

Waking Women Healing Institute

MMIWG2S Care and Response Team

2021



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Introduction

This toolkit is simply a guide and suggestion based on listening to and working with our survivors and MMIWG2S family members. Our roles as helpers are to walk beside our relatives, hold space, and provide supports as they navigate these western systems. We must be mindful, to not cause further harm, recognize our own limitations, and utilize the power of the collective to do this work. We all have amazing strengths and were born with a unique purpose. When we connect to our purpose and are able to lead with love and spirit our movements of change can not be deterred. Our approach has been to RESTORE matriarchal roles to decolonize self and systems, UPLIFT survivor voices and experiences in all spaces, and IGNITE places of healing through connecting to language, creation story, and land. We hope this toolkit provides choice in your work and inspires you to create your own spaces of healing and learning to address and prevent these acts of violence against our Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit.



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MMIWG2S Care and Response Team

The following steps were utilized to help develop a team of helpers that is indigenous women/girls/two-spirit and survivor led, founded in cultural ways of being, and that anticipates the needs mind, body, and spirit of survivors, family, and communities within this work.



Identify Key Roles and Skills

This stage is focused on identifying key roles needed on your team, the skills suggested, and anticipating the needs mind, body, and spirit of person, family, and community.



Standing With

Developing a missing relatives response plan that includes: cultural responses, outline tasks and roles, first contact and ongoing supports, and forming relationships with key partners.



Standing UP

Developing a murdered relatives response that includes: cultural responses, first contact and ongoing supports, key partners/agency, and justice work.



Breaking Barriers

Importance of ongoing learning in systems change and justice work, sharing resources, and empowering through knowledge.



Healing and Learning

Spaces of connecting to land, language, and oral history for healing work, kinship building, and uplifting survivor voice.

Key Roles and Skills

In the beginning stages to create your community response crew to MMIWG2S it is critical to match skills and strengths to the necessary roles needed in order to completely serve our relatives of MMIWG2S. We must learn to anticipate the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of the family, and community, from the first contact meeting to ongoing aftercare. When we work as a team, we are able to meet each of those needs. While working in communities other than your own, it is always best practice to act a respected guest and follow the communities' cultural protocols, lead, and creation stories. Our team will often gift the community that we are traveling to, which acknowledges the importance of reciprocal relationships across nations. Below you will find examples of key roles, sample family needs, and key skills for your team to have. While each team member may not have every suggested skill, as a collective your team will hold a full spectrum of care. In the collective, we find the whole. Consider what this team name may be in your language? How can you make this name of your community?



Key Suggested Roles

- Advocates formal and/or informal
- Systems experts (Legal, Tribal Law, Detectives Prosecutors)
- Community Knowledge Holders/Elders
- MMIWG2S Family members and survivors
- Wellness and body movement workers
- Trauma helpers
- Community organizers

Original Thinking- Anticipating Needs Mind, Body, Spirit, and Emotion

- Rally/vigil supplies
- Childcare
- Food/Shelter/hygiene
- Healing work
- Media and Print
- Expert consultations

Suggested Skills

- Connection to own creation story, original language, traditional foods, and cultural tools for healing
- MMIWG2S overview and history
- Advocacy
- Conflict resolution
- Grassroots organizing
- TIC 101
- Mental Health First Aid

Standing With Developing Missing Relatives Response

It is best to have a team response plan for cases of missing relatives with clear outlines as to who is to do what and when. This helps for consistent care and helps each team member understand clearly what their roles and expectations are in this work. Time is critical when our relatives are missing, having a base plan to refer to will help reduce response times from both systems and your response teams. While every case may be different, we have identified below common themes in responses we have seen and experienced. What partner agencies your community will need to work with in missing cases? On and off reserve? What will your comprehensive cultural response look like?

First Meeting and Key Information Gathering

- Build relationships and hold space
- Ask permission
- Gather cultural tools for healing and response
- Gather key descriptive information
- Help family to place missing report to local law enforcement with note to responding officer
- Request incident # and/or case #
- Disarm misinformation and myths around missing protocols and criteria

Ongoing Support and Advocacy

- Be prepared to act as advocate for and with family to file a missing person's report and help them navigate multiple systems
- Create missing flyer with first contact information, include local law enforcement number as contact
- Share flyer to social media, news desks, tribes, agencies, task forces, MMIWG2S organizations, and regional/national networks
- Tend to mind/body/emotion/spirit of family and community
- Healing work as directed by family and community
- Contact boots on ground and grassroots
- Provide care kits and basic needs
- In found safe cases plan for ongoing aftercare needs of family and supports
- Long-term missing anticipates needs of family and provide ongoing supports and meaningful contact

Standing Up- Developing Murdered Relatives Response

When a relative has been found murdered the pain ripples across Indian country, and our families experience deep grief and re-traumatization from western systems. Our job is to take care of family and community during this time while holding justice systems accountable. We can help them to honor their grief, and as helpers, we pick up this very heavy load so that they do not have to carry it alone. We find strength in each other, connection to ceremony, and land. Remember this as you help stand up and speak out for our and with relatives seeking justice. Be prepared to hold space and become expert listeners, our main role in this stage is to provide choice through resources, uplift the families' voices, and creating spaces of healing. This is their journey, and we are here to walk with them, not for them.

First Meeting and Key Information Gathering

- Build relationships and hold space
- Introductions and sharing story
- Ask permission
- Gather cultural tools for healing and response
- Gather key descriptive information
- Identify key roles in case
- Type of response given from systems
- Key dates for court
- Supports already involved formal and informal

Ongoing Support and Advocacy

- Cultural tools for healing
- Resources for media and press work
- Consultations with systems experts
- Direct actions- vigils/rallies, walks
- Care kits
- Fundraising help
- Child care
- Create visibility of family/survivor narrative across your networks, media, organizations, and elected leaders
- Engage MMIP Coordinators, Task Forces, and Cold Case Units



Breaking Barriers

Ongoing education of self in mind, body, spirit, and emotion is another critical part of this work. We must constantly be tending to and further developing these four areas of self so that we are providing our community the most well versions of ourselves. Below are some resources we have found helpful in this work in providing information about systems, wellness, and training materials for teams. Combating systemic racism and violence is not an easy task, however when armed with wisdom, love, and truth we are unstoppable. Each area provides information around due process, jurisdiction, wellness, policy, and protocols that have helped us dispel common misinformation given out to MMIWG2S families. They have been useful in correcting lack of movement and bias/racist response in most cases we site them often in our work. The pages following this one have QR codes with links to some of the materials mentioned below, arm yourself and teams with knowledge and use it to shift power in seeking justice.

Policy and Acts to Know

- PLU 280
- Oliphant Decision
- Major Crimes Act
- Not Invisible Act
- Savannahs Act
- Crime Victims Act
- VAWA

Process and Protocols

- Due process
- Missing persons criteria and protocol
- Jurisdictional maps
- Open records requests
- Victims Witness and Victims Specialist

Trainings and TA

- Amber Alert in Indian Country
- SOAR Human Trafficking Online Training
- Tribal Law and Policy Int.- Human Trafficking Training
- NIWRC Advocacy, MMIW Toolkit

Land and Water Protection

- Rights of Nature
- Self Determination and Tribal Sovereignty
- Man Camps and Resource Extraction
- Identify local, state, and national organizations dedicated to protection

Resources

AMBER alert in Indian Country

Missing Person Process, Investigation, and Protocols



NamUS

MMIP Coordinators

Clearinghouse for Missing Persons in WI



Trainings and TA, Human Trafficking

Rights of Nature, Major Crimes Act, PLU 280



Resources

NIWRC Jurisdiction and Crime Victims Rights



VAWA, Not Invisible Act



NIWRC MMIWG Special Collection

Tribal Law and Policy Institute

Operation Lady Justice

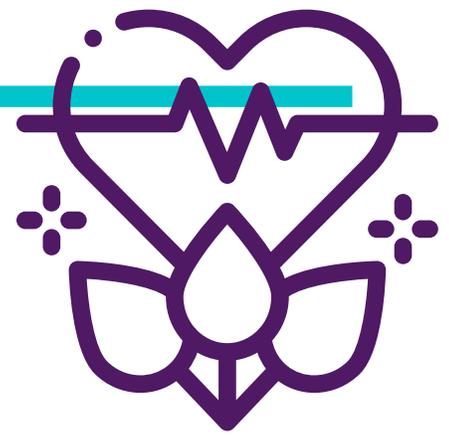


FOIA and Public Records Request

MN MMIW Task Force Report, SBI- Honoring Warrior Women Report



Healing and Learning



Creating spaces of Healing and Learning are central to justice work with our survivors and MMIWG2S families. In reclaiming our original ways of thinking through creative and critical lenses founded in connection to identity, we are able to liberate our mind, body, and spirit of harmful colonial constructs. Practice anticipating the needs, barriers, and outcomes your teams may experience in this work, and then utilize the unique gifts, strengths, and talents of individuals to build a collaborative that will help respond to and prevent violence against indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit.

Parts of Self	Examples	Anticipate and Plan
<p>Mental</p> <p>How will we continue to develop our teams mind? What supports are needed for survivors?</p>	<p>trainings/ta, policy work, Mental Health First Aid</p>	<p>Who are local formal and informal supports for mental health? What trainings/information can we share?</p>
<p>Emotional</p> <p>How will we promote emotional well being of survivors and teams?</p>	<p>Ceremony, support groups, culture and land based activities</p>	<p>How do we create collaborative and heart centered approaches?</p>
<p>Physical</p> <p>What are other key physical needs of community, family, and self immediate and ongoing?</p>	<p>travel, hygiene, care kits, traditional medicines, print media</p>	<p>Who are key people, agency, knowledge holders to help gather and provide needs? What are our efforts for land and water protection?</p>
<p>Spiritual</p> <p>How will we connect to identity, land, and language throughout our work?</p>	<p>Creation story, use of original language, governance structures, clans</p>	<p>Who are our knowledge holders, elders, helpers, and language speakers? What does our cultural response, prevention, and protocol look like?</p>

Restore Uplift Ignite

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