



Ending Violence Against Native Women

From the Roots Up

**An Overview of Shelter and Advocacy
Program Development Supporting Native Women's Sovereignty**



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Dear Friends,

I'd like to extend a heartfelt handshake to each of you. "From the Roots Up" offers a basic outline for the development of shelters and advocacy programs for Native women who are battered or raped and their children. It provides an overall picture of what elements are important in developing the foundation for opening a shelter. You will notice the booklet challenges some common myths and misconceptions Advocates indicate that often the nearest shelter is not operated by and for Native women who are battered. It does not make sense that we would replicate a shelter that is not meeting the needs of the women we provide advocacy for. That does not mean that we cannot examine how advocacy is being provided and take the best from what our non-Native sisters have developed. And, in developing our own shelters as native women, we have the opportunity to look at how we can provide safe space for women who are battered based on our common values and cultural teachings as Native people.

The "tree" is used to illustrate the developmental process for creating respectful space that honors our relationship as relatives. The idea to use the tree to illustrate shelter/program development comes from the vision and teachings of the famous holy man, Black Elk. Black Elk, an Oglala Lakota, interpreted, *"...the Grandfathers had shown me my people walking on the black road and how the nation's hoop would be broken and the flowering tree be withered, before I should bring the hoop together with the power that was given me, and make the holy tree to flower in the center and find the red road again."*

In spite of the despair Black Elk saw, his vision also offers an alternative and a prescription. As Native nations, we should "go back into the sacred hoop and find the good red road." Black Elk shares a hope for the world in his vision.

"My body did not move at all, but I looked ahead and floated fast toward where I looked. There was a ridge right in front of me, and I thought I was going to run into it, but I went right over it. On the other side of the ridge I could see a beautiful land where many, many people were camping in a great circle. I could see they were happy and had plenty. Everywhere there were drying racks full of meat. The air was clear and beautiful with a living light that was everywhere. All around the circle, feeding on the green, green grass, were fat and happy horses; and animals of all kinds were scattered all over the green hills, and singing hunters were returning with their meat. I floated over the tepees and began to come down feet first at the center of the hoop where I could see a beautiful tree all green and full of flowers...."

Black Elk acknowledges that a return to balance could not be a simple return to the past. He challenges us *"and from the same good spirit <that brought us the buffalo> we must find another strength."* He also saw *"a good nation walking in a sacred manner....on the good red road together."*

It is from Black Elk's vision of the *"beautiful tree all green and full of flowers"* that we came to use the tree to illustrate how we could find our way back to the good red road and a lifeway of non-violence, respect and harmony with ourselves, others, the Creator and the Universe.

"From The Roots Up" is divided into three sections. The graphics, title and language in the booklet is intended to inspire critical thinking and dialogue about the assumptions we bring to the work to stop violence against Native women.

Section I. The Roots: Program Belief System. This section describes the theoretical foundation of the approach and method to the work to end violence against women. Knowing the history of what, how and why our People have come to a place where women are no longer seen and treated as sacred, will provide the information we need to formulate a response to violence against women. The roots are the foundation for the red road.

Section II. The Contributors. The trunk connects the roots to the branches and describes the elements that contribute to the growth of the shelter/program. Again, the concepts and values of the red road provide the strength that will allow us to flourish and make the safe space that women need.

Section III. The Branches: Response. The branches offer a demonstration and description of the activities and/or the outgrowth of the shelter/program roots.

Sacred Circle, other shelters, state and national domestic violence coalitions and organizations can also provide valuable materials, support and resources to assist you in your efforts. At Sacred Circle, contact Catherine Grey Day, Information Specialist at 877-RED ROAD if you would like additional information. Eileen Briggs, Logistics Specialist, is the person to talk with about being placed on our mailing list, receiving a training schedule or for workshop registration.

Brenda Hill, Education Coordinator, can help you in arranging on-site technical assistance, consultation or training specific to shelter/program development. Sacred Circle can also coordinate on-site visits with Cangleska, Inc. if you are interested in coming to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation for information on the how and why of Cangleska's domestic violence response.

As tribal people you have your own histories, prophecies, and ceremonies to draw upon. The common connection for us as Native peoples is our experience of colonization and the understanding that we are all related to each other.

The scars of colonization run deep and the energy and preparations we put into this healing ceremony will determine the strength and direction of the outcome of our ceremony. Black Elk saw an alternative future where we were happy and healthy.

"I thought of my vision, and how it was promised me that my people should have a place in this earth where they could be happy every day." "From the center of the earth I had been shown all good and beautiful things in a great circle of peace, and maybe this land of my vision was where all my people were going, and there they would live and prosper..."

As sisters, we offer this booklet to you and will support you in whatever ways we can as you honor the journey of our relatives living in fear and with violence.

Working together to end violence against women and children.

Sincerely,



Karen Artichoker, Director

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PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

RESPONSE: Advocacy & Social Change for Native Women's Safety & Sovereignty

OBJECTIVES:

Affirm Women as Sacred Systems & Community Accountability Offender Accountability

Meet Basic Needs Removal of Barriers to Resources Outreach
 Men's Reeducation Programs Legislative Work Women's Groups
 Children's Programs Confidentiality Model Non-Violence Shelter
 Reclaim Tribal Culture Coordinated Community Response Education
 Live With Respect and Compassion
 Leadership by Battered Women

CONTRIBUTORS: Supports:

- ◆ Leadership and expertise of battered women
- ◆ Structure & administration of tribal domestic violence programs
- ◆ Other organizational structure: private non-profits
- ◆ Policy & procedure promoting sovereignty of women
- ◆ Identification of needs, resources & barriers
- ◆ Affirm traditional lifeways

ROOTS: Belief System - Reflected in a philosophy and mission statement that:

- ◆ Supports sovereignty of women
- ◆ Focuses on safety of women, offender's system's and community's accountability
- ◆ Validates the expertise & voice of battered women
- ◆ Identifies battering as a crime & cultural issue
- ◆ Includes advocacy & social change activity
- ◆ Describes root causes of violence against native women as a result of colonization

SOVEREIGNTY:

AN INHERENT RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Sovereignty requires the respect and active support of others. Sovereignty is diminished by violence in all its forms. Silent witnessing or ignoring the violence of others is a form of violence in itself.

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY:

All Tribal Nations have an inherent right to:

- 1) a land-base: possession and control is unquestioned and honored by other nations. To exist without fear, but with freedom.
- 2) self-governance: the ability and authority to make decisions regarding all matters concerning the Tribe without the approval or agreement of others. This includes the ways and methods of decision-making, social, political and other areas of life.
- 3) an economic base and resources: the control, use and development of resources, businesses or industries the Tribe chooses. This includes resources that support the Tribal life way, and the practice of spiritual ways.
- 4) a distinct language and historical and cultural identity: Each Tribe defines and describes its history, including the impact of colonization and racism, tribal culture, worldview and traditions.



Colonization and violence against native people means that power and control over native people's life way and land have been stolen.

As native people, we have the right and responsibility to advocate for ourselves and our relatives in supporting our right to power and control over our tribal life way and land - tribal sovereignty.

NATIVE WOMEN'S SOVEREIGNTY:

All Native Women have an inherent right to:

- 1) their body and path in Life: the possession and control is unquestioned and honored by others. To exist without fear, but with freedom.
- 2) self-governance: the ability and authority to make decisions regarding all matters concerning themselves, without others' approval or agreement. This includes the ways and methods of decision-making in social, political and other areas of life.
- 3) an economic base and resources: the control, use and development of resources, businesses or industries that Native women choose. This includes resources that support individual Native women's chosen life ways, and the practice of spiritual ways.
- 4) a distinct identity, history and culture: Each Native woman defines and describes her history, including the impact of colonization, racism and sexism, tribal women's culture, worldview and traditions.



Violence against women and victimization in general, means that power and control over an individual's life and body have been stolen.

As relatives of women who have been victimized, it is our right and responsibility to be advocates supporting every woman's right to power and control over her body and life - personal sovereignty.

Sacred Circle

INTRODUCTION



Domestic violence is a crime – a criminal justice and human rights issue. Battering and the other forms of violence are tactics of terror. The destruction of a person's or Nation's sovereign rights through acts of terrorism is the destruction of the very essence of who we are as individuals or nations. Amnesty International's publication, "Report of Torture", includes Biderman's Chart of Coercion which describes techniques used to torture and brainwash prisoners of war: isolation, monopolization of perception, induced debility and exhaustion, threats,

occasional indulgences, demonstrating omnipotence, degradation, and enforcing trivial demands.* These are some of the same tactics batterers utilize to maintain control over their partners. They are also tactics used in the colonization of Native People.

Attempts to destroy tribal sovereignty begin with the destruction of women's sovereignty. Destroy the women – destroy the Nation. The major tactic of colonization was to destroy the family, again targeting women, the backbone of Native cultures.

Before colonization, the vast majority of tribal peoples had non-violent life ways based on an understanding of the natural world. The natural world belief system is based on relationships between all things in Creation, respect and compassion. Violence against women is violence against all of Creation. We are all inter-dependent and related: harm of women is self-destructive - physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

The imposition of an unnatural belief system through colonization, condones and encourages violence against women, endorsing misperceptions of male superiority, ownership of women and children, and men's rights to control women, children and the environment. Domestic terrorism cannot occur without these unnatural beliefs that objectify women and justify violence against them.

Identifying the root cause of violence against women as the result of colonization and the imposition of an unnatural belief system expands our work to pro-active social change and advocacy for the sovereignty and safety of women. Our work will be ineffective, possibly dangerous, if the root cause of violence against women is not accurately understood. For

"Where are your women?"

The speaker is Attakulla, a Cherokee chief renowned for his shrewd and effective diplomacy. He had come to negotiate a treaty with the whites. Among his delegation are women "as famous in war, as powerful in the council." Their presence also has ceremonial significance: it is meant to show honor to the other delegation. But that delegation is composed of males only; to them the absence of women is irrelevant, a trivial consideration.

To the Cherokee, however, reverence for women/mother Earth/life spirit is interconnected. Implicit in their chief's question, "Where are your women?" the Cherokee hear, "Where is your balance? What is your intent?" They see the balance is absent and are wary of the white man's motives. They intuit the power of destruction.

(Marilou Awiakta – Cherokee; from a work by Andrea Smith)

*(See **Getting Free: A Handbook for Women in Abusive Relationships**, by Ginny NiCarthy)

There are times when accessing mental health services is appropriate for women who are battered.

In the vast majority of situations, this needs to be the decision of the individual woman. Advocates are responsible for ensuring all mental health professionals (as well as traditional healers) utilized as referrals understand the dynamics of battering and prioritize women's safety and confidentiality.

Advocates may need to consult with, and/or refer to knowledgeable mental health professionals (and as appropriate traditional healers) when concerns about misdiagnosis, prescribed medication or serious mental health problems exist.

Advocates consistently guard the sovereignty of women and their right to make autonomous decisions about their bodies and lives. At the same time, as relatives of women who are battered, advocates respectfully respond to the needs of women who are coping with serious mental/emotional issues such as schizophrenia, clinical depression or bi-polar disorders.

In those situations, advocates continue their advocacy relationship with women, refocusing on safety issues in light of the fact that severe mental/emotional conditions increase women's vulnerability and danger levels.

example, if alcoholism were believed to be the root cause of battering (rather than a contributor), the outgrowth would logically be treatment facilities, rather than shelter and advocacy. This approach does not provide safety for women who are battered, accountability of offenders, nor does it stop violence. Program development must make consistent connections between the root cause of violence and the way programs do their work.

Mental health approaches are still common; however, they are based upon the American medical model that does not make connections between individual experiences, culture, history, politics or spirituality. Mental health approaches do not address the existence of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ageism, and other forms of oppression. Consequently, a mental health approach that deals only with the individual and/or family can be ineffective and revictimizing. This approach tends to minimize battering as an anger or relationship issue and "treats" individuals rather than addressing the root cause of violence or offender accountability.

Racism, sexism, classism, and other oppressions create a pervasive system of oppressive, violent tactics and barriers that deny people basic freedoms and human rights. Connections need to be made with the reality that oppression impacts the daily lives of all women. Oppression intensifies and expands the violence women who are battered experience. Oppression diminishes women's ability to get safe and to live autonomously.

A social change model validates the sovereignty of women in all aspects of the work. The grassroots model presented here focuses on the safety of women, holds offenders and systems accountable, and defines battering as a violent crime resulting from an unnatural belief system. Our work moves beyond the limitations of a "direct services" approach of mental health or social services. Our work is advocacy and social change.

Welcome to the "movement!"



Beyond Women's Rights

Beyond the ballot...
More than a vote in a system
Driven by control

Our mothers saw people in harmony-
It stirred a remembering
Of a time before the laws of church
And nation-state.

Sovereign women in sovereign nations
Living beyond fear, beloved
Not owners, but keepers of the land
Not property, but sacred centers of creation

In a world where
Everything is a part, connected
Each valued and responsible to the whole

Wiser women of older nations
Remind us still today
That dominance control ownership
Man-made, can be unmade.

Balance comes from honoring life,
Living in Thanksgiving
Wise women, living this vision,
We thank you.



SECTION I

ROOTS

Program Development

ROOTS: Belief System - Reflected in a philosophy and mission statement that:

- ◆ Supports sovereignty of women
- ◆ Focuses on safety of women, offender's, system's and community's accountability
- ◆ Validates the expertise & voice of battered women
- ◆ Identifies battering as a crime & cultural issue
- ◆ Includes advocacy & social change activity
- ◆ Describes root causes of violence against native women as a result of colonization



SECTION I

THE ROOTS: Program Belief System



Our commitment to reclaim women’s integrity, status and to create safety and justice for our sisters who are battered is often grounded in our own experience: the experience of being battered and/or raped. Knowing fear and pain, prayers for help and peace, and hopes to be believed provide the expertise. Our strength and courage in the face of violence and our ability to live compassionately are the foundation of our work.

Our understanding of the necessity to create relationships, programs and communities based on respect and compassion form a vision reflected in a mission statement. The ultimate goal is the realization of **women's sovereignty**. Sovereignty means the right to control our bodies and lives without threat or fear of violence, to make all decisions regarding our bodies and lives, and to have both the resources to fulfill our choices and the right to define our experiences and identity.

A statement clarifying the program mission describes the guiding principles of our programs. In practice, **mission statements** often become lost in the flurry of administration, program development, politics and crisis intervention. Ideally, mission statements remind us of our purpose and act as a shared “consciousness” to help us stay focused.

The mission statement describes and justifies goals and methods, and outlines the organizational beliefs about the issues to be addressed by the program. This is based on a **shared understanding of the root cause of violence against women and our relationship with women who have been battered.**

Battering and rape are a product of an unnatural belief system that aims to maintain control and power over women. We must ask ourselves if our “program belief system” replicates this unnatural system. Or, does the program, beginning with the mission statement reflect the natural belief system, honoring the sovereignty/freedom, expertise and voice of women?

The expertise of women who have experienced battering/rape is invaluable. We validate the voices and expertise of women by their inclusion in positions of governance and decision-making. Instead of soliciting “input,” which minimizes their knowledge and understanding, programs must ensure women who have been battered are integral members of the team.



Many programs support the sovereignty of women by establishing a “hiring preference” for women who have been battered. The term “hiring preference” is actually a misnomer. Hiring women who have been battered from a pool of qualified candidates, (aside from being a sovereignty issue), is a logical way of ensuring the person hired brings with her expertise based on experience. This personal life experience is more like previous “on the job training.” Escaping the violence from a batterer earns women a grassroots degree in survivorship. American society has not created language that acknowledges grassroots expertise whether we’re talking about Native grassroots expertise or battered women’s grassroots expertise.

Language plays a key part in advocacy, social change and program development. Most tribal peoples have a way to express the concept that words are powerful. Words carry energy, describe our perception of reality and reflect our belief system. For example, if we describe the on-going beating, sexual assault and emotional abuse of a woman by her batterer as “a violent relationship,” “they’re fighting again,” or “family dispute,” we deny what is really going on. This minimizes and “equalizes” the violence and takes the focus off of the violent offender. In essence, that language sets the stage for questioning the behavior of the woman who is victimized by violent crime, and fails to hold the batterer accountable for his actions. We must name what is happening accurately if we are to appropriately respond to and end violence. (See appendix Articles A, B & C.)

Women who are battered are often referred to as victims, patients, clients, “my ladies” or “my victims.” Using these words denies respect for women as unique, capable human beings with minds, hearts and spirits. Terms like “my ladies” or “my victims” imply ownership and control of women who are battered or raped. Labeling is a tactic used by batterers. Rarely do batterers refer to their partners by their names prior to, during, or following an assault; instead, women are called bitches, whores, hags, old ladies, etc. Labels (clients, patients) dehumanize and objectify women and are permission-givers for violence. Labels deny our relationships as relatives.

Calling women by their given name or relative name shows respect. It mirrors our understanding that though a woman has been battered, she still has many powerful gifts, skills, wisdom, experiences and relationships. Women survive horrendous violence because of these powers. When we treat each other as relatives, we overcome oppression and internalized oppression - **we validate each other's personal sovereignty** and reclaim the power and control that had been taken from us.*

*See **Domestic Violence Information Packet** for Glossary

ASPECTS OF THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Advocating for the sovereignty of women and reclaiming our tribal ways requires affirmation of our relationships with each other. Women who are battered may be in our lives for minutes or years. We may like who they are, “approve” of their choices - or not. It's irrelevant. Women who are battered, whom we have the honor of supporting, are always our sisters, mothers, aunts or grandmothers. They are always our teachers.

The language used throughout the “program tree” to describe our understanding of violence against women we hope will inspire critical thinking and dialogue. Getting a new law passed that will provide greater protection for women may not be as empowering as the process itself. There is power in the debate, argument, conflict and dialogue about the law and its ramifications. There is just as much power in the *process* that inspires and makes the change as there is in the change that is the *outcome*.

The process is **social change** in itself. Social change begins on an individual, grassroots level. Social change is political and personal; it can be tiresome, bothersome and painful. It can be especially painful when we become aware of our own internalized oppression. Social change also inspires vision, hope and the gifts we have to offer each other.

Remember that conflict is an inevitable and necessary part of change, program development and organizational administration. How we resolve conflict is as important as the resolution itself. Keep in mind that our different perspectives are our gifts to the work; our similarities and shared vision keep us connected. Allow time (and food!) for dialogue and periodically revisit your mission statement to stay on track.

This work requires courage and personal accountability. This work requires finding respectful and compassionate ways to hold each other and ourselves accountable. It's tough work some days, but we are all in this together. Celebrate each new lesson, each success and positive step. And Celebrate the strength and courage of women who escape the violence and move on to re-create their lives.

EXAMPLES OF A MISSION AND A PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault “Principles of Unity”

The South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault comprises people dealing with concerns of battered women and their children. We represent both rural and urban areas. Our programs support and involve battered women of all racial, ethnic, religious and economic groups, ages and lifestyles. We oppose the use of violence as a means of control over others, and support equality in relationships and the concept of helping women assume power over their lives. We strive towards becoming independent community-based groups in which women make major policy and program decisions.

In recognizing that hierarchy is the root cause of violence against women, we are committed to maintaining and nurturing grassroots programs, organizations and communities. We must never lose sight that this movement was born through grassroots women who have been victimized by violence. We strive to ensure grassroots leadership and involvement in all matters, especially policy-making and governance.

MISSION STATEMENT - *Cangleska, Inc., Pine Ridge*

Cangleska, Inc. recognizes that violence against women is not a random state but is, in fact, a system of behaviors and tactics used to obtain and maintain power and control over women, whether that is as individuals or as a group.

Cangleska, Inc., believes that violence against indigenous/Lakota women is not traditional to our culture and lifeway teachings. We believe it has its roots in an imposed institutionalized system that was designed to maintain control over us as a People after genocide failed.

We do not define violence against indigenous women as a problem with a relationship or as the pathology of an individual perpetrator. Again, it is perpetuated and maintained through society and institutions and is the same dynamic that perpetuates other forms of oppression, i.e., racism, classism, ageism, homophobia, able-bodyism, adultism, etc.

We are committed to providing shelter, safety, and advocacy for individuals victimized by violence. We recognize the necessity of a multi-faceted approach- the need to develop an effective partnership with systems within our community such as health, criminal justice and other institutions.

At the same time, we recognize that creating an appropriate system's response may or may not make a significant enough change to stop violence against women. Therefore, we are also dedicated to exploring and creating actions that will move us toward a social transformation that will allow equity for women. We actively seek methods and processes that will facilitate nonviolent human interaction.

We have internalized our oppression. Consequently, it is also the mission of Cangleska, Inc. to support each other in our exploration of ourselves and our attachment to beliefs that justify our own oppression and the oppression of others. As we work to transform the world into a circle of peace and harmony, individual responsibility and self-growth is essential.

As indigenous people we have survived and held on to much of our tradition. In keeping with our culture we are expected to conduct ourselves ethically and, as employees of Cangleska, Inc., we expect to interact with each other in the spirit of unity and mutual respect.

Program Development

SECTION II

TRUNK

CONTRIBUTORS: Supports:

- ◆ Leadership and expertise of battered women
- ◆ Structure & administration of tribal domestic violence programs
- ◆ Other organizational structure: private non-profits
- ◆ Policy & procedure promoting sovereignty of women
- ◆ Identification of needs, resources & barriers
- ◆ Affirm traditional lifeways



SECTION II

THE TRUNK: Contributors

Once the mission statement is established, it is time to do some “nuts and bolts” work. This stage of planning and development should be philosophically consistent with the mission statement.

1. LEADERSHIP AND EXPERTISE OF WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN BATTERED:



Grassroots advocacy includes helping individual women find safety from their batterers while creating social change and ensuring the sovereignty of all women. The concept of women's sovereignty is validated by the ways we interact, establish and operate our programs. When women who have been battered are in positions of leadership, authority and decision-making, women's sovereignty is affirmed.

Women with specific types of expertise may not be available in smaller communities. Often barriers to safety and lack of resources prevent women from participating. If it's an issue of resources, (i.e., gas money, childcare, etc.), make those resources available. If it's a safety issue provide the advocacy and support she wants. Otherwise, recruit and hire women based on experience, ability, understanding of battering and their ability to support the mission of the program. Tribal communities traditionally gave leadership positions to those who earned the respect of the people based on their skills, knowledge, character and life style, not based on their formal education.

There is a tendency to expect the chief of police, judges and politicians to be responsible for taking action to end violence against women. People in those positions can greatly impact our work. However, it is advocates and grassroots people who provide the leadership, strategies and vision for this transformation. Ending violence against women is everybody's responsibility. Regardless of status, title or gender, the bottom line is we remain accountable to women who are battered.

Be clear and unapologetic about the “preference” (acknowledgement of expertise) for women who have been battered and their sisters. All tribes had/have women's societies and culture. Shelters and programs for battered women are women's societies and should be respected as such. In the past men honored and supported women's societies and culture, understanding they balanced men's societies and culture. It is appropriate for men to serve on task forces, to work with their brothers who batter and assist with educational and social change efforts. But, women are the experts and leaders in this work. Men who are balanced will know this.

2. STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION OF A TRIBAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM:

Typically, a domestic violence shelter and/or program that develops in Indian Country will be a "tribal program." As such, employees of the program operate under the Personnel Policies and Procedures of the Tribe and within the overall structure of the Tribe. There are benefits to being a tribal program and there are also problems that might arise as a result of being placed in a large and sometimes highly political organizational structure. Most Tribes have little experience or history with advocacy programs serving women who are battered and may not understand the specific issues around safety that are inherent in operating a shelter/domestic violence program.

It is the responsibility of the tribal domestic violence shelter/program to create space within the tribal structure that reflects and honors the experience of the native woman who is battered. It is also the responsibility of the tribal program to ensure that a woman seeking advocacy and related services will receive confidentiality and immunity from a tribal government structure that can be fraught with politics.

As advocates working in a tribal domestic violence program, you can and should formulate a mission or philosophy statement that will provide a foundation upon which to base public education activities, how advocates do their work, how the program is administered, etc.

Educate your Tribal Council about the differences in operating a program that provides advocacy and related services from a more general social services program.

Regularly place domestic violence educational materials in your council representatives' box. You should carefully select the materials you hand out to your council representatives. Select articles that reflect the philosophy of the program and are short and easily read. If you give them a long article, they won't read it. Most people believe that there is something wrong with a woman who is battered. Include articles that clarify the purpose of shelter and provide information on the dynamics of domestic violence. Sacred Circle has educational materials that you can access.

Routinely invite council representatives to training, even if they never attend. Ask your council representatives to provide a welcome address or make a brief statement at local conferences, walks, etc. Attend tribal committee meetings, council meetings, etc., when possible. Attend multidisciplinary team meetings, etc., as appropriate and be clear with other members that you cannot discuss a woman and her children's situation without her informed consent.

Make sure that all advocates understand the philosophy of the program and

can articulate the dynamics and effects of domestic violence. Advocates will run into council representatives (at the grocery store, post office, etc.) who will ask them questions about the program, complain about the program or even make threats toward the program. It's a good idea to have some prepared responses that advocates agree upon when responding to these informal encounters with council representatives.

CONFIDENTIALITY *

Tribal councils, council representatives and other tribal officials need to know that a breach of confidentiality could mean life or death or another beating for the woman who is battered and her children. Confidentiality is crucial to safety and breeches of confidentiality may inhibit other women who are battered from utilizing the program. Lack of trust is a big issue for everybody so the credibility and capacity of the tribal domestic violence program in maintaining confidentiality will, in large part, determine how effective the tribal program might be in assisting women who are battered.

The Tribal Personnel Policies and Procedures should be reviewed to determine if the document would adequately meet the needs of the domestic violence shelter/program in holding advocates accountable for maintaining the safety and confidentiality of the woman who is battered and her children. If the policies do not meet this basic safety requirement, it is your responsibility to advocate for changes within Personnel Policies and Procedures that will, at the very least, stress confidentiality and provide strong sanctions for employees who breach confidentiality.

The Tribal Finance or Business Office handles most tribal domestic violence programs' finances. The process for maintaining the confidentiality of records and, especially requests for emergency financial services, such as bus tickets, rent, deposit, and payment of bills for an individual woman who is battered must be developed to ensure that confidentiality will not be breached. Some tribal program advocates report problems with tribal finance personnel making judgments about the woman needing emergency services when her name on paperwork is required by the tribal finance department. These attitudes include: "Why buy her a bus ticket? She's just going to go back to him anyway!" Or, "I saw her at that party and she deserved it!"

Paperwork submitted to the tribal finance office should have all names and any other identifying information redacted, ie., blacked out. The tribal domestic violence program's authorizing signature attests to the validity of the request. One person in the finance office should be designated to deal with the program's request for emergency services for the individual woman who is battered.

Another issue is the inability of the tribal finance department to provide the

Read "**Confidentiality: Cornerstone of Safety for Women Who are Battered**" in the Advocacy and Shelter Information Packet.



emergency service in a timely fashion. Tribal finance departments are part of a bigger bureaucracy and have their own internal pressures plus external pressures and requirements from a wide variety of funding sources. Tribal finance people process and monitor tribal programs according to federal, state, and/or tribal accounting practices.

Advocates working in tribal domestic violence shelter/programs need to recognize that the infrastructures of tribal governments are not designed to accommodate emergency, confidential services. A state treasurer would not sign off on a state check for a bus ticket. However, in a state system, grants are awarded to private, non-profit organizations that are responsible for the fiscal management of the grant along with the program implementation. Some tribal domestic violence shelters/programs have successfully created a process within the tribal finance department that maintains confidentiality and safety while accommodating the Tribe's requirements for fiscal accountability.

Since the Tribe is the grantee, they are responsible for the overall grant including the financial records and progress reports. However, the tribal domestic violence program is responsible for the actual program records and individual women's records. Other departments within the Tribe, such as finance, contracting, committees, etc., including the Tribal Council do not have access to the tribal domestic violence program's confidential records.

The process (that maximizes safety and confidentiality) should be written down and adopted in the Tribe's Accounting or Fiscal Policies and Procedures. There should also be a process that outlines what happens if the designated finance person has concerns about the expenditure. Always, the focus should be on how to maintain safety and confidentiality along with the fiscal integrity and accountability of the Tribe.

Many of the problems encountered by tribes and tribal domestic violence shelters/programs are infrastructure problems inherent in a grant making process designed for states and private, non-profit organizations, not Indian Tribes. It is up to us to promote and encourage solutions and minimize in-fighting as much as possible.

Create a relationship before attempting to do problem solving or making changes within the finance office or any tribal other department. Identify allies or potential allies and create the opportunity to educate other tribal personnel about domestic violence so they can work with you in doing creative problem solving.

Advocates have a responsibility to shape and influence the development of tribal personnel and fiscal policies and procedures that will honor the safety and confidentiality of native women who are battered. Rather than whine and complain, find allies within the tribal government structure and initiate talks that will lead to safe and respectful policy. And, rely on your fortitude and commitment because these changes may take a long time.

3. OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: PRIVATE NON-PROFITS

In some tribal communities, native women have incorporated their shelter/advocacy program with the state and become a 501 (c) (3) private, non-profit and/or a tribally incorporated/chartered organization. Just like the federal government or state government, Tribes can enter into a sub-grant relationship with the incorporated domestic violence shelter/program.* In this relationship, the Tribe is the grantee and a legal document known as a Memorandum of Agreement, contract, etc., outlines the program and financial responsibilities of the Tribe and the sub-grantee.

The Memorandum of Agreement between your organization and the Tribe should delineate the procedure for requesting drawdowns and reporting requirements as reflected in the Tribe's Accounting Policies and Procedures manual. The drawdown process, reporting requirements, and on-site visits constitute a Tribe's monitoring of tribal sub-grantees. Naturally, a Tribe has the right as the grantee, to choose not to continue a sub-grantee relationship with the organization if they determine fiscal and/or programmatic inadequacies. Hopefully, your organization is responsible and accountable in administering the sub-grant and you will develop an ongoing and stable relationship with the Tribe.

Whether a program is state or tribally incorporated or both, the domestic violence shelter/program must have a certified accounting system and be prepared to be accountable to the Tribe and the federal granting agency. A certified accounting system means that a certified public accountant has reviewed your financial policies and procedures, personnel policies and procedures, and procurement policies and attests that they are in compliance with certain federal standards.

If your Tribe has little or no history of sub-granting, you may need to provide the tribal finance office with a model of a Memorandum of Agreement and a policy for the Tribe's Accounting Policies and Procedures manual. Sacred Circle can provide you with a sample as a starting place.

Another area that a private, non-profit organization serving women who are battered must consider is the maintenance and retention of confidential financial records. It should be noted that federal institutions that administer grant funds to Tribes for domestic violence shelters/programs do not have specific guidelines for the retention of confidential records within their Financial Guidelines. Although, both Family Violence Prevention and Services Act and Victims of Crime Assistance grants require programs to maintain confidentiality, it is the program's responsibility to figure out how that can be accomplished.

"In all actions Cangleska, Inc. shall seek a balance between the interests of the individual, family, community and the Oglala Lakota Nation. Cangleska, Inc. shall not engage in practices that serve to undermine the sovereignty of the Oglala Lakota Nation."

* Contact Sacred Circle for additional information and samples of the process for state and/or tribal incorporation, samples of Memorandum of Agreement, and financial policies that safeguard confidentiality.



Whether your shelter/advocacy programs operates as a tribal organization or an autonomous corporation, it is imperative that Tribes and state and/or tribally incorporated organizations develop formal policies within the organizational structure to safeguard names and other identifying information of women who are battered and their children. A few states and Tribes have passed privileged communication laws that do not allow advocates to reveal information about women who are battered and their children that have received advocacy and related services from the program.

Making changes in your community, organizational structure, accounting office, or tribal institutional response to domestic violence is difficult. It requires fortitude and patience. Making these changes may require you to enter into relationships where you must work with people you might have issues with. It is expected that you put your personal biases (ego) aside and do the best you can to educate, find, and create allies who will help you develop policies, procedures, activities, and actions that will maximize safety for women who are battered and their children.

4. POLICY AND PROCEDURE PROMOTING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF WOMEN:

A. Policy development by the board is the next step. In general, policy gives additional description and explanation of the by-laws. Policy describes the intent and purpose of a general course of action. Policy does not describe specifically how things will get done; that is left to administrative staff. (Boards should not be involved in the daily functioning of the program; that is micro-managing...a BIG “no-no”).

Policies provide guidelines to manage the organization so it fulfills the mission in the most effective manner possible. Remember the mission is not to meet the needs of the organization, its directors, or staff; the mission is about the safety and sovereignty of women. Having lots of policies does not increase the organization’s credibility. In fact, more policy creates more bureaucracy. The end result is attention, time and energy directed at compliance with policies, instead of toward women who are battered and their children.

Programs need to consider the question “What is minimum policy to ensure the safety of women?”

Policy flows from the mission statement and must not change or misdirect the mission.

Personnel, fiscal and shelter policies must prioritize the safety of women. Policies should be helpful to women, including the staff. We all live within the same oppressive society, so policy needs to support personal

efforts by staff members to maintain non-violent, healthy life ways.

Policies on confidentiality need to be explicit and strongly enforced. Breach of confidentiality should be considered grounds for immediate termination from the program. *



Prioritize advocacy with, by and on behalf of women who have been battered. Emphasize that advocate is the biased support of the sovereignty of women, safety of women and their children and offender accountability in hiring, training, education and all aspects of the work.

Fiscal policies should address how the confidentiality of women will be maintained. Many programs have budget line items to assist women with rent, utilities, etc. However, women can not be identified in the process.

Accounting standards must be met for auditing and fiscal accountability, but confidentiality still must be safeguarded to consistently protect women.

Confidentiality is integral to the safety of women who have been battered. Since this right rarely has legal protection, it is important for policies, procedures and by-laws to explicitly defend this right.

Policies can direct the work (advocacy, education, etc.) to ensure that violence against women be addressed as a criminal justice and human rights issue, not a mental health problem.

Tribal sovereignty and Native women's sovereignty are interdependent. Consider written policy that the program will not take actions that endangers tribal sovereignty in its efforts to advocate for the sovereignty of Native women.

B. The Board hires the Director . The Director hires staff. Boards must trust the Director with the responsibility and authority necessary to do the job. The Director needs to be accountable to the Board and staff. The Board, Director and staff must be accountable to women who are battered.

Most programs have a hierarchical structure with lines of authority. We have been socialized to see this as the norm. Our funders have concerns about accountability, about who is "in charge."

As social change organizations we can consider creating organizations

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that allow all staff to participate as partners within the program. Everyone has a voice and participates as team members. Group members respectfully acknowledge each other's expertise and limitations. The group comes to consensus about the mission of the work and specific objectives. Those that have the expertise needed to accomplish the task/project are supported in their decisions by the other group members.*

The entire group must be committed to ethical communication and conflict resolution, participate in consensus decision-making and working through internalized oppression as individuals and as an organization.

The approach is a powerful aspect of social change. It can be time consuming and emotionally and intellectually challenging. It requires commitment and courage to evolve as individuals and in relationships with co-workers and other relatives. Creating new and different organizational structures that are "human", "de-institutionalizes" power and control within systems and relationships. Social change means addressing sexism, racism, classism, etc., and the internalized oppression that results, on both personal and organizational levels.

Some ways to begin creating these changes may be to use a consensus method of decision-making, have staff participate in hiring co-workers and emphasize their shared vision and respect for everyone's contributions to the work.

Often volunteers do the initial work in safehousing and shelter. In fact, it is assumed that volunteers are a major part of shelter staff. Volunteers can be hired and released from the "job" in the same ways as paid staff with applications, interviews, training, etc. But volunteering assumes that people have existing financial resources and lots of free time: not always a good assumption in poor communities. Volunteering is a way that women can stay connected with the shelter program. While volunteering efforts should benefit the organization, volunteering should be an empowering and supportive experience for a woman.

- C. Procedures are developed by administrative staff (director) based on board policy.** Procedures detail how the policy is to be enacted. Procedures should include protocol that specifies who does what and in what ways. However, procedures should not be so rigid they limit the ability to respond effectively to the needs of women.

Every aspect of program development, including budgets and all forms should be evaluated based upon their ability to meet the needs and

*See the **Advocacy and Shelter Information Packet** for articles: "Ethical Communication", "Consensus Model for Decision-making" and "Making Social Change"

ensure the safety of women. Remember, budgets, forms, procedures and different types of programming are only tools to help provide safety and support women's sovereignty. Sometimes while attempting to be credible administrators there is a tendency to mold the work to meet the needs of administration, rather than the needs of women and their children.

Minimize the paperwork. Ask yourself why you need the information. "Less is best" and any information gathered should benefit the woman you serve. Lots of paperwork does not necessarily make the program more responsible. It only means that you'll have less time to spend with women and their children.*

Case management is inappropriate and has legal ramifications that are dangerous for women escaping violence. Case management is a mental health approach. Women who are battered are victims of violent crime; they are not "sick." Battering is a criminal justice issue, not a mental health issue. Women who are battered are asking for help to get safe and regain control of their lives. Psychological evaluations, assessment of parenting skills, treatment planning, etc., revictimize a woman and minimize the violence against her. These types of actions do not hold the batterer accountable for his behavior nor do they address the root cause of violence.

EXAMPLE: Because a woman in shelter or receiving advocacy from Cangleska, Inc. is assured that her stay in the shelter or the contact she has with the program is anonymous and confidential, advocates will answer any telephone or in-person inquiries about any woman as follows: ***"Our program has a confidentiality policy that does not allow us to admit or deny we know or have contact with any woman. We only take messages and post them. That does not mean she is here or not here. You can speak to the shelter director if you have other concerns. Thank you."*** This script is taped to every phone and entrance in the building.

Procedures and protocols like this example are supported by policy that requires mandatory in-service about confidentiality and advises employees that breach of confidentiality is grounds for immediate dismissal. Employees are also required to sign a statement indicating they understand all policies regarding confidentiality.

Policy and procedure are usually presented in one manual, but it is important to be clear on the differences in intent, authority and development to avoid conflict and misunderstanding within the organization. It is the board's responsibility to bring the overall mission of the program to life through establishment of general policy. If they choose,

*See the Sample Form Packet in the Sacred Circle **Advocacy and Shelter Information Packet** for in-house shelter forms and policies.

they can involve administrative and other staff in this process. It is the administrative staff's responsibility to convert policy into concrete actions. Each of these phases should be consistent with the mission statement.

* Shelters are not treatment or penal institutions, so 24 hour staffing, schedules and detailed rules are not always necessary. Rules or guidelines for residents need to be in keeping with the philosophy statement. The basic function of rules is to keep everyone as safe as possible and get everyone's needs met. Critique rules from the perspective of power and control issues. Are they respectful and empowering? Whose needs do they meet?*

5. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS, RESOURCES & BARRIERS

The purpose of identifying needs, resources and barriers is to direct program and budget development. Ideally, development should reflect and fulfill the mission of the organization.

Think beyond the shelter door. Remember, women look everywhere for help and every community member is a potential advocate. Many women choose not to go to shelter or have contact with law enforcement, although they may need assistance from other agencies or programs. Those programs should have an understanding of the dynamics of battering and prioritize safety and respectful services.

Identify needs, resources and barriers by focusing on specific parts of the program: women who are battered, staff/training, programs, other organizations and security. Feel free to create other or more specific categories. The following are not a comprehensive road map, but provide for consideration of major issues and concerns.

Planning should always occur along two tracks: 1) **individual advocacy**, that includes crisis response; work with individual women; provision of basic resources; and 2) **social change**, which is advocacy and transformation within political/ institutional/cultural arenas that support the safety and sovereignty of women and their children in humane and respectful ways.

It is extremely important to budget resources that will allow the grassroots experts (women who have been battered) to fully participate. Provide what is needed to accomplish this – safety, childcare, gas money. Historically, Native people have experienced the oppression of the federal government, missionaries and social workers doing “to” or “for” us. Avoid replicating this form of oppression in the development of your program.

*See “**Guide to Harmony**” in the **Women in Shelter** information folder.

A. Women who are battered and their children.

Safety is always first. The safety of one woman is the safety of all women. If a woman's behavior is endangering the safety of other women, take appropriate action that continues to meet her safety needs and the safety considerations of other women.

Allow for visiting and free time for women in the shelter or program. Find volunteer childcare or schedule children's programming at these times. Women need the opportunity to share and build relationships and to have time for themselves (so do children).

Women who are battered are each unique individuals who bring with them a vast variety of skills, qualities and expertise. As competent adult women, they are great resources to each other, to advocates and to the program itself – if given the resources and freedom to do so. *

Section III The Branches examines shelter and advocacy more specifically. We must be clear that shelter and advocacy will not support women's sovereignty if we don't understand and truly believe battered women aren't "sick." Bruises are a natural consequence of being hit. Whether those bruises are physical, mental, emotional or spiritual, they heal naturally once the violence stops and the resources, accurate information and a safe, supportive environment is provided.

B. Staff/Training

Develop staff orientation and training programs. Aside from the basics of advocacy, all staff need to be familiar with both legal and law enforcement aspects of the work. This includes domestic violence and related laws, law enforcement procedures, protection orders, full faith and credit, child custody-related issues and stalking and harassment laws. All advocates need to be trained to provide basic legal advocacy. Identify lawyers familiar with the dynamics of battering who can be called upon for consultation and/or offer pro bono services for women.

Additionally, women often use health and social service programs. Familiarity with the staff and policies and procedures of these programs is essential. Advocates routinely work with these programs, providing in-services and supporting creation of services that are "women-friendly" and protective of women's safety and confidentiality.

Establish a 24 hour/7 day a week crisis line with trained responders. Volunteers can be used in this capacity in under-funded programs. Answering machines can be used on a limited basis if they offer other emergency responder numbers and contacts. Cell phones and beepers can be made available to on-call advocates and neighborhood watch

volunteers. Cell phones and beepers can be used by women who don't have phones at home.

Create a referral list of possible resource people for women. Make sure you “visit” with potential referrals. Anti-woman or well-meaning but uninformed professionals can be re-victimizing and dangerous to women escaping violence. Your unwillingness to refer women to uninformed programs and/or people may give the shelter/program a reputation for being uncooperative—that's okay. If programs that are well-meaning but uninformed have a true commitment to the safety of women, they may be potential future referrals. This depends largely on your program's capacity to invest the time, energy and resources to create working relationships with them and their participation in domestic violence specific training.

The reality is that all staff bring unique skills and knowledge, as well as some level of internalized oppression reflected in many possible ways, i.e., lack of initiative, power struggles, addictions. Given this perspective, “personal development” becomes a challenge requiring creativity, compassion and the ability think and work beyond standard personnel practices.

C. Community Involvement

Brainstorm and identify resources. Begin with women in the community who have been battered and are now safe enough to participate. Be inclusive! A major part of social change is re-establishing relationships and valuing the gifts and contributions of others. For instance, not everyone wants to answer the crisis line, but maybe she can help with a lunch sale that is part of outreach and community education. Include grassroots people, possible fund-raisers, tribal, local, state, national resource folks and organizations.

List existing resource programs and coalitions that can serve as mentors or have available space/buildings. Don't think you have to start with a new building. As Indian people we're used to making do. Livingrooms and basements are common places to begin. That's okay for a start, but we need to have a larger vision, too.

Identify barriers. This includes community attitudes, inappropriate agency and institution policy and/or procedure, lack of training and/or expertise. Geographic distances and poverty are two major barriers to women getting safe and accessing resources.

Strategize methods of overcoming the barriers previously outlined. Include resources you will need to acquire. Be creative, without “re-inventing the wheel.” Much of Indian Country is new to this work,

however, there are a number of well-established Native programs that can share their expertise, experience and lend support as well. Contact Sacred Circle for information about these organizations.

Get the word out about your shelter and the dynamics of battering! Program publicity is a great opportunity to do community education and let people know who you are.

Radio stations and newspapers usually do free public service announcements. Newspapers generally welcome articles submitted for publication. If these resources are unavailable, program newsletters, poster campaigns or competitions (where everyone gets something) are fun and effective.

Mini-workshops (especially if you offer food and transportation) are excellent ways of letting women know who you are as individuals and as a program. Asking for help is always difficult; asking for help from strangers can be dangerous and nerve-racking. Keep advocates involved - women need to know who the advocates are in order to assess safety and trust levels.

Schools are often sites of community education work. Additionally, advocates often arrange annual schedules of presentations on non-violent conflict resolution, dating violence, etc.

Community organizing efforts begin with education. Identify and specifically invite community leaders to these events. Agendas need to describe concrete, appropriate ways people can get involved in ending violence against women.

D. Networking

Create working relationships with existing shelters, coalitions and women's organizations. Social change cannot take place in isolation. We need each other for support, sharing information and expertise. Developing and maintaining working relationships with existing shelters, coalitions and women's organizations is integral to our work and is a major aspect of our "herstory." Nurturing relationships with people and organizations on a local, state and national level is a way of overcoming oppression that purposefully separates and isolates us as women and Native people.

We need to decide the amount of time, energy and resources we can commit to working with these programs versus expanding our "service area" so women have respectful, appropriate and accessible, shelter and advocacy.

Building the infrastructure and capacity of native people and programs is a sovereignty issue for both tribes and Native women. Battering is about having power and control over a woman's body and life taken from her. Colonization is about having power and control over tribal lands and life way taken from nations of tribal people. Sovereignty is about the human right to have power and control over ourselves as individuals and as tribal nations. It is also the right and responsibility of nations to develop and provide services that assure the safety of its citizenry.



If a tribal community must contract with non-Indian organizations, consider making in-services and workshops on issues of dynamics of battering in Indian Country, culture, oppression and sovereignty a condition of the contract. Contracts with non-Indian programs should be seen as a temporary measure. Mentoring programs and the hiring of tribal staff can be addressed within these contracts as well.

Visit with law enforcement, hospitals, social services and existing women's and/or community groups. Assess their attitudes, policies and response to women who are battered. This information is invaluable for development of memorandums of agreement, policy, procedure and protocol, and training needs. (Note: more women go to shelter than report to police, and more women try to deal with the battering on their own or go to hospitals than go to shelter).

Develop working relationships with people within social services, law enforcement, hospitals, etc. In-services and workshops followed by periodic visits encourage consistent, appropriate responses to women who are battered. Create a network of trusted responders within your community.

E. Security

While security includes policy and procedure in addition to equipment, internal program policy and procedure need to outline what steps are to be taken and by whom if security is endangered. This may cover a multitude of situations. If a woman is drinking, how do you protect her and the other women in shelter? What do you do if a batterer knocks at the shelter door? What have you provided for phone security? How will you protect an advocate who is being stalked or harassed? Other shelters or law enforcement can help you develop the most effective system for the shelter and budget. For example, a neighborhood watch program may work in your area.

Part of the "security system" includes memorandums of agreement/ understanding, or policy and procedure with law enforcement and court systems that provide protection of women, their children and advocates while at court, the police station etc. Sometimes it may be necessary to include the advocate in a woman's protection order within the "no contact" section.*

*Sacred Circle has a model for Advocate Safety Policy available by request.

6. AFFIRM TRADITIONAL LIFE WAYS:

Ending violence against Native women goes hand-in-hand with reclaiming Tribal culture. One cannot happen without the other. How elements of women's and men's societies, ceremony and other tribal ways are brought into individual programs depend upon the native people within the program.

We claim our sovereignty as Native women by exercising our right to freely define and express our own identity, beliefs and spirituality. No one can provide a "to-do list" for this aspect of our work; it is very personal and has to do with where we are spiritually and culturally as individuals.

The greatest strength and unifying power available to us as a native people is our understanding and belief in our relationships - in living as relatives with respect. To reclaim our "natural" roles as women, we need to validate and nurture the power of womanhood. Reclaiming our relationships means seeking out the gifts in others and ourselves, and finding ways to honor and nurture those gifts. It means holding ourselves accountable for responding to people in need, whether that need is safety or being stopped from hurting ourselves or others.

Often the most difficult challenge we face as individuals and advocates is finding the balance between our responsibilities to ourself, our family, our community/tribe, and the universe. We can embrace this challenge to find our balance as one of life's ultimate lessons and a gift of the work we do.

The work to stop violence against native women is painful. It brings up memories of our own victimization as women and can, in fact, be dangerous. Burnout is commonplace but not inevitable. To avoid burnout advocates can look to traditional beliefs and perspectives, ceremonies and, of course, our relatives (blood related, or not) for support and guidance. We encourage you to use the strengths of your culture. Your people need you!

Programs reflect the life way of their leadership. When leadership and individual advocates reclaim their balance as relatives, programs become more than institutions providing services to others; they become women's societies and sacred and respectful places for women and their children.

SUMMARY:

This list is by no means complete. It is intended to serve as a starting point. Trust what you know, be open to change and rely on the expertise of women who "have been there." Advocating for the sovereignty and safety of women provides a dynamic gift of knowledge and understanding, especially if conflicts and challenges are seen as opportunities to grow, learn and make relatives. Your life will be forever changed by the work to end violence against native women.





Program Development

SECTION III

BRANCHES

RESPONSE: Advocacy & Social Change for Native Women's Safety & Sovereignty

OBJECTIVES:

Affirm Women as Sacred Offender Accountability
Systems & Community Accountability

- Meet Basic Needs
- Men's Reeducation Programs
- Children's Programs
- Reclaim Tribal Culture
- Removal of Barriers to Resources
- Legislative Work
- Confidentiality
- Coordinated Community Response
- Live With Respect and Compassion
- Leadership by Battered Women
- Outreach
- Women's Groups
- Model Non-Violence
- Shelter
- Education



SECTION III

THE BRANCHES - Response

ADVOCACY: SOCIAL CHANGE FOR WOMEN'S SOVEREIGNTY AND SAFETY:



Women's sovereignty and safety is the vision that guides our everyday work and program development. **Accountability of offenders for their violence and accountability of community members, tribal government and relatives for protecting and upholding women's sovereignty are essential to social change.** Creating the social change necessary for women to walk freely and safely through the world requires a bigger vision – a vision of societal transformation that does not support

prejudice or discrimination of any kind. Not because you're poor, or a Native person, or have a different sexual orientation or because your old, etc. As native people, we have a belief system that will allow us to overcome our history of colonization and oppression. *We can create relationships that reflect our understanding that women are sacred.

Power means we use our ability, knowledge and relationships with others—family, community, nation and universe—in a balanced and spiritual way to create, preserve and nurture life. Power is not the ability to control others; it is not violent. Peace and non-violence is born out of respectful, compassionate relationships that actively affirm the sovereignty of every individual.

Social change is distinctly different from social service. Social change for native nations requires a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of colonization, genocide and oppression. It also requires that we know who we are as Native people – our history, language, and culture. Many of us know personally how powerful it is to reclaim who we are as Native people.

What are some of the weaknesses in only focusing on a social services model and what are the strengths or benefits in seeing change in a bigger, broader context? The social service model requires little analysis outside of individuals' experiences: the focus is on individual victimization or "dysfunction," often resulting in victim blaming. The social change

* See **Violence Against Oglala Women is Not Lakota Tradition Handbook**



perspective requires making connections and relationships between individual experiences, oppression, culture and history. The social service model requires separation and detachment from our relationships as relatives, from other institutions and from anything deemed political.

Social change is political: it requires critical analysis of power and control, i.e., oppression and human rights within all levels of society. Social change requires a pro-active stance that brings about changes so systems structure and cultural beliefs are responsive to all individuals. Social service requires maintaining the status quo: it assumes oppression and the current functioning of political, medical and social systems are “natural.” Social service tends to lead individuals to adapt to the needs of the political, medical, economic and political systems.

Social change is about a transformation that will allow political, social, and economical equality for all. Social change to end violence against women requires accountability to women who are battered. Social service is an institutional reaction by people “in power.” Social service requires accountability to the institutions that fund them.

In attempting to be clear with funders and other agencies, advocates will talk about assisting women and their children in getting safe, promoting access to resources and providing for basic needs. Commonly referred to as “direct services,” this language comes from the social service model. It reflects a case management approach aimed at “fixing” individuals, during business hours, at the workers convenience, on a limited basis and usually there are eligibility requirements. “Direct services” are given to people in ways that meet the needs of the system.

There are many competent, compassionate, and well-meaning direct service providers in Indian County. Some are native, others are not. As a “direct service” provider, you need to learn as much as you can about violence against women issues if you consider yourself a responsible advocate, employee, and relative.

The mechanism for social change is advocacy. Being an advocate is powerful in the best sense of the word. As advocates, we are afforded the challenge and opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our sisters and other relatives. This role provides innumerable lessons about our relationships and ourselves. This works provides an opportunity to reclaim all the connections and relationships devastated by colonization and oppression.

Many advocates begin their work within a social service, chemical dependency, educational or other similar system. We are all educated and socialized by the larger society that presents the social service model as the appropriate approach to helping others. Often the isolation, ineffectiveness and frustrations of working from that model move us to critically question our role and relationships in both our personal and professional lives.

Advocacy is an opportunity to understand the societal and personal impact of

oppression and internalized oppression. Internalized oppression occurs when we take on the beliefs and behaviors of our oppressors. We are operating from internalized oppression when we compete instead of cooperate; detach instead of create relationships; talk about or “at” instead of “with” someone; label or judge others instead of accepting people as unique individuals, blame instead of understand.

We operate from internalized oppression when we excuse our lack of respect and compassion instead of holding ourselves accountable. Internalized oppression can create feelings of inadequacy, confusion and fear that immobilize us or burn us out. We can react by becoming oppressive to those around us in a misguided attempt to maintain control. Or we can choose a path of courage – intellectual and emotional honesty that leads us back to the natural lifeway. Guidance on this path can come from prayer and embracing relationships with sisters whose expertise about this journey comes from personal experience.

A key aspect of social change and advocacy is the responsibility of holding our relatives and ourselves accountable for internalized oppression in respectful and compassionate ways. When these “teachable moments” occur it is important to find a way of talking without shaming. Shaming is a tactic of oppression that divides and isolates us. Grassroots advocacy is about developing trust and partnerships based on our commonalities. Living in an oppressive society is an experience we all have in common. Actively recognizing and honoring our differences and our variety of expertise is key to grassroots advocacy and our ability to work through internalized oppression together.

We act out of our internalized oppression when we diagnose, analyze and/or refer “our clients,” “our victims,” our co-workers (or ourselves) to professionals who we believe have more expertise than we do about ourselves. We use labels like “low-self-esteem,” “co-dependent,” “neurotic,” “manipulative,” “dysfunctional,” and “victim.” These labels are disempowering; they mislabel survival skills as illness and are victim blaming. Labeling the victim and batterer alike serves to not hold the batterer accountable for his violence and excuses us from being responsible and responsive relatives.

We act as advocates and as relatives when we take the time to visit with our relatives, **respectfully listen and believe** what we are told, validate their expertise and take action. Advocates assist sisters and other relatives to accurately label their experiences and pro-actively work to end the violence in individual women's lives, in our communities and in our society. Advocates focus on safety of women, accountability and social change. Advocates know that women are not perfect and that no woman deserves violence.

Our relationships with individual women are the fabric of social change. Advocates work side-by-side with their sisters, trust that women know what

they need and prioritize their safety, integrity and autonomy. Advocates' relationships with women who have been battered are the "life force" of the movement to end violence against women.

The relationship between the woman who is battered and the advocate includes: validation of the voice, expertise and leadership of women who are battered; modeling respect, compassion and non-violence; personal accountability for our internalized oppression and behavior; belief in and non-judgmental support of women as whole human beings and women's right to sovereignty.

In the Victims Advocacy Manual (1995, Section Two, Advocacy), Ellen Pence and Anne Marshall describe four aspects of advocacy:

1. *Personal relationship with the battered women. The ideal relationship between a battered woman and her advocate is that of a partnership, working together to reach a conclusion that is acceptable to the woman and providing her with maximum protection. There may be cultural and class differences between the two women but there are always commonalities that can be instrumental in developing the trust that is needed in this partnership. It is the advocate's responsibility to look for these commonalities, at the same time recognizing and respecting the differences.*
2. *Decision-making. Remembering that decisions must be made by the woman, the advocate can best help by walking through this process with her, prioritizing the decisions she will be facing, listing the options that are available to her, discussing how realistic they are and the ramifications of those options she may choose. It is the advocate's responsibility to provide the women with information she needs in order to make decisions.*
3. *Clearing the path. Of all the people involved in the response to domestic violence, the advocate is the most likely person to have an overall picture of what a battered woman faces. It is the advocate's responsibility to advise and, if need be, educate the service providers and agencies of all the obstacles that are in a woman's way before she can gain some control over her life: taking care of her children, finding a home that is affordable and safe for her and her children, having reliable transportation, reconnecting with family and friends from whom she has been isolated. Many times rules, regulations, long-standing practices or attitudes of people who control resources prevent women following a course of action. The advocate's role is to use her influence, her knowledge and her pervasive powers to help women overcome those obstacles. Certainly stopping the abuse is paramount, but the other very real obstacles cannot be ignored and often prevent women from making what an onlooker may see as her only choice.*
4. *Changing the system. The best tool an advocate can have to make any changes in the system is documentation of instances when cases of domestic*

assault are mishandled, trivialized or neglected. Laws or procedures that are being circumvented can be challenged with dispassionate memos, stating dates, times, names, etc. While each case will have its own set of circumstances, an advocate can watch for consistent practices that are not in the interest of the victims of domestic assault. It is the advocate's responsibility to know the system she is working in and to be able to determine when the only recourse is to change policy or practices that will ensure victims will be protected.

Knowing the system also refers to knowing what boundaries are constricting an advocate. While good advocacy may typically mean arguing a victim's position at every level of decision making, the justice system is not an environment conducive to challenging decisions. The advocate who walks into a judge's office to tell him or her that they "blew it on the Steven's case" may compromise her effectiveness. Yet an advocate who is afraid to raise objections will also fail to be effective. Those within the system must recognize the obligation of the advocate to question all decisions on behalf of the victim's safety and integrity.

Advocacy includes all the things programs offer individual women: 24 hour crisis line, shelter, food, clothing, transportation, accompaniment to court and other services, general, legal and medical advocacy, consciousness-raising/support groups, information and referrals, assistance with rent and utilities, childcare and crisis intervention, men's re-education groups, probation departments and children's programming.

The list is expanded by what a woman needs to be safe and to get her life back. The list is limited by victim-blaming, lack of funds or support and sometimes our lack of creativity, energy, our program politics, or barriers imposed from outside agencies.

Limited access, mounds of paperwork, eligibility requirements, limits on utilization or "do-gooder's" attitudes all create barriers to women getting what they need and have a right to. These barriers can re-victimize women, can prevent women from being safe and increase their danger level. Advocates work to **remove barriers** in a number of ways.

Sometimes we provide resources like utility and rent deposits, food and gas money directly to women. Other times we create partnerships with other agencies and assist them in finding ways to prioritize the needs of women who are battered. We work with programs to create respectful policy and procedure that ensures the safety of women, minimizes delays and paperwork, and reflects trust that women know what they need.

Respectfulness is key to women's safety and sovereignty.

One shelter proudly announced that they had opened a food bank. Women could come in, fill out some paperwork documenting their battering, income, etc. Within two days they would be notified if they meet the eligibility requirements. If eligible they attended mandatory parenting classes, then they could get a couple bags of groceries.

This program did not trust women to know what they need; they believed the stereotype of battered women as "bad mothers." The imposed barriers served to further endanger women, as well as their children. Well-intentioned or not, their methods replicated some of the tactics batterers use to maintain control over women.

Another shelter program simply lined the hall to their group room with bags of groceries that women could take as they saw fit. No paperwork, no requirements, no explanations needed. It is difficult and humiliating (and sometimes dangerous) to admit you are unable to get safe and feed yourself and your children. This program has created respectful ways of working with battered women that honor their relationship as relatives.



As a result of decades of advocacy and social change work, shelters for women who are battered are now seen as essential in many communities. The nature of shelter work is crisis-oriented; we are challenged to move outside of the shelter doors. We are equally challenged to not re-create the oppression of other systems we work so hard to change. Working with individual women can become all consuming. Keep in mind that the “means is the end.”

How we work within the shelter is a reflection of our social change work.

Shelter is more than providing safety and getting basic needs met on a temporary basis. This may be the first time in a Native woman’s life that she is listened to and asked what she needs, what she wants. Part of our social change work is to ensure that the voices of women who are battered are heard and play a major role in decision-making. How can we ensure that this is true behind shelter doors? We work to get systems to let go of their privilege, let go of their power and control over women. Is this true behind shelter doors? We need to ask these questions about our advocacy and outreach work, too.

Outreach work is another avenue for providing advocacy to women who are battered and their children. Some women may not come to shelter at all but would like an advocate to help her navigate a criminal justice system that might have some safety options available to her. Or, a woman may be residing at the shelter and request that an outreach advocate “check on her,” or may call with a very specific need and request. Sometimes, family members and friends come to advocates hoping we can get the woman who is battered to “do something.”

Sometimes we work with family and friends to arrange a safe meeting place with a woman, if that's what the woman wants. We are not doing advocacy if we impose ourselves into a woman's life. On the other hand, sometimes we don't take needed action, because we don't want to exercise power and control over women. We need to strike a balance between imposing ourselves on women and overcoming barriers that prevent women from being able to reach us.

Legal advocacy means providing support, accurate information about the operation of the court system, transportation, accompaniment through the court system and assistance in completing necessary documents. Legally, unless advocates are attorneys they cannot provide legal advice. However, advocates can offer basic information, refer to attorneys, and assist women in filling out and filing protection orders and other routine paperwork. Advocates can act (with the woman's permission) as the contact person for law enforcement, attorneys and others involved in her legal situation.

Advocates commonly help women figure out available resources to deal with divorces, child custody and visitation and even things like taxes and bankruptcy. Legal advocacy includes tracking paperwork through the system, making sure papers get served, visiting with law enforcement and attorneys to ensure a woman's

case is not lost in the system and is handled appropriately.

It is not the job of advocates to get women to cooperate with law enforcement or the criminal justice system. Both law enforcement and the criminal justice system have specific responsibilities that do not always prioritize the safety and sovereignty of women. The woman who is battered knows her situation best.

Legal advocacy requires knowledge about federal laws (Violence Against Women Act and related legislation), tribal and state domestic violence codes, law enforcement departmental policy, procedure and protocol regarding domestic violence and mandatory or pro-arrest (if this code exists). Legal advocates become experts on writing protection orders, getting them served and doing safety plans. Mutual arrests and protection orders, full faith and credit and other jurisdictional issues are areas that legal advocates become very familiar with.

Legal advocates also work with court systems and law enforcement to develop policy, procedure and protocol related to domestic violence. Provision of training about the dynamics of battering, the history of violence against Native women and the law enforcement response can help create a common foundation for this work. Training within any particular system is more effective if you can bring in a co-facilitator that has worked in that particular field, but also has experience in the movement to end violence against women .

There are more and more workshops, manuals and other materials available about doing legal advocacy. Many advocates still rely on asking questions, experience and consulting with other advocates, domestic violence coalitions, knowledgeable lawyers or resources centers dedicated to this work. Smaller programs will most likely not have specialized advocates. That's ok. In the end, all advocates do (or learn to do) whatever it is that the woman is wanting.

Women's groups are a standard part of our movement. These groups began early in the shelter movement as "consciousness-raising or "CR" groups." The name described the awareness that an individual woman's experiences of battering is connected to that of other women, and is a result of a societal belief system that created, supports and maintains violence against women. These groups connect women with similar experiences as sisters for support, validation and information sharing. Importantly, they create agendas that use their combined expertise to take action to end violence against women. The key concept of these early groups was that the "personal is political."

Moving from individual experiences to social change work was the goal of these groups. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of shelters, advocacy programs, state and nation-wide action organizations. The Violence Against Women Act is an outcome of decades of work by grassroots women advocates. The sacrifices and often dangerous work of those women changed America's consciousness about battering from a socially acceptable "family matter" to battering as a violent crime against women.





Today women's groups are commonly referred to as “women's support groups.” They tend to be more “self-help” and mental health oriented, than political or social change oriented. Rather than hearing “sisterhood is powerful” or “the personal is political,” we now hear talk about co-dependency and recovery. Connections to historical and societal oppression and transformation of our communities and society are not on their agendas. The focus is on personal deficiencies and how to heal them.

There are a number of theories about why this change occurred. It may be that younger women now doing the work are unaware of the herstory of the movement and take some of the changes in the status of women for granted. It may be that “new money” has brought women with privilege into the work, instead of grassroots women who have been battered. It may be that the monies now available for shelter has made us complacent. Not so long ago, all shelters struggled on a daily basis to keep their doors open. Today, some still struggle but many others have reached financial stability.

Advocates must be aware of the herstory, differences and consequences for the various approaches to women's groups. The only eligibility requirement for group should be that a woman has been battered with no pre-requisites of filing charges, parenting classes, staying in shelter or leaving her batterer. Professional facilitators are not necessary if battering is understood as a violent crime, not a mental health issue, and if we believe and trust in women and their expertise.

Many women may believe they need counseling and request referral. The reality for native communities is that counselors are not easily accessed and the crisis/chaos environment of tribal communities is not conducive to healing by appointment. Regardless, we need to make sure we give women accurate information about battering, validate her survival skills and expertise and make a referral to a competent counselor or therapist that understands the dynamics of battering, prioritizes safety and doesn't discount the violence.

Shelter and advocacy programs establish **programs for children** as resources become available. All children in homes where there are batterers are victims of battering. National statistics show approximately 50% of batterers also beat their children/step children and 1/4 to 1/3 sexually abuse their children/step children. One hundred per cent of batterers emotionally abuse their children. Some studies have shown that children are more traumatized by witnessing their fathers beating their mothers than if the children themselves are beaten. Mother abuse is child abuse.

The purpose of children's programs is not to assess or improve parenting skills of battered women. Nor, is it to “reunite” families. Children's programs are aimed at helping children to understand what the violence is about and to give them information that will help them deal with their experiences. Battering is emotionally exhausting for women and their children. Sometimes women need time away from their children and children likewise, need time away from their

mothers – without either feeling guilty. Children also need safe space where they can “bounce off the walls” and not get into trouble. Structure and routine are helpful in making children feel secure. We need to establish relationships as sisters with women, and as aunts or grandmothers with their children so we can be respectfully supportive.

Safety planning for children and visitation centers are important aspects of these programs. Remember that perhaps the most powerful tactic of battering, next to the physical, is the batterer's use of the children to gain access to their mother through visitation, custody battles and emotional blackmail - “tell your mother when she stops being mad at me we can be a family again,” etc.

Too often child protection, social services and even some advocates end up unintentionally colluding with batterers by charging the woman who has been battered with failure to protect her children, child neglect or abuse for returning to the batterer. We need to be clear that it is not the responsibility of women to end the violence: she is the victim of the violence. It is the responsibility of advocates, community members, child protection, social services, law enforcement and the criminal justice system to stop the violence. To blame a woman for her batterer's violence or to blame her for our inability or unwillingness to stop the battering is re-victimizing; it lets the batterer and the rest of us off the hook. And, it puts the woman and her children in much more danger.

Community or public education is a broad term that describes efforts to raise awareness levels through out our communities about the history and dynamics of violence against native women. Community education can create ownership of community members' roles in ending violence against women and their children. Community education takes place through workshops, newspapers, public service announcements, radio talk shows, school presentations, written literature, posters, candle light vigils and other community events. A number of national resource centers and organizations have materials and guides that individual programs can use to tailor events and presentations to their communities.

Every conversation with individual community members is powerful. Lunch sales, auctions and other fund-raisers or events are “non-threatening” opportunities to create relationship and have conversations within the communities.

The most effective educational approaches: 1) target specific age groups 2) take into consideration literacy and education levels, 3) capitalize on other skills and abilities beyond formal education; and 4) establish a connection between ending violence against women and community members' lives.

Men's Re-education programs give men who are violent the opportunity to examine their violent behavior and the impact their violence has on himself, his partner, children, family, community, and nation. The most effective men's re-

education programs address the offender's unnatural belief system about women, provides historical and cultural information and practical tools for stopping the violence while learning respectful behavior.

Men's re-education programs are not counseling or therapy groups. Attendance is court-ordered. If participants have mental health issues, referrals to mental health professionals are appropriate; however, they do not replace criminal justice consequences. Anger management programs are inappropriate for offenders if used to replace re-education classes or jail time. Violence is not caused by anger – violence is about power and control.

Alcohol/chemical dependency is a major problem throughout Indian Country and many of the men attending men's re-education program will abuse alcohol and/or other chemicals. While alcohol and violence are highly correlated, alcohol increases the frequency, unpredictability and severity of battering. ***However, domestic violence is not caused by alcohol abuse or alcoholism.*** Offenders who are alcoholic or addicted to other drugs should be referred to treatment, ideally before beginning the men's program.

Men's re-education programs are accountable to women who are battered. They should coordinate their activities through the advocacy program to ensure the safety of women. Ex-batterers co-facilitating with an advocate is the ideal. Ex-batterers can role-model respectful partnerships. Many ex-batterers self-identify as "recovering batterers," indicating their acknowledgement of the difficulty of remaining non-violent and respectful of women and not colluding with offenders in their classes. This reflects the harsh reality of society's pressure to maintain male privilege and be disrespectful towards women. Because of this dynamic a woman facilitator or advocate should co-facilitate or monitor the classes.

Facilitation of men's re-education classes is difficult work. Success rates for any men's program are very low; up to 90% will re-offend. This is not necessarily the fault of the facilitator or the program. Men's programs are fairly new and will continue to evolve and become more effective. The low success rates reflect the pervasiveness of beliefs and attitudes of American society that created battering to begin with. Indian Country has survived a couple hundred years of colonization; it will take generations to undo the oppression and reclaim non-violent life ways.

The high re-offense rate means that ending violence against women by holding batterers accountable for their violence and helping them as relatives to reclaim a natural, respectful life way requires the direct involvement of every community member, relative, agency and system. Coordinated community response initiatives are developed with that concept in mind.

A **coordinated community response** to end violence against women encompasses a broad range of initiatives. **Advocates usually provide leadership, strategies and vision for this effort.** Other players are people within law

enforcement, the criminal justice system and men's programs who have authority to establish policy, procedure and protocol.

Of all the players involved, advocates are the only ones able to maintain biased support of women who are battered. It is the job of advocates to keep the focus on the safety and sovereignty of women and offender accountability.

Coordinated community response (CCR) may involve other programs such as child protection, social services or housing agencies. However, battering must be clearly acknowledged as a violent crime, and the coordinated community response as a criminal justice initiative. CCR is not a mental health or social services task force. Those agencies may or may not be used by women who are battered. Systems advocacy includes educating mental health and social service agencies about the dynamics of battering so they can provide respectful, appropriate services to women who are battered and their children, and prevent collusion with batterers. It is most appropriate for mental health or social service agencies to act as supportive allies of the coordinated community response.

The goal of the coordinated community response (CCR) is safety of women and offender accountability. This is accomplished by education, dialogue and creation of memoranda of understanding or agreement, policy, procedure and protocol, and law and other legislation. This initiative is strengthened by ongoing cross-training that emphasizes interaction, and includes the operation and history of each agency.

The major objective in attaining women's safety and offender accountability is accountability of law enforcement, the criminal justice system, men's programs and shelter/advocacy programs to women who are battered. Involvement and leadership of advocates and women who have been battered is key to that objective. It is inappropriate and re-victimizing to utilize CCR meetings for staffing of women/case management or discussion of women's behavior.

Discussion should focus on the systems' response and ability to hold offenders accountable and provide safety. The overall purpose of the coordinated community response is the transformation of systems and institutions that actively supports and respects the sovereignty of women.



CONCLUSION

The work to end violence against Native women and reclaim the sacred status of Native women is an awesome, dynamic commitment. If this booklet has achieved its goal, you have a stronger sense of the relationships between the Tree of shelter, advocacy and social change and all other personal, herstorical and tribal trees that make up the "forest" of our life ways. Hopefully, this outline has provided some direction and guidance in your work.

However, this booklet is possible because of the struggles, experience, courage and wisdom of hundreds - if not thousands of women. It is impossible to share their knowledge and understanding in one life time, much less one booklet. Recognizing that reality means another potential outcome of this booklet is a myriad of questions. Hopefully, the weight of those questions is supported by the inspiration to continue the challenge that literally saves women's lives, and transforms us and all of our relationships.

If we choose, this work can teach us how to reach within ourselves, reach out to others, reach back to our ancestors, and reconnect and reclaim the natural, peaceful life way of our ancestors.

This concept is thoughtfully described by Terri L. Henry, member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee:

*"The development of this work is founded in the creation of a social movement for change. Implementing this initiative in Indian Country is different for the rest of the country because we, as Indian people, have access to our traditions and customs. Our task is to unravel all the imported attitudes from the fabric of our tribal societies and emerge as the dream we were to our ancestors seven generations ago."**

* Tribal Response to Combat Violence Against Native Women, presented at the Federal Bar Association Conference, Indian Law Section, 1998© Terri L. Henry

APPENDIX:

A. Collusion

**B. How We Provide Safety and Accountability
When...**

**C. For A Woman Who Has Been Battered
Safety & Accountability Means...**

D. The Role of Advocates

E. Advocates do..., Advocates do not...

F. Shelter is..., Shelter isn't...

**G. Common Memorandum of Understanding
Components**

**H. Advocacy & Shelter Information Packet Table
of Contents**



APPENDIX A

COLLUSION

Collusion is any act that intentionally or unintentionally supports bad, deceitful or illegal behavior. In terms of battering it is any act that discounts, condones or ignores any of the tactics that batterers use to maintain power and control over their partner. The results of colluding are increased danger to the woman/victim, her children, family and friends. Collusion means the woman must now protect herself, her children and relatives from the batterer, as well as those that collude with him. In effect, those that collude revictimize her.

Collusion makes the batterer more powerful by reinforcing his use of abusive and violent tactics. The batterer is allowed to enlist other people and systems to assist him in controlling his partner. The result is the creation of more barriers and elimination of support, resources and safe places battered women need to access to end the violence.

Colluding also prevents the man/batterer from being held accountable for his violence. If not held accountable, the batterer continues to do violence not only to his partner and other relatives, but to his own spiritual being. Everyone continues to suffer.

Examples of Methods of Collusion:

- 1) Not arresting when there is probable cause or charging lesser crimes, like disorderly conduct. Not determining who is the predominant aggressor and making a dual arrest.
- 2) Buying into his minimizing, lying and blaming; "I was drunk." "I just shoved her." "I was abused as a child." "She hit me first." "She's got PMS/is sick/ a bad mother, so I..."
- 3) Acting as if violence against the mother is not child abuse.
- 4) Acting as if his violent behavior and use of tactics is a "private family matter." Not confronting him at work, socially, etc. Not having policies, procedures and protocols that make him accountable.
- 5) Saying things like: "Well, you should see how she keeps house/ looks at other men/talks to him," "She gets drunk all the time." "She verbally abuses him, too."
- 6) Laughing at his jokes and stories about her that are demeaning, embarrassing or humiliating to her. Not telling him this behavior is disrespectful and unacceptable.
- 7) Not acting when you know she is being abused and beaten. Pretending you didn't hear, see or know what's going on.
- 8) Not confronting him about his internalized oppression when he says sexist or other oppressive things.
- 9) Bailing him out, talking to the judge/officers/prosecutor/child protection workers in defense of his violence.
- 10) Ignoring his continued abuse of his partner.
- 11) Not confronting him when he is name-calling or in other ways abusing her in front of you.
- 12) Not providing her resources; making her justify her survival skills and requests for help.
- 13) Telling his partner she needs to change or has a problem, too or in some way provokes/starts/deserves the violence. "Yes, his behavior is bad, but you..."
- 14) Not having resources, policies, procedures and protocols in place that provide her safety (including safety in the workplace).

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APPENDIX B

How to Provide Women Safety & Batterer Accountability When the Batterer Uses the Tactic of ...

... Physical / Sexual Assault:

- Provide safe space and confidential medical care
- Have the batterer arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to the full extent of the law
- Provide easy access to protection and restraining orders, ensuring enforcement
- Assess for possible threats from his family or friends
- Acknowledge the pain and sense of betrayal that comes from victimization
- Assist and talk with women from a place of compassion and validate her strengths

... Male Privilege:

- Act in a way that validates the sacredness of women
- Express the right of women to move through the world with respect and compassion
- Avoid collusion - confront the batterer's belief about his right to control his partner
- Respectfully confront him about his behavior
- Actively support women's expertise about themselves and their expressed needs

... Isolation:

- Provide respectful support and assistance to women
- Provide outreach and easy access to services, including transportation, childcare, etc.
- Remove any barriers to her regaining power and control over her life
- Deal directly and immediately with on-going threats of violence
- Create and enforce sanctions for interfering with her moving freely and without fear

... Intimidation:

- Allow advocates to accompany her
- Shield her from this tactic, being aware that it includes looks or gestures from him, his relatives or friends
- Avoid use of position as an authority figure to reinforce intimidation tactics
- Communicate clearly that intimidation is unacceptable by naming the behavior and enforcing consequences

... Emotional Abuse:

- Treat and name women as relatives, not as "cases" or other objectifying labels
- Do not make her justify her actions or requests for assistance or resources
- Validate her thoughts, feelings, actions and decisions
- Provide accurate information that lets her know the violence is never her fault, she did not cause and cannot alone stop his violence
- See and speak to the best in her
- Support her healing in her own way
- Speak with her as a friend, honestly and respectfully

... Minimizing, Lying and Blaming:

- Avoid collusion with the batterer by buying into his stories or manipulation of systems to maintain control of his partner
- Believe in her and what she says
- Understand the dynamics of battering to avoid minimizing or blaming her for his behavior
- Focus on the truth and confront him about his dishonesty
- Find ways to hold him accountable and change his behavior.

... Using the Children:

- Act in ways that reflects the understanding that mother abuse is child abuse
- Understand that if we protect women, they can protect their children
- Do not allow the batterer to use children as weapons or means of access for violence against their mother through custody or visitation
- Provide the safety and resources for the mother and children to stay together
- Know that removing children from their mother for "failure to protect" revictimizes children and mothers
- Create laws that asserts that battering is child abuse

... Economic Abuse:

- Provide free, easily accessible resources and services
- Acknowledge that poverty, especially lack of housing, causes women and their children to return to the batterer or be homeless
- Create appropriate resources without barriers

... Coercion and Threats:

- Create safety and comfort for women to express themselves and do things freely
- Know that his past use of violence may continue to affect her
- Affirm her thoughts, feelings and opinions
- Understand that using position and authority to make her do what you want her to do is disrespectful and abusive
- Create and enforce laws that validate her rights and hold the batterer accountable for his violence

... Cultural Abuse:

- Provide support and accurate information
- Understand our role as relatives to all things in Creation
- Be responsible for our role as relatives by holding ourselves accountable to women who has been victimized, children and other relatives
- Respect her Path as being equally important as our own
- Honor her privacy without it being an excuse for inaction

... Ritual Abuse:

- Validate her fears and concerns
- Provide accurate information
- Provide whatever she needs to practice her spiritual ways
- Practice our spirituality so our relationship with our sisters reflects humility and self-understanding

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APPENDIX C

FOR A WOMAN WHO HAS BEEN BATTERED

SAFETY MEANS...

- ...BEING PROTECTED FROM HIS VIOLENCE EVERYWHERE SHE GOES
- ...HAVING HER CHILDREN WITH HER AND BEING ABLE TO KEEP THEM SAFE
- ...BEING HEARD AND BELIEVED
- ...BEING SUPPORTED IN HER DECISIONS
- ...HAVING A HOME AND THE THINGS SHE NEEDS TO SUPPORT HERSELF AND HER CHILDREN
- ...NOT HAVING TO EXPLAIN WHAT SHE DID TO SURVIVE
- ...HAVING THE TIME, SPACE AND SUPPORT TO REGAIN POWER AND CONTROL OVER HER LIFE
- ...NOT HAVING TO JUSTIFY WHAT SHE WANTS AND NEEDS
- ...ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT BATTERING, OPPRESSION, HER CULTURE AND RESOURCES
- ...KNOWING IT'S NOT HER FAULT
- ...NOT HAVING TO BE PERFECT TO BE PROTECTED OR RESPECTED
- ...BEING ABLE TO WALK HER PATH WITHOUT BARRIERS OR FEAR
- ...BEING TREATED AS A WOMAN, NOT SICK, CRAZY, A CASE OR PART OF THE "PROBLEM"
- ...BEING TREATED AS A RELATIVE

ACCOUNTABILITY MEANS...

- ...LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM ENFORCE THE LAW, REGARDLESS OF THE RELATIONSHIP
- ...THE BATTERER CAN'T MANIPULATE THE SYSTEM TO CONTROL HER OR BLACKMAIL HER INTO RETURNING
- ...STOPPING HIM FROM BEING VIOLENT TO HER IN ANY WAY
- ...STOPPING HIM FROM USING CHILD VISITATION OR CUSTODY TO FRIGHTEN, HARASS OR ASSAULT HER
- ...STOPPING HIM FROM INTIMIDATING HER, INCLUDING IN COURT
- ... STOPPING HIM FROM USING HIS FRIENDS/RELATIVES TO GET TO FRIGHTEN, HARASS OR ASSAULT HER
- ...HE IS CONFRONTED ABOUT HIS VIOLENCE AND HELD TO THE CONSEQUENCES
- ...HE IS HELD TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTIONS, EVEN IF SHE ISN'T LIKED OR APPROVED OF
- ...PEOPLE MODEL BEHAVIOR FOR HIM BY SHOWING HER RESPECT, COMPASSION, HUMILITY AND PROVIDING HER SUPPORT AND RESOURCES
- ...TREATING HIM AS A RELATIVE WHO CAN MAKE CHANGES, BUT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS

APPENDIX D

THE ROLE OF ADVOCATES

- TO ADVOCATE FOR THE WOMAN WHO IS BATTERED IN A MANNER THAT RESPECTS AND VALIDATES HER INDIVIDUALITY, EXPERIENCES, DECISIONS AND STRENGTHS.
- TO MODEL COURAGE AND RESISTANCE IN THE FACE OF OPPRESSION, INTIMIDATION AND FEAR.
- TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND ENSURE THAT WOMEN'S SAFETY IS A PRIORITY IN THE COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE INITIATIVE THAT PROMOTES AND ENHANCES THE SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF THE SACREDNESS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.
- TO ADVOCATE FOR THE EXPRESSED INTERESTS AND SAFETY OF THE WOMAN, AND HER CHILDREN, INCLUDING PROVISION OF SAFE SPACE AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR THE WOMAN TO REGAIN CONTROL OF HER LIFE.
- TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE OPERATIONAL MEANING OF SAFETY AND INTEGRITY OF WOMEN AND RENEWAL OF TRADITIONAL LIFE WAYS AS GUIDING PRINCIPLES AT ALL LEVELS OF THE JUSTICE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, SOCIAL AND MEDICAL SYSTEMS DEALING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES.
- TO PROVIDE EXPERTISE BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN WHO ARE BATTERED AND THEIR CHILDREN ON ISSUES RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITHIN THE JUSTICE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, SOCIAL AND MEDICAL SYSTEMS.
- TO ENSURE THAT ALL WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN BATTERED/SEXUALLY ASSAULTED HAVE 24-HOUR ACCESS TO SUPPORT, ACCURATE INFORMATION, CRISIS INTERVENTION, AND OTHER ADVOCACY SERVICES.
- TO EDUCATE PERSONNEL WITHIN THE RELEVANT SYSTEMS REGARDING THE MOST EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON BEHALF OF BATTERERS, VICTIMS AND AT-RISK FAMILY MEMBERS, PRIORITIZING VICTIM SAFETY AND OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY.
- TO BE CONSCIOUS OF THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE WITHIN ALL ADVOCATE ACTIVITIES.
- TO REMAIN ACCOUNTABLE TO THE WOMAN, WHO HAS BEEN BATTERED, INCLUDING MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY.

*Produced by Sacred Circle * TAKEN IN PART FROM "ADVOCACY" BY ANNE MARSHALL AND ELLEN PENCE*

APPENDIX E

ADVOCATES DO...

- Advocate for the personal sovereignty and safety of women and their children, including provision of safe space and any resources necessary for women to regain control of her life.
- Ask, listen to, believe and respectfully act on what women state they need and want.
- Clearly and persistently send the message: violence is unacceptable, battering is a crime and never the fault of the woman who has been battered.
- Validate the individuality, experiences, decisions and strengths of women who have been battered.
- Act and treat women who are battered as relatives.
- Model courage and resistance in the face of oppression, intimidation and fear.
- Provide leadership ensuring women's safety is a priority in coordinated community responses that promote and enhance the spiritual and cultural traditions of the sacredness of women & children.
- Focus attention on the intent of safety and integrity of women & renewal of traditional life ways as guiding principles throughout systems dealing with violence against women.
- Provide expertise through the voices of women who are battered and their children on issues regarding violence against women within justice, law enforcement, social & medical systems.
- Ensure all women who have been battered/sexually assaulted have 24-hour access to support, accurate information, crisis intervention and other advocacy.
- Educate personnel within systems about the most effective responses to violence regarding batterers, victims and at-risk family members, prioritizing victim safety and offender accountability.
- Be conscious of the educational role within all advocate activities.
- Remain accountable to the woman who has been battered/sexually assaulted including maintaining confidentiality.

ADVOCATES DO NOT...

- Act without the expressed informed consent or participation of the woman who has been battered, or withhold or create barriers to safety & resources because we judged her "unworthy" in some way.
- Believe we should mind-read what she needs or wants, or assume we know better than she does.
- Minimize or blame her for the violence, collude/make excuses for the batterer's behavior, or treat the violence as a private or mental health issue.
- Treat all women the same, as incapable of making decisions, "sick" or incompetent.
- Label or act as if women who are battered are "cases," "those women," clients or patients.
- Get women to cooperate with other agencies or "follow rules" not honoring her safety or sovereignty.
- Allow task forces, meetings or initiatives to focus on the behavior of women, instead of accountability of offenders and of systems.
- Diverting attention to mental health or other issues not directly related to battering as violent crime, safety and Native women's sovereignty, or that reinforce external or internal oppression.
- Speak for or on behalf of battered women, unless they are not safe enough to do so themselves, or without their express, informed permission.
- Ignore or create barriers that prevent or limit access to safety or resources.
- Forget violence ends through social change that includes systems work focused on accountability for provision of safety and offender accountability.
- Dismiss the reality that conflicts and creation of working relationships are "teachable moments" for all involved, including advocates.
- Allow limited budgets, policy, funders or our "check signers" to compromise advocating for the safety and sovereignty of women who have been battered.

APPENDIX F

SHELTER IS A PLACE THAT PROVIDES ...

- Safety & protection from violence
- Advocacy to support the personal sovereignty of women and hold batterers accountable for their violence
- As many resources as possible to create a non-violent life.
- Respectful, non-judgmental support
- Legal, medical and social advocacy
- Accurate information
- Transportation & accompaniment to court & resources
- Confidentiality
- Time and space to rest
- Support in making decisions
- Support in caring for children
- Freedom to choose
- An understanding of battering as a crime, not a personal failure of the woman
- Advocates who believe in women's abilities to know what they need
- Religious freedom
- Freedom to return to the abuser without giving up other rights
- Focus on coordinated community responses to hold batterers and systems accountable to women who have been battered

SHELTER IS NOT A PLACE THAT ...

- Charges for services or has eligibility requirements other than being in fear of or having been battered.
- Requires participation in groups in order stay at the shelter
- Requires counseling, treatment plans or parenting classes.
- Tells women what to do.
- Tells a woman she is co-dependent/addicted to love for caring about her batterer or returning to him
- Shares information with other agencies without her written, specific approval
- Attempts to reunite families with the batterer or require she divorce him (those are her decisions)
- Uses authority to get her to do what the staff thinks is best for her and her children.
- Does mediation or marital counseling
- Tries to get women to see how they provoked the violence.
- Sees battering as caused by a mental health or communication problem
- Does case management or staffings of individual women
- Focuses coordinated community response efforts on the behavior of women.

By Sacred Circle with credit to Ellen Pence and Anne Marshall

APPENDIX G

Common Memorandum of Understanding Components

1. Statement of purpose of the memorandum of understanding that prioritizes the enhancement of victim safety and offender accountability, and focuses on development and implementation of policy, procedure and protocol.

Note: If the Memorandum of Understanding is to be an on-going collaboration, the document might include language demonstrating "the commitment of each agency will be considered still in effect by all collaborating parties, regardless of any administrative or infrastructure changes" within the signatory agencies. This would still not prevent an agency from utilizing the conflict resolution section of the document to modify, amend or rescind their participation in the collaboration.

2. A brief history of the collaborative efforts of the partnering agencies.
3. How the agencies coordinated in developing the application (grant applications), policy (coordinated community response initiative, agency response protocols, etc.), or organizational make-up and procedures (multi-disciplinary teams, coordinated community response tasks forces, etc.).
4. Identify and describe the roles and responsibilities of each collaborating agency/organization.

Note: Inclusion of the local shelter/victim service/advocacy program, if one exists, is extremely important. It is appropriate to give this program the responsibility and authority of agenda-building for meetings, etc. as their primary focus is women's/victim's safety and offender accountability.

5. Assurance that participating agencies/organizations reviewed and approved any budgetary requirements of the collaboration.
6. Describe and detail the specific contributions (monetary, in-kind, personnel, expertise, cooperative, etc.) each agency will make in implementing the collaboration.
7. Describe specific procedures collaborating agencies will use to resolve any conflicts arising from implementation of the collaboration, including any process by which participating agencies can modify, amend or rescind specific roles/responsibilities/contributions as set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding.
8. Assurance that collaborating agencies will up-hold the highest standards of confidentiality especially regarding women who have been battered and their children.

Note: It is recommended that this section disallow staffings or other forms of case management of women/victims and emphasize sharing information on "a need to know basis."

9. The document must be signed by authorized signatories of each participating agency.

*Produced of Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women
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APPENDIX H

Shelter and Advocacy Information Packet Table of Contents

SAMPLE FORMS PACKET:

- A. Outreach letter
- B. Outreach Services description
- C. Outreach contact sheet
- D. Outreach Advocate Stat. Sheet
- E. Orientation check list
- F. Telephone log
- G. House Meeting form
- H. Contact sheet
- I. Cangleska, Inc. Confidentiality Policy
- J. Release of Information form

ARTICLES:

- A. Ethics of Activist Outreach
- B. NCADV Guidelines For Starting a Shelter
- C. Making Social Change
- D. Reflections on Rural Realities
- E. Aftermath of Crime
- F. Reclaiming Our Movement
- G. Battered Womanism
- H. Assessing Whether Batterers Will Kill
- I. Safety Planning
- J. Responding to Crisis Calls (Cangleska, Inc.)
- K. Ethical Communication
- L. Concensus Model of Decision-Making

HANDOUTS:

- A. Shelter is, Shelter is Not
- B. The Role of Advocates
- C. Violence/Non-Violence Tree
- D. Thoughts of An Advocate
- E. You are on the Cutting Edge - Poem
- F. Are we part of the Problem? Or Part of the Solution?
- G. Advocacy Problem Analysis
- H. Some of the Ways we Revictimize Women in Shelter
- I. Communication Agreement
- J. What is An Advocate?
- K. Bill of Rights for Women Who have been Battered
- L. Medical Model vs. Grassroots Model

RESOURCES:

- A. NCADV Bibliography
- B. NCADV Resources
- C. Recommended Resources

PAMPHLETS/BROCHURES:

- A. Confidentiality brochure
- B. Full Faith and Credit brochure for Advocates
- C. Safety Guide
- D. Ending Violence Against Women From the Roots Up- Shelter and Program Development booklet