

# Understanding the Dynamics and Tactics of Intimate Partner Violence through the Lens of Indigenous Survivors

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*Welcome!*



# Perspective and Connections

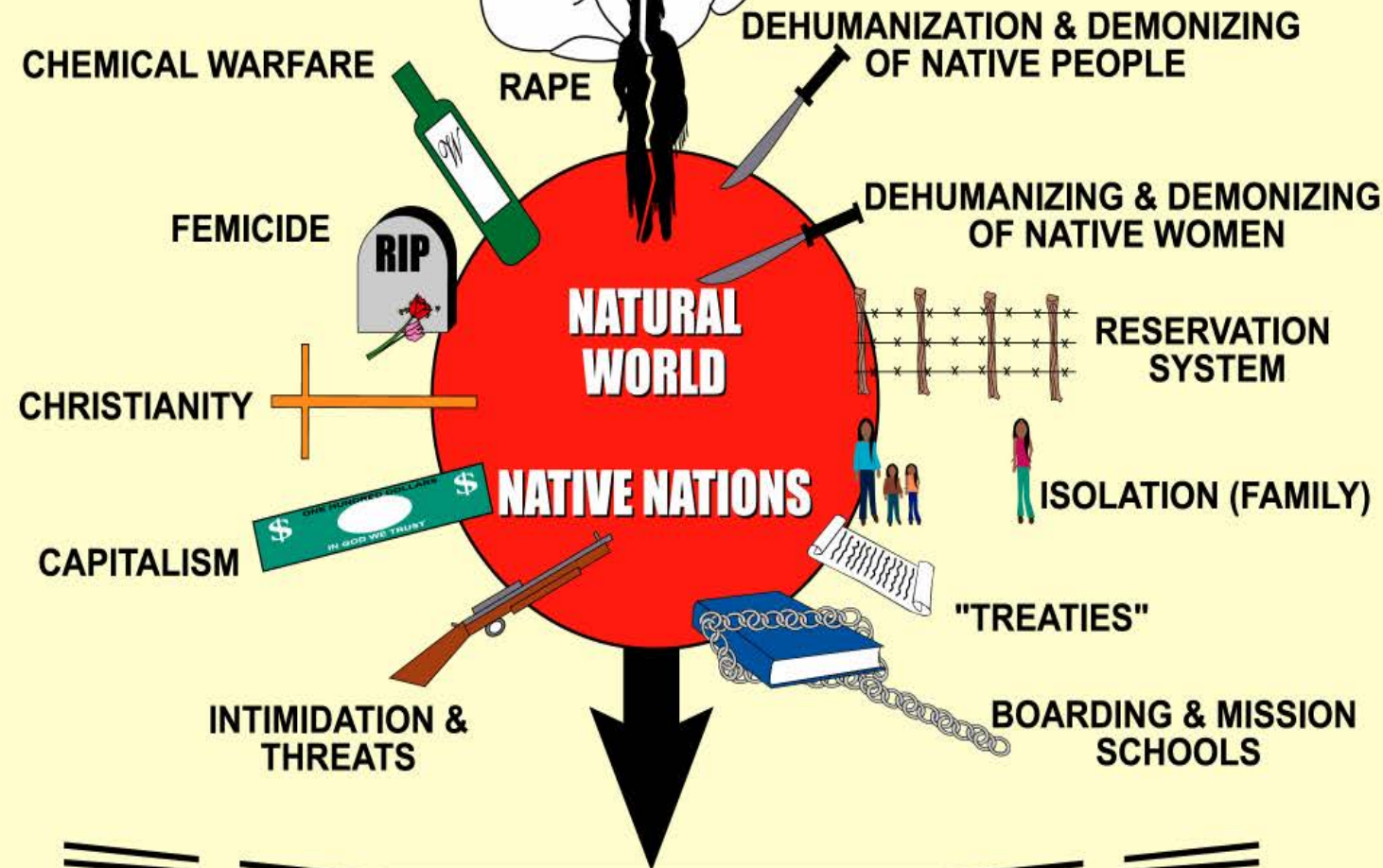
Root Causes Matter:  
Colonization and Culture





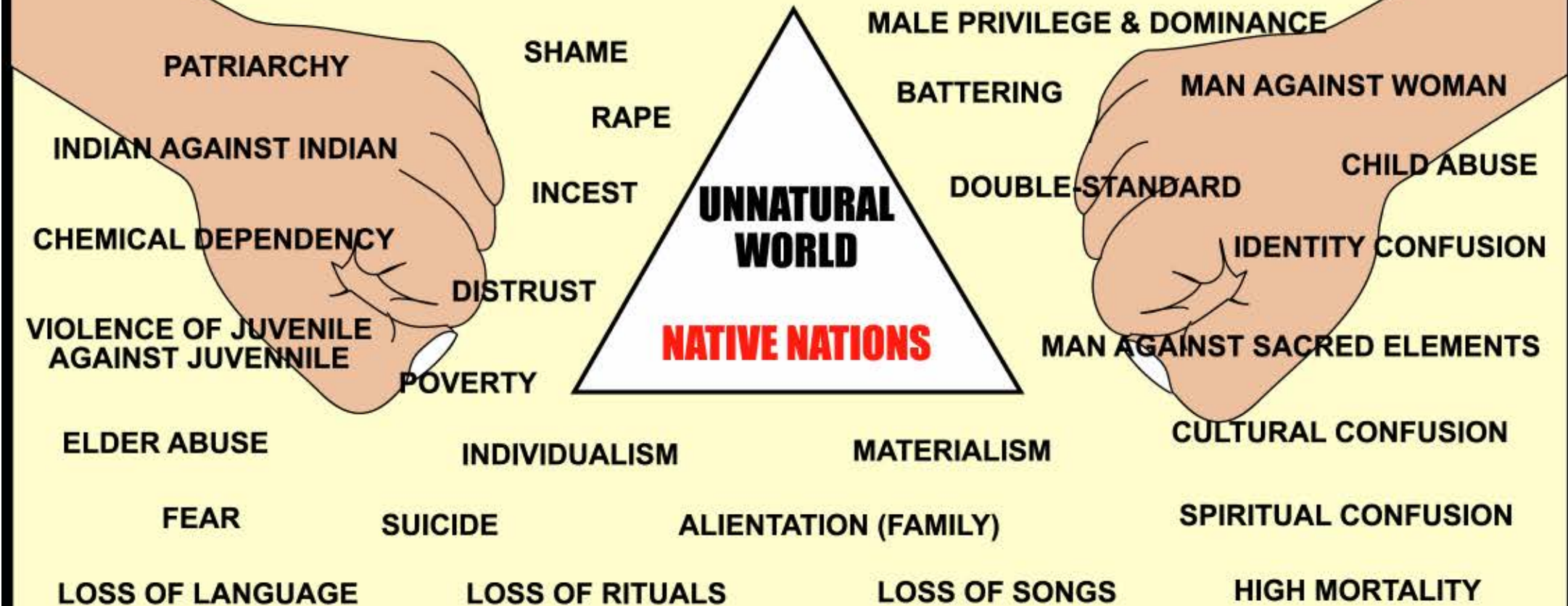
How did we get to where we are today?

# WHEN GENOCIDE FAILED, THE NEXT TACTIC COLONIZATION = OPPRESSION



# IMPACT OF COLONIZATION

(INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION)

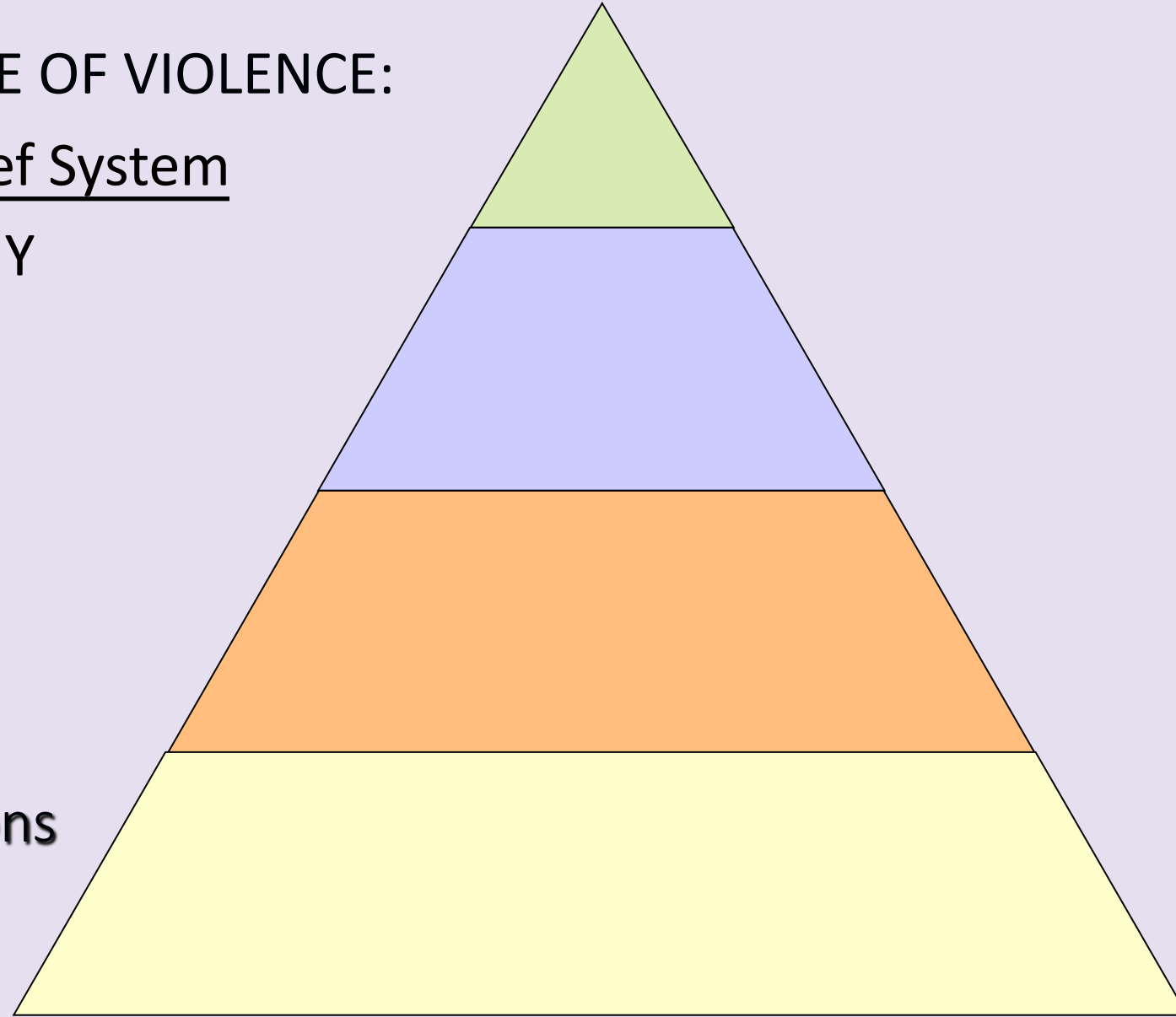


# THE ROOT CAUSE OF VIOLENCE:

Unnatural Belief System

HIERARCHY

Racism  
Sexism  
Heterosexism  
Classism  
& Other Oppressions





# Hierarchy is like the game King of the Hill:

- Requires ongoing violence
- Values or requires:
  - Defines “power” in a violent way
  - violence as positive and necessary
  - must maintain the threat of violence
  - being “above others”
  - competition
  - winning
  - separation/ individuality
  - masculinity as violent & superior
  - BREAKING RELATIONSHIPS



All forms of oppression are a result of the hierarchical belief system.

The tactics of oppression, colonization and IPV/battering are essentially the same.

The goals are the same:  
power & control over others  
and attaining personal status.



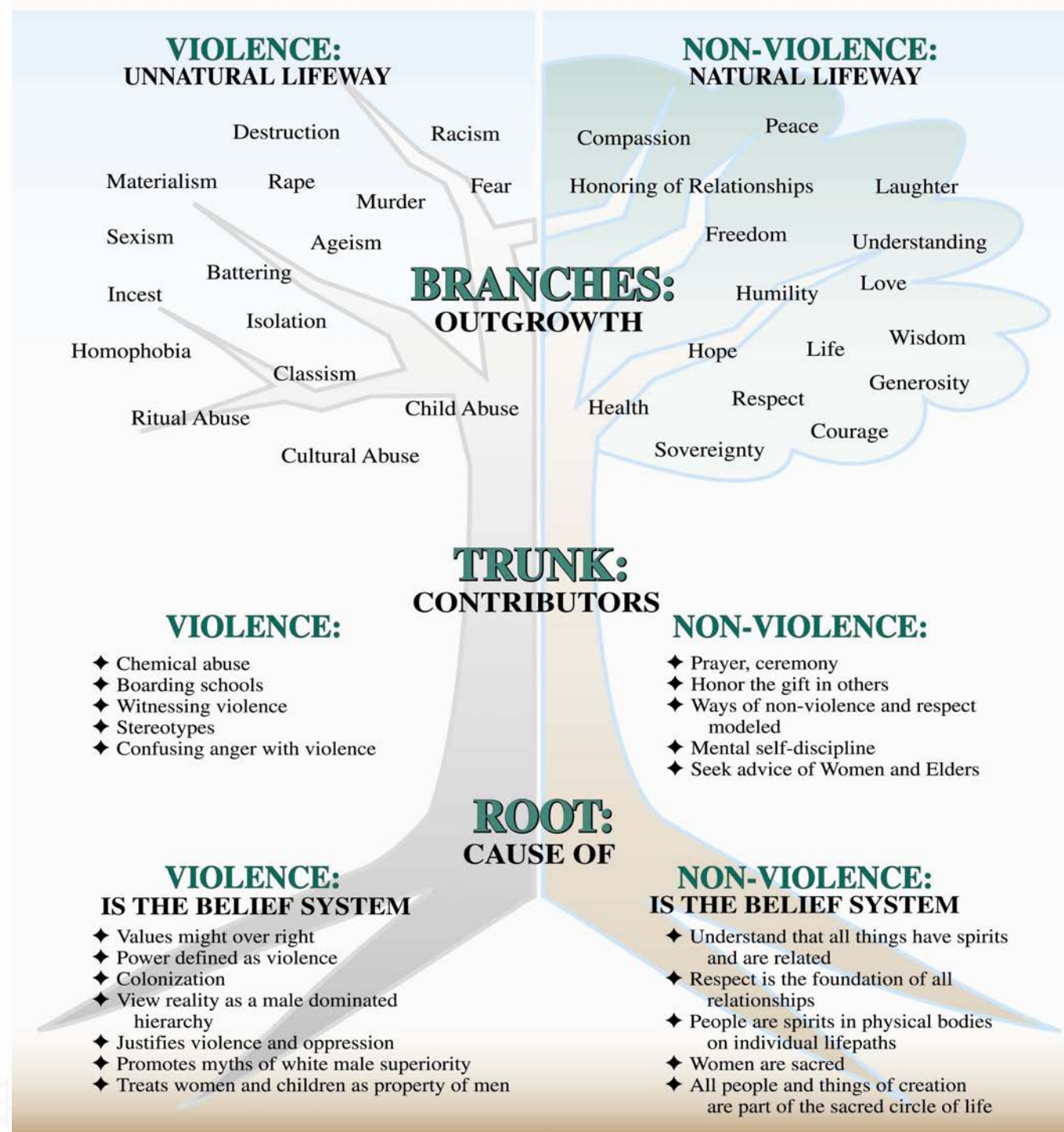
# Hope and Guidance comes from our Indigenous Cultures

Violence against women was extremely rare before colonization.

Consequences were immediate and severe.



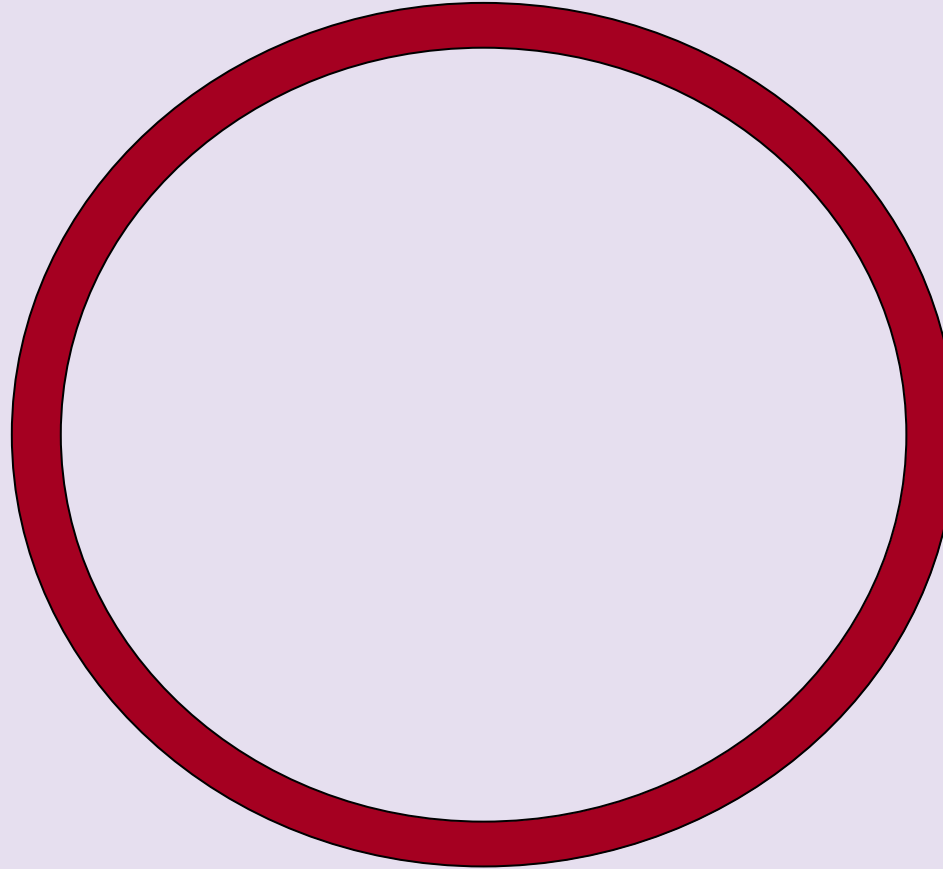
# Handout:





# ROOT CAUSE OF NON-VIOLENCE: Natural Belief System

Respect  
Equity  
Equality  
Connection  
Relationships



Healing and Honoring  
Relationships  
are  
Integral to Non-violence.



# Food for Thought about Making Change

Colonization, oppression, violence against women, domestic violence is about Power and Control. We're connected by trauma and resilience.

One key to making change is to assure that decision-making is done with those who the decisions impact. This is about more than "allowing input."

Change begins vision, hope and honoring expertise earned through experience.

Where are the voices of Native women survivors? Those of the LGBTQ2S community? Other survivors and disenfranchised groups?





## Clarify Definitions

*Build Mutual Understanding,  
if not Agreement!*

- Conflict
- Abuse
- Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Intimate Partner  
Violence/Battering



# Intimate Partner Violence/Battering:

- an institutionalized
- system or pattern of
- continuous
- purposeful tactics used to
- maintain power and control
- over an intimate partner, usually a woman.

IPV/Battering requires others to collude with the batterer.



Tactics involve many forms of abuse and violence, including:

physical, sexual, emotional/ mental, economic, abusing children, ritual and cultural abuse, threats, intimidation, coercion.

*Constant **fear for one's life** is a result of these tactics.*



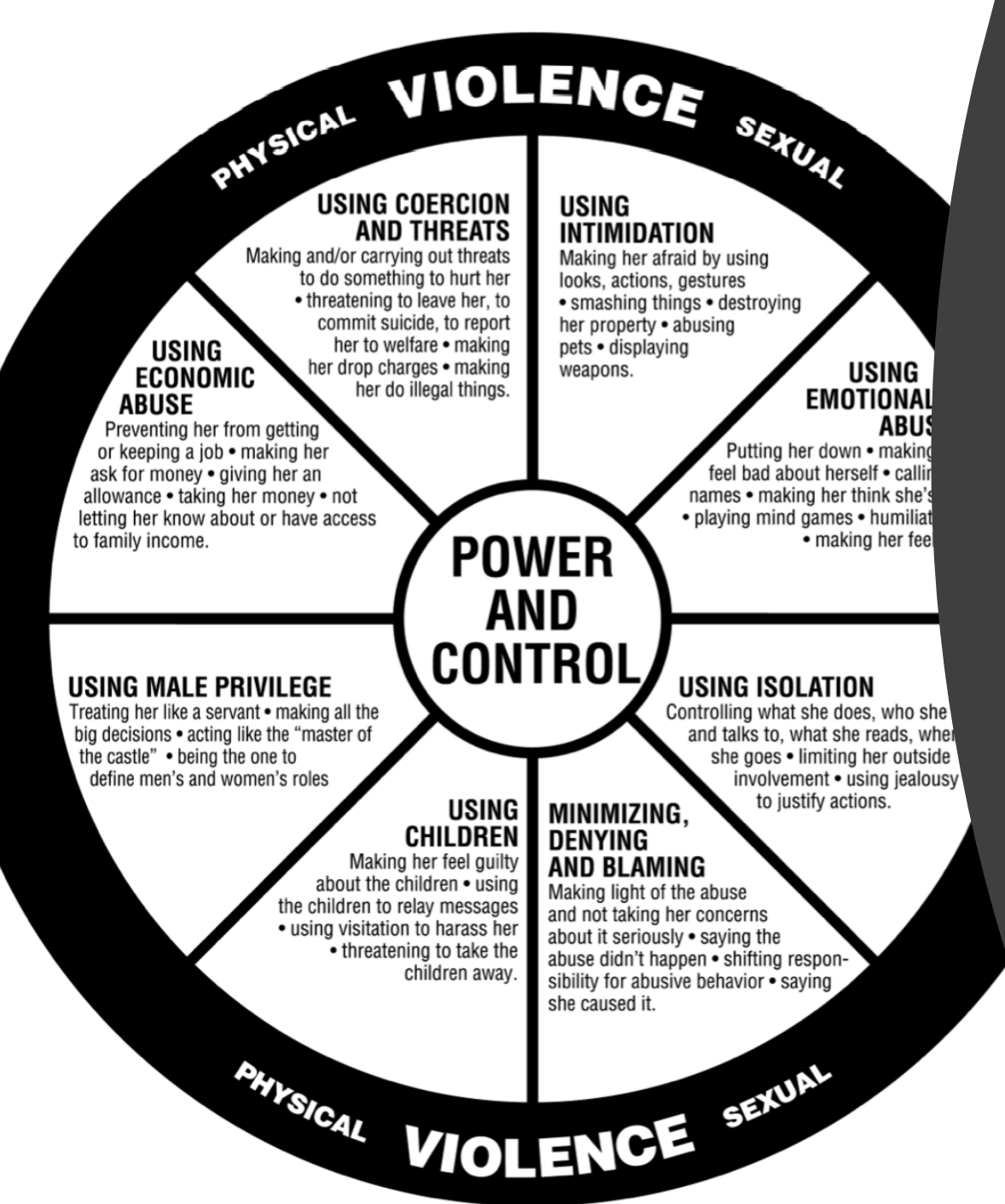


Battering is more than a mental health issue.

It is rooted in culture and is not natural.

It is gender based.

It is serial, violent crime.



The Power and Control Wheel was developed in the early 1980s in Duluth, MN, a center of innovation for the battered women's movement. Ellen Pence, Michael Paymar and Coral McDonald created the wheel after meeting extensively with battered women's groups in Duluth and credited the women's input as being the sole basis for the concept.

They also created the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, which operates local domestic violence programs and an international training program.

Around 2000, with the support of Ellen Pence and the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, the staff of Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women, “indianized” the Power and Control Wheel to reflect an indigenous perspective and the root causes of violence.

Originally called the “Battering Triangle,” it is now called the “Intimate Partner Violence Triangle.”





# Intimate Partner Violence:

Gender-based  
institutionalized  
system  
of over-lapping  
continuous  
violent tactics  
used to maintain  
power & control

PUNCH - KICK - STRANGLE - PUSH - SLAP - PULL HAIR  
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

## MALE PRIVILEGE

Treats her like  
a servant.  
Makes all the big  
decisions. Acts like  
the "king of the castle."  
Defines men's and  
women's roles.

## ISOLATION

Controls what she does,  
who she sees and talks to,  
what she reads. Limits her outside  
involvement. Uses jealousy  
to justify actions.

## INTIMIDATION

Makes her afraid by using looks, actions,  
gestures. Smashes things. Destroys her property.  
Abuses pets. Displays weapons.

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Puts her down. Makes her feel bad about herself. Calls  
her names. Makes her think she's crazy. Plays mind games.  
Humiliates her. Makes her feel guilty.

## MINIMIZE, LIE AND BLAME

Makes light of the abuse and doesn't take her concerns  
seriously. Says the abuse didn't happen. Shifts responsibility  
for abusive behavior. Says she caused it.

## USING CHILDREN

Makes her feel guilty about the children. Uses the children to relay  
messages. Uses visitation to harass her. Threatens to take away the children.

## ECONOMIC ABUSE

Prevents her from working. Makes her ask for money. Gives her an allowance.  
Takes her money. Doesn't let her know about or access family income.

## COERCION AND THREATS

Makes and/or carries out threats to do something to hurt her.  
Threatens to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare.  
Makes her drop charges. Makes her do illegal things.

## CULTURAL ABUSE

Competes over "Indianness." Misinterprets culture to prove male superiority/female submission.  
Uses relatives to beat her up. Buys into "blood quantum" competitions.

## RITUAL ABUSE

Prays against her. Defines spirituality as masculine. Stops her from practicing her ways. Uses religion as a  
threat. "God doesn't allow divorce." Says her period makes her "dirty."

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PHYSICALLY ATTACKING THE SEXUAL PARTS OF HER BODY - TREATING HER LIKE A SEX OBJECT

Except for male privilege, tactics are not listed in order of use or power.

## UNNATURAL POWER & CONTROL

# Physical & Sexual Violence Ensure Control

## **Physical:**

Slap, pinch, punch, push, pull hair, kick, strangle, held down, trip, hit with objects, drag, throw things, back hand, use weapons etc.

## **Sexual:**

All forms of rape: forced to do sexual things against their will; physically attack the sexual parts of their body; treated like a sex object; threaten if won't submit; force sex with others; trafficked, etc.

# Male Privilege:

**It is the permission-giver for all  
violence against women and  
general disrespect of ALL women.**



# Examples of Male Privilege:

- Is trusted and is seen as more credible than women.
- Experiences fewer barriers. More access to money, jobs, etc.
- Gets to do what he wants, when he wants.
- Allows for the expectation that women should be accommodating
- Feeling of entitlement to make big decisions alone expecting women to “make it happen.”
- His/men’s ways is the right way and more valuable than women’s
- Makes men roles superior and women roles inferior.
- No consequences for bad behavior.
- Feeling of entitlement to monopolize conversations and discussions.
- Feeling of entitlement to interrupt and/or ignore women.





# Coercion and Threats:

- Makes/carries out threats to do harm to the victim, the children or family and friends.
- Threatens to kill the victim, the children, family or friends.
- Threatens to take the children, either legally or by kidnapping.
- Threatens to commit suicide.
- Threatens to report the non-offending parent to welfare.
- Makes the victim do illegal things in order to blackmail.

# Intimidation:

- Causing fear by using aggressive looks, actions or gestures.
- Smashing things, putting holes in walls and destroying property.
- Killing pets.
- Displaying weapons.
- Reminding her how he has or can hurt her. Verbal threats
- Stalking, including sitting at her place of work, school, etc.



# Isolation

- Controls what the person does, sees, talk to and/or read.
- Limits outside involvement by not taking away the car, ensuring the children are always with the non-offending parent, limiting access to money, etc.
- Destroys personal belongings (clothing, etc.).
- Public humiliation.
- Constantly questions (interrogation).
- Takes the phone.
- Constant surveillance.
- Forces her/him to give up supportive relationships and outside connections.

# Minimizes, Lies and Blames

- Minimizes the violence
- Ignores and belittles victim's concerns.
- Says the violence didn't happen.
- Says the victim caused/deserved/provoked it.
- Shifts responsibility for the violence:
  - “She made me do it.”
  - “I didn't hit her hard.”
  - “She should have just shut up.”
  - “It was her own fault.”
  - “I had to teach her a lesson.”
  - “I was drunk.”
  - “I was abused as a child; I can't help it.”



# Emotional Abuse

- Put downs and name calling.
- Makes the victim feel crazy, always wrong or stupid.
- Belittles feelings, opinions and reactions.
- Plays mind games.
- Humiliates and criticizes. Tells her she's a bad mother, wife, woman.
- Makes the victim feel guilty for the batterer's feelings and behavior.
- Blames the victim for their violence and consequences.
- Stops the individual from doing what she/he needs to or wants to do.
- Tells the victim how to dress, look or act.
- Ignores and neglects the victim.



# Abusing Children

- Convinces the children that the violence is the non-offending parents' fault, that parent is stupid/sick/bad and that the children need a father even if he's violent.
- Uses the children to relay “mind game” messages.
- Uses visitation and custody to harass or do violence.
- Threatens to take the children far away.
- Believes that children are property
- Convinces her/him that her/he'll get custody if she/he leaves; she/he stays – abuse/violence continues.
- Does not pay child support (if living in separate households); children may live in poverty.



# Economic Abuse

- Prevents the victim from working.
- Makes the victim ask for money or gives an allowance.
- Takes the individual's money.
- Doesn't let her/him know about or have access to family income.
- Makes her/him prove how she/he spent money.
- Doesn't pay child support.
- Spends money on his/her "toys," not necessities.
- Makes her/him work; he/she doesn't.

# Ritual Abuse

toward Women Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

- Makes prayers against the survivor..
- Defines spirituality as masculine.
- Stops her from practicing her/his ways.
- Uses spiritual ways as a threat.
- Say “God doesn’t allow divorce.”
- Say menstruation time makes her “dirty.”
- Native women don’t sweat with men, don’t sit at drums.
- Says a women’s participation in ceremonies is to support men only.
- Misinterprets Traditions or Bible to justify violence/abuse.





# Cultural Abuse

- Competes over “Indianness.”
- Misinterprets culture to prove male superiority and female submission.
- Uses relatives to execute violence.
- Says “real” Native women don’t wear make-up, wear slacks, talk or be independent.
- Denies the spiritual power and role of women.
- Distorting the old-time practice of having more than one wife to justify having affairs, or multiple, simultaneous relationships.
- Participates in ceremonies, then batters the partner, abuses the children.
- Distorts or denigrates the role of Two Spirit – LGBTQ people.



# Collusion

- any act that discounts, condones, supports or ignores any of the tactics that offenders/batterers use to maintain power and control over their partner.
- makes the offender/batterer more powerful by reinforcing use of abusive and violent tactics.
- increases violence against the victims, their children, family and friends.



# IPV/Battering Doesn't Occur in Isolation

IPV/Battering requires collusion by many individuals, groups and communities.

IPV/Battering is created & sustained by society.

Therefore, advocacy moves outside shelter doors creating institutional, policy, legislative change, coordinated community responses and other forms of social justice.

Further, advocacy goes beyond reactive responses, to pro-active social and cultural change to end violence.

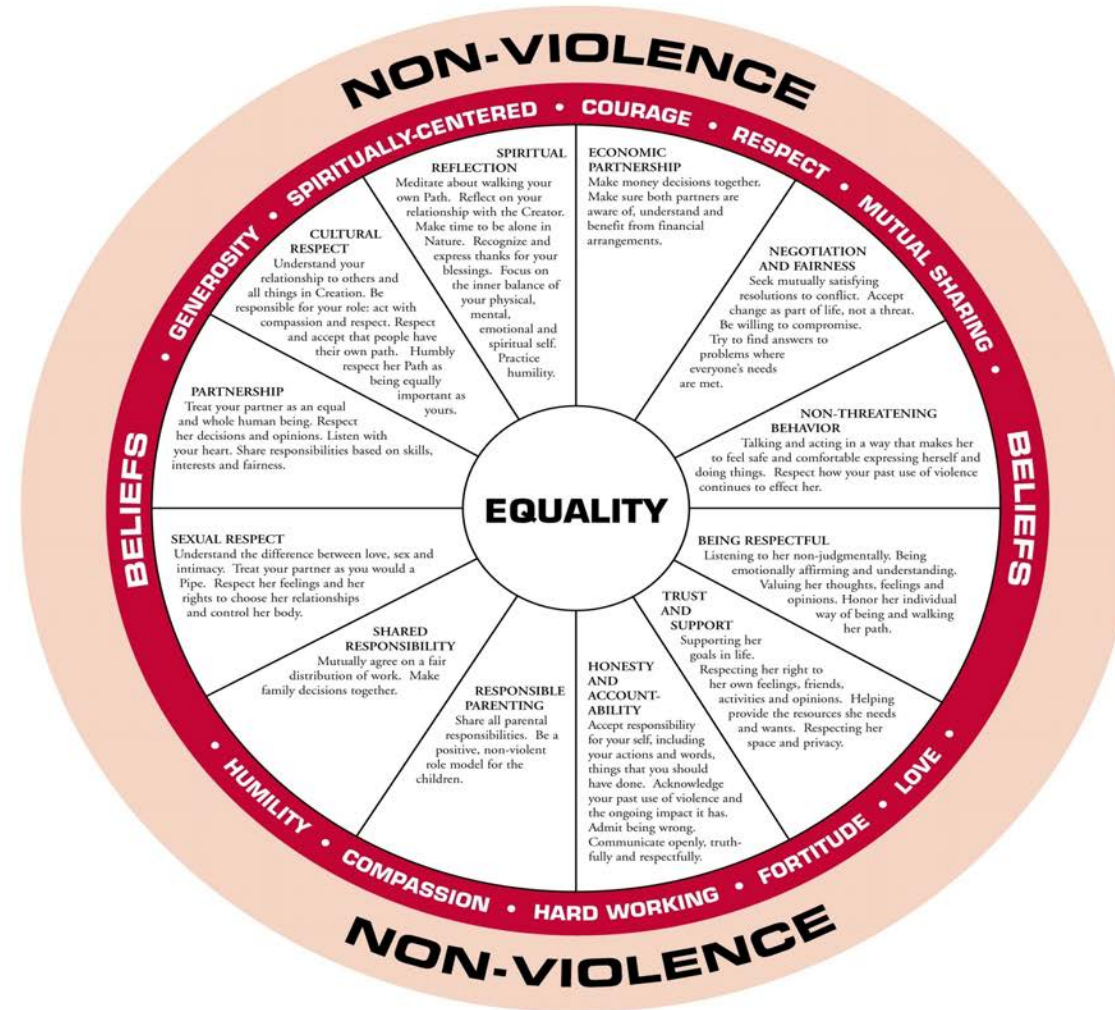






This Wheel was also created by Ellen Pence and colleagues at the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project and revised by Sacred Circle.

# NATURAL LIFE SUPPORTING POWER



Hand out

**EQUALITY**  
**is natural life-supporting power**  
**that is grounded in spirituality, requires**  
**non-violence and is based on character.**

Produced by Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women.  
Adapted from materials created by Domestic Abuse Intervention Project of Duluth model.



Advocacy is different from other fields.

Advocacy and Social Work are different.


Advocacy is not “case management.”

Advocacy requires knowledge of multiple issues.

Advocacy to create social change must consider cultural belief systems to be effective.







Advocacy requires self-reflection, and a constant challenging of our internalized oppression and colonized beliefs.

There's a difference between being bi-cultural and cultural confusion resulting from oppression and internalized oppression.





Language plays a key part in advocacy, social change and program development.

Words carry energy, describe our perception of reality, and reflect our belief system.

Words are Powerful



# Words Are Powerful

Describing the on-going beating, sexual assault and emotional abuse of a woman/man by her/his batterer as “a violent relationship,” “they're fighting again,” or “family dispute,” misconstrues what’s really going on.

This characterization minimizes and “equalizes” the violence and takes the focus off of the violent offender.

This sets the stage for questioning the behavior of the woman/survivor who is victimized and fails to hold the batterer accountable for his/her actions. Relationships aren't violent, the batterer/abuser is.

An Overview of Shelter and Program Development in Indian Country from the Roots Up – Revised 2020 NIWRC



# Does our language reflect survivors' reality?

- Clients
- Case management
- Service providers
- Violent homes
- Titles
- Batterer/Offender/ Abuser
- Relatives, Visitor
- Advocacy
- Advocates
- Describe what's happened/happening to by whom, to whom
- Relative: Sister, Brother, Aunt, Uncle etc.
- Dependent upon who's speaking.
  - What language does the woman/survivor use? Boyfriend? Partner?

# Does our language reflect our cultural values?





## It's About Relationships

Ending violence against women,  
and all other forms of violence,  
lies in our ability to reclaim our  
roles and responsibilities as  
Relatives.

*Advocates ideally role model  
this sacred connection.*

# Advocates:

- ❖ Acknowledge pattern of violence & other power & control tactics
- ❖ Recognize root causes from society & culture
- ❖ Prioritizes safety & accountability
- ❖ Balances power differential by using legal & societal sanctions
- ❖ Guide social change initiatives
- ❖ Utilize culturally-based approaches
- ❖ Connects the different forms of oppression
- ❖ Supports Hope, Healing and Resilience
- ❖ Brings activism and leadership





# Advocacy is about Relationships and Standing Up Together.

Use your understanding of what it means as a Native Woman to be a good  
Relative.

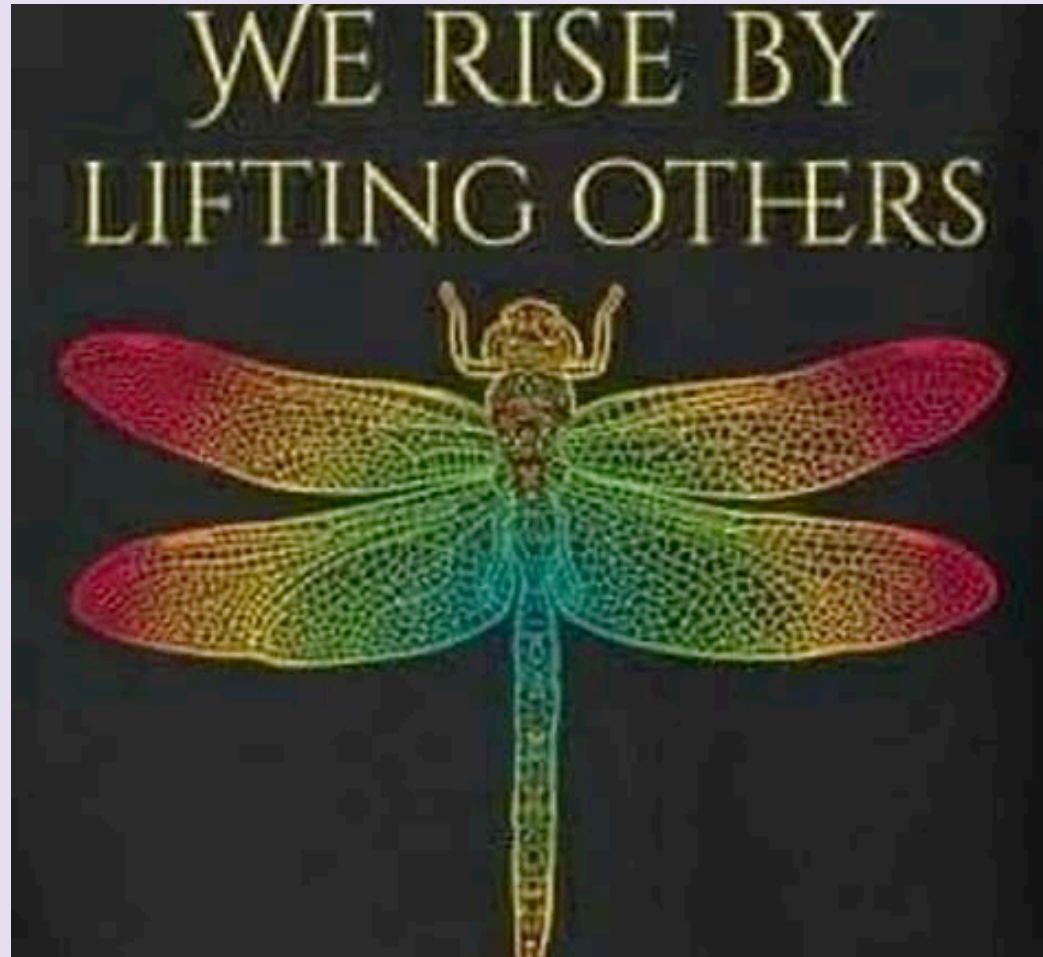
Advocacy is more than working with individuals.

It is safer & more effective to work in groups with leaders from the group  
impacted & who have expertise based on experience and character.

This puts the concept of social justice in action.







Questions? Comments?







Thank you!

