



*Toolkit for Aboriginal
families living off-reserve.*

MIYKIWAN
LIFE FACT BOOK



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- * Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band
- * Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of Saskatchewan Inc.
- * NunatuKavut
- * CAP National Youth Council
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FORWARD

This family violence prevention toolkit is the result of the efforts of a great many people coming together with open hearts and open minds to help improve the lives of Aboriginal families living off-reserve in Canada.

Each of us recognizes that there is an urgent and profound need for change in our communities. We understand that there is a need to bring our lives into greater balance and to center ourselves within lives free of violence, in order to heal ourselves, our families and our communities.

I believe that this toolkit is a constructive and practical step toward a better future for off-reserve Aboriginal families. It contains strong reminders of our cultural resilience and points to realistic ways that we can bring about positive change through ideas and practices that help people to live healthier, more peaceful lives.

As the name *Miykiwan* suggests, it is hoped that these tools can assist us in returning to home to ourselves.

On behalf of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, I would like to offer our thanks to the National Advisory Committee and Project Partners who, together with our staff and others, brought their experience, their knowledge, their compassion and their understanding to this project.

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Violence will not live here

Chapter 1

Balancing Self, Family, and Community

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AND ITS CONTENTS:

This chapter is meant to introduce some First Nations traditional and cultural practices that can help provide a good foundation for Aboriginal families.

The material provided here is for informational purposes only. It is not meant to replace traditional teachings.

FINDING BALANCE IN LIFE

Balancing self, family, and community means balancing life in all its many parts. It means that we seek to live life well and in harmony with the greater good of all that is. Living life well requires that we find balance in our world, no matter how busy we are with work, raising a family, growing a garden, or anything else.

This concept is common across many Nations and beliefs. For many Aboriginal cultures this means the use of traditional practices and ceremonies. In the modern world, we may wonder if this concept remains true, and if so, what can we do about it?

This chapter provides a quick glance into the many and varied traditions and ceremonies across Canada. Some of these traditions and ceremony have been used since time immemorial and continue to be used today. Readers looking for specific teachings or guidance should contact their local friendship centre, women's organizations.

Traditions and ceremony are helpful for finding and keeping balance in life, but this is not the only way. Do what feels good for you and what helps you find balance; know that your family will learn from you and may follow your example.

LIVING A GOOD LIFE

Making the decision to live a good life starts with you. It then will move to members of your family and then extend out to your community. This is how social change begins and takes root. It starts with me, you, us. It starts inside of us and then manifests outside of us; living a good life generates positive results.

Making the decision to be a good man, woman, boy, girl, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, etcetera, generates positive results. Many times, we do this naturally. From time to time, it is good to ask ourselves a simple yet fundamental question — are we living a good life? If so, what are we doing that is good and how can we do more of it? And, if not, what is not good and what can we do about it?

There are things that naturally bring joy and happiness to our lives. Take a few moments to consider what these are—simple reflections on what makes us smile is important. Think about your family members, what brings them joy and happiness?

THE MEDICINE WHEEL

The most common Aboriginal teaching tool is the Medicine Wheel.

The Medicine Wheel is an ancient method of connecting to the Earth and is used for ceremony, prayer and spiritual practices. There are many different ways to use the Medicine Wheel to teach traditional knowledge and pass on life skills.

The Medicine Wheel can help with finding and maintaining balance in life. You do not need to be First Nation to use the Medicine Wheel, in fact many service providers and organizations have found the Medicine Wheel useful in their programs and services. The Medicine Wheel method of teaching is adaptable and can be used in solution orientated thinking and problem solving.

The Medicine Wheel is divided into four equal parts that represent the four directions. There are several different variations, the following is an example of the Anishinabeg Medicine Wheel:

Medicine Wheel

EAST: Yellow, Morning, Spring, Baby, Eagle, Tobacco, Spirit

SOUTH: Red, Afternoon, Summer, Youth, Coyote, Sage, Emotion

WEST: Black, Evening, Autumn, Adult, Bear, Cedar, Physical

NORTH: White, Night, Winter, Elder, Deer, Sweet Grass, Mind

The image below is one version of the Medicine Wheel.



ACTIVITY:

MAKE A LIST OF THE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE THAT BRING YOU JOY AND HAPPINESS. WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE?

Reflections

Look your list above and at the Medicine Wheel. Think about how your list fits into the Medicine Wheel. What else could you add to your list to bring more joy and happiness to family life? Using the Medicine Wheel as a guide, what other things could you add to the list above?

INSIGHT

Our Elders can offer us the best advice what traditional teachings are and their importance to the family. They can also be a great guide on better understanding the Seven Grandfather teachings and how to add them to your life. Ask them for ideas. Make a word relation game with smaller children, use art to create a visual expression of each teaching, make a dream board of the Seven Grandfather teachings.

TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

To the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, and this is true for many Indigenous peoples the world over—Aboriginal women are recognized as the life givers and caretakers of the community. Sometimes in day to day living we forget to celebrate this simple fact; when we forget, society also forgets. This can have a negative impact in our lives. Today that negative impact has taken the form of violence. Violence has permeated society; people are addicted to watching television programs and movies that has violent content, music and games promote violence; and in the news is rife with reported violent that is often glorified.

Violence seems to be everywhere. It is the most vulnerable who are most at risk; with statistics that says “Aboriginal women and girls are five times more likely to experience a violent incident” society should be concerned. When violence enters the family home do not ignore it. Violence can and does destroy families.; it can destroy communities. If violence is a part of your current life, it does not need to be. Seek help, reach out to someone you trust, know that you are not alone. Remember that, violence is not part of who we are. Violence does not need to be a part of our lives and it does not define us.

Traditional teachings on the importance of family can lead to a good life , a sense of well-being that is at peace, a heart that is happy in the home. Adding a few traditional teachings and cultural activities to every day life can help families address violence. Each family is different, think about what teachings and cultural activities would work with your family.

BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Research has shown that Aboriginal families and communities benefit from traditional and cultural practices. The following pages are included in this toolkit to provide a basic foundation upon which to build on. Remember that the Indigenous people in Canada are a diverse group, culture and traditions may differ across regions and territories. You may want to seek the advice of someone local to your area.

“One may know these Seven Grandfather teachings but we can only understand them when we apply them to our daily lives.”

SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS

The Seven Grandfather teachings is traditional knowledge of what a community needs for survival and promotes a better way of being and living. While the exact origin of these Anishnabeg teachings is unknown, Elders say that these important verbs have always been a part of the language.

The Seven Grandfather Teachings are: WISDOM, LOVE, RESPECT, COURAGE, HONESTY, HUMILITY, AND TRUTH.

WISDOM

- *Wisdom is to learn what your gifts are and how to use them in a good way. To cherish knowledge is to have Wisdom. Wisdom is given by the Creator to be used for the good of the people.*

LOVE

- *To know Love is to have peace, Love for life and for all Creation. Before you can Love another you must first Love yourself. Love must be unconditional.*

RESPECT

- *Respect is to treat all human beings and all of Creation with kindness and consideration. To hold in high regard is to have Respect. Respect is the giving of yourself to others. Respect is to have an open mind and be non-judgemental.*

BRAVERY / COURAGE

- *Courage is to face your fears and difficulties. It is to face your greatest foe, which is your inner demons with integrity. Courage is to look at yourself rather than at others.*

HONESTY

- *Honesty is to acknowledge your faults, walk without shame and be true to yourself. Be honest first with yourself and you will more easily be able to be honest with others.*

HUMILITY

- *Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation. You are equal to others, but you are not better.*

TRUTH

- *Truth is to live by these Teachings and honour your vision and dreams.*

EXAMPLE OF HOW TO USE THE SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS IN THE HOME:

"I found a great image of the Seven Grandfather teachings online and printed it. I taped it to my fridge door and it has been there for more than three years. I see it everyday, my family sees it everyday. It is a great reminder of who we are and how we should live. I believe our home is happier because of it."

- Irene

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE, CULTURAL TEACHINGS, AND CEREMONY

Living off-reserve and away from your home community can bring great opportunity as well as some unintended challenges. One of these challenges, is the potential loss of traditional knowledge and cultural teachings. Many communities and urban centres do have services and organizations that can provide some of these teachings. Maybe you already know of a few places that offer opportunities for Aboriginal families.

Ask around, someone is sure to know about various programs that are being offered. What kinds of activities do you enjoy doing that can naturally evolve into a traditional activity? What interests do you have, what interests do your family members have? Fun activities such as hand drumming, singing, story telling, cultural nights, arts and craft classes, and learning the medicines are examples of things that can bring families together. Make an effort to find traditional knowledge, cultural teachings, and ceremony in your community; participate when you can and know that these are good things.

SEVEN GENERATIONS: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN AND WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

At some point, you may have heard someone make reference to “seven generations” and wondered what that means and where it came from.

The term “seven generations” was first recorded in The Great Law of Iroquois Confederacy (written between 1142 to 1500 AD) and refers to an ancient Iroquois philosophy that says *“any decision we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future”*.

This teaching is important for many reasons. It is important to keeping alive the Indigenous Nations of North America. It is important for all peoples, regardless of race or geography to understand - our continued existence on this planet requires that we think about and plan for the future. It requires that we make strong healthy families and communities, and this is something we can do today.

CULTURE AND IDENTITY: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Colonial structures and assimilation policies have had a negative impact on the culture and identity of Aboriginal people in Canada. Take some time to discover your culture and identity, make a record of your explorations, share them with your family, extended relatives, and community members.

WHAT IS AN ELDER?

This question is asked often and the answer may vary depending on the community, region or organization. In general, an “Elder” is a person who is recognized by their community as having gained traditional and cultural knowledge and who may share these teachings and conduct ceremonies. The term “Elder” is not age specific; one does not automatically become an Elder when they reach their senior years and in addition, one does not need to be “old of age” to be recognized as an Elder.

An Elder is often a well respected member of the community who can provide you with guidance on your life’s journey.

APPROACHING AN ELDER

There is no wrong way to approach an Elder. But, there are respectful ways to do it. Some simple advice...

- Offer traditional medicine (tobacco, sage, sweet grass, cedar) to the Elder. This “offering” is used for ceremonial purposes.
- If you have no medicine, don’t let this stop you. An Elder always has medicine to respond to these times.
- Elders are helpers. They are here to help, to teach, and to offer guidance; listen well to both understand and know their words.
- Ask them, how you may approach them in the future.

I live in the city, where can I find an Elder or traditional healer or practitioner?

Almost all urban centres in Canada have Aboriginal specific organizations. Some will be service providers, others may be local or regional political offices. Try calling your local friendship centre, native women’s associations, healing centres and other local offices as well as the First Nation communities and Tribal Council offices in your region.



THE DREAM CATCHER

The Ojibwa (Chippewa) believe that sleep is full of both good and bad dreams.

It is said, that if you hang a dream catcher above your sleeping area, the web of the dream catcher catches the dreams as they drift by. The good dreams, pass easily through the opening in the center of the webbing while the bad dreams, are caught and evaporate away with the first light of the morning sun.

There are several versions of the dream catcher legend and they may differ from each other slightly. But what remains the same is the teaching, the meaning and the symbolism. Today, the dream catcher is universally recognized and has reached across cultures and language barriers. Dreams are part of being human, we all dream.

THE FOUR SACRED MEDICINES

The Aboriginal people of Canada have thousands of medicines. Of these, there are four medicines that are used most often. They also form part of the Medicine Wheel teachings.

The four sacred medicines are Tobacco, Sage, Cedar, and Sweet Grass.

Tobacco (East direction):

Tobacco is for rituals and ceremonies, to communicate with Spirit

Sage (South direction):

Sage is to release, cleanse, or to remove negative energy

Cedar (West direction):

Cedar is used to purify and to protect the home

Sweet Grass (North direction):

Sweet grass is to purify the Spirit, to calm

WHAT IS SMUDGING?

You may have heard of “smudging” before, perhaps even participated in a smudging ceremony or were present when this was done. Perhaps, the smudging ceremony is be new to you and your family.

The Smudging ceremony is a process used to clear away negative energy and invite peace, harmony and overall ease into a person’s life. It is a purifying ritual and is often used to cleanse ceremonial tools. The ceremony may involve any one of the four medicines above, a combination of them, and or other traditional medicines.

To smudge, you first clean your hands in the smoke, remove any items you are wearing (such as glasses, jewelry) and clean them in the smoke. Then you wash yourself in the purifying smoke of the medicines, starting with your face, the top of your head, your hair, neck, body, arms, legs, and back. Pay attention during this purification and cleansing process and recognize what you feel and experience.

The smudging ceremony is often the first ceremony most people become familiar with and may do this regularly at home.

TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND CEREMONY

There are many different types of traditional practices and ceremony. Talk to an Elder about ceremony; learn more about them. Put aside any Hollywood style visions of what Aboriginal traditional practices and ceremonies are. Take time to know where you come from, who your people are, and what types of ceremony were most often practiced by your family and the generations before you.

The following are only a few ceremonies; there are many others. There are also regional variations that speak to the diversity of the Indigenous peoples in North America.

Sacred Bundles / Medicine Bundles are special items that help guide us through life. These can consist of one or more items, it can be the tobacco or medicine pouch worn around the neck, or it can be a much larger bundle or medicine bag. Some people have their items on display at home, others keep them stored until they want to use them. Some people feast their bundle four times a year with the changing of the Seasons, others feast their bundle every time they do a ceremony.

Fasting can mean different things to different people. In terms of indigenous practices, fasting is a way of “quicken” spirituality and is often done with the guidance of an Elder. In general, it means no consumption of food or drink for a prescribed period of time.

Sacred Pipe is a spiritual instrument that must always to be treated with respect and care, and used only in a sacred and prayerful manner. The sacred pipe ceremony offers a way to communicate; the smoke coming from the mouth symbolizes the truth being spoken and provides a path for prayers and the Creator to travel upon.

Sweat / Sweat Lodge is sometimes referred to as Mother Earth’s womb; it is the place where we are re-born into a new person. This sacred healing ceremony has been in use for thousands of years for spiritual renewal and purification of body, mind, soul and spirit. The Sweat Lodge is a sacred place where we connect and communicate with Creator, the Spirit Helpers, and our ancestors.

The Naming Ceremony is where a person receives their Indigenous or “Indian” name. It often marks a time of change or life transitions and acknowledges new ways of being or doing.

Rites of Passage is important in the life cycle, they teach us how to interact with the world around us. There are different rites of passage for girls moving to womanhood and for boys moving to manhood. These teachings include understanding what our role and responsibilities are within self and community.

REFLECTIONS

Often, we know more than what we think we know. Take a few minutes to think about what you know about traditional or ceremonial practices.

Write these down here:

REFLECTIONS:

What cultural activities are your teen children interested in?

Chapter 2

Embracing Our Strengths

DEALING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE MEANS KNOWING WHAT IT IS AND GETTING HELP

Preventing violence from entering the family home should be a goal for all families. Every dad and mom should be guarding the family home from violence. That is easier said than done. We can only guard against something we know and recognize as a threat to ourselves, our family and our community.

Preventing family violence requires awareness of what it is and how to address it. This chapter is structured to provide a basic understanding of what family violence is and how to recognize it. The MIYKIWAN Toolkit includes a Resource Book with information to various services and organizations for individuals needing help or support services.

“If the result is the same, the difference might well be you. So go out and make a difference”

Elder Gordon Williams

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AND ITS CONTENTS:

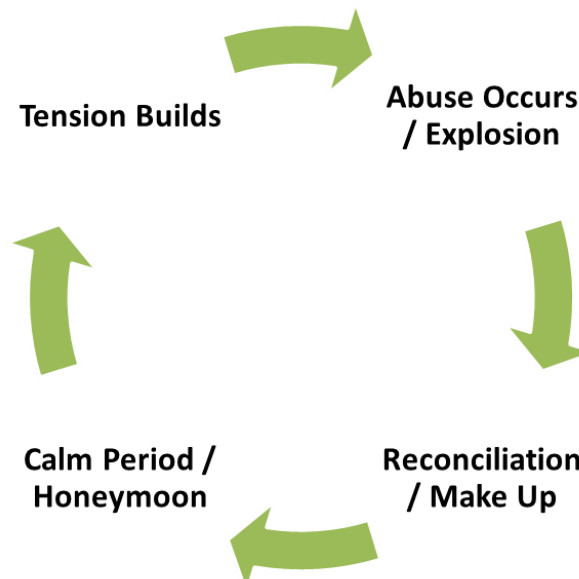
This chapter is meant to raise awareness about family violence and identify ways to address it. It also links topics with the toolkit fact sheets.

This toolkit includes a Resource Book with information on services and programs available across the regions.

IDENTIFYING FAMILY VIOLENCE

No family is perfect; taking the time to look closely at your home life can help you make positive changes for yourself, your children and family. Sometimes we can fall into patterns of behaviour that we think of as normal. We may just refer to it as “life”.

Below is one image that shows the cycle of violence as it can occur in the family setting and between two adult partners. Take a few minutes to consider each cycle, are they familiar?



THE MIYKIWAN TOOLKIT FACT SHEETS

Included in this toolkit are several fact sheets on the various types of violence that can occur within the family home. They provide some basic information and key things to know to help you identify family violence as well as how you may address it.

MIYKIWAN Toolkit Fact Sheets:

- * Family Violence
- * Domestic Violence
- * Sexual Violence
- * Date Violence
- * Emotional Violence
- * Child Violence
- * Senior Violence
- * Violence Against Men
- * Violence Against Those With Disabilities
- * Issues Affecting Violence
- * How to Live to With/Exit Abuse

Each fact sheet is a little different from each other depending on the content. Most fact sheets contain the following headers:

- * What Is
- * Current Statistics
- * Types Of
- * Warning Signs
- * Strategies & Next Steps
- * First Person Quotations



Remember, you are not alone

There are services available to help you and your family deal with violence in the family.

By looking closely at the patterns in your home life you have a better idea of what kind of violence you are dealing with and how they may be addressed.

It is ok to say no to violence.

It is ok for your family members to say no to violence.

Make this toolkit slogan your slogan: Violence will not live here.

It is ok to remove yourself and your family from violence when it occurs.

Having a personal safety plan can be less stressful to yourself and children. (see Chapter 3 for more information on personal safety plans).

And remember, leaving a dangerous place or situation does not mean you do not love the offender.

If you are in immediate danger call your local police or 911.

MIYKIWAN Toolkit Fact Sheet Highlights

While you go through this chapter you will find references to the MIYKIWAN Toolkit Fact Sheets. Take some time to review them individually, and then again together as a whole. Family violence impacts on all areas of the family. The following are quick highlights to the Fact Sheet contents.

Family Violence

- Family violence occurs when a child or adult experiences abuse from a member of their own family. Family violence can also happen to a person when they are in an intimate relationship with someone. Family violence can include: physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional, psychological or spiritual abuse; financial abuse; and neglect.

Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence is any form of abuse or neglect that an adult inflicts on another adult family member. When this takes place between two persons who have an intimate relationship, this is known as intimate partner violence.

Sexual Violence

- Sexual violence means any sexual activity being forced upon someone without their consent. It can be anything from unwanted touching to rape. Even if they are married or engaged, a person's partner cannot force them to engage in any sexual activity that is not wanted. Sexual violence can happen to anyone: women, men and children.

Date Violence

- Dating violence is an act of violence, whether it be physical, sexual or emotional, committed by one partner in a dating relationship. The abuser tries to take control over the other person and destroy their well-being and self-worth in order to gain power. Victims of dating violence may only experience one incident or be subjected to an ongoing pattern of incidents.

Emotional Violence

- Violence is not just about hitting. Emotional violence occurs when a partner, spouse or family member says or does something to make a person feel worthless, instill fear, gain control, manipulate, humiliate or dominate.

Child Violence

- If a child is subjected to any form of physical, psychological, social, emotional or sexual mistreatment, this is child violence. This includes the endangerment of the child's survival, safety, self-respect, self-esteem, growth and development. Examples of child violence include: physical assault; rape; and physical & emotional neglect.

Senior Violence

- Senior violence entails someone in a family environment who inflicts harm or distress on an older person. The most common forms of senior violence include physical, psychological and financial, and neglect among others. It is quite common for a senior to experience more than one form of abuse at the same time. The abuse may also consist of a single incident or a cycle of abusive behaviour.

Violence Against Men

- While the majority of news stories and studies focus on violence against women and girls, it would be wrong to ignore the reality of violence against men. It can happen just as often but is not reported nearly as much as violence committed against women. Violence against men consists of any form of abuse or neglect that a male adult experiences from a member of their family. They can experience with someone with whom they have an intimate relationship, including same-sex couples.

Violence Against Those with Disabilities

- While family violence against Aboriginal people has often been highlighted, Aboriginal people with physical disabilities have been subject to the very same forms of violence, whether they be physical, sexual, emotional or financial. Some people may have even acquired their disability as a result of having been subjected to family violence.

Issues Affecting Violence

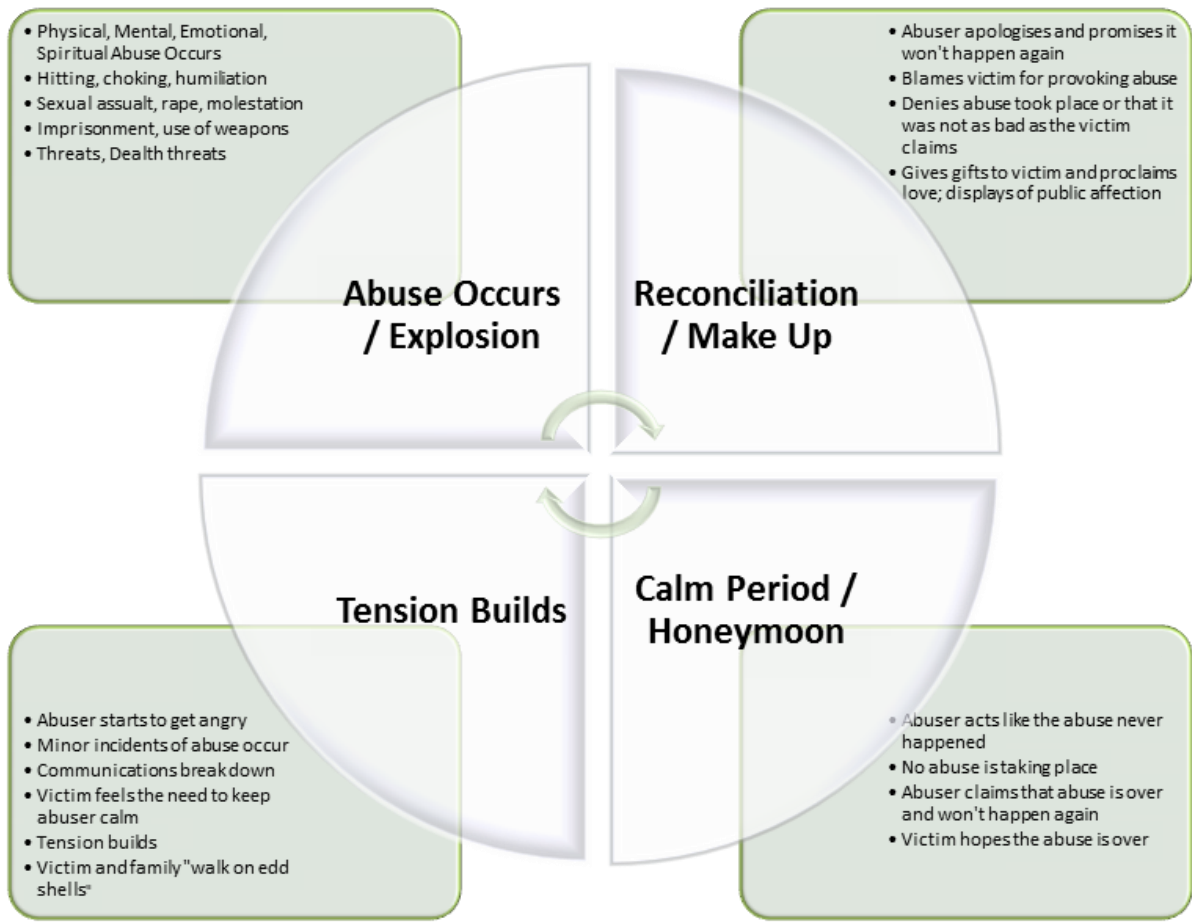
- There are issues in people's lives which can act as a cause and effect with family violence. Issues such as: alcohol & drug addiction; lack of employment & housing; gang involvement; poverty; mental illness; and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. This fact sheet specifically examines these last two issues and their relationship to family violence.

How to Live With / Exit Abuse

- The decision to stay and live within a violent family relationship or whether to leave it may be the single most difficult and important decision you will have to make. If you should stay, you must be aware of any present dangers and ensure the safety and well-being of you and your children. If you plan to leave, there are significant steps to take to make sure it is the safest exit possible.

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

The following image shows the different stages in the cycle of violence. Included are several examples of what may occur in each stage. Understanding this cycle can help you move forward, anticipate actions, and make informed decisions.



DEALING WITH THE STATISTICS AND THE REALITY AT HOME

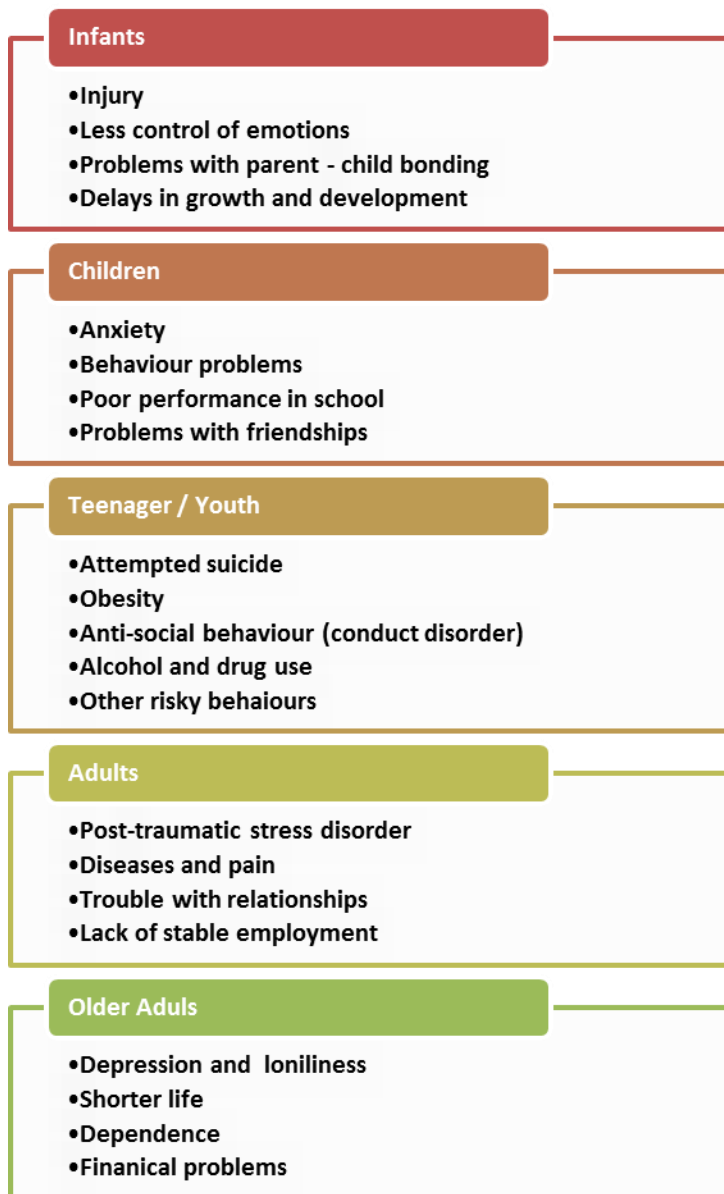
After looking through the MIYKIWAN Toolkit Fact Sheets you may have a general overview of the various types of violence that can impact the family home. Being aware of the statistics and having a better understanding of the issues can be empowering; it can also be troubling.

It can be difficult to admit that there is “family violence” in your home and you may experience a wide range of feelings from shame to anger to confusion. You are not alone and there are services available to help. If there are multiple issues, you may need to consider multiple services. If a crime or sexual assault has occurred, contact your local police. The MIYKIWAN Toolkit has a resource book that contains contact information for numerous services and organizations.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND HOW IT CAN IMPACT OVER THE LIFE CYCLE

Violence in the home impacts everyone. No one is immune. From the youngest to the oldest, violence in the home has a negative impact on the life cycle.

The following chart shows some of the impacts that family violence can have on members of the family.



RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE / INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

The reality may be hard to face, but knowing the reality places us on the pathway to a better life, free of violence. The following are examples of actions that may indicate the presence of domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence or IPV.

Does your partner ?

- ⇒ Commit physical acts of violence, such as hitting, kicking, shoving, slapping, poking, choking and other acts that otherwise hurt you, your children, or pets.
- ⇒ Blame you or your children for their violent behaviour. This may include telling you that you deserved it or asked for it.
- ⇒ Name calling, insults and put downs.
- ⇒ Control your movements, where you go, and who you talk to. This includes preventing you from going to work or school, and from seeing family members or friends
- ⇒ Use money as a means of control, by making you financially dependant, controlling how you spend money, and withholding money or access to joint bank accounts.
- ⇒ They act jealous or possessive of you and may accuse you of being unfaithful.
- ⇒ Use threats of violence which may include the use of weapons.
- ⇒ Force you to have sex when you don't want to; this includes being made to perform sexual acts against your will.

INTERGENERATIONAL IMPACTS OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES

You may have heard people say that they suffer from intergenerational impacts of Residential School and have wondered what this means.

Intergenerational trauma is the transmission of historical oppression and its negative consequences across generations.

This is supported by research that demonstrated the cyclical nature of violence and that it is a learned behaviour..

Ending the cycle of violence in the home and in the community requires that violence against children ends and never occurs. This includes the need to address intergenerational trauma.

IMPORTANT

If you know that a child is in need of protection you have a legal obligation to call child welfare.

To learn about how to talk to your child about child sexual abuse and exploitation contact the Canadian Centre for Child Protection at 1-866-543-8477 or visit: www.protectchildren.ca

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN

Child abuse is wrong. Children who are exposed to violence in the home are experiencing family violence. We are all impacted by our lived experience; what we see, hear, and experience form our perception of the world and helps us find where we fit in the larger scheme of things. Negative exposure can have a negative impact on how we grow and move forward in life; this is true for our babies, children, and youth.

Research has shown that children exposed to family violence may be at greater risk of developmental problems, psychiatric disorders, problems at school, aggressive behavior and low self-esteem. Research also tells us that children may become violent because they are experiencing violence in the home.

Child abuse includes any form of physical, psychological, social, emotional, or sexual action against a child. Observe your child. Talk to your child about their life experiences and seek appropriate help and assistance if needed.

Refer to MIYKIWAN Fact Sheet on Child Violence for more information.

DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Not all violence in the home involve adults, sometimes it is the younger members in the home who are committing acts of violence or are otherwise aggressive with other members in the home including family pets.

Children display aggression in several ways, most often by biting, hitting, and kicking. The main causes of aggression in children are frustration, attention seeking and being territorial.

Knowing what triggers your child can help control aggressive behaviour before it begins. Here are some common sense tips:

- Watch for triggers
- Pay attention to how you react
- Talk about what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Demonstrate affection daily
- Observe TV programs and games being played
- Observe friendships and influences
- Give them advanced notice of an activity ending so they can plan the end of an activity
- Provide positive activities or something new
- Encourage conversation; talk to your child
- Praise good behaviour, make it a habit.

Talk to a professional and get help if needed.

ROLES CHILDREN MAY TAKE WHEN THERE IS WOMEN ABUSE IN THE HOME

Violence in the family can be traumatic to the children in the home. Often they are forced to take on roles and responsibilities that cause them stress. The chart below shows some of the roles that children may take when there is women abuse in the home.

Caretaker

- Acts as a parent to younger siblings and mother. May oversee routines and household responsibilities (e.g., meals, putting young siblings to bed), help to keep siblings safe during a violent incident and comfort them afterwards (e.g., reassuring siblings, getting tea for mother).

Mother's Confidant

- The child who is privy to mother's feelings, concerns, and plans. After witnessing abusive incidents, his or her recollections may serve as a "reality check" for mother, if abuser later minimizes or lies about events.

Abuser's Confidant

- The child who is treated better by abuser and most likely to be told his justifications for abuse against mother. May be asked to report back on mother's behaviour and be rewarded for doing so with, for example, privileges or absence of harsh treatment.

Abuser's Assistant

- The child who is co-opted or forced to assist in abuse of mother (e.g., made to say demeaning things or to physically hit mother).

Perfect Child

- The child who tries to prevent violence by actively addressing issues (wrongly) perceived as triggers, in this case by excelling in school and never arguing, rebelling, mis-behaving, or seeking help with problems.

Referee

- The child who mediates and tries to keep the peace.

Scapegoat

- The child identified as the cause of family problems, blamed for tension between parents or whose behaviour is used to justify violence. May have special needs or be a step-child to abuser.

Children learn by observation.

Pay attention to what they learn.

For more information see Alison Cunningham & Linda Baker (2004). *What About Me! Seeking to Understand the Child's View of Violence in the Family*. London ON: Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System.

UNDERSTANDING TEENS AND HOW FAMILY VIOLENCE IMPACTS THEM

Many teens feel extreme guilt over not being able to prevent the domestic violence from happening.

In some cases they may feel that they are to blame for the family's problems.

TEENS MAY DISPLAY THE EXPERIENCE IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

Flashbacks to the episodes of domestic violence.

Sleep problems, including nightmares.

Emotional numbing.

Depression.

Substance abuse.

Problems with peers.

Antisocial behavior.

Risk-taking behavior, such as driving recklessly

Self destructive behavior, for example drug and/or alcohol abuse, self-mutilation or eating disorders.

Withdrawal and isolation.

Suicidal thoughts.

Physical complaints that have no medical basis.

Difficulties at school, including academic decline and/or refusal to attend.

YOUTH AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (TEENS)

The teen years can be both fun and difficult. Being a teenager in this fast paced, highly technological world can bring challenges. Add into the teenage life family violence; domestic violence and the results can be devastating, resulting in life long effects. A teen trying to fit in with their peers while keeping secrets about their home life can become stressed. This can lead to teens who don't know how to form trusting, loving, or lasting relationships. They may end up in violent relationships and think its normal.

Teenagers living in homes with family violence may feel lonely and isolated, grow up too fast, have behavior problems, stress related medical and mental health problems, and school problems. These factors may put them at risk for addictions or suicidal behaviours.

Pay attention to the needs of your teen children. Look through their eyes and try to understand what they see and how they are processing that information.

Help them think through the situation and explain what you can, when you can. Let them know that they are not responsible for any acts of violence they witness or experience. Let them know that the current situation is only temporary and that it is not normal. Find them the help they need; it could be in the form of professional help or an Elder. Having someone safe to talk to is important at all stages of the life cycle, for teenagers, it is critical.

Refer to the MIYKIWAN Fact Sheets for more information.

EXTERNAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Our youth, our children are equipped with the knowledge and skills we, as parents and as community provide them.

There may be some forms of violence that occur outside the home that can impact the home environment. Examples include street gangs, human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Talk with your teen about what external factors they may be facing. It is important to acknowledge their feelings, and where you can, reassure them and provide access to any services or programs they may require.

YOUTH AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (OLDER TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS)

Older teens and young adults provide a unique opportunity for change. It is this age category that is best positioned to break the cycle of violence. Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing population group in Canada; they are also just beginning to enter the dating world. They are at the stage in life where they begin to enter romantic relationships. How they do this depends on what they have seen, experienced, and know about relationships.

Witnessing domestic violence and experiencing the cycle of violence can have a negative impact on the development of healthy personal relationships. Some teens and young adults may be at higher risk of becoming victims of dating violence or ending up in violent relationships as adults either as the victim or abuser.

Some of the information available in the MIYKIWAN Toolkit can be useful for young adults. Reviewing pages 16 and 17 of this book can help a person see the bigger picture and help them understand how family violence impacts the life cycle.

YOUNG FAMILIES: AN OPPORTUNITY

New romantic relationships often result in the development of new families. This is a wonderful time of growth and opportunity for many families and communities.

Young adults with families can be great inspirations in ending family violence. Many young adults are educated and are better informed than the previous generations; the advent of the internet and social media has helped with family violence prevention and awareness. There are now tools and resources available to young families that address family violence.

Breaking the cycle of violence means knowing what it is and facing it. It means making the right decisions for you and your family. If you need help, don't be afraid to ask for it.

Living life well and enjoying all the good things that life has to offer us is important to our sense of well being and personal growth. Find that place of balance and teach your family how to do this.

SEVEN WARNING SIGNS OF POTENTIAL ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS:

Your partner is too possessive.

Possessive behavior is a sign of abusive behavior. This includes calling constantly to check up on you, visiting often or unexpectedly, and spying on you.

Controlling. *Taking control of your life and making decisions for you. This include making you ask permission before going anywhere, checking your call records, and frequent intense interrogation.*

Isolation. *He/she tries to isolate you, cutting you off from family and friends. You can only talk to them. They may control the money, car, and phone to ensure they know what you're doing.*

Verbal Abuse. *Talks to you in a disrespectful way, sometimes using profanity. This includes name calling, rudeness, vulgarity, and yelling.*

Refusing to Accept Responsibility, Blames Others. *Consistently blame others for their mistakes. When the two of you argue it's all your fault. They cannot admit to being wrong and run away from responsibility.*

Scares or makes you Fearful. *Do not feel safe and secure when you are with your partner; feel scared. Partners that are potentially abusive try to scare you and might tell you how dangerous they are.*

Wants or demands dominating sex. *Use of force and extra power while having sex. Make you perform sexual acts against your will. They may hurt you physically but refer to it as fun. This may lead to physical violence.*

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND WOMEN

In reading this chapter and reviewing the MIYKIWAN Toolkit and its fact sheets you have become aware of what family violence is. Knowing what family violence is a first step towards addressing it.

Statistics reveal that women are most often the victim in cases of family violence. This violence against women is often in the form of intimate partner violence, also known as domestic violence. Women are also more likely than men to be killed by domestic homicide.

Knowing the warning signs of potential abusive relationships can help you make informed decisions about your life pathway. Often these warning signs increase until there is an incident of domestic violence. This begins the cycle of violence, which can begin slowly and escalate over time.

Every situation is different. But one thing stays the same. No one deserves to be maltreated. Whether you're being abused in a romantic relationship or by a member of your own family, you need to form a plan to put a stop to it and get help immediately. If you plan to stay then you need a personal safety plan to keep you and other members of your family safe should a violent incident occur.

Take some time to get familiar with the contents on pages 16 and 17, as well as Chapter 3 of this book. Reflect on where you are now and where you would like to be.

The MIYKIWAN Toolkit may help you find ways to take action and plan for your safety. Refer to the Fact Sheets for more information and to the Resource book for contact information to various programs and services within your regions. Remember that you are not alone; seek the help and assistance you need to live a happier, healthy life.

Life changes can be scary, fear of the unknown can prevent us from doing what we need to do to be safe. Sometimes the choice is taken away from us and we are forced to act. Being prepared for change and taking control of that change can help you in the transition from one stage of life to another.

**Report death threats to your local police.
If you are in Immediate Danger
Call 911.**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV) AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

Domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence is defined as occurring when one partner in a relationship purposely hurts the other partner. The perpetrator is often a husband, ex-husband, boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend. Women also can be abusers.

Domestic Violence hurts more than the victim; it hurts the whole family. Boys who witness family violence are four times more likely to become the perpetrator of family and domestic violence; they may also become the victim of violence.

Manipulation is often part of this type of violence. If you're in an abusive situation, you might recognize this pattern:

- ⇒ **Your abuser threatens violence.**
- ⇒ **Your abuser strikes you.**
- ⇒ **Your abuser apologizes, promises to change and offers gifts.**
- ⇒ **The cycle repeats itself.**

Typically the violence becomes more frequent and severe over time.

Solutions to and prevention of domestic violence include providing economic opportunity, mentors, role models, community programs for youth and families, and adult family members who are nurturing and who provide consistent, structured support.

WOMEN COMMIT ABUSE TOO

Women and girls can be violent; they do commit abuse. No one ever wants to think about it, but it happens. There is considerable debate on who commits abuse most, between men or women. Research suggests that these rates are relatively even with each other (Archer, Straus). This means that for every man who commits abuse, there is a woman who also commits abuse. Addressing family violence requires honesty and open conversations.

SEEK HELP WHEN NEEDED

Find out what programs and services are available to you. Women's shelters provide a wide range of family violence services, including outreach programs, crises lines, and training on family violence-related topics. Victim advocates within the police service or community are also good resources to safety planning.

REFLECTIONS

Spend a few moments thinking about your relationship with your partner or spouse. Is it a safe and healthy relationship?

Does your partner always need to know where you are? Does your partner expect you to spend all of your time with them? Is there great shows of public affection? Is your partner possessive? Act jealous?

Does your partner put down your family and friends? Does your partner laugh at your dreams, ideas, and goals? Is your partner "better" than you? Are you treated with disrespect? Teased for not being as smart? Poked?

Has your partner isolated you, or made you isolate yourself? Is your partner moody? Sulks to get their own way? Has a short fuse and loses temper?

Are you afraid of your partner? Has there been threats of any kind, such as threats of suicide, extreme violence and death? Has your partner hurt other members of your family, including pets, to "get back" at you? Does your partner scare you? Has your partner physically assaulted you?

ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION:

The following is a list of programs and initiatives that aim to engage men and boys in violence prevention:

Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin : I Am A Kind Man is an Ontario-wide initiative that provides an opportunity for communities to help Aboriginal men and youth understand the causes of violence and supports them in joining together to end it.

The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), a local, national and international movement promotes men and boys involvement in violence prevention on various fronts.

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes is a popular method of engaging men to support women's shelters and other services for abused women and children by raising funds through literally "walking a mile" in women's footwear.

It Starts With You. It Stays With Him is a social marketing campaign created by the White Ribbon Campaign in Ontario and is aimed at inspiring and motivating men to educate the boys in their lives about the importance of healthy and equal relationships with women and girls.

The Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls developed by the United Nations (2010) provides a series of learning resources that document, share and offer support on programming essentials, monitoring and evaluation tools, frameworks, challenges and strategies to effectively address violence.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND MEN

Men have always been identified as the protectors and providers of family. Men are the backbones of the community, just as women are the life givers. Many Aboriginal people would agree and add that Aboriginal men have an important role in the home and family.

Violence is a learned behaviour. The life experience of many Aboriginal peoples include a history of institutional abuse. The Residential school legacy and similar assimilation policies left some people with trauma. Unresolved life trauma can have a negative impact on a person's life, and place them at higher risk of become a victim of further abuse or the perpetrator of violence.

Men are most often the perpetrators of violence in the family home. This violence can take on many forms, and can include threats, hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, stalking and harassing intimate partners, children, and pets. Domestic violence is a crime and a person committing these acts can find themselves facing the justice system. You can be arrested, charged, convicted and jailed for assaulting family members or any other person.

Review this chapter and pay attention to pages 16 and 17. Know what family violence is and what the impacts are. Review the MIYKIWAN Fact Sheets and Resource book.

Understand that violence is wrong. If you recognize yourself in these descriptions and warning signs of family and domestic violence, need help. You are not alone, there are services available to help you address this issues, their triggers, and any past trauma's that need to be resolved.

If you are a man who is not committing acts of violence against your intimate partner, children, and pets, then you can be a good role model to other men. There are programs that engage men in violence prevention, some of these are listed on the side bar of this page.

MEN CAN BE VICTIMS TOO

Not all victims of family violence are female, men can and do find themselves in relationships that can become abusive and violent. Men who experience domestic violence often suffer in silence. Research states that 40% of all domestic violence incidents are committed against men. The perpetrators of this violence are often their intimate partners, who may be their girlfriends, common law spouse, fiancé, or wife. Other members of the family may also be the perpetrator of abuse. Domestic violence also can occur in same sex partnerships.

Men who experience family violence can experience a range of feelings and may not disclose this abuse for a variety of reasons. Many often stay in these types of relationships. Know that abuse of any sort is wrong, it is wrong to be committed against you, and it is wrong for your children and any other members of your family to witness. In many cases, removing yourself (and perhaps your children) from the situation is the only option. Remaining in a domestic violence situation is not good for your well-being and the well-being of your family. Seek help and don't be afraid to ask for it. You may feel alone, but there are others who have walked that same path and who can help you.

SEEKING HELP WHEN NEEDED

It does not matter if you are the victim, perpetrator, or witness to violence in the home. Violence is wrong, it hurts everyone, and it must be addressed. Please seek help for yourself, talk to someone you trust.

Take time to reflect on past and current trauma; how can this be resolved? How can you return to a more healthy state of being, return to living life well and in balance with Creation? How can you be better at building healthier relationships, strong families, and thriving communities? It starts one person at a time, it starts with you.

No one intentionally plans on being an abusive person. Review the cycle of violence, know the warning signs, monitor your behaviour. Remove yourself from the situation if you feel an incident may occur.

Acknowledge your actions and work towards positive change. There is help available. Find the services and programs in your area; talk with professionals and seek assistance to resolve and heal.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPACTS OF PAST EXPERIENCES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Family violence can have life long impacts; it can become cyclical in nature if not addressed. Children, both boys and girls may grow into men and women who may be the perpetrators or victims of family and domestic violence.

Males who experienced sexual and/or physical abuse in childhood are more likely to experience mental health issues, such as toxic stress, sexual dysfunction, unhealthy eating, self-abuse and substance abuse

Many resort to the use of violence in interpersonal relationships (including sexual violence) with their partners. Men's past experience with childhood abuse often goes under-recognized and untreated.

Sources: Haegerich & Hall, 2011; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2009

SENIOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE OFTEN DO NOT REPORT THEIR EXPERIENCES.

There are several reasons why, most often they are:

Afraid of repercussion

Dependant on the abuser

Afraid of institutionalization (being put in a seniors home)

Feeling guilty or think they are somehow at fault

Feeling as if police cannot help or will not help

Held back by cultural/ethnic values or beliefs

Family, friends, and service providers can be a good resource. They may also experience some challenges, such as:

They do not recognize the signs of abuse

They do not know who to go to or where to get services

They do not want to get involved in the affairs of the family

Have been asked not to report by the victim or some other person in the home

They are afraid of repercussion

Or, they may feel there is a confidentiality issue.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SENIORS

The seniors in our family homes may be our mothers, fathers, grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, great aunts and great uncles or any other older member of our extended family units. Having a senior in the house can bring with it many benefits. Often they pass on their learned wisdom and life experience to the younger members of the family; they share stories of the past and help bridge that knowledge gap. In Aboriginal communities, seniors are well-respected and honored, many are recognized as Elders, spiritual advisors, and healers. Many carry sacred medicines.

The sad reality is that the rates of senior abuse is high. Further, the people committing this violence are often family members. Violence against seniors can include physical abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, financial abuse, and neglect.

The following are some signs that may indicate senior abuse:

- ⇒ Unexplained injuries, unusual bruising and/or doctor shopping.
- ⇒ Fear of certain individuals, abuser speaking for the senior or not giving the senior privacy when company visits.
- ⇒ Overdue bills, unusual banking activity, mail missing, and seniors standard of living not in keeping with income or assets.
- ⇒ Unhealthy living conditions and unkempt appearance

If you are a senior experiencing abuse or you are a witness to senior abuse please do not ignore it. All violence is wrong; and violence committed in the name of love and violence ignored in the name of love, is not love. Violence and abuse is not love. Please talk to someone you trust, get help, and address the situation. Remember that incidents of violence often do not get better on their own, most times it get worse.

Every member of the household is important and vital to the success of that home and family. Our seniors have walked a path more challenging than our own; it is their hard work, dedication, and Vision of the Seven Generations that has moved things forward. It was our Aboriginal seniors who demanded the right to vote, who fought to be included in the Canadian Constitution, and who fought for our human rights. It is they who protected us when we were young and vulnerable. It is our place to protect, honour and respect them as they age.

When Seniors abuse:

Many Aboriginal seniors are survivors of the Residential School system; many have suffered from physical, emotional, sexual, and physiological violence and abuse while in the Residential School system. Some may not have healed from this experience and the cycle of violence continued.

Seniors do commit abuse, this like any other form of family violence must be addressed.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND THE ABUSER

The information in this chapter may be eye opening for many people. You may have recognized yourself, your partner or another member of your family in these pages. You may have found yourself thinking hard about life and your family home. You may be wondering how to stop violence from occurring in your home. You may also have wondered if you are the abuser, and if so, what can you do about it?

Both men and women can be abusive towards their partners. Reflecting on how we do things, why we do things and how we respond can help us identify issues that need to be addressed.

Being aware of what family violence is, is a step towards prevention. Acknowledging family violence and your role in it is the next step. This can be difficult and painful, few people want to admit that they have hurt or are hurting a loved one. It is never too late to stop abusive behaviour; you can start today. You may need support to do this, don't be afraid to ask for it. Talk to someone you trust, this can be an Elder or professional counsellor.

Violence is cyclical in nature. Take time to review this book and the MIYKIWAN Fact Sheets and Resource Book. Make sure you understand what the danger signs are; think about what triggers you, your partner, or family member. Plan to make positive changes and know that these changes must start with you.

The cycle of violence can impact the entire life cycle. Many times abusive and violent are ingrained and have been normalized. Creating a new "normal" requires that you take responsibility for your actions and beliefs. Consider how you feel after a violent incident, and what thoughts and excuses you make so that you can deny doing anything wrong. Perhaps you may think that your partner is simply overreacting or making a mountain out of molehill. Perhaps you think that the abuse is not that bad, that the abuse would not happen if your partner didn't provoke it. Maybe the thought occurred that your partner "deserved it". Perhaps you blame alcohol or drugs for the abuse.

Take full responsibility for your actions. You can be the loving and caring spouse/father/mother that the Creator meant you to be. Be strong, seek help, heal yourself.

BUT, I LOVE YOU!

Loving relationships do not include abuse or acts of violence in any form. It is impossible to force someone to love you; love does not require force.

AM I AN ABUSER?

As yourself the following questions, and be honest about your answers. Make no excuses, offer only a YES or NO answer.

- 1. Would you treat your boss, best friend or next-door-neighbour the same way as you do your partner? YES or NO*
- 2. If someone else were treating your daughter, son, brother, sister or friend the same way you treat your partner, would it be okay or not? YES or NO*
- 3. Has your partner told you that you are being abusive or that your behaviour is unreasonable or abusive? YES or NO*
- 4. Has your partner either left you or threatened to leave you if you don't stop the abusive behaviour? YES or NO*
- 5. Have any of your previous relationships ended because of your behaviour? YES or NO*

If you have answered NO to either of the first two questions, and YES to any of the last three questions, then the chances are pretty high that you are abusive towards your partner.

Refer to the MIYKIWAN Fact Sheets for more information.

TESTIMONY OF HOPE: MABEL M

Have you ever looked into the face of a woman with visible bruises on her body and wondered “How did that happen?” Did you then look closer into her eyes and see the helplessness, the pain that reaches beneath the skins surface, to the very depth of her soul? Did you see the child that’s clinging onto her leg with a pleading look on his little face that’s saying, “Please help my mommy”? You are in fact looking at a woman that has been abused by her partner, and a child that has felt fear, his entire life.

Family abuse is a crime. It comes in many forms, including physical abuse, mental and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, intimidation and neglect. It does not matter the colour of your skin, or where you live, family abuse is everywhere in our society. I would like to focus mainly on the topic of abuse against women. Many boys wrongly learn from early childhood that violence is not only acceptable but an important part of being a man. Many little girls wrongly learn that it is an important part of being a woman to be passive and accepting.

Many women that are involved in violent relationships often ask the same question, “Can I make the violence go away?” The short answer is “NO”. Violence usually gets worse with time not better. Many people are told by their abusive partners that it is their fault that the relationship is not working. Victims will try to change themselves hoping to make things better. It takes a long time to realize that the abusers are the ones that have to change, and that we can’t do it for them.

One form of abuse which quickly comes to mind is physical assault. Women are shaken, hit, punched, slapped, and kicked by their partner. Physical abuse may result in anything from a black eye to hospitalization for multiple injuries. It can even result in death. There is also abuse which leaves no physical marks. This is emotional abuse. It can involve being called names such as “fat”, “ugly”, “stupid”. It can also be the threat of violence against a person or the things that you love, like your pet. Emotional abuse is as bad if not worse than physical abuse. With physical abuse, the bruises fade and the scars eventually heal, with emotional abuse, the scars stay for a long time.

Ask yourself these questions for some of the warning signs:

Is he overly jealous of your contact with other friends or relatives?

Does he not want you to participate in activities that don’t include him?

Does he criticize the way you dress, talk or dance?

Are there times when his teasing hurts your feelings?

Does he make fun of you in front of family or friends?

Do you ever feel pressured to do something you do not approve of?

Has he ever hit you?

I am a survivor of domestic violence. I married what I thought was the man of my dreams on July 21, 1984, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. While I was walking down the aisle toward my husband-to-be, I had this feeling in the pit of my stomach that something was wrong. I wanted to turn and run, but how could I cancel it now. My family had travelled from Newfoundland to see me married, how could I not. Instead I said nothing. The night after our marriage the “accidents” as they were called started happening and I ended up with my tooth drove through my lip. I told my parents when they visited the following day that I had tripped and fell.

My husband continued to be abusive during the years we were together. It started off with a slap in the face or a punch in the stomach, but then it got steadily worse where it led to beatings. Many times he would knock me on the floor where I would be punched, kicked, choked, and bitten. He would push his fingers into my eyes and try to pop them out. I found myself left lying on the floor trying to remember how to breath, wrap my mind around what had just happened, and asking myself the unforgettable question, “What did I do to set him off this time”. The sound of his voice when he would say, “Look what you made me do” still echo in my ears.

We moved back to Newfoundland after the birth of our first child with the promise that things would be better, and we started to build our home in Frenchman’s Cove, which is approximately 20 minutes away from my parents. I was very fortunate if I made that 20 minute drive two to three times a year to visit them, and I had to be home at a certain time. I was cut off from everyone that was important in my life, and he controlled everything I did.

He called me late one night from a bar in Corner Brook wanting me to pick him up. When I arrived to the location of the bar he was nowhere to be found so I figured he must have gotten a ride with someone else. When I arrived home he called again and he was very upset that I didn't come to get him. I headed back to Corner Brook again with the biggest knot in my stomach because I knew what was going to happen. I was dragged out of the car by my hair, was kicked, had my head pounded into the pavement and also the back fender of the car. I started to scream for help and that just enraged him more so I just stopped and took the rest of my beating. I thought I was going to die and at that point and time, I think I wanted to. Nobody came to help.

The next couple of days were like a blur. I remember looking out through the window the next day and wondering how to get out of this relationship. I thought about killing myself that day because there was no other way out. I felt like there was no one else in the world that was going through what I was going through. I had no self-esteem, and I had no one to talk to. My children were the only things that saved me that day, and I had to protect them, no matter what.

Abuse is a vicious cycle and it's a learned behaviour. First your partner will try anything to get you and this is known as the honeymoon phase. They worship everything about you and it will last about two weeks. Slowly they think of ways to hurt you and try to drive you away. You finally leave and then they try to make it up to you again to get you to come back.

The Transition House in Corner Brook is a safe haven for women and children who have been victims of abuse. I had heard about it through an advertisement on the radio, and on October 1, 1994, I packed up my children and some clothing and we left. We didn't know what we would find when we arrived there but it was certainly better than what we were leaving.

It was a very emotional time for me and my children. They knew what I was living with at home and there were many times they were verbally and physically abused by their father as well. My son Kevin suffered more of the abuse from his dad than my daughter Victoria. Times when I wasn't home, Kevin would always protect his little sister. I didn't want those abuse traits to continue on in their lives and for them to grow up and think that this is OK.

I was given a card called "My Rights" when I arrived at the Transition House that night. It reads as follows:

*I am not to blame for being beaten and abused.
I am not the cause of another's violent behaviour.
I do not like it or want it.
I do not have to take it.
I am an important human being.
I am a worthwhile person.
I deserve to be treated with respect.
I do have power over my own life.
I can use my power to take good care of myself.
I can decide for myself what is best for me.
I can make changes in my life if I want to.
I am not alone. I can ask others for help.
I am worth working for and changing for.
I deserve to make my own life safer and happier.*

If anybody you know is suffering from abuse, please encourage them to contact the Transition House here in Corner Brook, at 634-4198. When my kids and I left that night in 1994 a song played on the radio. One of the lines of the song said, "I'm walking away a winner, walking back into my life". That is exactly what I did.

Chapter 3

Safe Solutions and Planning

ADDRESSING FAMILY VIOLENCE

Each situation is different, there is no “one size fits all” solution to addressing family violence. Some families need minor interventions, others need much more. And, others, require a more drastic response. Talk to people you trust about the situation you or a member of your family is dealing with. Do not be ashamed or fearful to seek professional help, many are trained to deal with difficult issues and can direct you to specific services.

Do not ignore violence that occurs in the home. To eradicate violence in our home, community, and in the lives of all our peoples requires that we address the problem head on. Sometimes getting help means making some difficult life decisions. Change can be intimidating. We may experience fear, embarrassment, and the feeling of being out of control of your life. These are all natural emotions. Let them flow through you and think your way through to a resolution.

“It is better to get help than to ignore the issue, because the issue can often get worse as time goes on.”

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AND ITS CONTENTS:

This chapter is meant to provide the reader with some information on personal safety plans. It is meant as a guide, individuals and families seeking to escape family violence should seek professional help.

The MIYKIWAN Toolkit Resource book contains information to programs and services that can help.

LIFE AFTER FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Creator gifted us with Life. We are honoured and blessed with this gift, this wonderful opportunity to live life and live it well. This gift is given to you, to your spouse, and to your children, equally.

Life is meant to be enjoyed, each day is a magnificent reminder of all of Creation. Deep inside of us, we know that this is true. Pause for a moment and think about all that makes life wonderful; what makes you smile and celebrate life?

Now, consider the things that don't make life enjoyable. Abuse and family violence have no place in happy and healthy lives. Life cannot flourish where violence lives; making the decision to remove violence from your life is an important decision. Fear should not stop you from taking the steps you need to take to address whatever situation you may find yourself in. Your safety and the safety of each member of your family is important.

There is life after family violence. In fact, life after family violence is much better living life in fear of family violence and abuse.

The MIYKIWAN Toolkit does have a Fact Sheet specific to this area, it is the How to Live With / Exit Abuse Fact Sheet. The information contained there and in the next few pages can help you make this most important life decision. Know that, this impacts more than you, it impacts your children, your community. It impacts upon life in many ways.

STARTING OVER OR DECIDING TO STAY

Violence in the home should never be tolerated; breaking this cycle requires that you make some hard life decisions. Deciding to start over or deciding to stay is one of them. You do not need to be alone in making this decision and in developing a personal safety plan that you can put into action when you need it. Professionals trained in domestic violence and intimate partner violence are your best source of information and assistance. There are services available to help you and your family.

Regardless of your decision, the very fact that you are aware of the situation, empowers you to make positive changes. If you plan to stay, know the risks and how to respond to them, know when staying is not an option. Leave if you have to leave.

Starting over can be very rewarding, it can offer fresh starts and new opportunities that may have been blocked to you in the past. It may be difficult but the rewards can be tremendous, not just to yourself, but to your family as well.

Making the right decision is the only decision you can make.

TESTIMONY OF HOPE: JACQUI P

I tried leaving a few times, but I always went back. We had a house, nice car... our neighbors thought we were the "Joneses". He was the perfect man, handsome and educated. I was his pretty wife, the eye-candy on his arm. No one knew what was happening behind closed doors. He was a leader in our community and I came from another community; I was isolated with no help to turn to.

One day, I saw that my neighbor had bad bruising on her neck. They were choke marks, her common law partner had beaten her badly the night before. She came to talk to me. He had thrown her bloodied and unconscious body out their back door and she lay exposed all night. She could have died; it scared her and it scared me. We talked more and soon I let her know what my own situation was. We shared, we cried. Then we made plans to leave the community together.

That was over sixteen years ago. Since then, I have become educated, I now have two degrees. My children are happy and healthy, they live life well and are violence free. The cycle of violence has been broken in my family and I am an advocate for others going through the same thing. I now have my own house and car. My neighbor, became my friend. She too has so much more than what she had before. Leaving was a good thing for both of us, but we may not have left if we did not find each other. My advice to everyone is to talk to someone and then, do something about it.

SAFETY DURING AN EXPLOSIVE INCIDENT

If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area that has access to an exit and not in a bathroom, kitchen, or anywhere near weapons.

Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, or stairwell would be best.

Have an extra set of keys and a packed bag ready; keep them in an undisclosed but accessible place in order to leave quickly.

Identify a neighbor you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.

Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police.

Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home (even if you don't think you will need to).

Use your instincts and judgment. If the situation is very dangerous, consider giving the abuser what he wants to calm him down. You have the right to protect yourself until you are out of danger.

Always remember: YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE HIT OR THREATENED!

HINTS AND TIPS FOR USING SWOT

There are many uses for SWOT. Its advantage is that it allows us to see the whole picture.

Use a SWOT analysis to examine where you are now and where you wish to be.

Be realistic about your strengths and weaknesses are, and what the strengths and weaknesses of the family are.

Be specific and list only the key points and issues.

Make sure you relate strengths and weaknesses to critical success factors.

State strengths and weaknesses in competitive terms.

Rank each point in order of importance.

Keep the SWOT analysis brief—it should be no more than one page in length.

UNDERSTANDING EACH SWOT SECTION BETTER

Strengths – are positive attributes internal to you and your family and are within your control.

Weaknesses – are also internal and within your control; these are the things that may impede your ability to meet your goals and objectives.

Opportunities – are external factors that you and your family should (or could) explore and further develop.

Threats – are external factors beyond your control that could place you or your family at risk.

PERSONAL SAFETY PLANS—WHAT ARE THEY?

A personal safety plan is a unique tool that is used to help us know what we need to respond to safety issues or concerns. It is used to identify steps that you can take to increase your safety. It can also help prepare you and your children to respond to the possibility of further violence.

In the following pages you will find information on how to develop a personal safety plan. To better prepare you, a thinking tool can be useful. An example of such a thinking tool is the SWOT analysis, which has the user consider all angles to a situation with an intended focus on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

USING SWOT ANALYSIS TO THINK IT THROUGH

Using SWOT to develop a personal safety plan will help you think things through and make a decision. But first, what is SWOT anyways?

SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is used for many purposes and was designed to help people think through situations and to develop a course of action. The image below shows these four SWOT areas within a Medicine Wheel.



HOW TO USE SWOT

There is no right or wrong way to use SWOT to think things through. The main point is being clear of what issue you are dealing with, and then using SWOT to resolve or address the issue.

The following chart offers some prompters and questions that may be posed for each section.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Identify safe places, safe people, services and re-sources. Identify skills, personal strengths, things that make you strong. What do you have and who do you know that helps here? Know how resourceful you are.	Identify potential gaps in your strengths. Know what your weaknesses are and make a plan to address them. Identify what you need to deal with items in this column. Consider a back up plan. Be honest with yourself.	Identify the things that are there to help you. Explore all possible ways to deal with the issue at hand. Identify what personal opportunities are available. Examine your skills and how they can be used to better your life. Be forward looking, goals are good things.	Identify things that could go wrong and plan how to deal with them. Work threats into your back up plan. List all possible threats and review with someone you trust. Identify solutions and implement them. Consider all avenues of threat and plan for it.

EXAMPLE OF HOW SWOT CHART LOOKS

Issue: _____



EMERGENCY PLANNING AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Emergencies can happen at any time. Having an emergency safety plan will help you and your family members respond to emergencies when they occur.

The **Canadian Red Cross** has developed a Disaster Preparedness kit. It provides advice on how to prepare for short-term power outages or major disasters and how to make your own kit. Information on the Disaster Preparedness kit can be found on the Canadian Red Cross website: www.redcross.ca

TIPS ON MAKING YOUR OWN 72 HOUR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS KIT

Collect your supplies and store them in a sturdy back pack or bag. This bag should include the following items:

- ⇒ Water: 2 Litres of drinking water and 2 Litres of washing water per person, per day
- ⇒ Food: 72 hour supply of non-perishable food for each person
- ⇒ First Aid Kit
- ⇒ Extra Keys (House, Vehicles)
- ⇒ Money (in small bills)
- ⇒ Medications and other special needs items (contact lens solution, baby formula)
- ⇒ Manual Can Opener
- ⇒ Crank or battery-operated radio and flashlight, with extra batteries for each
- ⇒ Personal hygiene items
- ⇒ Important Papers and Family documents (copies of birth and marriage certificates, passports, licenses, wills, land deeds and insurance)
- ⇒ Copy of your emergency plan and list of names and phone numbers

DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN

Most safety plans start with the premise that the abuser is dangerous. This may or may not be true for you and your family. This section was developed to assist those individuals who find themselves in a violent situation and who may need to leave the family home quickly.

DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN

Having a personal safety plan is not something we think of. But, just like there is the need to have a Disaster Preparedness kit for unplanned power outages and natural or man-made disasters, having a personal safety plan for you and your family makes sense.

If you do find yourself in a dangerous situation and need to escape quickly your safety plan will come in handy. Your personal safety plan can also be useful in a wide variety of emergencies.

If you need information on available resources and services please refer to the **MIYKIWAN Resource Book and Fact Sheets**. It is also recommended that you talk to a professional about what your needs are, they can provide guidance and show you options you may not have considered.

SAFETY IN ACTION

Your safety and the safety of each member of your family is important. Trust your instincts and do what you need to do to survive. Practice your escape, know which doors, windows, elevators or stairs to use. Have a code word for emergency situations and don't be afraid to use it. Reassure family members and children that the situation is not their fault.

Leaving a domestic abuse situation is dangerous. Take precautions.

“PERSONALING” YOUR SAFETY PLAN:

The *MIYKIWAN Toolkit* includes a Personal Safety Plan work sheet. This work sheet is designed to give you one spot to collect your information. You may want to print extra copies for yourself and to share with friends. The *MIYKIWAN* Personal Safety Plan is also available on the internet as a downloadable PDF document.

It is advisable to keep a copy of your Personal Safety Plan in a place outside the family home and to give a copy with a trusted friend in case you need to leave the family home quickly.

HINTS AND TIPS

The following are some basic hints and tips:

- ⇒ Consider an unlisted phone number
- ⇒ If possible carry a cell phone for emergencies
- ⇒ Remove items of a personal nature from your garbage or recyclables
- ⇒ Make sure your windows and doors are locked, consider the use of deadbolts
- ⇒ Use security alarms or other security features if possible
- ⇒ If travelling in a car, change your travel route to and from work often
- ⇒ Keep emergency numbers at your disposal
- ⇒ Make sure others are informed of your situation and if possible, create a signal to let them know if you are in danger
- ⇒ Have an escape route mapped out in case you need it
- ⇒ If children are involved teach them a plan and make sure they know emergency numbers
- ⇒ Do your research. Talk to trusted sources, get legal advice, and find services in your area
- ⇒ Collect personal information and documents, make copies and store in a safe location. Preferably outside the home.
- ⇒ Use caution with technology, computers, social media. Know how to delete your browser history.

PRACTICAL ADVICE ON SAFETY PLANS:

Detailed plans to help you deal with dangerous situations or sudden changes in a relationship or living situation.

Identify the people you trust; these are often referred to as safe friends.

Identify where the safe places are in your community; these are the places you may need to run to. Mark these on a map.

Include information on domestic violence resources and what your legal rights are.

Build on what you know. Each safety plan will be different.

Your 72 hour Disaster Preparedness Kit can double as your Emergency Bag.

“What you should know, is that... removing yourself from a violent situation does not mean that you love them any less. What it means, is that you also love yourself and the kids too.”

CUSTOMIZE YOUR SAFETY PLAN

The following may or may not apply to your situation, or you may find that each applies at different stages of your life transition.

Recent Separation

- Security: remember to change all locks on doors, windows, and the garage. If you have a security system be sure to check the contract, update it, and change the passcode. Have a security system installed if you don't have one.
- Educate your children so that they know to call police or family if the other parent has taken them without permission.
- Communicate with your child's school and childcare providers. Make sure that permissions to pick up your children are established and known.
- Get a lawyer who is familiar with family law. You need this expertise to assist with issues pertaining to custody, visitation and divorce. The intent is to protect you and your children.
- Get a restraining order if you need one.

If you plan on leaving the abuser, you may want to consider the following:

- Plan when and how you can safely leave. Have a location to go to.
- What services and resources do you need? Write this information down and include telephone numbers.
- Know the number of your local emergency shelter and how to get there.
- Consider what type of custody and visitation provisions are needed to keep you and your children safe.
- Open a savings account and use a safe address, such as a post office box or your work address.
- Leave money, a set of extra keys, and copies of important documents with someone you can trust. If you need to leave home fast and may not have the time to collect these documents before leaving.

Planning to Stay? Things to think about:

- Know what works best in terms of your safety and the safety of your family members?
- Identify your support persons. Who can you call during a crisis?
- Create an emergency signal or code word so that other family members, children, or neighbours know when to call the police.
- If you need to leave the situation temporarily, where will you go and how can you safely return? Have several places in mind and talk to these supporters about your situation.
- Know the escape routes in your house, in your neighborhood and in your community.

CHECKLIST

The following items are important and should be a part of your safety plan:

- List of Safe Contacts

- List of Emergency Numbers

- Pack an Emergency Bag and include the following:

- Phone numbers for family, friends, doctors, lawyers, and local service providers.

- Important Information: this includes birth certificates, social security cards, marriage and driver's licenses, car ownership, lease or mortgage papers, passports, insurance information, school and health records, welfare and immigration documents, and divorce or other court documents.

- Money, credit cards, ATM cards, and bank account numbers

- Extra set of keys, clothing, medication and prescriptions.

THINGS I CAN DO TO LOOK AFTER MY “SELF”:

THINGS THAT STRESS ME OUT AND HOW I CAN DEAL WITH THEM IN POSITIVE WAYS:

LOOKING AFTER “SELF”

Family violence can be very stressful for all family members. It is important to take some time to look after yourself and your family during difficult times, especially if there are changes to home or living environment. Most often we try to focus our attention on other people around us, such as our children. It is important to know that you can take better care of them by looking after your “self”.

The whole experience of family violence can be devastating. You may feel a whole range of feelings. Feeling defeated, depressed, and even anxious about making changes to your life and the lives of your family members is normal. You may also experience a sense of elation, excitement, and happiness to be free. You may also feel guilt. These are all natural feelings.

Take time to look after you. Consider what you can do to make you a happier person. What do you need to find balance, perhaps it is returning to your cultural roots, joining a drumming group, getting a pedicure, or getting a better education.

GETTING HELP—SERVICES AVAILABLE

There are services that can help you access what you need to deal with your particular needs. Part of safety planning is knowing what is available in your community; you may be surprised to find out that there is more than you thought there was. In other situations and regions, there may be less access to direct services or you may not be comfortable accessing those services. Having alternative options is part of safety planning.

STRESSORS AND TRIGGERS

No one is perfect, everyone has stressors and triggers. Knowing and understanding what stresses us out and triggers us to respond in a particular way is important to breaking the cycle of violence.

Some people in situations of violence self-medicate. This can lead to addictions to alcohol, illegal drugs and prescription medications. Poverty, homelessness, and lack of employment are examples of triggers.

Reflect on what your stressors and triggers are. Be honest with yourself; and then develop a plan to respond to these stressors and triggers.

ADJUSTING TO A “NEW NORMAL”

We all know that “patterns” repeat themselves, it does not matter what type of pattern it is—but they do repeat. Our lives are often patterns, either we develop our own, adopt someone else’s pattern and make it our own, or we combine life patterns with our intimate partners.

Adjusting to a “new normal” means changing some of the patterns that no longer serve us well. If a pattern resulted in a negative outcome, we should not seek to repeat that pattern. Change can be a very good thing, but also can be scary. But remember one thing, while change can bring new things, those new things will quickly become regular and normal things. Life continues, and we adapt. This happens all the time, whether we know it or not. Accepting change is easier than resisting change; when we resist change we often find ourselves hanging tight to the things that hurt us or the things which we have outgrown. Letting those things go allows for new things to enter our world. Take it one day at a time and celebrate each success and accomplishment no matter how small.

HELPING FAMILY MEMBERS ADJUST

Pay special attention to the needs of your family during the transition stage. They may be experiencing a different set of stressors and may not always know how to express this. For children and youth this can include moving to a new neighborhood, starting fresh at a new school, making new friends and living in a custodial arrangement that confuses them. Keep the lines of communication open and help them adjust.

TALKING WITH RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

Family friends and relatives can be a great support during a crisis. You may be surprised to discover that they have known all along that there were issues within your home and that they may have been waiting for you to open up the lines of communication. Talking about your feelings and emotions can be both helpful and healing.

A cautionary note. You may find that there might be some resistance or confusion to what it is you are going through, this could be subtle or more pronounced. Remember, that in the case of family friends they may find their loyalties challenged. It could be difficult for someone to picture their friend committing acts of violence against the family. This can be hard to understand or accept for someone who has never experienced this type of violence before. Understand and acknowledge this, and move towards those people who truly support you and your family.

PRACTICAL ADVICE AFTER YOU HAVE LEFT

Did you know that the woman leaves her abuser more than seven times before she makes it permanent?

Leaving does not mean you are safe. It can put you at risk.

Statistics show that 75 % of intimate partner or domestic violence homicides happened when a partner is leaving or has left abuse.

Never return to get “stuff”. If you are a victim and have left your abuser, do not return or be lured to return to collect “stuff.”

You are not replaceable, you are more important than “stuff”.

Source:

www.domesticabuseshelter.org

Chapter 4

Taking Action

WHY IS TAKING ACTION IMPORTANT?

Family violence in its many forms, hurts everyone. No one is immune. Silence and ignorance are the best friend of family violence. This chapter seeks to break the silence that can keep families from living happy healthy lives.

Addressing violence in the family and across our communities means breaking the silence and taking actions to end it. It means making the commitment to live life free of violence and to change what needs to change to live life free of violence. It takes courage and determination to break the cycle of violence. Know that you are not alone, there are services and organizations to help you, there are family and friends who love you and care about your well being. There are people who know; reach out and break the silence.

“Fear, Power, and Control... These are the things that keep violence going. These are the things we need to look at to break the cycle of violence.”

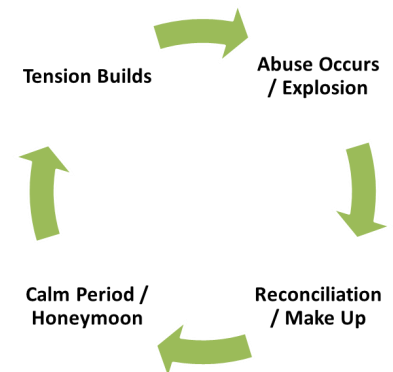
PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AND ITS CONTENTS:

This chapter is meant to prompt thought into why and how we may take action to address family violence.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Saying “no” to family violence, means changing the way we think and live.

Looking more closely at the cycle of violence can help us move forward in healthy ways. Knowing and seeing patterns is a natural survival process for all life on this planet.



REBUILDING LIFE AND FRESH STARTS

Leaving an abusive situation can bring with it many new opportunities and fresh starts. Make rebuilding life as enjoyable as possible; do the things that make you and your family smile. This is part of the healing journey. Afterwards, you will find yourself in a much better place. When you arrive there, to that place of balance, “where the heart lives, where it calls home”, you may find yourself wanting to help others. This too is part of the healing journey. Consider ways you may do this, start the conversation and invite others to join you.

TESTIMONY OF HOPE: RYAN B

“It was really strange for me, no one told me that my life wasn’t normal. My mom and dad went to residential school but they never talked about it. They were alcoholics and fought a lot, I thought that was normal. I saw that the moms and dads in the other houses on the reserve also drank alcohol and fought a lot. That was common then.

I grew up in dysfunction but didn’t know it. I didn’t know that what I was doing was wrong, until the one day I really hurt the person I loved. She left me; I was shocked and embarrassed. I went to couples counselling to try to get her back and made all sorts of promises. It didn’t work, I hurt her again and again. I hurt myself and became afraid that I would kill her and then kill myself. I remember thinking that one day and it scared me.

I went to see an Elder; we had a good talk. Lots of good talks. Over several years I learned about our history and ways of doing things, our teachings and ceremony. I also learned about colonialism and assimilation and the cycle of intergenerational abuse. I learned about residential schools and what it did to our people, to my mom and dad. I also learned that these are root causes of violence but are no excuse for my behaviour and my desperate need for control. I learned to accept this and made friends with myself. I quit drinking alcohol and am now eleven years sober. My wife did leave me and she re-married, I broke a sacred trust. I know that. We are friends now, she plays bingo with my new wife and a few times a year, we ceremony together.

If I could say one thing about all this, is that, we need to know who we are, who we were as a people, and what happened to us. And then, and only then, can we get back to “there”, that place where the heart and soul live in balance with the Creator. We find that place, when we find who we are. That is where love lives, and there is no place for violence there, where love lives.”

LIST ANY IDEAS YOU
HAVE ON REBUILDING
LIFE AND FRESH
STARTS:

IS THERE ANYTHING
THAT YOU HAVE AL-
WAYS WANTED TO DO?
WHAT IS IT?

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Building awareness and prevention around the types of violence that can occur in the family home is important in the quest to end family violence. Facts must be faced. Consequences must be understood. The survival of our Indigenous Nations require that we deal with this issue in the here and now.

The Aboriginal population is the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population. This is an untapped resource that is fast becoming an educated resource. Many are ready to move forward and make real and lasting positive impacts on Canadian society and its economy, and there are many more waiting in the wings. Aboriginal youth can and will be the next driving force in Canada.

To do this effectively, Aboriginal families need to be strong and healthy. This is one way to produce independent vibrant people who are equipped to move into leadership positions. There is a direct correlation between higher education, higher income, and giving back to the community.

Creating awareness and prevention around family violence should be a priority for all Canadians. The “demographic dividend” is just too great to ignore. Aboriginal people are and should be an economic interest for all Canadians. Addressing violence in Aboriginal families must be a priority to all people.

ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY

Many people find themselves naturally drawn to the very same issues that once posed them the greatest challenges. This “lived knowledge” also referred to as “experiential” knowledge often provides the best insight to tackling issues. You may find, that over time, the desire to help another woman or another family find their way through the darkness of family violence to the light of family happiness and healing is strong. Often, women and their children (when they grow older) will seek to help others. This can take many forms, some may work directly in the field, become activists, do advocacy work or a combination on behalf of family violence survivors.

But what is activism and advocacy? These terms can become confused because the roles of both may be similar and often overlap.

Activism is the act of assertive, often militant action, such as mass demonstrations in support or against a cause, idea, or policy.

Advocacy is the act of actively supporting, that is, pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, an idea or a policy.

WHAT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

This toolkit includes a Resource Book. Within that book you will find contact information for various programs and services. This listing is not all inclusive. Each Province and Territory has a range of initiatives that work together to support families and communities, many have specific programs to address family violence. Contact your regional and local public offices for additional information.

The Federal response to family violence in Canada:

Canada has been working to address family violence through the Family Violence Initiative since 1988. The Family Violence Initiative is provided through 15 departments and agencies working together to prevent and respond to family violence.

- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Canadian Heritage
- Citizen and Immigration Canada
- Correctional Services of Canada
- Department of National Defence
- Department of Justice
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Health Canada
- Public Safety Canada
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Status of Women Canada
- Services Canada
- Statistics Canada

Victim Services.

For more information visit the Government of Canada Correctional Services website here: www.csc-scc.gc.ca/victims/index-eng.shtml

Directory of Victim Services can be found here: www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/vsd-rsv/index.html

TESTIMONY OF HOPE:

My experiences in a violent household were hidden from most of my community. The only escape I had was my education and it made me feel more normal to be involved in my school and be completely submersed in the material.

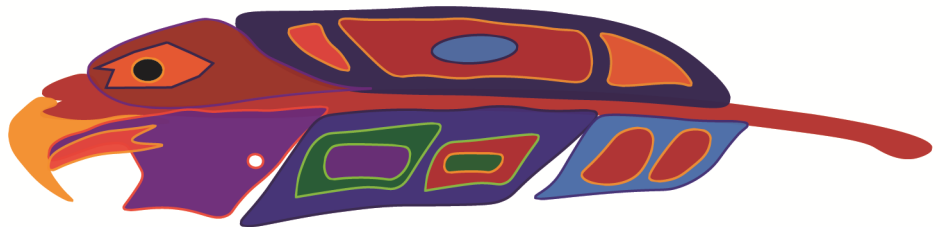
I left my home at a young age because of the combination of my sibling's and father's addictions. I couldn't focus on school. Everyday was violent.

My education was an escape and my chance to have a life free of fear. I did not want to be paycheque to paycheque and dependent upon others. My mother was strong, but was financially dependent on my father and he on her as well, so there was additional fear of leaving the situation. Where could she go? How much worse would her situation become? Especially with children?

I saw these lingering questions as motivators to do more in my life in which I would never have to rely on someone else. I just completed my third degree at the masters level and became a teacher to encourage others to use school as a way to break the cycle that holds families down and children back from succeeding.

It is my goal to support Aboriginal girls and boys and all those who struggle in the strong grip of poverty to achieve what, at times, society, even their own family, tells them they cannot. I will be there each and every step to ensure they do not fall back into the familiar, the familiar is that old path, the only one they knew growing up.

If I can teach them there is a different one to follow, one of worth and value, instead of addiction and violence, then I consider that success.





CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

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