

TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE

Bridging the Gap:

A Cross-Cultural Conversation between
Aboriginal women, RCMP, Yukon Women's Groups,
First Nations and front-line service agencies



Liard Aboriginal Women's Society

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A Cross-Cultural Conversation between Aboriginal women, RCMP,
Yukon Women's Groups, First Nations and front-line service agencies

Whitehorse and Watson Lake Meeting Reports

*We would like to acknowledge
and thank our funders*

Justice Canada

Women's Directorate
Yukon Government

RCMP
Family Violence Fund

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page and Acknowledgements

ii

Executive Summary

iv

Session 1

Agenda

6

Participants

7

Whitehorse Report

8

Evaluation Template

28

Evaluation Results

30

Session 2

Agenda

38

Participants

39

Watson Lake Report

40

Evaluation Template

58

Evaluation Results

60

Final Justice Canada Report

69

LAWS Newsletter March 2011

77

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS) recognizes a critical need to provide more opportunities for Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members to hear from Kaska women, Help and Hope for Families, Kaushee's Place, other women's groups, government agencies in Watson Lake and Whitehorse, Yukon, community members, and service providers about violence and how it can be addressed. The current climate of fear and distrust of police has been well documented in Yukon. (See for example reports of "What We Heard" and Sharing Common Ground at www.policereview2010.gov.yk.ca). LAWS is motivated by a desire to change that climate of fear and to build safety in community.

With Justice Canada and RCMP funding, LAWS held two workshops in March 2011 to promote a dialogue between women and the RCMP about how we can create safety for women so they can retain their dignity and report violent crimes. LAWS wants to stop the serious abuse of women in Yukon communities, and help develop an effective plan of action to address this abuse with the full participation of RCMP and community members. As activists for social justice together, we need to establish a set of practices that acknowledge harm, honour resistance, and stop violence.

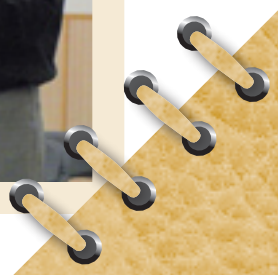
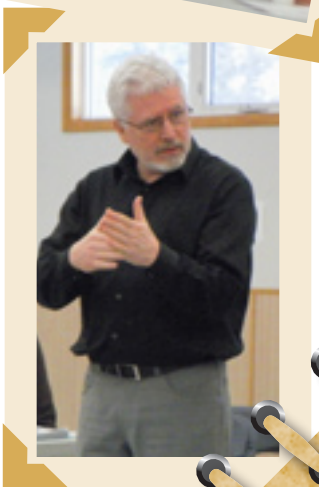
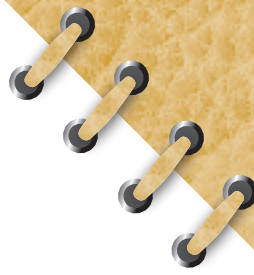
RCMP participation and ongoing communication and cooperation with women's and community groups is key to building trust among all participants, and improving safety for women. The program objective is to create lasting change, through the development of an action plan and orientation documents that could be used by the RCMP to inform and improve policing and social service delivery for women living in Watson Lake and Whitehorse.

At the initial workshops; "Bridging the Gap: a Cross Cultural Conversation between Kaska women, First Nations, RCMP and community agencies" and "Bridging the Gap: Creating Safety in Community", Allan Wade and Cathy Richardson educated on safety, the importance of accurate language, violence, responsibility, and recovery. The facilitators were tasked with structuring a conversation and activities about current practices, the issues of violence and about shared concerns regarding violence in communities, particularly against indigenous women. At these workshops, participants would periodically exchange relevant information and strategize for areas of improvement. At the end of each workshop, the participants completed evaluations and an agreement was established to maintain ongoing communications throughout the series of future workshops. LAWS has applied for funding for a two-year Together for Justice project to continue this work.

LAWS asked participants at Bridging the Gap sessions to make a collective commitment to move forward in building relationships that will accomplish change. LAWS publishes this report of conversations from the first two Together for Justice workshops in the hope it will inform improved service delivery, policing, and community work to prevent male violence against women and violence in all its forms.

Lois Moorcroft, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society Secretariat
July 2011

Session 1



AGENDA

Bridging the Gap –

*A Cross-Cultural Conversation between Aboriginal Women, RCMP,
First Nations, Women's groups and front-line Service agencies.*

Date & Time: MARCH 3, 2011 & MARCH 4, 2011 • 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Location: NaKwaTaKu Potlatch House

Presenters: Allan Wade, Ph.D., Catherine Richardson, Ph.D.,
Centre for Response-based practice, Duncan B.C.

MARCH 3, 2011

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 10:00 | Opening Prayer |
| 10:15 | Identifying Points of Connection and Common Purpose |
| | Purpose and Process of the Gatherings |
| | Building Safety |
| 11:00 | Social Responses in Cases of Violence |
| 12:30 – 1:30 | LUNCH PROVIDED ON-SITE |
| 1:30 | Dignity |
| | Understanding Violence in Social and Historical Context |
| | Family Resemblance in Domination and Resistance |
| 2:45 | NUTRITION BREAK |
| 3:00 | Violence is Social |

MARCH 4, 2011

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 10:00 | Violence is Unilateral |
| 11:00 | Responses and Resistance to Violence |
| 12:30 – 1:30 | LUNCH PROVIDED ON-SITE |
| 1:30 | Language and Violence |
| 2:45 | NUTRITION BREAK |
| 3:00 | Identifying Effective Social Responses Already in Place |
| 3:45 | Evaluation |
| 4:00 | Forging Commitments for Sustainable Local Action |
| 4:30 | Closing Comments |

PARTICIPANTS

Bridging the Gap – Creating Safety in Community

Date & Time: MARCH 3, 2011 & MARCH 4, 2011 • 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM • 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM
Location: NakwaTaku Potlatch House

Michelle Beckley	Aboriginal Women's Project Officer - Women's Directorate
Ann Maje Raider	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Mary Maje	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Martina Baker	Teslin Tlingit Council - Peacemaker Diversion Program
Peter Clark	Commanding Officer RCMP
Bob Johnson	RCMP Training Development
Kurt Bringsli	RCMP youth Liaison
Kelly MacQuame	RCMP - Magor Crimes Unit
Janet McDonald	Liard First Nation Member
Liz Porter	Liard First Nation Member
Mary Charlie	Liard First Nation Member
Cindy Chiasson	Elizabeth Fry Society Yukon Outreach Worker
May Brodhagen	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
May Stewart	Liard First Nation Member
Barbara McInerney	Kaushee's Place
Winnie Atlin	CTFN Elders Council
Kitty Grant	CTFN Elders Council
Pearl Keenan	WCC Elders Advisory Council
Agnes Mills	WCC Elders Advisory Council
Paul Thalhofer	RCMP
Dean Hoogland	RCMP
Julie Menard	Women's Directorate
Shauna Curtin	Women's Directorate
Don Rogers	RCMP
Terra Taylor	RCMP
Sharon Keaton	VAU-RCMP
Rick Aird	RCMP
Ketsia Hoode	Les EssentiElles
Charlotte Hrenchuk	Yukon Status of Women Council
Adeline Webber	Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle
Julianna Scramstad	Victoria Faulkner Women's Society Program Coordinator
Fannie Vance	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Lois Moorcroft	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society Secretariat

Whitehorse Report

Together for Justice

**Bridging the Gap: A Cross-Cultural Conversation between Aboriginal women, RCMP,
Yukon Women's Groups, First Nations, and front-line service agencies
NaKwaTaKu Potlatch House, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, March 2011**

Introduction:

Meeting Notes:

Opening Prayer and Introductions	9
Safety and collective ethics	11
Social responses to violence	11
Small group discussions: On a scale of 1 to 10, how just and effective are social responses to Aboriginal women in the Yukon, in cases of violence?	13
Positive examples of creating structures of safety	13
Negative social responses	13
The colonial code of relationship	14
Violence is deliberate	15
Dignity	16
How do you pay attention to people's dignity?	17
Social responses to victims	18
Concealing the violence: contrasting accounts of male to female violence	19
Violence is unilateral	20
Mutualizing interventions: types of interventions that don't recognize violence and resistance	21
Closing: Round table discussion	22

Handouts from workshop:

Contrasting Accounts of Male to Female Violence, Accounts 1 and 2	26
First and second accounts of sexualized assault	26
Wife-assault, sexualized assault: Judge's remarks	26

List of participants 27

Evaluations 28

Introduction:

Host agency: Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS)

Mary Maje, President, Ann Maje Raider, Executive Director, Elders, Board members

Presenters: Dr. Allan Wade, Dr. Cathy Richardson, Centre for Response-based Practice, Duncan, BC

Thirty-three participants attended Liard Aboriginal Women's Society's *Together for Justice: On Violence, Language and Responsibility* introductory workshop in Whitehorse.

LAWS representatives, Kaska Elders and LAWS Secretariat, RCMP "M" Division Commanding Officer, and RCMP from First Nations, Youth, Training, Major Crimes, Communications, Whitehorse and Kwanlin Dun detachments, RCMP victim assistance volunteer program; Kaushee's Place, Les EssentiElles, Yukon Status of Women Council, Elizabeth Fry Society Yukon, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre; Yukon Government Women's Directorate, Whitehorse Correctional Centre Elders Advisory Committee, Vuntut Gwitchin, Teslin Tlingit, and Carcross Tagish First Nations' Elders and Liard First Nation citizens joined presenters Dr. Allan Wade and Dr. Catherine Richardson for the gathering. A list of participants is found on page 27 of this report.

The goal of *Together for Justice* is to build on the opportunity for change by bringing together First Nations and community women, RCMP, women's groups representatives and front-line responders to start a conversation, to learn better ways of responding to violent crime against women living in aboriginal and northern communities, and to develop ongoing agreements on how to improve women's safety.

Many women distrust police because of previous negative experiences when they have reported violence. LAWS project is designed to bridge the gap between women and the RCMP, and to educate about the use of language and how to deal with people with dignity, respect, and honour. The initial two workshops, in Whitehorse and in Watson Lake, have been funded by Justice Canada and the RCMP for fiscal year 2010-11.

Evaluations said it was good that we cared enough to get together to change things for ourselves and future generations. Participants appreciated that the RCMP attended. They learned how important words are in the justice system, and that passive and mutual language can undermine the victim and normalize the violence or even blame the victim. Safety is always the underlying foundation for women's actions and we need to honour resistance and put emphasis on it when dealing with women, not blame women or judge them. Education and communication will all parties involved is essential to creating safety in communities. The open dialogue was a good start, more gatherings and conversations are needed to learn more and to develop lasting change through agreements and action plans to create safety.

By collaborative work during the Together for Justice workshops, RCMP members, Aboriginal women, First Nations service providers and women's groups can develop action plans and orientation documents for the RCMP. Participants will learn about safety, the importance of accurate language, violence, responsibility, and recovery. This knowledge, if put into practice, can help to improve investigating and reporting of sexual and spousal assaults. Ongoing communication and cooperation will inform improved service delivery, policing, and community work to prevent male violence against women and violence in all its forms.

Opening Prayer and Introductions:

Ann Maje Raider welcomed everyone, and Elder Pearl Keenan gave the Opening Prayer. Gunalcheesh.

Cathy Richardson asked the ancestors to join us, gave thanks for the prayers, and acknowledged the traditional territory of Kwanlin Dun First Nation. She spoke of her Metis heritage and her great-grandmother from Old Crow and of her work with Yukon First Nations communities. We're here to help people recover and create safe, just, dignified conditions around them.

Allan Wade introduced himself as someone who has been walking the divide for a long time, growing up in Chilliwack in an orderly, square grid pattern neighbourhood, on the other side of the dyke from the “Squaw River Reserve.” As a child he wondered why the dyke protected the white folks' homes and not the Indian ones. Working as a family therapist, counsellor, and psychologist he addresses problems that are connected to violence. Colonization is hidden under the term “civilization.” Working with aboriginal people he started hearing about the prison camps that we call residential schools which were not a residence nor a school. Their intent was to de-educate not to educate. Allan does critical incident debriefing with firemen and police, and helps communities create more socially just and effectiveness circumstances for people. His research is on the connection between violence and language. As an employee of LAWS he is accountable to the advocates.

Cathy said her understanding of our task is to bring individual women and RCMP members together to talk about how we can create safety. We would like to stop violence and build relationships. We will identify what's already safe and what's already working.

Allan said that when you talk about violence you talk about hard things, that's unavoidable, but we'll be very sparing about that. We don't want people to be traumatized or sad. We'll create enough safety to look at these issues in a fairly straightforward way. We're not going to talk about your personal lives. We're not going to engage in the practice of criticism. We're here to build, not tear down. This is a place for direct, honest, informed criticism. Participants should have a willingness to enter into some examination of their practice. I expect that like me you are humbled by the people you work with. Just when you think you know things you learn so much from other people's wisdom and experience.

Ann Maje Raider explained the background for this gathering. Last summer LAWS applied for RCMP family violence program funding. Ann acknowledged the support of Sergeant Paul Thalhofer, and thanked Yukon women's groups for their letters of support. We've applied to Status of Women Canada for longer-term project funding. In Yukon, there is a gap between women and the RCMP, and the idea behind our project is to bridge the gap. We want to educate about the use of language and how to deal with people with dignity, respect, and honour. We want to reach a protocol agreement with the RCMP. When new members come in to work in our communities they will take Kaska cultural training, and have an understanding of the history of violence against Kaska people. The Kaska have a rich history and culture, we are much more than what the RCMP see in arresting our people. We are not that. In our community the RCMP are very transient; we want them to have the wonderful knowledge Allan and Cathy have that will be introduced over the next couple of days. I want to thank the RCMP, Kaushee's Place, and women's groups for their help. We're glad the RCMP are making amends and building relationships.

Mary Maje acknowledged our Elders and our people, saying it's an honour to be here among the Elders and always good to be in a learning environment. I represent Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS) and I honour Ann, Lois and Travis for their hard work bringing this about.

May Broadhagen is from Liard First Nation, has been part of LAWS since they started and serves on the RCMP “M” Division Elders Advisory Committee. She's interested in stopping violence against women and improving the relationship with the RCMP. “I like my people to feel safe with them. We have to know they're respectful. So hopefully everything will turn out.”

Each participant then introduced themselves around the circle. Several of the Elders spoke about how abuse of women has to stop, describing their work over many decades in the area of healing and recovery, by empowering our women which empowers the whole family. They talked about residential school and being made to feel ashamed of who they were. Members of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre Elders Advisory Committee work with inmates to help the healing of a lot of men and women who are stuck in the violence and in the justice system. They expressed concern about very young people being drunk and then having to be picked up and taken by RCMP to the hospital. They were really happy to be there to discuss all of this and said it's good to help each other in a circle.

SAFETY AND COLLECTIVE ETHICS

Allan talked about the many layers and different forms of violence that are functionally connected to each other. During invasions there are often high levels of rape, kidnapping of children, ethnocide, high levels of debasement and humiliation. We need to connect these things, to see the links between schoolyard bullying and wife assault. LAWS is looking for participants to commit to three two-day workshops over a period of months to work on breaking down isolation. Virtually all forms of violence involve isolation. In Watson Lake, bingo is about a lot more than playing a game. It's a way to break down isolation.

We need to create a spirit of collective ethics and sustain a relationship over time. It's big fish to fry, not an easy project. This is an historical moment and we hope everyone will rise to it. Talk it over; if you're not willing to participate we don't want anybody to be forced to attend. Coming and going from the session interferes with collective efforts and sustainability. There is no value in just holding a two-day workshop with outsiders from B.C. The group needs to foster something that's going to be sustainable over time. We'll be discussing that more later on.

SOCIAL RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE

Allan and the Centre for Response-Based Practice look at how police, lawyers, doctors, transition house workers and other people respond to victims, children, the accused, offenders. He's been at the work in earnest for about 30 years. A majority of victims receive negative social responses. An example is a parent may say to a battered woman "Honey you made your bed, lie in it," or "Your children need your marriage to stay together." These are well-meaning people.

It's so quick to subtly blame a woman for being raped, to ask, "Why were you in that part of town?" As a parent you might ask that out of real concern. Social responses also include service providers. An assaulted woman phones police, calls a victim assistance worker, the police arrive, a constable begins to interview her. He gets information about the past, in B.C. there's a primary aggressor assessment requirement. He asks the woman "How long have you been having the problems in your marriage." She replies "This isn't a marriage problem, this is a violence problem. It's a criminal assault." The police constable is experienced and competent, but now embarrassed. He finds the accused, arrests him, lays a charge, once convicted the sentence included jail and a no contact order. After the offender is out of jail he came to the woman's house and she phoned the police to say you need to call the arresting officer, he's not supposed to be here and he's accosting me. It goes to the detachment and she is told "I'll make a note on the file." She phoned Allan who advised her to go back down to the detachment and ask them to locate the accused and enforce the no contact order. There is no negative intention at all, but the woman isn't being protected.

A 56-year old woman whose psychological career started when she was 13 had had shock treatments and been diagnosed with anxiety disorder, depression and personality disorder. Support from members of a faith community helped her. When asked why she ran away from home at a young age it was because her brother had been molesting her since she was 8. She told her mom one day when she was giving her a bath. Her mom pushed her head under the bath water and said "Your brother would never do that." Her brother and his friends sexually assaulted her and she ran away when she was a young teen. Victims of violence who have negative social responses are unlikely to tell an authority person. She said how her mother reacted to her made her feel worse than the assaults did.

Aboriginal women who are part of so-called healing processes, reconciliation processes, say it means you get to tell these five lawyers representing the church and the government, these strangers in suits, what the priest did to you. When, where and how he touched you. You might be 75 years old and you're being asked to recall painful abuse from years ago. That's not justice, that's violence. A few years ago at Wye Lake cabin several Edmonton lawyers blew in to town to take statements and get clients, then left. People drink, they get sad, they think about suicide. That's a negative social response to all victims of violence. Then legal counsel sent out a long form in English to the survivors.

Violence is the cause of most "learning disorders." A child who can't sleep, lives in a house of terror where dad is beating mom, and the child lies awake then falls behind at school, feels humiliated, and is diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. Many of the psychological tests used to diagnose children are unethical and unsupportable, and should not be used. The WISC and other common tests to diagnose learning disabilities, as well as mental health

diagnostic tests such as those used to diagnose ADD/ADHD and depression, are problematic in this respect. The quality of the social response is a better predictor of recovery from violence, when people have good social responses they recover quicker. When a counselor asks you “Why do you pick these men?” it puts the deficit on the woman rather than on the violent man.

Our collective project is to reshape and improve our social responses all across the board. Police are one part of that, social workers and nurses and others need to be involved.

Cathy said women experience negative social responses more often than men, and are more likely to receive a psychological diagnosis. Once you have a permanent mental health record you can never get it cleared off your name. It can be subpoenaed in court; you can be denied life insurance or a mortgage. Many people are not made aware of consent and what the implications of a psychological diagnosis are. I see it as a misdiagnosis of violence, particularly when members of the aboriginal community are labeled as mentally ill. Negative social responses leave more intense and lasting distress.

When we think about how to solve the violence, or ask if women have been victims of violence, we tend to assume they are likely to be violent if they have been victims of violence. Actually that’s not true. It depends on how they were treated when they reported the violence. That’s what makes the difference. If they’re cared for well when they report violence they likely won’t be violent themselves.

Allan spoke about how violence by the offender begins a cascade of violence from many other people. If a woman reports sexual assault by a Chief, her kids are beat up, she’s sworn at at the grocery store. The water truck doesn’t make its delivery. The exercise of power and privilege to suppress the victims is entrenched in power structures, financial, political, gendered power, and male power. We have to find a way to address that, to bring about safer social responses.

An Elder said that in the communities Chief and Council have a lot of power. In her experience sometimes the violence is reported but no action is taken by police. Our people think they’re in partnership with Chief and Council.

Wade: In those cases, people know nothing happens. You tell your friends, they want you to be safe, and ask why you don’t leave. If you leave he’ll get partial custody and the children won’t be safe. It’s a deeply problematic notion that she has to leave. There are many good reasons why women stay. Most women who are murdered by their partners it’s after they leave. In BC psychiatrists are not required to disclose violence. Men who are violent are more successful in Court in getting custody.

Richardson: Under “Failure to protect” policies child welfare intervenes and ask why you didn’t stop the violence and children are removed from the mom and placed with the dad who was beating her. Poverty, class, and race are significant factors. A child protection worker may say “You need to move or we’ll take the children away.” There’s a zero vacancy rate in Whitehorse. Landlords do not want to house a single mom with three kids and a violent man chasing her around.

Elder: We’re looking at keeping people safe in the community, keeping them at home. The reality is often a child services intervention. Both parents may have problems with alcohol and drugs. Go back to the community and give them the capacity to help themselves, use culturally based activities.

AW: There are initiatives in several places for “Safe at home places.”

CR: When those mothers have to leave subsidized housing because their children were taken away from them they go to Edmonton, to Vancouver, to the Downtown East Side, and some are disappeared.

An RCMP asked Allan whether after being involved in this for 20 years, was he making gains?

Wade: What really brings change is culture. I've seen change when people feel a sense of belonging. All their lives they've been rejected. Culture brings them dignity.

A participant said what brings about change is education. Teachers have to be involved. First Nations learners are being disadvantaged because they are exposed to violence. Teachers don't see these children as what they've experienced, don't see them with a sense of hopeful possibility. They see them as learning disabled or damaged.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS – On a scale of 1 to 10, how just and effective are social responses to Aboriginal women in the Yukon, in cases of violence? Record your number and discuss in small groups why you picked it.

After the small group discussions, we talked about why most groups had picked low numbers. Women have to answer to so much criticism to get what they need. There's still a lot of ostracizing women who speak up. We react quickly with – what did you do? There's so much blame on the victim and it's all her fault. Women very rarely report. In small communities, girls and women don't report gang rape – these girls get blamed. It's so easy to fall into that trap. There are children being gang-raped and there is no positive response. Absolutely none. And she lives with that. Kids are taught they can't tell. They don't report violence, then later on in life they have troubles.

In the past our community would sit down and talk about it. This conversation is going to help turn things around, if we as a community raise the children together.

POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF CREATING STRUCTURES OF SAFETY

Cathy described a safe baby program, where family members can visit their children. The model of a kibbutz, living in a collective way, allows change and recovery.

Allan talked about the February 2011 outcry of positive social responses for the victim when Manitoba Justice Dewar gave a 2-year conditional sentence to a man convicted of sexual assault, calling him a "clumsy Don Juan," and said in the judgment that "Sex was in the air". The provincial government filed a complaint to the Judicial Council, and the Crown has appealed the sentence.

LAWS asked about developing a protocol. How do we incorporate this knowledge into protocols? How do we keep the language and the process going when we're alone? Who's going to implement it? Some of the ideas discussed were that once trust is broken it's gone, and to foster safety in communities we need to develop personal and institutional trust through improved relationships. Some of the suggestions related to trust and protocols:

1. Ensure RCMP continue to learn to develop clear descriptions of violence and resistance, using accurate language. For example, sexualized assault is a crime of violence, not a crime of wrongful sex. Wife-assault is about violence by a man against a woman, not about a "domestic dispute" or "conflict" or "abusive relationship". As well, any complete description of violence should include a description of how the victim responded and resisted. This reveals the ways in which the perpetrator tried to suppress that resistance, and reveals the full extent and deliberate nature of the crimes. Accurate descriptions, especially those that are developed when there has been a sincere effort to identify the primary aggressor, provide a more complete fact pattern and challenge the ways in which victims are blamed. (See handouts, page 26)
2. Kaska history/ Tlingit history/ the history of the First Nation whose traditional territory RCMP are placed in is learned by RCMP new to the community. It's a time saver for them – efficiency and economy for police.
3. Holding a circle discussion with women who are allowed to bring a supporter.
4. Commit to regular meetings.

NEGATIVE SOCIAL RESPONSES – turning them into positive social responses

We have huge room for creativity in solving these problems. Women who receive negative social responses from members of the community every time they report an assault need to have support if they are going to come forward

and report. She could identify two or three friends to sit in a circle with a police officer in the circle, to make it possible for her to report her account of violence in an environment she feels safe and that she won't be judged.

Another example of negative social response was recently reported at a Downtown Eastside Shelter – a Minister at a church shelter where a number of women reported rape said “Those women should watch how they dress, and how they walk around.” Marginalized, oppressed people are much more likely to receive negative social responses.

Victims who receive negative social responses experience more intense, lasting distress, are less likely to disclose violence, and are less likely to cooperate with authorities.

Victims who receive positive social responses tend to recover more quickly and to cooperate more with authorities. When children are provided with safe care they recover very quickly.

THE COLONIAL CODE OF RELATIONSHIP

Cathy spoke about the Nanaimo Indian Hospital in the 1960s, where a child she knew was chained to the bed and the toddler's parents were not allowed to see him on a regular basis. Because her dad was white she went to the other hospital. Her family came from Fort Chipewyan, and when her grandmother lived in Uranium City she lined her garden with uranium rocks. They weren't told the rocks were dangerous, and all of her hair fell out when she was still young. Her mom went to Anglican day school, and later taught her daughter to make birchbark baskets and traditional crafts.

Déline is known as “the Village of Widows.” Everybody in charge knew that the uranium was dangerous. All the men who carried 25 kg sacks of uranium on their shoulders died. The Dené had a prophecy, “I saw people going into a big hole in the ground – strange people, not Dené. Their skin was white. They were going into a hole with all kinds of metal tools and machines and making a lot of noise, so I followed them. They were going back and forth into that hole. They were digging a great tunnel.” The Elders said those rocks were dangerous and should stay in the ground. (<http://web.uvic.ca/~mharbell/final/prophecy.html>) The uranium they mined was used in the Manhattan project and in the Little Boy atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

People are still dying from this. Then it was uranium and radiation poisoning. Now it's oil. Animals are being born with more than one head. First Nations communities are dealing with all the pollution. Communities have lots of transient labour, boom and bust economic cycles, men come into the city and young women aren't safe. We want safety for every human being born on the planet.

In Canada we still have racialized legislation, the Indian Act that governs aboriginal peoples. In 1951 changes were made to the Indian Act so provinces could take over child welfare. First Nations families experienced the 60s scoop, the millennium scoop. Social workers would go into communities with empty buses and take all of the children off the reserve. This is destabilizing communities, and part of the colonial project of “Move over, we want your land”, which First Nations were expected to believe was for their own good.

People want proof of these things. They think aboriginal people are complaining. In 2008, on Squamish Nation Territory near Vancouver, The Friends and Relatives of the Disappeared released a list of twenty-eight mass graves across Canada holding the remains of untold numbers of aboriginal children who died in Indian Residential Schools.

There are many sources for this colonial history, Bourgeois, Harris and Tough document land theft research. *Merchant Princes* (O'Keefe and Macdonald, 2001), tells the history of the Saskatchewan Valley Land Co., which amassed 5 million acres in 1899 at \$1.00 per acre, resold \$20.00 per acre. The land was described as sparsely or unpopulated with no mention of its original inhabitants. Millside Logging and Comox Logging & Railway controlled 70,000 acres of timber between Courtenay and Campbell River. The majority of Canadian Western Lumber Co. board members were in the Canadian parliament. Leaders profited from the wealth of stolen indigenous land.

An Elder talked about Dena Au-Nazen, the highest law of our Kaska people, which is to honour the land and to have respect for everybody. It's the self-control and the social order of our people. People were taught for generations how to treat people, the animals, and the land.

Allan described how European culture gave us genocide against indigenous peoples. European imperialism gave us psychiatry and psychology. What's known as the talking cure – if you talk about something enough you'll get better. There's a way of thinking imbedded in colonialism and the helping professions that is part of a colonial code of relationship. And it's how the land, the children, and the social order were taken from aboriginal people. What the institutions of health, education and child welfare have in common when applied to indigenous people is land, or "Move over, we want what you're standing on." We need to move away from the colonial code of relationship.

Colonial Code of Relationship

1. You are deficient and heathen,
2. I am proficient – knowledgeable, white, wealthy,
3. I have the right to perform certain operations on you – controlling, policing, diagnosing, apprehending, for your own good.

Cathy told the history of scrip paper which was issued by government agents to Metis and aboriginal people in exchange for their land. Speculators followed the government agents and bought the scrips for 50 cents or for a beer. After Louis Riel was hanged it wasn't safe for Metis to live there, many moved to Saskatchewan or BC or the Island. If we can't keep people safe in their own communities they become isolated and vulnerable, or susceptible to poverty, violence and homelessness because they lost their homes and were spread out without their families.

The government deliberately killed off all the buffalo, and gave Indians the most primitive farming implements. Imposing the colonial order leads to high levels of alcohol abuse and high levels of violence in the communities.

Allan talked about the connections between logging interests, mining, and violence against women. The Endridge Northern Gateway pipeline project has been approved by government. BC Chiefs were unanimously opposed to it. What's going to happen? Men working away from home in resource extraction industries often use drugs and alcohol, become abusive. Young women are not safe from assault. Who's asking for anything to be done about it? There's a role for the RCMP in that. How will they consult aboriginal women and be involved in keeping women and community members safe?

VIOLENCE IS DELIBERATE

Cathy presented information about Dr. Peter Bryce, the Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Indian Affairs. In 1905 he reported that Indian children were deliberately being exposed to tuberculosis. He was fired from his job and expelled from the medical society. In 2008, Dr. John O'Connor exposed unusual and high cancer rates harming aboriginal people in Fort Chipewyan, and asked for more study into the effects of high levels of arsenic dumped into water supplies by the tar sands industry. He had to appear before the College of Physicians for a disciplinary hearing after he was accused by Health Canada of causing undue alarm.

Allan discussed his experience as a special education teacher in Prince Rupert, where parents didn't come to meet the teacher night. Five generations of their children had been kidnapped and taken away. When he began to work in counselling, he started hearing about residential schools and thought he must be stupid not knowing about it. That was the intended effect of a colonial education – how did the truth get hidden? He started to identify the ways bleached history had been produced. He saw parallels in the way grammar and language was used in colonial language and in describing sexualized assault.

Bleached history – Example 1 – Desmond Morton. 1988. *Towards tomorrow*.

“Since the beginning of European settlement, Canada’s original citizens had little place in the mainstream of Canadian life. Even during this century, Native people did not share in Canada’s growing prosperity. Most continued to live in rural areas; over 60% were employed in such occupations as trapping, fishing, logging, and unskilled labour, which traditionally were seasonal and paid lower wages than the urban jobs held by most Canadians. Native people also had limited access to education to improve their chances of getting better-paying jobs. When formal education was available, it often seemed of little use to people coming from a tradition where learning through participation and from oral teaching was highly valued. Worst of all, those who ran the schools frequently used education to undermine Native traditions. The superiority of every aspect of “white” society was emphasized. For example, Native children were forbidden to speak their own language among themselves at school, and, if caught, were punished for doing so. Native groups saw education as being imposed from outside; they felt they had little control over the curriculum or teaching methods. As a result, few of the children who did attend school went past the elementary level.” (p. 206-207)

This kind of language is found all the time in legal judgments and psychological reports.

Bleached history – Example 2. CBC radio interview of Bishop Weisner – “Can you address for a moment the legacy of residential schools? And the concerns of native people leaving the church?”

Bishop Weisner: “No, I can’t. I don’t really know that much about the history of the residential schools up here.... Ummm... or what the situation of the native people. The ummm... like a general comment I would make on the residential schools is... I think it’s one of those things where... where we’re dealing with some positives and some negatives. I... I wouldn’t want to deny that... that in some ways language and culture of native peoples and maybe some other aspects of their lives have somehow been stifled or hurt by the residential schools. At the same time I really believe that the people who were involved in the residential schools at the time were really committed people, really dedicated people. And in the circumstances that they seriously discerned that to be about the best way they could serve the needs of these people. And I know a lot of people who gave their lives in the residential schools and gave their lives literally, like they really served. And... and so like I say, I think there is both positive and negative with respect to the schools.”

WADE The stated policy of the government of Canada was to eliminate Indian people. We’re raising our kids on bleached history. This is flat out racism. We have to speak the truth and talk plainly about what’s going on. Stephen Harper gave a non-apology apology, which is a common silencing strategy. It implies, “Now get over it.” Listening to Harper’s non-apology in a BC friendship centre, the energy went way down until Beverly Jacobs from the Native Women’s Association of Canada said “We never let you do that to us.”

This colonial history on an interpersonal community level constitutes a deep humiliation across time on a daily basis. There is a deep need for respecting the dignity of people. RCMP must build on a foundation of dignity to repair some of the harm that has been done. A positive and effective and socially just response is for police to get out of uniform and have tea with an Elder. As RCMP you will perpetuate the problem if you don’t do that.

DIGNITY

Dignity is respect from other people and from you towards others, and for yourself. Dignity is to be accepted for who you are. It’s the opposite of humiliation.

Dignity is about autonomy, freedom, physical and psychological integrity, safety and security, being treated with honour, self-worth, self-sovereignty, concern for others, and much more. Dignity is something we all have. It’s part of the human condition and the human spirit. It’s part of daily life. It’s something we all know a great deal about.

Dignity comes from self-confidence, from culture, from being treated with dignity by others. Dignity is recognizing competency – your ability to act in the world. You can do something and affect how things turn out. Dignity is having

your human rights respected, freedom from violence. It is creating conditions of dignity, integrity, wholeness, you have control over your own body.

We conceal our commands as requests out of respect for other's dignity, we'll say pass the salt please. We laugh at people's bad jokes. In polite company we all work together to protect the dignity of others. We attend to the dignity of others all the time.

Your ability to care effectively for others is essential to dignity. If your kids don't have a proper lunch, or the same lunch, or can't take part in sports, or if your parents can't afford medicine or are dying in squalor, you are robbed of dignity.

Have you ever had somebody tell you how you feel? Representatives of the state engage in surveillance, for example a public health nurse visiting a new mom. It's not an invited service. If you have a baby expert on the front doorstep, you can't tell them to go away. They offer advice, one part is the advice. Another part is the unspoken notion that I am here to give this advice because you don't know it on your own. There's a cold unspoken accusation that you don't know how to take care of your child. Young moms will always say "Thank you," and then "That's what my mom said," or "I tried it and it didn't work," or "Thanks, I saw it on Oprah." These are ways to assert their competency as a matter of dignity, when they're saying in some way "I already knew about that." Your first job then is to ask, to find out what they think, feel, say, or do.

We have an understanding the Elders role is to teach things and our job is to learn.

An Elder said it was important to think of the little people. Slow down and pay attention to their needs. Are you training her to run a marathon? It's a big responsibility to raise a child. She shared a story about raising children.

The Elder went on to say the police have to be kind to people. There's a young man in our community, the police were beating him up and he finally moved away because he couldn't take it anymore. I was at depot for a visit one time and I saw the instructor yelling at the recruits, treating them like they weren't even people. Is that how to teach people? Of course you're going to come out of there mean if that's how they treat you. Then they don't act the way we want them to when they come into our communities.

Allan said that whenever there's a violation of dignity people respond in some way. In cases of violence dignity is always at stake. If a man denies raping a woman, women report humiliation is the deepest and most lasting injury. Recovery from violence is a struggle for dignity. To support dignity means creating autonomy, giving a choice, trying to learn how that victim tried to protect herself. We need to understand that the nature of that resistance is important in our practice, to structure all of our services to restore dignity. Pay attention to non-verbal and body messages. Back up and ask people to tell you if we're doing something wrong. Recognize how women cling to dignity. He used examples from his practice and said he doesn't ever use sarcasm or irony as humour because they don't have enough safety.

HOW DO YOU PAY ATTENTION TO PEOPLE'S DIGNITY?

Members of the group shared ways they pay attention to people's dignity, and problems of losing dignity.

Acknowledge everybody.

Show respect before I start talking.

Need safety in the community – I went to residential school so it's hard for me to trust. To be safe I think about how to avoid situations – stay away from older boys and the men. Create safety where you have a buddy system with a friend. It's a very closed community and it takes years to build trust and you don't talk.

Silent code. We don't talk about the violence in the open because it brings shame to the family and to yourself. It's embarrassing and hard to talk about. It's not easy to talk about.

We don't talk about safety enough? Why? Because the violence is rampant in our communities. Who do you

trust to talk about it? We don't talk to RCMP or authority figures because we were abused by them. It's hard to talk to an authority because they've done this violence to us too.

To create safety is another matter. When you begin to involve Elders in culture and teaching, and teaching about safety networks, and getting involved with victims, and start to hold them up rather than their being ashamed, you can build more safety.

Get the men to begin to be responsible for the men's actions.

Try and teach the younger ones in the school.

The word victim is not really a good word for me because it puts you down, being victimized kind of puts you down all your life. It makes people think you're weak.

In our society they hold up the offender more because it's about power and control. There's kind of a vacuum for the survivor.

I worry about my grandkids, we need more safety in school. The older boys were bothering my granddaughter. My daughter is talking to the school and bringing it up at the school council.

I didn't have anybody to talk to and was scared because I had nobody to talk to, having lived through sexual abuse at residential school and at home. Give her a hug and say I love you. I don't want them to go through what I went through. Tears is the best medicine of healing. My mom said "Don't be mean. Let it go. Let things go." I think to myself – I let it go. That was the law – we respect everybody. Everything was stripped from us. Having children and have to learn how to raise them – I try to remember my mom's teaching.

I learned not to judge anybody because they each have their own story.

Listen and restore their dignity. Respect them and not judge. You know you've done that when you release them from custody and they say thank you. Treat them the way you would like to be treated in the same situation.

Cathy displayed the Medicine Wheel of Response: How did you respond – what did you do?

Everyone has different needs across different ages and in different settings. What are the physical responses?

What are the emotional responses? What are our emotions telling us? Sadness tells us we refuse to participate.

Emotions can be a form of protest.

What are the spiritual responses? People pray, or get together, or have ceremonies, or think about how we keep our spirit alive.

What are the intellectual responses – what were you thinking in your mind? What are people already thinking and knowing?

SOCIAL RESPONSES TO VICTIMS

Yesterday we talked about social responses to victims a little. We just touched on one of a number of topics that are part of that, social responses to children and youth. We also look at mothers' and children's responses to violence.

We want to always acknowledge and remember the people who have been harmed by violence. We will look at the culture of resistance to violence and why resistance is often overlooked in court documents and interviews. We will consider steps we want to take to create more safety for victims.

There are always acts of resistance and they may not stop the violence, but they help to preserve dignity and the human spirit. Allan shared Fran Christie's story of residential school in Port Alberni. Healthy food was contraband at these prison camps. Some girls had gathered apples fallen from a tree hanging over the fence. The apples were confiscated. The nun lined up the girls in the order of their height and went to get a switch. Fran turned to the other girls and said "don't cry". Fran refused to cry, she refused to give them her tears. Many years later she told 120 university Education students that story and reclaimed her right to cry, which she hadn't done in the intervening years. These small acts of living don't stop violence, but they show other people the history and what happened.

We don't want to focus on trauma. In fact the pain and suffering is resistance. What people despair of is what they hope for. In many cases open physical struggle is the least common form of resistance because it's simply too difficult. When you undergo an experience without calling out in pain, because you may be killed or under torture,

you will do things like play mathematical games in your head. In moments of extreme adversity people find ways to resist.

People will say “I went to court and that’s why none of my family will talk to me anymore.” That’s not an uncommon experience, people will talk about you behind the scenes, we call that “lateral violence.”

It’s not uncommon for a victim support group to never discuss how they had resisted. But the children would practice turn-taking, for the beatings, or the sexual assaults. Children would take turns sleeping on the outside to protect siblings from rape. Resistance is ever present.

How do you learn these subtle ways of resistance? We talk about the way a survivor responded to the violence. Parents would drink and pass out and men/predators would come to the house and rape the kids. We asked her “What did you do?” not “What effects did this have on you?” and she said how she would respond. Children will pull a dresser in front of the door.

People will protect the ones they love. Allan told the story of an older sister at the prison camp they called residential school who would crawl under the beds, through the dorms, to lay beside her younger sister and stroke her hair and sing quietly to her in their language. Being asked to remember what she did to protect her sister told her a lot about how good of a mother she would be. It helped her to heal, to recognize her own resistance and strength.

Youth who have survived extreme violence will adopt a fuck you attitude, that means “I will always continue to go forward.”

An Elder said that since the Aboriginal Healing Foundation closed its doors people have stopped talking about the prison camps. Since then there’s been a lot of chaos among our people. There’s a lot of vandalism and assaults because people are venting. What steps can be taken to relieve the chaos? I know there’s counselling available but a lot of people are still stuck in one place. Survivors need to take up the cause in some place where they can continue to talk about their resistance.

Cathy said we need to put safety containers in place for people.

Allan said that people will talk about difficult and graphic experiences. How much safety are they going back to? Will they be safe to walk along the lake? We need to create safe environments for people in communities and move from counselling to community development work.

Cathy talked about another example of creating safety. In Iceland there was a movement to stop the violence at a popular rock festival, to make sure there were no date rape drugs. From initial planning to the festival people were completely committed to making sure there was no violence against women – they built it in as part of the title and the advertising for the event.

CONCEALING THE VIOLENCE: CONTRASTING ACCOUNTS OF MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE (See page 26)

Allan: I’m going to try to persuade you that if you don’t get a clear picture of how the victim resisted you are concealing the violence. Accounts 1 and 2 of male to female violence appear on page 19. From the description in Account 1 you could assume that Sue was passive. Account 2 inserted Sue’s responses. It switches from an “argument” to an assault. Which of these two descriptions is most likely to go to court?

RCMP asked whether Allan was talking about police or Crown reports to Court. Allan asked what information would come out in the police interview? RCMP said you might not get the victim’s cooperation.

Allan: The more you ask about the victim’s resistance, the more cooperation you get.

We see that the Crown will make the case for the defence in the Courts in the way they use language.

We have a very particular form of social contempt in North America for people we perceive to be passive victims.

“Victim” used as an assaultive, situated action term is not about your identity. This is a profound distortion – “passive

victims” is a stereotypical notion.

In Account 2 Sue defended herself, she has dignity, she fought back. So you could say “You did everything you could in this situation, didn’t you.” More subtly and more powerfully, the 2nd account gives you a greater sense of the full extent of the violence. In the 1st account you could maybe think he just had an misunderstanding.

A wife assault or a sexualized assault is not a single act – it’s a series of acts. He anticipates she will resist, she resists, he works to overcome her resistance. There’s unequivocal evidence that violence is deliberate and intentional and that he anticipated her resistance and suppressed it – not that “he lost it” as is commonly said.

Prime Minister Harper in the “apology” referred to “our historical relationship problem.” Not to genocide. At no point did he talk about the history of aboriginal resistance. The use of the term “residential schools” is an integral part of suppressing resistance. It was a military endeavor enacted through the church and the government. Nurses, police, counsellors, mental health workers, kitchen table friends can all get this history of resistance. From our point of view that’s not optional – we have to do that.

When you’re working with abused women, don’t ask “how can you let that happen?” or “why didn’t you leave him?” We’ve been working in women’s minds to change the behaviour of men. That’s not how you’re going to change men’s behaviour. There’s nothing wrong with women’s minds. Ask instead: What is he doing to try to prevent you from leaving? When you attempt to assert your boundaries what does he do to prevent you? Ask yourself, how do we feed the negative perception of victim?

A participant asked why do women stay with abusive men?

Allan: There are many reasons. The violence gets worse when a woman leaves. There’s more abuse of the kids. He’s got weapons. If I’m not with him all of his brothers will hit on me. At least I’ve got a moose in the freezer.

Cathy: If I stay with him I’m more likely to know what state of mind he’s in, assess things related to safety. If I don’t know where he is I have less safety.

Allan: He’s going to win custody, he can afford a barracuda lawyer. What are the circumstances that make it difficult for her to leave? Focus on the context, not on women’s minds.

Cathy: Women will say, he was actually kind in the beginning. I didn’t fall in love with the violent one. He knows how to be kind, how to communicate. He doesn’t need to go to communication classes.

VIOLENCE IS UNILATERAL

Language can be used to: (a) conceal or reveal violence, (b) obscure or clarify offender responsibility, (c) conceal or elucidate victim responses/resistance, and (d) blame and pathologize or contest the blaming and pathologizing of victims. There are no neutral accounts: all accounts involve a process of “fitting words to deeds.”

Look at the distinction between unilateral and mutual acts, and at descriptions in media, courts, psychology textbooks, sports. One action done against the will of another, what one person does to another is a unilateral act. “Violence ain’t sex. If you hit someone over the head with a frying pan it’s not cooking.”

In a good clear description of a physical act “forced” conveys coercion and the use of power. We did research looking at 63 cases before BC and Yukon Courts and found a lot of mutual language in Court descriptions of violence. This is a violation of the spirit and the letter of the law.

Sexual assaults are inherently violent. Don’t let the term “abusive relationship” go by. “Who’s being abusive?” “My husband.” Then say instead, “You’ve been in a relationship with a man who’s abusive to you.”

Reference to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples film, *No turning back*.

Colonial discourse and wife assault fit together hand and glove. It's flat-out woman blaming and it's epidemic in our culture. Tapping in to the stereotypes we've been discussing, an Appeal Court judgment referred to strangling as something that "arose spontaneously during the course of an argument."

Anger is not a cause of violence, it's part of the weaponry. Violence is not a marriage problem, it's a violence problem. It's not "difficulties in the marriage." What we've been doing in the court system is profoundly distorting the problem of violence. We're not even getting the clear facts before the courts.

MUTUALIZING INTERVENTIONS

Accounts that omit victims' responses and resistance:

- Portray victims as passive (imply consent),
- Reinforce negative stereotypes of victims,
- Conceal how perpetrators suppress victim resistance, and
- Conceal the full extent and deliberate nature of violence.

To conceal resistance is to conceal violence.

An Elder asked how do we tell our stories in a way that doesn't victimize us again?

Allan said that what Elders have said is that "you need to hear our stories of resistance." Reparation, restoration and justice is much more than resilience. We didn't take a licking and keep on ticking. A victim's history is the history of resistance. Truth and Reconciliation Commission tried to pay attention to strengths. "Reconciliation" still fails to challenge the big problem – the stereotypical notion that victims are passive.

THESE TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS DON'T RECOGNIZE VIOLENCE & RESISTANCE

- Workplace abuse – conflict resolution
- Child/spouse abuse – mediation
- Bullying – non-violent communication
- Genocide – reconciliation

Ann said that to hear about the horrors makes a lot of counsellors twitch. It so rips people apart. They don't hear about the resistance, how we took a piece of home with us to those prison camps. We make people feel stronger when we talk about that resistance. That's what we'll do in Watson Lake.

Allan presented a description of a sexualized assault of a minor from a Judge's remarks made in 2004.

Children have the right to have the crimes against them represented accurately. This decision reads like a trashy romance novel. "Peri-pubescent" implies almost ripe. We frequently find some completely unnecessary reference to the victim that's unrelated to the case. It is legally, developmentally, and morally impossible for an adult to have sex with a child. He can't "have sexual intercourse with her," that language completely reverses reality. You wouldn't say "have rape with her." If we use sexualized language we make the crime disappear. Judges violate the fundamental human rights of the child to equal protection under the law when they use this language.

In this account, he "purchased sex from a 3-5 year old girl." Purchase is a mutualizing verb, it presumes there is a buyer and a seller. "Believing he was going to meet a young girl for sex." What he was doing was abducting, confining, overpowering, forcing his body parts on a young child. "Meet" is a mutual term. When he threatens, coerces, stifles the screams of the child that's not sex, that's violence. He wanted to dominate, violate, and dehumanize the child. Why do we accept the notion that pedophilia, the problematic term "child-lover" is about sex?

We ought to treat these kinds of representations as crimes. This is occurring on an epidemic scale in our country and we're the group of people that can address that.

Allan distributed excerpts of articles, judgments, and newspapers accounts, and asked people to break into small groups to discuss them. When reading an account of a crime ask: How did it work to 1. Conceal violence, 2. Obscure the responsibility of the offender, 3. Conceal resistance of the victim, 4. Blame or pathologize the victim?

The inherent messages are that you're all part of the violence, the citations reveal prevailing social norms that violence is mutual and that victims are at fault. These messages pass by our eyes as psychological wisdom.

Discussing the groups' analysis of these articles, we noted that socially, violence is considered ok in the "privacy of your own home." Women don't report because there's some element of blame and shaming, people ask her why were you there? Or interviewers may not have talked about her resisting as she might be dual charged, so keep that under wraps.

CLOSING:

How do we move forward from here? How are you planning to respond to what you're learning? What are you going to do to sustain our collective efforts? We have to have a plan for that or it will drop off the table – as it often does when you talk about violence. How will you sustain conversations about safety?

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION.

Peter Clark RCMP Commanding Officer, Adeline Webber, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Council

Adeline I'm currently the President of Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle and a volunteer in the community. This is very informative, I've learned a lot. We don't want to leave here and just go away and not talk about it anymore. This session is to ask, How can we work together and help people in our community?

Peter That's kind of what I got out of it too. I've been very privileged to travel around the communities and meet most of you. I arrived in Yukon about a year ago, and became Commanding Officer of the RCMP in July 2010. I was co-chair and co-author of *Sharing Common Ground*. It's a very forward looking document, about the relationships RCMP must have and improve on with aboriginal peoples. There's a good cross section of RCMP here.
There are a lot of courses our members take on sexual assault investigations. We don't have many courses we take with groups like this. To interact with the people you're interacting with is a beneficial process. We'd like to hear your questions or observations. Where do we go from here?

Question Will you invite Allan Wade to present this to all RCMP?

Peter We're a 24/7 service and are unable to bring 30 members at a time. We will bring more people to Allan Wade in groups like this, but no, we're not going to bring Allan Wade to talk to RCMP alone.

Ann There's a lot of very resourceful people in the group. We want to look at immediate issues and at long-term relationships. How can we use this training and weave it into a protocol relationship with the RCMP?

Peter I don't think we need to wait. Seize the momentum. What does an opportunity look like? RCMP will work on annual performance plans to be developed with communities at the detachment level.

Question How is RCMP approaching community members to engage them in this?

- LAWS Community involvement should be broadened to include women's organizations. Our priorities may be different from the First Nation. Liard First Nation may not have time to meet with you. Does RCMP see the community as being the First Nations' government?
- Peter We see the need to look at new ways of getting community involvement. The first part of implementing *Sharing Common Ground* is developing a plan with First Nations. The second part includes women's groups – there will be a working group to focus on this type of issue and develop a long-term plan. I said we're getting ahead of ourselves with *Bridging the Gap*, and *Together for Justice* – I don't have the budget and human capacity to do it. Without having the foundation we risk failure. RCMP show up for these 2 days in Whitehorse as a gesture to show we're not bureaucratic. That may also be a way to build a sustainable process. RCMP are 50%, the other 50% is yourselves and others who may not be here. How do we do this in a way that sustains itself? The RCMP have a process of developing Annual Performance Plans, and the RCMP are "voluntold", those opportunities are there within our existing situation.
- YSWC I'm hoping this new ease of relationship will facilitate representation of women's groups on the Police Council and that RCMP will walk with us in trying to achieve that.
- Peter I signed the *Sharing Common Ground* report believing it to be true and achievable. The decision on who ends up on the Council is not mine, it's done through Yukon Government appointment process. That doesn't mean you can't use your influence to have women appointed.
- Lois Many women are too afraid of the RCMP to call them when they are being abused. I heard that from women in Whitehorse and around the Yukon during the Review of Yukon's Police Force. Women have told me they are telling each other "Don't call the police if he's beating you." If women don't trust the RCMP and won't call them when they are raped, or beat up by their partners, it can put their life at risk. This is not a small problem, it's a very real problem. Violence against women is far too prevalent in Yukon communities, it's accepted, and men think they can get away with it. I want all women to be safe and for the RCMP to make the changes they need to, to improve police service so that women can trust them. This work is so important.
- Elder AM What we need is to move ahead. I firmly believe when we have working groups they have to have some people who represent everyone in the Yukon. Often what's not spoken about is violence among our people – aboriginal women and their children and men of course. What I perceive is that people are reluctant to talk about it. Let's have some concrete steps to take. It's really hard to sit here for 40 years and talk about the same things. It's not just a relationship with the RCMP but a relationship with Justice and all of the agencies sitting around the room. *Any good because we're all here together and speaking together needs the Elders participating in the working groups.* We need to continue with the children and seven generations down and our voices aren't really in there now. Some of it is harsh stuff and they don't want to hear about it. I'm tired of being patient. I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings but I do want to be in there. On the Whitehorse Correctional Centre Elders Advisory Committee we work in isolation, we can't even throw the ball at your group to help us because there's no capacity and we have no jurisdiction and don't get asked to participate in decision-making. They're living, and don't know why they were always in care, as children in group homes and adults at WCC, and now their children are in care. As Elders we have no clout. At WCC we are told we have no budget.

Our people have been crying out, saying train us in our communities. Train us to help ourselves - that's what our people have been asking for, for something that's going to be active.

I have a hard time with the political arena, not just federal and territorial governments but with our own First Nations governments. We need to rectify that somehow – we want to see 14 Yukon First Nations working together. Vuntut Gwichin doesn't belong to Council of Yukon First Nations and doesn't have a voice there. We have to take all of these things into consideration.

Question I'd like to ask whether RCMP would offer language-based training like this at depot. Whether it's Allan or others. RCMP need to start with training members there in the use of language to bring women's voices and women's true experiences into the evidence and documents.

Peter I'm glad you brought that up. The Police Council and training plans, our report says let's go to Depot and show in a comprehensive way what we do. I have to disagree when Elder Pear Keenan talked about depot and people being mean and members being hostile, and talked about values of the RCMP. Yes people still get shouted at at depot. It helps build discipline and character in our members – prepare them for what they'll face when they get out. They have to learn to listen to people. Is there room for curriculum to be improved at depot – Yes. I'm willing to hear about those improvements and build them into depot training. To ask what did you feel, how did you think. RCMP want to show and help people become more aware of what happens at depot.

Adeline Over the last couple of days I made sure I was in groups with different RCMP members.

RCMP There's lots of room for improvement. There were some things I don't agree with for setting the platform for down the road. Ann and I talk at length, I work with LAWS, we have our own issues in Watson Lake.

Comment It's good to find out everybody's background. We need to have that understanding. Knowledge is power. We need to not forget who we are and where we come from.

RCMP For me, meeting such a fabulous group of ladies in the community and knowing there is such strength in the communities is great. We will figure out how to use the strength of people in this room to improve things in the communities.

YWTHS Thank you LAWS for opening up this opportunity and the complete participation of women's groups, police and others. We need to build based on common ground. I'm getting old and cynical and impatient with fighting violence against women for this many years. There needs to be political will to address violence against women or it undermines our ability to work with people. We're often forced to act by terms of reference and as part of a group where our beliefs, passions and strengths will be muzzled. I want more of this open conversation and learning.

Elder PK The last day and a half has been really good and I really appreciate the progress. I really truly think we should train our own people. Our own police will respond to our own people faster than they do to anyone else.

Being on the WCC Elders Advisory Committee, I see the core right where women are hurting.

It's so easy to respond with love in our heart and understanding and not condemning. They've already been condemned. So we see a different response from them when we treat them with respect. Every week when we go in there they open up, when we first go in they're closed. After 3 hours they open it. We need more teachers up there at WCC.

From three years old being molested, there should be a law changed. Just think of that little three year old for the rest of her life. I'm 90 and to think of having to live with that for your entire life is hard. It would stop if you changed the law.

- VAV I've volunteered with RCMP for four years, there's a long process of training. We do callouts at the request of the RCMP. In a month we do a one-week shift and have 8 people on call. I enjoyed being at the meeting and meeting everyone and thank the Elders for what they've shared with us.
- Ann I would like the judiciary to be here – could we get them to the table someday? I echo what Barb is saying about having equal numbers of women on the Police Council. At the political level appointments are made and it's not people who work with victims and advocate for justice.
- Elder MB Thanks Allan and Cathy. You've done a lot for aboriginal women. You will learn a lot from this workshop if you just sit down and listen about how important words are in Court. I really enjoyed it but it's just a start.
Teach the RCMP about our culture. I often wonder do you have problems with people from other cultures, Japanese, Chinese, blacks, or is it just because there's a lot of native people around here? I know as an Elder whenever we see a policeman we used to run away. We have rights to stand up for ourselves. How would you like it if you have children and if I go in there and grab them away?
Thanks Ann, she's always there for us in Watson Lake, she's one of our strong Kaska women.
- Elder AM There needs to be at least a couple of Elders on these working groups.
- Peter We shouldn't legislate or mandate for people to come together. Each and every one of us can contribute. Even if these councils are established by government, it doesn't mean people of like minds shouldn't get together. The police and the community will continue to collaborate.
- Allan Linda MacDonald at Liard First Nation first invited me and Robin Routledge to Watson Lake to teach and when the funding disappeared we were hired to teach camp cooking. We got started and one of the participants described running away from Lower Post Residential School at 8 years old. She was in her pyjamas and when the army trucks went by on the road searching for her she was making snow angels in the snowbank. This was heartbreaking and inspiring at the same time. A large Kaska man, who's now part of bringing drumming back, finally put up his hand and asked "What the heck does this have to do with camp cooking."
Cathy and I are privileged to be working with the Kaska and with all of you and thank you.

Participants were asked to please fill out evaluations and return them.

Handouts from workshop:

Contrasting Accounts of Male to Female Violence, Accounts 1 and 2
First and second accounts of sexualized assault
Wife-assault, Sexualized Assault: Judge's Remarks

Account 1: Contrasting Accounts of Male to Female Violence

Sue and Tom had been dating for five weeks. One night they had an argument on the way home from the pub. Tom complained that Sue was cold and not interested in sex. Tom stopped to urinate in the bushes and asked Sue to stop and wait. He caught up to Sue at Sue's apartment. Tom wanted to come in. He pushed the door open and forced his way in. Tom pushed Sue hard against the wall, called her a nasty name, and punched a hole in the wall inches from her face. Tom grabbed Sue and punched her in the ribs, twice. Tom kicked her in the ribs, then left the apartment.

Account 2: Contrasting Accounts of Male to Female Violence

Sue and Tom had been dating for five weeks. One night they had an argument on the way home from the pub. Sue complained that Tom was rude and drank too much. Tom complained that Sue was cold and not interested in sex. When Tom stopped to urinate in the bushes, Sue kept walking. Tom asked Sue to stop and wait, but she refused. By the time Tom caught up to Sue, they were at Sue's apartment. Sue told Tom he could go to his own place, but Tom wanted to come in. Sue insisted that he go to his own place. He pushed the door open and forced his way in. Sue told him to get out. Tom pushed Sue hard against the wall, called her a nasty name, and punched the wall inches from her face. Sue ducked underneath his arm and ran for the phone in the living room. Tom grabbed Sue and punched her in the ribs, twice. Sue rolled onto her side, gasping for breath. Tom kicked her in the ribs, then left the apartment. Sue found the phone and called her best friend.

First account of sexualized assault:

He followed her down the sidewalk. He sped up to catch her. He grabbed her by the shoulders and threw her to the ground. He dragged her toward the bushes. He overpowered her and dragged her into the bushes. He held a rock over her head and threatened to kill her if she screamed. He called her degrading names. He forced his mouth onto her face. He tried to undo her belt. He grabbed at her pant legs to pull them off. He overpowered her and vaginally raped her.

Second account of sexualized assault:

He followed her down the sidewalk. She sped up. He sped up to catch her. She moved to the side. He grabbed her by the shoulders and threw her to the ground. She rolled on the ground to get away. He dragged her toward the bushes. She grabbed the roots of a tree so he couldn't drag her into the bushes. He overpowered her and dragged her into the bushes. She started to scream. He held a rock over her head and threatened to kill her if she screamed. She stopped screaming. He called her degrading names. She said, "You don't want to do this. You don't want to hurt me." He forced his mouth onto her face. She averted her face. He tried to undo her belt. She stuck out her stomach so that he could not undo her belt. He grabbed at her pant legs to pull them off. She crossed her ankles so that he could not pull off her pants. He overpowered her and vaginally raped her. She went limp to avoid injury and went elsewhere in her mind.

Wife-assault, Sexualized Assault: Judge's Remarks

"The appellant & his wife engaged in an argument Mr. X became upset over something said during this argument. He thereupon grabbed his wife's neck, squeezing it until she nearly lost consciousness. He then let go. This brought the argument to an end. That the earlier of the two assaults arose spontaneously in the course of an argument is not in dispute. To that extent it can be said to have been unpremeditated. He was willing to take counselling in reference to his anger and his marital problems. He expressed his deep remorse for what had happened and his desire to improve the marriage. They went to bed and he said, 'Jane, I'll have to screw you one more time', and he had intercourse with her. . . . It is obvious difficulties were present in the marriage."

List of Whitehorse participants:

Bridging the Gap: March 2011, NaKwaTaKu Potlatch House	
NAME	ORGANIZATION
Ann Maje Raider	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Mary Maje	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
May Brodhagen	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, RCMP Elders Advisory Committee member
Adeline Webber	Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle
May Stewart	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Fannie Vance	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Janet McDonald	Liard First Nation Member
Liz Porter	Liard First Nation Member
Mary Charlie	Liard First Nation Elder
Lois Moorcroft	LAWS Secretariat
Peter Clark	Commanding Officer RCMP
Bob Johnson	RCMP Training Development
Kurt Bringsli	RCMP Youth Liaison
Kelly MacQuame	RCMP - Major Crimes Unit
Paul Thalhofer	RCMP – Watson Lake Detachment
Dean Hoogland	RCMP – Kwanlin Dun Detachment
Don Rogers	RCMP – Communications officer
Terra Taylor	RCMP
Rick Aird	RCMP – First Nations and Youth policing
Sharon Keaton	RCMP Victims Assistance Unit Volunteer
Pearl Keenan	Whitehorse Correctional Centre Elders Advisory Council
Agnes Mills	WCC Elders Advisory Council
Barb McNerney	Kaushees Place, Executive Director
Ketsia Houde	Les EssentiElles, Executive Director
Charlotte Hrenchuk	Yukon Status of Women Council
Cindy Chaisson	Elizabeth Fry Society Yukon Outreach Worker
Winnie Atlin	Carcross Tagish First Nation Elders Council
Kitty Grant	Carcross Tagish First Nation Elders Council
Martina Baker	Teslin Tlingit Council - Peacemaker Diversion Program
Julianna Scramstad	Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre Program Coordinator
Shauna Curtin	Yukon Government Women's Directorate, Director
Julie Menard	Women's Directorate
Michelle Beckley	Aboriginal Women's Project Officer - Women's Directorate, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council
Dr. Cathy Richardson	Presenter
Dr. Allan Wade	Presenter

EVALUATION TEMPLATE

Bridging the Gap –

A Cross-Cultural Conversation between Aboriginal Women, RCMP, First Nations, Women's groups and front-line Service agencies

1. Can you think of a way to improve cooperation and strengthen trust between community members and the RCMP?
How could that happen?

2. What can you do to make women feel safe in your community?

3. What will RCMP members notice in your community when they have provided you with more of a sense of safety or trust? What will be different?

4. If your grandchildren were here today, what would they like about what took place in this workshop?

5. What aboriginal cultural teaching have you learned today that will help you in your daily work?

6. If all of the people who were taken away to residential school could witness this conversation today, what would they like to see take place?

7. What do people in your agency need to know that would contribute to improving services for women victims of violence? What have you learned that could improve services for women?

8. What changes would you like to see in your community 10 years from now? What would your ancestors hope for you to achieve?

9. How could the workshop be improved?

EVALUATION RESULTS

Bridging the Gap –

A Cross-Cultural Conversation between Aboriginal Women, RCMP, First Nations, Women's groups and front-line Service agencies.

EVALUATIONS

(Received from 19 of 31 participants)

Date: MARCH 2011

Location: NaKwaTaKu Potlatch House – Whitehorse

1. Can you think of a way to improve cooperation and strengthen trust between community members and the RCMP? How could that happen?

More sessions like this; build on this one.

Continued communication, community events involvement.

I'm not sure how to go further than nice polite talk that doesn't go far. Training together with community and RCMP I hope is a start to change one person at a time but it's so slow!

RCMP have to get out there and get involved in the community; to listen to the people, you have to have knowledge to understand. RCMP should know what role they played in residential school – e.g. process used to recruit. Teach history and relationships during residential school time.

I think that RCMP in the communities need to make more efforts to be a part of that community, not just enforce the laws in it. They need to be involved in community activities; the community needs to know who they are as a person in order to have a positive relationship or form any trust.

I found what Peter Clark said in conclusion quite discouraging. I would like to see a real, genuine openness in the Commanding Officer that was demonstrated by many of the RCMP officers here.

Continue talking and learning together. Meet regularly. Cultural education/prison camp awareness.

Changing the language – this needs improvement in RCMP.

More meetings that bring people together to talk about their differences.

By having an even broader conversation and training with people from Justice – Crown Prosecutors AND Judges, to learn about language and its power. I think processes need to work for people to trust them and use them.

Take workshops together. Take opportunities like the rape kits coming out to train multi-sectorally and identify roles and gaps in service.

Monthly / quarterly meetings with women's groups to work on issues within the communities.

Strengthening trust in the entire system will strengthen trust with each of the component parts/agencies of the system. Isolating a single organization in evaluation is not healthy.

Less focus on past issues and history and more focus on future plans to make positive change. History is important but at some point we need to move forward.

One way: Invite RCMP members and their families to all community events so they 'become' a member of your community. It is through these relationships that we build trust and open communication.

Establish personal relationships rather than institutional – speak the same language about trust and respect.

More gatherings like this where RCMP can get to know aboriginal women and women's advocates and identify common goals.

Have new members to a community be mentored with a First Nations family. Have a First Nations dreamed, led, facilitated orientation to the First Nation – perhaps an overnight campout with RCMP. Have RCMP members attend the First Nations training and First Nations attend the RCMP local training. Have members learn some local First Nations supporting language.

2. What can you do to make women feel safe in your community?

Believe them, honour resistance and history. Treat women with respect. Safe, affordable housing. Continue with this educational process for those in positions of power – child welfare, the justice system, Yukon Housing, etc.

Educate women on their rights, educate them on help and hope.

Making them know that there are places where they can ask for help and where they will be respected and that their resistance will be duly honoured.

Be sure to have a safety plan for young women in the community. Talk to RCMP to help.

Women need to trust and feel safe, leaders of the community have to help develop respect.

Honestly I don't know! I think it starts with mutual respect between community and RCMP. I also think that it has to involve youth.

Not labeling or judging them! Correct people who wrongfully judge victims. Use the language of resistance.

Buddy system.

Stand up and be heard.

Honour our resistance. Continue to (more collaboratively) plan prevention and awareness campaigns.

Educating on assaults/music festivals to make safety a part of organizing them. Yukon wide crisis line. Create circles of support that are defined by the women.

Encourage and walk beside women when they need to deal with RCMP/address judgment calls (if applicable) at the time they happen.

Demonstrating myself as a healthy role model for my wife and daughters.

Work closely with local women's groups to improve trust and work to improve issues.

We together become the strength for women/children by providing unified support and care. Education is key.

Work toward use of language in law. Speak with all service providers.

This is something I would like to have better answers for. To trust and respect and honour women is one way. Great need to improve RCMP responses to violence against women so that women trust them, because when women don't trust police they aren't safe.

Have Elders and women determine what they need to be safe as well as feel safe.

3. What will RCMP members notice in your community when they have provided you with more of a sense of safety or trust? What will be different?

More willingness to work cooperatively.

People will disclose more crime and impunity can stop so violence can stop being normalized.

Less crime, more communication, help and assistance in solving crime.

They would most likely....

People will approach them. Children raped will report to them. Women will report violence.

Needs improvement.

More people will complain to police when they are victimized. More crimes reported.

More people reporting, more people looking them in the eye, more of a sense of collaboration than avoidance and distrust...

Warmth, feeling of being part of the community.

It will provide a sense of trust and respect. Women will not hesitate to call RCMP when needed.

More cooperation from all citizens to deter violence against women.

More cooperation.

Trust speaks for itself. It is a foundation of safe communities. Overall community support will naturally grow.

Higher reporting of violence. Better safety planning. Proactive planning. Better communication.

Less crime and more people willing to report crime.

An Elder will know them and greet them. They will get invited to local events. They will feel they belong and can get advice from local people.

4. If your grandchildren were here today, what would they like about what took place in this workshop?

The change of the discussion from victim blaming and undermining toward the acknowledgement of their resistance to change their situation. Positive social response, what a radical notion.

Have a workshop for young people to have a better understanding. I talk to my family about what we talked about. So it would be helpful for them to understand.

In my opinion, they would learn that language is very important.

I think they would see the collaboration and connections made were a step forward. They would see how so many different stakeholders have a vested interest in creating change.

They would feel safe in the world.

Changes in resistance to violence and how to resist violence and only use good language.

Good food. Laughter. Smiles.

That we cared enough to get together to change things for them.

Adults working together for a common good.

The interaction between RCMP and women's groups without hostility and defenses.

I hope for the future – comfort in action by leaders, parents, elders.

Elders provided the very important advice that culture is needed if we really truly want to help our communities become healthier.

History. Evolution. Education. Dialogue.

That RCMP were willing to listen to women.

That we looked at the importance of language used to frame violence.

5. What aboriginal cultural teaching have you learned today that will help you in your daily work?

Importance of including elders.

The great strength of women elders standing up for their people, even at 80+ years old. The respect for them was lost in the non-native culture.

Strength and resistance in times of adversity.

Dena Au'Nes'sen (Kaska supreme law)

Pass the cultural teaching onto the younger people.

Importance of listening to wisdom of elders.

I feel like this form is an aboriginal cultural teaching! I like it.

I enjoy hearing from the elders. Some of the crap we have and still do teach about First Nations culture.

Referrals to elders for guidance and direction. That culture is important in the north.

Understanding is powerful. Cultural and historical teachings are invaluable.

It was an important refresher of things learned previously and things not learned before.

Elders need to be heard and their advice taken.

Involve elders – eat together – share thoughts.

The elders' knowledge and willingness to share it is inspiring. We need to invite them, respect their wisdom, and learn from their teachings.

The importance of Elders to be present in working groups. They bring the cultural teachings and have years of experience.

6. If all of the people who were taken away to residential school could witness this conversation today, what would they like to see take place?

A real plan for action to prevent anything like that ever happening again. A real apology, public honouring of their resistance and dignity.

Recognition that they fought back, that the word prison camp was used and that acknowledge the de-education that was and still is being done.

Have a voice, a small positive step has been taken.

They would see how they resisted and be able to see themselves as not only survivors but also strong and proud. They would see themselves with dignity and strength not as “victims.”

Service providers not judging them. Compassionate workers.

The real truth on the children’s resistance to violence.

Still talking about it. Needs action.

Maybe to see processes that really respect and honour basic human dignity?

Peace / community / unity / dignity.

Some would still be angry for what took place, others would say it is a long time in coming and that we still have a very long way to go.

Not to dwell but understand and move forward to ensure it doesn’t happen again. That their suffering can somehow lead to change that is positive for the future.

Respect being built between all people in this group. We learn from the past and move forward with a plan that is culturally inclusive.

They would like to see RCMP have accurate training on the true history of aboriginal peoples in Canada, and a deeper understanding of the role of the police in their colonization. They would want that our society understands the state and industry intent to steal the land and resources from indigenous peoples and destroy their culture, which hasn’t changed much. And see an acknowledgement of First Nations’ governments and leaders’ formal resistance to these practices, as well as the personal acts of resistance of young children, adults, and family members.

They would like to see us making change in the language we use – example, it was a prison camp – we need to honour all the resistance that First Nations have demonstrated and will continue to do. They would like to see First Nations being trained to help ourselves.

7. What do people in your agency need to know that would contribute to improving services for women victims of violence? What have you learned that could improve services for women?

Education/communication with all parties involved.

Need to honour resistance and put emphasis on it when dealing with women. I learned how words are important in the justice system.

Language – I really never realized how detrimental passive and mutual language can undermine the victim and normalize the violence or even blame the victim.

Not to blame women or judge them. Recognize that safety is always the underlying foundation for their actions.

That RCMP, Justice and First Nations take resistance to violence and the language change regarding women living in violence.

We need lawyers, judges and social workers here too.

Honouring resistance, ensuring appropriate social responses, ensuring that there is room for maintenance of human dignity.

That RCMP are at the table and will make change.

To look at the resistance rather than the “bad” things women do when dealing with violence.

That the community has an understanding of the challenges that all agencies face and not focus blame. This will give agencies the confidence and strength to accept their shortcomings and then strive to make positive change for all.

To not assume, not judge and not become disillusioned with repetitive clients.

Stop stereotypes. Again respond to the person in each case (the victim).

How to frame issues – what language to use.

Teach people how to use accurate language to convey the true nature and meaning of criminal actions / violence against women.

How to interview women and children in a supporting way and the importance of the words used to describe violence. To honour and recognize the resistance of women.

8. What changes would you like to see in your community 10 years from now? What would your ancestors hope for you to achieve?

Less violence, poverty, homelessness. A concrete action plan for each that is in place and followed, changing with time. This would have to be truly collaborative.

That all see women's worth, women obtain respect and safety.

Understanding and respect. Be proud of the strength shown by all residential school survivors.

Violence against women eliminated. Courts use the language of resistance.

That survivors regain dignity, a violence-free environment.

People involve elders. People work with the RCMP.

Real peace and justice.

More safety, accountability of offenders. Violence against women not accepted.

That women and the RCMP have a better relationship and that women are 100% comfortable in calling when they have issues and need help.

A community where you have a lot of laughter consistently amongst all cultures and demographics.

Reduce the harm to all members of the community both First Nations and non-First Nations.

More elder/community circles.

Less violence, healthy people, less addiction.

Peaceful, compassionate, healthy communities where all people are treated with dignity and have their basic needs met - for food, shelter, safety, a healthy environment.

First Nations and RCMP sharing training. RCMP staying longer in a community. First Nations healing ceremonies. Develop locally based just plans/actions. Have the “truth” be taught in school about the First Nations resistance, history and prison schools.

9. How could the workshop be improved?

This is a great start.

Justice needs to be here. Language issues discussed here need to be incorporated into all lawyers and judges training!

That the RCMP take “the prison camp” teachings from the survivors that lived through it.

Bring Crown Prosecutors and judges and government services folks in on the conversation! Family and Children’s Services too. Hospital workers.

Was great. Committed group.

Possibly include a youth women’s representative.

Louder speakers! Chairs very uncomfortable. Glad to see so many RCMP here and engaged in dialogue!!

More agencies need to be on board. Be honest on what can really be accomplished – reasonable goals.

Less inflammatory introduction as it creates conflict.

Suggest a cultural opening such as drummers/dancers – this brings dignity to all First Nations and participants.

Good workshop – informative.

Longer time. More scenarios. Divide groups up so First Nations / women and RCMP will be mixed.

Session 2



AGENDA

Bridging the Gap – Creating Safety in Community

Date & Time: MARCH 21, 2011 & MARCH 22, 2011
Location: Two Mile Hall
Presenters: Allan Wade, Ph.D., Catherine Richardson, Ph.D.,
Centre for Response-based practice, Duncan B.C.

MARCH 21, 2011

10:00 Opening Prayer, Introductions
10:15 Identifying Points of Connection and Common Purpose
Safety and Collective Ethics
11:00 Social Responses in Cases of Violence

12:30 – 1:30 LUNCH PROVIDED ON-SITE

1:30 Dignity
Understanding Violence in Social and Historical Context
Family Resemblance in Domination and Resistance
2:45 NUTRITION BREAK
3:00 Violence is Social
4:00 Forging Commitments for Sustainable Local Action

MARCH 22, 2011

10:00 Violence is Unilateral
11:00 Responses and Resistance to Violence

12:30 – 1:30 LUNCH PROVIDED ON-SITE

1:30 Language and Violence
2:30 Identifying Effective Social Responses Already in Place
3:00 Evaluation
3:15 Closing Comments

PARTICIPANTS

Bridging the Gap – Creating Safety in Community

Date & Time: MARCH 21, 2011 & MARCH 22, 2011 • 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Location: Two Mile Hall

Caron Statham
Susan Whalen
Alice Broadhagen
Grace Grady Tom
Julia Allen
May Brodhagen
Julia Fox
Susan Derksen
Cecile Cheezo
Nicki Bowes
Shannon Miller
Monica McMillian
Maggie Dick
Ruby Johnny
Michelle Beckley
Dixon Lutz
Duane Esler

Frankie D. Magun
Maria Wolftail
D. Lynn Leith
R Dwayne Latham
Colleen Dennis
Cst. Colin Kerry
Cst. Lynden Morrison
Teena Bazylnski
Peter Clark
Ann Maje Raider
Cynthia Olie

Rick Aird
Mary Maje
Rose Peter
Mary Charlie
Tootsie Charlie
Leda Jules
Daniel Dick
Lois Moorcroft

Help & Hope Shelter - Executive Director
Help & hope Shelter
Elder
Elder
Elder
Liard Aboriginal Women's society
RCMP
Nawidiga Pathway Second Stage
Help & Hope
Victim Services

DDC Justice Worker
Elder
Justice - Acting Director
Women's Directorate YAWS Implementation Officer
Liard First Nation Councilor
"Offender Supervision & Services. Previously -
Adult Probation"
Liard First Nation Councilor
Liard First Nation
Watson Lake Heath Centre
RCMP - Operations and Community Support Services

RCMP
RCMP
RCMP Training Unit "M" Division
Commanding Officer RCMP "M" Division
LAWS ED
Liard Basin Task Force, Assistant Support worker,
Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies
RCMP - FN & Youth Policing "M" Division
Liard Aboriginal Women's society
Community Wellness Worker, RRDC
LAWS Board Member
Elder
Liard First Nations Kaska Language
Liard First Nations Kaska Language
Liard Aboriginal Women's Society Secretariat

Watson Lake Report

Together for Justice

Bridging the Gap: Creating Safety in Community

Two Mile Hall, Liard First Nation, Watson Lake, March 2011

Introduction:	41
Meeting Notes:	
Safety, Collective Ethics, Agreements	42
Dignity	43
Stories of Our Families, Grandparents	43
“What good is this going to do?”	44
Understanding Violence in Social and Historical Context – Colonialism	44
Social Responses in Cases of Violence	45
Activity, Social Responses	47
Discussion	47
Reflections	50
Resistance to Violence	50
Violence is Deliberate	51
Common strategies	51
Responses and Resistance to Violence	51
Violence and Language	52
Closing comments	54
Forging Commitments for Sustainable Local Action: what good will this do?	54
List of Watson Lake participants	57
Evaluations	58

LAWS: *Bridging the Gap: Creating Safety in Community. March 2011.*
Meeting notes prepared by Lois Moorcroft

Introduction:

Thirty-four participants attended Liard Aboriginal Women's Society's (LAWS) first Watson Lake workshop of *Together for Justice: On Violence, Language and Responsibility*.

LAWS Board members, Executive Director, and members, Kaska Elders, RCMP Commanding Officer, Help and Hope for Families Shelter, Nawidiga Pathway Second Stage Housing, Yukon Government (YG) Offender Supervision and Services and Victims Services, Liard First Nation Council, Ross River Dena Council Community Wellness, Watson Lake Health Centre, RCMP representatives from First Nations and Youth policing, Training Division, Operations and Community Support, and Watson Lake detachment, Lower Post First Nation and Liard First Nation Justice workers, LAWS Secretariat, and YG Women's Directorate joined presenters Dr. Allan Wade and Dr. Catherine Richardson for the gathering.

In order to provide effective police service in the Watson Lake area, RCMP require knowledge of the communities they serve and the public's expectations, of Kaska values, beliefs and culture, and of the colonial code of relationships historically and to the present day. The goal of *Bridging the Gap: Creating Safety in Community*, funded by Justice Canada and the RCMP, was to build on the opportunity for change by bringing together First Nations and community women, RCMP, and front-line responders to start a conversation, to learn better ways of responding to violent crime against women living in aboriginal and northern communities, and to develop ongoing agreements on how to improve women's safety. The evaluations showed that the open dialogue that occurred between women and police during the workshop was a good start, although participants agreed more gatherings and conversations are needed to learn more and to develop lasting change through agreements and action plans to create safety.

Many women distrust police because of previous negative experiences when they have reported violence. *Together For Justice* came about because LAWS recognizes the critical need to provide more opportunities for RCMP members to hear from women in the communities about violence, how it can be addressed, and to provide an environment where trust can be established. The March 8, 2009 events that resulted in criminal charges against two RCMP constables who were later acquitted of sexual assault, the statements made at public meetings held in Watson Lake during the *Review of Yukon's Police Force 2010*, and the conversations held at the Whitehorse *Bridging the Gap* session in early March and at the Watson Lake workshop all highlight the current climate of fear and distrust of police. Participants are motivated by a desire to change that climate of fear. This requires active listening, reflection, participation in difficult conversations, and a willingness to learn about and to engage in new practices that respect women, acknowledge women's resistance, and serve and protect women's safety.

By collaborating in the workshops on *Together for Justice*, RCMP members, Aboriginal women, First Nations service providers and women's groups can develop action plans and orientation documents for the RCMP. Participants will learn about safety, the importance of accurate language, violence, responsibility, and recovery. This knowledge, if put into practice, can help to improve investigating and reporting of sexual and spousal assaults. Ongoing communication and cooperation will inform improved service delivery, policing, and community work to prevent male violence against women, and violence in all its forms.

Opening Prayer

Elder Clara Donnelly gave the Opening Prayer in Kaska for *Bridging the Gap: Creating safety in community*. Each day began with an opening prayer.

Ann Maje Raider, LAWS Executive Director welcomed all participants and introduced presenters Dr. Allan Wade and Dr. Cathy Richardson. She gave background information on funding for the current fiscal year project from Justice Canada, seed money from the RCMP Family Violence fund, and an application to Status of Women Canada to support a 2-year series of workshops. Violence against women is epidemic and on the rise. LAWS is aware that many young women, and older ones, are being abused and raped and not reporting this. As a community we need to change our thinking on violence. The workshops will ask how we can create safety for women so they can retain their dignity and report the violent crimes that are occurring. LAWS hopes to achieve a protocol agreement with the RCMP, to share ideas, and to weave in what we're learning to create more safety.

Mary Maje, LAWS President welcomed all participants, thanked the Elders for attending, and commended the group for demonstrating by their presence that they care about people. Dena always gather to act in the social interest of our people.

Participants introduced themselves around the table. Presenter Allan Wade acknowledged many old friends around the table and spoke about his work over 25 years to address problems of violence. There are connections between many forms of violence experienced by aboriginal peoples around the globe who have been colonized, people brutalized at work, survivors of armed robbery, battered women, and others.

Presenter Cathy Richardson has Dene, Cree, and Gwichin roots and has worked in Ross River for over 10 years as a family therapist. She helps aboriginal families stay together and works to redress historical injustice in ways that create safety and a good life for people. She described Islands of Safety work with Metis children. It's important at meetings like this to bring back what's sacred and whole to isolated, remote and aboriginal communities. She noted this special work, and that people need to speak up.

Safety, Collective Ethics, Agreements

Allan and Cathy invited us to participate collectively in a spirit of respect. We don't have a right to mess up this work and will hold each other to a high degree of accountability. This is an historical moment. The problems don't just rest with police and the criminal justice system. We have to really know it's safe to talk here. They will facilitate a conversation. Telling us what to do would be replicating power and not productive. They want to make it possible to talk about what we need, to talk about our lives, what we'll do differently, and identify concrete and measurable things that will make a difference in our work and our community. People will have to speak up in the meetings. If anyone doesn't agree with something it's important to say what you're thinking. You can't talk about how to address violence without talking about violence at some level.

Allan and Cathy will show how language is used to make violence disappear in different settings. We will be sharing stories about people's resistance of violence in the prison camps known as residential schools, where aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their homes and communities, stripped of their personal possessions, forbidden to speak their language or talk to members of the opposite sex. Children who ran away were tracked down, brought back, and punished. The Lower Post Residential School located 20 minutes south of Watson Lake along the Alaska Highway was closed in 1975.

Lois Moorcroft is taking notes for LAWS to produce an accurate report of what happened. The documents, agreements, and commitments will be made public. This is not just another workshop, it is a

movement forward. People become dispirited if they come to feel a bit hopeful and then a program dies on the vine and their hopes are dashed. It requires an act of will on our parts to break out of that pattern. An example is found in the economic structure of our society when the Aboriginal Healing Foundation was established, funded some good research and programs, then closed down with no more money available. This creates a problem for policing when people are highly vulnerable and maybe being violent.

Peter Clark, RCMP Commanding Officer noted that he had another commitment March 22, and that advance notice is needed to enable them to participate. He commented on the good direction and framework and thanked the organizers for that. The work needs to be sustainable and entrenched in the way we do business. He said a caveat on that is that some of this would be tied to funding. RCMP need continued support from Yukon Government so we can make these commitments become viable.

Dignity

Dignity is a particular spirit and energy. It is pride in yourself as a person, humanity, being accepted for who you are. Dignity is confidence and feeling good about yourself. Dignity is treating people with honour and respect, and is found in greeting each other, acknowledging people, saying hello, manners taught by family and parents: "I see you." Dignity is fairness in the workplace, where everyone has an equal voice. Dignity is being able to care for people. Dignity is safety and security, concern for others, and much more.

There are many ways we take care of people's dignity. We are born with dignity and treat each other that way every day. The way Kaska Elders are treated, brought food, listened to, is Dena Au-Nezen, the proper order of life. We have a problem if people act against the proper order of life.

All of us have experienced humiliation, and most of us have had someone help us by telling us how to behave so we don't hurt others. We can minimize people by giving them too much advice, or by treating them like they don't already know things. Physical violence is a form of attacking the spirit and dignity of a person, which has the most profound implications. The job we all share is to restore dignity to a person.

How many people start telling an abused woman what to do? Her friends, her family, police, Crown, school counselors, Oprah. So they're telling her she's not competent, and that's a form of humiliation. Try to discover what women already know, ask how they are responding, what they are trying to do to protect themselves.

Victims of violence are often good at telling people what they want to hear. If you are in a position of authority be aware people may only be telling you what they think you want to hear. It is a profound form of resistance to keep your real thoughts hidden and say what the listener wants to hear.

We subject offenders to really humiliating treatment programs. You don't get people to behave better if you humiliate them. It doesn't work. Aboriginal women don't want to see their husbands humiliated and abused. It becomes part of a series of indignities and things get many times worse. That's what we have to change.

Stories of Our Families, Grandparents

In groups of three people, participants were asked to share stories about their families, where they lived or were from, what they did or do, and our relationships with them, even if they have passed on. We talked about what our grandparents passed down that we take into our life and work on a daily basis. We were asked to talk in the small groups about what we hope to avoid or continue with that we have learned from our experience with our grandparents. How is this visible in our work?

After the small group discussions, participants talked in the round about points of connection and common purpose.

“What good is this going to do?”

Allan and Cathy introduced the goal of identifying what good will result from these discussions.

After this gathering, what will you be thinking and doing differently (at home or work) to carry on our work?

Who will notice you are thinking and doing these things? How will they notice?

What difference will this make to them?

What difference will this make to you?

How will this create more safety in the community?

At the close of the workshop, small groups responded to these questions about what they would do differently and how this would make change and create safety. The responses provided to the recorder are summarized later in this report.

Understanding Violence in Social and Historical Context - Colonialism

Cathy asked what does colonialism mean? Kings and queens would send people out into the world, tell them to find more wealth and bring it back to them. Find land, things of value under the land, gold and silver, on the land, furs and timber. The word for Crown land in Kaska is the Queen’s hat land.

Cathy’s family lived in Fort Chipewyan and Uranium City. Her grandmother lined her garden with uranium rocks that they weren’t told were dangerous and had lost all her hair by the time she was 40. Two generations of women in her family have congenital hip dysplasia. Because her dad was white, she was sent to Toronto Children’s Hospital for two hip replacement surgeries and fortunately wasn’t placed in the Nanaimo Indian Hospital. At the Nanaimo Indian Hospital, young children would be chained into their beds, and their families would only be allowed to visit them occasionally.

The Déline Dené men handled the sacks of uranium rocks with their bare hands and packed them in cloth gunny sacks on their shoulders to the ships. Uranium from Déline was used for the Manhattan Project, and in the Atomic Bomb “Little Boy” used on Hiroshima, Japan in 1945. All the Déline Dené men died of cancer. Déline is now known as the Village of Widows. A group of Elders went to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to talk about how you heal from this type of colonialism. The military knew but never told our people about the dangers. The Dené had a prophecy to keep the black rock in the ground, they told a story that you would get sick if you took it out.

Cathy’s grandfather opened up a school for the trapper kids and kept 20, maybe 25 kids away from the residential schools. Children were sent away from their homes so the colonial powers could break up families and get at the land. It wasn’t just about “giving them an education.”

When applied to indigenous peoples, what the institutions of health, education, and child welfare have in common is land. Move over, we want what you are standing on. Chris Arnett reports in *The Terror of the Coast: Land Alienation and Colonial War on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, 1849-1863*, (1999) that after the British naval gunboat Forward was repulsed in a fierce battle with a handful of Lamulcha warriors from a village on Kuper Island, the colonial government launched one of the largest military operations in the history of British Columbia. He argues it was nothing more than the brutal suppression of British Columbia coastal Natives that eroded their jurisdiction, and is relevant to today's land claims processes in B.C.

Merchant Princes (O'Keefe and MacDonald 2001) chronicles land theft by companies, some of which had a majority of board members who were in the Canadian parliament. In 1899 the Saskatchewan Valley Land Co. amassed 5 million acres for \$1.00 per acre which was resold at \$20.00. The land was described as sparsely or unpopulated, infertile and of little use to anyone, notwithstanding indigenous peoples had been driven off the land. A number of lumber companies, eventually acquired by the Canadian Western Lumber Company, in 1910 controlled 70,000 acres of timber between Courtenay and Campbell River, considered to be the largest timber holding in the world. Bourgeois, Harris, and Tough also document land theft research.

Canada's *Indian Act* is racialized legislation. Today, less than ¼ of 1% of the land in Canada is held by Aboriginal people, over 95% is in non-Native control. In 1911 amendments to the Indian Act that legalized the government's removal of land from reserves meant that you could then be arrested as a squatter for fishing/hunting/being on your land. In 1936 responsibility for Native Indians was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Department of Lands, Mines and Resources. In 1951 Child Welfare authority was passed to provinces, the "Sixties Scoop" is now the "Millennium Scoop."

Along with land theft, Indian residential schools and child welfare systems institutionalized the collective humiliation of Aboriginal peoples. In 2008 on Squamish First Nation Territory near Vancouver, Friends and Relatives of the Disappeared released a list of twenty-eight mass graves across Canada holding the remains of untold numbers of aboriginal children who died in Indian Residential Schools.

The Colonial Code of Relationship is summarized as:

1. You are deficient, heathen, savage, dependent
 2. I am proficient, expert, white, Christian, closer to God,
 3. Therefore, I have the right to perform certain operations upon you (e.g., diagnose, advise, fix, assimilate, educate)
- . . . for your own good (while I steal your stuff).

This is the centrepiece of the colonial attitude. Imperialism would probably be a better word. It is found throughout the law, history, education, Courts, policing, mental health. It is the underpinning of all the structures that maintain the status quo. In our work together we have to challenge this attitude.

We are activists for social justice together. We need to establish a certain set of practices that acknowledge harm, honour resistance, and stop violence.

Social Responses in Cases of Violence

Most people who have experienced violence and told somebody about it get negative responses from family, friends, or professionals. Because of that they have deeper sadness and more long lasting

suffering. Women are more likely than men to get negative responses, with the result that recovery will likely be slower, they may attempt suicide or have clinical depression due to the negative social responses.

More marginalized members of society, gay/lesbian/transgendered/bisexual/queer, people with disabilities, and the deaf receive worse social responses. First Nations, Metis, Inuit and refugee women more than any are other groups get negative responses, such as removing children from their mother's home. Often these women are not believed. Allan and Cathy described some examples from their work, and concluded that the people involved in these scenarios needed some decent training. Negative social responses can be far more harmful than the violence itself. People need to ask what happened, to look at how the victim responded at the time and after, and to ask what responses they received at the time and following. The idea of resilience, that you can "take a licking and keep on ticking", should take into account that by and large resilient people have had more positive social responses. We can learn to give positive social responses to battered women and others who've been abused.

Allan showed a video of an interview he did with a woman who had been attacked in a bar. She had said no thanks to dancing with a man who was aggressive, he came after her and threatened her so she punched him, then he knocked her out. The interview brought out her resistance and the social responses of the people around her. Often people just don't want to get involved.

This work isn't just about stopping the violence, which is our project; it's about the larger project of improving the whole network of social responses. Allan described a woman's situation where she was diagnosed as having "symptoms of a disorder." The woman saw the world as a dangerous place, which was a logical conclusion based on her real life experiences, and not a mental health disorder. Under similar logic, an assault becomes a fight, and may lead to dual charging. As professionals and community members we should challenge that whole way of thinking. We need to be in solidarity with the victim and get an accurate description of events. In elementary schools, we teach children from a young age they should be bystanders, not helpers, by the way we fail to respond to problems of violence on the playground. Educators who ask "What do we do as a whole class so Bobby doesn't think he needs to pick on Timmy and so Timmy isn't scared?" will get amazing responses. Timmy may say "I'll go and play with Bobby so he doesn't feel lonely."

As a counselor, Allan needs to be in solidarity with the victim, and get an accurate description of events. He asks them "Have you ever told anyone about this before?" and "What did they say?" because he wants them to know he's interested in what their whole experience has been. He works for them, not for the other professionals and the system.

Peter Clark said as Commanding Officer he's responsible for the delivery of all RCMP services in Yukon, and thinks many of us have seen over the last few years a journey in policing with RCMP coming to sessions like this. We went through a period of time when society was changing, when police adopted more widespread use of computers and rules of evidence in Courts was changing. Police became very busy in their cars and were not as touch with the communities as they want to be, used to be, and should be. Peter gave credit to LAWS organization, helpers, and Elders for bringing us together. He wants RCMP to get out of police cars more and build relationships in communities. Being better connected to people will lead to a new future to take us where we want to be. He thanked LAWS for having RCMP there to be part of important conversations. Peter committed that he would attend the next 2 sessions of *Together for Justice*, and said he was available to members of the groups for comments and questions.

A LAWS Elder said it was an honour to be here, and she wanted to say that it's not only aboriginal women who face violence. Violence against women in Watson Lake is so widespread among all walks of life. We have trauma through our lives. It's often good to share it because we all are human and don't want to be alone. As a product of residential schools, I've seen our Elders too felt the loss because the children were taken away. Only maybe one month of the whole year were they able to care for their own children. Lots of us who attended residential school know what violence is, we grew up with violence in those schools. I guess that's what we've been taught. We don't talk about it even when we get home because it's too painful. She talked about Court dockets full of pages of property damage, assaults, and stolen vehicles. Sometimes people will hit, or do property damage, outwardly trying to let go of their childhood trauma. For others the hurt goes inward, there's a lot of sickness, disease, people try to commit suicide. The only way to get it out is to talk about it. She shared some memories of residential school. All the children who went to Carcross Choutla School and who tried to run away got the strap. She described the long thick strap the principal would use to hit them as hard as he could, but that they would still run away. She said if somebody else could share what they did to resist it would be good.

Someone described progress being made because it's no longer acceptable that what happens in a private home is not police business. Others told stories of racialized institutional violence from child welfare, Indian agent, police and medical professionals.

An Elder spoke about her pain and outrage at the way the complainant in the 2010 sexual assault trial of two RCMP was revictimized. She would never tell if it happened to her because she wouldn't want it to be splashed all over the front pages of the newspapers. She said she was verbally abused by those two (accused) men. If you're trying to change the system you're not going to win. You can't beat the system. We don't have fifty or sixty thousand dollars for lawyers. It pissed her off that the constables got paid while they were suspended from duties, they're on vacation while this woman's life is in shambles. All they get is transferred. They should apologize.

Activity, Social Responses

How just and effective are social responses to Aboriginal women in the Yukon in cases of violence?

Each participant was asked to pick a number between 1 and 10 and write it down.

Working in small groups, we discussed the reasons for the number chosen.

Discussion

Most groups picked the number 1, 2, or 3. Only one group said 8, because Yukon had more resources than Nunavut. A number of social dynamics contribute to these low numbers.

Some comments note that things are changing, there are better social responses. Education and new Court methods help. Another felt it's going backward.

Working with paperwork and not with people means police can't be effective. Better orientation to Aboriginal cultures would be helpful.

People talked about the negative social responses from community members – when somebody is traumatized the blame is put on them – it's all their fault – not the perpetrator. We all see that

throughout the system. The Courts do that – the prosecutor will bring up the past of the woman. It just goes on. People will get it from the detachment and they get it from the community.

Social systems aren't coherent. We shouldn't be left with figuring out who does what, who provides shelter and housing.

When we phone to report an incident they usually ask "are you drinking?" or will say go home and take an aspirin, go to sleep. When we do report something in the village they don't keep it confidential.

People need better knowledge of family raising prior to residential schools. We didn't know what we could expect as normal cultural practices. What was discipline like? How did different tribes at war deal with family?

Language is a real barrier, particularly for our Elders. When they get picked up and charged and they've been drinking they will say I was so drunk I don't remember. If I say I did it then they let me go right away. If I say I didn't I keep coming back to Court. Even if it's a really bad charge and they may go to jail for a long time, and even though they didn't do it they'll say they did to get it over.

The circus Court is here – we call it that – because it's really unreal the stuff that happens there.

Young people don't understand the charges, and have no trust, because RCMP will beat them. Building relationships is going to be a really tough go.

Police need to visit Elders, knock on their door, sit down and have tea, talk to them, take your shoes off at the door. Don't look so regimented like on the posters. Don't stand up over them and talk down at people. Or put your hand on your hip. Act normally like it was your longtime friend. Listen to a really good story, a funny one. They like humour.

My perspective is quite different. I've worked with all cultures and all socio-economic scales. Domestic violence and substance abuse hits every level. General duty covers car accidents, thefts, violence. Spousal violence, sexual assaults and historic sexual abuse requires a lot more follow-up and there's a shortage of time. Victims were also getting frustrated with the system, the fatigue of going through the stories over and over again, and then wouldn't show up for Court. We'll take some learning, bear with me. That fatigue is like preparing for a marathon. When you come forward you have to know it's going to be a long haul.

Back-up and support for victims of crime is good in the community. From what I see there are great people working in the RCMP and Victim Services. The disconnect is when people go to Court, it's adjourned for three months, another three months for a First Appearance, another three months to meet with Counsel, another three months and plead not guilty, a three months adjournment for trial, it's been a year and nothing's coming forward.

What's the point in coming forward when you know in the end you're not going to get anything out of it? There's no end point to it.

Peter is seeing the momentum and the groundswell of public support for doing things differently and doing it together, this type of dialogue is very positive. Doesn't hear comments today about RCMP not being engaged and feels the members are connected. Acknowledge the importance of culture and

listening to Elders. Will youth be brought in to this table? And it would be good to see more presence from Justice officials.

One Kaska teacher brought some students to an earlier meeting and LAWS will try to get youth here.

Allan spoke about meeting with two groups of grade 8 and grade 11 students asking them how safe it is for the youth of Watson Lake. The grade 8s said 2.5 and the grade 11 said 1.5–2, on a scale of 1 to 10. They said their parents would rate safety at 7 or 8, because they don't know because we don't tell them, because they would screw it up if we did. Their practical ideas for improving their safety include more lights along the highway between 2-Mile and Watson Lake, a pay phone at Lucky Lake because girls get assaulted there. The bars have to close down earlier. Drunk drivers should get charged. They gather those ideas and take them to a safety committee, and nothing happened. It's a great idea to bring the youth in, but we don't listen to them.

These youth have relatives feeling a lot of pain. They see them drinking, or crying, or sad. These youth are getting the same colonial education I got. They don't know the real history of the country and of colonial relationships. They don't have the information to make sense of what's going on. The Elders don't want to tell the youth – it's too painful. We'll be richer for knowing the truth.

Social responses come from our friends, our families, not just the professionals. There's always room for improvement and that's why we're here.

Allan said when wife assault offenders receive swift and certain responses the recidivism rate drops 25%. If they're in Court in two weeks, attending programs before they go to Court, when that happens they change their behaviour. We've created open season on women in Yukon and B.C. – it takes months to go to Court. We need meaningful intervention. These are political funding decisions.

RCMP said in DVTO it goes to Court in a week or two, programming starts right away. Women activists have a different view of DVTO – women report problems with it.

Asked how successful "anger management treatment" is, Allan replied there are problematic ideas behind "anger management." Violent behaviour is deliberate. Men already know how to be respectful and we let them off the hook by saying they have "anger management" problems. Men simply change strategies and the abuse continues with added monetary or psychological abuse. There's a need to keep contacting the partners throughout the treatment to be sure women are seeing positive results. Many men's treatment programs are "counselling lite" based on faulty assumptions.

Ann spoke about the need for traditional programs. Women often don't want to report abuse because they don't want men to go away to jail – they want them to get help. A swift program where the abusers get help sounds good. Restorative justice is almost like a shaming process. Men don't know how to accept their own responsibility for their actions and be accountable; they will blame alcohol or drugs, or say you made me do it. They need solitude – a lot of time to think.

A 2001 study by the BC Aboriginal Women's Action Network, *The Implications of Restorative Justice for Aboriginal Women and Children Survivors of Violence: A Comparative Overview of Five Communities in British Columbia* concluded that Restorative Justice should never be used in violence against women cases in northern Canada, because it can be used to further violate the woman. Allan said that restorative justice can be really useful if there's a context that contains it. Much of what we call Restorative Justice is purely offender driven and the safety of the victim isn't taken into account. The

sad thing is that good Restorative Justice is tarred with the same brush. It's not uncommon to find exaggerated claims of the effectiveness of a new program that people want to fund.

Ann said that First Nations government could pass legislation that would address violence against women. The Navajo have a law that requires people to go to treatment.

Allan spoke about a Maori initiative to go out on the land and visit historic massacre sites. Men get back in touch with the fact they're supposed to protect people.

A justice worker spoke about the diverse range of people in communities. You can't throw people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder into the same pool as everyone or put them in jail. It doesn't do any good.

Reflections

We've started to create a place for dialogue between women's groups and RCMP to begin the development of lasting relationships. We will develop an agreement with RCMP on their commitment to the two year plan process, and prepare a workshop summary. We will develop RCMP orientation materials based on these initial cross cultural conversation workshops.

Language, Violence, and Resistance

Cathy introduced the topics of language and violence, resistance to violence, and how people take care of each other. The language we use when we talk about violence, the words we use to describe violence are so important, and they make a difference to what happens in Court. She asked that we do what we need to do to take care of ourselves.

Resistance to Violence

Allan told some stories about Charlene, a Cowachin woman who came to recognize her role as a First Nations woman and a grandmother; when she held a traditional ceremony to burn the clothes her daughter and grandchildren were wearing when they survived a bad car crash it brought up all kinds of memories of being in the prison camp of the Port Alberni Residential School. One day a float plane landed and scooped up her and her sister, and other children of the village. That kind of kidnapping was endemic in Canada for about one hundred years, and it's not even on the table for consideration. We are a long way from truth and justice. The so-called Truth and Reconciliation process doesn't even begin to address the pain and loss of the Elders and the parents whose children were taken away.

This prohibition of siblings talking to each other in the residential schools when priest or supervisors were physically and sexually abusing them caused grief and loss about children's separation from their family. They thought their older siblings didn't love them anymore, when they wouldn't talk to them it was to protect them from punishment not because they didn't love them.

As a counselor I came to see that the question "how were you affected by that violence" was problematic. I didn't ask Charlene, who was an older sister, how she was affected by that. That was obvious. I asked her "What did you do to remain connected to your younger sister?" She would lay awake and listen to the footsteps, different staff would sound different. She would get to know which staff were less diligent and wouldn't come back for another round for a long time. Then she would crawl under the bunks like a commando and through an archway into the next dormitory, do the same thing

again and go through a second and third dormitory, find her sister's bunk, crawl up into the bunk, stroke her sister's hair, and sing songs to her in her language. What would that story say to you about her ability to be a grandmother? Many of the residential school survivors will say I wasn't raised by my family and I don't know how to be a parent. If you pay attention to it, they do know a lot about how to be a parent. Through respect and gentle curiosity is how you find out about that. You need to ask "What else did you do?" Survivors rarely get asked about their resistance.

Conversations about resistance tend to be healing stories. Charlene started to do a lot of healing work in her community. "When you sit down and talk to people you have to be careful because everything you say goes in the fire and into the air everywhere. First you talk about the scheming – things to fool the nuns and protect each other and everybody laughs. Then you talk about the pain and a lot of people cry. Then you talk about the scheming again." There's a rhythm to it, the Elders bring us the humour and that wise perspective.

Charlene went to Vancouver to testify at a United Nations tribunal. When people finished testifying they were supposed to go through a door at the back of the stage, but Charlene didn't know what was back there so she wouldn't go through the door. When she finished testifying she just stood in front of the door. And after everybody else who testified after her had spoken, she gave them each a hug before they went through that door.

Resistance is subtle. And it's important. One man talked about how the white people brainwashed him. They made him clean that floor with a toothbrush. When Allan asked him more about what he did, there was one little corner of the closet that they never looked at and he left it dirty. They never succeeded in fully brainwashing him. That's why it's crucial to ask about what they did, to include the person's resistance and response, and to protect their dignity.

Violence is Deliberate

Photos of genocide show children infected with tuberculosis sitting beside healthy First Nations children being deliberately exposed to TB, published in the Ottawa Citizen in 1905 (Kevin Annett). Dr. Peter Bryce, former Chief Medical Officer of Indian Affairs was expelled from the medical association for speaking against the abuses of First Nations children. A century later in 2008, Dr. John O'Connor practicing in Fort Chipewyan had to appear before the Canadian Medical Society for similar reasons after Health Canada accused him of causing undue alarm about chemical pollution and aboriginal residents' cancer rates.

Common Strategies

When you stop blaming the victim it lets you get at the advocacy. Part of the activism is contesting and stopping the blaming of victims. You need to ask what is he doing to prevent her from leaving, not "why doesn't she leave." Then you see the steps the offender takes to prevent her resistance. The sense of hopelessness and despair is part of the resistance.

Responses and Resistance to Violence

Several Elders shared stories about their life experiences, violence, and resistance. They commented that a lot of things made more sense now because of the information presented in the workshop.

I came up here because I wanted to share some things. I find this very interesting because we go through the system. We do a lot of things in our own way. I talk to the teachers, public health, doctors. I always use my own experience, my sexual abuse as a child. For a long time I blamed myself. I carried that guilt around, I was told by the priest it was a mortal sin and I would go to hell. Now I'm not taking the blame for what somebody else did to me.

We were taught by our parents and grandparents to know the difference between right and wrong. That's why I love culture. We share that and we're better people for that. I share my life with people, it's a learning tool. I've had enough with boarding school, it's way in the past. For some people it's not way in the past. Emotionally and spiritually some of them are still in boarding school. Be more compassionate.

My parents too they resisted the violence. When we got home from school they made us speak Kaska. They forced us to speak the language and I'm grateful for that to this day. They told me lots of stories about when that [Robert] Campbell went through here. They gave out blankets with TB. My mom found a way to get better, they made a sweat lodge, and some medicine, and people stood outside the sweat lodge and prayed for them. My parents resisted by taking us out on the land. They would come around and tell them if they didn't send us kids to school they would take them to jail. The airplane would land and take the kids away. Some people weren't even told they wouldn't see their kids again for nearly a year.

I'm really glad that I'm here. I'm on my healing journey and I can do what I want and say what I want. I'm not going to have anybody talk down to me anymore. I want to be free. I love this freedom and nobody's going to shame me anymore for who I am.

Another Elder shared her story of violence and resistance. "We've got to speak up against all this violence we see in our communities. Even if we're scared."

Clara spoke in Kaska to thank her for talking and to thank people for listening and understanding. She said we have to keep talking about it to heal and to make things better.

Allan acknowledged that we must have created enough safety here that the Elders could take the risk of speaking openly about their personal experiences. He thanked them for their bravery. We were shown by Clara how to witness and how to respond. We will feed what we've seen and heard into our commitments and how we take this forward into the world.

Violence and Language

When you intervene in a case of violence you're probably also intervening in colonial violence. Aboriginal people face racism on a daily basis, in law, in the store, in government failing to provide needed infrastructure at every level imaginable.

You can't begin to understand how to address violence if you don't understand the way language is used. One of the most deceptive tools is language. "Settlement" conceals "colonialism." We've been using language to conceal violence for a long time. We have to try and look at it square on.

Violence is social. We can't have appropriate responses if we don't get accurate descriptions of what happened and what each party does. The job of the Courts is to sort out what's accurate and what's hearsay.

Linda Coates, Allan and Cathy analyze language used in Court. What happens depends a lot on who interviews. What forms of resistance are recognized in the Courts? Generally only forceful physical struggle is recognized as resistance. One judge viewed the victim making the accused wearing a condom as consent, not as a form of resistance to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.

Allan presented examples of two woman abuse scenarios, showing how using language could ignore or acknowledge the victim's resistance. In the first description there was no recognition of her agency, of what she was trying to do. We could conclude she was completely passive. We tend to project the assumptions from our culture that victims are passive. Defence counsel will try to argue the victim didn't adequately say no. (See page 26)

The second statement in both cases contained all of the ways the victim resisted. Her resistance took many forms. It showed she was a fighter, and that she was thinking all of the time the assault was going on. It gave us more of a feeling of solidarity with the victim. He demonstrated how using clear language that acknowledged her resistance would be more effective in Court.

"Fight, flight, or freeze" is such a distortion – we have a cerebral cortex and don't shut off our brains when we get frightened. That assumption isn't borne out by research studies. It's a deeply faulty way of thinking that blames victims.

When a person has been traumatized, she may not remember that she sped up to get away. You have to ask. A 'cognitive' interview is a step better than a 'pure fact' interview. If you choose to look someone in the eye when they point a gun at you, it's much more than "fight, flight, or freeze," and it can have a big impact on what happens.

We have a particularly ugly form of contempt for people who we think of as "a real victim." We have more of a sense of the deliberate nature of the violence when we include the responses and resistance of the victim. When we see how he works to overcome her resistance we see the deliberate intent of the violence. To conceal the victim's resistance is also to conceal the violence.

Prime Minister Harper didn't talk about Aboriginal people's resistance to kidnapping, racism and genocide. The notion of truth and reconciliation is a sham. As Beverly Jacobs of the Native Women's Association of Canada said watching his apology on TV, "Remember Mr. Prime Minister we never let you do it." It's ok to talk about resiliency, but never to talk about the resistance. That's why it's such a profound act for women to speak in the way they did earlier today about their resistance to violence.

In child protection practice we are training people to conceal the resistance. But we can get that complete description at every point. If we make it our business to ask about the victim's resistance we will get more convictions and the seriousness of the violence will be reflected in sentencing. A young man shared his stories of being a child and protecting his mother from violent men. Allan acknowledged how he had been there for his mother, picked his spot so carefully to reduce the danger for both of them, and comforted her. Children often don't know what's happening, the extent of the violence, or the extent of the resistance, and women end up taking the blame for the men's behaviour. The child won't know that he's threatened to kill her, or her son, or to hang himself in the shed where the child will

find him. Finding out about her resistance is part of our obligation, and we have a responsibility to make it part of our practice.

An Elder talked about her father coming to visit and insisting on seeing her every month. After he had left the principal would laugh at him and call him a crazy fool. She asked her father to stop coming and he told her I'm coming every month no matter what. That's how she survived, and learned resistance from him.

Everybody who's been subjected to violence can tell you a story of their resistance. If you're a frontline worker how do you prevent yourself from being desensitized, that you don't get sick of it and don't care anymore.

Frontline workers talked about self-care, retreating into your own world, having hobbies that take your mind off it, taking a deep breath and putting yourself into her situation for a moment, riding your motorcycle, giving yourself permission to take a vacation. Allan commented that in BC all of those social workers have no external support. In Sweden it's illegal to be a child support worker without external supports. Sometimes the problems and the solutions the system will insist on – that a woman has to move – are impossible. The problems relate to poverty, racism, and homelessness, and the dilemmas clients face cause workers spiritual pain. We have to advocate for external support.

Cathy quoted a colleague who would say we don't burn out, we blow out. Form small groups and meet every week and talk about your values and how you act ethically and do work you're proud of. Don't be caught in "vicarious trauma," our clients are not the ones who hurt us.

In the Kaska way all the people have to have a gun in our house. A long rifle because we have to have moose meat. We survived by that for many generations. I haven't yet heard stories about the use of guns against women in Kaska territory. Every year at New Year's at midnight Kaska shoot off their guns. I want to tell the RCMP we value their service – and it's safe for them to come out at New Years.

An Elder said to bring the young boys and girls. So when they're old enough they'll know something. So those cops hear from youth and understand more – that's good.

Closing Comments

We're just getting started, and all of us need to be at the next two gatherings as well. It's our collective commitment to move forward in building relationships that will accomplish change. It's part of what creates the safety to speak as the Elders have. We don't have the right to go away and drop the ball.

Allan and Cathy thanked Chief Superintendent Peter Clark and the RCMP for participating in *Bridging the Gap*.

Before ending the workshop, people talked about where we want to go so our vision of safety becomes reality, and how we can work together to make good changes in our communities.

Forging Commitments for Sustainable Local Action: what good will this do?

On the final afternoon of the workshop, people talked in small groups to identify effective social responses already in place, and actions they would take between now and the next workshop.

These notes were recorded from the discussions about taking action before the next workshop.

1. After this gathering, what will you be thinking and doing differently (at home or work) to carry on our work?

Keep the vision wider – look at both sides, help the victim and look for others who could be support.
Have an open heart. Look deeper into the person's unease and put them at ease – reassure.
Talk to the kids about this meeting and what we're trying to do.
Being more respectful of others and be able to listen more.
Stop telling my family what they need to do and be in charge of their lives. No more unsolicited advice at home or at work.
Paying more attention to the questions I ask to those I work with. Focus more on their responses rather than what happened to them.
Stepping back and looking at things more closely.
Explain to my son what happened in residential school, why I am the way I am.
Break down my own walls.
Communicate more with children.
Seeing things from a parent's perspective.
Trying to see all sides.
I'll go and talk to the police and ask them questions. I won't be afraid to approach them. I'll try and talk to my children and grandchildren to do the same.
It's going to be the same all the time I think.
This was good because people came together and sit down and talk.
I could help people that need the help. If they're having problems I could talk to them. A lot of people come to my home and talk to me because I pray and do stuff. Have some tea and things like that and support them.
Always tell those younger people about the value of education.
Get together and have handicrafts. It keeps some people that drink from drinking because they're doing handicrafts. I go talk to them, say I wish you'd completely quit that drinking, you have more freedom. You can go trapping, skidooing, hunting.

2. Who will notice you are thinking and doing these things? How will they notice?

Have more conversations within the community about what it is we're trying to accomplish.
They will see us being more open to hearing what people are really thinking.
Done properly the community could be happier and healthier.
When people tell their stories, we don't judge, just listen and accept.
People who have been to residential school will notice we acknowledge and allow their resistance.
Family members, co-workers, and boss will notice changes.
I will notice it would alleviate my stress.
Hopefully the people/clients I work for will notice and benefit from this.
My family, co-workers, colleagues, children, students, parents.
They will notice changed views, perspectives, different attitudes.
More patience, listening better. "You're a lot nicer."
When you're helping people, people notice you right away. When I was taking in foster children the children would notice. My friends will notice.
You have to treat people how you want to be treated.

3. What difference will this make to them?

Provide them with knowledge.

Make them more accepting.

Security and safety.

Their dignity and peace of mind.

Hopefully give them a sense of empowerment to give their side of the story.

I have more understanding and patience towards them. They may be more open. There will be more trust.

Even people who are drinking you have to help them – give them a ride back home. Give them meat if you think they're hungry. When you help them they're thankful and they look up to you. Then I think they learn something about how to act with other people. I don't want to look down on people because I've been through that.

4. What difference will this make to you?

Provides us with the knowledge that there are many victims.

Gives us better skills to meet the needs of victims.

Help provide victims with safe environments.

Peace of mind. Better sense of justice.

It will hopefully allow me to do what my job is supposed to do, but do it better.

Gives me more understanding and insight. I will be happier seeing things in a positive light.

Less contradicting. More safety.

I think it will make a lot of difference for me. The other side, the police side, has to meet us halfway.

They have to earn our respect, in our culture. We don't have money in the old days. When we elect our Chief they have to earn our respect. The RCMP have to earn our respect, by showing us respect. It's not only on our side, it's on their side too.

5. How will this create more safety in the community? How can we create more safety?

Security for victims, because it will be safe for them to go for help.

More resource workers.

More grassroots people involved.

More pockets of safety.

I think there should be more education Canada-wide about what has happened throughout our history – the residential schools. If more people have this knowledge there will be more safety.

If people are treated with more love, they will have more hope and will feel more safe in the community.

Happier kids. Sense of belonging. More positive views of the RCMP – RCMP need to see why and where the fear of the RCMP came from.

The bonding would really be something. Sharing the teachings that we got from our parents and grandparents how everything is made. That's why we're so grateful to be alive today. Our people pray all the time, not just once a day. They would pray to go up the hill, pray when they get there, pray to get down to the bottom.

RCMP come for hand games and stick gambling. Dance in public. Invite an RCMP to be on your team – RCMP try to sit beside a community member.

Police need to do public relations – visiting campfires in the summer. Bring your tent and camp out. Shut off your generator. Listen to the legends and the stories. Tell us about the past.

Tell stories about successes helping families in the community. What is different here in the Yukon?

List of Watson Lake participants:

<i>Bridging the Gap: Creating Safety in Community</i> March 2011, Two Mile Hall, Liard First Nation	
NAME	ORGANIZATION
Ann Maje Raider	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society ED
Mary Maje	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
May Brodhagen	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Clara Donnelly	Elder
Alice Broadhagen	Elder
Grace Grady Tom	Elder
Julia Allen	Elder
Maggie Dick	Elder
Tootsie Charlie	Elder
Rose Peter	Community Wellness Worker, RRDC
Maria Wolftail	Liard First Nation
Frankie D. Magun	Liard First Nation Councillor
Dixon Lutz	Liard First Nation Councillor
Cecile Cheezo	Help & Hope
Susan Derksen	Nawidiga Pathway Second Stage
Caron Statham	Help & Hope Shelter - Executive Director
Susan Whalen	Help & Hope Shelter
Peter Clark	Commanding Officer RCMP "M" Division
Julia Fox	RCMP
Rick Aird	RCMP - FN & Youth Policing "M" Division
Cst. Colin Kerry	RCMP
Cst. Lynden Morrison	RCMP
R Dwayne Latham	RCMP - Operations and Community Support Services
Teena Bazylnski	RCMP Training Unit "M" Division
Nicki Bowes	Victim Services
Shannon Miller	Daylu Dena Council (DDC)
Monica McMillan	DDC Justice Worker
Ruby Johnny	LFN Justice- Acting Director
Duane Esler	Offender Supervision & Services. Previously - Adult Probation
Michelle Beckley	Women's Directorate YAWS Implementation Officer
Colleen Dennis	Dease River First Nation
D. Lynn Leith	Watson Lake Health Centre
Cynthia Olie	Liard Basin Task Force Assistant Support worker, Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies
Lois Moorcroft	Liard Aboriginal Women's Society Secretariat
Dr. Allan Wade	Presenter
Dr. Cathy Richardson	Presenter

EVALUATION TEMPLATE

Bridging the Gap *Creating Safety in Community*

1. Can you think of a way to improve cooperation and strengthen trust between community members and the RCMP?
How could that happen?

2. What can you do to make women feel safe in your community?

3. What will RCMP members notice in your community when they have provided you with more of a sense of safety or trust? What will be different?

4. If your grandchildren were here today, what would they like about what took place in this workshop?

5. What aboriginal cultural teaching have you learned today that will help you in your daily work?

6. If all of the people who were taken away to residential school could witness this conversation today, what would they like to see take place?

7. What do people in your agency need to know that would contribute to improving services for women victims of violence? What have you learned that could improve services for women?

8. What changes would you like to see in your community 10 years from now? What would your ancestors hope for you to achieve?

9. How could the workshop be improved?

EVALUATION RESULTS

Bridging the Gap – Creating Safety in Community

EVALUATIONS

(Received from 24 of 31 participants)

Date: MARCH 2011

Location: Two Mile Hall – Watson Lake

1. Can you think of a way to improve cooperation and strengthen trust between community members and the RCMP? How could that happen?

I think that the RCMP members have to be seen in social setting – WITHOUT UNIFORMS – and participate in the social life of the community.

Sometimes I call them they don't come; they should come right away; late at night – they should drive around more often; don't let drunks bother elders.

More dialogue between both groups so there is a better understanding of each other's position. Set up smaller meetings for open and frank discussion.

This trust is taken away, don't know how to get it back.

Talk with them. I'll have trouble trusting them, there are many "bad cops." More First Nation members.

More workshops like this. (picture of smile)

Individuals need to learn more about what RCMP do and not only what media write. Less paperwork for RCMP and allow them to be available for community work.

Get together, talk together, by eating and getting to know each other.

I trust the RCMP. They have helped me when I needed help.

More communication. Invite the RCMP to social gatherings.

Effective and honest communication.

You have to have a meeting like this and the RCMP have to socialize with us.

RCMP and community having more social gatherings, helping one another.

Approachable, help them understand that their relationships with not just women but all of the people.

Smile when approached or approaching members. Come out to events that are being hosted, come as a community member and not in uniform.

Listen to each other and honestly give positive input to solving the situation; don't ignore the problems.

Invite the RCMP to other social functions hosted by the First Nations (Xmas dinners).

Hopefully they can interact with the youth, elders, and other community members – not only when something happens.

Include in the orientation an introduction to the culture and beliefs of the community. Introduce them to elders.

Be approachable and nice with a welcoming attitude. Be polite and easy to talk to. Faster service when it concerns abuse.

Get people and talk. They are just like us...they are people! Trust them!

The idea of the RCMP being here is a start. Because we are a small community visits with people would help.

2. What can you do to make women feel safe in your community?

Talk to them about what they are interested in – in a setting where alcohol is NOT involved.

We can take them out in the bush; camp out and talk about it.

Help them understand they have a place to turn – help instill a sense of confidence/self-worth.

Improve trust with them with setting? a safe place.

Talk with women and try to help.

Decreased violence and assaults I guess!

Continue the work we have been doing. Continue taking steps ahead.

Teach dirty-fight.

If someone needs help my home is always open and I could talk with them.

Be there if they need me. Say hello when you meet on the street, or at the store, even if you do not know who they are.

Support them, listen to them, encourage them, empower them.

I think for women to feel safe they have to be treated with respect, that's #1. Help women to respect themselves.

RCMP have to treat women equal, women have to have equal rights.

Teach women how to protect themselves.

Learning self-defense and talking more to men how much it hurt the women.

Developing safety plans with women; acknowledge their experiences, when interviewing them to ask "How did you respond."

Write for funding for pay phones in certain locations in Watson Lake, Liard, Two Mile, Lucky Lake.

Have an open ear to their plight. If I cannot help, assist them to receive the proper help.

Reunions, talk, meeting, teaching.

Information.

Speak out for women who cannot do it for themselves.

I continue to share my own experiences so they know that they're not alone. I want to help them feel safe and they can experience with feelings more openly.

Greet them with respect at each encounter. Have more liaison workers who understand the trauma and violence of the community.

Let them know there's help for them if they need it, and it doesn't matter what time or what hour it is they will be there to help. Good service.

More talking – like we used to.

Direct them to safe house.

Listen to them and not try to give advice.

Believe them.

3. What will RCMP members notice in your community when they have provided you with more of a sense of safety or trust? What will be different?

They wouldn't be seen as "the enemy", which is the case/stereotype in Canada because they have "botched" so many serious crime investigations.

When we have meetings to see them. Yes, take our people out and talk to them so they understand.

They will notice more trust given back to them.

More confidence to be out at night etc.

More positive reports in media.

Better place to live.

This year in Ross River I am noticing the RCMP are more involved in skating and hockey.

A better relationship.

Less hiding – more sharing.

People are comfortable speaking with the police, are not afraid, and feel safe in their homes and communities.

RCMP will be more open to talk to the women. It's so hard after what happened down here – it's not fair for big men to attack a little woman. (McLaughlin and Belak)

Notice that hardly no charges are being laid and it's a better community to live in.

They may notice more honesty from not only women but our youth, and men.

People walking around more often, right now it doesn't feel so safe to be out, especially on a Friday.

I would not know, after the recent incident of the 2 officers accused of rape and then later found not guilty, I would feel apprehensive about approaching the RCMP.

We put a link with all the Nations.

No more silence – there will be openness.

Have them come and visit.

You will have more respect for them and they for you. There will be a better working relationship.

If they build trust, there would be more positive responses they would get. It might encourage some of the young teenagers to be open to get help easily.

The way we are here today. It would be like that all the time.

I wonder if this will help. I really hope so!!

4. If your grandchildren were here today, what would they like about what took place in this workshop?

They would like that adults were having good conversations that were serious, but also some laughter was involved.

Want more young girls and boys to be involved, listen to the people talk.

Each person's story.

Hearing the stories.

The respect and honour of each individual and their stories that were shared.

Uncertain since family involved in this work for so long.

Involve them in little things, they will be happy.

They would be glad that care-takers and professionals are understanding how strong our people were and are.

The stories that were shared.

The laughter.

The sharing of stories.

They would think it's all right to start talking about these things. We're in 2011 and it's about time we got together and talked about these things that happen to the women. And they should be taught at home.

Having a better understanding of how we resisted the violence in the residential school.

The honesty, the history of what the government has done to First Nations and that what "we" do or what happens in our lives, that there was a plan put in place long before we were born to abolish us, to move us; to make money off our resources/land.

Recognizing that expressing resistance to violence is good.

That they could feel safe and that they mean something to someone.

Seeing their grandmother sharing – being vocal.

The caring and respect in the room.

I have an 18-year and 2-year granddaughter. The older would have been very impressed with the inclusion of RCMP, the 2-year old would have been a 2 year old.

Be more open with themselves to get help because there's others out there like them.

The trust established today.

5. What aboriginal cultural teaching have you learned today that will help you in your daily work?

The sense of abandonment that many adults who went to residential school feel.

We need to share to heal.

Better understanding of residential school issues.

The traditions of First Nation mothers.

Reinforced lots of the training already had.

Elder's speaking, behaving, having respect for everybody. Don't laugh about – not speak about overweight people.

Listening without interrupting.

Family is the cornerstone to safety, as is community.

Listening to the elders.

The language.

"Sharing helps in healing." And to share my personal experiences with my clients too, because I'm not looking down on them, I'm just like them.

Social violence is part of abuse.

That their words are heard and that the listener respects those words.

No judgement.

An ongoing deeper understanding of the truth around residential schools and violence.

About the "prison camp." About genocide. About kidnapping.

6. If all of the people who were taken away to residential school could witness this conversation today, what would they like to see take place?

A lot of understanding, empathy, compassion for what they experienced in residential schools.

Talking about what they went through helps healing. (I would go and pick them up if I knew what happened.)

More sharing letting the youth know what happened at the camps so they can be more understanding of the people in their families.

Safe places to speak and acknowledge their experience.

I don't know – I walk against the wall – the way I was treated – not good.

They would like the world to hear their stories of resistance and know they were not victims.

More sharing.

To learn from everything – good and bad.

They would like to see us more forward and heal.

They would like to see how they should become a strong person. They would like to hear us talking about how they resist violence.

How they resisted violence and the pride to return to the Dena.

That it was not their fault, it was planned to break-up families.

That they would be set free.

More people involved.

Healing of the body, mind, and spirit. Healing physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

More validation of their trauma and healing.

They would see things changing.

An outpouring of love, and regret for what happened to the children.

7. What do people in your agency need to know that would contribute to improving services for women victims of violence? What have you learned that could improve services for women?

My students would see me speaking with more empathy with the mothers of my students.

They should have a men's shelter, and a detox place to go when they drink too much.

Open dialogue, better understanding for everyone on all facets of support.

Learning about resistance.

That it is difficult to come forward and positive social responses are crucial.

Talking to Allan and Cathy because they give you a lot of information so you could understand violence and resistance. I know it in my heart but I can't explain it the way they do.

Their written submission of how the women resisted the violence and honour the resistance.

Both sides of the story are equally important; and that their social responses are important.

Have a group of front line workers give presentations to the schools about violence against women, especially teen-age girls.

Support.

My agency is pretty attuned to all the services, and try very hard to keep up with the times.

More about the culture prior to residential school; family structure; traditional parenting. To look deeper beneath the present trauma.

8. What changes would you like to see in your community 10 years from now? What would your ancestors hope for you to achieve?

I would like to see people being more neighbourly, watching your neighbours back, especially for children, instead of ignoring/closing the door on them.

Our children drink too much, I want them to get sober – send them out. Nobody talks about anything like drinking. See the Chief out at these meetings.

Safe water – no pollution from mines etc., especially gold mines close to Ross River.

I would like to see less youth drinking and spending more time with our elders.

Do cultural activities instead of drinking and partying.

Less violence.

Everyone to get along, respect for everyone, no matter what race they are.

To see our youth living on the land and to leave the alcohol and drugs.

To learn from everyone – always.

To carry on and make life better.

Decrease of family violence, to accept victims.

My mother and dad would like to see no more discrimination. They want people to work together. Because in their heart they know all people are the same.

Treatment Centre out on the land, the connection to the land, language and culture revival.

That I've done everything I've done to help prevent violence; some changes are that "youth voices" are heard and taken seriously.

Payphones in locations that they're not now!

That any type of violence, whether it's physical, sexual, psychological, or lateral abuse is not ok and if it occurs that its ok to report because it will be safe.

Generous, sharing ideas of concrete solutions.

Peace for everybody.

Alcohol and drug free.

No more lateral violence.

Healthy children. People working together. Healthy elders.

Less drug and alcohol use in the community. More self-respect in our young people both boys and girls.

A happy, healthier community that's more unified, not Caucasian/First Nations but blended.

More information on certain issues like getting and building trust.

The things we have talked about today.

Peace! No tears!! No abuse.

9. How could the workshop be improved?

Have some high school students be involved.

We should have school kids here; Chief should be here.

I liked it because one person talked at a time and I could understand.

Youth representation. Having youth attend. Invite youth.

Over educated people not to use big words – younger people too – so they can understand.

This workshop was great and I really enjoyed myself. I like to hear stories of residential schools.

Handouts.

Move out of the way of the screen.

Make sure we all bring our business cards.

More stories from the elders. More youth, more elders, more chance to talk and share.

If objectives were set at the beginning, goals. Dates set up well in advance of next meeting.

When they bring a good question out they should go around the room. That's the only way they could get the input from everyone. Because I've seen it work like that before.

Workshop be out on the land – Frances Lake.

More interaction with group activities with examples or scenarios.

More and more information for other people.

I'm tired of workshops! Think of something else.

How can people regain their independence and break the bonds of childhood with the government.

Involve young people.

More awareness in helping each other overcome problems. It's really important.

The workshop is great. The materials, and the talkers let the others talk until you're done.

FUND NAME (PLEASE IDENTIFY): VICTIMS FUND

YOUR PROJECT TITLE: BRIDGING THE GAP: A CROSS-CULTURAL CONVERSATION
BETWEEN KASKA WOMEN, FIRST NATIONS, RCMP AND
COMMUNITY AGENCIES

File Number: 6152-15-445

A. TYPE OF PROJECT *(Please check one)*

- ☐ Public Legal Education and Information
- ☐ Information sharing (conference/workshop/training/other)
- ☐ Training and Education
- ☐ System Development
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Linguistic/Legal Tools
- ☒ Other: INVITATION FROM JUSTICE CANADA

B. WHAT HAPPENED?

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- As stated in the project's proposal, the objectives and the anticipated results of your project were:

Together for Justice builds on the opportunity for change by bringing together community women, RCMP, and front-line responders to start a conversation, learn better ways of responding to violent crime for women living in aboriginal and northern communities, and develop ongoing agreements on how to improve women's safety. This project is important because the combination of relentless high levels of violence against women in aboriginal and northern communities, and northern women's acknowledged lack of trust in the RCMP means that women are not safe and live in poor social conditions. Feeling safe to call the police when you are in danger is an essential democratic right for women living in Canada's northern communities. Many women distrust police because of previous negative experiences in response to them when they have reported violence. There is a critical need to provide an opportunity for RCMP members to hear from women in the communities about violence in their lives, how it can be addressed, and to provide an environment where trust can be established.

Objectives were:

1. To do the preliminary work required in advance of the two year funding from Status of Women Canada.
2. To create an awareness on the upcoming workshops in Whitehorse and Watson Lake and invite participants to attend the 2 initial sessions.
3. To develop an agreement with the RCMP on their commitment to the process in the two year plan.

4. To offer three day workshops in Watson Lake in February and a three day workshops in Whitehorse in March facilitated by Dr. Allan Wade. The workshops would serve to encourage dialogue between women's groups and RCMP on ways of developing lasting relationships.

The anticipated results of this project include:

- 1) Increased safety for Aboriginal women who report violence;
- 2) Positive social responses for Aboriginal women who report violence beyond increased safety;
- 3) An increased sense of well-being for Aboriginal children and youth who will witness and experience the positive outcomes of increased safety and opportunity for their mothers, aunts, or grandmothers as outlined in #2;
- 4) Relief from knowing that racism and systemic discrimination are being addressed and that safety for Aboriginal women will bridge the gap towards greater equity and social equality in Canada;
- 5) Increased opportunities for conversations related to justice will expand the sense of possibility for progressive service delivery in Canada.

Using the scale provided below, please indicate the extent to which your project was able to achieve its objectives.

Not at All			Somewhat			Fully
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

TARGET POPULATION

Who was/were the primary target population group(s) for your project?

Aboriginal Women, RCMP, First Nations, front-line service providers, and Yukon women's groups' representatives.

How many members of your target population did you reach (i.e. number of participants, number of distributed materials)?

A TOTAL OF 65 PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED THE TWO WORKSHOPS

7 people from LAWS, RCMP and Women's Directorate attended both workshops.

In Whitehorse 32 participants included:

5 Liard Aboriginal Women's Society members, 9 RCMP, 8 representatives of Yukon Women's Groups and front-line service providers, Yukon Government Women's Directorate.

Several Elders, 2 from Whitehorse Correctional Centre Elders Advisory Committee, and representatives of 6 First Nations attended. Several participants represented more than one category, e.g. First Nations RCMP, Aboriginal women service providers.

In Watson Lake 33 participants included:

3 LAWS members, 7 Elders (some of whom are LAWS members), 8 RCMP, 4 Women's Shelter staff, 7 Liard First Nation representatives, YG Women's Directorate, and 8 front-line service providers.

PROJECT RESULTS

What results did your project achieve or produce? *(Please respond to all questions that are relevant to your project)*

A significant result is that LAWS met its primary objective in that the RCMP Commanding Officer committed to participate in an anticipated ongoing project over the next 2 fiscal years, and for consistency to send the same members who have attended the Whitehorse and Watson Lake workshops to future sessions.

We also met the objectives of developing awareness of the workshops, getting attendance of the priority groups, and offering two well-attended and successful workshops.

Did it result, for example, in new skills, new information, changed awareness?

Yes, at *Bridging the Gap: a Cross Cultural Conversation between Aboriginal/ Kaska women, First Nations, RCMP, Yukon women's groups and community agencies* the participants talked about current practices and issues of violence. They shared concerns regarding violence in communities, particularly against indigenous women. The opportunity for dialogue started to open doors for working together more effectively to address violence and support women.

The sessions educated the participants on safety, the importance of accurate language, violence, responsibility, and recovery. The participants found particular value in the presentations on dignity, social responses to victims of violence, accurate language, and on commitments to local action.

The evaluations indicate there is a strong desire for more training of this nature. People said they would change the way they ask questions of women victims of violence to be more respectful, some participants said they will incorporate into their practice the more effective interview techniques that were presented.

Participants also identified ways to create safety in the community and actions they would take before the next workshop.

Did your project identify any best practices or potential responses to priority/emerging justice issues?

Yes, the presenters used examples of clear and accurate language to describe violent sexual assaults that reported the victim's resistance and documented the full extent and deliberate nature of the violent assaults.

Speaking in small groups, participants found points of connection and common purpose. Positive social responses to victims of violence were identified and practiced in the group when an Elder shared stories of violence and her resistance, everyone listened respectfully, and an Elder demonstrated how to respond in a way that acknowledged her dignity.

Did the participants find that progress had been made towards developing best practices or responses to emerging justice issues?

Yes, several participants noted that the teaching about the prison camps and colonialism addressed problems of racism and systemic discrimination in a constructive way. A few participants were not as open to learning about this.

The workshop created safety for Aboriginal women to report violence and receive positive social responses. Many participants acknowledged the value of learning together, hearing from women, and identifying and practicing positive social responses. There was a sense of hope about the possibility of increased opportunities for conversation and developing deeper relationships.

How do these results compare with the results anticipated at the beginning of your project? (i.e., were there any results achieved that were not anticipated, either positive or negative?)

This project was preliminary in nature, and was successful in that there were high levels of participation of RCMP and of women, and beginning steps in working together. The RCMP Commanding Officer did commit to participating in a continued 2-year project with Status of Women Canada funding.

As noted in response to the previous questions, the results are generally what was anticipated, increased safety for Aboriginal women who report violence, positive social responses, well-being for those who witnessed the positive outcomes, relief at hearing racism and systemic discrimination being documented and addressed, and hearing RCMP commit to participate in a longer process over the next 2 years.

Organizers need to make additional efforts to involve more youth and justice system workers in future sessions.

RCMP need to make this a priority, to identify additional resources for relief personnel so that participants can attend without leaving and disrupting the proceedings. The short time frame between notification of funding approval and delivery of the workshops before fiscal year-end meant that LAWS wasn't able to confirm the schedule with as much advance notice as RCMP and other participants require.

What was the perception of the target population/participants as to the quality and utility of the activities? (When possible, please base this response on the results of the exit survey provided)

Of 65 participants in 2 groups, 43 completed evaluations. Some participants were not present for the second day when the evaluations were distributed.

19 Whitehorse and 24 Watson Lake participants completed detailed evaluation forms. The evaluations indicate that participants appreciated the quality of information provided and found it useful to attend the workshops.

It was valuable to set aside generally uninterrupted time for aboriginal women, police, and service providers to have an opportunity to discuss important issues outside of a crisis response setting. Aboriginal women and Yukon women's groups' participants identified the need for police and other service providers to respect women's dignity. Several participants noted that more of this is needed.

It was a constructive beginning towards the long-term goal of creating safety and trust, and it requires ongoing commitment and participation of RCMP and service agencies, as well as LAWS who identified the need, applied for funding and have taken in a leadership role in advancing justice and safety for women.

When applicable, did participants report that their knowledge/understanding about the particular justice issues was furthered? If so, how? (When possible, please base this response on the results of the exit survey provided)

Participants reported that cultural practices of honouring Elders and the knowledge of traditional law was valuable. The knowledge about colonialism and stories of resistance was empowering for participants.

The importance of using clear and accurate language in reports that will be used in Court and other criminal justice system settings will be expanded on in future sessions, and was well received in the two workshops.

In your view, how did this project affect your community's capacity to respond to the needs as identified in your project?

By bringing together community women, RCMP, and front-line responders to start a conversation about better ways of responding to violent crime for women living in aboriginal and northern communities, "Bridging the Gap" provided an opportunity for people to identify common concerns and learn from each other. Some women reported on evaluations that they still do not trust RCMP, but overall the tone of the gathering was one where people listened openly to each other. More progress was achieved in Watson Lake than in Whitehorse. In a smaller community, there seemed to be less tension in the room.

Women and police reported that they learned a lot about positive social responses to women, and about using accurate language to ensure more just responses to women reporting violence.

Participants identified concrete actions they could and would take to make things better. These are direct ways to respond to the identified need to improve women’s safety, in the face of high levels of violence against women in the north.

How did your project impact Official Language Minority Communities (when applicable)?

Les EssientiElles, L’Association Franco-Yukonais women’s directorate participated in the Whitehorse workshop, and had an opportunity to speak about the specific needs for RCMP to make available French-speaking police for women to report sexual assaults or other crimes in their first language, in keeping with Canada’s official languages policy. Les EssientiElles works collaboratively with aboriginal and non-aboriginal women’s groups. Franco-Yukonais women represented an official language minority at the table with the police and organizations to communicate and develop protocols that respect all women’s needs.

PARTNERSHIPS

Who were your partners?

None (please explain)
Listed below

Besides the Department of Justice, what did your partners contribute in terms of knowledge, experience, skills, and materials (including financial and in-kind contributions) for this project? *Please fill out one table below for each partner:*

PARTNER 1

☐ Direct Funding \$ _____

☐ In-kind ☐ Knowledge/expertise/skills
 ☐ Materials/space
 ☐ Other

Describe this partnership ☐ Short-term (this project only)
 ☐ Ongoing (have worked with them before)

PARTNER 2

☐ Direct Funding \$ _____

☐ In-kind ☐ Knowledge/expertise/skills
 ☐ Materials/space
 ☐ Other

Describe this partnership ☐ Short-term (this project only)
 ☐ Ongoing (have worked with them before)

PARTNER 3

☐ Direct Funding \$ _____

☐ In-kind ☐ Knowledge/expertise/skills
 ☐ Materials/space
 ☐ Other

Describe this partnership ☐ Short-term (this project only)
 ☐ Ongoing (have worked with them before)

Were any potential partners suggested to you by your contact at the Department of Justice?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, did you follow up on this/these suggestions(s)?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Did any partnerships emerge as a result of a recommendation made by your contact at the Department of Justice?

☐ Yes
☐ No

With respect to partnerships, is there anything that you would do differently?

☐ Yes
☐ No

What is it?

C. LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, what worked well?

As reported above, participants found the workshops engaging and empowering. There was a good feeling about what was accomplished, and a strong sense of common purpose that left people eager to participate in more workshops of this kind in the future.

What didn't work so well?

Because of the late notification of funding approval, the workshop dates were confirmed on short notice. This meant that some of the RCMP participants had to leave during the workshop, which was disruptive and lessened the value of the important stories about violence and resistance shared by the Elders.

Senior RCMP leadership was only able to attend for portions of the Whitehorse and Watson Lake workshops, which concerned some participants who questioned whether the RCMP is fully committed, or merely engaging in a public relations exercise.

What, if anything, would you change?

More advance notice of the workshops to participants.

As stated above, more participation of youth and justice program workers would add to the value of future workshops.

How will your group build on the lessons learned from this project?

The training is cumulative in nature and requires consistent participation. To the extent that RCMP were called away on duty and disrupted the proceedings, the overall value of the workshop suffered.

LAWS will be able to provide more advance notice of future sessions to better accommodate participants schedules, and will ask RCMP to ensure rural detachment members who attend will not be on duty for the dates of the workshop.

LAWS will ask the RCMP Commanding Officer to ensure that he can attend for the entire workshop, and if not that he should not drop in for only a portion of the sessions.

LAWS will invite more youth representatives and government justice program workers to attend future sessions.

The small group activities were very successful and will be continued. The high caliber of the presentations and the lessons on clear language, violence and resistance, social responses, and developing community safety and action plans will be featured in future sessions.

D. COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

Did you communicate the results of this project beyond your immediate group?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

If yes, how? (Please check off all those which apply)

local media (please provide copies of articles/transcripts of interviews)

- ☐ national media
☐ conferences
☐ workshops
☐ meetings
☐ reports (please provide copy)
☐ web site (please provide address)
☒ X newsletters (please provide copy)
other (please specify)

Newsletters, website, and reports.

E. NEXT STEPS

What does your group plan to do next?

LAWS has applied for funding to Status of Women Canada to complete a 2-year project with additional training workshops in Watson Lake and in Whitehorse over the next two fiscal years. LAWS has received funding from the Yukon Women's Directorate Prevention of Violence Against Aboriginal Women Fund to support this project.

LAWS will continue to meet with RCMP leadership and detachment members to engage the police in this important work.

LAWS continues to work with Liard First Nation leadership and citizens, Elders, and LAWS members to advance the long-term goals of this project: building safe communities, helping service providers give positive social responses to women experiencing abuse, reducing the high levels of violence against women in northern communities and advocating for women's safety in every aspect of their lives.

Upon confirmation of funding, LAWS will schedule additional workshops, notify participants, and continue the training and the honest cross-cultural conversations needed to develop safety-based community action plans.

MARCH 2011

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be in Watson Lake on May 26th to hear stories of resistance and courage from Residential School Survivors

This woman has been kind,
gentle,
and has much love,
All of this has been given
with
the blessing of the Great
Spirit above,
But Great Spirit gave her
something
else and she didn't know
it...
The Great Spirit gave her
the blessing of being a
warrior woman
as now her light is lit

Excerpt from Woman Warrior has
Fully Awoken
By Lady J-Ann

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM UPDATE

In our last issue we reported that we were working with Health Canada to have a Therapist work closely with Lower Post, Good Hope Lake and Watson Lake.

We are pleased to report that Mary Ann Stein, a registered therapist has shown a commitment to serving the Kaska communities.

Mary Ann has worked as a nurse in several northern/arctic communities and has served as a supervisor

in Health Stations in the Yukon from 1987-1997.

Since then Mary Ann has obtained a Masters in counseling and has been providing therapy and support in different communities for the last 10 years. Her most recent focus has been addressing the trauma faced by residential school students and their families.

Mary Ann was in Watson Lake on the week of March 28th and we introduced her to key resources personnel in Good Hope Lake on March 28th and Lower

Post on the morning of the 29th.

She was available for counseling and saw clients on the afternoon of March 29th and March 30th in Watson Lake.



HEALTH CANADA TO OFFER CULTURAL SUPPORT TRAINING MAY 16 & 17

What is Cultural Support

Cultural supports seek to assist students and their families to safely address issues related to Indian Residential Schools as well as the disclosure of abuse during the Truth & Reconciliation and Settlement Agreement process. Specific services are determined by the needs of the individual and include dialogue, ceremonies, prayers, or traditional healing.

- knowledge of Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and related issues, and the impacts on former students, families and communities.

- knowledge of the Resolution Health Support Program and services offered, and the role of RHWs and CSPs.

- Understand the scope of the event and the sensitive issues that will be openly discussed.

Following the training individuals that have addressed their own Residential School issues may be selected to provide emotional support at the hearings.

If you are interested and are from Watson Lake, Good Hope Lake or Lower Post, please contact LAWS at 536-2097.

MARCH 2011

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP PROJECT



***“BE A VOICE,
NOT AN
ECHO”***

Since the start of the project in July 2010 the youth violence prevention project has evolved into a core group of 19 youth and 2 dedicated parents. The majority of the youth are from Denetia Elementary and Watson Lake High School.

The youth involved are creating their own key message about violence in the Yukon communities, on Healthy Relationship, Healthy Families, and Residential Schools.

So far the project has been fun and the students are having a lot of creative ideas creating a media message. The youth have discussed

photo shots with the photographer and once that is complete then the project will be sent to printing. I has engaged youth by meeting in the gym and discussing issues around violence and then having snacks and ending the session with some games.

The youth coordinator and NADAPP worker will be doing workshops that youth are interested in such as healthy relationships, the effects of violence with alcohol and drugs, self esteem and bullying. These workshops will be held after spring break in April 2011.

The youth and project

coordinator are also working on a “Youth Violence March” that will be held in April 2011 and posters will be out in the community with more information.

The Campaign design will be completed at the end of March and the printing will began. The printing will take a month to complete so the Opening of the launch is going to be in May 2011.

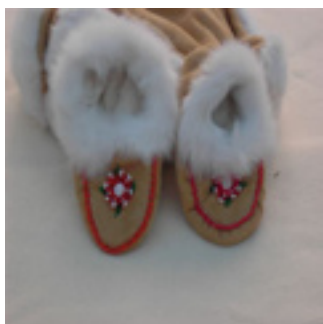
The youth are excited and can’t wait to have the opening of the project so they can present a slideshow for the schools and for the community.

In Unity,

Kristel Vance



TRADITIONAL CRAFTS COMING AGAIN SOON



LAWS is pleased to announce we have received some funding from The Art’s Fund for traditional crafts.

We plan to start the workshop in May and will send out posters when we have the exact dates, times and

location.

In an effort to keep our workshops growing, we would like to send a special invitation to our young mothers and youth.

If you plan to attend, we ask that you do your

projects at the workshops as these workshops are an excellent opportunity for us to get together to share our stories and have some fun!

See you out there soon!



Phone: (867) 536-2097 Fax: (867) 536-2810 Email: laws@northwestel.net or lawsadmin@northwestel.net 721 Frances Ave. Watson Lake, Yukon Y0A 1C0

MARCH 2011

Bridging the Gap: Watson Lake Report

On March 21st and 22nd, thirty-six people gathered at Two Mile Hall for “Bridging the Gap: Creating safety in community.” The vision of Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society’s (LAWS) *Together for Justice: On Violence, Language and Responsibility* project is to hold a series of training workshops that bring together Kaska women, RCMP, Help and Hope for Families shelter workers, Liard First Nation representatives, and Watson Lake frontline workers in justice and social services.

LAWS’ goal is to facilitate honest cross-cultural conversations between community members and the RCMP so that all segments of the community can work together to create safety. This was the first of three sessions that all of the participants are encouraged to attend.

Presenter Dr. Cathy Richardson notes that “Working together with a foundation and spirit of human dignity, we can create positive social responses to those who have been harmed by violence.

. Within this work lies a respect for culture, for diversity and for the land.” After the opening prayer, presenters Allan Wade and Cathy Richardson led a discussion about safety, collective ethics, and agreements. Working in small groups and around the table, participants identify points of connection and common purpose. Sharing stories of our families and what we have learned from our grandparents began to build relationships. This work will continue over the next two workshops.

Understanding violence in a social and historical context requires learning about the colonial code of relationship whereby the dominant culture assumes the right to educate, diagnose, fix or assimilate what is seen as “deficient” First Nations culture. The racial Indian Act legalized the theft of land and resources from indigenous peoples and institutionalized the collective humiliation of Aboriginal peoples. The destruction of culture creates conditions for violence. Honouring culture and caring for one another creates conditions for safety.

On Tuesday, people learned about the unilateral nature of violence, and people’s responses and

resistance to violence to protect human dignity. In a majority of cases, victims of sexualized assault, wife-assault, and other violence report receiving negative social responses from friends and family, and from professionals in human services, medicine, and criminal justice.

Sometimes this is deliberate and prejudicial, other times it is done out of habit or is inadvertent and careless. Allan and Cathy presented examples of how to use clear language to accurately describe violence and resistance, which can result in better social responses and safer outcomes for victims.

Talking in the group, there was enough safety for elders to share their stories of resistance to violence. An elder showed us by example the way to witness and respond.

“What good is this going to do?”

In closing, everyone was invited to name concrete things they would do before the next gathering. In small groups, participants talked about what they would be thinking and doing differently to carry on our work. They were asked to think about who would notice a difference, and how their actions would

create more safety in the community. Some of the ideas shared were to listen more, to be more open to hearing what people are really thinking, to accept instead of judging or directing others what to do, and to talk to youth about what happened in the prison camps that were called “residential schools.”

A longer report on the workshop will soon be available for distribution.

Following the workshop, Dr. Allan Wade observed that many of the participants talked in quite personal terms about their experiences and aspirations. Though hopeful, this is a very first step. It remains to be seen if meaningful change can be achieved. A great deal cannot yet be said due to the history of violence and concerns of community members who have faced very negative social responses. We are encouraged by the tone of the conversation and by the level of respect and engagement shown by all who came.

“Some of the ideas shared were to listen more, to be more open to hearing what people are really thinking, to accept instead of judging or directing others what to do, and to talk to youth about what happened in the prison camps that were called residential schools.”

MARCH 2011

Bridging the Gap: Whitehorse Workshop Update

"We cared enough to get together to change things for the better."

On March 3rd and 4th, approx. 30 participants attended "Bridging the Gap," A cross-cultural conversation with First Nations, RCMP, Service Providers, Women's organizations, Kaska women and Women's Shelters at the NakwaTaKu Potlatch House in Whitehorse. The project's focus is an introduction to the workshops that will be presented in the two year project *"Together for Justice: On Violence, Language and Responsibility"*. Dr. Allan Wade and Dr. Catherine Richardson delivered powerful and well-received messages about understanding violence in a historical and social context and how to improve social responses to women report-

ing violence. Whitehorse participants reported that training together with RCMP and community members, sharing food, and hearing wisdom from the elders all help to build good personal relationships and a sense of trust and respect. They noted the need for action and for justice system personnel to be fully involved. Participants appreciated the teachings about the effective use of language. The evaluations stated that the radical notion of positive social change and acknowledging the resistance and strength of survivors is a great change from blaming and undermin-

ing victims. It was important to have youth involved. One evaluation said our grandchildren would like the fact that "We cared enough to get together to change things for the better."





Liard Aboriginal Women's Society