
Mending the Sacred Hoop

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

Volume 1, Issue 3

March 1999

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The National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) operates ORIC and it serves as the central location for display and distribution of OJP publications. The library contains hundreds of publications produced by the following OJP agencies:

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Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Office for Victims of Crime
Bureau of Justice Statistics

ORIC continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Candlelight Vigil
- 2 Putting your program on a national level
- 3 Calendar of Events
- 4 Fairness and Accuracy in DV/Custody cases
- 5 Lessons from Geese



Candlelight Vigil

Submitted By: Bobbi Limberhand, STOP Coordinator

(From Northern Cheyenne's 'Health Happenings' newsletter)

As you may all be aware, there has been a tragedy that has affected many members of our community. This tragedy of domestic abuse took the life of one of our community members, Ms. Latisha Brien. Latisha grew up and lived in Lame Deer most of her life, and had many friends and family members here. Latisha was a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and also the Cheyenne Arapahoe Tribes of Oklahoma.

Although this brutal act of violence occurred in Minnesota, many people here on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation were and will continue to be affected by Latisha's death.

"Violence like this doesn't have to happen in our reservation communities."

Here at the Healing Hearts Program and STOP Grant Program (Domestic Violence Programs) we decided to organize a candlelight vigil in memory of Latisha and all the other victims who have died at the hands of their partners.

The walk started at the Boys and Girls Club on January 27, 1999 at 5:30 p.m. and all the participants walked with
"Vigil" continued on page 2

Bureau of Justice Assistance
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Some people may remember taking the online tour at the "Women Are Sacred - Promising Practices" conference last October and November with a representative from NCJRS during the resource fair. For those that may have missed out on that experience here's your chance to explore the online library for your self. If you don't have Internet service, or possibly have it but are intimidated to use it, don't worry - NCJRS has a general information 800 line. Staff can be reached at **800-851-3420, 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., eastern time, Monday - Friday.**



Your can also place an order up to 5 free documents 24 hour a day through your fax machine, send a fax to 410-792-4358. To obtain facsimiles of short documents, call the 800 number above to use the fax-on-demand service. You can also send letters to **NCJRS, PO BOX 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000.**

Go to the World Wide Web site of NCJRS to get full text of the OJP publications, funding information, press releases, and links to other Internet sites. The address is <http://www.ncjrs.org>. Publications are available in ASCII text, which can be viewed online and downloaded to any personal computer. Most OJP publications are also available in Acrobat format that allows full text and graphics - including charts and color photographs - to be downloaded. Acrobat Reader software, which allows users to view and print these publications, is available at no cost to internet users; see the Justice Information Center home page to download the software.

candles illuminated to the Catholic Church, where the wake services were being held for Latisha. Approximately 50 - 75 supportive community and family members participated in the candlelight vigil/walk. Ms. Nancy Whitedirt said the prayer in Cheyenne and Mr. Myron Littlebird said a few words about this tragedy of violence. Myron stressed that "Violence like this doesn't have to happen in our reservation communities." This statement says it all.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in this walk and give a special thanks to Myron, Nancy Whitedirt, Rita Hiwalker and LeAnn Bruisedhead for their prayers and help. We would also like to give our sincere sympathy to the family and friends of Latisha.

Most importantly, Latisha's death will **not** be in vain. Our community can and will unite to make a coordinated effort to **STOP Domestic Violence.**

Got a story to tell?

Mending the Sacred Hoop would like to collect traditional stories that show the regard and respect for women and how the family, community, and society were based around the involvement of women.

Stories such as the "Morning Star Women" of the Siletz Nation and "White Buffalo Calf Woman" are the type of stories we have in mind.

Please send stories to Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project, 202 E Superior Street, Duluth MN, 55802. We would like to publish stories in future newsletters to share with other grantee programs as well as compile a collection at the MSH-TA office.

Put your program on the national level

The National Domestic Violence Hotline maintains a list of all the domestic violence programs available across the country. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 and request to get added to the database. They'll send you a packet of information to fill out and return to them. You'll basically be asked to submit a description of your program, the services you offer, and how to contact your agency. Get your program on the national resource list and let people know your program is there.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Introductory training

These following trainings are for newly funded or newly hired advocates, program coordinators, prosecutors, judges, law enforcement personnel, shelter personnel, and women's group facilitators. This training is designed for grantees who have not previously attended a regional I training or an advanced training conducted by Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project. This includes both new and continuation funded grantees.

Southwest

May 25 – 27, 1999

Phoenix, AZ

Sheraton Airport Hotel

800-346-3049

*Hotel reservations deadline April 22, 1999

Northwest

June 15 – 17, 1999

Portland, OR

Oregon Convention Center

800-996-0510

*Hotel reservations deadline May 18, 1999

Midwest

June 29 – July 1, 1999

Minneapolis, MN

Sheraton Metrodome Hotel

800-777-3277

*Hotel reservations deadline June 6, 1999

Call Mending the Sacred Hoop TA Project for more information or to register, as space is limited to 45 people per training.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Pre-solicitation Meetings

Pre-solicitation meetings are going to be held for tribes that have not received STOP Violence Against Indian Women discretionary grants in the past. Currently there are approximately 120 grants allocated to tribes, pueblos, consortiums, and tribal corporations. Each year about 20 new grants are awarded to new applicants, most of the prior grantees receive continuation grants to carry on their projects. Pre-solicitation meetings are intended to encourage more tribes to apply.

There are two funding areas for new applicants under the grant program. There are planning grants available where the tribe has an opportunity to set out a solid plan for implementing a domestic violence program. There is also an implementation category for new applicants where the tribe is ready to start operating a DV program.

The meetings will cover the application process, grant requirements, and the role of Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project. Please share this information with local tribes around you, stay posted for further information, and encourage others to apply.

Promising Practices National Conference

Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project is getting ready to host the second national conference highlighting key issues and practices in Indian country. The first conference "Women are Sacred" was held in Rapid City, SD, in October and repeated in November 1998.

The second conference is being scheduled for December 1999 to be held in Flagstaff, AZ. The Hopi tribe will be hosting a "Workshop on Wheels" to include a tour of their coordinated community response to domestic violence and a tour of their programs.

We hope to showcase the work of more tribes with innovative approaches that protect the sovereignty of women, and to help end violence against Indian women and children throughout Alaska and the lower 48 states.

Look for upcoming notices listing the dates, location of the conference, and workshop titles. We'll see you in Flagstaff early December!

Fairness and Accuracy in evaluation of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Custody Determinations

By Rita Smith and Pamela Coukos

(Excerpts reprinted in this article originally published in “The Judges’ Journal” fall 1997)

This article attempts to explain the counter-intuitive phenomenon of protective parents losing custody to batterers and abusers. It also highlights the ways abusive partners use custody as a weapon to intimidate battered women, and how batterers frequently initiate or prolong litigation to perpetuate abuse. Through the use of spurious and discredited psychological “syndromes,” an abusive parent may successfully portray the protective parent as mentally unstable and undeserving of custody. The prevalent belief that many parents fabricate domestic violence and child abuse allegations during divorce and custody disputes makes it easier for batterers to win custody. As explained below, however, there is no evidence to support the belief that there is a widespread pattern of false allegations.

Judges understandably seek the tools that can help them evaluate whether the allegations are true; in order to make a decision that protects the child and is fair to the parents. However, judges should be wary of much of the psychological evidence offered to assist a court in evaluating abuse allegations, which may be used to cover up abuse and wrongly characterize the reporting parent with a pathological diagnosis. Indeed, respected authorities such as the American Psychological Association (APA) have discredited many of these approaches. One example of this type unsupported psychological labeling can be found in an article recently appearing in this publication, written by Ira Daniel Turkat, entitled “Management of Visitation Interference, which is discussed in this article.”

Despite a perception that the courts disproportionately favor mothers, one study has shown that fathers who fight for custody win sole or joint custody in 70 percent of these contests. An abusive partner will often threaten to take the children in order to keep the mother in the relationship. If she leaves, he may continue his efforts to harass and control her by manipulating custody litigation. The APA put it best: “[w]hen a couple divorces, the legal system may become a symbolic battleground on which the male batterer continues his abuse. Custody and visitation may keep the battered woman in a relationship with the battering man; on the battleground, the children become the pawns.”

Although both common sense and the prevailing legal standard dictate careful consideration of evidence of domestic or family violence when determining custody, allegations of domestic violence and/or child sexual abuse made during a divorce or custody proceeding are not always taken seriously.

These allegations often are perceived as false, because they are asserted in a contentious environment, and because of the widespread myth that parents fabricate domestic violence and child abuse allegations in order to gain advantage in court. When combined with the misuse of psychological syndrome evidence, the perception that a parent has fabricated the allegations often results in unfair retribution against the reporting protective parent.

The tendency to wrongly blame reporting parents can be largely traced to an increasing diagnosis of unsupportable “syndromes” such as “Parental Alienation Syndrome.” In his book, *Parental Alienation Syndrome: A Guide for Mental Health and Legal Professionals*, Psychiatrist Richard A. Gardner defines PAS as “a disturbance in which children are preoccupied with deprecation and criticism of a parent – denigration that is unjustified and/or exaggerated...the concept...includes the brainwashing component, but is much more comprehensive. It includes not only conscious, but subconscious and unconscious factors within the programming parent that contribute to the child’s alienation.” Despite attempts at gender neutrality, Gardner in fact presents PAS as an overwhelmingly female problem; he finds that mothers are the perpetrators in 90 percent of the cases he deems to involve PAS. Gardner’s work is entirely self-published and unreviewed.

Psychologist Ira Daniel Turkat talks approvingly of PAS while introducing an even more extreme version – “Malicious Mother Syndrome” (MMS) – in his article on visitation interference appearing recently in the *Judge’s Journal*. MMS differs from PAS in two ways. First, while PAS theoretically can involve either gender as the perpetrator, Turkat presents MMS as strictly a woman’s psychological abnormality; there is no male version of the syndrome. Second, while in an instance of PAS the perpetrator’s supposed goal is merely to alienate his or her children from the other parent, in instances of MMS, the mother is apparently “committed to a broad-based campaign to hurt the father directly.” Like Gardner, Turkat’s research apparently comes only from his own clinical observations.

Since PAS and MMS are unproven concepts, they do not meet the standard for admissibility of scientific evidence. Courts should be vigilant in evaluating any psychological expert testimony that claims to be able to discern false from true allegations, or that can be used to explain away or cover up abuse. Judges should particularly worry about theories such as PAS and MMS, which raise serious concerns of gender bias. When measured against the two most common standards states use for the admissibility of scientific evidence, the *Frye* test and the standard applied by the Supreme Court in *Daubert v. Merrell-Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc.* PAS and MMS should not be allowed into evidence.

[*For a full copy of this article contact Mending the Sacred Hoop TA office]

Lessons from Geese

This piece was transcribed from a speech given by Angeles Arrien at the 1991 Organizational Development Network and was based on the work of Milton Olson. It was circulated by the Outward Bound Staff throughout the US, and is shared hoping that all may learn these lessons.

FACT 1:

As each goose flaps its wings it creates an “uplift” for the birds that follow. By flying in a “V” formation the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

LESSON:

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

FACT 2:

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

LESSON:

If we have as much sense as a goose we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

FACT 3:

When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

LESSON:

It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities, and unique arrangements of gifts, talents and resources.

FACT 4:

Geese flying in formation to encourage those in front to keep up their speed.

LESSON:

We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart and core values, and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of the honking we seek.

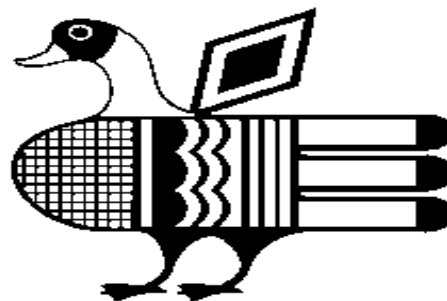
FACT 5:

When a goose is sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

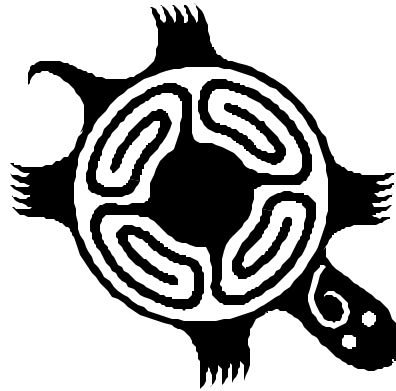
LESSON:

If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

*(*Received from the Tri-State Rural Collaboration Project)*



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Technical Assistance Project

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