
MENDING THE SACRED HOOP

NEWSLETTER

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Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project. STOP Violence Against Indian Women

In the fall of 1995, U.S. Department of Justice awarded a grant to Mending the Sacred Hoop, a program of Minnesota Program Development, Inc. to organize and provide on-going technical assistance to tribal grantees of VAWA funds

MSH/TA is organized to provide assistance on collective strategies to end violence against women. The purpose of this project is to ensure the safety of victims and their families and to create accountability within tribal criminal justice systems. In assisting tribal grantees with training, consultation, production of materials, etc. the MSH/TA project utilizes a faculty of Native Americans who work within Native communities to end Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. We have developed five areas (stages) of the technical assistance project for tribal grantees:

- * Regional Training teams, Faculty development
- * Direct Assistance, Programmatic Development
- * Regional Trainings to work on Advanced Implementation
- * On-site Consultations
- * Mentoring Consultants Bases on Need.

In addition, Mending the Sacred Hoop/Technical Assistance project will provide on-going training and technical assistance to assist grantees in accessing resources and networking. If you have any questions you may call our office toll-free at 1-888-305-1650, or 1-612-664-0835. Our fax number is 1-612-664-0840, or you may e-mail us at mshtap@aol.com.



Vice-President Gore announces Native American Tribes to receive \$4.9 million to combat violence against women

Washington, D.C.—Fifty-seven tribal governments in 20 states will be able to provide better services for adult Indian women victims of domestic violence and prosecute more domestic violence cases. This comes as a result of a 4.9 million allocation in Fiscal year 1998 to STOP Violence Against Indian Women grant funds this past June.

“For too long, many Indian women have been victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault have suffered in isolation, unable to gain access to needed services such as counseling, legal help and shelter.” Vice -President Gore said.

This year there are 24 new tribal grantees, receiving grants ranging from 34,860 to 84,000, bringing the total number to 112 tribal governments that have received STOP/VAIW Funds since the first awards were made in 1995. These grantees service total of 233 Indian communities.

Another 33 tribal grantees will receive continuation grants up to 104,000 to continue funding projects begun with FY 96 STOP VAIW funds.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SACRED CIRCLE INSTITUTE

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

SEPTEMBER 21-25, 1998

FFI: 605-341-2050

Sacred Circle presents a specialized Domestic Violence Training Institute to support the creation of a coordinated community response to stop violence against Native women in Indian Country.

SHARING THE VISION II

Second Indigenous Nations HIV/AIDS Conference

"Dancing in the Spirit of Nations"

Prior Lake, Minnesota

September 27-30, 1998

FFI: 602-248-0071 or 503-228-4185

Sharing the Vision II is the Second National Native HIV/AIDS conference, and is the only national HIV/AIDS conference specifically designed and presented for and by native people.

4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN EXPOSED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

San Diego, California

October 21-24, 1998

FFI: 619-581-1774

Assessment, intervention, prevention and research strategies for maltreated children, battered victims, and batterers.

IN OUR BEST INTEREST: A PROCESS FOR PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

October 20- 21, 1998 and

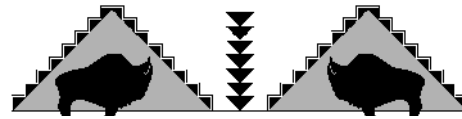
CREATING A PROCESS OF CHANGE FOR MEN WHO BATTER – POWER & CONTROL: TACTICS OF MEN WHO BATTER. (NATIVE TRACK)

October 22-24, 1998

Duluth, Minnesota

Sponsored by the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

FFI: 218-722-2781



MENDING THE SACRED HOOP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TOLL-FREE NUMBER (888)-305-1650

This is a toll free number available from Mending the Sacred Technical Assistance Project for STOP Violence Against Indian Women Grantees. We can connect you with a list of resources on Domestic violence.

Specific topics include:

Coordinated Community Response

Criminal statutes and legislation

Law enforcement

Tribal codes

Issues of jurisdiction

Civil and family court

Defense of battered women

Batterer's programs

Advocacy for women and children

We also maintain a list of Native people who are experienced on many aspects of domestic violence that are available to give you specialized advice and assistance. Call the (888) number for more information.

To learn more about STOP and other violence against women resources contact the Violence Against Women Grants Office web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/VAWGO> or OJP's web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov> or call the National Criminal Justice Reference Service toll-free on 1-800-851-3420.

Upcoming MSH/TA Trainings

FIRST REGIONAL TRAINING FOR 1998 GRANTEES.

MYRTLE BEACH, South Carolina

September 9-11, 1998

The first regional training is scheduled for September 1998 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina held at the Wyndham Myrtle Beach Hotel. Each 1998 new grantee is required to send a team of 5 people to the regional training. If you have any questions regarding the regional meeting please call us at 612-664-0835 or the toll-free line at 1-888-305-1650.

WOMEN ARE SACRED: KEY ISSUES AND PRACTICES IN INDIAN COUNTRY ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN.

**Howard Johnson Hotel & Convention
Center, Rapid City, S. D.**

***October 26-29, 1998 and repeated in
November 16-19, 1998***

Mending the Sacred Hoop and Sacred Circle National Resource Center is collaborating to highlight and explore domestic violence responses, key issues and practices through out Indian country. Building on previous domestic violence training, sessions will provide state of the art approaches that support the creation and development of responsible actions to stop violence against Native women.

This training is designed for those STOP Grantees that have attended at least one Mending the Sacred Hoop regional training or Sacred Circle Institutes.

The November training is a repeat of the October Training. Space is limited please register ASAP. For a registration form or more information please call 1-877-733-7623.

Indian Country and Domestic Violence Response: Part I

By Karen Artichoker

Introduction

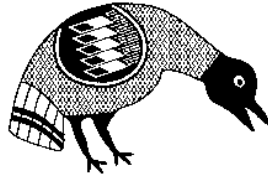
The history of this country does not typically recount the disempowerment of Indigenous People. Women in tribal cultures had a definite and powerful place in the Circle of all living things. In Lakota culture, women were honored and respected as life-givers and nurturers. Many indigenous men have incorporated the distorted values of the oppressor about women into their individual and collective value system.

This distortion of values serves to oppress indigenous women in the same manner that women throughout the world are oppressed. We cannot blame native men for the oppression perpetrated against them however; it is imperative that native men resist what oppression has imposed. We can resist anti-women values and translate the values of our ancestors regarding women and family into daily practice.

Domestic violence in Indian Country

In Lakota Culture, woman abuse was rare and severely dealt with. It was not viewed as a family problem and ignored. Individuals were held responsible for their behavior. To inflict abuse on a family member was seen as harming the spirit this knowledge is reflected in contemporary culture, mostly in the area of child abuse, when we make statements such as "our children are sacred." Harmony in the family was necessary to the survival of the People as a whole.

Our history and relationship between the federal government and native peoples shows us how violence is an issue of power and control. When the colonizers were not able to physically kill all of us, their tactics changed and focus of violence moved to another arena- the family. Mission schools become the tactic used to destroy our culture and families. (Continued page 5)



**1998 Stop Violence against
Indian Women New Tribal
Grantees**

Alaska

Native Village of Larsen Bay

Arizona

Yavapai - Prescott Indian Tribe

California

Tuolumne Mewuk Tribe

Two Feathers Indian Child Welfare Program

Florida

Miccosukee Corporation

Louisiana

Chitlacha Tribe

Maine

Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians

Minnesota

Red Lake Band of Chippewa

Nebraska

Ponca Tribe of Nebraska

Winnebago Tribe

Nevada

Lovelock Paiute Tribe

New Mexico

Pueblo of Zuni

New York

Seneca Nation

North Dakota

Trenton Indian Service Area

Oklahoma

Choctaw Nation Miami Tribe

Otoe-Missouria Tribe

Quapaw Tribe

Tonkawa Tribe

Oregon

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

South Dakota

Northern Plains Intertribal Court of Appeals

Washington

Quileute Indian tribe

Spokane Indian tribe

Tulalip Tribe

Wisconsin

Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior

Wyoming

Northern Arapaho



As service providers we have a responsibility to be aware of how the colonizer destroys and creates chaos. An extensive historical overview of the violence against native peoples should not be a necessary component of this writing. However, it is important that violence against indigenous women be placed in an historical context and recognized as a problem that became extensive in our society only after colonization and the federal government's purposeful intention of destroying the native family.

Violence against indigenous women is the direct result of the violence perpetrated against all of us as a People. Colonization and alcohol were the tactics.

Connections

The same dynamic of violence used by the federal government can be seen in the individual abuser when he switches tactics in an attempt to get his way. After the Physical violence he may become loving and contrite, act like nothing happened and resume a normal daily routine with the family or he may absent himself for awhile until she gets over it.

We also see this link in reviewing history; the massacre at Wounded Knee contains all of the same elements of violence on a larger scale as we see again with individual batterers. The Calvary pursued Big Foot's band just like the abuser when he tells her that no matter where she goes he will find her. The Calvary isolated women and children from the men, just like the batterer isolates her from family and friends. The Calvary destroyed personal property; just like the batterer when he destroys her most precious possession. The Calvary men were drunk; just like the batterer using alcohol as the permission giver for his violence. The intent and tactics were the same, Power and control is the issue.

Oppression in any form – racism, sexism, classism, ageism, etc. are linked by the common denominator of privilege that allows certain groups access to power. This power over others can easily be abused and becomes the

mechanism whereby control is exerted over individuals and groups of people.

This hierarchical (a triangular configuration) way of living and being with each other requires that a large base of those without privilege be at the bottom in order for those with privilege to stay at the top of the triangle. It brings to mind the childhood game of "King of the mountain" (use of the word king is no accident). The bottom line is; in order to stay on top you have to keep everyone else on the bottom.

This is contrary to the circular life ways of indigenous people. In the circle, everyone and thing has a role and function. None was above or below. The gifts that anyone or thing had to offer were valued and validated.

Law Enforcement

While the federal government has certainly not see the native family as sacred or not available to public scrutiny, we know that the federal government is, in general, reluctant to interfere in family matters. Naturally, in a racist, sexist and classist society, poor families and families of color are not always extended this privilege.

However, it is safe to say that in a male dominated society whenever men of color are extended some privileges, there is pressure to follow the dominant role. We know that police departments on reservations run by the tribal state or federal law enforcement will be male dominated, and will function with the same attitude and practices of any other law enforcement service.

We also function with the same basic set of laws that any state law enforcement agency operates under. In fact, most tribes have an almost exact rendition of a state code. Under these codes, all of the law enforcement agencies have always had the capability to arrest under probable cause. This reluctance to arrest has required, usually women, to use massive amounts of energy convincing tribal councils that it is against the law to assault anyone, even an intimate partner. (Continued page 6)

This struggle for indigenous women is the same struggle that other women have gone through in dealing with city policies and state legislatures.

Many Indian Nations now have domestic abuse codes that require law enforcement officers to make an arrest if there is probable cause to believe a crime has been committed. And to our credit, some tribes adopted mandatory arrest laws prior to states.

It is important to note that as of January 1, 1991 the Bureau of Indian Affairs also requires that BIA operated police departments to develop and implement a domestic violence policy that will treat domestic violence like any other violent crime. However the BIA has not set up any systems to monitor whether or not their police departments have actually done this.

These laws and policies reflect a change in government attitude about violence against Indigenous women and tribal governments attempt to introduce the cultural belief that a strong healthy individual is essential and will strengthen the Circle of Life and ensure the survival of the People. While the insertion of this concept into a foreign criminal justice system is positive in sending a message, it does not necessarily ensure that women will receive better protection.

While the practice of writing Tribal codes and policies with gender neutral language is commonly held, and sometimes criticized, the law is designed to protect women who are battered and criminalize assaults that take place in the home.

When placed in a cultural context, the code can be seen as the tribe's responsibility and role in assisting the individual tribal members in coming to understand the rhetoric- "women are sacred."

Women's issues are often trivialized and victim-blaming attitudes are prevalent. However, no matter what the personal opinion and belief of the individual law enforcement officer, prosecutor or tribal court judge, each individual has been empowered with the responsibility by and to the Nation, through elected government to uphold all laws.

In our next issue: Indian Country and Domestic Violence Response: Part II Women who have been assaulted and the criminal justice system.

INTERNET WEB SITES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE Minnesota Center on Violence and Abuse electronic clearinghouse

www.mincava.umn.edu

This site contains general information on family violence issues as well as an event calendar for the state as well as national and international event. It also includes a list of job postings.

STOP and other violence against women grants office

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/VAWGO>

This site contains information on VAWGO programs and funding.

Office of Justice Programs

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>

Family Violence Prevention Fund

<http://www.fvpf.org>

This site includes general health issues, work place violence issues.

National Victim Center

<http://www.nvc.org>

This site contains general victims rights information as well as domestic violence resource material.