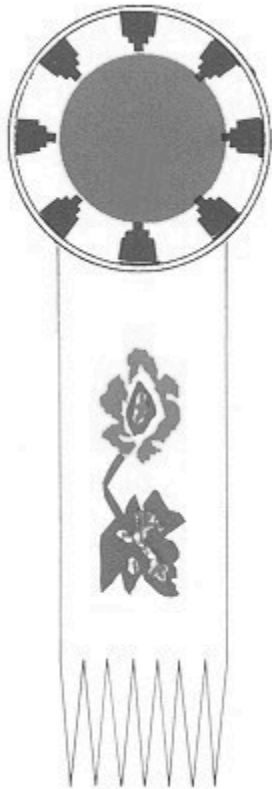


# Native Women's Association of Canada



## SECOND STAGE HOUSING FOR NATIVE WOMEN

~ September 7, 1993 ~

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Housing Corporation

*An NWAC Report*

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# **1. Acknowledgements**

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M. Hager

## **2. Introduction**

### **a) Approach to Final Report**

In agreement with contractual obligations to the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation this research report was completed in order to establish the need for Second Stage Housing for Native women. Information pertaining to necessary changes in the delivery of services to the unique and distinct needs of abused Native women was acquired using the methods outlined below. Conclusions and recommendations were made after an extensive investigation was carried out via various socio-psychological and ethno historical publications and studies. During the project interviews with seven shelter directors and their assistants or counsellors were also utilized in order to achieve primary source input and their subsequent analyzation of current programs and what changes should be brought forth in order to better serve abused Native women.

However, given the inherent ambiguity of language, any section within this final report is capable of being read in a narrow manner that extinguishes its potential and preserves the inequities of the status quo within society. Such an approach would be yet another betrayal of Aboriginal peoples.

To complete the report there were four main data sources which were utilized to amass information on the objective of this final report.

#### **1. *Shelters For Native Women***

Five Native initiated first stage or emergency crisis shelters were selected based on recommendations made by the board of directors from the Native Women's Association of Canada. Personal visits were made to these five shelters due to their current status with CMHC. Their status is positive in that they have been approved for Next Step or second stage housing funding and are awaiting tenders for the construction or renovation of the approved facilities. Two second stage housing facilities were also visited. One of these projects was not Native initiated but had 95% Native client use. All of the sites visited had been in operation from less then one year up to five years and one had been open for a little over twenty years.

In terms of population distribution, two of the projects were in large metropolitan areas where the population exceeded two million. Two of the projects were located in large urban centres with populations ranging from 100,000 to 300,000. Three other sites served areas which had a rural population not less then 1,000 but not exceeding 10,000. Five of the projects visited served a large Native population for the majority of the time, of which only two had existing second stage housing projects.

Information was obtained on general project description, shelter use, clients distinct needs due to being Native, on how much of the programs were based on Native traditions and Elder input, and what culturally appropriate therapy meant in the Native sense. Second stage housing proposals were also acquired when available and were compared to programs in order to meet the distinct requirements of Native women.

## **2. Telephone Interviews**

Telephone interviews were carried out due to time constraints which would not permit personal visitations to some locations. These four conversations took place in order to elicit various perspectives on the current family violence response projects and the cultural sensitivity therein. Issues such as the unique needs of Native women who have suffered the effects of abuse and/or prison and how traditional holistic and community based family oriented holistic healing should be utilized in order to heal Natives were discussed in detail.

These project sites were chosen based upon a random selection of known Native populations in the region. For inclusion into the research project the areas must have access to or be currently serving Natives for the majority of its cases. Representatives from Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and the Yukon participated in this phase of data collection.

## **3. Shelter/Project Director Interviews**

Directors of currently operating crisis shelters from a wide area of regions and population distributions were interviewed in person using a structured questionnaire which focused on shelter programs, problems and issues. Cultural aspects were also paid particular attention to in regards to treating Native clients. Also how current aspects of the family violence projects should be changed to better suit the special needs of Native women, their children, spouses, extended families and communities. Issues such as funding, staff size and training as well as location and access to other social services were also discussed to a large extent. In addition traditional teachings and healing methods which concentrate on all of the consequences of violence in a holistic manner were examined during the course of the interviews.

Second stage housing project directors and/or organizers were also interviewed in person using the same structured questionnaire as mentioned above. They gave their insights into how and why such a facility was necessary especially to serve the distinct needs of Natives. Their individual proposals were discussed in detail when available. Four of the seven places visited had copies of proposals that were submitted to CMHC for approval. Aspects of design, location, and building size were addressed as well as types of counselling, therapy and programs to be available once the facilities have been opened.

#### **4. Native and Family Violence Data Bases**

A number of data bases were accessed in the Ottawa area as well as from the University of Guelph. These databases included the libraries of Ottawa and Carleton Universities, the Assembly of First Nations library, the library of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and the resource centres of the National Clearing House on Family Violence and the National Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies. Various government documents and publications were employed in addition to numerous journal and periodical articles concerning related topics.

Some of the topics that were included in order to reach the necessary conclusions were feminist theory, ethno history of Native women, traditional teachings of various Native Elders, sociodemographics of abused women and those who commit the acts of violence as well as criminology theories and statistics concerning the large proportion of Native inmates.

#### **b) Research Limitations**

There are a number of limitations to the research carried out including, a limited number of only two Native organized and run second stage facilities to visit in order to consult with the managers-organizers. In order to make up for this inadequate number, both second stage shelters, one in Thunder Bay, Ontario and one in Peace River, Alberta, were visited. Consultation took place in cities where second stage housing had been approved or was in the process of being approved by CMHC. Other cities or towns visited included Toronto, Ontario, Montreal, Quebec, Ohsweken, Ontario, Sucker Creek, Alberta, and Fredericton, New Brunswick. Another limitation was in the amount of time given to 'complete the research. Therefore, visiting each province was out of the question. However, a fairly broad base was covered encompassing urban areas, rural and Native locations, as well as eastern and western provinces. Only the far north such as the Yukon and North West Territories were omitted in terms of travel due to time constraints. These areas as well as British Columbia, and Saskatchewan were consulted via telephone and courier delivered interviews. Also due to illness, summer vacations, and very busy schedules on the part of some managers, Thunder Bay and Whitehorse Yukon did not complete or submit responses to the questionnaire before the time of writing the final report.

Also, the interviews raised several shortcomings concerning the current programs now in operation but also offered some solutions. These may be biased in that the majority of respondents were Native. However, who better knows what is best for Native women than Native women? The exact percentage of Native interviewees is not known due to the discourteous nature of asking if one is Native or not.

An attempt was made to interview a non-Native shelter and its director. However, this did not work out, since for reasons unknown, the director did not show up for the interview. It was then later advised by the research consultant's director to not pursue the matter nor to obtain the input of non-Native shelters. It was felt that these established shelters who do not serve Native women on a regular basis would not appreciate the emphasis or necessity of the research project and its possible ramifications.

Finally, it was felt that only the shelter directors, their assistants and some shelter counsellors should be consulted with for this research project for a number of reasons. The main reason being that seeking the perspectives of shelter clients, both former and current, was felt to be discourteous. Also the views and input from Native women who are or were incarcerated was not gathered due to the fact that there have been countless studies and reports done on the plight of inmates. It was felt that another report, especially conducted by a male, would only serve to further alienate the Sisterhood of Native women inmates. However, it should be noted that it is the clients who are best suited to describe any shortcomings within the shelter or Next step programs. It was hoped that enough time was given prior to the interviews in order to allow the directors to obtain some client input. Whether or not this was done is not known.

### **c) Background**

Family violence includes issues such as wife/spouse/partner, elder and child abuse. Many of these are no longer hidden atrocities for the majority of Canadians. The problem still seems to be a general lack of awareness or even denial for the majority of Canadians. However, despite this ongoing obstacle, in recent years this terrible problem has received enough recognition from governments so that programs were created to help alleviate the devastating effects family violence has had on many Canadian families. A great mass of these programs are working, but in most cases they only affect the majority. Those in the minority, such as the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, are still struggling with this grave situation. This situation seems to be multiplied to greater heights for Natives in spite of our relatively small percentage within the general population.

As the right to self-government and self-determination loom in the not so distant future, Natives have taken the stand that not all government policies and programs, which are mostly reactive and geared for the general population, will work for Natives. Included in this agenda is the issue of family violence and the care of those who suffer its consequences.



Natives believe in taking responsibility. This means creating the necessary solutions to problems, problems which although are not uniquely attributed to just Natives, they are uniquely and differently endured by Natives. Natives have a distinct history of traditions and spirituality in addition to low socio-economic gains and colonial genocide which has caused a dependency on government initiated programs, all of which are unique from the rest of Canada. Culturally appropriate therapy and holistic healing that encompasses and involves the entire family and community are the desired and necessary means of solving this issue of deviance within the life experiences of Natives. Many Natives realize that family violence is a vast problem and now they feel it is time for them to solve it within their own realm and world view.

#### **d) Research Rational**

This research was undertaken due to concerns about the distinct needs of abused Native women which were raised by the board of directors of the Native Women's Association of Canada. They strongly felt that something had to be done to help abused and battered Native women. In addition there were those Native women, who for lack of available services or coping abilities, reacted violently to their abusive situation and then were subsequently incarcerated. The director's concerns are well founded, as will be illustrated by the brief historical overview that follows. It depicts what Native women are currently suffering through.

Something has to be done, silence is no longer considered golden. The programs in place are not working to the extent that the board of directors and many Native social workers feel are necessary in order for Native communities to return to the dignity and normality brought about through non-violent and traditional beliefs. These beliefs are based on traditional roles of women and men in the community and are intertwined with Native spirituality.

In order to establish this perceived need, it was felt that one main factor had to be proven - that Native women have different life experiences than the majority of Canadians. Because of their distinct life experiences and world-view it could be argued that as formally incarcerated and/or abused and battered Native women they have distinctive needs in terms of counselling and therapy compared to the non-Native majority. As a result of their unique position within Canadian society as a whole, it could be argued that this particular group of women and their unique needs are not being met by the programs available at non-Native shelters and within the Next Step or Second Stage Housing projects in current operation.

### 3. Historical Overview

Some of the callous things Native women deal with on a regular basis are exceptionally illustrated in an article by Linda M. Gerber, which is found in Canadian Ethnic Studies. Her results support the fact that the most disadvantaged Canadians in terms of education levels, employment and economic gains are members of a visible minority group and are female or more specifically Native women (Gerber, 1990). In addition to this deplorable fact is that eight out of ten Native women have experienced family violence, according to a study completed by the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), this is eight times higher than the national average of one out of every ten women.

Oates, a Native psychologist, is in agreement with the above results and feels the violence stems from stress caused by historical colonial dependency. Family violence is but another symptom of greater problems such as: lack of direction, non-identity, insecurity and deterioration of values "...Aboriginal people are living under abnormally high levels of stress compared to the non-Aboriginal population" (Inuit and Indian Nurses of Canada, 1991). Supporting Oates' findings that family violence is definitely more prevalent in Native society than the rest of Canada were statistics compiled by Health and Welfare Canada. These can be found in Health Indicators for Status Indian and Canadian Populations for 1978-1986 and in Health Status of Canadian Indians and Inuit, Update 1987.

There are many varied reasons for wife abuse. In the report Battered Native Women, Morrison states that this type of assault occurs more frequently to Native women than non-Native women due to social conditions suffered by Natives such as high unemployment, alcohol/drug abuse and overcrowded living conditions as a result of a housing shortage. Rix Rogers, Special Advisor to the Minister of Health and Welfare Canada feels that:

*The chances for an Aboriginal child to grow into adulthood without a firsthand experience of abuse, alcoholism or violence are small...The tragic reality is that many Aboriginal people have been victimized and the non-Aboriginal community has largely ignored their suffering (IINC, 1991).*

Gerber's article sheds more light on the social condition that Native women suffer through. They suffer due to the "double bind of ethnicity and femininity", both of which are attributes of powerlessness and dependency". (Gerber, 1990). Along these lines is the fact that, "Indians suffer disproportionately because the Canadian Indian Reserve is an exploited internal colony for which external political and economic control creates substantial barriers to development." (Frideres, 1988). In other words Natives are controlled by the Indian Act, from birth up to and including death. For example there exists restrictions in the Indian Act which effectively curtail borrowing by councils or individuals to finance, housing construction, a built in dependency clause (Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1992). To the extent that this is true, one could argue that Native women face triple jeopardy - being women, members of a visible minority and residents of uniquely dependent communities. Plus they are eight times more likely to encounter family violence than the majority.

In addition, Native groups have shorter life expectancies, lower marriage rates, higher rates of single parenthood, less education and greater occupational sex segregation. According to Gerber, Native women who are young, suffer especially low labour- force participation. Therefore, they can very easily become totally dependent on their spouses financially. Indian status with its historical trappings of colonial dependency, does indeed create additional barriers to economic and social health (Gerber, 1990). In effect, the violent reaction in the family is a reaction against an entire system of domination, lack of respect and bureaucratic control (ONWA, 1989). As aboriginal people in general have been confined, with no place for release of societal pressure, they have turned on themselves. The only place people have left to turn for both releasing the pressures they face and achieving some power in their lives is in the family (ONWA, 1989).

Counselling and second stage housing are required for battered women and children. However, there must be more services directed at the batterer such as residential treatment programs which both reform the batterer yet allow the victims to remain in the matrimonial home (ONWA, 1989). As it stands now, most non-aboriginal shelters are located in urban areas which means the woman must leave her community, frequently travelling a great distance, to find help. Moreover, the aboriginal victim of family violence may even experience racism and further victimization at the shelter (ONWA, 1989). "We're finding that women and children aren't leaving abusive situations because, other than the shelter, they have no place to go. Relatives homes are already full. In fiscal year 1991/92, 88% of all the women reporting to the shelter had been there at least once in the past year, so we're seeing the return of people, again because there's nowhere else for them to go." (SCAA, 1992).

In conjunction with family violence are those Native women who are serving time in prison. Many of these women also endured the hardships of abuse. With nowhere else to turn in a seemingly hopeless situation a life of crime ensued. According to the Final report, Task Force on Aboriginal Peoples in Federal Corrections 1988, 9% of the federal penitentiary population are aboriginal people, although only 2.5% of Canada's population is of Aboriginal origin. The full extent of the problem is not known because statistics under-estimate the extent of Aboriginal representation in the federal correction system. "In corrections we have people coming out of incarceration with no home to go to" (SCAA, 1992).

Second stage housing could also serve as a place for women coming out of prison to go to for a substantial length of time. A secure, culturally appropriate place where they could be with their children and within their communities if they so desired. They would then have access to various services including therapy and counselling from other Natives who would be able to understand the situation that these formally incarcerated women came from before they became a part of the federal or provincial corrections system.

Second stage housing could help to serve as a healing place, a place to become realigned with the universe and get balanced in the Native sense. Prison cannot remedy the problem of the poverty on reserves. It cannot deal with the immediate or historical memories of the genocide that Europeans worked upon Native people. It cannot remedy violence, alcohol abuse, sexual assault during childhood, rape and other violence Aboriginal women have experienced and are experiencing at the hands of men. The Prison For Women, P4W, in Kingston is a place in which it is impossible for the women to heal. Their stories show that they all have been the victims of violence. All too often they are the victims of long term and systematic violence (Sugar and Fox, 1990). From the article P4W, the population of the prison is made up of women where 70% have an alcohol or drug problem, and 90% of the Native women have been physically or sexually abused. When they get out on parole they have no where to stay let alone get counselling for their past lives of abuse which often led to their life of crime and acts of violence.

By providing these women from prison, along with those abused women who remained out of jail, a place to get culturally appropriate help is allowing them to heal. Both sets of women have suffered abuse at the hands of men. The few "helping" services that are available in prison and at non-Native shelters which are intended to heal are delivered in ways that are culturally inappropriate to them as women and as Aboriginal people. In prison the physicians, psychiatrists and psychologists are typically white and male. How can these women heal when those supposedly helping symbolize the worst experiences of their past? Because of this the women refuse to become involved, and then are further punished because they fail to seek treatment (Sugar and Fox, 1990).

Claudette Dumont-Smith in her article What We Want states that as women and as Natives they want to heal themselves, their partners, their families and communities. They want to heal in the traditional way, they want access to healing lodges near their families and communities. They want culturally appropriate programs and want them delivered from people from their own race or from people who are culturally sensitive. They want the services to be holistic in nature, which means to heal the person in mind, body and spirit. They want the racism to end. They want their rightful place in Canadian society. To achieve this goal means getting help from the existing governments until such a time when self-government is put into effect.

In accord with the Assessment Report, Evaluation of Project Haven, it too verifies that the needs of battered women are a result not only of their socio-economic characteristics but also of their experiences from living in violent situations. The effects of wife abuse emphasizes the psychological consequences of abuse associated with the loss of dignity and control leading to feelings of powerlessness and entrapment (CMHC, 1992). This is increased for Native women, who due to their history, have had to deal with this feeling of low self-esteem for their entire lives.

In order to restore the victim's self worth and give a level of control, the therapy must provide a means of enhancing ones personal dignity and reinforce the feeling of confidence with independence which are necessary to make daily decisions and to live without the violence (CMHC, 1992). Holistic healing in the Native sense involves the spiritual self, the emotional self, the physical self and the mental self. By reconnecting the women with all four directions within the circle of life the above is achieved. However, few shelters are able to address the needs for special groups such as Natives, immigrant women or the physically challenged (CMHC, 1992). When Native women go to non-Aboriginal shelters, often the other women and the service personnel cannot fully identify with the racism and other social ills Aboriginal women have had to deal with. Native women do not open up to social workers or employees because they feel alienated from everyone else (IINC, 1991).

As mentioned earlier, a holistic approach is necessary and desired. The rehabilitation program should also include treatment for alcohol abuse, and any other psychological and medical problems related to family violence. The present system, which is reactive to crisis, tends to absolve the perpetrator from his responsibility for the violence, essentially ignoring him and focusing attention to the victim. The victims need immediate attention, but they are merely one part of the entire family violence situation (ONWA, 1989). As Natives, we also see family violence holistically in terms of a community problem which requires healing of all members of the family, not just those suffering from the immediate effects of the abuse (ONWA, 1989). In order of precedence, the culturally specific approaches currently in use are: Elder involvement, healing/talking circles, cultural awareness activities (traditional values and beliefs, lifestyle and language), medicine wheel, Native experts/consultants, native counsellors or employees or committee members, and native music and dancing (IINC, 1991).

"Family violence is something that goes on -- spills over the whole community... We should try and involve more men in our out-reach efforts because stats show that they are the 'number one' perpetrators of this problem. I would also like to get away from just a family focus and examine how some of these problems are actually embedded in societal attitudes, example: development models, government policies which alienate and marginalize native people leading to self-esteem problems" (IINC, 1991).

Housing is an instrument of everything. It is an instrument of health, it is an economic instrument, it is a social instrument. If housing is cut by 50% or 55% there is going to be a cost associated with that. Whether it is the cost of increased crime, more social services or escalated spousal assault there is going to be bad consequences (SCAA, 1992). As it stands First Nations are clearly among the last when it comes to partaking of what mainstream society might call the "better things in life." If it were simply a matter of cultural choice of rejecting the materialism and its associated ills, then Canada could rest easy. If on the other hand, there are multiple barriers, including discrimination and a colonial legacy that keep Natives from acquiring the same standard of living as other Canadians then it is up to us as Natives to persuade the governments to fulfill their duties to us as Aboriginal people and as Canadians (Gerber, 1990).

Native housing is a large obstacle to overcome and stemming from this problem is the dilemma of housing for those with even less power and independence in modern Native society, those women and children who suffer at the hands of an abusive family member. Included in this group are those women who had turned to crime as means of maintaining control in their lives, they too need a place to stay. In order to overcome a denied livelihood, and controlling rules that we did not set, rules that made us dependent on services we could not provide for ourselves we must get culturally specific holistic healing in the Native context. This can occur at the crisis level of first stage emergency shelters and then in the long term healing process where follow up support services take place in second stage housing.

Without adequate outreach and critically necessary follow up services that are culturally appropriate and a vital function of second stage shelters, emergency shelters can become revolving doors. These offer little more than a temporary way station for battered women who use this service only during times of intense crisis and who, because of the lack of adequate follow up services, returns to the violent home with no additional options for the long term than existed previously (Roberts, 1981).

## 4. Research Results

The results of the research for this project are divided into two parts. The first set of results were derived from the information and insight gained from the many structured, yet unpretentious interviews. The results of the interview may seem repetitive, but that was the idea, if enough or all of the respondents felt that the distinct needs of Native women were not being fulfilled at current shelters then the need would be established.

The second section of results is similar to a literature review and secures its results from the volumes of current publications which provided evidence relating to the distinct nature of Native women and the issues surrounding their plight in terms of family violence. Native socio-economic and ethno history, the rejection of some of the tenets or principles of feminist theory and how Native women who are inmates need the same type of healing that is being proposed for Native second stage housing were also dealt with. As can be seen from the brief historical overview the needs of these women are very real.

### a) Part 1 - Interviews

#### ***Anduhyaun Inc., Toronto Ontario.***

After speaking with the director, her assistant and one of the life skills counsellors in addition to attending a staff meeting some very helpful wisdom was gained into the anger, shame, unburdening and rebuilding that takes place in order to overcome the cycle of abuse. Anduhyaun, which is Ojibwa for Our House, is the only Native hostel in Toronto. It serves a Native population of approximately 60 000. According to a city mandate this first stage crisis shelter also must take in all non-Native women who suffer from abuse if there is space available. It employs an all Native staff and they all speak at least one Native language. It has been in operation for about twenty years.

It was revealed that all of the women who come to Anduhyaun have low self-esteem. However, leaving the abusive partner is an important first step to gaining back a lost lifetime due to violence. All three interviewees were in agreement to the fact that Native women have special needs in comparison to non-Native women. During counselling, Anduhyaun therapists use medicines brought by the Elders in traditional ceremonies in order to reconnect the women spiritually.

Spirituality is a vital link in the chain of therapy sessions that take place while the women stay at this shelter. It is used to create a good feeling about the self within the self so that things become easier. "We need to heal our people, we don't want to send our people to non-Native programs. We need a starting point for our people to come together to get our circle re-joined. Whereas the abuse has no racial boundaries, the healing does" (Smith, 1993). The spirituality is never forced upon the women or their children. Many are reluctant and unreceptive to the traditional ways at first. This is often due to many women denying their Native heritage because they could then deny the abuse. Many women believe that the things happened to them because they were

Native. Therefore, they blocked the Native aspect of their lives out. To identify oneself as Native meant one also identified oneself as being abused, by accepting both issues the healing is greatly aided. Although the abuse has stopped the horror has not.

Native organized and run second stage shelters are necessary because by going into a non-Native group the women come into contact with misconceptions, prejudices, and stereotyping, in addition to coping with the abuse problem and no income or other forms of support. The general methods in current use are not working, they only medicate the pain instead of healing it through spirituality. Traditional teachings are used to get past the victim mentality.

For abused Native women and for many Natives in general there exists a deep mistrust of non-Natives and the services provided by them. It was explained in this manner, "Why trust services or institutions based on racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and patriarchy when a supposedly loved one broke that sacred bond of trust?" (Smith, 1993). This mistrust is learned and is based on a long history of such actions and beliefs which are being carried out on a regular basis. Spirituality is based on trust and egalitarian tradition, which is different then equalitarian ideals.

It was felt that non-Native shelters and services have been given the chance to make mistakes because they have been around so long. It was also stressed that there is a need for Native second stage housing since we owe it to our people to heal ourselves, using our known ways. The opportunity to get out of a unique situation that Native women are finding themselves in requires a unique solution. This solution utilizes traditional healing methods interwoven with traditional spirituality. There is a great deal of built up frustration due to housing that takes so long, then there are prejudices for former Native inmates and Native women in general. The key to success is that people must want to change. By learning and following Native spirituality a person becomes grounded or connected and that desire to become a functioning member of society is increased.

Anduhyun Inc. is in the process of opening a second stage housing unit in its area of metropolitan Toronto. This program will be able to house 43 people, women and their children, for an indefinite length of stay. The time permitted to stay at the second stage housing is indefinite because it is felt that a length of time cannot be placed on the time needed for follow up counselling and gaining the ability to live independently. The organizers and planners of Anduhyun II would have liked a smaller less institutionalized shelter, however, the need is so great that a larger sized one was chosen. The commitment to the individual is long term because healing programs cannot be stopped before the women are healed completely.

Other important aspects incorporated within the design of the second stage housing project concern the children, elders and common areas. A daycare centre is being built on the ground floor of the housing unit. It will be able to care for 44 children. They also hope to be open to the rest of the neighbourhood in order to gain local support and revenue. Due to the fact that many Native elders travel frequently and over great



distances they will be provided with separate living accommodations, a suite if you will within the housing unit, with an area to meet with people individually or in groups. Common areas are also important due to the extended family and communal nature of Native traditions. These are big enough to provide space for ceremonies and dancing and drumming, all important aspects to Native spirituality. Many of these special needs just cannot be met at non-Native shelters or housing units (Brooks, Louttit, Smith, 1993).

### ***Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, PQ.***

Consultation at this first stage shelter took place with the director who also served double duty as a councillor. Being located in the province of Quebec poses problems for this particular shelter due to the fact that they must raise 40% of its revenue. The province only provides 60% of the funding. This is a problem when there are other shelters who must also raise this kind of money, there is a limited cash well to draw from and if they all draw from the same well it soon runs dry and then programs are cut from each shelter. This shelter serves a large Native population that come from outlying areas and from up north. It too has an all Native staff where English, French, Cree, Mi'gmaq and Montaignais are all spoken fluently. The Montreal Native women's shelter has been in operation since 1988.

Again spirituality is an important aspect here. However, there is not a well structured Native community in Montreal and funding is not provided for consultations with Elders/Healers. They are not seen as social workers nor recognized by the government as serving in a psychological or psychiatric capacity. Therefore, the Healer/Elder is not covered under blue cross. The women learn about Native culture and heritage, but it is never forced upon them, the shelter does not want the women to feel aggressed against. There is a strong belief that learning the traditional ways are important in every aspect of living, including in terms of self-sufficiency, because they are based on respect, routine, and egalitarian ideals. In non-Native spirituality and ceremony within the church, it seems that one is looking after someone else.

At this Native shelter they are responding to the needs of Native women which are distinct because of where they have come from. Their situation is exacerbated due to lack of skills to survive in an urban environment. Some are uneducated, have no professional training, lack of knowledge of urban resources, and encounter linguistic barriers since their mother language is neither English nor French. In addition, in an urban centre Native women frequently encounter a system that is unaware and uninformed about Native culture, life-styles and the multiple problems faced on a daily basis. Culturally appropriate therapy depends on which Native nation is being dealt with. The historical part of that particular nation must be examined in order to be sensitive to what that person relates to. The healing process can start from that point. The person could be converting to the traditional spirituality or re-affirming their non-Native religion.

At the Montreal shelter everyone is considered the same, as humans, but the difference stems in the delivery when applying the basics of therapy. The councillors there realistically look at what aspects of cultural traditions can be implemented in the women's lives. In any disease there is a lengthy healing process. It is up to the government to take- some responsibility to stand by Natives and our programs by ratifying and changing laws that are controlling us. For too long the social ills including the issue of family violence for Natives has been viewed as a business venture, not a social problem. The director felt that she was always juggling numbers and statistics so that quantity came before quality. Native's problems are not going to just disappear, neither are Natives, something has to be done and yesterday was too late.

It was pointed out that Native women's needs differ from other battered women due to lack of services available within many Native communities. This includes inadequate housing which means that the people cannot be separated. However, it was also stressed that in the Native view separating the family is not the total answer. This does not solve the problem of having two volatile people still in crisis. The men and extended families need healing and to learn skills to deal with their anger. The women and children are not the only ones who need help. Family violence is still very well hidden and denied. There also exists the reality that many of the women want to be with their partners within their communities, they want to keep their families together but without the violence. Second stage housing is a need, not a solution. The communities must take responsibility and with the help of the governments develop and implement services, such as second stage housing, geared to the distinct needs of Natives, needs that are not being entirely met in non-Native programs (Pratt, 1993).

### ***Ganohkwa' Sra', Ohsweken Ontario.***

Separate interviews and discussions were carried out at this first stage emergency shelter with the director, the assistant director and two counsellors in the men's program. Ganohkwa' Sra' is a phrase from the Cayuga language, one of the six languages within the Iroquois confederacy, it means "Love Among Us". This shelter is located at the heart of Six Nations Indian Reserve on a main road and in plain site of the entire community. Security precautions are top notch but far from institutional in design or implementation. The shelter provides a home-like atmosphere for 28 women and children. In spite of being far from hidden a code of confidentiality, for the safety of the women and their children, is strictly adhered to. It was explained that it is not hidden because out of site is out of mind. The organizer and director of Ganohkwa' Sra' felt that by having the shelter in the open would mean the community would have to deal with the issue of family violence and the fact that it does exist and occur on the reserve.

By being in the open and at a central location the women can also walk around the village and are given a sense of empowerment. To further instill a feeling of self-confidence holistic healing is very strongly adhered to in all of the counselling programs which are available at the shelter for both women and men. The clients learn about their culture and heritage, it is never forced upon them but is there, also in the open. The counsellors serve as positive Native role models. Traditional teachings and spirituality serve as connecting points which are important in terms of self-sufficiency. It was

revealed that if the women or men or children do not know where they have come from how can they have pride? This pride combined with the feeling of self-worth are both necessary to know if one is to realize that one is special.

Although the traditions of language and spirituality are very prolific within this community through the schools and Longhouse religious ceremonies, Elder input at the shelter, at present, is minimal. This is due to the newness of the shelter, therefore, the Elders are approaching its services with caution. It was stressed that in time the Elders will become even more influential within the realm of the shelter and its programs. Once the shelter has built up the community's confidence, trust, awareness and accessibility, will all improve.

Cultural appropriate therapy here, was defined as coming to grips with the historical processes and impacts that the European or non-Native majority has continually worked upon Native nations. Therapists and counsellors must have an understanding of Native society as a whole in order to see the conflict that Natives are in now. This conflict involves all areas including religion, society, politics, value systems and belief systems. The tremendous impact of losing all of ones culture, heritage and values can never be fully explained to nor appreciated by non-Natives. By creating an awareness of the traditions and spirituality that does still exist one is given a cultural identity and can begin to heal. All were in agreement that spirituality is an important aspect within any person. It was also explained that traditions are important to get back due to the respect for the self that is gained. This was further rationalized by the notion that one cannot respect others if one cannot respect the self. With traditional Native spirituality one becomes a whole person or grounded, a sense of being connected is achieved. Along these lines, spirituality is to connect with all that surrounds you, coming into ones self.

When asked how battered Native women's needs differ from other battered women the interviewees responded with the fact that there was more family involvement within Native communities. This then results in more than one person being helped when the woman is helped, a definite goal in counselling. The issue concerning the lack of self-esteem in comparison to non-Natives was also raised. It was revealed that there exists a feeling of powerlessness amongst Native people. At Ganohkwa' Sra' programs using the holistic approach of healing the mind, body, emotions and spirit are used to help empower people. Being prepared to present these types of holistic programs for everyone, including the men, that are affected by the violence is the biggest difference between Native and non-Native counselling. Also a huge need for housing within ones own community exists, which if rectified, would permit easier access to families, friends, traditions, Elders and other means of support and social services.

The Next Step Housing unit of Ganohkwa' Sra' will allow the women and children who are leaving the shelter to continue healing by extending a bridge of safety and support from the shelter into the community. It will continue to utilize holistic healing ideals incorporating traditional teachings 'and Native spirituality into the counselling and follow up support services. These important aspects necessary in the healing process to Natives are not readily available at non-Native shelters (Beaver, Bomberry; Heath, and Martin, 1993).

### ***Beendigen Inc., Thunder Bay Ontario.***

An interview and general discussion was held with the newly appointed director of Beendigen Inc. This agency has provided a crisis home since 1978 in conjunction with the new Wakaigin Housing Project. Both are geared to meet the specific needs of Native women in the surrounding area. A total of six reserves in northwestern Ontario and eastern Manitoba utilize the short and long term housing which understands and handles the unique requirements of abused Native women and their children. Due to the recent placement of the director it was expressed that a meeting with Beendigen's board of directors should take place in order to obtain substantial information pertaining to the specific needs of abused Native women who use the emergency shelter and second stage housing facilities. Unfortunately, the director never returned the completed the questionnaire. Also, as requested, some concrete definitions concerning the terms of cultural appropriate therapy and subsequent criteria necessary to serve Native women was also not returned.

However, during the general discussion some issues did come to light. This included the fact that success, in terms of healing someone who has suffered an extended period of abuse, cannot be defined in absolute terms. The women may use the shelter on and off for a period of time, it serves as a place to start. It provides a safe place for Native women and their children without the added stress of having to deal with a non-Native environment.

In addition to the above it was also revealed that the holistic approach is important for Natives because it allows the entire self to be healed, people are encouraged to take what they need and they do. The support system that is utilized at Beendigen is individualized because all people have common requirements but each person has very distinct and specific needs. Similar to Native battered women compared to non-Native battered women, each have common goals in addition to very different goals and the resources to reach these aims (Kennedy, 1993).

### ***Women's Emergency Shelter, Sucker Creek Alberta.***

The meeting with the director/councillor of this first stage shelter was informative and helpful. It was held prior to a short meeting with the director of the Peace River (Alberta) Regional Women's Shelter. The shelter in Sucker Creek has been in operation for approximately one and a half years. It serves a substantial rural population of Natives coming from nine surrounding reserves. The second stage housing and crisis shelter in Peace River serves a wide area including many northern Alberta reserves. Many of the programs in use at these facilities are the result of very strong ties to language, traditions and the extended families that is found in a significant amount of Native nations out west.

Some of the main obstacles encountered at the Sucker Creek shelter thus far have included the issue of some advantages the treaty Indians have over the non-treaty Indians. If a women is non-treaty she is supposed to be under provincial jurisdiction but

because she is Native the province rejects responsibility stating Natives are a federal obligation. Also because of the shelters location, right on the reserve, lack of security has become a problem. The budget did not allow for the same excellent security measures to be put in place like the ones in effect at the shelter on the Six Nations Indian Reserve. This is an important issue and it was stressed that appropriate security will also be sorely lacking at the soon to be opened second stage housing units which will be located right beside the existing shelter.

In addition to the above there is also the issue that pertains to a general housing shortage on most reserves serviced by this particular shelter. Permanent housing is just not available and when it is the houses are assigned to the men. There was also a large staff shortage, a reoccurring problem at all of the shelters visited across Canada, but particularly at this shelter where the small staff had to maintain the 24 hour crisis line, monitor the house and deal with counselling in addition to running the soon to be opened second stage housing unit.

In terms of culturally appropriate therapy, there is a great deal of use and belief in the holistic healing processes which involve traditional medicines, ceremonies, language and speaking with Elders. Many of the women who have used the shelter are pleased and surprised that the entire staff is Native. The women do not feel judged nor stereotyped. Instead they have confidence in the staff and programs when they reveal the problems that only a Native woman would be able to relate to. Most non-Native shelters do not understand the complexities and subtleties involved in the relationship to the extended family that many Native women have to deal with. Elders also help when requested by the women. They are not utilized as much as the shelter would like due to lack of funding and some initial reluctance due to the newness of the shelter. However, it is felt that with some time the Elders will become an even more integral part of the healing programs.

The issue of how battered Native women differ from non-Native women was brought forth by the fact that Native women who come from small isolated communities, such as reserves, are deeply affected by the relationships they have with the entire community and the many extended families therein. These women live with the fact that the whole community, including their own families, know that they are being abused. As a result they are receiving conflicting messages that this is her place in life, yet at the same time she knows that the abuse is not right. Nobody is saying anything to condemn the abuse or stop it. Confusion over loyalties results due to the tradition of depending on family for well being and survival (Lalonde, 1993).

In Peace River, where 95% of the women are Native, the director also felt a specific housing program for Native women was very necessary. It was rationalized that these second stage units should be located on the reserve or closer to the home communities because of the many good things that occur as a result of supportive extended families. Not all families permit or misinterpret the abuse suffered by the women. As it stands now many women have to travel for nine to eleven hours on a bus to get help. The assertion is that if security is greatly improved in terms of policing and/or shelter design then the shelters and housing units should be placed on the reserves (Gene, 1993).

### ***Gignoo, Fredericton, New Brunswick.***

This interview was held with the director of Gignoo, a Maliseet word for "Your House". This Native run and staffed first stage shelter is centrally located in Fredericton. It services three immediate reserves, two within the city limits and one a few minutes outside of the city. It also aids Native women in all surrounding areas. It has a mandate to help abused Native women only, although some non-Native women do stay occasionally. When asked about aiding former inmates the reply was that they have access to a Medicine Healing Lodge just outside the city. The shelter has only been open since January of 1993, but there was a substantial waiting list to receive the Native healing methods long before the shelter actually opened its doors.

The traditional healing and spirituality that is involved in the culturally appropriate counselling and therapy sessions include sweats, the talking circle as well as smudging and sweetgrass ceremonies. The women have to want to help themselves, nothing is forced upon them. It was pointed out that many Native women in the area know the traditional ways but they have strayed away from them for many reasons. Learning or reaffirming Native culture and heritage is important in terms of self-esteem, self-efficiency, self-confidence and control because the traditional ways act as re connectors for the women who want to heal and break free from the alcohol, drugs and abuse.

To help combat the problems of addiction and abuse, Elders are utilized at a moderate rate. As time passes more input from the Elders will come. Contrary to many non-Native shelters which have a "No Man" rule in effect, this and all of the other Native shelters realized the potential good speaking with a male Elder/Healer can do. Again the main obstacle being that these Native spiritual leaders are not recognized as social service workers, therefore funding is not provided to cover their costs. At Gignoo when there is some extra money, they pay for the gas for the Elder, and they are fed at the house.

It was also revealed that abused Native women's needs do differ from non-Native women because it takes an Indian to know an Indian. The battering or psychological abuse is similar but it was often found that if one little word in Indian was spoken it was so helpful. There are no cultural or linguistic barriers at a shelter that is staffed entirely by Natives. In addition the many traditionalists working there help to promote that to heal the self must take place within. Meaning that the emotional, mental and spiritual selves are just as or even more important than the physical side of the healing process.

It was admitted during the interview that as Natives, we have problems. One of them is the reluctance to admit we need help or have horrible issues to deal with. When admitted, these issues seem to only feed the fires of racism and stereotyping. The racism is out there, it may be underground or not blatantly obvious, but it is very real and very harmful. That is why it is important to have shelters, second stage housing, counselling and therapy geared to the distinct needs of abused Native women because when someone is trying to heal a lifetime of hurt they do not need the additional burden of being judged or, looked down upon just because there is a lack of understanding or sensitivity to the Native ways of healing, thinking, talking, listening and being. Non-

Natives do not and cannot understand why Natives want to go back to home communities, only the bad things about reserves and Native struggles come to their minds. Natives want to be with their own people, people they know, love, understand and relate to. It was further asserted that Natives seem to always have something to prove. This includes the fact that Natives are different and are always trying to prove that they are just as good or better even though they are different than the majority (Boone, Brooks, 1993).

### ***Kaushee's Place, Whitehorse, Yukon.***

Interview questions were couriered to the second stage housing coordinator of the Yukon Women's Transition Home in addition to discussing some of the pertinent issues relating to the distinct needs of battered Native women. Unfortunately, the responses to the questionnaire were not received. Some of the issues that were stressed during the short unstructured telephone interview included the very strong sense of family Native women must cope with. The Native women must deal with strong pressure from the family to return to their husbands and the women often eventually cave in.

In the Yukon the focus of the second stage housing was to make the women feel safe, since they often feel unsafe and not ready to return to the community. The women have access to all of the staff so the women can choose who to talk with. There are no men's programs, the support system is set up to encourage women to attain their goals and to take responsibility for their choices (Anderson, 1993).

## **b) Part 2 - Literature Review**

### ***Rejection of Feminist Tenets***

It could be argued that many non-Native shelters and second stage housing facilities adhere to the tenets and principles of feminist theory. During the course of the research project it was discovered through interviews and subsequent viewing of current literature that this is not the case for Native run and staffed shelters. One reason is that feminist service agencies are avowedly ideological in organization and functioning: the intent is to act in a manner congruent with a profound identification with women and a firm commitment to ending systemic gender injustices. The battered women's movement has always experienced an ideological tension between being a self-help movement and a professional service (Pennell, 1987). Therefore, isolation from men is sought in order to further empower women, because to achieve equality means to do things without the help or input of the men who have worked the injustices of the perceived gender differences on women.

Whereas in the Native realm, Aboriginal experts were more likely to consider the structural and ideological dimensions of the problem of Aboriginal male violence against Aboriginal women and the subsequent services needed, as uniquely related to the process of colonization. The non-Aboriginal experts from the general shelters were more likely to view the problem in a universalistic framework. There exists some

contradictions in women's interests which are caused by the complexity of class, gender and race in contemporary societies. As was illustrated in the historical overview there is a limited, but fairly consistent body of literature that suggests Native male violence against their Native spouses/partners is currently a significant problem. It is believed, by Native's in the social work field, that the problem is the product of a more complex process than is dictated by the "universality of patriarchy" thesis so commonly used by feminist theory in explaining violence against women cross-culturally.

Feminism has been described as "an ideology, a theory and a method, and the three are inestically intertwined" (Jamieson, 1981). The commonsense, generalized usage of the term, however, has masked the very fundamental and very real differences in the theoretical and political orientations which fall under this widely-used rubric. Despite the fact that politically diverse segments within the feminist movement can agree that there is a interrelationship between the relatively low status and subordination of women generally (supported by cross-cultural evidence of spousal violence in which women are overwhelmingly the victims), this cannot be taken to infer that this strongly held "interrelationship" is experienced by women.

In Canada, the dominating strand of feminism which has been applied to the issue of wife assault has focused on the notion of a shared biology, sisterhood, and a universal set of interest among women. The issue of race - in this case, the plight of Native women victims of male violence had been constructed as an extended factor, not as a central issue for consideration. The notion of universality falls far short of providing a meaningful analysis of the historic, interactive nature of power, race, culture and social class in complex modern societies such as Canada's. Therefore, it could be further argued that the recognition of Native societies as unique self-determining entities, with attendant group rights and responsibilities, does not appear to have permeated in a meaningful way to either the feminist movement's or the state's approaches to Natives solving the problem of family violence in terms and traditions that Natives can relate to (Jamieson, 1987).

As previously mentioned one prevalent belief amongst feminists is the universality of patriarchy across time and cultures. Many Anglo-European feminists greet with disbelief the statements by Native women that their societies before colonization were not patriarchal, that patriarchy is a foreign ideology introduced by Europeans with only partial success and that non-patriarchal Native traditions endure and thrive. Here, the concern for Aboriginal women is not a proxy for rejection of Native self-determination but instead it is a refusal to accept Native women's understandings and truths on their own terms.

It is another manifestation of cultural arrogance to suppose that the causes of problems in one culture are exactly replicated in another. Related to this bias concerning current and past cultural practices is an assumption that Native women have the same aspirations as non-Native women, and that these aspirations are neatly encapsulated as the desire for equality. This desire for equality is very different for Native societies which are grounded in notions of harmony, complementarity and balance, not



sameness as suggested by equality. At worst, the sameness conception of equality is a tool of cultural impoverishment and assimilation. Many Native women refuse the label of "feminist" because it implies the fungibility of women and men.

Along these same lines lies the principle of respect which insists upon the culturally appropriate treatment of Native women once they are convicted of offences and this should hold true for their ensuing release. Respect for Native women requires far more than providing equality with non-Native women or men under existing laws and social services. It requires the recognition of the pivotal role that Native women have in their cultures. This must be acknowledged and placed at the centre of social service efforts. Obviously, such systems cannot be created and run by non-Native persons who lack the lived experiences and understandings of Native cultures. It is not for the government of Canada nor its bureaus and departments to set out the details of Native systems. Natives will do it because racism and misogyny are universal, pervasive, insidious, blatant and absolute contradictions of respect, which is the key principle of Native traditions and spirituality. Equality is reached and understood in caring about other people, man or woman (Greschner, 1992).

Feminist scholars point increasingly to patriarchy as the main source of violence against women in contemporary society. Whether they are liberal, socialist, radical or Marxist in their theory they all tend to agree that patriarchy provides the structural and ideological underpinnings of male violence against women (Smith, 1990). However, this can not be held as the reason for violence in Native societies due to the traditions of matriarchy. Due to this fact, feminist and non-Native shelters fail to take into account the historical aspects of colonization and the resulting genocide of Natives when implementing counselling and therapy programs.

Where there is some agreement is in the fact that most -representative surveys of the general population reveal that, although abusers are found in every segment of society, they are not evenly distributed throughout society. In particular, they tend to be most common among men with low income, low educational attainment, and low occupational status. Which is unfortunately the socio-economic profile of the majority of Native men.

Feminism is a necessary "ism", it was not the purpose of this research to malign its theories and the reasoning behind its principles. It was, however, meant to show how being a Native women is very different than being a non-Native one. Hence, the theories and practices of Native women, in terms of family violence, differ greatly due to this fact. Many of the Native women who were consulted with did agree with some of the ideals of feminism, yet, it was put forth that how can Native women agree to fight for equality with men when they do not even have equality amongst other women. With this in mind it should also be noted that the women and literature consulted also point to several problems that exist in current shelters.

## ***Obstacles Native Women Face Within Current Shelters***

Some of these problems or obstacles were noted in the interviews. However, within the framework of the literature review is the problem of class diversity in shelter life. Battered women's shelters, like many other sheltered living facilities, disproportionately house working-class and poor people. Shelter staff members on the other hand, often are from, or appear to be from, the middle class. The gap in life experiences and values can create obstacles to effective working relationships between shelter residents and staff members. A more comprehensive understanding of economic realities and the social context of residents' lives is essential in bridging the gap between staff members and shelter residents. Following this same ideal, Native women need Native staff from within their area to better understand the realities that exist within that Native community and Native nation.

Class assumptions in the shelter reflect the biases of the culture, and women operating in the culture (for example, as an employee, as a potential tenant, or as a social service recipient) face those hidden assumptions as they begin to develop a non-violent, independent living arrangement outside the shelter. If a woman appears to be from a lower class, landlords may view her as a risk. Potential employers may view her as lacking experience, education or not presenting the correct "image". The woman may internalize these rejections as a personal failing, rather than as, class or race discrimination. Thus poor people, more specifically Natives, often see themselves as failures with little control over their lives. These are the hidden injuries of class: lack of self esteem and the scarcity of personal options seem to prevail, especially for a disproportionate number of Natives (Davidson and Jenkins, 1989).

Carol S. Wharton furthers this theory of obstacles resulting within shelters due to staff-client differences in her article *Splintered Visions*. This article found in the "Journal of Contemporary Ethnography" is based on a study that emphasizes the conflicts that arise in situations where long-term service providers' interests and views differ from those to whom they provide service. She puts forth the argument that there are three major issues where the staff's and residents' perspectives conflicted. First, the staff emphasized empowerment and interpreted this concept as meaning that women should build lives permanently separated from violent partners, while the residents were concerned primarily with stopping the violence and returning home. (According to the interviews this was also found to be true for most battered Native women.) Second, the staff emphasized anger as the dominant and optimal emotion of battered 'women, while the residents experienced a variety of emotions and were often uncomfortable with anger. Third, the staff feared the residents' partners, focusing on them as violent assailants, and this fear took on mythical qualities that were not always shared by the residents, who continued to be interested in their partners' actions and feelings. These differences, combined with the discrepancy between the egalitarian ideology and the staff's imposition of rules, formed the basis of the conflict of staff/resident relations. Arguably, these issues are amplified further due to Non-Native staff misinterpreting the actions and world views of Native women.

The empowerment message that most shelters abide by is that women can take control of their lives. This is feminist and is often in conflict with many of the residents' expectations of themselves and the system they are seemingly held captive by. If second stage houses are not clear about the values and principles on which they are founded, women entering these houses may find themselves in uncomfortable situations. Whereas in Native operated shelters and second stage housing, the Native women would have an excellent chance of knowing what to expect in terms of counselling and ideals (Wharton, 1989).

To further illustrate the splintered vision theory is the issue of returning or not returning to a mate. This does not address the question of future physical or emotional well-being. In addition, measuring whether or not a woman returns to her mate upon leaving the shelter does not take into account the likelihood of returning to the mate in the distant future. Even if the woman does establish a new living arrangement, to the degree so desired by feminist purveyors of empowerment, she may still be beaten when her former partner comes calling (Berk, Newton and Berk, 1986). Therefore, programs are needed to change the men too. Unfortunately, this is against the ideal of empowerment put forth by feminists.

A study done by Nanette J. Davis asserts the notion that shelters embody many features of custodial systems, for example they are rule-ordained, overcrowded, they have limited resources, they are exclusionary and maintain a we-they authority structure. She then asks how can a basically authoritarian model of service delivery yield democratic results, including the empowerment of victims, which enables them to assume control over their own lives? This is a valid point. The ideals proposed for Native second stage housing are based upon respect and togetherness, two aspects necessary for the survival and functioning of a traditional society, The survival today may not be considered similar to the life and death situations faced by Native ancestors, however, this survival of abuse is still based upon the support of a community, a clan and an extended family. These traditions are still flourishing at present times and as Natives begin to heal themselves these Native institutions of support will only expand and grow.

It has been suggested that early feminist shelters were oriented toward ideology, not service, and concentrated on raising the consciousness of the battered women. In feminist shelters today, the literature argues that advocacy continues to be the dominant theme. Self-help is another theme: women helping women to alter existing oppressive relationships. Shelter organization is said to be informal with an absence of hierarchy, while achieving the maximum participation of residents, and a distancing of the organization from mainstream institutions are the ideals stressed. Long-term goals are to work toward ending the political and economic dependence of women. As such, counselling couples or violent men is non-existent (Davis, 1988).

It is necessary to realize the multiple layers within the Native realm of healing in order to understand why the woman is only one part of a whole system that needs healing. As mentioned earlier these include, emotional, physical, mental and spiritual aspects to the whole self and often involve couples and the entire family. Many general and feminist shelters fail to recognize these facets, as can be seen from the above study by Davis. Multi-dimensional approaches are necessary and it needs to be realized that there is more than one route to the same goal. Native service providers, including Elders and Healers, have a clear idea of who constitutes their client population. Without that knowledge it is impossible to design socially and culturally relevant services or even identify what is needed.

Native services aim towards a holistic approach. Individuals are not treated in isolation from their familial, economic, cultural, and occupational circumstances. By implementing community-based housing the strength of the community shines through. Problems and needs are better recognized and identified by the community. The community chooses how it responds to those needs, therefore, the community is committed to the solution chosen. Responsibilities for initiating strategies must clearly lie within the community (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1985).

### ***Importance Of Design***

The community, in this case a reserve or urban Natives, would also consider the actual design of the building to best suit their needs and fit within the overall setting of their surroundings. This may seem trivial, yet it was found that residential satisfaction is predicted by one's psycho-emotional condition and the status of one's children. Site-locational aspects associated with satisfaction included the quality of outdoor play areas for children and the sense of safety in the immediate neighbourhood. In general, residents were more directly influenced by their shelter compared to staff, and second, personal status is a more useful indicator of residential satisfaction than the ways in which the occupants actually use their shelter.

In a study by Refuerzo and Verderber in 1989, it was discovered that victims of family violence are better able to cope if they were satisfied with the shelter design and surroundings. Satisfaction with the size of the kitchen, dining, and bathroom spaces, the location of the phones, the level of privacy indoors, interior furnishings, shelter security, and the ability to protect one's belongings from theft or damage all were necessary in order to better deal with the situation the women had found themselves in. The amount of trees and vegetation, the appearance of nearby buildings, the shelters location within the community or city all contribute to the women's well being.

One needs one's own space and adequate time to heal and adjust. The furnishings of the shelter are important as support devices for activities; security has a strong bearing on the activity one engages in, as does the size of the kitchen and dining areas. Daylight and lighting are also seen as indoor activity support amenities. The way one's children's needs were met during one's stay in the shelter, the extent to which one experiences personal privacy, and the extent to which one feels safe in the shelter are

all major factors to the healing process. Additionally, the perceived sense of neighbourhood safety is related to a good night's sleep and one's ability to relax. All of these satisfaction needs are related to the women's ability to reach her personal goals during her stay at the shelter or second stage housing unit.

One of the main tenets of Functional-evolutionary theory is that preferred environments are those that are legible, predictable, controllable, and foster a sense of human involvement. Involvement in this framework denotes a caring on behalf of the individual for the setting itself. Success in coping with one's surroundings is considered essential to effective human functioning.

A supportive shelter for victims of family violence is one that a) is aesthetically enriching indoors and out as opposed to one that is run-down and aesthetically mundane and unstimulating; b) is controllable and predictable by the staff and the residents; c) incorporates nature landscaping to afford respite from the indoors as opposed to a shelter that is located in an urban setting devoid of outdoor greenspace; d) is safe and secure in perceived and in actual terms and unthreatening as opposed to a shelter whose lack of security renders it threatening to residents and staff; e) is home like in its architectural design, furnishings, and general appearance; f) is located near to adjunctive support amenities such as transit, stores, schools, etc.; g) most importantly, the shelter must promote an individual's self-esteem and self-respect which enables one to remain in the shelter or housing unit for a period of time sufficient to allow the freedom needed to restructure one's life and ensure the well-being of one's children, as opposed to a facility, that due to overcrowding, poor management, or the poor physical nature, by default prompts early retreat.

The study also revealed that a perverse irony seems to exist in that battered women and their children are all too often subject to a shelter environment that due to overcrowding, unaesthetic conditions, a poor location, and the like, fosters a similar form of information overload, which often manifests itself in the form of further stress, alienation, apathy, and detachment from one's social environment (Refuerzo, Verderber, 1989). As can be seen from the above and the interviews, security, location, size and design are all important to the healing process. It was the intent of the research to establish these very important issues so that providing the proper amount of funding will be ensured in future and present endeavours in such a manner that these significant needs are also met.

### ***Tenets of Native Therapy and Traditions***

Native values are related to a whole way of life, a traditional way of life in which they were a vital part. Good health is a balance of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual elements. It is a gift from the Creator and it is the responsibility of Natives to take care of it. When Natives show respect for the self and its well-being, it also shows an appreciation for the Creator's gifts. If neglect for one's well-being and health occurs it shows disrespect for the Creator. From this it can be reasoned why medicine men, or healers, are firm in their stance that they are accountable to their people and their fellow

Elders, not to governments. One of their main concerns is with helping and healing Natives who are victims of family violence and all of its encompassing problems in a Native way. This Native way is based on respect for the Creator and the people (Malloch, 1982).

Feminists assert the empowerment of women, Native therapists assert the empowerment of Native families. This means they are to positively maintain their rightful place in the community as teachers, leaders, healers and elders. Native therapists and Elders want to help both women and men meet their goals of healing. By nurturing the families, the families will learn to nurture themselves. This activity will affect others to change, until the change is all consuming. Natives are admittedly an unpretentious people who believe in uncomplicated issues. Therefore, the traditional ways are easy to understand. In teaching the simpler aspects of life, we therefore, "heal our own" in our own way. The residents of a Native community are often a very united group of people through the extended family, clan, Secret Societies, religious beliefs, language, and tribal affiliations. Almost all information about living (morals, values, attitudes, skills) comes from within this closed community. Decisions that affect the entire community are, and should continue to be made and carried out within the community. Support and nurturance must come from within the community in order for it to succeed (Beendigen Inc., 1990).

Within the realm of Natives healing Natives are the issues of what could and does occur when abused Native women are forced to seek help away from their communities and the support systems therein. A seemingly unimportant matter such as counsellor dress cues is not as trivial as it first appears when it is taken into consideration with differences in language, social class and culture. All of these aspects were found to impinge on the effectiveness of counselling when the client and counsellor were from different cultures. The way a counsellor dresses is an important feature in communicating nonverbally with clients. The nonverbal cues are not to be taken lightly because they serve as a prelude to establishing a counselling relationship, particularly in settings where client attrition is high.

From a study completed in 1983, it was discovered that Natives and Caucasians differed in their perceptions of each of the counselling conditions based on the counsellors' attire. Therefore, it could be argued that if something as simple as a counsellors clothes affect the outcome of a session, imagine the results of having someone from one's own people, from one's own community to help in the healing process. Natives respect older persons. These older people, in conjunction with the system of Elders, are considered to be wise due to their knowledge of the world. In the aforementioned study the Natives considered the youthfully dressed counsellors as less desirable and less able to convey the counselling conditions. In summary, the dimensions of culturally specific meaning for clothing helps in understanding only one of the many differences perceived by a distinct culture (Littrel and Littrell, 1983).

As mentioned several times throughout the research and the results, the importance of aiding the entire familial unit, in this case the Native extended family, has been stressed in Native traditions. Included in this of course are the children. This is of particular importance because the children usually always accompany the mother when she leaves a violent situation. It is the contention of Native counsellors and therapists that to end the cycle of violence the children must have the traditional knowledge of Native spirituality and heritage instilled in the values and beliefs of the children. This results in the children gaining pride and self-esteem which comes from obtaining and establishing a Native identity.

The establishment of identity is a major developmental task for all adolescents. As a psychological task, striving for a sense of unification and cohesiveness in the self provides meaning, direction, and purpose while serving a critical function for the individuals manifest competence and adaptive functioning. This identity development is a complex task for all children, but this complexity is heightened for children and adolescents belonging to ethnic and racial minority groups such as Natives.

There have been a number of studies conducted which show that preschool and young school-age children belonging to a minority group, such as Natives, demonstrate a white bias. Whereas, when the children were tested in their Aboriginal language they showed a greater preference for their own race and culture. It has been suggested that minority and oppressed individuals may be prone to develop a negative identity as a result of accepting negative self-images projected onto them, not only by the larger society, but by their own group as well due to their learned behaviour. Therefore, it is the adamant belief by many Natives that positive role models are necessary to invoke a positive image to the children and this can only occur at Native initiated and staffed shelters and second stage housing units (Spencer and Markstrom-Adams, 1990.)

A lot of emphasis in this research has been placed on traditions and the revealed healing capabilities they seem to be having in Native communities and shelters as they attempt to deal with family violence and abuse. This is not to naively suggest that a return to traditional ways will miraculously eliminate violence against women. But it does provide a new basis for negotiating a more balanced spread of power in the sphere of gender relationships. This situation raises a question in the minds of both Natives and non-Natives of whether 'neo-traditions', insofar as they depart from a commonly accepted 'original' tradition and thus they may lack the seal of approval of antiquity. In other words family violence is a fairly new phenomenon in the Native realm and these traditions which intertwine with spirituality were not meant to deal with this type of problem. Therefore, neo-traditionalism results to deal with a new problem. Due to the seemingly unaged use over time of these traditions that are healing familial violence it could be put forth that these traditions are not really traditions because they lack the necessary time span throughout the ages to be considered traditions (Dickson-Gilmour, 1992).

For while traditions must be of seasoned vintage, it would seem they must also have evolved slowly, almost imperceptibly, and never under the conscious influence and manipulation of human beings. To be invented is to be fraudulent, and essentially untraditional, apparently notwithstanding the value or the necessity of the invented tradition. However, many traditions which are considered legitimate in non-Native societies can be shown to have been, at one time or another, the product of invention, usually by the state, but not uncommonly by others within a given society (Hobsbawm, 1983). Thus, what is central here is not whether the systems are based on 'rightful' traditions, so called due to their antiquity, but whether those systems are the right ones for the Natives who abide by them. And that, in itself, is a matter which only Natives can decide (Dickson-Gilmour, 1992).

### ***Native Inmates within Second Stage Housing***

Aboriginal culture teaches connection and not separation. Our nations do not separate men from women, although we do recognize that each has its own unique roles and responsibilities. The Native teachings of creation require that only together will the two sexes provide a complete philosophical and spiritual balance. Aboriginal nations have the power to heal. We only need respect and some help in obtaining the resources to do so.

Native females' conflict with the law may be linked to a variety of ways to the already mentioned role strain experienced by Native males. First Native women may retaliate in kind against physically abuse Native men. Secondly, Native women may choose to escape from violent or otherwise abusive situations at home by migrating to an urban area where their usually low levels of skills and education, combined with discrimination by the larger society, may relegate them to the ranks of the unemployed. That, in turn, increases the probability of resorting to behaviours involving alcohol or drug abuse, or to prostitution, all of which increase the probability of coming in conflict with the law. Even without engaging in such behaviour, the very fact of being in an urban area increases their exposure to police. This all adds up to the further victimization of Native women (Pitcher-LaPrairie, 1989). It is believed that second stage housing geared to the distinct needs of Native women would also help deter recidivism.

As mentioned in the historical overview and above, Native women who are inmates cannot heal because the source of their pain lies within their entire lives of violence, victimization and abuse. Native women need Native halfway houses now. The second stage housing programs for Natives that CMHC wants implemented could also serve to heal these Native women. These programs must also be located within Native communities. Native women have a strong and uniform plea that their cultural and spiritual backgrounds be recognized and accepted, and that all aspects of their treatment within their communities reflect this recognition. This research suggests that there is a need to further explore the potential to develop a holistic approach that treats a variety of problems within the context of a single program for Native women and their families.



Native women would like to have the choice to interact with Native people in every facet of their life, be it upon their prison release into a second stage shelter or if they go to the Next Step because they recognized the abusive situation they found themselves in. Community integration is an effective way to provide support, continuity and the variety of services needed for these former inmates to take responsibility for their lives. By allowing formerly incarcerated Native women entrance into second stage housing facilities their continued desire and needs to be with other Native women will be met. In addition they will have free and wide access to the teachings and healings of their culture. These former and current inmates also spoke of the importance of keeping in touch with their families and communities which would also be provided within second stage programs.

This connection to the communities is essential to the survival of Native second stage facilities and the traditional healing involved therein. These units want to be based on principles that promote: a safe place for Native women; a caring attitude towards self, family, community; a belief in individual client-specific planning; an understanding of the transitory aspects of Native life; an appreciation of the healing role of children who are closer to the spiritual world; and pride in surviving difficult backgrounds and personal experiences (The Report on The Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990).

The female offender has been for too long forgotten or ignored. This holds especially true for Native women inmates even though they make up a substantial portion of the prison population. Because crime is generally perceived as a male phenomenon, rehabilitation may also be viewed from this narrow perspective, yet the fact remains that female offender population has been steadily increasing. The female offender shows a history of dependency - a dependency on drugs, alcohol and men. Incarceration perpetuates this dependency, because in prison the women become dependent on rules, regulations, and correctional staff to guide her life. She experiences poor self-esteem and feelings of general powerlessness. Greater community involvement is essential for more effective service delivery to the female offender (Iglehart and Stein, 1985). It is the belief of the researcher, supported by the results and directors of NWAC, that this community involvement can occur at a highly successful rate within the second stage housing facilities. If these facilities are located within actual Native communities the success rate can only be enhanced.

### ***Native Perspectives***

Native social workers endorse the approach that combines advocacy for the victim, counselling for the women, children and men and then for the family as a unit. It is a comprehensive systems approach where the family is a system and the agencies as they affect the family is also a system. It is felt that this approach would be far more effective than the seemingly piecemeal, haphazard, crisis-oriented approach that exists today. This technique sees the whole family as the victim of violence and addresses many different facets of the problem: legal, emotional, economic, shelter, support, education and prevention. It seems to be more economical to mandate counselling for men rather than send them to jail. Charging the men and sending them to jail are two

different things. Charging the men makes them take responsibility. Sending them to jail does not solve the problem in the long run. This counselling should take place through the shelter but off the premises, where the abusive partner has the same counsellor as his wife (Transition House Feasibility Study, 1985).

Many of the present service networks are inadequate to meet the needs of Native women for the simple reason that the existing programs are geared toward the needs of urban-based women generally, not Native women specifically. While urban centres may have some aspects of a support network for Natives (i.e. transition houses, friendship centres, etc.) this is viewed as fragmentary and in any case not regarded as a meaningful replacement for the ties which must be broken upon leaving the community. In the case of Native women who do decide to leave the reserve, they are often faced with some serious legal consequences. First, her leaving may jeopardize her rights to band membership for herself and her children. Taking action may effectively result in self-banishment. Banishment, a traditional means of restoring peace through the removal of the offender from the community - is ironically the victim's chief option. To speak out against intimate violence represents a threat to one's sense of collectivity as well as one's sense of individuality.

There is a uniform feeling that the family should play a supportive role in developing individual solutions to abuse. But more importantly, the family is viewed as a mechanism for confronting the cycle of violence. The family is the basis on which Natives learn - Natives need to relearn this aspect. Family life and family education are important foci for teaching the young that violent behaviour is unacceptable. Generalized second stage housing and shelters are not the answer, because they are not structured in a way which can adequately respond to the culturally unique circumstances in which Native women are situated; nor can they adequately attend to their needs as a distinct group within Canadian society as a whole (Jamieson, 1987).

Many general shelters and the subsequent second stage housing that they utilize focus on the violence only, viewing Native identity as a secondary issue. This reflects an inherent bias in the system of social services. Often times a major portion of the victim's dilemma stems from the absence of identity. How does a Native woman from a Northern isolated reserve pick up a valid identity in an urban shelter staffed predominately by middle class whites, serving a predominately non-Native clientele? Native identity must be based upon its own worth, not upon comparisons with others (Hughes and Sasson, 1990). Counselling with minorities is a very special process. Not only does the counsellor have to deal with all the components of a regular counselling situation but they must also try to understand the cultural meaning of behaviour presented by the minority receiving the help. Many Natives are taking the justified stand that this is not being done. Most professionally active counsellors today have not been adequately prepared to serve clients who are members of other cultural and/or class groups (Raynor and Raynor, 1985).

A holistic perspective on family violence views the problem as part of Natives existential reality. Native women want and need to define that reality on their own terms. The following argument still seems to persist and that is as Natives we are incapable of managing our own affairs. That the money will be squandered, mismanaged, and utilized all wrong leaving Natives with nothing in a very short period of time. To put it bluntly it is far too often believed that Natives are inferior to the white man and should not be given the right to succeed or fail on our own (Bennett, 1982). Native people in general have suffered from a myth of needing protection (Adams, 1989).

Another assumption is that we are disadvantaged. We are only disadvantaged if a white middle class yardstick is used as a comparative form of measurement. This white middle class yardstick is a yardstick of materialism. The majorities values are based upon the size of your bank account or on how many degrees one can have after one's name. Wherever Natives are found, one will also find that things are done in a different way, against a different value system. And the measure is not materialism. It is not what you are that counts but who you are. Natives are distinct and different. The inability to accept this difference and respect difference and rejoice in difference is the point at which Native anger grows. Equality is really a celebration of difference (Monture, 1986).

Native healing within the realm of Native organized and run second stage housing and shelters for victims of family violence is based upon the ideals invoked by a sense of community, respect, togetherness and accepting the responsibilities of one's own actions. Community focuses individual and collective energy allowing members to act on their vision of life. It is the place where individuals learn their identity and develop the attitudes, skills and confidence necessary for participation in the larger realm. In effect, community composes the heart of the nation. Thus, as Native people organize in the long struggle to recreate their nationhood and attain a place of consequence within Canada, communities are, and must be, a major focus for thought and action (Lee, 1992).

Native women should not have to leave their home communities to seek help for the violent situations they are living in. Due to the closeness and togetherness of Native communities when a woman leaves she is typically viewed as the one who broke the family. The Bands, the women's own communities, feel that the woman has abandoned them, that the woman made the choice to move away. This is not the case, she moved away not by choice but due to a lack of services available to her within her own community. The community blames the woman, they do not look at the man who is abusing, they look to the woman because she broke the commitment, to the man, the family, and the community by leaving, even though it is to survive. It is very painful for all women who have to leave their communities just to survive, rather than get help from their own people. To try and understand or explain the Native communities' rationale for blaming the woman, not for causing the abuse, but for causing the division of the whole is impossible (Phillips, 1987). Yet, the hope remains that the distinct needs of abused Native women will be recognized as being distinct and thus acted upon accordingly.

## 5. Conclusions

Based upon the research findings and the data presented in this final report several conclusions and subsequent recommendations can be made. The main conclusion being that abused Native women do in fact have distinct needs when compared to non-Native women who suffer from abuse. Abused or battered native women are distinct from abused non-Native women for a number of reasons. The most obvious and the root of the uniqueness of abused Native women is the fact that they are members of a visible minority group. This particular group is unique in itself due to the fact that they, unlike many other minority groups" have had their cultural history, heritage and traditions worked upon and against for well over five hundred years. This genocide has caused Natives to acquire a distinct world-view which is based partly upon traditional teachings and partly upon a deep mistrust of the Canadian governments, both provincial and federal, and their actions and attitudes towards Native nations individually and collectively.

Native women also have the dubious distinction of being eight times more likely to suffer from family violence. It has also been found that 90% of female Native inmates have suffered from abuse and that is probably why they ended up in prison. Until 1985 Native women have suffered the distinction of being openly discriminated against by the federal government in the form of the "Indian Act" which limited who a Native woman could marry if she and her children wanted to keep their Native status and remain a part of the woman's home community. Although this section of the Indian Act has been changed, Native women are still suffering its ramifications. If a woman leaves her husband the matrimonial home is automatically considered his. When subsidized housing finally does become available the men end up getting it. Native women are distinct in many ways, unfortunately, too much of this distinction lies in the amount of suffering and discrimination they must put up with instead of the uniqueness of their culture, language and heritage. In addition, far too often former inmates are relegated to even worse status amongst Native women just because they need help to better cope and adjust to the violence.

Another conclusion is that Native women who become part of the corrections system are being left hanging in the wind. For too long the needs of these women have been ignored. The research has shown that these women have also suffered systemic and long term abuse, their only difference from other Native women who have also suffered is that they reacted violently after seeing that there was no where left to turn. By becoming part of the Canadian Corrections system these women were only going from bad to worse as they became part of a system that has been shown by a number of studies to be ineffective in rehabilitating and healing a lifetime of pain and abuse. Second stage housing geared to the unique needs of Native women can also help serve the needs of these formerly incarcerated women. It is obvious that there are going to be problems, and some women may not respond to the programs, all these women need is a chance and more importantly a choice.

This lack of choice is due to the fact that too many shelters are based upon the tenets put forth by feminists. These tenets fail to recognize the unique world-view in which Native women perceive themselves and their surroundings. Which in turn means the Native women must endure further humiliation and suffering caused by cultural bias and stereotyping. This problem is not helped by the justified fact that Native women can not identify with feminist models nor the shelters and second stage housing units that are the results of these theories and principles. This fact is justified because to Native women feminist are struggling for something that is different then what Native women are struggling for. Native women do not want to fight for equality with men when they do not even have equality amongst other women. Native women are trying to be heard within the Native political and social arena. Once this has been accomplished they can then move onto fighting for recognition among non-Native women and then perhaps when this has been achieved they will fight for equality with men in general.

The results also point to the extended families as both a help and a hinderance to solving family violence. They are a hinderance in that they blame the woman for leaving the community. Leaving or deserting is viewed as a betrayal and an insult to the community as a whole because the woman went to outsiders for help. Outsiders are viewed as being deceitful and against long established values of Native nations. At the same time however, these extended families offer an excellent means of support to the woman when they are able to recognize and interpret the abuse as being wrong. Extended families tied in with traditional ways combine to give the women a sense of being connected. Her family re-affirms her Native identity and gives her the feeling of belonging. It is harder for her to deny her Native identity which is for many women the cause of their suffering. This is in fact partially true, the results point to the emasculation of Native men and the subsequent frustration and abusive behaviour brought about by not being able to control his livelihood. Therefore, the women are abused because of the situation Natives generally find themselves in, she is not being abused just because she is Native. It is a complex system of "justifiable blame".

Finally, Native women are distinct due to the traditional matriarchal system which Native nations are originally based upon. In no other time or place have women enjoyed the fruits of being in control of a nations destiny and survival than during the time before Europeans forced their patriarchal, classiest, sexist and religious ideologies on Natives across this continent. More and more Natives are heeding the teachings of the Elders who knew all along that traditional spirituality is the basis of everything everywhere. There has been a rediscovery of traditions that were thought to be lost, but instead were merely in the hearts and minds of the Elders, waiting for the younger generations to realize that it takes a Native to know a Native and to heal a Native means to reconnect them to their heritage, language and culture. Natives need to feel pride and this feeling of pride comes from within. Once this is realized the mental self, emotional self, physical self and the spiritual self will all have been rejoined and healed in the traditional manner using traditional methods such as the sweat, smudging, sweetgrass, dancing, drumming and talking. These things cannot occur nor be fully understood in non-Native second stage housing. The distinct needs of Native women and their connection to their Native community can only occur in second stage housing that has been planned, implemented and staffed by Natives for Natives.

## **6. Recommendations**

### **1. *Increased Funding***

Unfortunately, the biggest recommendation is in terms of funding. No matter where I went or who I spoke with the root of all major obstacles boiled down to a lack of sufficient funding. In terms of basics such as furniture, taxes, supplies, counsellor training, therapy programs and shelter upkeep and security everyone wanted or needed more money. The problem is that as soon as one obstacle or issue is hurdled another one needs to be resolved. That is the nature of social work, it is dealing with human beings, who contrary to many human's wishful thinking, are far from perfect. There will always be issues to resolve as a result of human nature. The simple fact is that these services need more money and I have no idea where it is going to come from.

### **2. *Security***

Not enough attention is being paid to this issue. These women want to feel safe and secure and so do the counsellors that are trying to help them. Security must be increased, but not be foreboding. It should not take an incident akin to the Montreal Massacre to get the necessary security precautions desired by the organizers and planners of second stage housing facilities.

### **3. *Simplify Application Procedures***

Consultation should take place between CMHC officials and formerly approved applicants for second stage housing. This is a necessary measure in order to ensure that the applications do not take as long to complete and to ensure that the planners know exactly what they are getting in terms of funding and support, this should be expressed in laymen terminology or simplified language.

### **4. *By-Laws***

The by-laws concerning taxes and municipal services for sewage and water, etc. should be changed so that the shelters and second stage housing units do not have to pay as much or at all. It should be similar to the deal churches get.

### **5. *Placement Within Native Communities***

As can be seen from the research and results Native women suffer more so when they must retreat from their home communities for survival and treatment. Second stage housing and crisis shelters need to be right within the communities in order for proper healing to occur. If recommendation 1, is complied with there should be no problems concerning the safety of the women. I also feel that confidentiality is not a major issue within Native communities due to the close knit nature of being relatively small, rural and sometimes very isolated.

## **6. Recognition of Elders/Healers**

As can be seen from the research and results Native Elders and Healers play a significant role within the treatment and healing process. They provide Native women with a vital link to the past tradition of matriarchy and spirituality. Unless they are recognized as accredited social service providers this link will be lost or not utilized to the extent that is required.

## **7. Length of Stay**

The period of time that has been suggested for the women to stay and heal is set at one year with exceptions made if extraneous circumstances arise. How can one year be sufficient to heal a large period of abuse if not a lifetime. The women do not need the added pressure of knowing that there is a time frame to which they must comply. There are enough pressures of finding a job, raising children, feeling safe and living without a partner, there is no need to make the women hurry and heal.

## **8. Staff-Client Ratio**

There needs to be a greater number of staff compared to clients. The staff are overextending themselves which results in tension and stress and does not help the women who really need the help. Too much time is spent hustling for monies due to a lack of funding. It is easy to say more volunteers could be used, but it is not so easy getting and then training them.

## **9. Native Staff**

If CMHC recognizes the importance of placing safe and very secure second stage housing within Native communities then they should also recognize the importance of having Natives staff these programs. As the research and results show it takes a Native to understand the world-view and value systems which Natives work in.

## **10. Consideration of Former Inmates.**

As can be seen by this research and several others, former Native inmates have no where to turn to for help or services. This is in part due to a general housing shortage for Natives and also due to a lack of recognition of the very similar needs and desires of these former inmates. Whether an abused Native woman has served time or not, she is still a Native woman who wants to become an independent active member of her home community. She wants a secure, stable, affordable place to live that is nice and amongst her family and friends. Second stage housing could serve this purpose quite adequately in addition to allowing access to culturally appropriate therapy from Natives for the formerly incarcerated Native woman who has also lived through family violence.

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Bomberry, Reva. Director, Ganohkwa' Sra'. Six Nations Indian Reserve, Ohsweken, Ontario.

Brooks, Catherine. Director, Anduhyaun Inc. Toronto, Ontario.

Brooks, Valerie. Executive Director, Gignoo. Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Boone, Christine. President, New Brunswick Native Indian Women's Association. Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Burt, Sandra. Director, Liberty Lane Inc. Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Dickson-Gilmour, Jane. Law Professor, Carleton University. Ottawa, Ontario.

Gene. Director, Peace River Regional Women's Shelter. Peace River, Alberta.

Heath, Carol. Assistant Director, Ganohkwa' Sra'. Six Nations Indian Reserve, Ohsweken, Ontario.

Hinch, Ronald. Criminology Professor, University of Guelph. Guelph, Ontario.

Kennedy, Betty. Director, Beendigen Inc. Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Lalonde, Priscilla. Director, Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter. Sucker Creek Indian Reserve, Alberta.

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Martin, Wayne. Counsellor in Men's Program, Ganohkwa' Sra'. Six Nations Indian Reserve, Ohsweken, Ontario.

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## Appendix A

### ***Community Based Transferable Model***

Based upon the research findings the following community based transferable model of Native Second Stage Housing was devised. It was also discovered that this type of facility for Native Women and their distinct healing processes which utilize traditional spirituality and teachings is very similar to the proposed Healing Lodges which are to be established as an alternative to prison for Native Inmates.

The most important feature of Native Second Stage Housing is its location. In order for abused Native women to heal properly and completely it is necessary to locate these housing units within Native communities. Thus, the women do not have to leave behind a unique support system that lies within Native communities in the form of clans, religious societies, tribal affiliations and extended families. Because it is a Native priority to heal the whole person and the whole family these second stage housing units must be on reserve or no less that one hour away from a Native community. Due to this factor security, not necessarily confidentiality, is of the utmost importance.

Therefore, these facilities will recognize the unique disadvantaged position of Native women and with the help of Native counsellors and therapy in addition to the help of the Native community the distinct needs of abused and formerly incarcerated Native women will be met. Through Native teachings, spirituality, and culture the women will be able to recover from their histories of abuse and gain a sense of self worth and hope to rebuild families in addition to gaining skills for "walking in the new forest" (urban, non-Native society).

The housing units should be small, housing no more than 6 women and their children. The units should be aesthetically pleasing to the Native clients and the Native communities where they are located. The design should reflect Native culture and tradition utilizing as much open green space and circular concepts as possible. Abundant space should be provided for children to run and play; to store furniture and possessions until final accommodations are achieved; to provide space for fund raising events, traditional dances and ceremonies; therapy sessions and finally a place for the Elders to stay during their visits. The surrounding land should be large enough to allow sweat lodges to be built and relocated annually, for gardens to be planted, and for wildlife to be preserved.

As for the transferability of these second stage housing facilities, I believe that it is nearly impossible due to the uniqueness of each Native nation in terms of culture, language, spirituality, size, isolation and resources. However, if many of the important ideals, such as on reserve location and high security, are implemented then they could be transferred across Canada.



## **Appendix B**

Interview questions for second stage shelter managers/organizers.

1. ***How many women are permitted to stay? Funded:***
  - what would be the ideal number?
  - Is there a shortage of space?
  - Is there ever any overcrowding?
  - Who decided the size of the second stage housing unit and how?
2. ***How is the housing unit location determined?***
  - Who decides this?
  - Where would an ideal location be if there were a choice?
3. ***What type of women stay here? i.e. abused, paroled, homeless, ethnicity, urban, rural. (circle)***
4. ***How long can they stay?***
5. ***Is there a waiting list to get into the second stage housing program? Y. N. If so how long is the wait? Where do these women go if they are on the waiting list?***
6. ***What is the criteria for admission to second stage housing?***
7. ***What type of counselling is available?***
  - Is it holistic healing?
  - Are there group sessions?
  - Do the elders help? How?
8. ***What type of training do the women get in terms of being able to support themselves and their children or being reintegrated into society? Native society?***

- Do the women learn about Native culture and heritage?
  - Do you feel this is important in terms of self-sufficiency, self-esteem, self-confidence and control?
- 9. How do the women find out about second stage housing? How do they become qualified for admission?**
- 10. What is the rate of repeat visits? (HI, MED, LO) Is there a limit to number of repeat visits or are you always here for their support?**
- 11. How would you improve second stage housing in terms of:**
- funding
  - resources
  - counselling
  - management/staff training
  - instruction
  - child care
  - security
  - recreation
  - facilities
  - public support
  - space
  - community awareness, accessibility
- 12. How much input do the elders have, i.e. programming, counselling, instruction?**
- 13. Are the elders recognized as accredited social service workers in the non-native realm? Y. N. If not does this create any problems?**

- 14. *What problems have you encountered?***
  - From the community? i.e. by-laws, neighbours, discrimination
  - From the women staying there?
  - From abusive husbands?
  - In starting second stage housing? i.e. CMHC, NGO'S, getting necessary funds, finding counsellors and volunteers, basic assistance
- 15. *How would you personally define culturally appropriate sensitive therapy? How does your housing mandate define it?***
- 16. *How do you respond to people who suggest that Natives are lucky in a lot of ways because they are entitled to so many gov't. breaks and incentives for education, housing, taxes, etc?***
- 17. *What about "it's time for Natives to stop being unmotivated, they should go and get educated, get jobs, stop being so dependent on the gov't and social services, all that stuff happened in the past. We can't count on the "guilt money" forever"***
- 18. *How long has your second stage housing program been in operation?***
- 19. *What type of shelter is it? eg. Feminist theory, holistic healing, etc.***
- 20. *Does your house have a team leader?***
- 21. *Do the clients assist in the day to day operation of house?***
- 22. *What features of your shelter would benefit future or current shelters?***
- 23. *What are your hours of operation?***
- 24. *What languages are available? (sign)***

25. **Have language barriers ever posed a problem?**
26. **What women are refused entry?**
27. **Is there an upper age limit for boys?**
28. **What is average number of children each mother has?**
29. **Most common reasons why women are coming to shelter?**
30. **What is the official maximum length of stay allowed?**  
Actual length?  
Average stay?  
How do you get around the length of stay in the books?
31. ***Do you accommodate women with no per diem?***
32. ***What are your staff numbers? Full: PT: Vol:***
33. ***Are you understaffed? Y N By how many?***
34. ***Do you have an organized staff training program?***
35. ***Do you have a manual that emphasises culturally appropriate training? Y N Is it available to share? If not please outline major points.***
36. ***Is the same training used for all staff?***
37. ***What type of improvements would you like to see in training?***

38. *Has funding prevented you from providing certain services? Which services have been cut or will be cut?*
39. *What is the best manner of obtaining the maximum funding? Are you ever in competition with existing shelters or newly approved ones?*
40. *Name the top five sources of referral.*
- a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
41. *How is your relationship with other community agencies? i.e. police, churches, lawyers, hospital etc.*
42. *What are the five services most needed by battered women?*
- a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
43. *Do battered Native women's needs differ from other battered women? Y N If yes please describe how.*
44. *Did CMHC arrange mortgage for the second stage housing unit?*
45. *Do women stay at your shelter longer than is absolutely necessary while waiting for permanent housing?*

46. ***What is the avg. wait for housing?***
47. ***Do you have a children's program? What services for children would you like to provide if funding was available?***
48. ***How many women have had their children taken away by CAS or children's welfare?***
49. ***Why were they taken away?***
- a)
- b)
- c)
50. ***What proportion of women were:***
- U-21: 21-34: 35-49: 50+:***
51. ***What level of education did most women have?***
52. ***What was combined average income of household?***
53. ***What proportion of women were:***
- local: rural: out of prov.:***
54. ***How many women were employed:***
- Professional (lawyer, teacher, nurse):
- White collar (clerk, secretary):
- Blue collar skilled (cook, machinist):
- Blue collar unskilled (waitress):

**55. *Where do the women go when they leave the shelter?***

Abusive situation:

Independent Home:

Elsewhere: