

Family Violence

Relevant Details

- The ongoing effects of the residential school experience, racism, and many other issues have led to many violence issues among and against Aboriginal people

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Juristat, Vol. 26, no. 3

- 21% of Aboriginal people reported experiencing spousal violence in the previous five years, compared to 6% for non-Aboriginal people ...with 25% of Aboriginal females reporting spousal violence in the previous five years compared to 7% for non-Aboriginal women (p. 6).
- Female Aboriginal victims of spousal violence were much more likely to suffer the most severe forms of violence including being beaten, choked, threatened with or had a gun or knife used against them, or sexually assaulted, 54% versus 37% (p. 6, 7).
- 43% of Aboriginal victims reported injuriesand one third feared for their lives (p. 7).
- Family violence among Aboriginal offenders was 2/3 higher than non-Aboriginals, the rate against family members was double the rate of non-Aboriginals, the dramatic difference is mainly attributable to higher rates of perpetration against female partners. There are no statistically significant differences in rates of violence against children (The Incidence of Family Violence Perpetrated by Federal Offenders: A File Review Study, No. FV-03, Correctional Service of Canada, March 1995).
- Correctional Service Canada recognises the importance of specialised programming to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal offenders, 50% of whom presented with family violence issues (The Incidence of Family Violence Perpetrated by Federal Offenders: A File Review Study, No. FV-03, Correctional Service of Canada, March 1995).

Who's Involved?

Helping Spirit Lodge Society (3965 Dumfries Street)

- Provides safe, protective shelter to Aboriginal women and children, holistic educational programs of enhancement, and support and advocacy to Aboriginal people.
- More specific program info can be found in the Housing/Homelessness and Women's sections of this manual.

Battered Women's Support Services - First Nation's Women's Support & Outreach

- Provides counselling and advocacy services for women who have experienced emotional, physical, sexual or financial violence in relationships.
- Their Aboriginal specific program is provided by a trained Aboriginal women's counsellor.

Circle of Eagles Lodge Society (1470 East Broadway)

- Operates Anderson Lodge which helps women who are transitioning from abusive relationships to independent living.

Aboriginal Wellness Program (255 East 12th Avenue)

- Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Community services.
- Offer talking circles for women who are or have experienced family violence.

Warriors Against Violence (2425 Oxford Street)

- Works to help Aboriginal families unlearn abusive and violent behaviours and reclaim their traditional values of honour, respect, and equality.
- Provides counselling, group work and cultural ceremonies, and public education.

Native Education Centre - Family Violence Resource Centre (285 East 5th Avenue)

- Offers info and referral, free confidential counseling, workshops, online newsletter, and educational resources which you may view on-line or print copies for reference.

Change of Seasons Society (911 Park Royal South, North Vancouver)

- Counselling for Aboriginal men who abuse their spouses, or men with Aboriginal wives.
- There is a 16 week counselling group for men who abuse their spouses and a 6 week anger management group during the summer.

Women Against Violence Against Women - Aboriginal Outreach Worker

- Provides services, educational workshops, information, resources, and referrals for Aboriginal communities.

Partnerships

- None

Committees

- The Aboriginal Women's Collective met again in October 2006 to provide a safe forum for Aboriginal women to identify and address issues that they feel are important to them. The Aboriginal Mothers Centre, Helping Spirit Lodge Society, and the Pacific Association of First Nations Women hosted the first meeting and will work with the Vancouver Aboriginal Council to lobby for funding for a full-time person to work in this area.

Trends

- Aboriginal women continue to suffer high rates of poverty, child apprehension, poor health, and many other issues that leave them vulnerable to family violence.
- More individuals are beginning to talk about violence within families and communities, rather than skirting around the issue. Hopefully this will lead to more open discussion, planning, and initiatives to address this huge issue.

Gaps

- There is very little open discussion at the community level about this large issue.
- There are very few programs to help address family violence, this would especially be helpful for Aboriginal youth who are the largest group of the Aboriginal population.
- Much of the federal initiatives focus on rural or on-reserve family violence, this leaves urban people with little to no support on this foundational issue in Aboriginal communities.

Contact Information

Addresses, phone, fax, email, and website information for any of the organizations above can be found in the Contact Information section of this manual.