



BC Association of Specialized
Victim Assistance and
Counselling Programs

RESEARCHED TO DEATH: B.C. ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

FINAL REPORT
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Prepared by

**Pacific Association of First Nations Women
BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre
BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and
Counselling Programs**

Sponsored by

**Ministry of Community Services and Minister Responsible for
Seniors' and Women's Issues**

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An Atrocity For Our Women

Strong, beautiful, innately sensitive, harshly abused, denied equivalence, struggle to grow
and to maintain presence.

Consistently found to be diminished, seen to be destroyed, advocated for by some but not
truly seen by all.

Report after report is completed to describe the plight of those in the streets, on the Land,
and those never found,
and all to no avail.

The First People see their people but are shadowed with history, a history that allows
them to not truly see the light, the knowledge, beauty, forgiveness, understanding, the
search for closure, the need to heal, or to absorb what is needed.

In a lot of cases a need to destroy either themselves or those around them.

I heard another call, it was the call of a spirit, another of our woman has left, leaving her
family, a son and daughter and spouse.

It was another young death as she was only in her 40's

As her entire family and her children mourn I reflect on the beauty of this woman, the
brightness of her spirit, the love she bestowed on her children, the freedom she allowed
those present around her, and I think what a waste.

Then a sinking of my heart as it drops to my stomach as I see her face and realize the
present pain of her family.

Then I think of the historical pain of our women and our people, with her passing I am
awakened by trying to count all of those that have died through alcohol, drugs or related
deaths and the numbers are staggering, alarming and bestow an Awakening.

Our people are still being birthed into genocide,

What has been inflicted is still taking and a government watches, knows what the impact
was, and still is and chooses to continue to watch us die, to kill ourselves but their only
response is none except a new research report and not much beyond that.

Then I reflect on a thought that if I counted all of those people just from my Nation who
have died through alcohol, drugs or related deaths how many would I find?

I would say countless, countless atrocities that have never been counted.
The trouble is if they were documented what a hurt it would impose on those who are still
living.

Death's breath consistently in our presence, the unrecognizing of the destruction lain all
around us, and us not knowing we are locked, still and immobile in this continuous
traumatic cycle.

Then there are jokes, jabs, denials and supposed misunderstandings, and you think that
these are not just created and believed by a First person but of all those around us.
This saddening thought, this unrecollection of the depth of our despair, plight and the loss
of direction supports the view that we need to be pitied instead of protected, that we need
a report versus accountability or true light-filled understanding, that we need to lose
ourselves as a people and become One with everyone that is not a First person.
These thoughts, minimizations, and non-engaging thoughts both from us and not by us
reinforce that this death is just another Aboriginal women who died of an overdose.
It will be seen as unfortunate but the only focal point will be the overdose and the
families' pain.

This view will not connect this atrocity to her People's past and present History.
It will be another unrecognized atrocity that is not fully understood, is over studied,
under-served and often denied.

Written by: Anita K. Pascoe

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of the Pacific Association of First Nations' Women, BC Women's Health Centre, and the BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Program and our sponsor, Ministry of Community Services and Minister Responsible for Seniors' and Women's Issues, we would like to thank BC's Aboriginal Women.

We would like to honor them for their continued vigilance in their communities to support Aboriginal women and families, for their continued dedication to ensure their people's voice is heard, recognized and affirmed, and for their ultimate devotion to their people's healing and well being.

Their dedication, knowledge and spirituality are the force that continues to be a beacon for all of us who have the privilege to witness the strength of BC's Aboriginal Women. There are no words to explain the gift that Aboriginal women, Aboriginal agencies, and the various advocates receive when our women gather together and advocate for one another.

INTRODUCTION

This report examines ten studies and one book relating to Aboriginal women and violence. The purpose is to review reports from different sources to determine the extent to which the numerous recommendations and suggestions have been acted on to ameliorate the impact of violence against aboriginal women.

The first section of this report will summarize each of the reports. A large portion of the report addresses the historical picture of Aboriginal women and the emergence of violence in Aboriginal communities. Colonialism, racism, sexism, paternalistic measures and programming are all identified as contributing to the development, continuation and societal acceptance of violence, victimization and deaths of Aboriginal women.

The second section will connect all of the recommendations and directions offered by Aboriginal women, their families, communities, Aboriginal service providers (both on and off reserve), non-Aboriginal service providers (both on and off reserve), non-Aboriginal government agencies and international umbrella organizations. The wide scope of research, reports and books included in this summary report will aid in showing a pattern of Aboriginal women's known violence at the hands of their partners, communities, leadership, justice system, government systems and society as a whole and highlight the lack of effective response to the needs of Aboriginal women, even in light of the number of recommendations that have been repeatedly offered by reports on this subject over a timespan of fifteen years.

What is striking about this report is the alarming similarities between each of the reports' identification of the causes and remedies. Aboriginal women have been clear and detailed about what they needed to keep themselves and their families safe. These future directions to empower, protect and advocate on behalf of Aboriginal women are specific and represent a wide variety of BC Aboriginal women. All of the resources were directly documented by either Aboriginal survivors of violence, were Aboriginal authors or were

the Aboriginal women and/or Aboriginal programs that were interviewed directly to contribute to the document's information.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE

The ***Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples'*** 1996 Report researched and documented the challenges faced by Aboriginal Peoples in the past and present. The report's main purpose was to "investigate the evolution of the relationship among aboriginal peoples (Indian, Inuit and Métis), the Canadian government, and Canadian society as a whole." (RCAP, Volume 1, Chapter 1; 1996). The solutions presented addressed the need for social, political and economic changes. One consistent theme emerged which was the present and historical relationship between the Canadian government and society as a whole would require drastic changes in order to achieve equality for Aboriginal people.

The Commission of Inquiry argues that the government policies that removed Aboriginal people from their land, withdrew their right to govern themselves, to raise their own children, to maintain their right to speak their language and live their culture, and to monitor and control them all contributed to the violence existing in Aboriginal people's lives.

The Commission stated that for long-term change to occur Aboriginal people need to be engaged at an equal nation-to-nation basis with treaties as a foundation of that new relationship. The treaties and economic self-sufficiency would also need to be accompanied by a drastic intervention in the devastating environmental and social "realities" that Aboriginal people face.

The Canada Stolen Sisters Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada: A Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns, Amnesty International, 2004 documents the violence, discrimination and eventual murders perpetuated against Aboriginal women in Canada and the lack of intervention or

recognition of this pattern by the Canadian government and society as a whole. The report begins with the murder of Helen Betty Osborne, a 19-year-old Cree woman from The Pas, Manitoba who was sexually assaulted and murdered by four white men on November 12, 1971 and then describes an historical pattern of violent death after violent death of Aboriginal women.

The report, like the Royal Commission found that Canadian and Aboriginal people's history of colonialism and assimilation measures and its compounding affect that it has had on Aboriginal peoples and specifically on Aboriginal women have lead to the current reality of poverty, racism and sexism against Aboriginal people. These are key factors that place Aboriginal women at extreme risk of violation, victimization and death. The report concludes that there is no support or protection being offered to Aboriginal women who are or could be victimized or murdered in Canada. This conclusion was drawn from the track record of the plethora of past reports, studies, and depictions of countless Aboriginal women's deaths in Canada.

Aboriginal Domestic Violence In Canada, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation's 2003 report evaluates Aboriginal violence in its' current community manifestation through Aboriginal history. Family violence is described as an intergenerational "syndrome." This syndrome impacts every aspect of the Aboriginal communities from its individual members to its' political structures. The analysis is based on an extensive evaluation of numerous past and present statistical data, theories and evaluations.

The report explored key community determinates that sustain Aboriginal family violence and abuse. These determinates included a lack of consequences imposed on the perpetrator by the justice system and community; male beliefs that support violence and victimization; intergenerational knowledge of violence; community leadership; availability of professional services; public policy; police and justice system; level of employment and poverty; communities' response for awareness of issue and determination for change; geographical and social isolation; and finally the level of "spiritual and moral climate."

Government policies and programs that are not developed in collaboration with Aboriginal communities is a factor that aids in the continuation of violence. The report concludes that the short term solutions offered through government programming is a barrier to achieving long-term solutions. In part, this is because there is an inadequate understanding of the “determinates” needed to truly enact change.

The report outline the lessons learned from the programs identified in this report, including the need to understand the multi-faceted dimensions of the root causes of family violence and the underlying themes of racism, gender inequality and societal support for the continuation of violence against Aboriginal women. Finally, the report identifies a foundation of interventions to reduce and eventually eliminate family violence in Aboriginal communities.

Hear First Nations Women Speak, Edna Leaks, 1993 report is a collection of Aboriginal women’s life experiences of family violence and victimization. Their stories and the report’s main purpose are to identify an effective approach to family violence. The women’s stories shed light on the challenges inherent in the current approaches being used to assist Aboriginal people and especially Aboriginal women.

At the core of the challenges is the continuing social acceptance of racism and sexism that supports the continued victimization of Aboriginal women. The challenges identified are: justice systems lack of intervention and support; inadequate programming and uneducated service providers; creation of programming without direct input of those being the most impacted, Aboriginal women; and finally, the intergenerational impacts of colonialism, most profoundly, the residential school system that perpetuated and supported Aboriginal family violence and victimization.

The challenges identified in this report, like the other reports, is the lack of attention paid to the multi-faceted factors that impedes Aboriginal women and children’s protection and well being. The women themselves identified that the re-discovery of spirituality and

culture was at the core of their healing. A holistic community based approach to ending violence against Aboriginal women must include Aboriginal men and especially the Aboriginal perpetrators in the healing process. The inclusion of Aboriginal men and perpetrators will break the cycle of violence and bring a new change to the entire community. Aboriginal women also state that the leadership and the entire community need to aid in the process of change by being educated and motivated to ensure long-term safety for Aboriginal women and their children. Finally it states that direct intervention for the correction of the intergenerational impacts needs to be understood not only by the Aboriginal communities but also by Canadian society as a whole.

***Strong Women's Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival*, Kim Anderson and Bonita Lawrence**, 2003 book is a collection of stories, perspectives and lived experiences of Aboriginal people in Canada. It is presented in three different sections that include: coming home, asking questions and rebuilding our communities. In these three different and complex topic areas the various Aboriginal authors look at past and present critical issues that affect them as individuals, families and communities as a whole. The grassroots women, urban women, aboriginal men, youth and elders voices, whether status, non status and Metis are all represented and the collection of voices speak to the directions and solutions for the future generations to come.

The first section "*coming home*" analyzes the historical reality of colonialism and its resulting impact on past and present generations. The impact of colonialism on Aboriginal peoples is documented through key themes: the "sixties scoop," no land base or home as a result of the Canadian government's denial under the *Indian Act*, no status or understanding of cultural identity, and forced into urban environments for economic reasons or to escape individual/community abuse and dysfunction.

The second section "*asking questions*" is directed at determining "what happens when we come home and we don't like what we find?" (Ibid; pp.15). This question includes the need to create a safe and respectful place for Aboriginal women in Aboriginal communities. The questions asked determine the "what" and the "how" for change.

Similar to the other reports, this book explains colonialism's present impact on traditionalism, community and Aboriginal government.

The final section "*rebuilding our communities*" connects all of the sections together to understand the link for Aboriginal women between "sexual health, disability, violence, land loss, education, internal oppression, and gender roles." (Ibid; 18). It weaves in the colonialism tools such as residential school and the child welfare system.

The primary recommendation focuses on changing the future by educating the children and youth. In addition, Aboriginal communities and violence are directly addressed by one of the authors. She states that the shift in focus from "victims to leaders" is a reflection of the impact of colonialism and oppression of Aboriginal communities. The tools needed for change include: the community being engaged in a holistic way with the inclusion of men and perpetrators; changes in laws that support "domination" and the continued victimization of women; the need for culturally based and established approaches/perspectives.

Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities: An Aboriginal Perspective, Karen Green, 1996, discusses the various forms of family violence, including physical, psychological, sexual (children, incest), financial and spiritual abuse. The report describes what Aboriginal communities are doing to address family violence and what tools they are using to counteract it. The report then maps out the extent of violence in Aboriginal communities and supports the findings of other reports with respect to the prevalence of violence against Aboriginal women. The report concludes with a summary of what would be needed for violence to be reduced in Aboriginal communities.

Violence In Aboriginal Communities, Emma D. LaRocque, 1994 addresses family violence as it affects Aboriginal women, teenagers and children. Like some of the other reports, it highlighted the societal support of these "cultural myths" that perpetuate the victimization of Aboriginal people through sexism and colonialism. The report

argues, “sexual violence is related to racism in that racism sets up or strengthens a situation where Aboriginal women are viewed and treated as sex objects” (Ibid; 73).

The report parallels the other reports understanding that the dominant social beliefs about Aboriginal people can then in turn become internalized colonialism. This racism, once internalized by Aboriginal people, can become destructive. The overarching belief like the other summarized reports is that change needs to occur in non-Aboriginal communities, and specifically by those in “positions of power.” It outlines that the defense of community perpetrators supports the continuation of violence. It points to the current reality in law that supports the perpetrator over the victim and offers alternatives in law and social policy to change that. In conclusion, like the other reports, a direct critique of the justice system is included as a key element supporting the continuation of abuse against Aboriginal women.

A Resource Guide on Family Violence Issues for Aboriginal Communities

David McTimoney, 1994, provides an overview of the behaviors and values that traditionally honored Aboriginal children, women and families. Like the other reports a factors that contribute to rise and continuation of Aboriginal communities’ family violence are detailed. The report acknowledges residential school, loss of culture and women’s roles in society, an absence of parental and Elder’s teachings, internalized colonialism and oppression, and also an adapting of “non-functional, non-Aboriginal attitudes, beliefs and values” (Ibid; pp.1) as key factors in the rise of violence against women. In addition to a description of the context of violence, an approach to combat it is presented. The approach is based on interventions, education and a creation of a system that includes allied community providers, members and other interested individuals.

Understanding the Role of Healing in Aboriginal Communities, Marcia Krawll, 1994 takes a closer look at what is meant by the term “healing” for Aboriginal communities. It describes a “working definition” based on community examples and also provides recommendations directed at government to aid them in their role to support Aboriginal communities’ healing. Like most of the other summarized reports, this report

engages the “do” and “don’ts” of engaging Aboriginal communities in healing. The data was gathered through interviews with various Aboriginal communities from across Canada with the goal of taking “concrete steps” toward community healing. The information gathered aided in explaining how to conduct safe, equitable, and respectful relationships while interviewing communities.

It highlighted, like the other reports, the past and present challenges to Aboriginal communities’ healing. The difference between this report and the other reports is its’ specificity on identifying, engaging and establishing a concrete vision of communities “healing.” The report moves through an individual processing of healing to communities engaging in healing. The individual’s search to change is seen as a “recognition of problems” that then aids “the motivation to change” and a transition to taking “responsibility for making things happen” (Ibid; pp. 26). The process starts from a vision, then to a process and then to a creation of activities to support what is already in place in the community.

The holistic nature of this report parallels the other report’s recommendation to include the offenders and victims in the process of community healing. Like most of the other reports it suggests alternatives to an offender’s incarceration. This does not mean a non-justice approach but suggests justice with “support and protection to victims and their families” which it argues restores balance for the victim and for the community (Ibid; pp.49). The incarceration system it states only detains with no victim or community accountability and fosters continued violent behaviors with no rehabilitation solutions.

The report describes the government’s role in the Aboriginal communities “healing and development.” The government’s role needs to be clear and established with respect for the community’s knowledge and culture. This working relationship needs to be guided by the community itself with a long-term healing plan put into place. The communities’ readiness needs to be determined by the government and outside agencies and directed by the communities’ workers and members for a realistic movement towards a long-term healing plan.

The healing plan would need to include educated community members and workers that preferably are trained in community. The government must act as an advocate rather than an “expert.” The government’s advocacy would need to “encourage, support, and to make available technical assistance and information where requested” (Ibid; pp.65). In addition, the report states a good premise to understanding the community and government relationship is recognizing the differences in basic perceptions. A pro-active solution is for the government to “listen more effectively and observe first hand” (Ibid; pp.67).

The ***Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 2001*** report was a direct result of the 1988 Public Inquiry into the Administration of Justice and Aboriginal People, also known as the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry’s recommendations. The report’s information and findings are quite extensive so for the purposes of this summation the Aboriginal women’s section will be the only section examined.

Aboriginal women are described traditionally as playing a central role in the family and in the community. Their importance and prominence is supported with their inclusion in various Aboriginal creation legends and also in their role as generational teachers. The report moves from the traditional Aboriginal society and the changes from a status based role to a role of inferiority. It attributes this change or moment of transition to the arrival of Europeans. The transition of role was only one of the changes. The other changes included “new values and cultural standards” that the report argues is one of the bases for the historical, social and economic changes that render Aboriginal women inferior and invisible.

Like the other articles, the report details the residential schools, racism, and sexism’s past and present impact on Aboriginal communities. The report argues that the media portrayal and society’s perception of Aboriginal women supports their present sexual and physical abuse. The report’s examination of the justice systems role leads to the conclusion that this system plays a large role in the continuation of Aboriginal women’s

violence and abuse. The report provides a detailed template for Aboriginal community involvement and non-community involvement in seeking solutions to family violence. It proposes an alliance between the judicial systems to create “abuse teams” that would aid in family violence incidences. In addition to community teams, the report also recommends second stage housing for women and children that is “culturally appropriate.”

Community support and aid need to be included in the communities’ responsibility to stop Aboriginal women and children’s victimization and abuse. The community needs to advocate for the women and children to stay in the community safely, to receive proper support and to advocate on her behalf in the process of dealing with the “offender.” Like most of the other reports, child abuse is included along with directions needed to pursue and to minimize these acts of violation.

With respect to healing, the report parallels the other reports recommendations. It suggests the inclusion of culturally based programming, and holistic community healing with the offender and victim treatment component that is designed and delivered by Aboriginal people. It also advocates for the use of these culturally appropriate programs for Aboriginal offenders in prison as a means of rehabilitation. In addition to male incarceration an equally sobering reality is the increase and over-representation of Aboriginal women serving time for violent crimes. The report attributes these numbers to the abuse inflicted and endured by the Aboriginal women throughout their lives.

The Start of Something Powerful: Strategizing for Safer Communities for BC Aboriginal Women, Pacific Association of First Nation’s Women, BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre and the BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs’, 2003 report examines BC Aboriginal women’s recommendations to violence against Aboriginal women.

The report’s recommendations were a direct result of a Gathering that brought together twenty-five B.C. Aboriginal women from rural, isolated and urban communities and

organizations. The Aboriginal women's directions and suggestions were presented to various provincial health and anti-violence workers, policy makers, advocates, and funders. Like the other reports, the Aboriginal women spoke about the impact of colonialism and residential schools, racism, sexism and poverty. It also highlighted the challenges and obstacles for Aboriginal women who seek and receive "anti-violence and related health, social and legal services" (Ibid; pp. 6).

Unlike the other reports, this report documents the concerns raised by Aboriginal women about the government funding cuts and its impact on their communities' services. It describes how the impact of the reduction or elimination of funding on rural and remote Aboriginal communities in BC is compounded when there are no other available services or options available to them. To combat these challenges Aboriginal women requested a strong provincial organization to represent and advocate for them so that their voice is no longer minimized within non-aboriginal government as well as within Aboriginal political realms. In addition, the women's organization would need to "coordinate, support and train programs, and assist government at provincial and federal levels to understand and respond to the issues." (Ibid; pp.10).

The report's solutions to issues, gaps and barriers are similar to the other reports. Like the other reports the Aboriginal women requested services created and delivered in a culturally appropriate way by and for Aboriginal women. The inclusion of Aboriginal men, children and families was also described as a necessary step to healing. The report's addition of safe houses on and off reserve for Aboriginal women, a need for core funding for programming/services, and the necessity to have all these services delivered by Aboriginal women is similar to the other reports too. In addition, it recommends that non-Aboriginal staff, boards and volunteers receive mandatory "cultural sensitivity training." Education and training was also suggested for Aboriginal women too.

This concludes the summary of relevant reports. The next section will review the recommendations that have arising from the reports.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Violence against Aboriginal women and its real impacts have been documented for generations. The dangerous reality of documentation and not acting on the suggested directions is that Aboriginal women and families continue to be victimized and die with no aid or support. The directions and solution in this section are a direct result of compiling the above listed reports. The various reports interviewed hundreds of Aboriginal women representing on reserve, off reserve, Metis, Inuit, status, and non-status people. Not surprising is that the Aboriginal women's solutions and directions were all similar.

Aboriginal Women's Contribution To Social Policy Development

Aboriginal women understand the political and social reality of non-inclusion and the dangers that entails. The first recommendation is that there needs to a Provincial Aboriginal women's organization that offers support, training, and education to Aboriginal women. This organization would also have a mandate to provide input to policy makers on issues that effect Aboriginal women in order to improve and assist government in the development of relevant and effective policy and programs. This organization would be the "voice" that is rarely heard or understood at provincial and federal levels. BC Aboriginal women state that involvement required to ensure the safety of their families, communities and themselves.

Programs and Services

The second recommendation is for programs and services. What is required is on-going funding to support culturally relevant Aboriginal programming and services that are designed, delivered and implemented by healthy, Aboriginal women, Elders and community workers. The programming and services need to include a counseling component specific to intergenerational trauma issues and be delivered from a holistic approach to healing, meaning, that the victim, offender, the victims' and offender's family would all need support in their healing to create long term community change.

The programming and services would work towards this community supported healing with a direct understanding that there are community “power dynamics” that need to be recognized and interrupted for the healing to occur. Recognition of and changes to these “power dynamics” that support the continuation of violence against Aboriginal women will aid in shaping a community based response.

The Aboriginal communities’ leadership, community members and the communities’ workers must work as a team to support this community development approach to women’s safety. Advocating for Aboriginal women’s safety includes the establishment of on and off reserve safe houses or shelters, counselling programs and victim assistance programs.

The Aboriginal leadership, community members and the communities’ workers would need to work towards early family violence intervention and response. The protection and advocacy offered by the community as a whole would ensure the confrontation and containment of the abusers, to protect the victims and children who witness or have had violence perpetuated against them. To work to this end, an option is to set up programs to support and supervise high risk households that ensure non-isolation of the victimized individuals.

Aboriginal women’s well being and safety is an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal responsibility. To ensure the reduction of violence there needs to be connections between the Aboriginal community and non-Aboriginal community’s services. A community-based committee that has a pro-active role in networking within community (members, employees and those that need assistance), outside agencies, justice system personnel and other related resources/supports would aid in this change. These alliances would also make it more likely that Aboriginal women would report, lay more charges and testify about their victimization if they knew there was continuous support offered throughout the entire judicial process. More specifically, the Attorney General’s office needs to design a program that addresses the coordination problems found in child sexual abuse cases on reserve.

Training and Education

The third recommendation relates to training and education. The Aboriginal community and non-Aboriginal people, organizations, law enforcement, legal society, judicial system and government agencies receive education on the history of colonialism, cultural genocide, sexism, racism, forced assimilation, family violence, and violence against women in the sex trade. The overall society needs to also be educated on Aboriginal people's history and present challenges that support family violence. The societal awakening is a necessity to change the prevalence of violence directed at Aboriginal women and families.

Aboriginal leadership with the financial support of the government needs to create workshops and conferences for Aboriginal community members, workers and leaders that are directed towards family violence, including sexual violence. Family violence, personal safety (prevention), and sex education are also a necessity that needs to be delivered in Aboriginal schools.

Policy and Research

The fourth recommendation relates to policy and research. An implementation of past government commissions and inquiries reports completed on Aboriginal women and violence is a good start. An even better direction with long-term results would be to implement the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and the United Nations human rights treaty bodies' recommendations that relate to "poverty and social marginalization of Indigenous peoples in Canada" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's Report; pp. 8).

To this end the Canadian government needs to work with Aboriginal women to work towards solutions to stop the violence and include them in any policy discussions that will directly affect them. Since the rate of Aboriginal women incarcerated is increasing a mandatory appointment of Aboriginal women on the National Parole Board is a necessity.

Specific actions and protocols need to be implemented, designed and supported by the federal and provincial government for missing Aboriginal women and youth cases. The creation of protocols for respectful working relationships with the justice system to support this end is also needed. The response to Aboriginal women in family violence situations can be aided with these judicial system alliances. Judicial support needs to also be implemented for law enforcement officers. There needs to be clear instructions for law enforcement officers that confirm the sex trade worker's fundamental rights' protections and guarantee that they will be treated with respect.

In regards to human rights, specific actions need to be taken to protect Aboriginal women. Request the United Nations to study and document violence against Aboriginal women. This study needs to determine if there are specific measures being taken by Canada to address the violence against Aboriginal women. The Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Committee need to be notified if these actions are working or even being taken. The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women needs to also be included to ensure Canada is honoring the International human rights for the prevention of violence against Aboriginal women.

A transformation in Canadian perspective and law needs to be a priority. Canadian laws need to be changed that currently support "domination" and the continued victimization of women. One such law is the Indian Act's non-inclusion of a provision similar to the off reserve's equal division of property upon a marriage breakdown. A provision needs to be included in the Indian Act that allows for the same equal division of property for Aboriginal women on reserve.

CONCLUSION

The numerous reports and book reviewed issues of Aboriginal family violence in Canada. The specific reports and their summaries and recommendations were duplicated from one report to another linking violence to very similar roots and causes. Surprisingly, the similarities were upheld despite the different authors, the Aboriginal nation being interviewed/examined, the location of these Aboriginal nations, the age or sex of the women or the types of violence in question. The similarities were also not dependant on whether these women were status, non-status, living on or off reserve, Metis or Inuit.

The violence Aboriginal women have faced historical abuse and brutality that continues into the present to impact them physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. The reports summations included close to one thousand pages of various authors' visions of how to stop the violence perpetuated against Aboriginal women, their families and their communities. The violence experienced varies in degree and impact but the solutions offered by these women are specific in scope and duration. Aboriginal women considered the historical and present impacts that perpetuate the continuation of violence. They then evaluated its manifestation in their community and environment and determined a pressing need for social, legal, political and economic changes that entitle Aboriginal women to equal status in non-aboriginal and Aboriginal realms.

The second section summarized the reports various recommendations. As mentioned earlier the similarities were strikingly similar. The recommendations were categorized in four sections. The first section was the need for a provincial organization that would be the voice at the federal and provincial levels. It would provide training and education for Aboriginal women, communities, service providers and government agencies.

The second section was outlined under programs and services. Community based programming and services would support a community-based holistic approach to healing with the support and cooperation of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people allied under education and a common goal. The common goal would be the protection and well

being of Aboriginal women and children as the root to the entire community as a unit in health, healing and well being.

The third section addressed training and education needs. The greatest challenge to the safety and well being of Aboriginal women is non-educated individuals both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The solution offered was knowledge of Aboriginal people's history of colonialism, cultural genocide, sexism, racism, forced assimilation, and family violence. The alliances created from this education would aid in the development of relevant, safe Aboriginal services and programming and improve the overall safety of Aboriginal women. The beliefs that support the continuation of violence to Aboriginal women inflicted by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people would be greatly reduced with education in the above outlined areas. With the support of outside services, community leadership, community members, government and society as a whole the victimization, violation and deaths of Aboriginal women would reduce exponentially.

An educational component would also work as a prevention tool for Aboriginal children and youth. These programs would be delivered in the schools or would be a component for outreach of the communities' youth to aid in the eradication of family violence through education, empowerment and cultural understanding.

The fourth section identified the need for policy reform and culturally safe and relevant research, ranging from the United Nations to the Canadian and provincial front. An implementation of past reports and inquiries on Aboriginal women and violence was a key directive. This would aid in the domestic government's future directions to reduce the devastating and abhorrent conditions Aboriginal women face daily. The foundation of all of these changes in political policy and research would be to include Aboriginal women to make them relevant and applicable to their needs. In addition Aboriginal women need to be appointed at every level of government, non-aboriginal and Aboriginal, domestic or international.

Aboriginal women's vision of safety, community change and development are all contained in this report. It is important to note the amount of time and the countless years of advocating, supporting and reporting have all lead to similar findings, directions and approaches. These approaches and directions as listed in this report and need to be acted upon rather than becoming just another report on Aboriginal women and violence. This report outlined workable solutions for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that is based in equality, respect and honesty. The only outstanding element is action.

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