

Knowledge Exchange Workshop:
Successful Approaches for the Prevention
of Aboriginal Family Violence

February 23- 24, 2009

Gatineau, Quebec

Knowledge Exchange Workshop: Successful Approaches for the Prevention of Aboriginal Family
Violence – Final Draft Report

February 23 – 24, 2009 – Gatineau, Quebec

This report was prepared by Madeleine Dion Stout , President of Dion Stout Reflections Inc. for the Public Health Agency of Canada's Family Violence Prevention Unit. It provides a summary of the Knowledge Exchange Workshop: Successful Approaches for the Prevention of Aboriginal Family Violence which was hosted by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) on February 23-24, 2009 and organized by PHAC's Family Violence Prevention Unit, with guidance and advice from the Family Violence Initiative Working Group on Aboriginal Family Violence.

Disclaimer:

The summary provided herein should in no way be construed as official or unofficial policy, nor should it be seen to reflect a consensus of the participants who attended the workshop.

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Executive Summary

The Knowledge Exchange Workshop: Successful Approaches for the Prevention of Aboriginal Family Violence was held on February 23 and 24, 2009 in Gatineau, Quebec. The purpose of the workshop was to provide a forum for sharing of information and knowledge about proven and promising approaches aimed at preventing the occurrence and reoccurrence of family violence and at reducing its harmful impacts and consequences.

Convened by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the workshop was planned by PHAC's Family Violence Prevention Unit, with guidance and advice from the federal Family Violence Initiative Working Group on Aboriginal Family Violence.

The workshop brought together about 40 participants including First Nations, Inuit and Métis representatives from national, regional and community organizations, health professionals and other community-based service providers and researchers, as well as government officials involved in program and policy development. Participants shared knowledge, including experiences, insights and expertise on a range of prevention and intervention approaches and initiatives to address family violence in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. The workshop provided opportunity for participants to discuss how best to inform and contribute to the development of evidence-based practice and culturally-sensitive research.

The following four main themes arose from the plenary presentations and discussions.

Support Knowers, Knowing and the Known

Discussion amongst participants underlined the need to adopt holistic First Nations, Inuit and Métis lenses when examining knowledge exchange about family violence prevention. Knowers like Elders figured prominently in discussions. Participants talked about the different types of knowledge and many stressed the importance of knowledge which stems from sacred teachings, oral traditions and shared philosophies. It was generally agreed that “knowing” perspectives include balance, non-violence and an ongoing quest for knowledge.

Getting the language right and defining key concepts was felt to be foundational and participants acknowledged that this work can be better accomplished by valorizing voices and listening to them. Because they did not see family violence as solely a women's issue, participants expressed a desire to integrate men's perspectives and ideas more fully into the process.

In their presentations and discussions, participants supported the need to balance research with practice so that evidence does not block innovative, ready and anticipatory action.

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Many ideas for setting up conventional or non-conventional channels of communications were shared among them.

Unpack Family Violence Prevention Strategies

The presentations in plenary helped to prompt rich discussions about the complex and fluid nature of family violence prevention efforts. It quickly became obvious that First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations have set up systems of care on-the-ground through a range of activities such as raising awareness, establishing partnerships, meeting training needs, facilitating peer support, denormalizing destructive behaviours, placing the person with the lived experience at the centre and paying increasing attention to the impact of their work

During the workshop, participants frequently underscored the importance of safety. They said that family violence inflicts significant personal, cultural, social, health, economic and political consequences for First Nations, Inuit and Métis and so stressed that safety must be given priority in prevention efforts. Participants also unraveled concepts of space, place and change agents during the workshop.

It was suggested that space is ever-changing because it reflects the human condition and lived experiences. Participants underlined the need to create safe spaces where people can disclose and oppose family violence without further harm. Place is where people live, work, play, study, seek help, pray, etc. Participants stressed the need to address problems where they are located. Change agents include all the people and organizations that are trying to make a difference as they work on the many different aspects of preventing family violence. Space, place and change agents were seen as very relevant to improving health and social outcomes for individuals, families and communities impacted by family violence.

Raising awareness about natural and creative responses to family violence in a way that serves individuals, families and communities who are troubled by family violence was another important contribution to the workshop. Participants heard that connecting with points of resistance has a great bearing on the resolution for family violence by individuals. Resilience, which in basic terms means getting along, getting through, and getting out, was a similar topic to which participants devoted time.

Outreach to vulnerable groups including children, youth, elders and two-spirited people was flagged as an important family violence prevention strategy for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Meeting them close to their own home communities was seen as a go-forward strategy. Participants stressed the importance of early intervention and identified the transmission of language and culture as protective factors.

Participants frequently cited gender as a social determinant of health and explored ways to create more extensive social responses to girls and women who disclose violence. Some participants also advocated for non-gendered approaches.

Participants considered risk factors that can contribute to high rates of family violence such as the Residential School Legacy along with additional protective factors that can help decrease family violence like spirituality.

Capture Surges in Strengths and Successes

Participants agreed that putting fires out first is a reality in family violence prevention work. Basic human needs like shelter and longer term housing must be met. It was argued that given the requirements of basic work demands, First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations need to be provided with distinct support for their evaluation and research efforts so they can measure outcomes and document the successes of their approaches.

Create a Knowledge Circle

Participants itemized a variety of traditional and contemporary methods for continuing knowledge exchange. Participants stressed the importance of oral history, storytelling and talking circles as well as networking, training and effective use of print media and community radio. Participants identified emerging issues like isolation and trends like ``healing fatigue`` as matters that need further examination.

Participants emphasized the importance of community ownership of problems and solutions. They said that stronger linkages need to be created among helping organizations and governments to spur political will, influence policy makers, sensitize the Canadian public and engage community leaders.

Workshop feedback and evaluation

At the end of the two days, participants were invited to evaluate the workshop. The average tabulated scores showed high levels of satisfaction. Participants commented that the presentations provided a wealth of information about holistic approaches to family violence prevention. Several participants suggested that more opportunities such as this workshop were needed to support, for example, networking, examination of the contexts of family violence in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, exploration of “best practices” and comparison of programs with a view to potential replication.

Introduction

The Knowledge Exchange Workshop: Successful Approaches for the Prevention of Aboriginal Family Violence was held on February 23 and 24, 2009 in Gatineau, Quebec.

This workshop was convened by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) which leads and coordinates the federal Family Violence Initiative (FVI) and manages the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence (NCFV). The FVI is a partnership of 15 federal departments, agencies and Crown corporations working together to reduce family violence in Canada.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide a forum for sharing of information and knowledge about proven and promising approaches aimed at preventing the occurrence and reoccurrence of family violence and at reducing its harmful impacts and consequences.

The workshop brought together about 25 non-governmental and 15 governmental participants, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis representatives from national, regional and community organizations, health professionals and other community-based service providers, researchers as well as government officials involved in program and policy development. Participants shared information and knowledge, including experiences, insights and expertise on a range of prevention and intervention efforts to address family violence in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.

Workshop Structure

Participants were engaged in knowledge sharing and exchange throughout the workshop. In all, there were nine plenary presentations, each followed by brief discussion. Participants also shared information and knowledge, including ideas and perspectives during two breakout sessions held in round tables. Four groups were formed for breakout discussions, with a majority of non-governmental participants present in each group. Reports back to plenary occurred in the latter part of day 1 and day 2. On day 2, participants contributed to a final plenary session which included a review of key points from the workshop and brief discussion of some of the more controversial issues.

Opening Prayer

Elder Annie Smith St. George set the tone for the workshop. She welcomed the participants to the Algonquin territory and to what she viewed as a potentially life-changing workshop. Appealing to the participants to put family first, she shared a personal tragedy to show what can happen when there are too many distractions. She focused on what needs to change to reduce the impact of family violence especially with regard to elders and silent abuse. Noting that compassion and solidarity guide her own work, she wished the same for the participants.

Welcoming Comments

Isabel Romero, Director, Healthy Communities Division, Public Health Agency of Canada, set the context for the workshop in her brief remarks. She began by acknowledging the Algonquin territory on which the workshop was being held and by welcoming the participants to an important dialogue session on exchanging knowledge about successful approaches for family violence prevention pertaining to First Nation, Inuit and Métis. She challenged the participants to find ways of sharing information after the workshop.

Workshop Presentations

“The Impact of Violence on Community Wellness”, Bronwyn Shoush (Alberta Justice Initiatives, Alberta Justice and Attorney General)

In her presentation, Bronwyn Shoush noted that Aboriginal people are over-represented as victims and offenders in the justice system. Moreover, Aboriginal women are more likely than other women to be victims of family violence. The challenges facing Aboriginal peoples is not limited to gender issues alone – there are broader challenges including escalating gang violence, intimidation and crime which confront all members of communities, including women, men, children, youth and Elders. The presentation by Bronwyn Shoush correlated community wellness and violence through linking various areas of health (such as mental health, stress, diabetes, addictions and drugs/alcohol) with the justice system. She characterized family violence as a mental health, addictions and justice issue. While risk factors such as substance abuse and unequal power relations begin with individuals and within households, there are profound impacts rippling out to community and community health.

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Ms. Shoush articulated some of the ways forward, out of the cycle of family and community violence – she spoke about relationship-building and reconciliation within community, which entails citizen engagement (including all members and segments of the community, such as Elders, women, men, and youth) and finding champions to work with. Such community mobilization may lead to the development of an action plan to address problems and challenges (such as intra-community violence, family feuds and gangs) one by one. This approach may be of particular salience to the unique challenges posed by the nature of remote or small communities - like intimidation where there is no access to police in order to report violence. She urged the participants to become familiar with the demographics and trends of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, with particular emphasis on the youth demographic. She flagged the special needs of offenders and victims, pointing out that violence has roots and solutions in individuals and communities. Finally, Ms. Shoush spoke about Alberta-specific issues and examples, such as the fact that there are a high percentage of communities that are victimized by drugs. There are some Alberta activities to address family violence, as well as initiatives that successfully address broader community issues, such as the Canadian cadet corps in Hobbema. Such initiatives should be examined closely to identify factors contributing to success. Beyond the individual, family and community-focused initiatives, Alberta has emergency protection legislation; however, Ms. Shoush pointed out that it has limitations due to jurisdictional issues.

“Youth Violence Prevention Toolkit”, Pauline Huppie-Parsons (Native Women’s Association of Canada)

The Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) toolkit project emerged in response to the need to provide youth with Aboriginal specific information on violence prevention. It is aimed at providing Aboriginal youth and girls in particular with violence prevention information, safety tips, resources, etc. Issues covered by the toolkit include “girl on girl” violence/jealousy, feuds and ‘silent violence’, for example, emotional violence and bullying. The presenter showed the participants how toolkits lead to training capacity for the community. Expanding the tool kit is a goal of the organization (NWAC). Ms. Huppie-Parsons spoke about the workshops that run based on the toolkit, one of which is the ‘train the trainer’ workshop, approximately 1.5 days in length. Information about residential schools is provided through these workshops, which also examine types, signs, and prevention of violence. Ms. Huppie-Parsons emphasized the importance of evaluation of the workshops, and the necessity of follow-up to prevention strategies. Evaluation will provide information on what the toolkit is achieving and how it can be expanded. A CD copy of the toolkit was made available to all participants.

“National Strategy to Prevent Abuse in Inuit Communities”, Leesie Naqitarvik (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada)

Pauktuutit is the national non-profit association representing all Inuit women in Canada. Its mandate is to foster a greater awareness of the needs of Inuit women, and to

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encourage their participation in community, regional and national concerns in relation to social, cultural and economic development. A contact list of over 400 services and programs is available on the Pauktuutit website. All of the programs, documents, activities and projects are available on the Pauktuutit website (www.pauktuutit.ca).

Current activities include supporting four wellness initiatives, as well as a national Inuit residential schools healing strategy which includes a youth media project on inter-generational impacts. Beyond youth, the organization is planning to carry out a gaps analysis through the use of a survey questionnaire by the end of March on children's needs. The Inuit Residential Schools Healing Strategy is to increase awareness, healing and restoration and it includes a mobile treatment program to improve access to healing programs by Inuit.

Pauktuutit also has a project addressing child sexual abuse survivors, which seeks to develop key messages for the Inuit public on child sexual abuse for a communication strategy. There is one psychologist for 25 communities and some fly-in psychologists. Three men attended the session regarding the child sexual abuse project. The outcome document is entitled: 'National Strategy to Prevent Abuse in Inuit Communities', with a companion document called 'Sharing Knowledge, Sharing Wisdom: a Guide to the National Strategy'. Elder abuse prevention has not yet been undertaken by the organization. However, Pauktuutit did recognize the issue in their presentation.

Pauktuutit is involved in capacity development and support to shelter work. For example, a shelter workers association will be incorporated in May. This association is called the National Inuit Women's Safe Shelter Association. Under development is a mobile training module for shelter workers in Inuit communities.

There is also an excellent report on the Pauktuutit website entitled 'Applying Inuit Cultural Approaches in the Prevention of Family Violence and Abuse'. This report on cultural practices was guided by 5 Elders.

The 'On The Land' project is a promising practice model that incorporates healing, journals and traditional skills for men. Finally, there is a film called "Hidden Faces" which is being edited and will be completed by June – this is a powerful film that will be useful for training of frontline workers.

"Walking the Prevention Circle", Shelley Cardinal (Canadian Red Cross)

The presenter stated that she carries out primary prevention due to the existing gap in understanding about what violence is and what we can do about it. The broader Canadian Red Cross mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity in Canada and around the world. The presentation focused on a number of initiatives related to violence prevention. The RespectEd Program is designed to break the cycle of abuse, neglect, harassment and inter-personal violence, as well as to help

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with issues of vulnerability aggravated by violence in families and communities. The main focus of the program is on child and youth prevention. Of particular concern is the exponential rise in violence among young women, and associated behaviors such as belittling and withdrawal. There is also an initiative called ‘Walking the Prevention Circle’ which is part of the RespectEd Program – it is an Aboriginal program. ‘Walking the Prevention Circle’ examines layers of harm. As we “unpack the layers”, including racism and history, we do no further harm. This speaks to a comprehensive prevention plan. A success story related to this approach was described by the presenter as having taken place in the community of Hollow Water. The overarching idea behind the program is to come strongly from a community approach. The pathway was described by the presenter as understanding the issues in order to maintain safe environments.

Another program of the Red Cross is called Community Prevention Planning. This program seeks to formulate healthy community strategies sourced in baseline information. Ms. Cardinal spoke about how layers of harm have been imposed and how those layers need to be unpacked, from contact with the settler society (Europeans) to contemporary government and popular culture.

Ms. Cardinal also mentioned a guide book called ‘Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments for Children and Youth – A Risk Management Road Map to Prevent Violence and Abuse.’ A copy was provided to each participant.

Ms. Cardinal spoke about best practices in the field of violence prevention, which she characterized as including community ownership (of both the problem and the solution), building on community strengths, developing a comprehensive community approach, traditional and formal support systems, knowledge and skills development, mentoring and support, evaluation, and community-based research with training of community members. She urged the participants to “engage the voices from the margins” of communities, while reminding us of the importance of confidentiality and the need for “safety in sharing”. Ms. Cardinal stated that every community has its own baseline at the start which helps us know what has shaped its present situation and thus what needs to be unlearned. The presentation was concluded by reflecting on the example provided by Bronwyn Shoush in her presentation of “gossip free days” as a means to prevent violence in the community.

“Islands of Safety: A Safety Planning Model for Urban Aboriginal and Metis Families in Cases of Violence”, Dr. Cathy Richardson and Dr. Allan Wade (for Métis Community Services, Victoria BC)

The presentation began with images of “safety blankets”, which were characterized as representing children, elders, mothers and fathers - all of whom sit on a larger blanket of community. The questions tackled by the presenters were: “How do people respond to

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and resist violence? How do people preserve dignity and promote safety?” The presentation emphasized the consultation process – for example, Métis Community Services has ten to twenty years experience in talking with women and others who have experienced violence. This has been a focus due to the fact that women have a different knowledge of resistance. Such consultations have had a multitude of positive impacts, including on how women and other Aboriginal peoples experience the justice system. Throughout the consultations, women used action-based language, and talked about how they were responding rather than about the impacts of violence. They were not talking about what is in textbooks, but rather spoke from lived experience. They were breaking cycles and patterns more than they were carrying them on.

Resiliency was described as a “glow of spirit”, to build from our strength and our spirit. Resisting violence may be more about learning the language of responses instead of the language of effects. Typically, everyone has resisted violence overtly or covertly. The difference is in the languages of responses – for example, the presenters found that victims need to talk about how they responded and resisted violence as opposed to how the violence impacted or affected them subsequently. Women have many imposed deficits that support self-blame as victims – thus, their responses expose their strengths. Histories of resistance help explain how violence operates. The “cycle of violence” charts utilized elsewhere are built on effects of violence, not resistance to it.

“Extreme situations have a great deal to teach us, not so much about the grander forms of loyalty and treachery as about the small acts of living.”
(Erving Goffman, Myerthorpe Alberta, 1961)

The presenters stated that the quality of social responses is the best predictor of recovery and healing. We need to incorporate history of resistance to build effective safety plans. By failing to honour victim resistance, we are perpetrating violence. We must disclose and oppose violence. The presentation concluded with the example of how shelter intake and police interviews can engage victims to disclose resistance, and how that practice can be improved via a shared framework regarding victim’s responses and resistance.

“Violence Prevention and Healing” Josie Nepinak (Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society)

Five of forty-three shelters in Alberta are Aboriginal. Awo Taan is the only off-reserve shelter, which makes it very unique in the province. Ms. Nepinak provided an overview of the programs and services offered by Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, which includes a twenty seven bed emergency shelter for women and children fleeing family violence; a 24 hour crisis line; a pediatric and wellness clinic; on site Elders and Cultural Advisors; outreach services for families leaving the shelter; peer healing circles; family

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violence prevention counselors for families experiencing family violence in the community; a 'Parent Link Centre' providing parent education, early childhood development, family support and information and referral for families with children 0-6 years of age; and a youth and Family Resource Program that provides programming for children aged 7-18 and their parents. Ms. Nepinak also referenced their 'Peace Program' which provides education and awareness on anti-bullying

Awo Taan is essentially a community based model. According to statistics compiled for the year 2007-2008, Awo Taan served 419 women and children, of which 9% were immigrant, and 22% were non-Aboriginal. Awo Taan has a high rate of "turn-aways", meaning they cannot accept / accommodate all those who attempt to utilize their services.

Ms. Nepinak spoke about the guiding principles of Awo Taan which include the slogan "We believe that Spirit knows no color". Hence Awo Taan provides programs and services to all women and family members fleeing family violence and other abuses. Ms. Nepinak stated, "We believe that wholistic healing requires attention to healing the mind, emotions, body and spirit," and therefore the work of the Society is based on culturally appropriate tools sourced in traditional teachings. An example of this is the 'Assessment Wheel' which assists staff in their work with the women and their families (see Awo Taan's 'Aboriginal Framework for Healing and Wellness Manual' on their website). To heal is to create an environment that promotes balance between the duality of life. The concept of wholistic healing was articulated in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, comprising a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated approach to healing.

Other guiding principles include the foundational role of traditional knowledge (such as song, dance, ceremony and teachings, amongst others); understanding life as a journey; nurturing a positive self-identity; and utilizing the grandfather teachings. Ms. Nepinak spoke about how these guiding principles serve men as well as women. In the implementation of these principles, elders are actively engaged in ongoing governance, programs and services. Awo Taan works from a strength-based approach and builds on individual strength for healing.

In terms of the role of the people within the organization, staff act as role models for families. Evaluation of how the guiding principles are realized, and the achievement of the goals and objectives of the programs and services offered is assisted through the use of an assessment sheet, which is initiated at intake and can serve as post-test (or subsequent measure) on the state of wellness of the client/beneficiary. From intake, there is a period of twenty-one days within which women are expected to find safe and appropriate housing and income support. This requires incredible resiliency. As such, the community has to define what healing means and what the program and services will look like. Awo Taan attempts to support clients and beneficiaries of programs and services on a daily basis, even to the point of beginning every morning with meditation and prayer. Various tools are utilized to further that support, such as a self-assessment wheel called "where I am today", in use for the last year and a half. The purpose is to

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help participants to monitor their wellness as they move through the programs and services. In short, Awo Taan attempts to provide an urban Aboriginal solution.

“The Healing Journey: Family Violence Prevention in Aboriginal Communities”, Natalie McBride (Gignoo Transition House Inc.)

First Nations communities want Aboriginal context in materials. Ms. McBride spoke about the geographical location of Gignoo Transition House, which is in District 2 on the map of the region. “Gignoo” means “our house”. Gignoo operates through partnerships with police, friendship centres and other entities and institutions. The main financial supports are provided by the Department of Justice (Canada) and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, amongst other government departments. Gignoo offers tool kits, a website (www.gignoohouse.ca), conferences, and training. Training is delivered annually to the RCMP, with whom Gignoo has partnered to inform new members of the location of shelters. Another initiative includes the Public Legal Education and Information Service (PLEIS) of New Brunswick who, jointly with Gignoo, prepared an information booklet and a toolkit for Aboriginal women called ‘Creating Healthy Personal Relationships’ which is very successful. In preparing the toolkit, Gignoo and PLEIS did a needs assessment to find out what people wanted in a family violence prevention toolkit. As a result, Gignoo now offers training and information sessions in communities on the toolkit entitled *The Healing Journey: Family Violence Prevention in Aboriginal Communities*. This toolkit includes such content as safety plans, information on family law and educational skits for kids. A brief guide on developing a family violence prevention community action plan has been added to the kit. A copy of the toolkit was provided to each participant.

“Promoting Non-Violence”, Ellen Gabriel (Quebec Native Women / Femmes Autochtones du Québec):

Ms. Gabriel spoke about how violence against women is a human rights issue, pointing out some excerpts from an Amnesty International report referencing the “Stolen Sisters”. There is significant discrimination and racism in Canada, which is partly due to the net effects of colonization and resistance. This discrimination and racism translates into violence against Aboriginal peoples – women, men, families, children, youth and elders. Understanding who the perpetrators are – where they are from, how they are situated relative to the victims – is essential in identifying the policy needs related to violence prevention. Understanding and acknowledging the forms of resistance is also essential – Ms. Gabriel gave some examples in her presentation of women (and champions / warriors) who have denounced violence in all of its forms, including conjugal violence and sexual aggression. She pointed out that Aboriginal communities are uniquely situated because they cannot be equated to other ethno-cultural communities due to salient legal, political, historical and jurisdictional issues faced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

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In speaking on behalf of Quebec Native Women, Ms. Gabriel pointed out the gaps in services and programs for victims of violence, and in the effort to prevent violence. For example, there is a need for both on-reserve and off-reserve shelters, as many reserves may be “postage stamp size” or too small to accommodate a shelter. In addition, front line workers need tools and support, such as a tool to gauge how women respond to violence, to prevent burnout in delivery of programs and services. The SHARE project uses traditional images to gauge how women react to violence.

There is also a need for second stage housing – this forms a gap in service and support for victims of violence. A consistent challenge for these types of programs and services is funding - project funding versus core funding – often the latter is hard to come by. This impacts every aspect of violence prevention – in Quebec, that might be something as simple as basic communication. If there is no money for translation, there are serious repercussions for service delivery and access. Part of the source of that need is found in the incomplete or insufficient data and research being done within and across communities. Such data and research could help change policies related to violence prevention. Finally, Ms. Gabriel spoke of the need for educational curriculum in schools on women and men’s responsibilities for Aboriginal youth.

***“Kanawayhitowin: Taking Care of Each Others Spirit”, Wendy French
(Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres)***

The organization reflects a traditional approach to community healing and wellness. Taking care of each others spirit is one of the seven grandfather teachings of the Ojibway, another of which is “to cherish knowledge is to know wisdom”. There are existing gaps in terms of culturally appropriate services and training. As such, there are designated Kanawayhitowin workers who offer such services as support for men being abused by women. Ms. French spoke about the need to raise awareness about signs of abuse and how to provide support for victims, and ensure that offenders take responsibility. The focus is on ending the isolation experienced by victims. There are education and awareness community two-day training programs offered. The hope is to have participants trained to develop network and work plans during training - warning signs and safety plans are fundamental to the training process. There are also training programs offered for men, police and even to develop support for child witnesses. An evaluation is currently underway on pre- and post-training within communities, which includes an evaluation form filled out by training participants. Success, however, will be partially measured by the number of people who are trained in the program.

The Ontario Death Review Committee findings were surveyed by Ms. French, who stated that those findings are useful in educating lawyers with respect to how they work with communities and families. Prevention and education initiatives are also underway to raise awareness about rights of abused women in communities which focuses on ending violence for Aboriginal women and emphasizes engaging men to take the responsibility.

Participants' Discussions

A summary of participants' discussions held during the workshop is provided below and organized under thematic headings and sub-headings, reflecting themes which emerged over the course of the two-days.

Support Knowers, Knowing and the Known

Adopt Holistic First Nations, Inuit and Métis Lenses

Discussion amongst participants reinforced the importance of respecting traditional knowledge. It was proposed that adopting holistic First Nation, Inuit and Métis lenses requires that we recognize that we are *spiritual beings in bodies*. Participants talked about the need to return to basic values (which also represent positive resources) – such as

“Our people have always searched for knowledge – it is how we have survived.” Kathy Absolon

those held within and represented by family, connection to community / community cohesion, and even values held within and represented by the land and resources around us, for example. Participants related that this approach is strengthened by connections to spirituality, language and culture. Aboriginal communities – whether urban, rural, reserve, settlement or otherwise - hold a rich supply of such resources. Participants agreed that in sharing our stories, we respect different ways of knowing, and different perspectives. They emphasized that Aboriginal communities can speak for themselves, as only they will know what works for them. For example, only the Inuit can speak to what will work for Inuit communities. This makes the Aboriginal lens employed very specific to particular communities. It comes from the Aboriginal people themselves, as they are now and as they were formerly, and is directly informed by their own spirituality, culture, language and forms of expression (such as oral history). As similar philosophies underpin Aboriginal traditional knowledge amongst most communities, it is a basic understanding that Aboriginal traditional knowledge is sacred, as is the communication and transmission of traditional knowledge – in particular, the transmission to future generations. Thus, such knowledge is deserving of the highest level of respect and consideration.

Participants also related that, in returning to basic values and attempting to attain life-balance, we must also assert that violence does *not* form any part of our culture(s), nor is violence a cultural value. Participants underlined that there is a critical difference between a cultural behavior and a normalized behavior. Violence has become increasingly normalized in wider society, and this normalization has been much more pronounced in Aboriginal communities. While there is duality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures in terms of people and communities, the adoption of an Aboriginal lens in addressing issues, problems and conflicts may make significant contributions to conflict resolution, overcoming obstacles, and generating solutions. This

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may require that we re-conceive how we value different approaches (and their outcomes) to violence prevention. It was proposed that a valuable approach to prevention couldn't simply be measured with socio-economic indicators, for example. Aboriginal people are wealthy in heart – we must give this as much or more value than we ascribe to material wealth. Cultural relevance in violence prevention is thus a key element to ensure success.

Participants agreed that success might not always be signaled by an earth-shaking event – it can be a small personal success, or an everyday miracle experienced by community members yet which has no real impact on the wider world. Success may be a cumulative accomplishment – a number of goals accomplished or programs delivered over a period of time and across communities. It was suggested that initiatives achieve greater success when delivered by Aboriginal people and in Aboriginal languages. Participants agreed that such an approach ensures that the people who are the recipients or beneficiaries of the initiatives are able to see themselves reflected in the way those initiatives are carried out. This reflectivity is particularly important in addressing the special challenges faced by Aboriginal women, particularly those in isolated communities. Participants pointed to the need to examine how to transform the externalities of the lives of Aboriginal women to give hope, and how to facilitate the empowerment of Aboriginal women to transform themselves and their own lives to give hope.

Get the Language Right and Define Concepts

As discussed elsewhere in this report, language is an important concept in understanding successful approaches to family violence prevention on multiple levels. Language matters in prevention strategies, programs, initiatives etc., as well as in simple communication or information sharing. The language of the audience / recipient / beneficiary is of particular importance. Exchange of knowledge and information relies in large part on the language chosen for the purposes of exchange, resulting in a major impact on resulting practice. Typically everyone has resisted violence overtly, covertly. Participants explored the concepts of language of responses and language of effects and acknowledged that most of the time victims of violence are not asked how they responded to and resisted violence. Participants spoke about inquiries to allow abused women to connect with points of resistance and their history with resistance. Participants talked about improving our encounters with individuals who are experiencing family violence. A participant pointed out that there is a victim's response protocol that has been developed in Alberta. There are assumptions we make about victim's response -if we perpetuate these assumptions then we won't move forward. Moreover, judges are mis-representing violence on a massive scale e.g. "sex gone wrong". Participants agreed that we need to improve our thinking.

Integrate Men Fully

Participants emphasized that success in family violence prevention cannot be accomplished without men. Violence prevention requires the involvement and support of men. An important aspect of strategies is to be inclusive of men at different levels of

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violence prevention. Inclusivity may also be taken to refer to various generations of men, such as teens, adults and Elders. It was suggested that we also need to have the “hard conversations” with men, which may mean targeting the perpetrator(s) of violence within and around Aboriginal communities and families in moving towards success in Aboriginal family violence prevention. However, participants pointed out that it is sometimes difficult to understand how to reach out to men, in particular when violence is not perceived as a women’s issue. Some participants felt that it may be advisable to create specific initiatives or simply encourage community recognition of Aboriginal men who are contributing to ending violence towards Aboriginal women. Participants pointed out that there are a number of laudable initiatives underway which represent outreach to men, such as poster series. It was mentioned that there are gaps in resources and support for men. Ways of including men were mentioned e.g. capacity development, traditional teachings for men and a “men helping men” approach.

Balance Research with Practice

Participants suggested that, in exercising inclusiveness and openness in our process, we must ask ourselves the following questions: Why are rates of violence so high? As communities, how prepared are we to be inclusive, open and willing to change? Who are we willing to bring in to help create change?

Joyce Fossella showed a video entitled “*The Human Face of Family*” and she demonstrated a research method called photovoice.

Photovoice is a research method that is being used in the research project Joyce is working on with the School of Nursing at UBC titled: “*Aboriginal Women’s Experiences in Leaving or Staying in Intimate Partner Violence: toward Improved Access to Health Care*”. Joyce who has experienced family violence commented on the conflicted emotions in her photos: pain, struggle, endurance, strength, survival. When a participant asked her to speculate on what kind of pictures her husband would have taken to depict family violence, Joyce responded: “*family, ceremony; his childhood was abusive*”.

How can we promote Aboriginal cultures and languages in research and practice?

Participants thought that these questions necessitate employing an ecological model, as proposed by one participant, to look at people interactively - in other words, people in relation to their social world(s) and each other. This model exposes problems as being social, not psychological. Participants agreed that this model takes us away from an overly individualistic approach and can help us to avoid blaming victims. The model focuses on understanding the social world around victims and draws away from a negative focus which seeks to uncover what is wrong with victims. It was also thought that programs continue to evolve through feedback from community. Finally, participants supported the view that a crucial element of sustaining a balance between research and practice is the implementation of principles of research governance – “OCAP” - ownership, control, access and possession. It was underlined that we must

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acknowledge and respect community-based protocols for knowledge sharing and recognize the process of knowledge-making as a two-way exchange between the community and the researcher.

Set Up Channels of Communication

Participants underlined the role of communications as a key focus in achieving success in family violence prevention in Aboriginal communities. The issue of varied and effective means or vehicles of communication arose several times in participant discussions, and was described as needing to include an array of activities such as, but not limited to:

- video-conferencing, possibly making use of the telehealth infrastructure;
- online groups and resources such as lemongrassmedia.com (video);
- online resources, dedicated newsletters or blogs, or access links on other websites;
- government websites that disseminate information or provide links to such information;
- social networking sites such as Facebook to link users to anti-violence toolkits (Participants pointed out that there are existing links related to healthy relationships on social networking sites.); and
- the Kids Helpline, adult crisis helpline(s) and similar telephone based services.

The idea of utilizing a number of communications formats (such as the internet, telephone, community radio, television, print media, etc) spoke to the issue of accessibility. Participants stressed that some information, programs and services are more likely to be employed by community members such as youth if you provide them with enough ways to access them anonymously (and therefore without disclosure and vulnerability). Such efforts may also go a long way towards ensuring that youth, and other community members, utilize the services. However, participants also cautioned that there should be some safeguards built into the functions of on-line and other communications resources to protect information which may be disclosed by vulnerable individuals such as women who are experiencing violence.

Participants noted that sometimes the information gap impacts all generations in Aboriginal communities equally – for example, lots of parents have questions which are similar to those of youth. There may be a need to facilitate inter-generational communications as well – as many parents have information and contacts gleaned from responding to violence in their lives.

Given the fact that much of the Aboriginal population is highly mobile (moving away from community to attain education, employment or for a variety of other reasons), participants felt that it is especially important to ensure access to relevant information at new locations or places of residence to respond to needs. For example, if a person is going into a new province, they might need information on that province's protection laws.

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Finally, participants identified some of the communications vehicles and resources which lie within Aboriginal communities themselves, and which can be translated for use outside of communities. Talking circles, community forums and workshops, sharing circles, storytelling, traditional knowledge, and counseling services were all specifically mentioned. For example, participants pointed out that workshops are necessary to listen to community members, use existing or accessible knowledge, apply knowledge and get feedback; while community forums valorize many voices as part of the knowledge exchange process. Some participants felt that based on their discussion, a series of recommendations might be made to change policy. One concrete recommendation from these participants was to support the funding of a national clearing house for disseminating exceptional resources.

Unpack Family Violence Prevention Strategies

Work with Emerging Practices

Participants raised the issue of authentic voice – there is only so much we can articulate or contribute towards emerging practices from various Aboriginal communities when we are not speaking from those communities. It was proposed that the idea of community based emerging practices and “authentic voice” is also relevant when we think about measuring the success of emerging practices, as success may not always be demonstrated, evaluated or signified by traditional indicators. Success may be demonstrated by something as simple as a person deciding that they don’t need the service anymore, or by maintaining peer mentoring practices. This is why on-going engagement and feedback from communities is so necessary to assess what is working and what isn’t.

However, participants mentioned that actors / individuals external to an Aboriginal community may still serve as witness to the process of change, and testify as to the success of emerging practices. Anecdotal records may also be useful in this regard. Documentation of success was stressed by participants. The “witness” role may be especially important where emerging practices are taken over by Canadian government departments or ministries.

Overall, however, participants felt that it was important with respect to emerging practices, that such practices are organized independently of government or political structures. Many participants pointed to difficulties in accessing secure funding, to implement services and programs due to the complexity of applications forms and processes, and asked that there be more assistance provided in applications processes or alternatively a simplified application process.

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Participants said we need to stay away from “medicalization” of the issue of violence in communities. Community based resources and emerging practices are avenues to change community beliefs about non-violence and wellness. As such, communities can be resourced and trained to deal with family violence within the community.

An example of the integration of emerging practices with government and judicial systems cited in participants’ discussions was the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* of Nunavut. Four types of orders are available under the legislation: emergency protection order; community order; compensation order; and assistance order. This process empowers communities through engaging community justice outreach workers and community response. It places an emphasis on healing and the roles of community members such as Elders.

Participants viewed the idea of community-based emerging practices and “authentic voice” as a “community ownership” issue and some participants urged the development of an Aboriginal strategic framework for communities.

Participants shared the view that we need to recognize and support community based and community created practices. Several participants pointed out that (externally) imposed solutions do not work. Partnerships between communities and external institutions and actors may also be effective, including partnerships around establishing Aboriginal courts, housing, and training of community members and first responders such as Emergency Response Teams (EMTs) and police. In supporting community initiatives, we should not discount the strategic plans put in place by Provincial / Territorial Organizations (PTOs). Community supports can also promote community self-awareness.

Participants talked about the need for programs in schools on respecting Elders (with the participation of Elders), educating youth about family roles and educating youth about all aspects of violence (for example, not only spousal violence). A group of participants discussed and proposed that we consider the need to create “visible paths” for people (such as clients) to improve their lives and become leaders and helpers through engaging in “giving back practices”. Helping professions and organizations from transition houses to schools of social work and counselling programs may be engaged in emerging practices as well.

Participants agreed that the goal should be to create a community environment that is conducive to prevention and does not contribute to or increase violence. Participants pointed to the need to continue to examine why is there so much violence in Aboriginal communities, specifically spousal violence.

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An important consideration raised by participants pertained to breaking down barriers in accessing programs or services, whether community based or not – instead of allowing jurisdictional issues to stop access, it would be better to simply provide the necessary access to whomever is in need (see, for example, “Jordan’s Principle” in the healthcare services provided in Alberta).

Underscore Safety

Issues of safety were raised by participants throughout the Workshop. These issues have many linkages to other themes described in this report.

Participants described safety in many different ways. They spoke of the need to create safe relationships, both within and outside communities and families – creating safety for all. It was thought that building safety in this way may lead to individuals and communities assuming more responsibility for issues of violence. This may in turn provide safety for naming the violence, allow for constructive feedback, and help address the need to talk about grief, stress, loss and accountability.

Participants stressed that disclosure is difficult in communities where violence has been normalized. They underlined that we must also respect the wishes of individuals who choose not to use existing services or programs while at the same time ensuring that their non-participation does not compromise the ability of other community members to access the service or program.

Strategizing for safety was also characterized as important by participants – for example, participants talked about the roles and responsibilities of political institutions, administrations or organizations in communities and underlined the need for political independence for safe spaces i.e. disengaging from existing structures. As example, a participant proposed, as one avenue, going to the media with stories about lack of safety within communities and political or governmental accountabilities. Participants also asked how we might strategize for safety “on the inside” of existing administrations, institutions, and organizations – with particular reference to the issue of safety and disclosure.

At a familial or individual level, the participants pointed to exploratory questions such as, “What knowledge about safety have you gained from your family, and how are you using that knowledge to help yourself in the process?” Such knowledge does not only come from life experience – it may also come from new experience on the land and tapping into traditional Aboriginal knowledge. Some participants talked about “sacred concerns”, and taking into account of the breadth of cultural resources available if we choose to speak “richly” about people’s lives. This approach would mean thinking about creating safety by means other than mainstream approaches and recognizing that safety may have a different meaning for Aboriginal people. What seems sufficient to the wider Canadian population around safety in violence prevention may fall short in meeting the particular needs of Aboriginal people and communities.

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Participants supported the view that momentum starts with creating safe spaces in communities, privileging disclosure and asserting non-tolerance of violence in communities. They proposed that we can create safety through the development and implementation of safety plans for communities and can then measure their success following implementation. Participants looked briefly at the Canadian Red Cross' RespectEd: Violence and Abuse Prevention publication entitled *Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments for Children and Youth – A Risk Management Road Map to Prevent Violence and Abuse* as example of a resource to create safe environments. A copy of the publication was provided to each participant.

Factor in Space, Place and Change Agents

Participants discussed the role and importance of space, place and change agents in ensuring better health and social outcomes from family violence prevention efforts.

Participants suggested that space is ever-changing because it reflects the human condition and lived experiences. In light of this, they spoke about the importance of having services, support systems and referrals available. They asked questions like “In our actions, who are we leaving behind? Why do so many victims learn that they can't trust the system, that it is dangerous to disclose violence? How can we create a network of positive responses that create safety for victims? How do we break the silence around violence so that it stops the harm? “

Place is where people live, work, play, study, seek assistance, pray, etc. Participants discussed the need to address problems where they are located. A number of participants pointed to the need to create stable supports and to provide training to various community responders. As example, a participant asked, “Why ever speak out again when victims don't get support when seeking justice?” adding that victims can feel lost without support partly because a court system can re-victimize them. Some participants talked about the issue of portability from one place to another, indicating that what they learn in their respective workplaces can be brought to new places of work or back to their home communities.

Change agents can include all of the people and organizations that are trying to make a difference as they work on the many aspects of preventing family violence. Participants asserted that everyone has a stake in changing the structures and culture around family violence. There was concern that the victim who is rightfully at the centre of the systems of care often gets lost when pressing charges. Participants said that evaluation processes and self-evaluations by service providers are needed to guide change. Some participants suggested the need to elicit client feedback. While stressing the importance of social responses in addressing family violence, a number of participants also pointed to the need to support the helpers and the importance of preventing helper burnout.

Raise Awareness about Strength and Spirit

Raising awareness about strength-based responses to the experience of family violence is essentially about promoting the inclusiveness of community processes, and the well-being and safety of people and families within those communities. Participants underlined the urgency of meeting the basic human needs (such as food, shelter, clothing) of victims and how success in meeting these needs is often a major factor in whether families are able to progress beyond day to day survival, let alone confront family violence issues. Participants underlined that addressing community and family needs begins with treating people with respect and dignity. Participants added that we also need to celebrate positive community social responses. One group of participants stressed that, in talking about responding to and resisting violence within communities, we should acknowledge that the “protection medicine” offered by natural and creative community responses is there. Sometimes this may mean re-considering the value that we attribute to these responses. For example, counselling moves from treating effects to honouring resistance within communities. It provides a basis for contesting professional diagnoses, the over-medication of people, and examining culturally unique approaches to resisting the particular challenges for each Aboriginal group. Participants again affirmed that our experiences as Aboriginal people are different and unique. We all resist in unique and contextual ways. This may mean the difference between being studied versus understanding ourselves. This can only be a positive contribution towards the promotion of strong individuals and resilient and strong communities.

In reporting back to plenary, a group of participants underscored that Aboriginal people often pride themselves on the role that humour takes in their lives. A sense of humour (and laughter) in addressing challenging issues can serve to express a natural response that finds its strength in the resilience of a community to address the challenges posed by violence. Participants defined resilience as “how to create conditions where peace can flourish.”

Participants also emphasized that change cannot not happen until people and communities begin to take responsibility, or have clear lines of accountability. For example, a participant talked about building on agency in the perpetrator’s story through questions such as “You said that you know what you did was wrong... can you say more about that?” This approach means supporting both a broad and deep insight on one person’s actions or one aspect of an incident. This approach defines client success as sometimes not the “big hopes” that workers have for them, but as things clients “do” to build momentum towards success in their lives such as getting a new job.

Focus on Outreach to Vulnerable Groups

Participants pointed to the continued peripheralization of vulnerable groups within communities, such as children, youth, Elders and two-spirited peoples. Participants commented that children experience many hardships – as victims and witnesses of family or community violence, and are thereby forced to live with the day to day consequences

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of those experiences. As such, participants underlined that early intervention with children and youth at risk is extremely important. In addition, participants pointed to the need to do more than what is being accomplished by existing programs and initiatives to support communities in the promotion of language and culture. A number of participants felt that we need to facilitate the transmission of language and culture to children and youth as a strong support for violence prevention i.e. as protective factors. Another focus mentioned by participants (quite often throughout the Workshop) was the need to talk about the proliferation of Elder abuse. It was stressed that Elders are key in the transmission of culture and language, and in knowledge exchange itself. Participants highlighted the need for funding to support efforts to address these challenges.

Participant discussion on supporting vulnerable groups was quite prevalent and coalesced with the “community ecosystem approach” to involve the whole family and community at large in violence prevention. It was mentioned that there is a common experience of trauma that we have not yet fully recognized. Participants enumerated some of the areas that could be expanded to support this approach, such as programs on parenting skills; anti-bullying programs; anger management skills; communication skills; substance abuse and mental health programming. It was underscored that taking a holistic approach means involving vulnerable groups.

Include Health and Social Determinants

Participants expressed concern about the cumulative impacts of family and community violence on social well being and health issues. Participants felt that it is necessary to talk about violence in the context of social, psychological and physical wellness, as well as cultural safety. The most common social determinant of health cited by participants was that of gender.

A participant provided an example which arises from collective and individual memory about residential school experiences – that in August, when the poplar leaves turn yellow, was the time when children were stolen from communities, which resulted in a profound grief response, closely tied to the land and which often gets diagnosed as having “seasonal affective disorder.” This prompts an immediate response of “medicalizing” the issue, as opposed to probing its source.

Participants pointed out that while women are often the backbone of the community, and decision makers within the community, they still face very unique and specific concerns. As such, responses to women’s needs must be equally unique and specific.

Participants thought that through restoration of Aboriginal knowledge and acknowledgment of history, as well as through the empowerment of women, we might strengthen communities to take action to address root causes of family violence and violence in Aboriginal communities.

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Participants urged that the following exploratory questions be asked about the experience of women: “How much room does the woman have to move safely? What is the place in which she must make crucial decisions regarding her safety or the safety of her family? What limitations are being imposed on her safety and dignity?”

Participants pointed to the fact that, at the community level, there are additional concerns around violence and women. More than one participant spoke to the increasing rates of “girl on girl violence” within communities. Participants agreed that we need to find ways of addressing these relatively new and unique challenges. Some participants proposed that addressing these new challenges means creating more positive social responses for girls and women who disclose violence - many people do not perceive local services as safe, confidential or “distant” enough from one’s family.

As to the level of the relationship of the community to the rest of society, participants felt strongly that there is a need to find ways to break the silence and help women find their own solutions and not impose solutions. Participants highlighted the need to sensitize the Canadian population to issues confronted by Aboriginal women. The examples explored by the participants in some detail were “sisters in spirit” and the “Stolen Sisters” campaigns. Participants noted that through these campaigns, the image of Aboriginal women has changed from one where victims were blamed for high risk behavior to one where there is a taking account of family, denouncing violence and breaking the silence. In the past, Aboriginal women have repeatedly told their stories to no avail. Participants also pointed out that many times police representatives or front line service delivery workers change and this frequent turnover results in families or individuals being required to tell their stories over and over again. It causes them to give up early in attempting to obtain assistance or help.

Consider Risk and Protective Factors

Successful prevention strategies must take account of risk and protective factors, according to many participants. Participants described risk factors as including, but not limited to:

Participants expressed interest and concern in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – about the way it would be establishing in the future, but also about the conflicts that occurred over the past year regarding the resignation of the appointed Commissioners. Participants are also concerned that where lawyers are acting as advocates, risk factors and protective factors should be addressed in the process. Participants cited the work done by Marie Waddam, entitled “Where the Pavement Ends” (Kingston, Ontario).

- The complex and multi-layered reasons behind (or “root causes of”) high rates of violence;
- breakdown in intergenerational transmission of knowledge, language and culture;
- learned behaviours of violence (father-spouse; mother -daughter) that relate to the source of trauma;

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- history and past experiences (such as the legacy of residential schools);
- impacts of colonization (including integration of mainstream values or behaviours);
- a context of grief/loss/stress; and
- high rates of suicide.

Participants described protective factors as including, but not limited to:

- movement and progress toward a better understanding of where feelings of mistrust come from;
- a widespread understanding that healthy families lead to safer communities;
- increased emphasis on the necessary community conditions for peace, harmony and love;
- identification of violence types and appropriate responses to these;
- a recognition that cultural pride equals strength;
- empowerment as a survival mechanism;
- a community understanding and pride in the roots (positive and negative) and history of the community, which allows us as community members to have a “better understanding of where we come from and where we are going.”;
- cultural survival through the practice of “secret ceremonies” and other cultural practices; and
- sustained community mobilization.

A participant proposed that the quality of social responses is the best predictor of recovery and healing.

Capture Surges in Strengths and Successes

Put Fires Out First

Participants felt that in addition to looking for innovative and creative approaches to violence prevention, we must also examine the issue of awareness and access to programs and services, and the effective delivery of programs and services. For example, participants discussed how to increase the number of resource people that can be brought

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into a community or to an incident of violence to assist in recovery and breaking down barriers such as out-dated or unacceptable belief systems (i.e. racism, prejudice, victim-blaming). Participants said that an awareness of shelters was one basic way of addressing violence, in particular inter-generational violence.

Participants discussed the issue of funding for existing programs and services, its serious impact on the way programs are delivered and on how successful they are at prevention. Participant felt that programs such as transition houses should have 20 year lives with a number of reassessment points. It was stressed that there must be an acknowledgment of the problems and challenges faced, and how severe they are (i.e. life and death situations). Participants pointed to the need to educate political leaders in Ottawa on the issue. In terms of Aboriginal politics, participants thought that the national “Chief’s Summit” could be a good opportunity to bring the issue forward. Participants thought that to achieve a renewed focus on continuity and stable funding for projects, an engaged dialogue might be required between and amongst First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and federal Ministers.

Participants pointed to the problem of “information flow” in programs and services run by government. Participants felt that even if they were to reach the ear of a Minister or high level government officials, often the funding is cut from on high, for political reasons, not for reasons couched in the realities of the beneficiaries of those programs and services. As such, participants underlined the need to change attitudes of the wider Canadian public, not just within our own communities.

Provide Support for Evaluation and Research

Participants expressed support for evaluation and research as an integral component to any strategy to address violence prevention. Participants felt that a more proactive approach to evaluation can inform us as to how a particular program or service is working. It also allows us to take a critical view of those program and services that are provided – participants noted that service providers become very impassioned and dedicated to those services that they have had a hand in creating, which leads to an approach that is less self-evaluative. Participants stressed that evaluation requires an “openness” on the part of service providers, who can be supported by inviting in others to offer gentle feedback. The example cited by participants included the evaluative process / feedback in the Red Cross program, including evaluation forms and focus groups. This approach can result in a change to programs to better respond to community needs. Participants agreed that evaluators should work in meaningful ways with community to help bring more meaning and change for the community.

In discussing the need for research, participants emphasized the need to adopt methodology and a process of research which is safe and self- or community-guided. Participants stressed a need for reliance on community-based protocols for knowledge creation and sharing. Participants also spoke about different kinds of research, such as “intervention research”. Finally, some participants pointed out the need for more

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research on specific issues such as Elder abuse. Participants felt that since government programs and projects need to be “evidence-based”, and those programs need to take into account community needs, then more investment needs to be made in research that finds partners or its source within communities themselves.

Build on Existing Capacity

Essentially, participants pointed to the need for sustained funding and resources to build capacity and to support (ongoing) training. They also spoke of building networks using existing resources. Their concern was for ensuring greater continuity of service from police, teachers, social workers, etc. Turnover of these workers, they felt, often compromises safety. In addition to addressing attrition / retention, participants promoted continued and increased training and sensitization of professionals, in particular police and first responders.

Brand, Message and Market Workable Approaches

Participants agreed that how information is presented to the “listener” is very important. Participants acknowledged that awareness raising efforts must be culturally appropriate and community based. This means referencing, where appropriate, community protocols (whether formalized through documentation or attained informally) to respect knowledge of Elders and cultural property.

Participants returned to a point made throughout the Workshop: that imposed or prescribed solutions do not work, and that the community knows best what will work for them.

Participants discussed challenges to changing mentalities, attitudes and mobilizing resources. For example, one participant spoke about racism encountered in a small city in B.C.. The participant said: “We set up a process in partnership with the city where city officials and Indian band members, came into a circle environment. All day sessions were held with a commitment to having everyone included. The sessions began with entrenched positions being taken by different parties. Things changed, through sharing, listening to each others’ stories, and trying to understand.” Thus, through respectful exchange, people can come to an understanding of the experiences and knowledge of others, and relate it to their own situations. This helps us understand the gaps and connections between Aboriginal traditional values and Canadian values. It can also form the basis for partnering (i.e. with social services; mental services; drug and alcohol programs; housing victims services) to promote healthy families.

Participants urged that statistics be used to compliment anecdotal knowledge, as opposed to being the sole focus of data or information.

Create a Knowledge Circle

Enhance Knowledge Base for Increasing Knowledge Sharing

Participants discussed ways to continue to support knowledge exchange. Some participants pointed to the need for translation into Aboriginal languages. Others stressed the importance of employing a variety of methods of knowledge exchange including the sharing of oral histories; print media; teaching (formal and informal education); training; storytelling; relating life experiences; networking; “tea and talk”; talking circles; presentations; community radio; amongst others.

One participant stated “Knowledge comes from self, our lived experience and is our intellectual property”. Others felt that what is in the circle of knowledge belongs to everyone and must be put in a way that others can hear and understand. Another participant pointed out that sometimes knowledge is slotted into categories or “silos” which inhibits it from being used or accessed properly (such as the way post-secondary institutions too often characterize knowledge).

Some participants underlined that successful knowledge exchange depends upon sustained community mobilization; that it requires reciprocity within knowledge sharing contexts; that it encompasses the creation of visible paths for healing; and educating leadership and youth.

In sum, many participants felt that enhancing the knowledge base and increasing knowledge sharing was a multi-faceted challenge.

Identify Emerging Issues and Trends

Participants identified and proposed a number of issues as emerging issues such as the many layers of isolation and the need to recognize Aboriginal intellectual property. Trends were also mentioned such as “healing fatigue” where one is exposed to a multitude of healing practices when the need is for answers to real problems. Participants emphasized the need to address jurisdictional barriers between rural / urban, on and off reserve, status and non-status, and interprovincial.

Many participants felt that community ownership and engagement is increasingly important and that it requires leadership buy-in, as well as the development of a strategic plan or framework that is inclusive of cultural perspectives on healthy relationships. Participants expressed strong support for increasing efforts that place community as the central player in identifying problems and identifying solutions.

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Create Stronger Linkages Among Helping Organizations and Governments

Participants underscored the need for collaborative partnerships. A number of participants stressed the need for allies and supported the idea of communities actively facilitating access to information, participation in the creation of networks and enlarging the circle of mutual help. Others described collaborative partnerships as a tool - for example various agencies referring clients to shelters- that contributes to violence prevention and serves as a sign of success. It was proposed that having a greater range of service providers at the table, such as physicians or nurses, creates safety, demonstrates commitment to breaking down silos, improves connections and communication and can facilitate better community responses.

Finally, participants iterated their own role in creating linkages through recognizing their responsibility for relaying within Aboriginal communities what participants have learned in various fora, including this workshop. It was proposed that success in these endeavours will yield stronger individuals and communities, peace among us, engagement and support of men and sensitization of Canadian public.

SUGGESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

During the plenary sessions, participants brought forward some specific suggestions for follow up to the workshop. One group of participants suggested the development of an Aboriginal Center of Excellence for domestic violence research. Some participants expressed hope that there will be future support for a follow-up conference. Participants identified the need to support the development of a comprehensive national strategy on addressing Aboriginal family violence. One participant offered that an aspect of such a strategy might include encouraging dialogue about the issues generated by this workshop. Some participants suggested that there be an exchange of email and mailing addresses of participants to facilitate networking and further sharing of information. Others proposed on-line dialogue.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY AND CLOSING

Over the course of the 2 day workshop, participants heard a series of presentations that covered many salient issues around knowledge exchange and successful approaches to family violence prevention among First Nations, Inuit and Métis. At the outset, they heard that the impact of violence affects the totality of individuals, families and communities and that violence itself is embedded in the totality of the environments in which individuals, families and communities find themselves. Participants also heard that collaborative outreach efforts yield wide and deep coverage for violence prevention while

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also engaging and providing safety for vulnerable community members including children and youth.

Participants were reminded that preventing abuse in Inuit communities must take the notion of place into account. Not only do most Inuit people live in certain climatic zones with unique political realities, they also have their own compelling cultures. For example, kamik making is an everyday occupation that is not only a form of artistic expression but is also a means of exchanging knowledge about problems like family violence.

Developing programs with the potential for national application and implementing them in this way was a point shared with the participants as were the merits of establishing Aboriginal specific programs within mainstream agencies like the Red Cross. In these settings, partners can work together for peace and bring in different voices, ideas and models.

Honouring victim's responses and resistance in order to shift power to individuals who are living the experience of family violence resonated well with participants. It was understood that deficit positioning reveals little of the human agency of individuals who are caught in family violence. Metaphors like safety blankets and protective shields were discussed in conjunction with the lived experience of family violence. More than one presenter said that people are believed to be spirits in bodies and because they suffer such high rates of deprivation they have become "homeless spirits".

Although front line workers and early intervention are critical for preventing family violence, "Kanawayhitowin: Taking Care of Each Others Spirit" and Awo Tan: Protective Shield speak to the mindfulness and spirituality that must underpin family violence prevention practice. It was felt that the symbolism in cultural logos stir Creator-given gifts along with gifts of reason but the greatest gift they spur on is personal involvement and commitment.

Participants provided insights into urban initiatives where individuals, particularly Métis, live in diversity and experience differential health risks. Participants heard about the considerable challenges to addressing family violence. In a passionate presentation on public awareness and education, one presenter said that raising people's awareness about sexism and racism has to be the starting point for denormalizing violence and for ultimately saving women's lives.

Participants discussed the need for community reconciliation, the stigma against violence prevention, the need to underline that violence cannot be equated to culture, the transience of service providers; success markers and identifying potential pitfalls [i.e. Richard Cardinal's story].

At the end of the workshop, Isabel Romero of PHAC acknowledged the participants' excellent contributions to what turned out to be a successful workshop. Elder Annie

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Smith St. George conducted the closing ceremony with a prayer and words of guidance for the participants.

Appendix A – Biography of Elder

Annie (Kishkwanakwad) Smith St. George

Annie (Kishkwanakwad) Smith St. George is an Algonquin Elder born and raised on the Kitigan Zibi reserve near Maniwaki, Quebec. She is the founder of Kumik, the Elder's Lodge at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Annie holds a teaching certificate from the University of Quebec and worked several years for the Government of Canada.

Annie ((Kishkwanakwad) is a recognized Elder in Canada and the initiator of National Aboriginal Awareness Week. She has been featured in many documentaries on Aboriginal culture and social issues. She is the owner and founder of WAGE, a health centre that promotes the integration of Aboriginal knowledge with medical sciences. Annie has devoted her life to the promotion and recognition of positive values of Aboriginal people.

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Appendix B – Final Agenda

Day 1 - February 23, 2009:

Check-in and Coffee	8:30 am to 8:45 am
Opening Prayer – Elder Annie Smith St-Georges	8:45 am to 8:55 am
Welcoming Remarks	
Isabel Romero , Public Health Agency of Canada	8:55 am to 9:10 am
Workshop Agenda Overview and Introductions	
Madeleine Dion Stout, Workshop Moderator	9:10 am to 9:30 am
<u>Presentations</u>	
The Impact of Violence on Community Wellness	9:30 am to 10:00 am
Bronwyn Shoush, Alberta Justice Initiatives, Alberta Justice and Attorney General	
Youth Violence Prevention	10:00 am to 10:30 am
Pauline Huppie-Parsons, Native Women’s Association of Canada	
Health Break	10:30 am to 10:45 am
National Strategy to Prevent Abuse in Inuit Communities	10:45 am to 11:15 am
Leesie Naqitarvik, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	
Walking the Prevention Circle	11:15 am to 11:45 am
Shelley Cardinal, Canadian Red Cross	

Lunch and viewing of audio-visual resources	11:45 am to 1:00 pm
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Islands of Safety: A Safety Planning Model for Urban Aboriginal and Metis Families in Cases of Violence	1:00 pm to 1:30 pm
Dr Cathy Richardson and Dr. Allan Wade, Métis Community Services, Victoria, B.C.	
Violence Prevention and Healing	1:30 pm to 2:00 pm
Josie Nepinak, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society	

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The Healing Journey: Family Violence Prevention in Aboriginal Communities

2:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Natalie McBride , Gignoo Transition House Inc

Break

2:30 am to 2:45 am

Preparation of Breakout Activity

2:45 pm to 3:00 pm

Madeleine Dion Stout

Breakout Activity: Small Group Discussions

3:00 pm to 4:15 pm

Plenary Debrief - Madeleine Dion Stout

4:15 pm to 4:30 pm

Day 2 - February 24, 2009

Promoting Non-Violence

8:30 am to 9:00 am

Ellen Gabriel, Quebec Native Women

Kanawayhitowin: Taking Care of Each Others Spirit

9:00 am to 9:30 am

Wendy French , Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres

Review and Preparations for Continuing Breakout Activity

Madeleine Dion Stout

9:30 am to 9:40 am

Breakout Activity (Continued)

9:40 am to 12:00 pm

- includes **Health Break**

10:00 am to 10:15 am

Lunch and viewing of audio-visual resources

12:00 pm to 1:15 pm

Reports back to plenary by Breakout Groups

1:15 pm to 2:15 pm

Health Break

2:15 pm to 2:25 pm

Knowledge Exchange Summary

Madeleine Dion Stout

2:25 pm to 2:40 pm

Wrap Up and Closing Remarks

Isabel Romero, Public Health Agency of Canada

2:40 pm to 2:45 pm

Closing Prayer – Elder Annie Smith St-Georges

2:45 pm to 3:00 pm

Appendix C – Final Participant List

Corinne Baggley, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Michele Bourque, Health Canada
Shelley Cardinal, Canadian Red Cross
Vini Dhillon, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Helen Doyon, Public Health Agency of Canada
Teresa Edwards, Status of Women Canada
Sipporah Enuaraq, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
Don Fiddler, Public Health Agency of Canada
Judy Ford, Nain Safe Shelter
Joyce Fossella, Warriors Against Violence Society
Marie-Lynne Foucault, Public Health Agency of Canada
Wendy French, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
Ellen Gabriel, Quebec Native Women
Naomi Giff-Mackinnon, Department of Justice Canada
Rebecca Hall, Native Women's Association of the N.W.T.
Anita Olsen Harper, Ph. D. Student, University of Ottawa
Lisa Hitch, Department of Justice Canada
Pauline Huppier-Parsons, Native Women's Association of Canada
Natalie McBride, Gignoo Transition House Inc
Dr. Jane McMillan, Saint Francis Xavier University
Cst. Barbara McMorro, Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Leesee Naqitarvik, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
Josie Nepinak, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society
Bruce Ransom, Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
Dr. Catherine Richardson, Métis Community Services (Victoria, B.C.)
Sophie Rioux, Public Safety Canada
France Robertson, Quebec Native Women
Isabel Romero, Public Health Agency of Canada
Bronwyn Shoush, Alberta Justice Initiatives, Alberta Justice
Clémence Simon, Centre d'hébergement Tipinuaikan
Freda Simon, Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centres
Danielle St-Laurent, Canadian Heritage
Spencer Tracy, Native Women's Association of the N.W.T.
Cecilia Van Egmond, Public Health Agency of Canada
Dr Allan Wade, Métis Community Services (Victoria, B.C.)

Appendix D: Feedback and Evaluation

1. What did you enjoy most about the workshop?

- ❖ Knowledge sharing, networking and meeting some of the funders.
- ❖ Learning about what services are available (Gignoo Transition House Inc.), particularly the availability of Elders at shelters. Learning that there is a family healing center (Freda).
- ❖ I liked the presenters, particularly Ellen Gabriel's presentation. Good to know what resources are available.
- ❖ The breadth of issues or solutions presented were excellent!
- ❖ The variety of the information from across Canada.
- ❖ Hearing stories and learning about the successes in detail, meeting such knowledgeable kind people.
- ❖ Networking, valuable information such as ideas presented for men's groups, meeting a diversity of people all working towards the same goal.
- ❖ Wendy French - Kanawayhtowin, Natalie McBride, Ellen Gabriel.
- ❖ In general all aspects of the workshop were very enriching.
- ❖ Learning how others are working in other regions, the inclusion of Aboriginal values in the training and sensitization tools used and the workshop mediator's synthesis of the presentations.
- ❖ Plenary presentations and questions and answers. Video presentations. Reports back from small group discussions.
- ❖ Meeting all the dedicated / concerned individuals that are working with the issue of violence in Aboriginal communities.
- ❖ Meeting workers from across the country.
- ❖ Large and group discussion. Meeting everyone.
- ❖ The wonderful people doing amazing work and sharing their stories and passion.
- ❖ The very practical presentations from various grassroots organizations. The space for discussion and diverse opinion.
- ❖ Madeleine was great, caring, and lovely!
- ❖ Some good speakers and questions. Madeleine did a great job. Ellen's talk was great.
- ❖ Bringing together service providers with funders

2. What did you least enjoy about the workshop?

- ❖ Nothing, but on a note of food - nothing at breaks for diabetic people or at lunch. Would be nice to have some fruit present as we do have higher rates of diabetes. A job well done, so thank you.
- ❖ Colonization issue. Breakout sessions: only because a few participants would get

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- sidetracked and not answer the questions. Uncomfortable to tell older participants to get back to the discussion.
- ❖ That people felt or were rushed (presenters).
 - ❖ Some activity between presentations to keep us alert between presentations.
 - ❖ We need more telling of the stories of how things are going on the ground. Women's and men's stories. A session on men's issues is needed.
 - ❖ Was looking forward to hearing about policy changes that may help with present policies. There was a discussion on emergency protection orders, but would have wanted a more in-depth relating to on / off reserves.
 - ❖ Needed more on the successful prevention models. But enjoyed the shared information.
 - ❖ Nothing it was great.
 - ❖ Enjoyed the whole thing.
 - ❖ Due to time constraints, it was unfortunate that the presentations were so short. It sometimes felt that we were glossing over some issues and initiatives that could have used more time.
 - ❖ It was really nice on so many levels to listen, share, connect with everyone. I worry about "resiliency" becoming a currency that we measure, and see its lack as a deficit. It does not acknowledge resistance.
 - ❖ Leave lunches for networking or discussion. No videos, etc.
 - ❖ I wish funders also gave overviews of what they could fund

3. What knowledge about the prevention of Aboriginal family violence will you be taking away from the workshop?

- ❖ Lots of information was given especially some new programs that are out there. The great contacts that we made whether it was funders or other programs.
- ❖ I now have more information than I can look at and compare what is potentially a good program to replicate it to appropriate culture.
- ❖ All of it.
- ❖ Some creative, inspirational existing practices that are a great example for other communities struggling with the same issues. Great solutions to try!
- ❖ New ideas. New training or program opportunities i.e. Red Cross, The Québec Native Women, Resources for Ontario Aboriginal Campaign.
- ❖ The Nunavut legislation. Community empowerment strategies. Networking.
- ❖ Men's role / prevention on partner violence, systems framework and how it works in different transition homes.
- ❖ The holistic approaches, hope of the presenters, the efforts to make change. All the presentations were superb!
- ❖ The importance of safe environments when disclosing experience of abuse. Dr. Wade's point on honoring victims responses and resistance and the importance of questioning them not so much on the impact of the violence they experienced but

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- on their response to it and how front-line workers can draw more helpful information from victim's responses and resistance to violence to better assist them towards healing via drawing and validating victim's inner strength and resources.
- ❖ Not so much on prevention - mostly intervention. Validates the need to focus on working to stop violence in communities.
 - ❖ New ideas on how to present.
 - ❖ All of it. It's great that so many communities are doing great work.
 - ❖ There needs to be more resources dedicated to working with perpetrators of family violence. Also more importance should be placed on "practice-based evidence".
 - ❖ I have a better understanding of resources at my disposal. It's useful to have a greater understanding of strategies used by diverse communities.
 - ❖ Lots!
 - ❖ Lots of people working on this. Some really useful documents, research being developed.
 - ❖ It is to see how there are many initiatives which are implemented. It gives us ideas. Now, we need to go towards change, engage men and women in order to reestablish the balance that had been lost over the years
 - ❖ The service providers need to work together more. Some of our work duplicates each other.

4. What key areas of knowledge about the prevention of Aboriginal family violence were not but should have been covered during this workshop?

- ❖ Maybe someone from sexual assault or rape crisis organization. Turn-over / burn-out of front-line workers. Vicarious trauma presentation.
- ❖ Not enough information on Elder abuse prevention programs / projects.
- ❖ Unknown.
- ❖ More on Elder abuse.
- ❖ Men's issues. Government to ground relations. Youth specific strategies. Using technology to reduce isolation.
- ❖ Policies on a federal level, affecting on / off reserve, property ownership, accountability to federal.
- ❖ Elder abuse, two-spirited, handicap. More discussion on these topics. Research on these. How to help the abusers? How to keep children an integral part of the picture. Economic terrorism through government legislation that denies us access.
- ❖ Simply glad that a particular table <discussion group> mentioned that there is a lot we don't know or are not covering e.g. Aboriginal realities may have commonalities. BUT that there are distinctions among First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities that we must acknowledge this.

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- ❖ Needed more on prevention "best practices".
- ❖ Lateral violence.
- ❖ Successful evaluations.
- ❖ Communication strategies with groups and individuals outside of family violence work.
- ❖ Current social factors such as reconciliation. Safety, opening people up and causing suffering.
- ❖ Economics, racism, and gender discrimination. Need a more critical analysis.
- ❖ We could have discussed disabilities and of the experienced violence.
- ❖ I would have benefited from a discussion on making partnerships happen

5. Any other comments or suggestions?

- ❖ Thank you for inviting me. Well-rounded people invited so thanks. Looking forward to receiving the power points and discussions reporting back.
- ❖ I enjoyed the PSAs and documentary. I wonder how expensive it was (just a ballpark figure would be nice to know). Perhaps another knowledge exchange forum in two years - only if a program will not be impacted (money is too scarce to have family violence projects).
- ❖ To come up with a way to share resources across the provinces / territories.
- ❖ Great job!
- ❖ More! More! More! Thank you. A Youth Forum would be helpful from a research perspective.
- ❖ A very good informative workshop / conference. Enjoyed meeting and networking and hearing about other shelters and how problems are overcome.
- ❖ I would like to know how we could have more communities to have access to these kinds of discussions and meetings.
- ❖ I've begun to work on Elder abuse very recently i.e. since November 2009. Although the workshop did not focus on the abuse of older Aboriginal adults, it provided a very rich opportunity to learn about the complexities of family violence as a whole and on the contexts of family violence within Aboriginal communities and their particular, profound challenges and richness. It has also provided me good contacts to link with regarding Inuit Elder abuse i.e. Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.
- ❖ Enjoyed - well-organized.
- ❖ Do it again perhaps one to two days more.
- ❖ Let's do this every six months.
- ❖ Should have these twice a year.
- ❖ Another day would have been very useful!
- ❖ Thank you.
- ❖ Need more nutritious food. Juice, fruit, etc.!

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- ❖ Thank you. It was a nice exchange. Thank you for taking account of the French language
- ❖ I really hope this happens again. Madeleine was amazing ! Thank you for the invitation.

Score Matrix – Feedback and Evaluation Questionnaire Point System Chart

Score reflects level of satisfaction (5 being most satisfied)

Form # ↓	1 Range of topics covered by presentations	2 Choice of topics in discussion guide	3 Rhythm of workshop	4 Nature of wrap-up discussions and conclusions	5 Emphasis on knowledge exchange	6 Focus on successful prevention approaches	7 Inclusion of First Nations, Inuit and Metis	8 Overall evaluation
1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
2	3	3	*	*	*	*	2	*
3	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	5
4	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	5
5	5	3	4	*	5	5	5	4.5
6	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	5
7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
8	4	3	4	*	3	3	4	4
9	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
10	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	4
11	4	4	4	*	5	4	3	4
12	4	4	4	4	5	3	5	4
13	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
14	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
15	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5
16	4	*	4	4	5	5	5	4

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17	*	*	5	5	5	4	*	5
18	3	4	4	2.5	3	4	4.5	4
19	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	5
Average Score :	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.4	4.5

* indicates “no response”

Bar Graph Representation of Score Matrix

