

## **Lutra Associates Ltd.**

Socio-Economic Research • Community and Economic Development

September 20, 1993.

Dr. Bea Medicine,  
Research Director,  
Women's Perspectives,  
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,  
P.O. Box 1993, Station B,  
OTTAWA, Ontario K1P 1B2

Dear Dr. Medicine:

Please find enclosed Damaged and Needing Help, the final draft of our community-based study on violence and abuse in aboriginal families in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e, N.W.T. Please accept our apologies for the delay in submission. We were beset by the typical delays inherent in conducting research in northern communities. Delays aside, we are pleased with the quality and quantity of information contained in this report, and we hope that the Commission will be as well.

As I indicated in our telephone conversation of 10 September 1993, we are vetting our report through all the participants, individuals as well as agencies, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, who provided information in this study. The report is being reviewed by the following community members, agencies and local government bodies:

### Yellowknife:

- \* 27 agencies delivering services related to family violence, representatives of which were interviewed in the study, and some of whom attended the Service Agency Focus Group
- \* individuals who attended the Public and Native Housing Focus Group
- \* McAteer House Women's Shelter
- \* Yellowknife Correctional Centre.

### Lutsel K'e:

- \* Chief and Band Council
- \* Alcohol and Drug Worker and Social Worker
- \* RCMP
- \* Adult Educator.

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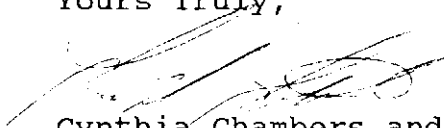
Bea Medicine, page 2.....

We have invited these groups and individuals to provide feedback to the research team by October 1, 1993. If participants suggest additions and/or changes, we intend to incorporate these into the final report which will be mailed to you October 6, 1993.

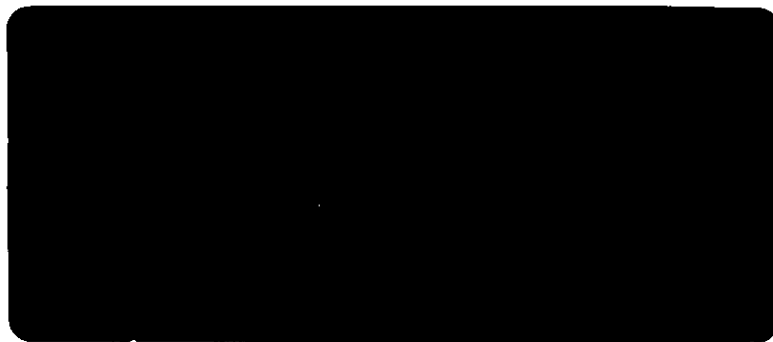
As we discussed, several of the people reviewing this study are professional aboriginal people working in areas related to the treatment of family violence and abuse. As a consequence, the review process we have initiated combines fruitfully community review and peer review; a critical combination for a community-based study. We believe this process to be rigorous enough to meet the stringent standards the Royal Commission has established.

We leave this report in your good hands. We understand it is only one of many that you must read but we really do look forward to hearing your response. Thank you for your assistance throughout this project. We have encountered our share of difficulties and your support through each of them has been much appreciated.

Yours Truly,



Cynthia Chambers and Lois Little,  
Principal Investigators.



Lutra Associates Ltd.

# **DAMAGED AND NEEDING HELP**

## **Violence And Abuse In Aboriginal Families In Yellowknife And Lutsel K'e**

**DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

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**Prepared for:** the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples  
and the People of Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e

September 15, 1993

# DAMAGED AND NEEDING HELP

## Violence And Abuse In Aboriginal Families In Yellowknife And Lutsel K'e

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*"Every family in the community is impacted in one way or another by family violence,"* is one professional's opinion about the amount of family violence and abuse in Lutsel K'e. Another professional estimates that each child in the community has been sexually abused.

The justice, social, health, and counselling professionals who participated in this study agree that family violence and abuse is rampant in the N.W.T. Aboriginal people themselves say that the problem is enormous. Family violence is so serious that it has gone beyond hurting families. It has damaged whole communities. In the words of a Dene woman in Yellowknife, *"we are damaged people and we need help."*

The purpose of this study was to examine how aboriginal people in a small community, Lutsel K'e, and an urban centre, Yellowknife, define family violence, deal with the problem, and can be helped to stop the violence and abuse. Family violence is the physical, sexual, mental or emotional abuse of one person by another person who is a member of the family or with whom the abused person has an intimate relationship. Most aboriginal people interviewed are in agreement about actions which are violent and abusive. But many people feel that the frequency of the action, its intent or purpose, and the tone of voice, facial expression and body language accompanying the action, affect whether it is violent or abusive.

It is difficult to gauge how much family violence and abuse is happening. There aren't any statistics which show the whole picture. One reason why there are so few numbers is that people don't want to face up to the problem, or talk about this *"family secret."* But reporting family violence is changing to some extent. In both Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e the number of spousal assault cases reported to police doubled between 1985 and 1992. The number of sexual assaults reported to police has tripled. Still, police and professionals believe that there are lots of cases of family violence and abuse which are not reported. And there is still little acknowledgement that some forms of violence and abuse are even happening, especially child neglect and elder abuse.

One of the most frightening aspects of family violence and abuse is the way it carries on to future generations. If a person is abused or exposed to violence and abuse as a child, there is a good chance the person will abuse others or

become involved in abusive relationships. And abusers are getting younger, they aren't waiting to become adults to start abusing others.

While many people agree that alcohol abuse makes matters worse, it is not the cause of family violence among aboriginal people. Some statistics suggest that the vast majority of women alcoholics were abused as children and have been abused as adults. It is more difficult to judge the relationship between alcohol and past abuse among men. Men are less likely to talk about violence or abuse which has happened to them. Some professionals believe that the violence was usually worse for men and its effects more traumatic than for women. An inmate at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre admitted that, *"when people are drinking the violence of childhood comes back like a nightmare."*

The reasons for family violence are many and complex. Some people believe society has to change to value women and children more in order for the violence to stop. Another view is that people have lost their values and that alienation is so bad that people are filled with self-hate and without a sense of what is morally right and wrong. The rapid changes in aboriginal lifestyles and families is also blamed, along with the poor example set by some leaders. Aboriginal people interviewed believe residential schools have also played a part.

Some aboriginal people look for help within their own family or community when they are living in violent or abusive homes. There are more and more support groups in communities, as well as Alcohol Anonymous meetings. Social Services has shelters, but only nine for the entire N.W.T. There is also a shortage of advocacy, foster homes, group homes and treatment, especially long-term counselling, for children and teenagers. As well there is little in the way of treatment for offenders, especially sex offenders.

Often when there is family violence people don't want to go to the police. Children sometimes fear they will be taken away from their home and community. In the case of spousal assault, going to the police for immediate help, means that as well as a *"quick fix"* in a crisis, charges will be laid against the abuser. Generally aboriginal people from Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e don't believe that jail helps to stop family violence. It often punishes the family of the accused as much as the offender and abusers don't get help for their problems while in jail.

In Yellowknife there are more services than in small communities, like Lutsel K'e. But not all aboriginal people know that the services exist. If they do know about the service they are often intimidated by the building or general environment. They can also be put off by the stigma attached to seeking help from that service. In Lutsel K'e there are fewer services but a greater opportunity exists for aboriginal people to work together on solutions to family violence.

People had a great many suggestions for things that individuals, families and communities can do to stop family violence and abuse. The actions people suggest are aimed at building better communication among family members and within communities, educating families and communities about family violence, and building networks of support. They also suggest basic changes in services: more one-one-one counselling for victims, offenders and entire families; training for more Dene so these people can help their families and community; and, revamping of alcohol treatment programs to deal with the problems of the client and his/her addiction as well as the need for support during recovery.

People participating in this study say that governments and politicians must give high priority to stopping the violence and to ensuring the well-being of northern people. Available money and human resources must be used more wisely.

The scarce program money for family violence and related issues (eg. alcohol and drug abuse, mental health, victims assistance, suicide prevention, etc.) must be pooled and focused directly on stopping family violence and abuse. **The goal is to bring together all of the people and money within a community, such as Lutsel K'e.** The financial arrangements should stress commitment and action and permit accountability to one source. Services must be made more accessible for aboriginal people in Yellowknife, who in themselves do not form a community.

# 1. THE STUDY

## 1.1 Introduction

Tolerance of violence and/or abuse in the home and the community has diminished since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms became law. In the N.W.T. the unacceptability of violence and abuse has led individuals and communities to take actions to stop it. Individuals are speaking out; forming healing and support groups; seeking treatment; providing protection and safety; prosecuting offenders; and demanding that leaders and governments give priority to stopping family violence and abuse. More incidents of family violence and/or abuse are being reported, brought to the attention of social agencies, and prosecuted in the courts.

Yet regardless of these efforts, family violence and abuse in the N.W.T. remains a major problem, and it's one that is not well understood. Since the majority of N.W.T. residents and those seeking services to deal with family violence and/or abuse are from aboriginal families, this problem must be examined in light of the circumstances of these families. This is the intent of this study.

## 1.2 Study Objectives and Context

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples requested a community-based study on family violence and abuse in aboriginal families in the western N.W.T. While recognizing the broad scope of this subject, the following research objectives were approved by the Royal Commission:

- to describe the extent of documented family violence/abuse in Yellowknife and the nearby community of Lutsel K'e, and to situate this description in a community profile of the two settings,
- to profile the type, nature and use of services available to address family violence/abuse in Yellowknife and the nearby community of Lutsel K'e,
- to identify issues associated with family violence/abuse that have been recorded to date in Yellowknife and the nearby community of Lutsel K'e, and identify the inter-relationship of family violence/abuse issues with other socio-political, cultural, economic, judicial, and educational factors,
- to describe how family violence/abuse is identified and addressed in a large urban community (i.e. Yellowknife) and a small Dene community (i.e. Lutsel K'e), and in particular how aboriginal people (victims, offenders

and people otherwise affected, of both genders and various age groups) name, define and understand family violence/abuse,

- to assess critically from the client's perspective (both victims and offenders), the efficacy and consequences of participating in/receiving services to address family violence/abuse issues, and the appropriateness of methods for prevention, prosecution and treatment currently in use, and
- to propose future directions for providing more appropriate mechanisms to address family violence/abuse and for linking family violence services in small and larger urban centres.

This study collected the views of aboriginal people and others, in Lutsel K'e and Yellowknife. The study was located in these two communities to enable a comparison of family violence and abuse in the small (traditional) community and the urban contexts of the N.W.T.

There are 64 communities in the N.W.T. of which almost two-thirds have populations of less than 600. In many respects, Lutsel K'e is typical of these small N.W.T. communities. Lutsel K'e is a small (population of 286) Chipewyan Dene community on the east arm of Great Slave Lake, some 200 km east of Yellowknife. The community is accessible year-round by air only. Residents of Lutsel K'e frequently visit Yellowknife to access services (eg. banking, retail, hospital, secondary education) unavailable in their community. Yellowknife is the capital and largest service centre<sup>1</sup> in the N.W.T. While a smaller community, living conditions in Lutsel K'e are more dense than in Yellowknife. According to recent Canada Census data, the average household size in Lutsel K'e is five persons compared to an average of three in Yellowknife.

Community size is only one of the differences between Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e. About 17% of the capital's population is of aboriginal ancestry compared to 94% in Lutsel K'e and about 60% throughout the N.W.T. Historically Yellowknife was part of the Dogrib Dene's traditional hunting area. Today Yellowknives (Dogrib) Dene Band members mainly reside in two communities adjacent to the City - Ndilo and Dettah. Yellowknife is home to aboriginal people from throughout the N.W.T. They are not a homogeneous group and don't constitute an aboriginal community per se, by virtue of their tribal affiliation, socio-economic position, length of time in Yellowknife and a variety of other factors. In contrast,

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<sup>1</sup> The 1991 Census recorded the population of Yellowknife as 15,180 or 26% of the total N.W.T. population.

most if not all of the aboriginal people living in Lutsel K'e are members of that Chipewyan Dene Band.

Yellowknife residents have among the highest education, income, and labour force participation rates (88%) in the N.W.T. and one of the lowest levels of unemployment (4%). In Lutsel K'e, less than half (45%) of the working age population is involved in the labour force (eg. employed or unemployed) and almost the same number are unemployed (39%). Well over three-quarters (86%) of Lutsel K'e's working age population have not graduated from high school and almost two-thirds (60%) have less than Grade 9. Over one-third (38%) of the working aged population receives social assistance. Most of these people are male and have less than a Grade 9 education. Over half (53%) of Lutsel K'e's population is under 24 years of age.

Yellowknife's economy is built on mining, government and secondary service industries. Yellowknife serves communities throughout the territories. Services accessed in or from the City address gaps or the non-existence of services in many locations. For example, a territorial high school and student hostel located in the City enable students in communities as far away as Pelly Bay (over 1300 air km to the northeast) to access Grade 12 education.

Major economic activities in Lutsel K'e are fishing, hunting/trapping, tourism and government services. The community is served by a school (K-Grade 9), a two nurse community health centre, a two person RCMP detachment, a social worker, an alcohol and drug worker, an adult educator and a community council administration. Administrative and political direction in the community is set by an elected Chief and Band Council.

### 1.3 Methodology

The research methodology was developed from the Ethical Guidelines for Research (RCAP, 1992), advice and direction from the Lutsel K'e Dene Band Council, and the community-based research experience of the study team. The research methodology had three main components: i) background research; ii) focus groups; and iii) one to one interviews. These components are discussed in detail in Appendix A.

Background research entailed a review of relevant northern and other literature on family violence and abuse (Appendix B) and interviews with 33

representatives of 27 Yellowknife-based service agencies (Appendix C). A total of five focus groups were held, four in Yellowknife and one in Lutsel K'e. A cross section of people participated in the focus groups (Appendix A). Among the 38 participants:

- 55% were female.
- Most were between 26-59 years of age.
- About half had college or university education.
- Most were married.
- 58% were of aboriginal ancestry, with 44% identifying themselves as Dene or Metis.
- All were comfortable speaking about family violence/abuse.
- Most did not hold back information during the group process.

Lutsel K'e researchers conducted 29 personal interviews in the community. Two other personal interviews were conducted in Yellowknife. Persons participating in one to one interviews in Lutsel K'e appear to share many of the main characteristics of the community as a whole:

- slightly more women (58%) than men (42%)
- representative of all adult age groups
- have less than Grade 12 education
- married, common-law, divorced/separated or widowed
- mainly of Dene ancestry
- participate in a mixture of economic activity, most of which does not generate year-round wage income.

Most interviewees felt comfortable about the interview process and did not withhold information. In total, **105** individuals participated in this study, with **55** of these people declaring an aboriginal ancestry.

#### **1.4 Research Issues and Limitations**

The research subject and the community environment generated issues which impacted on the research and the outcome. In particular,

**\*Timing:**

The duration of this study was 3.5 months, from May to August, 1993. It is very difficult to conduct community-based research during the summer months in the N.W.T. Communities have their own seasonal rhythms which people are reluctant

to interrupt and for which this particular project did not have the resources to adequately accommodate.

**\*Sensitivity to the Subject Matter:**

Family violence and abuse and particular aspects such as child sexual abuse, are topics which many people are reticent to discuss, especially on short notice.

**\*Lack of Statistical Data:**

With the exception of those agencies with specific mandates for family violence (eg. McAteer House and the GNWT Family Violence Program), statistics on family violence and abuse in the N.W.T. do not exist. Quantifying the problem is hampered by non-reporting and an apparent inability of agencies to capture complete information on the subject.

**\*Cultural Issues:**

There may be cultural constraints related to speaking about the topic of family violence. The Dene have traditionally believed that words carry great power. Saying things out loud can make them happen.

**\*Scepticism About Research:**

Aboriginal people in the N.W.T. and in Lutsel K'e have participated in numerous research projects but can see little change as a result. This scepticism about the benefits of this research influenced both the quality and quantity of participation.

**\*Scepticism About the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People:**

Residents of Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e are sceptical about the ability of RCAP to improve the lives of aboriginal people. Therefore there was some reluctance to participate in research being sponsored by the Commission.

**\*Lack of Comprehensive Documentation:**

This research relies heavily on the Traditional Dene Justice (1993) project's draft report as a source of documented Dene traditional knowledge on social practices and values, as this is the only such document available on the Dene. Since the Dogrib Dene are a focus of that research, traditional views of the Chipewyan Dene may be under-represented in this study. Similarly, there may be overuse of the Gender Equality Report, but again this is the most comprehensive document of its kind.

The above issues are discussed in greater detail in the methodological description provided in Appendix A.

## 2. DEFINING FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

How aboriginal people, who are the majority in the N.W.T., define family violence and abuse is a starting point for stopping it.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1 The Aboriginal Family

The notion of "*family*" is significant to understanding family violence and abuse. In the N.W.T., 90% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim and 20% are family members.<sup>3</sup> A study of N.W.T. victims of crime shows that in 29.6% of crimes victims are related to the offender.<sup>4</sup>

A long time ago, marriage and intermarriage created extended families that varied in size and influence. Among these extensive and intensive familial relationships, a member of an aboriginal family might be anyone known as/called sister, brother, aunt, uncle or grandparent, regardless of whether the person was related by blood, according to focus group participants. Another view suggests that the traditional aboriginal family was whoever an individual travelled with. For aboriginal children, the notion of family seems to have always meant the people to be trusted and depended upon.

Today traditional notions of family continue to exist in northern communities. However of equal prevalence is the view of the aboriginal family as a nuclear unit, consisting of blood relatives living in the same household. Focus group participants, especially single parents, and almost half (48%) of the people interviewed in Lutsel K'e described their family as being made up of only parents and siblings.

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2. Initially the concept under study was "*family violence*" however researchers from Lutsel K'e insisted that the term be expanded to include family abuse. Together the terms family violence and abuse include physical acts of violence as well as more subtle acts of emotional and/or mental abuse. Northern professionals note that mental/emotional abuse accompanies or is related to all acts of physical violence.

3. Posynick, J. (1991). Sexual Assault and Sentencing. Yellowknife, NT. Department of Justice.

4. Gilchrist, J. (1991). An Assessment of the Needs of Victims of Crime in the Northwest Territories. Yellowknife, NT. Arctic Legal Education and Information Society. p.17

## 2.2 Documented Definitions of Family Violence and/or Abuse

The Status of Women Council of the N.W.T. defines family violence as: *"physical, sexual, mental or emotional abuse of one person by another person who is a member of the family or with whom the abused person has an intimate relationship."*<sup>5</sup> Northern law enforcement, justice, health and social agencies participating in this study offer other definitions of family violence and abuse including:

- anything that is abusive/violent within the family and extended family.
- the systematic use of physical, sexual, emotional violence against people in the family.
- a lack of respect for human value and love which is exhibited in abuse - psychological, emotional, physical or sexual.
- actions towards another person which are offensive physically/sexually, mentally or emotionally.

Literature on family violence and abuse defines particular kinds of family violence and abuse. The most commonly defined are given below.

### Spousal Assault:

In the N.W.T. spousal assault continues to receive more attention than any other form of family violence. A task force struck in 1984 to examine spousal assault in the N.W.T. assumed that either men or women can be abusers:

*Spousal assault is violence, both physical and psychological, expressed by a husband, wife or lover towards his or her mate. It is directly or indirectly condoned by the traditions, laws and attitudes prevalent in the society in which it occurs.*<sup>6</sup>

An extensive survey of the Blood Tribe in southern Alberta looked exclusively at acts of physical violence within aboriginal families, and found that violence in

<sup>5</sup> Status of Women Council of the N.W.T.(1992). Break the Silence...End the Violence: Family Violence Prevention Kit. Yellowknife, NT: Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT. From now on referred to as Breaking the Silence. Specific items within the kit will be named separately.

<sup>6</sup> Bayly, J. McCracken, I., Vandell, M., Kikoak, L., Giroux, G., Allen, B., and Goulet, M.J., (1985). Task Force on Spousal Assault. Yellowknife, NT: Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Government of the Northwest Territories, Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT. p.7.

marital relations is unequivocally violence against women. *Women consistently reported that their principle abusers were their partners, but men did not. This differs from the pattern typically found in non-native families, where the primary expression of violent behaviour is between spouses, and where rates of violence (though not the consequences that stem from that violence) of husband-to-wife violence and wife-to-husband violence are usually found to be similar. In short, when we are considering physical violence occurring between Blood Tribe adults it is not appropriate to talk of 'spousal assault'. Rather, we have to speak unambiguously about abusive men.*<sup>7</sup>

In the present study, non-physical acts of abuse were included. This assumes that both men and women can be abusers. Study participants suggest that in marital relations mental/emotional abuse is as prevalent, and may be equally harmful and traumatic as physical violence in the long run.

#### Child Abuse:

Child abuse is "any act or lack of care that harms a child's physical, emotional or mental well-being. . . It can be physical, emotional or sexual or it can happen through neglect." A child is defined as someone under 18 years of age. Child abuse is prohibited under the Child Welfare Act of the Northwest Territories and certain acts of child abuse are crimes under the Criminal Code of Canada.<sup>8</sup>

Distinguishing discipline and abuse can be difficult. Force against a child such as spanking, is not considered abuse but a form of discipline. In legal terms, physical abuse which uses "*unreasonable force*" is considered assault and is a crime. The Blood Tribe Survey and personal interviews with some front-line workers in the Yellowknife area, suggest that the physical abuse of children or adolescents is not typically an issue among aboriginal families, however, child neglect and sexual abuse/incest are.

#### Child Neglect:

Child neglect is a serious phenomena in both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities. Physical neglect of children is defined as the "*failure to meet*

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<sup>7</sup> Healy, N., Soop, D., Fox, G., Iron Shirt, S., (Blood Tribe Team) and Armstrong-Esther, C., Buchignani, N., Indra, D. and Miller, C. (University of Lethbridge Team). (1991) Blood Tribe Family Violence Study: Final Report. Unpublished document. Lethbridge, AB: University of Lethbridge, AB.

<sup>8</sup> Breaking the Silence on Child Abuse.

*the child's basic physical needs for shelter, food and safety" while emotional neglect is "failure to meet the child's needs for affection and acceptance."*<sup>9</sup>

#### Child Sexual Abuse:

When an adult or adolescent uses a child sexually in any way, this is sexual abuse. The older person is usually someone the child trusts and he/she may trick, bribe, coerce, threaten or force a child into sexual activity. Most child sexual abuse occurs within the extended family. Within northern aboriginal communities this can virtually affect the entire community. Fathers (or partners of the child's mother) are the largest single group of abusers. Child sexual abuse is a crime which is defined in law by:

- sexual interference: touching anyone under 14 years of age for sexual purposes
- invitation to sexual touching: encouraging a child to touch her/his body or someone else's for sexual purposes
- sexual exploitation: a person in authority or a position of trust who engages in sexual activity with a child 14 to 17 years in their care
- incest: sexual intercourse with a blood relative
- sexual assault: sexual contact with a person without that person's consent. Children under the age of 12 are legally unable to give consent, unless the other person is under 16 or there is less than two years difference in age between the two.<sup>10</sup>

#### Elder Abuse:

Elder abuse includes benign neglect; not being fed or kept clean; being expected to babysit when not able or willing to; psychological/verbal/emotional abuse; physical and sexual abuse; and financial abuse. Financial abuse was frequently cited by agency representatives in this study as the most common form of elder abuse.<sup>11</sup> However other forms of abuse are surfacing as was

9. Breaking the Silence on Child Abuse . p.1-2

10. ibid, p.4

11. Elders who receive the guaranteed income supplement and the old age pension are getting up to \$970 per month. This often makes them the main income earner in the family and particularly vulnerable to financial abuse.

illustrated by the recent rape of a 70 year old woman in Fort Simpson, NWT.

### **2.3 Actions Which Define Family Violence and Abuse**

In an effort to find out how aboriginal people in Lutsel K'e and Yellowknife define family violence or abuse, study participants were asked to identify actions which may be abusive or violent in a family. Most participants were inclined to say that all of the actions in Table 1 could be considered violent or abusive. However there was variation in how significant or prevalent certain actions were. For example, inmates at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre (YCC) identified exposure to violence; neglect as a child; and being forced as an elder child, to babysit for long periods of time, as at the root of their own violent or abusive behaviour. In contrast, being forced to watch/hear violence were less frequently identified as violent and/or abusive by residents of Lutsel K'e along with neglect, being forced to babysit for long periods of time, and begging/bothering for money.

### **2.4 Conditions Which Determine Violent and Abusive Actions**

In the view of most Lutsel K'e participants (71%), the actions listed in Table 1 are wrong under most circumstances. However a number of conditions do exist that determine whether actions are violent and/or abusive. Over two-thirds (68%) of people interviewed in Lutsel K'e and YCC inmates suggest that the frequency of these actions effects whether or not they are violent and/or abusive.

Focus group participants offer the view that the intent/purpose of the action, the method, and the relationships of the individuals involved determine whether particular actions are violent and/or abusive. Yellowknife agency representatives agree that the intent of an action is important, however perceptions of intent (eg. when the message is sent, how the message is received and the intensity of the message) may be more critical. In this regard, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal participants caution that to recognize family violence requires an understanding of what constitutes demeaning behaviour, and of the nature of power and control (vs. accountability and responsibility) in various types of relationships.

Aboriginal women pointed out in focus group sessions that the tone of voice and place where the action occurs can also affect whether actions are abusive and/or violent. Yellowknife service agencies note that children are very susceptible/sensitive to changes in facial expressions and body language, and may perceive actions to be violent and/or abusive when they are not. Inmates

TABLE 1: ACTIONS WHICH MAY BE ABUSIVE OR VIOLENT IN A FAMILY

-insulting	-blaming (eg. finding fault)	-name calling
-swearing	-yelling	-shaking
-hair-pulling	-pushing	-slapping
-hitting	-kicking	-punching
-biting	-choking	-nagging
-rape in marriage	-suicide	-murder
-being harassed	-ignoring/silent treatment	-neglect (eg. not fed properly)
-forced to babysit for long periods of time	-stealing (eg. pension cheque)	
-relatives living off you without contributing/helping	-begging or bothering for money	
-being kicked out of my house	-being kicked out of the family	
-being threatened with a weapon	-being threatened (physically or verbally)	
-having something thrown at you (eg. boiling water)	-being threatened to be run over	
-being forced to watch and hear violence	- being burned	
-withholding food or help (eg. to elders or children)	-sexual abuse of elders	
-being forced into sex	-any sexual touching not wanted	
-any sexual touching not agreed to	-sex or sexual touching with a person under age	
-sex or sexual touching with a person mentally or physically unable to refuse (eg. passed out, mentally handicapped, in a wheel-chair)		
-being forced to touch someone else's private parts		
-being forced to watch others have sex (eg. on videos)		
-trying to kill someone (eg. by smothering, drowning)		
-withholding love or affection for money, sex or other favours		
<u>Additions Offered by Study Participants</u>		
-being removed from the family/placed in foster care		
-intent to control/manipulate/coerce		
-being disrespectful to relatives (eg. <i>"you know when it's intended to humiliate and put down"</i> )		
-threatening that you can't see your kids any more		
-threatening to harm a loved one		
-being in the presence/environment of violence		
-confinement (eg. <i>"forcing me to take all my clothes off to keep me at home"</i> )		
-spousal or elder isolation		
-threats to a support system (eg. job, school, friends)		
-beating with a weapon (eg. hammer)		
-threatening/angry facial expressions	-threatening/angry body language.	

at YCC suggest that the use of humour may also influence the acceptability of actions. For these men, body language, facial expressions and tone of voice are also indicators of whether actions are violent or abusive.

## 2.5 Individual Perceptions of Violence and/or Abuse

The range of definitions, actions and circumstances related to family violence and abuse suggests that society's understanding of the problem is evolving. Actions tolerated a long time ago may not be acceptable today. Actions which may be acceptable in certain circumstances are not acceptable in others. Many study participants agree that key variables affecting individual perceptions of what qualifies as violent or abusive behaviour are:

- understanding and having access to services which address family violence and abuse, including the legal system;
- being aware of options;
- overcoming feelings of shame, fear and/or powerlessness; and
- being able to articulate concerns.

Another view suggests that to truly understand family violence and abuse, it is necessary to look at patterns of behaviour within and outside the home and at what is going into the home from outside. *"If people live with violence they are less likely to be able to define and identify it,"* suggests a participant of a Yellowknife focus group.

### 3. THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

This section examines how much and what kind of family violence and abuse is going on in aboriginal families, particularly in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e. It also looks at issues that affect our knowledge of the situation.

#### 3.1 Reporting of Family Violence and Abuse

According to a national evaluation of sexual assault legislation in Canada, reporting has more than doubled in the N.W.T. and elsewhere in the country from 1982 to 1988. Moreover, the number of reported sexual assaults in the N.W.T. was consistently four to five times the national average for the period 1977 to 1988. According to northern professionals, reporting of all forms of sexual assault is improving in the NWT (estimated at 50%-75% of actual sexual assaults).

Child abuse including child sexual abuse, is probably the most under-reported of violent and abusive acts in the family. In Lutsel K'e disclosures and reporting of sexual abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, skyrocketed due to joint school-RCMP education programs between 1990-1992. Education programs are showing children *"that it is not alright for Dad to come home drunk and crawl into bed with them,"* according to a northern law enforcement officer. However the high rate of reporting in Lutsel K'e captured incidents that had happened in the past. (An individual has up to 20 years, in some cases more, to report sexual abuse). Sexual abuse occurring today is not necessarily being reported.

Northern professionals say the extent of child sexual assault suffered by aboriginal men is far greater than previously believed, and the impact of these experiences on the men is as devastating as for women. However there is virtually no reporting of these sexual assaults.

The Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1985) shows that only 45% of spousal assaults are reported. In Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e, RCMP sources suggest that most spousal assault cases where the victim is a woman, are reported. Northern professionals say that there is virtually no incidence of men reporting spousal assault. YCC inmates explain that women (who are most often the victims) are more likely to report spousal assault because they are more likely to talk about

and to report violence and abuse. Men are more likely, and indeed have more opportunities "to get away from it, to go out drinking."

While this study found the reporting of family violence and abuse is generally increasing, it is still the case that aboriginal people are not reporting most acts of violence and abuse in the N.W.T. In Lutsel K'e many people don't report family violence and abuse, seek help, or even admit that it is happening or is wrong. According to community members, reporting or dealing with family violence and abuse is hampered by

- a fear of being charged for their own use of drugs or alcohol;<sup>12</sup>
- a fear of criticism or alienation from community or family members; and
- a lack of confidence in the ability of agencies or the community to stop the violence.

Lutsel K'e focus group participants believe elders are ashamed of the violence and abuse and do not want to talk about it. Middle-aged people are aware of the violence and abuse but are unable or ill equipped to deal with it. Young people want to deal with the violence but are frustrated by the attitudes and general ineffectiveness of service agencies and the community to come to terms with it.

There are a number of other complex issues which affect the reporting of family violence and abuse. These factors are also very similar to the things that contribute to family violence and abuse.

- For people who grow up with violence, the abusive situation in which they live is often perceived as normal thus, actions which are morally unacceptable and often illegal, are seen as normal and acceptable.
- For individuals who grow up with violence and abuse, many think so little of themselves that they honestly believe that they deserve the treatment they are receiving.
- Aboriginal people say that family violence/abuse is a "*family secret*". People are afraid to talk about it - they feel guilty, ashamed, afraid, fearful of more violence. They put off talking about it, hoping that things will get better (eg. in the spring).
- Children are afraid to talk about the abuse and violence for fear of being taken away from their home, family and community.

12. Alcohol is prohibited in Lutsel K'e.

- Health and education programs, local support groups and "*just one person taking a stand*" at the community level have increased the awareness that family violence and abuse is morally wrong, in some cases illegal, and should not be tolerated. Awareness has encouraged greater reporting of some violent and abusive acts.
- Current policies require mandatory charging of abusers in spousal assault cases, and prosecution of those offenses. Mandatory charging sends a clear message that spousal assault is a criminal act and society will not tolerate it. It is clear that mandatory charging has discouraged reporting. In small communities many women are not reporting violence to the police, and in some cases they are refusing to seek assistance from health or social workers for fear workers will report the violence to the police.<sup>13</sup>
- People don't report violence and abuse in the home, especially spousal abuse, because they do not see jail or fines as stopping the violence, and they do not have faith in the legal or social services systems to stop the violence.
- Women who depend on their partners for money may be reluctant to report violence which may lead to their partner going to jail. Community women participating in the Gender Equality Review expressed real frustration that once their partners were in jail, they and their children suffered for the loss of his income. In a sense, they were punished for reporting the violence in the first place.<sup>14</sup>
- A survey of women's shelters indicates that northern women do not report family violence for fear of the abuser; economic and social dependence on the abuser; fear of telling their story in public (eg. in the courtroom); lack of understanding and fear of the court process; fear of humiliation and embarrassment; and a desire to put the situation behind them.<sup>15</sup> Women also indicate that they have no control in the justice system, that all decisions are out of their hands. Time and time again women said that they felt blamed, that they had no credibility, that they were not taken seriously. In court proceedings, women felt afraid and humiliated. This was particularly the case when testimony of painful and embarrassing

13. Mandatory charging came into effect in the N.W.T. in 1985. It means that the RCMP must lay charges against someone if they believe he/she has assaulted their spouse. The person who allegedly was assaulted has no say in whether or not charges are laid.

14. Peterson, K. (1992). The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality. Government of the N.W.T., Department of Justice, Yellowknife, NT.

15. The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality. p.76.

experiences were required in an open court.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.2 Recording of Family Violence and Abuse

G.N.W.T. criminal statistics show that the N.W.T. has the highest rate of violent crime in Canada. The rate of violence continues to increase and is particularly high among young people. The N.W.T. has more young offenders than any other jurisdiction in Canada.<sup>17</sup>

The Task Force on Spousal Assault (1985) visited 30 N.W.T. communities. It could not find one community agency which could confidently state the frequency of spousal assault. In this present study virtually every agency contacted in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e agreed that there are no statistics that truly reflect the full extent or nature of family violence/abuse in the N.W.T. The same problems that are associated with the reporting of family violence and abuse (see above) contribute to the difficulty agencies have in keeping accurate statistics on the extent of the violence. However, other factors also account for the lack of numbers:

- lack of mandate and/or policies on family violence and abuse (For example, the Federal Crown Prosecutor's office maintains limited statistics on family violence mainly because Justice Canada does not have a national policy on family violence. Similarly medical staff in hospitals and nursing stations and alcohol and drug workers frequently come across cases of family violence, but they have no mandate to keep numbers on this subject, so they don't.)
- lack of data indicators which identify incidents as "*family violence*" (For example, the RCMP have only recently begun to keep statistics which separate spousal assaults from other assaults. Statistics on inmates only describe whether the inmates' crime was against a person or property. These statistics do not tell us whether the crime was against a family member. Further, the only criminal code offense which can be traced directly to family violence is incest.)

<sup>16</sup>. The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality p.19. Although workshop participants were not identified in the report as aboriginal, the location of their communities indicates that in all likelihood a high percentage of them were. The report goes on to conclude that it is just such feelings which discourage reporting incidents of violence, which would include family violence as well.

<sup>17</sup>. 6.8% of the N.W.T. population compared to a nation average of 1.7%.

- inconsistent data collection and management methods (For example, GNWT statistics on the number of NWT residents in federal prisons are 25% higher than federal numbers because the GNWT uses the inmate's place of birth to define resident, rather than the federal criteria which is the location of the offence.)
- lack of agency coordination (For example, child sexual abuse data are based solely on what is recorded by community social workers rather than on data compiled by all community agencies such as the nursing station, RCMP, school staff or other front-line workers).
- lack of human resources/effort to record and maintain consistent data (For example, statistics maintained by the Federal Crown Prosecutor's office are cumbersome and problematic due to heavy staff workloads and lack of time to fill out forms.)

### **3.3 The Extent and Type of Family Violence and Abuse in Aboriginal Families**

*"Every family in the community is impacted in one way or another by family violence."* the view of a Lutsel K'e professional

Family violence and/or abuse *"is going on in every family I know."* Yellowknife Focus group

*"There are whole communities which are sick from the violence."* Yellowknife focus group

Professionals participating in the Yellowknife agency focus group say that in some northern communities all children are victims of abuse of some kind. In other communities not all children are victims but all are affected in some way by abuse and violence. Aboriginal people participating in focus groups in Lutsel K'e and Yellowknife say the problem of family violence and abuse is enormous in these communities and throughout the N.W.T. Yet over two-thirds (68%) of people personally interviewed in Lutsel K'e describe the problem of family violence and abuse as *"not so bad."* What this somewhat subjective term means is described below.

- Among persons interviewed in Lutsel K'e, 81% said they know of family violence and/or abuse in families. The kinds of abuse/violence people are aware of, are: child neglect, elder (physical) abuse, violent and abusive

threats, wife abandonment, "*beating the wife and getting mad at the kids*", and getting the silent treatment from a spouse for weeks.

- Half of those interviewed are aware of children who are affected by family violence/abuse. The most common forms are neglect, sexual abuse, being physically/emotionally mistreated, and being exposed to violence and abuse in the home.
- Over one-quarter (27%) of those interviewed know of elders who are involved in family violence/abuse either as abusers or victims.
- About 62% have personally been involved in violence/abuse. Most frequently males had experienced child abuse/violence and women have experience spousal abuse/violence.
- 55% had experienced family violence/abuse as an adult while one-third didn't want to talk about their adult experiences. In all but one of these cases, alcohol was involved.
- Over one-third (37%) of persons interviewed had been involved in family violence/abuse as a child (under the age of 12 years), including rape, being beaten, and being exposed to violence/abuse among other family members. In most of these cases alcohol was involved. Further, one-third (30%) said they didn't want to talk about their involvement in family violence/abuse as a child.
- While most people don't know or don't want to talk about their own parents' involvement in family violence and abuse, about 23% say that their mother and father have both been affected by family violence/abuse. Mainly it was their husband, father or uncle who abused them.

In Lutsel K'e violence between partners, particularly physical violence, seems to be the most visible form of violence. Privately several residents acknowledge that elder abuse, child neglect and sexual abuse involving children are even more common, though less publicly recognized. Preliminary data from a National Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NAADAP) survey of 13 NWT communities corroborates many of the views of Lutsel K'e residents.<sup>18</sup> That survey shows that spousal battering and alcohol abuse are key issues in 85% of family violence and/or abuse situations, child neglect in 69%, child sexual abuse in 46%, and child physical abuse in 38.5%.

<sup>18</sup> Data from the NAADAP survey has yet to be published.

### 3.4 The Documented Extent of Family Violence and Abuse

The Status of Women Council and the Yellowknife Public Health Clinic identify the most common forms of family violence and abuse in the N.W.T. and in Yellowknife, as: child sexual abuse; child abuse; child neglect; spousal assault and elder abuse. Focus group participants, and persons participating in personal and agency interviews also indicate that these are the most common forms of family violence and abuse. Some statistical data are available on these forms of violence and abuse.

#### **Child Sexual Abuse:**

Child sexual abuse in Lutsel K'e is a serious problem. An aboriginal professional from the community says, that while national statistics claim that one in three children are sexually abused at some time in their life, in Lutsel K'e the numbers are 10 out of 10. To some extent RCMP data corroborate this view. In this community of 286 people, 50 sexual assaults were reported in the last decade. Given the traditional reluctance to report such matters (see above) this number is probably much lower than the actual number of sexual assaults.

Of the 50 reported sexual assault cases in the community, two-thirds of the victims were under the age of 18 years (the average age of victims is estimated at 12.) Victims can be as young as three years and offenders as old as 73 years. Police in Lutsel K'e say that the perpetrators are getting younger, noting that 10% of charges laid involved a young offender. Most sexual assaults (regardless of the age of the victim) involve intercourse. Less than 10% involve touching. None of the child sexual assaults recorded by the RCMP in Lutsel K'e were alcohol related. While the greatest percentage of sexual assaults involving children were reported in 1991 and 1992, only one child in Lutsel K'e was investigated by Child Welfare authorities in 1991.

The Yellowknife Victims Assistance Program provides immediate emotional and other support to victims of crime, loss, and disaster. In 1992/93, 131 victims contacted the Yellowknife program and 84% of these were women. Child sexual abuse is the most common reason for contacting Victims Assistance, followed by other family problems, and crimes against persons (eg. assault). Between March and December 1992, the average number of contacts made by each client was 11.

A northern professional dealing with child sexual abuse reports that a man recently came forward to confess that he had abused every child in his community. This type of disclosure by offenders is not reflected in the numbers of child sexual abuse cases reported by victims. Current N.W.T. child sexual abuse intake reports show the high rate of child sexual abuse disclosures by females (80%). Social workers believe that the same rate of abuse is occurring among male children. In 1991, these intake reports showed 200 victims of abuse of which 85% were female, and 50% were between the ages of 5-12 years of age. 42% of child sexual abuse reports in that year were in the Baffin Region, and 23% in the Keewatin. The Yellowknife Region accounted for 13% of all N.W.T. victims in 1991. Territorial trends are reflected in the Yellowknife Region. Data in Table 2 show that in a majority of cases, the offender was known to the victim, was often in a position of trust, and was frequently a family member.

**TABLE 2: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE INTAKE REPORTS FOR THE YELLOWKNIFE REGION, 1990, 1991 and 1992**

	1990	1991	1992
Total Victims:	19	26	7
- Female	16	18	7
- Male	3	8	-
Victim's Age:			
- 5 years	6	8	-
-6-10 years	3	9	1
-11-15 years	7	6	5
-16+ years	2	1	1
-Unknown	1	2	-
Offender's Relation to Victim:			
-Related	6	6	2
-Non-related	6	4	3
-Friend/Relative of a Family Member	2	10	1
-Teacher	1	-	-
-Babysitter/Foster Parent	1	1	-
-Unknown/Not disclosed	3	5	1

Source: Dept. of Social Services, GNWT. (Based on information provided by community social workers.)

Note: Lutsel K'e is not included in the Yellowknife Region.

### **Child Abuse and Child Neglect:**

There is a strong relationship between child abuse and other forms of family violence. Half of the men who abuse their partners also abuse their children. About 30% of the children of battered women have been sexually abused. Further if children are not abused, those from violent homes suffer extreme emotional stress, may be physically hurt trying to protect their battered parent, and are more likely to find themselves in abusive relationships as adults.<sup>19</sup> In the N.W.T., legal professionals suggest that child abuse is wide-spread in all forms but few cases are ever brought before the courts.

In 1992/93, 217 children with mental and/or emotional behavioural problems from across the N.W.T. were referred for clinical assessment by professionals at the Dept. of Social Services. Of these nine came from Yellowknife and none from Lutsel K'e. (This year there were three referrals (two of which were "no shows") from Lutsel K'e.) Over half (51%) of the clinical assessment cases were children in the care of Social Services or were young offenders. No hard data exists on the number of mental/emotional behavioural problems which are related to family violence. But clinical assessment staff suggest that at least 75% have family violence as an underlying issue.

Most support services provided to school aged children with behavioural problems in the N.W.T. are thought to be related to family violence and abuse. Behavioural problems are seen to be on the increase in all N.W.T. schools. A study on factors contributing to early school leaving in the N.W.T. found<sup>20</sup> that *"students see problems in the home causing them to get inadequate sleep, miss or skip school, and/or constantly think about or to be preoccupied with these problems"*. Students see their schooling hurt by their own or another household member's use of alcohol, drugs or solvents (51%); by neglect and/or abuse in the home (35%); and by family arguments/breakdown (35%). The study also found that alcohol and suicide are prevalent in the lives of students at risk of leaving school - 44% have thought about/tried to commit suicide and 87% have known someone who has tried to commit/committed suicide. *"People are more likely to see suicide as an option under stress or crisis if they have been exposed to abuse,"* says one professional.

19. Breaking the Silence.

20. Lutra Associates Ltd. (1992). Lessons for All: Factors Contributing to Early School Leaving in the Northwest Territories. Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, NWT Directorate, and the Department of Education, Government of the N.W.T., Yellowknife, NT. p.27.

**Spousal Abuse (Including sexual assault):**

Spousal assault is a very serious problem in the north.<sup>21</sup> The extent of the problem is documented in part through data maintained by woman's shelters such as McAteer House in Yellowknife and the GNWT's Family Violence Program, and in part by data maintained by the RCMP and the legal system. Still these agencies suggest that the full extent of spousal violence and abuse is unknown.

McAteer House serves women and children from Yellowknife and from throughout the western N.W.T. including Lutsel K'e. Spousal abuse is the main reason women seek shelter (Table 3). Most shelter clients are of aboriginal ancestry and about 9% identify their first language as Chipewyan.<sup>22</sup> After leaving

**TABLE 3: Reason for Admission to, Plans After Discharge, and Ethnic Status of Clients from Women's Shelters in Yellowknife and Fort Smith, 1991/92 (1990/91)**

	McAteer	Sutherland	NWT Total
<b>Reason for Admission</b>			
-Abuse of Wife	100%(100%)	78% (45%)	74% (77%)
-Abuse of Children		8%(8%)	2% (6%)
-Sexual Assault		1%	1% (1%)
-Other		13%(47%)	23% (15%)
<b>Plans for Discharge</b>			
-Return to Spouse	36%(19%)	63% (54%)	60% (59%)
-Live with Family/Friends	12%(19%)	3% (18%)	8% (18%)
-Live on Own	29%(25%)	10% (4%)	9% (9%)
-2nd Stage	7%(6%)		2% (3%)
-Other/Unknown	16%(14%)	23% (24%)	20% (12%)
<b>Ethnic Status of Clients</b>			
-Euro-Canadian	14%(19%)	3% (44%)	11% (18%)
-Dene	47%(42%)	77% (41%)	34% (25%)
-Inuit	29%(38%)	16% (9%)	41% (49%)
-Metis	6%(1%)	3% (6%)	7% (5%)
-Other	4%	1%	7% (3%)

Source: Family Violence Prevention Programs-April 1991-March 1992 and April 1990-March 1991, Dept. of Social Services, GNWT

21. Task Force on Spousal Assault.

22. Lutsel K'e is one of three mainly Chipewyan communities in the N.W.T.- Fort Resolution and Fort Smith being the other two. Persons of Chipewyan ancestry do of course live in other N.W.T. communities including Yellowknife.

the shelter most clients return to their spouse. If the number of women (and children) seeking shelter is an indication of the extent of spousal abuse, it is indeed a serious problem. Based on 1991 Census data and assuming one-time usage, about 6% of the female population over the age of 15 years sought services at an N.W.T. shelter in that year (Table 4).

**TABLE 4: Number of Women and Children Utilizing Shelters in Yellowknife and Fort Smith, 1988-1993**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Occupancy Rates</u>
<b>1992/93</b>				
McAteer House	92	123	215	98.5%
Sutherland	78	111	189	45%
NWT Total	831	1110	1941	82%
<b>1991/92</b>				
McAteer House	131	195	326	72%
Sutherland	303	300	603	48%
NWT Total	1113	1252	2365	92%
<b>1990/91</b>				
McAteer House	83	78	161	113%
Sutherland	74	115	189	56%
NWT Total	693	819	1512	87%
<b>1989/90</b>				
McAteer House	70	71	141	105%
Sutherland	88	110	198	57.3%
NWT Total	562	645	1207	87%
<b>1988/89</b>				
McAteer House	77	81	158	87%
NWT Total	484	539	1023	72%

Source: Family Violence Prevention Programs-April 1991-March 1992, Dept. of Social Services,GNWT

Spousal assault is a major factor in cases handled by N.W.T. Counselling Services in Yellowknife. In 60% of their cases (estimated at 250 in 1992/93) clients report being in an abusive relationship or being an adult survivor of sexual assault as the reason for needing help. In 80% of cases, some form of family violence and/or abuse is the presenting problem. The vast majority of this particular agency's clients are non-aboriginal female victims who have taken it upon themselves to seek counselling (Table 5). However, an agency representative suggests that the reasons aboriginal clients seek counselling do not differ significantly from those of other clients.

**TABLE 5: Client Profile of NWT Counselling Services, Yellowknife, 1990-1993**

	<u>1992/93</u>	<u>1991/92</u>	<u>1990/91</u>
<b>Gender:</b>			
Men	20	16	33
Women	82	71	50
<b>Referral Source:</b>			
Self	50%	52%	56%
McAteer	18%	15%	11%
YCC	-	-	11%
Social Services	7%	8%	18%
EAP	2%	-	3%
Other	33%	25%	1%
<b>Ethnic Status:</b>			
Euro-Canadian	67%	52%	41%
Dene	18%	24%	25%
Inuit	8%	20%	25%
Metis	9%	4%	9%
<b>Employment Status:</b>			
Student	24%	16%	5%
Unemployed	13%	14%	38%
Employed	19%	19%	26%
Homemaker	5%	20%	-
Other	41%	28%	31%

Source: Family Violence Prevention Programs-April 1991-March 1992, Dept. of Social Services,GNWT

Tables 6 and 7 report on the actual offenses recorded by the Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e RCMP detachments. In Yellowknife the number of reported spousal assaults more than doubled in the seven year period between 1985-1992, while the number of reported sexual assaults more than tripled over this same period. Similarly the number of male offenders involved in spousal assaults almost tripled over this same period. Findings<sup>23</sup> reported in the Gender Equality Review state that one in four women in the N.W.T. are thought to have been sexually assaulted by their partner at some time in their relationship.

23. The Status of Women Committee of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association as reported in The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality.

**TABLE 6: RCMP STATISTICAL REPORTS ON ACTUAL OFFENSES,  
YELLOWKNIFE 1985, 1986, 1991, and 1992**

	1985	1986	1991	1992
Homicide	3	4	3	-
Robbery	10	9	1	17
Assaults	228	242	423	492
-aggr/sexual	-	1	1	1
-sexual asslt./wp	-	1	-	2
-sexual asslt.	15	12	46	50
-common assault	159	176	313	356
-assault/wp.	39	35	12	17
-aggr. assault	3	1	6	-
-bodily harm	3	2	23	25
-f'arm/intent	-	-	1	3
-police	4	6	4	7
-other peace pub/o	-	-	1	1
-other assaults	5	8	16	30
Other Sex Offence	-	-	-	-
Abductions	-	-	2	4
Total Persons	242	255	429	513
Based on Incidents Reported				
Other Duties	43	42	61	79
-spousal assault MO	25	26	58	71
-spousal assault FO	18	16	3	8

Source: RCM Police Operational Statistics Reporting System, Division "G", 1993

Note: MO = male offender FO = female offender

In the last decade Lutsel K'e has also experienced increases in assaults of all kinds. For a community of only 286 people, the community has an alarmingly high rate of spousal assaults. An analysis of assault data between 1986 and 1993 showed that 53% of the incidents involved liquor and 47% of incidents involved the victim's spouse. In 58% of the 50 sexual assaults over the last decade the victim was female and under the age of 18 years. In 10% of the cases a young offender (eg. under the age of 16 years) was charged. 6% of sexual assaults involved liquor.

TABLE 7: RCMP STATISTICAL REPORTS, LUTSEL K'E, 1982-1993

	1982-87	1988-1990	1991	1992	1993	TOTAL
Homicide	1					1
Robbery						0
Assaults	113	39	51	52	24	279
-aggr/sexual			1			1
-sexual asslt./wp						0
-sexual asslt.	7	6	14	17	6	50
-common assault	83	29	33	31	15	191
-assault/wp.						0
-aggr. assault	2	2	1	1		6
-bodily harm	16	12	2	1	1	22
-f'arm/intent						0
-police	5					5
-other peace pub/o						0
-other assaults				2	2	4
Coroners Act (1982-93)						4
Child Welfare (1982-93)						3
Family Relations (1982-93)						2

Based on Incidents Reported Between 1982-1993

-spou.asslt.MO = 64

-spou.asslt.FO = 14

Note: 1993 data are for a six month period from Jan. 1 to June 26, 1993.

Source: RCM Police Operational Statistics Reporting System, Division "G", 1993

Data drawn from Justice Canada files provide an overview of the number of spousal assault cases brought before N.W.T. courts (Table 8) rather than the actual number of spousal assaults.<sup>24</sup> None of the actual reported spousal assaults in Lutsel K'e (Table 8) were brought before the courts.

24. These data do not reflect the actual number of spousal assault cases as many are not reported or many of those that are, are never brought before the courts due to lack of evidence.

**TABLE 8: SPOUSAL ASSAULT CASES BROUGHT BEFORE THE COURTS IN THE N.W.T., June 1, 1992 to May 31, 1993**

	<b>Common Assault (s266 CC)</b>	<b>Assault Causing Bodily Harm/With Weapon (s267 CC)</b>	<b>Sexual Assault (s271 CC)</b>
Yellowknife	36	6	1
Lutsel K'e	-	-	-
Total NWT	106	31	4

Source: Department of Justice Canada, 1993

Note: s266 CC = Section 266 of the Criminal Code of Canada

During the past decade a Northern Addictions Services staff member has collected some data on the problems experienced by clients beyond alcohol and drug addictions. Although these numbers are informal, the results show that 94.7% of female clients under 35 years of age identify themselves as victims of multiple abuse (sexual abuse being the most prevalent), usually by a family member or friend in an alcohol-related situation. All were battered as adults. This agency also found that every male client has at one time or another been incarcerated for an alcohol-related offence, usually violent and family related.

#### **Elder Abuse:**

According to social services staff, housing agencies, medical personnel and alcohol treatment staff elder abuse is a significant and growing problem in the N.W.T. The number of alcohol treatment clients disclosing elder abuse and the intensity of their remorse suggests that elder abuse is extensive and is an aspect of family violence that is particularly shameful/disrespectful. There are no statistics on this growing problem. Many people participating in this study believe little if anything has been done in the N.W.T. to identify or address elder abuse. It is also believed that elders are too ashamed or afraid to speak of the abuse. Laying charges for such abuse is virtually unheard of in the N.W.T.

#### **Other Types of Family Violence and Abuse:**

Northern professionals suggest that all forms of physical violence are accompanied by emotional and mental abuse. Emotional and mental abuse is difficult to identify, monitor and address. But professionals and community members agree that this form of abuse is rampant. Emotional/psychological abuse often takes place in front of others. Such public displays of disrespectful and humiliating behaviour make it particularly difficult for aboriginal people to deal with.

Emotional abuse is also a problem in custody cases involving aboriginal parent(s). In over half (54%) of the custody cases handled by one legal professional, emotional abuse was raised as an issue. In separation/divorce cases, family violence was raised as an issue at least 50% of the time.

At the request of the study team, statistics were compiled from files maintained by psychiatric services at Stanton Yellowknife Hospital. Between April 1992-March 1993, an estimated 210 patients were referred as outpatients to the Mental Health Clinic for psychiatric services. Of these patients the contributing factor to the psychiatric problem was identified as sexual abuse in 13% of cases; alcohol abuse (16%); and alcohol directly (8%). Statistics compiled from patient files found that on the psychiatric ward in the three month period between April 1-June 31, 1993, 92% of ward patients had experienced physical and/or verbal abuse; 64% had experienced sexual abuse; and 87% were alcoholics or affected by the alcohol abuse of a family member and/or partner.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.5 Violence and Abuse in Aboriginal Families A Long Time Ago

According to aboriginal women participating in a Yellowknife focus group for this study, family violence and/or abuse used to take place behind closed doors, *"where even in-laws didn't know about it."* *"10-15 years ago we took it as aboriginal people and aboriginal women. We believed that it was our lot in life. Today we are not as accepting and we are seeing more violence."*

In Lutsel K'e, over half of all individuals and two-thirds of females interviewed, say that violence and/or abuse occurred in aboriginal families a long time ago. The only specific example given of times when it was acceptable to use violence or abuse was *"when a mate was lazy."*

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<sup>25</sup> In the past year the number of referrals for psychiatric services has declined from an annual average of 350 due to a change in mandate which excludes alcohol and family violence related problems. People are screened out if family violence or alcohol is the presenting problem.

## 4. ISSUES RELATED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE IN THE N.W.T.

The people participating in this study and the literature reviewed identified a range of issues and factors which contribute to family violence and abuse in N.W.T. aboriginal families. The most significant of them are briefly documented here.

### 4.1 Patriarchy and Power

Many individuals working to stop family violence and abuse believe the greatest underlying cause is the patriarchal nature of North American society. Women, children and elders are the most commonly abused members of both aboriginal and non-aboriginal societies, while men hold most of the power - economically, socially, politically and spiritually.

The priorities of society, as expressed in the laws of government, band councils, churches and most other institutions, are male dominated. One participant was clear that an underlying factor in the prevalence of family violence is that government does not make stopping it a high priority. Instead it funnels money toward roads and other services. In a patriarchal society women and children have a lower social status than men. Where there is patriarchy men expect to hold more power than women and women have learned to accept, if not expect, certain abuses of power. One aboriginal woman in a focus group was adamant that *"society is patriarchal, and we have to name it as such. Men say they value families but they are trying to keep women and children down."*

Although patriarchy typically benefits the interests of men over women and children, men can bear psychological and emotional scars from living with abuses of power inherent in patriarchal society and families. The authoritarian nature of patriarchal families discourages boys and men from feeling or expressing emotions other than anger, and in some instances fear. Showing emotions other than anger is a sign of weakness in patriarchy. Males do not learn how to express or to name the wide range of human emotions they experience. Furthermore, they become unable to distinguish feelings such as joy, love, and kindness, from feelings such as jealousy, greed and lust. As this and other studies have shown, one prevalent abuse of power in the patriarchal family is wife battering. In order to survive in such relationships, women learn to suppress or ignore their emotions, often in hopes of preventing further beatings.

Consequently women living in, as well as leaving, abusive relationships have difficulty identifying and expressing their feelings.

Feeling powerless was among the most frequently identified factors contributing to family violence and/or abuse in the personal interviews conducted in Lutsel K'e. The sense of powerlessness of both the victim and offender is a key issue. Among aboriginal people, who have so little control over the social, political and economic aspects of their lives, the control one family member has over another, may in fact be all that individual can exercise. Living on social assistance with no hope for the future creates an overwhelming sense of powerlessness. And among victims a sense of powerlessness may lead to feelings that they deserve to be beaten. Both women and men frequently identified jealousy, cheating on a partner or being suspected of cheating, and needing someone to pick on as contributing to family violence. *"Until we find ways to restore the self-esteem the violence will continue,"* says one Yellowknife woman.

Several agency representatives express deep concern about the tolerance for violence in aboriginal communities, particularly against women and children. The patriarchal structure of traditional aboriginal societies is sometimes blamed. It is important to note that traditionally aboriginal men and women had greater sexual equality relative to the non-aboriginal society with which it had first contact.<sup>26</sup> In contemporary times non-aboriginal society is still grappling with the patriarchal focus of its society and with family violence among its members.

#### 4.2 Traditional Dene Views and Practices

It was stated to the Task Force on Spousal Assault that, *"...spousal assault is not an accepted part of cultural behaviour amongst Chipewyan people."*<sup>27</sup> However interviews with elders in the Traditional Dene Justice Project suggest a different story for Dogrib women. *"Every woman interviewed reported abuse by men over the years, many when they were young girls and women."*<sup>28</sup>

While traditionally *"men were the boss of women,"* excessive physical abuse in families was cause for intervention by the camp leader and sometimes grounds

<sup>26</sup> Ryan Joan. (1993) Traditional Dene Justice. Draft document to be published by the Arctic Institute, Calgary, Alberta. p.66

<sup>27</sup> Task Force on Spousal Assault. p.9

<sup>28</sup> Traditional Dene Justice. p. 7

for marriage separation. Most women interviewed individually for this study named laziness as contributing to violence or abuse. Laziness is often named as the reason aboriginal men traditionally physically disciplined women. In traditional aboriginal societies laziness was life-threatening. Not ensuring that adequate clothing was available or food preserved could jeopardize the success of male hunters and the survival of the family. Jealousy is also offered as a reason family violence and or abuse might have occurred a long time ago.

Rape was unknown within marriage, and rape outside of marriage was uncommon and would result in banishment of the offender, the ultimate sanction. Young women were protected from sexual assault through constant supervision and strict rules for behaviour after puberty.

Traditionally Dene children were expected to obey and respect their parents and elders. Physical discipline was used as a means of teaching children respect and proper behaviour. The elders in the Traditional Dene Justice Project made a distinction between discipline and abuse. *"The difference between discipline and abuse was determined by love. If parents loved their children they would discipline them so they could learn well and have sufficient skills to live in a harsh environment. Abuse occurred when people did not care about the child and did not love him [sic] either, that is, when the action was done to hurt only, rather than to teach the child."*<sup>29</sup>

The Traditional Dene Justice Project research with elders suggests that among Dogrib people there was little "crime" in traditional times. The intimate living situation in small camps made it difficult or impossible to keep secret any wrongdoing. At the same time social control was maintained through a common understanding of the rules for proper behaviour and the results of breaking those rules.

#### 4.3 A Spiritual Vacuum

Traditionally the Dene had a common understanding of the interdependence among the animal, plant, spiritual and human worlds and their responsibilities for maintaining harmony and balance among these elements. Each individual was seen as contributing to the collective well-being. Sharing was a primary symbol of this solidarity.

29. Traditional Dene Justice, p.52

Many of the behaviours linked to the traditional world view of Dene society are active within the culture today - the ethic of non-interference, the use of persuasion rather than authoritarianism, sharing based on need, and so on. However participants in this study agree that key values, namely respect and a common understanding of a moral code of ethics necessary for a harmonious existence, have been eroded.

In the words of one participant, *"a lack of spirituality has become a key factor in family violence and abuse in aboriginal families."* Many aboriginal people are seen as being *"cut off from any source of external power, cut off from Mother Earth, the Creator, or any system of beliefs about how the world is organized,"* and how they as individuals or as a community fit into today's world. Such disconnections are also expressed as a sense of powerlessness, or alienation from God, family and society. The result is the disconnection of the individual from his/her own feelings, history and experiences. This is the ultimate in alienation and it leads to self-loathing and an inability to live ethically.

One medical professional equates the lack of values and spirituality to being without internal boundaries, of simply having no personal understanding of what is right or wrong. The professional opinion that, *"there are many damaged people in the north, people who live without values,"* is dramatically underscored by the concerned aboriginal woman who says, *"we are damaged people and we need help."*

#### **4.4 Changing Aboriginal Family Relationships and Lifestyles**

Traditionally aboriginal men, women, children and elders had clearly defined roles. Men hunted and trapped. Women contributed to the family/community economy by sewing clothing, fishing, hunting small game, and gathering and preparing food. From an early age children were given chores and increasing responsibilities to prepare them for adulthood. Elders played a major role in teaching the skills and knowledge of living off the land and in ensuring that the Dene world view was passed on to younger generations. In the subsistence economy individual contributions were complementary and essential to the well being and survival of the group.

The fur trade changed not only the Dene economy but traditional family roles. *"Women worked but no longer received recognition for their work, nor did they*

*get cash for it. This eventually led to a change from the relative traditional sexual equality between men and women, to male economic and social dominance."*<sup>30</sup>

Today Dene women are becoming the main wage earners due to the decline of trapping and hunting. The jobs currently available are for those with higher levels of formal education and training, most frequently women. This has upset the balance of power and responsibility within aboriginal families and eroded traditional gender-specific roles. In Lutsel K'e, women are generally better educated than men and hold most of the wage-earning jobs, few as they are. This contributes to low self-esteem among men and creates situations where men threaten spouses with violence if they leave the community for further education or take jobs within the community. The model in action is known as the "drag-down" syndrome. One woman recalled how her husband told her not to come home unless she got a job. When she got a job he wanted her to quit.

Eight years ago the N.W.T. Task Force on Spousal Assault reported "*changes in traditional family structures, the emergence of the woman as family provider, increases in unemployment, particularly among men, and the introduction of new values which are in apparent conflict with old values are all put forward as things which influence spousal assault patterns and frequencies.*"<sup>31</sup>

The conveniences of modern living combined with the increased demands of school mean that Dene children are less actively involved in family life and chores than they were in the past. With less time spent with other family members and fewer responsibilities young people today are seen as "*having nothing to do and no direction in life.*" The traditionally strong relationship between elders and young people has been broken by a lack of common language, a perception that traditional knowledge is irrelevant for today and the future, and by the transfer of responsibility for educating children to an education system which does not promote a Dene world view. Young people are receiving information and education from a variety of sources today, including television and videos, which often become babysitters. In modern life, valuable human interaction previously apparent among members of the aboriginal family, has been lost.

30. Traditional Dene Justice. p.66

31. Task Force on Spousal Assault. p.11

While participants in the study saw the lack of family support as contributing to family violence, some find family interference or pressure just as much of a problem. This apparent contradiction could be interpreted as an illustration of the struggle that families face when they are "*caught between the old ways and the new ways*," a struggle which is also seen as a prominent factor in family violence. Family breakdown and losses, such as death in the family or a childhood interrupted by violence and abuse, overcrowded housing conditions, money problems, the loss of a job or being kicked out of school are also seen as contributing to changing relationships, priorities and lifestyles in aboriginal families and to violence and abuse.

Last, but not least, in traditional Dene society, people caring for each other and each other's well-being was an essential characteristic of family relationships. Today caring is becoming an increasingly precious commodity in Dene communities. The Traditional Dene Justice Project describes how people "*feel isolated from each other often expressing feelings which indicate they don't feel cared for by spouses, by parents, by children, or by leadership.*"<sup>32</sup> The absence of caring for others may be both a cause and an effect of family violence and abuse.

#### 4.5 Leadership

In the view of many study participants family violence in the N.W.T. has become institutionalized and cross-generational. Some participants are dismayed by the "*ability of communities to tolerate the intolerable.*" The tolerance of violence and abuse by leaders promotes acceptance within communities and families.

Study participants see northern leaders contributing to family violence in several ways. They are not informing themselves about the issue. Through their lack of awareness and neglect they are ignoring the power and control issues, the anger, and the despair which lead to family violence and abuse. Leaders are seen to place their emphasis on economic development. This sends a message that the human issues within their communities are not important. It is well-known that many leaders, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, are themselves abusers and therefore they have an interest in keeping the issue "*under wraps.*" And since most leaders are men, it is suspected they are unwilling to give up control. Several territorial and local politicians and the former

32. Traditional Dene Justice. p. 76-77

Western Arctic federal MP have been convicted of family violence or abuse. Rarely do members of band and tribal councils or the N.W.T. Legislative Assembly impose sanctions on colleagues convicted of such crimes.

The Traditional Dene Justice Project found *"there are complaints that Chief and Council only act on their own behalf and are not accountable to the community. Leaders are often seen as acting inappropriately especially when drinking...People sense a lack of strength and self-discipline in the leadership and in themselves."*<sup>33</sup> A sober leadership is key to communities being able to help themselves, say people interviewed in Lutsel K'e.

*"People often don't see the relationship between their acceptance of abusive leaders and acceptance of abuse in their own homes. When these leaders commit crimes in the area of family violence, they do not always understand why they have violent behaviour...our leaders must take their own steps to deal with their pain before they lead the community. Otherwise the frustration remains since the blind are leading the blind."*<sup>34</sup>

#### 4.6 The Influence of Christian Institutions

Churches and church-run residential schools are documented in literature and in this study as having a significant impact on the extent and nature of violence and abuse among aboriginal families. One Yellowknife professional suggests that abuse among young boys in residential schools was as high as 90% and 10% for girls. Residential schools introduced a model of physical discipline which reshaped the views and approaches to conflict of students and succeeding generations.

In residential schools students learned to reject, rather than to understand and be proud of their life. They suffered physical (including sexual), emotional and mental abuse.<sup>35</sup> Focus group participants in Lutsel K'e said that many young people grew up feeling that their *"family didn't want or love us any more."* And

33. Traditional Dene Justice. p.76-77

34. Community Evaluation of Family Violence Initiatives. (1993). Native Women's Association of the N.W.T. with support from Indian and Inuit Affairs, INAC. Yellowknife, NT.

35. *ibid.*

some parents are overcome by guilt and shame for the pain their children endured at residential schools. Students lost the opportunity to learn parenting skills in a family or community setting; the sense of protection and guidance of their parents; and lost a sense of themselves. Aboriginal women say losses are a major factor in family violence and abuse - loss of cultural teachings, language, spirituality, culture and rituals.

Christian churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church (which has played a dominant role in most Dene communities), are patriarchal in structure. The churches reinforce a subservient role for women and the traditional Dene belief in life-long marriage arrangements. Aboriginal women participating in a Yellowknife focus group explained that women brought up in convents or hostels were taught to respect the institution of marriage, accept abuse and look for a better day tomorrow. In the words of one woman, *"I was forced to get married because I was pregnant. I always thought the relationship might get better as time went on but the violence got worse. I didn't know what to look forward to when my husband got home. We always had food but there was always lots of mental and physical abuse."*

Churches and residential schools have had a role in promoting silence about sexual abuse and sexual assault, whether it occurred in schools or elsewhere. As one woman said, in the old days there was little discussion about sexual abuse because people were taught in the mission that anything sexual was dirty. The effects of this silence is still being felt today.

In individual interviews the church and schools are blamed for beginning a cycle of dysfunctional families, for *"putting garbage in your brain,"* and not teaching kids about the dangers of alcohol and drugs. Churches have taken some action, such as sponsoring the recent gathering of former students of Turquetil Hall hostel in Chesterfield Inlet. However, agency representatives suggest that churches are condoning family violence and abuse by their silence on the issue, and the absence of any programs to prevent or address it. It is significant that participants in the study seldom seek help from a priest or pastor after a violent or abusive incident, according to the individual interviews. Still, individuals in Lutsel K'e suggest that churches have a role and should be involved in stopping the violence.

#### 4.7 Alcohol and Other Addictions

Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e participants in this study clearly see alcohol and other addictive substances as a symptom rather than the cause of family violence. In other studies aboriginal victims often cite alcohol as the cause of family violence.<sup>36</sup> However, aboriginal communities which have achieved widespread sobriety, for example, Alkali Lake, are still experiencing family violence. This would seem to be the case in Lutsel K'e as well. Exposure to alcohol abuse is so pervasive that an attitude has developed that violence is worse or in a separate category when the man is sober.

American statistics show that 80% of adult women alcoholics were abused as children and there is opinion that a similar pattern exists in the N.W.T. It is more difficult to judge the relationship between past abuse and alcohol among men because they are less likely to disclose abuse. However one inmate at YCC says *"when people are drinking the violence of childhood comes back like a nightmare."*

Although it is not necessarily the cause of family violence, alcohol does contribute to the extent and nature of abusive or violent actions. One agency representative agrees that while alcohol is not a cause of family violence, *"alcohol, a poor view of women and pornography are a volatile combination."* Inmates at YCC recognize that an individual does not have to be drinking to be violent, but with drinking there is no control. Given the extent of alcohol abuse, professionals express concern about the number of Fetal Alcohol Effected people and people with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Part of FAS and FAE is an impaired ability to distinguish right from wrong. Currently there are few resources for diagnosing FAE and no special programs for those who are diagnosed.

There is a growing recognition of the impact of gambling addictions on family violence and abuse, particularly child neglect. In N.W.T. communities gambling usually takes the form of all-night card games or frequent nights out playing bingo. Gambling creates financial pressures within families and weakens family relationships. Ironically many northern aboriginal people turning away from alcohol are finding themselves immersed in gambling.

36. Blood Tribe Family Violence Study: Final Report. It is interesting to note that since 1989, Lutsel K'e has focused on sobriety in the community. Since then an estimated 60 people have been sent out for treatment including the leaders. But there have been problems, see page 44 of this report.

#### 4.8 Learned Behaviour

Participants in this study strongly suggest that aboriginal people have become conditioned to violence by growing up with it. Inmates at the YCC say violence in the family of origin, or *"where you come from,"* is a significant factor in the violence in their present family life. One professional working with children observed, *"even with six and seven year olds, it's ingrained that violence is okay, that that's the reaction when you're not happy with someone."*

Aboriginal women too say violence and abuse is *"carrying on to children who accept it because their Mom and Dad did it."* The abuse and violence is all *"shame-based stuff,"* and shame has become a norm in communities. Shame prevents people from discussing and dealing with family violence and/or abuse. Shame keeps violence hidden. An aboriginal professional made the point clearly: *"We all learned to be ashamed. Our parents were ashamed to be Indian. Today we are ashamed of the abuse. It is the message society constantly gives, a message learned."*

There is a strong message from people working with offenders and victims that there is a cycle of abuse rampant in the N.W.T. Some speculate that some cases of elder abuse may involve individuals who were previously abused by these elders. The cyclical nature of family violence and abuse leads some agency representatives to suggest that resources concentrate on keeping current victims from becoming abusers.

The research team developed a checklist of actions related to family violence and/or abuse. Participants confirmed each of the actions in Table 9, and then added many more. Some northern professionals were critical of the original list because it focused on external factors, rather than on internal coping mechanisms.

TABLE 9: THINGS RELATED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

-family interference/pressure (eg. from in-laws)	
-loss of job/kicked out of school	
-cheating on partner/suspected of cheating	
-pregnancy	-not able to have children
-too many children	-children acting up
-money problems	-illness
-death in family	-card games/bingos
-"asking for it"	-laziness
-needing someone to pick on	-low self esteem
-family breakdown	-drinking/drugs/solvents
-jealousy	-crowded housing
-feeling powerless	-residential schools
-too much education	-not enough education
-leaders setting bad example	
-caught between the old ways and the new ways	
-lack of family support and direction	
-bad attitudes about Dene/aboriginal people	
-being raised in a violent/abusive family	
-people don't think it is wrong	
-beliefs that men should have more power	
<u>Additions Provided By Study Participants</u>	
-working parents	-weak family relationships,
-poor parent-child relationships	-media violence
-sexually active 12/13 year olds	-survivors of abuse
-unemployment	-sexual abuse
-unhealthy community and family environments	
-FAS/FAE (eg. unable to differentiate right and wrong)	
-influence of parents and peers	-anger/frustration mismanagement
-low self-esteem	-poor communications skills
-a sense of hopelessness	-poverty
-cycle (eg. elders once abusers now the abused)	
-residential schools	-socialization/family values
-dysfunctional leadership	
-control, power imbalance, and dominance in relationships	
-learned behaviour	-cycle of sexual abuse
-tacit approval in a patriarchal society	-low community/racial self-esteem
-cultural disintegration	-institutional abuse
-lack of communication among family members,	
-forgiveness	-isolation from family/other supports

## 5. DEALING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Many people are reluctant to confront the violence and abuse in their homes and seek help. One woman's experience was related during this study - she didn't seek help until the 34th time she was violently abused.

### 5.1 Running Away

Both professionals and individuals see running away as a common way to cope with family violence and abuse. Perhaps most disturbing is how often individuals in Lutsel K'e suggest that running away is the way families and individuals should deal with family violence. Running away happens in a literal sense, usually with women and children leaving home to go to a shelter. It also happens when people play cards all night, when children sleep and spend all their time anywhere but at home, in the case of suicide, alcohol drug and solvent abuse. Others disassociate; one woman says she *"escaped mentally into another role and denied what happened, blocked it out."* For some, physical sickness provides relief.

### 5.2 Staying Silent

Silence is a primary coping mechanism because talking confirms the reality of the violence and abuse. As well, *"talking about it would be admitting your own guilt about the abuse."* One woman notes that in her silence, *"I used to fantasize about how my husband would die and how I would explain it to the police."*

Professionals who work with children suggest that until six or seven years of age, kids are willing to talk about the violence. After that they quit. *"They learn at an early age that silence is the way to deal with violence."*

Fear, threats and retaliation are factors which keep victims silent. *"I stayed because I was afraid they would take my baby. I left once and he and my in-laws took the baby so I went back. That fear kept me in my marriage for years."* When people remain silent the isolation is acute. *"You feel you are the only one in an abusive situation."*

Professionals in the study see breaking the silence as a necessary early step to stopping the violence. *"If we communicate, the threat of abuse is much less."* But there are many reasons why aboriginal people affected by violence aren't willing to take that step.

- a spouse threatens to kill himself and *"it will be your fault if you don't come back."*
- threats to harm or take the children
- relatives will turn against and blame the victim
- children who believe they will be taken away if they say anything
- *"if the family can't protect me, how can anyone else"*
- no place to go
- no money to go out on own
- no faith that the courts or other services will stop the violence
- fear of not being able to support the children and that they will be taken away.

### 5.3 Seeking Help Within the Community and Family

In individual interviews it is clear that aboriginal people are still seeking help from within their families and from elders. While this strategy isn't always stopping the family violence, it hasn't made it worse. In some cases relatives and elders have done nothing or told victims not to bother them. But in the majority of cases they have offered comfort to the victim, listened and given advice, taken the kids before social services did, sent a victim out to school, hid a victim from her husband, taken in women and children, or eventually called the RCMP. Other family members have talked to the abusers, told them how to live the *"right way,"* scolded them and told them how to be a better person, talked sense into them in a good way, and told offenders to seek treatment.

While almost half the individuals interviewed in Lutsel K'e didn't offer an opinion, half of those who did answer, say that trust and protection within families was about the same today as in the past. Most said they would go elsewhere rather than seek help from community leaders.

Within communities, Alcohol Anonymous meetings are seen as a way to lessen the violence by at least helping people stay sober. Support groups for women are blooming. Similar groups for men are less common. Healing circles are

being held among the Gwich'in and every Tuesday night in Yellowknife. In addition to personal help, support groups provide a forum for demanding that leaders and government assume their rightful responsibility in the matter of family violence.

Men are the least likely to seek help and have the greatest difficulty doing so. With so few places to turn, study participants say men are starting to disclose in women's groups. However, disclosure is more difficult for men because it threatens their manhood. Professionals believe the abuse is also more violent and the effects more traumatic for men than for women. YCC inmates say that healing means learning to talk about the violence. One-on-one counselling is best because there is "*no one there to see you cry*." While there is limited one-on-one counselling available in communities, elders can fill a similar role. The men at YCC say they seek help from elders because older people are less likely to gossip or criticize. YCC inmates and most other study participants say that trust is perhaps the most critical element in seeking help.

#### 5.4 Seeking Professional Help or Treatment

Professionals and individuals agree that there is a growing dependency on institutional help, and on political and financial solutions to all kinds of issues. Family violence and abuse is no different.

In Lutsel K'e there is a typical pattern evolving when spousal assault, for instance, is reported to authorities. Women and children are sent to McAteer House in Yellowknife for immediate safety and counselling. The offending husband stays home and "*goes fishing with his buddies*." In some situations the spouse feels he has lost face because he cannot control his wife. He might then follow his wife to Yellowknife, harassing her once she leaves the shelter and has moved into public housing. If this happens the violence may begin again and often becomes worse. If charges are laid, the offender may be jailed in Yellowknife for a time.

The majority of individuals interviewed say help from outside the family sometimes stops the violence. Many people say they would prefer to talk to a Dene person about family violence because "*my own people understand better*" or they would be "*more at ease*." In the decision about whether or not to seek professional help and with whom, it is more important that the client trusts the

professional and believe he/she has experience with family violence than that the professional be an aboriginal person.

The Tree of Peace Friendship Centre in Yellowknife is seldom contacted with family or sexual abuse issues. Friendship Centre staff say at least some people do not trust that confidentiality will be maintained because of the organization's widespread contacts within the aboriginal community.

The range of services which address family violence and abuse are discussed below and summarized in Appendix G.

### Social Services

The community social worker is a powerful figure who is perceived as having *"the authority to change the makeup of families by virtue of removing a child or withholding (financial) support."*

In Lutsel K'e and to some extent in Yellowknife, social workers are aboriginal women from the community. They are less subject to the criticism aimed at workers from outside the north, whose values frequently conflict with those of small aboriginal communities. Social workers have been criticized during this study for using a woman's own abusive behaviour to not support her and her children's travel to a shelter. Social workers define the problem of people seeking help and decide who will be referred. A frequent observation is that social workers are in need of additional training to deal effectively with the breadth and extent of social problems such as those posed by family violence. However additional training will not help if caseloads are not reduced. Community social workers are overworked and under-resourced due in part to poor program coordination within regional and headquarters operations.

A five-person clinical assessment team serves the entire N.W.T. It provides mental and emotional health assessments, upon referral from area social services. It identifies problems but follow-up treatment isn't always available.

The Family Violence Program supports nine women's shelters and three community-based prevention programs and contracts with the private sector for counselling services. The Child Sexual Abuse Program arranges contracted therapeutic services, provides information on child sexual abuse, assists with investigations, provides training to other professionals and administers program funds for communities. There is no specific program or funding source to deal

E:Consent Form

F:Family Violence and/or Abuse Questionnaire

G:Services Available to Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e Residents  
Affected by Family Violence and/or Abuse

with elders abuse. A Suicide Prevention Program also exists as does an Alcohol and Drug Program.

While not all child sexual abuse happens within families, and not all suicides or addictions are related to family violence, the proliferation of programs and lack of integration prevent progress in dealing with any social issue. It limits the effective use of resources. It means services don't meet the aboriginal community's interest of bringing families together. And it means that gaps in services exist, particularly for children described by one agency representative as "*the hidden victims*" of family violence and abuse. Study participants identified the following service gaps:

- advocacy and treatment services for abused and sexually abused children, including long-term counselling
- foster homes and group homes for children and teenagers
- guardianship legislation that protects elders from abuse
- education and services to deal with elders abuse
- thorough investigations before adoptions and foster home placements
- thorough assessments and monitoring of foster homes
- training for social services staff
- treatment services for men, especially sex offenders
- truly northern aboriginal treatment services (eg. reflective of Dene values)
- safe homes for children, women and elders in Lutsel K'e.

Gaps in services also arise because of the misconception that alcohol is the problem and that stopping the drinking will provide a "*quick fix*" for family violence. Lutsel K'e has taken this approach to some extent. A concentrated effort to create sobriety among the community leadership began in 1989. While some community sources express concern that alcohol abuse is rising again, going out for treatment has almost become a way of life for some residents. Judging by the responses in individual interviews, "*going out for treatment*" is viewed as a universal remedy for family violence.

Yet once back in the community there is no recovery or aftercare program to assist people to stay off booze or continue to examine the reasons they started and continued to abuse alcohol and family members. People return to treatment centres as often as six times, using treatment as a recovery program. One northern professional asks, "*Isn't it unethical to treat people, then kiss them off*

*after a 28-day program?"* Further, there are no specialized services which differentiate between the various stages of sobriety and recovery. Existing services provide similar, if not identical treatment for the person who falls off the wagon briefly after six months of sobriety, and the person who is drunk on the airplane on the way back from Poundmaker's Treatment Centre in St. Albert, Alberta.

### Women's Shelters

The nine shelters in the N.W.T. are funded by Social Services. McAteer House in Yellowknife serves Lutsel K'e and several other surrounding communities. Increased awareness is prompting more women to enter shelters when drinking starts and before physical abuse begins, rather than wait until after it happens. For a host of reasons, McAteer House is seldom the first avenue explored by the women interviewed who have sought help or treatment to deal with family violence.

Shelters are underfunded and don't meet the current demand, particularly for aboriginal women in isolated communities.<sup>37</sup> For women, they are a double-edged sword. The advantage of a temporary safe haven is often outweighed by isolation from home communities and being uprooted from their homes. Community criticisms are most strongly aimed at the removal of women and children from the community. Women and social services are accused of breaking up families. Elders see the use of the Yellowknife shelter as an abuse of the system, suggesting openly that women are only seeking a holiday from family and responsibilities. This contrasts with community opinions of offenders who are often met with sympathy because they have been abandoned. Sympathy is strongest for those who end up in jail.

*"It's common for women to come back and forth to the shelter six or seven times. Each time the woman changes, but the situation doesn't."* Some women are resentful that McAteer House can't offer a long-term solution (stays are limited to six weeks). Shelter workers say women and social workers sometimes see McAteer as a program similar to alcohol treatment. Some women are totally alienated by the rules and expectations of the shelter. McAteer doesn't allow alcohol or the physical disciplining of children. Women's advocates widely believe McAteer is viewed as a feminist organization. This adds to confusion about the shelter's role - safety in a crisis - not breaking up families.

37. The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality.

### Private Counselling Agencies

NWT Counselling Services is a private, Yellowknife-based counselling agency. Its goal is to serve a wider area, but few of its clients are from small communities like Lutsel K'e. A majority of its clients are women seeking help on family violence related issues. The agency offers individual, family and marital counselling, one-on-one counselling for male batterers and runs a group for adult survivors of sexual abuse. A group for offenders was discontinued because there were insufficient referrals or clients seeking help.

Study participants have no complaints about the service provided. The criticism is levelled at its' lengthy waiting list. Agencies such as North Slave Housing have quit referring people for this reason. People usually want help in a crisis. If they can't get it, says one professional, they cope as best they can and the crisis passes. Then they don't seek help until the next crisis, when again it's unavailable for six weeks.

The shortage of counselling services is a major issue, but northern professionals caution that counselling won't stop the violence. For victims, counselling comes after the fact and only reduces the long-term effects of the violence and abuse. As for offenders, the goal is to stop them from re-offending. There is widespread agreement that counselling for abusers only works if it is voluntary, and it takes three years to make any real difference. The major problem in treating abusers is that *"they don't think they have a problem."* A final limitation to counselling is that it currently does not use Dene approaches, which are not about telling people what to do with their lives. *"The white way is very directive, especially in treatment,"* says one professional.

NWT Counselling Services is contracted to provide counselling by different areas within the Department of Social Services, including the Family Violence Program. Sometimes it is administering different pots of money from the same Department. It is not used by the GNWT employee assistance program because the territorial government insists on a registered psychologist for their employees, though not for their social services clientele. If the GNWT did use NWT Counselling Services for its employees, there would be more financial support for the organization. The agency could then offer more services, thereby improving access to those in need.

### Medical Services

The local nursing station is not the first place to seek help for most people who were interviewed individually. However, in focus groups the doctor's office, the

public health unit and nursing station are viewed as safe places to seek help because the suspicion of the abuser and others isn't raised. As well, medical staff are not as threatening as the police or social workers, because they do not have the authority to apprehend children.

There were concerns about the lack of education among medical people and their ability to recognize and deal with violence and abuse. As one woman put it, "*if not bruised, not abused.*" There is the opinion that health professionals should take more seriously the mental, as well as the physical, well-being of people.

In some cases, the mental health system is seen as a medical alternative to the legal system when a decision has been made to remove someone from the community. However, the Stanton Yellowknife Hospital psychiatric ward and out-patient clinic do not have a mandate to treat people whose presenting problem is addictions or family violence.

#### Advocacy for Women and Children

The Yellowknife Women's Centre, Status of Women Council of the N.W.T., and the Native Women's Association of the N.W.T. support and advocate on behalf of women in the north. Efforts by these organization have raised the awareness of family violence and abuse issues and have had significant impact on the outcome of initiatives such as the Gender Equality Report.

#### Housing Services

There is no second stage, or follow-up housing once a woman has used up her six-week stay at McAteer House in Yellowknife. The Yellowknife Housing Authority and North Slave Housing Corporation both offer long-term subsidized housing in Yellowknife, the latter for aboriginal people exclusively. Both organizations have waiting lists but give priority to victims of family violence and/or abuse. Each has many tenants who are women and children who have left abusive or violent homes. Frequently an abusive spouse "*will track them down and move in with them.*" To protect women and children, in the case of a family breakdown, the partner who is the primary child caregiver (usually the woman) is able to remain in the rental unit.

There are several problems related to family violence observed in public housing. Often there is no phone to call for help. Women want their name on the lease to protect themselves, but then if there are damages to the unit, they are

responsible. Couples frequently break up and get back together again several times. People tend to fear authority so if the man isn't registered as a tenant, a woman ends up harbouring or protecting him instead of advising the housing manager.

In small communities like Lutsel K'e housing shortages are critical so there are few if any options for family members wishing to leave violent or abusive homes.

### 5.5 Seeking Help from the Legal System

*"People go to court and make promises but sooner or later it all starts again."* a Lutsel K'e resident.

According to some legal professionals *"more and more victims and offenders are doing a 'cost benefit analysis' before taking the legal route because as soon as the legal system kicks in, the complainant has little control of the process or resolution."* The justice system is supposed to empower. It does the opposite for both the victim and offender.

Participants in this study levelled substantial and specific criticism at various aspects of the justice system and its handling of family violence and abuse. This may be due to widespread national attention to questions about its appropriateness for aboriginal people. The Gender Equality Review, the work of the Arctic Public Legal Education and Information Society (PLEI), and media reports of several controversial court decisions for family violence and sexual offenses have raised awareness in the N.W.T. of the difficulty the legal system has in providing solutions. The criticism may also be due to fundamental problems with a justice system which has not evolved far enough from the days its' primary goal, as described by one study participant was *"to protect Anglo-Saxon men and their property."*

#### Calling the RCMP

The police are often the first called in volatile family disputes because they are seen as the most capable of immediately stopping the violence. They offer short-term help only. The research team was told that aboriginal people are generally intimidated by the RCMP. For example, victims are often reluctant to talk to the police. Offenders and others see the police as *"just throwing people in jail,"* and as being particularly violent with known offenders.

In the Gender Equality Review, northern women expressed concern about their treatment by the RCMP, particularly in cases involving family violence. The report said certain RCMP officers are frustrated by women who repeatedly report assaults but do not leave their abusive situations. It suggests RCMP are not adequately trained to deal with family violence and officers don't understand that leaving home may not be an option for many northern aboriginal women.

In both Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e, the RCMP are being viewed in a more positive light recently. This reflects increased awareness and training, as well as a commitment to deal more effectively with family violence. Dealing more effectively has meant the RCMP is doing more than responding to complaints, but trying to work closer with other community agencies. While police intervention offers help in a crisis, many victims avoid police involvement because of what comes after the immediate crisis.

#### Mandatory Charging

Since 1985 in the N.W.T., police press charges in all cases of spousal assault which come to their attention. Many women *"just want to stop the violence"*, they want a *"quick fix"*, to get the man out of the house until he *"cools off"*. They are often not interested in participating in an investigation. They don't want to testify in court where they may be re-victimized by having to describe the violent incident in public; and humiliated by a defense attorney casting doubt on their testimony. And they are not anxious to put their partner in jail. For these reasons they are reluctant to call the police.

Mandatory charging is the legal system's way of *"showing society's intolerance for violence."* By taking the burden of laying charges away from the victim, offenders realize the futility in pressuring the victim with further violence or threats to drop the charges.

If a victim refuses to cooperate in the prosecution of the offender they can face charges themselves. Some legal professionals say that there should be more flexibility. Some women lie when they are drunk and if they admit to this later, charges should be dropped. In British Columbia, the Crown can drop the charge if the offender agrees to get help.

For now, in the N.W.T. the legal system has decided the good outweighs the bad when it come to mandatory charging. So have the community people interviewed for this study. Many said they knew of people who wanted to have

charges dropped, but a large majority said the victim shouldn't be able to have charges withdrawn.

### Services for Victims

The Victims of Crime Act of 1989 created a Victims Assistance Fund which supports services for victims such as the Yellowknife Victim Services Program. It is a community and police-based program. It provides immediate support to victims of family violence and abuse, generally as a result of a police investigation. The program reduces demands on the police. It is effective because support comes from neutral people who are not in positions of authority. It's effectiveness is hampered by a shortage of volunteers. It responds to the victim needs identified in the Gender Equality Review and by Arctic PLEI.<sup>38</sup> No such program exists in Lutsel K'e or most other small communities.

The Crown Prosecutor's office in Yellowknife has a staff person who helps victims to prepare to act as witnesses and stays with them during the court process. Critics point out that much more money is still being spent on jailing offenders than on helping victims. While acknowledging the usefulness of this service, many professionals believe "*more hand-holding*" is needed in court.

Victim Impact Statements give victims some say into the sentencing of violent offenders. These statements have been gathered on a pilot project basis in some communities. The Gender Equality Review found that women living in small communities are generally unaware of victim support services, even though most had been victims of violence at one time or another.

### Protecting the Victim

Restraining orders and peace bonds are tools which are meant to protect a victim, usually a woman, from violence and abuse from her partner. While police encourage women to use these one official admitted, "they are not worth the paper they are written on." "The absence of enforcement mechanisms completely undermines the value of the order in the first instance."<sup>39</sup>

38. An Assessment of the Needs of Victims of Crime in the Northwest Territories.

39. The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality.

The RCMP is more likely to advise women to try to get an undertaking that ensures the man will not talk to the victim as a condition of his release. It is a simpler and more effective tool than restraining orders and peace bonds. With an undertaking, if the man approaches the woman he has broken a court order and can be picked up by the police and charged. However, this approach can only be used when the man has already committed a crime; it is no good if a man is only threatening violence.

While RCMP have had trouble enforcing orders when only threats are involved, undertakings are also a source of frustration. Once a man sobers up, a woman will often take him back in the house. If another fight breaks out, it is hard for the officer not to see the undertaking as a waste of time when the woman invited the man back in. The RCMP don't usually enforce undertakings unless there is a complaint.

#### The Investigation

Investigations of child sexual abuse are viewed as the most problematic in dealing with family violence. Social workers and RCMP lack training in interviewing victims, particularly on videotape. A sensitive innovation which is meant to keep children from having to testify in open court, videotaped interviews are often thrown out of court because police have asked a leading question. The RCMP acknowledges the problem and is seeking the resources to obtain child sexual abuse specialists for each region.

#### Going to Court

In Lutsel K'e there is no resident courtworker and little real understanding of court procedures, especially among aboriginal women. It can take three to six weeks for an offender to get a lawyer through legal aid, and then there is little control over which lawyer.

For victims, the length of time between the violence or abuse and a final resolution in court is much too long. Court delays allow victims to be pressured by the community, their families and the offender. They can suffer emotional, social and financial isolation. The Gender Equality Review brought to light the difficulties of aboriginal women awaiting court and living in the same community or household as the accused. Delays add substance to the argument that the legal system protects the accused better than the victim. The delays are a symptom of a "bogged down" system. Offenders often commit more crimes while awaiting court appearances, which causes even more cases and delays. People express little faith in such a system.

The legal system is adversarial and that shows most clearly in court. Whichever side makes the best case, wins. One legal professional says people are wrong when they view the courts as infallible. *"The dark side of communities and the justice system is that if a person is popular, they can get away with murder, literally."*

In child sexual abuse cases involving very young victims, convictions are rare unless there is physical evidence. Consequently, as some professionals observe, even though the number of child sexual abuse disclosures is increasing, the conviction rates are not. They believe crown prosecutors are not trained adequately to question child sexual abuse victims or to anticipate responses from young children. They say it is rare to see a defence lawyer show any sympathy for a child victim, and that most judges share that lack of sympathy because their backgrounds are as defence lawyers.

There is widespread concern that juries in small communities like Lutsel K'e, do not convict people of sexual assault. And in these small communities the accused usually chooses trial by jury. Some say it is simply a matter of the Crown not proving its case. But other legal professionals disagree and place most of the blame with communities and their widespread tolerance for sexual abuse. Some sense a fear of retaliation among juries and victims. Others say that court delays again play a role - the crime has lost its emotional impact for jurors and communities by the time the accused comes to trial.

One theory put forward is that unlike murder, where there is a dead person as solid evidence, sexual assault cases usually come down to taking one person's word over another's. Other factors may be a community perception that jail sentences are too harsh, useless in any case, or that the offender isn't viewed as a threat to the community. Some legal professionals and abuse workers also wonder how many jury members themselves are sexual abuse victims, offenders, or both.

The other side of these concerns about sexual abuse cases is the legal professional's worry that *"there is the idea that women and children never lie."* It may not be common, but the possibility shouldn't be overlooked. Study participants believe instructions to juries which last only 15-minutes long are inadequate for people to have a clear understanding of the law at work in a case and what is expected of them as a member of a jury in a trial.

In the N.W.T. Crown prosecutors do not specialize, as in some other jurisdictions. They are viewed as overworked and there is high turnover. Turnover is attributed to higher pay and benefits in the private sector, constant travelling on the court circuit, and to the inappropriateness of northern experience for obtaining positions in the south. When the Crown prosecutor changes in the middle of a case, that's abusive according to one advocate. There are moves to set standards for legal aid lawyers and attempt to provide some consistency in the lawyers serving individual cases and/or communities.

Finally, there is little in courtrooms or how they are run that is culturally appropriate for aboriginal people. For example, aboriginal victims, particularly women, are reluctant to speak with the force, loudness, and emotion which would make them a "good" witness in the system's view. Victims are often extremely uncomfortable testifying in open court in the presence of the accused because it is culturally inappropriate to publicly denounce someone in their presence.

#### Sentencing

While small communities like Lutsel K'e are resentful of their people being taken off to jail, the sentences for crimes related to family violence are perceived by women's groups and some professionals as too light. Paukituutit, the Inuit Women's Association, is currently researching sentencing in N.W.T. sexual assault cases involving Inuit women. Numerous other studies on sentencing in the N.W.T. have not been conclusive. Regardless of the data, public perceptions remain that sentencing is too lenient.

The paradox is the widespread agreement that jail does nothing to stop or decrease family violence. At the same time fines for assault of \$300 to \$400 are no deterrent in Lutsel K'e. Study participants say sentencing should be geared toward problem-solving. *"Often what the victims really want is treatment or healing for the offender and themselves."* Some participants observed that offenders fear having their names and convictions appear in newspapers or on radio much more than jail.

While judges can make treatment mandatory for young offenders, it is not usually part of the sentence. Professional opinion is that there are too few available services and too high a cost involved to make treatment mandatory for either adults or young offenders. However, individuals interviewed see this as one way the justice system could contribute to solutions to family violence.

### Jail

Aboriginal people in particular, view jail as an inconvenience rather than punishment, according to legal professionals. In the words of one aboriginal woman, "*sending my husband to jail is like booking him into the Holiday Inn.*" There is little social stigma attached to jail in communities, so it doesn't act as a deterrent.

YCC inmates say that jail in fact increases the violence. They believe incarceration makes people more angry, and causes resentment to increase. This is born out by women who told the Gender Equality Review that men who participated in anger management therapy in jail were more abusive after treatment. The abuse had shifted from physical violence to other more subtle, but equally damaging forms of abuse.<sup>40</sup>

According to the GNWT Corrections Services the demand for treatment of offenders is not coming from offenders themselves. Rather it is coming from victims, women's groups and upper levels of government bureaucracy sensitive to family violence issues. However, inmates at YCC participating in this study declare a need to learn how to share their feelings, to talk, and to seek help. They want counselling with other family members while in jail and follow-up after their release.

Even though some inmates might be open to treatment, corrections officials and counsellors agree that generally mixing treatment with punishment is not effective. As mentioned above imbalances and abuse of power in families is at the core of family violence. By virtue of being in jail, the very behaviours which led abusers to jail in the first place - misuse of power and authority to control others - are reinforced. Sentences are generally too short to allow any real progress in treatment to occur. However, in the long term corrections services are moving toward treatment rather than punishment. This would reflect the evidence that most family members who are violent and abusive, were themselves abused. This approach is taken for women in custody in Fort Smith. Unless they prove otherwise, the assumption is made that they are victims of abuse.

Corrections officials expect that the nature of jails will move from large

<sup>40</sup>. The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality. p. 82

institutions to community residential centres. With that will come more community control, more space for counselling and an environment more conducive to treatment. Corrections officials caution that the changes will work only if communities have the long term rehabilitation of offenders in mind, rather than jobs that will be created by the opening of community facilities.

The territorial government is supporting Community Justice Committees. So far, their role has largely been to advise the courts on sentencing. There are also moves to expand the role of Justices of the Peace and recruit more local people to these positions. The Traditional Dene Justice Project takes the view that the long term goal should be an independent justice system.<sup>41</sup> Making changes to the current justice system to accommodate aboriginal interests and culture will dilute and compromise the objectives of both aboriginal peoples and the non-aboriginal justice system.

The biggest challenge of community control will be convincing aboriginal women and children that their interests and safety will be protected. The tolerance for family violence in northern communities is of grave concern in this regard.

## 5.6 Prevention and Awareness

What steps are being taken to prevent family violence and abuse?

The Breaking the Silence awareness campaign of the N.W.T. Status of Women has made significant progress toward educating the public about family violence. However, except for spousal assault, the public in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e remains largely unaware of the extent and kinds of family violence occurring within aboriginal families. Awareness is also lacking about the range of services available to help families. Focus group participants and professionals say family violence has to be made socially unacceptable. *"We need to do for family violence what has been done for drinking, especially drinking and driving."*

Community people interviewed stress that *"talking"* about the issue is something individuals, families and communities can do to prevent violence and create awareness. But people need to feel it is safe to denounce violence.

41. Traditional Dene Justice. p.105

Since most abusers have been abused, one prevention approach suggested is to concentrate on breaking the cycle with abused youngsters. Trained school community counsellors are being counted on to work with young people, especially since few other options exist. There is a compulsory health curriculum across the N.W.T. which covers family life, relationships and abuse. However, a 1990 survey found that only 30% of teachers were teaching the entire curriculum. This may be due to the comfort level of teachers in dealing with the subject matter, or the difficulty of finding time to fit everything into the school year.

The RCMP is taking a lead role in the "Mountain and Beyond" program which is promoting collaboration among virtually every agency and worker in communities. The approach is to train nurses, police, teachers, community health workers, social workers, drug and alcohol workers and community leaders to recognize family violence. Once recognized, the goal is to create inter-agency cooperation in taking responsibility for the problem and dealing with it. The need for training of community service providers has been identified by both the Native Women's Association and the Arctic Public Legal Education and Information Society.<sup>42</sup>

### **5.7 Issues Which Effect the Way in Which Family Violence and Abuse is Addressed**

#### **\*Legacy of Universal Services**

In most of the provinces services and programs for registered Indians and Inuit are administered by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. In the N.W.T. the Government of the Northwest Territories pools the federal money for Inuit and Indians under one structure and administers one set of programs and services for all N.W.T. residents, aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike.

This has meant that there are virtually no services in N.W.T. communities set up to exclusively serve the needs of aboriginal people. This could change. Aboriginal land claims and self-government negotiations may provide the opportunity for aboriginal people to set up their own programs and services if they choose to do so.

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42. Community Evaluation on Family Violence Initiatives and An Assessment of the Needs of Victims of Crime in the Northwest Territories.

### **\*Political and Economic Climate**

Today the N.W.T. is characterized by a high level of political change and uncertainty. The kind of governments we will have in the future are being shaped by regional land claims, aboriginal self-government negotiations, constitutional development negotiations for the western N.W.T., the devolution of federal programs to the GNWT, territorial government transfer of program responsibilities to communities, fiscal restraint and division of the N.W.T. (At the end of the decade the Northwest Territories, as a result of the Inuit land claim agreement, will be divided into Nunavut in the east, and an as-yet-unnamed western territory.

The political changes in the works are shaping and raising questions about the division of responsibility among government, community, family and individual. Within the various political processes underway there is a level of uncertainty about who will be responsible for what programs and who will pay the bill. As with other issues the question raised is: Who is responsible for dealing with and stopping family violence and abuse?

### **\*Access to Services**

It is the absence of long-term follow-up services which most concerns aboriginal residents and northern professionals participating in this study. There is agreement with a report on N.W.T. victims of crime completed by the Arctic Public Legal Education and Information Society. Adult victims of crime are better served than offenders, juveniles and children.

The Native Women's Association held a series of workshops on family violence recently. Participants said Yellowknife may have a wide complement of services, but they are over-used and people have to really seek them out. The serious gaps, particularly in smaller communities, are: insufficient drug and alcohol counsellors, particularly aboriginal counsellors; programs which address self-esteem, parenting skills, self-awareness, healing, grieving, resolution of residential school syndrome, co-dependency, conflict and anger management; lack of family counselling and rehabilitation programs for offenders; and, few forums for addressing issues at community level.

In small communities there are few safe houses for women, safe houses for children who have been apprehended and no access to long-term counselling. Even in Yellowknife the counselling service is criticized frequently for having a long waiting list. Consistent with its focus on alcohol and drug abuse, the GNWT

## 6. Making Changes

In the north, as elsewhere, people are frustrated with research that simply describes problems and offers little in the way of tangible solutions. The research team is aware that simple solutions to such a complex problem as family violence are impossible. It was the intent of this research to investigate what aboriginal people, as well as the professionals and agencies that serve them, perceive the solutions to be. To this end, focus groups, agency representatives and individuals were asked to suggest changes that individuals, families, communities, professionals and governments could make to address family violence. As difficult as it is to speak about family violence, particularly when it is in your own family, it is still easier to talk about the topic than to imagine how things might be different. Still, many participants in the study accepted this challenge and made suggestions for specific actions which might lead to change.

### Within Families

Building Communication: Individuals within families, and families as units, have lost their ability to communicate honestly and effectively. Participants feel that opening up the lines of communication among family members is the key to stopping violence. Specific ways suggested to accomplish this are:

- to hold family meetings where it is safe for family members to express their feelings and to seek support from each other
- to try to communicate honest and deep feelings and make an effort to understand someone who is trying to communicate such feelings.

Educating Family Members: Participants feel that family members do not really know or understand the nature and extent of family violence, or the causes of it, and they do not have the tools necessary to deal with it. Specific ways family members could learn about and begin to deal with family violence and abuse are:

- to share their experiences with violence and abuse with other family members, particularly if they have found a means of recovering from the abuse
- to inform one another about all the aspects of family violence, including related issues such as drug and alcohol abuse
- to demonstrate non-violent ways of resolving conflict within the family

- to teach other family members directly about moral issues, explaining the difference between right and wrong behaviour and helping children to learn to make the distinction.

Building Support Within Families: Participants recognize that both victims and offenders, those currently suffering abuse, as well as those recovering from abuse, all require support in order to continue their journey out of and away from the cycle of violence. While individuals recognize that outside agencies and groups can provide support, it is important to them that families take action to provide the support badly needed by their members. Specific ways family members can do this are:

- to advise family members on ways to live well with each other
- to support sobriety as a principle for family life and to support people who are trying to stay sober in particular
- to break the silence, speak to offenders about their behaviour, and to kick them out of the home if the violence and abuse does not stop
- to make commitment to the family and to family relationships a number one priority
- to take care of each other, to watch out for one another
- to protect one another
- to respect one another.

### **Within the Community**

Building Communication: Entire communities, as well as families and individuals have lost their ability to communicate honestly and effectively, particularly about topics as sensitive as family violence. Participants feel that opening up lines of communication within the community is critical to stopping the violence. Specific ways this might be accomplished are:

- provide training in communication skills to all community members, but particularly to those in positions of authority and leadership
- encourage community members to speak out against family violence, and to speak up and speak out at community meetings

Educating Community Members: Like individuals, study participants believe that whole communities do not really know or understand the full extent of family violence, the causes of it or how to deal with it. Participants suggest that to address this that community workers and agency workers:

Employee Assistance Program covers alcohol treatment for employees but does not cover counselling/treatment for people affected by family violence.

**\*Effectiveness of Services**

In Lutsel K'e services are not only limited, but the social worker and drug and alcohol counsellor are overburdened and not specifically trained to deal with family violence issues. There are only a handful of elders who are considered "well," that is, not drinkers or abusers themselves. The trust has been broken within the women's support group and the men's support group is seen to be promoting a religious philosophy which is unacceptable to many residents.

*"Services are available in many communities but the time available to each client is limited. There are a lack of services that target youth whose parents were directly affected by the residential school syndrome, sexual assault, incest or other abuse....Due to a shortage of counsellors, crisis situations must be dealt with first and family counselling is often put on hold...the cycle remains: a lack of counsellors, burn out, resignation of counsellors, overworked counsellors, individuals and families on a waiting list....many participants expressed that they feel their problems are not understood and feel they are being judged for their behaviour, violence, problems, abuse, etc. Sometimes these non-aboriginal counsellors express their frustration (by asking) why their clients cannot just pick up the pieces and carry on with their lives...."*<sup>43</sup>

Services do not focus on the larger picture. Alcohol counsellors are mandated to deal with alcohol addiction, not related problems such as family violence. Specialized services are so limited that some agency personnel will refer an individual in need of help to whatever is available, even if it is not appropriate. While counselling services are limited, until the approach to dealing with community problems broadens, it appears more counsellors won't make a difference.

While a host of services are potentially available, at least in Yellowknife, linkages and coordination among services are weak. Services have different approaches which don't necessarily complement each other and they vary in focus. They appear to have been set up to accommodate the bureaucracy, rather than to meet family, community, victim and offender needs. These shortcomings are not lost on family members in need of help nor communities who have to go to a

<sup>43</sup>. Community Evaluation on Family Violence Initiatives.

variety of programs for the money to hold a workshop dealing with local social issues.

### **\*Aboriginal Languages**

Most service agencies participating in this study do not see aboriginal languages as problematic in the delivery of family violence services. Among those concerned about the issue, the lack of aboriginal speakers or translators means that unilingual aboriginal language residents, usually elders, are effectively denied access to counselling or treatment.

Translation services are an issue with most of the people who were interviewed individually. Providing translation, as the courts do, is not the ultimate answer. It does not accommodate subtle differences in communication styles or concepts which can't be adequately translated. Expressing feelings about sensitive matters, such as family violence and abuse, is difficult enough in a first language. Having to use a second language is a significant barrier to seeking help and benefitting from services available. The most popular pieces of advice offered by aboriginal people is that non-aboriginal people working with the Dene should learn the language; learn how to listen; and learn to be patient.

The delivery of services in aboriginal languages is particularly difficult for Yellowknife-based service agencies due to the range of languages spoken in the city. (In the N.W.T., the Official Languages Act recognizes eight official languages: English, French, Dogrib, Slavey, Cree, Chipewyan, Gwich'in and Inuktitut.) In Lutsel K'e most people speak either Chipewyan or English, or both. Several service providers, the RCMP, nurse, community health worker, adult educator, and school principal, do not speak Chipewyan.

### **\*Helpers Who Need Help**

Particularly in small communities, alcohol and drug counsellors, social workers and others become overwhelmed by the extent of family violence and abuse and its widespread impacts. They are often isolated from colleagues and either become burnt out trying to deal with all the problems, or chance losing community confidence if they are not available 24 hours a day.

In many cases these helpers are victims of abuse or violence themselves. This can apply to informal avenues of help, such as the Chief or elders, and to the social worker and alcohol counsellor. Some may not have dealt with their own

past adequately and there are few resources to do so when the need becomes critical.

Conflicts emerge for those who are from the community. Loyalties may be torn between traditional values of forgiving and keeping families together and the solutions currently available - a safe house in Yellowknife and the criminal justice system. Community support is not always present for homegrown workers.

*"We say we want our own people, but we devalue ourselves and our own. We need to address the need for a transition and plan to eventually place responsibility with our own people,"* says a Yellowknife aboriginal professional.

### **\*Other Barriers to Seeking Help**

Participants in focus groups and in Native Women's Association workshops identified the following barriers to seeking help from existing services.

- isolation of living in small communities
- services not available in evening or on weekends in small community
- lack of child care
- no place for women and other victims to go
- no political or community understanding or willingness to deal with family violence
- feeling threatened
- inherent distrust of white people
- not knowing what is available or how to access help
- not seeing the need for help
- intimidation of building or environment
- fear of institutions
- inherent fear of patriarchal system or institutions
- the name of some services and the stigma attached to these agencies (eg. why go to mental health, *"I'm not crazy"*).

- hold monthly workshops on violence, abuse and addictions
- tailor the content and approach of these workshops to meet the needs of different age groups in the community
- hold more spiritual workshops
- publicly acknowledge the problem and seek ways to educate people and to increase their awareness of the problem and possible solutions
- talk to students in school about this problem.

Assuming Responsibility for the Solution: Community members suggest that there are specific actions individuals can take, with community support, that would go a long way to stopping family violence. For people who are "outside" the situation, they suggest:

- checking on families who are known to be experiencing family violence
- offering your house to someone who needs a safe place
- ✓ encouraging friends and/or relatives to speak to the abusers about their behaviour
- becoming actively involved in referring people to others (including agencies, etc.) who can help them.

For individuals experiencing family violence themselves, participants suggest that they:

- talk to the drug and alcohol counsellor
- talk to people who have experienced family violence themselves, and who are aware of effective ways of dealing with it
- find someone you trust to talk to.

For people who are in leadership positions, participants recommend that they:

- establish support groups for abusers, victims and other family members
- sponsor more AA meetings
- make getting help for the young people a top priority
- create a "safe house" where victims of family violence can get immediate protection, and have a place to stay
- ensure there is on-going follow up counselling and treatment for people returning to the community from residential alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs

- train people from the community to deal specifically with family violence
- provide more (recreational) activities for people, particularly children and teenagers
- find ways to get elders involved in dealing with the issue.

Finding Appropriate Ways to Deal with Offenders: As discussed in this study participants experience a certain level of frustration about the way family violence offenses are treated by the judicial system. They offer specific actions which they believe might bring a dramatic reduction in the amount of family violence in their community:

- put abusers in the bush and require them to support their families from their earnings
- have a meeting where the community would play a role in prosecuting the offenders
- make sex offenders publicly known
- require offenders to complete community service work.

Demanding More From Community Leaders: People in the study express the view that the quality of community leadership could have a significant impact on stopping family violence. To this end they suggest that:

- elected leaders such as the Band Council take more responsibility for stopping the violence
- leadership should be strong and sober
- the leadership actively work with people to stop violence.

### **With Help From Professionals**

Participants in the study recognize that the nature and extent of family violence is such that individuals, families (and perhaps entire communities) need help from professionals. Help is required not only to stop the violence and abuse but to assist people in recovering from the long-term consequences of living with violence. To this end, participants suggest that:

- there is a dire need for more one-on-one counselling, particularly for victims, offenders, and families
- more Dene people must be trained as professionals in this area and available to communities as resource people

- treatment programs need to be re-vamped so that the programs are culturally appropriate, differentiated according to the problem of the client (alcohol, violence, etc.), the stage of their recovery, and their age
- treatment programs treat entire families, and indeed whole communities rather than individuals.

### **Making It Happen**

Scarce program money for family violence and related issues (eg. alcohol and drug abuse, mental health, victims assistance) must be pooled and focused directly on the problem. The goal is to bring together all of the people and money within a community such as Lutsel K'e. The financial arrangements should stress commitment and action and permit accountability to one source. For aboriginal people in Yellowknife, who in themselves do not form a community, services to these individuals must be made more accessible.

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### APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Members of the research team were:

**Dr. Cynthia Chambers and Lois Little, Principal Investigators**  
**Aggie Brockman, Yellowknife Researcher**  
**Alizette Abel and Bertha Catholique, Lutsel K'e Researchers**

The principal investigators and the Yellowknife researcher brought significant academic and community research expertise to the project. The Lutsel K'e Band selected two women fully fluent and literate in English and Chipewyan to work on the research. These researchers represented different age groups and extended families in the community. Both have formal training and/or experience in research, translation/interpretation, and issues related to family violence/abuse.

The research methodology was made up of three components: i) background research; ii) focus groups; and iii) one to one interviews.

#### i) Background Research

A thorough examination of N.W.T. literature, a cursory review of other relevant documentation (see bibliography Appendix B), and one to one interviews with agencies delivering services related to family violence and abuse provided the necessary background to develop primary research instruments.

Interviews were conducted with representatives of 27 Yellowknife-based service agencies (Appendix C). While these agencies are located in Yellowknife, some do serve people in Lutsel K'e and other communities (eg. McAteer House, Crown Prosecutor, Yellowknife Correctional Centre) or the Northwest Territories as a whole (eg. Status of Women, G.N.W.T. Social Services). Few agencies in Yellowknife or the N.W.T. provide services based on ethnicity or aboriginal status (exceptions include the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, North Slave Housing Corp.). Further, there are no government services or programs dealing with family violence and abuse which are delivered on this basis. Consequently, virtually all agencies in Yellowknife delivering services related to family violence and abuse were interviewed.

Agencies were asked for qualitative data about the extent of family violence and abuse, the use of services by aboriginal clients, and a description of the services provided. Since services and programs are delivered to all residents in the same manner, statistical data on aboriginal family violence and abuse are limited. To the extent possible agency representatives, some of whom are aboriginal people, were very candid and provided excellent, albeit limited, statistical and anecdotal data on the

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magnitude of the problem and how to better address family violence and abuse in the north.

### ii) Focus Groups

The key research method for this study was focus groups or group interviews. Focus groups were conducted in English. Group discussions were not intended to be "town hall meetings" or to replicate the hearings held by the Royal Commission. Ten to 12 participants were pre-selected to meet for two to three hours to discuss a series of questions. Questions were open-ended and intended to elicit perceptions, informed opinion and knowledge about family violence/abuse in aboriginal families. The guide used to focus group discussions (Appendix D) was developed from the background research, input from leaders and professionals in Lutsel K'e, and were reviewed rigorously (eg. for content, cultural appropriateness and wording) by all members of the research team. Focus group guidelines were distributed wherever possible to all potential focus group participants prior to the sessions. The guideline was divided into five sub-sections:

- i) how aboriginal people define family violence and abuse;
- ii) perceptions of the extent of family violence;
- iii) perceptions of the causes of family violence;
- iv) experiences with and assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of existing services (short-term and long-term treatment, prosecution, and prevention); and
- v) making recommendations for change.

Guidelines were established for group interaction during focus groups. Introductory remarks confirmed the content of consent forms signed by participants (Appendix E) regarding the sensitivity and confidentiality of the subject, and the intent of the group discussion. In particular, it was made clear that it was not the intent to open up personal pain but rather to collect information. Participants were reminded that if the process became too painful that they were free to withdraw or stop at any time. Participants were also reminded of the responsibility of the research team to report incidents of abuse which might be disclosed during group discussions. The research team provided business cards to all participants to ensure that any aftermath could be dealt with. (If contacted Lutra Associates would seek professional advice/support for participants experiencing negative fall-out from the group discussion). In spite of the guidelines for group interaction, some people did express pain and intense emotion in the sessions. These individuals made it clear that to express these emotions was important and in no way were they intending to detract from the process or the intent of the session. At the time of writing, no individual had contacted Lutra Associates regarding negative consequences as a result of the group discussions.

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A total of five focus groups were held, four in Yellowknife and one in Lutsel K'e. Of the 38 people participating in the focus groups (Table 1):

- \*55% were female
- \*most were between 26-59 years of age
- \*about half had college or university education
- \*most were married
- \*58% were of aboriginal ancestry and 44% identified themselves as Dene or Metis
- \*all were comfortable speaking about family violence/abuse
- \*most did not hold back information during the group process.

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS  
Lutsel K'e YK Public YK Agency YCC McAteer Total

	Lutsel K'e	YK Public	YK Agency	YCC	McAteer	Total
Gender						
-male	2	1	5	9	-	17
-female	3	7	4	-	7	21
Age<25 yrs.	-	-	-	4	n/d	4
26-39	2	-	5	2	n/d	9
40-59	3	7	3	-	n/d	13
60+	-	-	1	-	n/d	1
Education						
Gr.1-9	-	1	-	5	n/d	6
Gr.10-12	2	1	2	1	n/d	6
College		2	1	1	n/d	4
University	1	2	6	-	n/d	9
Other	-	2	-	-	n/d	2
Marital						
Single	2	1	2	4	n/d	9
Married	3	2	6	3	n/d	14
Other	1	5	1	-	n/d	7
Aboriginal Identity						
Inuit	-	1	-	1	-	2
Dene	2	2	1	4	-	9
Metis	-	2	3	1	1	7
Inuvial.	-	-	-	1	-	1
Other abor.-		2	-	-	-	2
Non-abor.	3	1	5	-	6	15
Comfort in Speaking						
Very	-	5	8	2	n/d	15
Okay	3	2	1	4	n/d	10
Not	-	-	-	-	n/d	-
Information Withheld						
Yes	1	2	3	4	n/d	10
No	2	5	6	3	n/d	16

Note: n/d= no data provided

Source: Appendix D: Focus Group Guidelines

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### 1. Public and Urban Native Housing Focus Group (19 July)

A recent housing study (Lutra Associates Ltd., 1993) found that tenants of subsidized housing frequently are affected by family violence and/or abuse. Introductory letters from the Yellowknife (Public) Housing Authority and the North Slave (Urban Native) Housing Corporation together with a written invitation from Lutra Associates to attend the focus group were distributed to each tenant. In addition, public notices were posted in the Ndilo Dene Band Office and at health and social agencies in Yellowknife, and announcements were made on local radio stations. Several persons were also invited by phone. Participants tended to be those invited by telephone.

### 2. McAteer House Women's Shelter (20 July)

Invitees were clients of McAteer House, the only women's shelter in Yellowknife. There were four aboriginal women resident in the shelter on the day of the focus group and one attended the session. Other participants, all of them non-aboriginal, were four staff members of the shelter, including two counsellors, a child care worker and the director; as well as two women from the Yellowknife Women's Centre. Two of the remaining three clients agreed to complete individual questionnaires.

### 3. Yellowknife Correctional Centre (29 July)

Persons incarcerated at YCC are from communities throughout the N.W.T., are males of an average age of 25 years, most frequently of aboriginal ancestry. Inmates are generally incarcerated for an average of three months and most for a violent crime. Offenders typically have been victims at some point in their lives. While two focus groups were scheduled for the Yellowknife Correctional Centre (YCC), there was only sufficient participation for one. Nine inmates participated in the group. During the session, one fellow said he "can't figure out why his heart starts pounding just talking about family violence".

### 4. Yellowknife Service Agencies (30 July)

This focus group gathered together professionals who provide family violence or related services to aboriginal families and who have demonstrated (through one to one interviews) an ability and a willingness to offer their professional opinion on issues related to violence and abuse in aboriginal families. Nine professionals from legal, medical, counselling, and advocacy groups participated.

### 5. Lutsel K'e Focus Group (28 July)

Four focus groups were scheduled for Lutsel K'e from July 21 to 26 (then rescheduled to July 26 to 28) - with an existing women's group, an existing men's group, youth, and community-based service agencies. Two deaths in the community and other

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commitments by two of the front-line workers caused the research team to rescheduled group discussions but eventually it was possible to hold only one session, with community-based service agencies. The Chief of the Lutsel K'e Band participated in this discussion group.

The quality of the data collected through the focus group process was excellent. The housing/public focus group drew quality participation from aboriginal women in Yellowknife who provided personal and professional observations on all aspects of the issue but particularly on defining family violence, its causes and the need for change. The focus group at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre provided a particularly strong aboriginal male perspective on the definition and causes of family violence/abuse, and the services available to meet their needs. The Yellowknife agency focus group provided a multi-disciplinary view of the issue as well as validating emerging trends/observations of the research team. The Lutsel K'e agency focus group offered a community perspective and showed the keen interest of leaders and professionals in owning and addressing this issue.

Not all of the focus groups originally planned were held. An urban and mainly aboriginal youth group in Yellowknife, "Youth on the Move", was invited to participate in a group discussion. However due to a busy summer schedule, the aboriginal woman coordinating this group was unable to schedule a time to meet. This is unfortunate given the urban nature of Yellowknife and the difficulty in ascertaining a youth perspective without the cooperation of such a program.

Focus groups for men, women, youth and children were planned for Lutsel K'e. Despite efforts by community researchers and three visits to the community by the principal investigators, a number of events prevented these groups from occurring: deaths in the community; family requests that facilities such as the youth centre (where the youth focus group session was to occur) be closed during the wake and funeral; other commitments by the social worker and drug and alcohol counsellor (both of whom are Chipewyan women from Lutsel K'e); elections for Chief and Council; and preparations for a one week community assembly at Fort Reliance. (This celebration which combines the taking of treaty with community meetings and spiritual activities is an event of major proportions.) The circumstances surrounding the research in Lutsel K'e are unfortunate but understandable. In small aboriginal communities, death affects everyone and ceasing all but the most essential services is a sign of respect. In addition, elections, community assemblies and other community activities take priority over outside research.

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### iii) One-on-One Interviews

At the request of Lutsel K'e, both one-to-one interviews and focus groups were conducted in the community. This addition to the research plan necessitated the preparation of a personal interview questionnaire (Appendix F). The questionnaire is fashioned after the focus group guidelines and was piloted in Lutsel K'e prior to finalization.

In developing the questionnaire, the Lutsel K'e researchers identified the difficulty of asking for an informed opinion about or perception of a phenomena, without appearing to invite people to make a judgement of others. So using a phrase such as "what do you think are...?" or "in your opinion are...?" was problematic. This required a shift in how perceptual questions would be typically phrased, to statements of fact. For example, the question "What do you think are some of the things related to family violence?" was changed to "What are some of the things related to family violence?" People are more comfortable giving statements of fact or general knowledge, rather than statements of personal opinion. Lutsel K'e researchers quickly differentiated between opinion and experience.

Lutsel K'e researchers conducted 29 one-on-one interviews with a cross section of community residents. Interviews were conducted in Chipewyan and/or English. Because it was possible to hold only one focus group in Lutsel K'e, one to one interviews became the key research method in the community. Two other personal interviews were conducted in Yellowknife with clients of McAteer House who were unable/unwilling to attend the focus group held at the centre.

The characteristics of persons participating in one-on-one interviews (Table 2) were:

- \*slightly more women (58%) than men (42%)
- \*representative of all age groups
- \*having less than Grade 12 education
- \*married, common-law, divorced/separated or widowed
- \*mainly of Dene ancestry
- \*a mixture of economic activity, most of which is not year-round wage income.

Most persons participating in the personal interviews felt comfortable about the interview process and did not withhold information.

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TABLE 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS PARTICIPATING IN PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

	<u>Lutsel K'e Yellowknife</u>		<u>Total</u>
Gender			
-male	13	-	13
-female	16	2	18
Age<25 yrs.	7	1	8
26-39	3	1	4
40-59	10	-	10
60+	7	-	7
Education			
Gr.1-9	11	1	12
Gr.10-12	11	1	12
College	4	-	4
University	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-
Marital Status			
Single	7	-	7
Married	12	-	12
Other	7	2	9
Aboriginal Identity			
Inuit	-	2	2
Dene	26	-	26
Metis	-	-	-
Inuvial.	-	-	-
Other abor.	-	-	-
Non-abor.	2	-	2
Main Economic Activity			
Student	2	-	2
Unemployed	8	-	8
Trapper	3	-	3
Homemaker	6	1	7
Pensioner	2	-	2
Self-Employed	1	-	1
Seasonal	3	-	3
Employed	3	1	4
Comfort in Speaking			
Very	11	2	13
Okay	8	-	8
Not	9	-	9
Information Withheld			
Yes	8	2	10
No	20	-	20

Note: Personal data were incomplete, thus totals do not always equal the number of persons interviewed (eg. 31).

Source: Appendix F: Family Violence and/or Abuse Questionnaire

The purpose of personal interviews was to solicit the informed opinion of the participant on the topic of family violence in

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their community, particularly in relation to the kinds of family violence and abuse they are aware of, the extent and causes of the problem, the existence of services, and their opinion on the effectiveness and appropriateness of those services. It was not the intent to ask the participants to reveal their personal experience or to make judgements about other community members.

### **Research Issues and Limitations**

The research subject and the community environment generated additional issues which impacted on the study.

#### **\*Timing:**

The people of Lutsel K'e continually reminded the research team that it is very difficult to do research of any kind in the summer. For example, on each trip to Lutsel K'e, there was exceptionally fine weather which had followed periods of bad weather. During good weather people leave town to go out on the lake to fish and hold picnics. In Dene communities, summer is seen as a time for relaxing, for recuperating from the winter. It is not seen as a time to engage in stressful and emotionally draining activities. Communities have their own seasonal rhythms which people are reluctant to interrupt and for which this particular project did not have the resources to adequately accommodate.

Adequate time is essential to successful research in northern aboriginal communities. Culturally it is inappropriate to pressure or hurry those asked to contribute to/participate in research. Further, to ensure that people are fully informed about the research and to solicit their full cooperation, the objectives must be explained frequently and often individually. In fact, it is preferable to invite residents to participate in developing the research objectives and plan such as is done in participatory action research. At the very least, people need the opportunity to ask questions of the researchers, to discuss the project informally and publicly. It is unfortunate that the time frame imposed upon this research project precluded such a process. Besides the difficulties lack of time presented, it was in the area of soliciting community input that the research team was most hindered. People felt that the research team was trying to rush a very delicate and difficult subject, and they were right!

#### **\*Sensitivity to the Subject Matter:**

In 1985 the Task Force on Spousal Assault was impressed by the willingness of northerners to confront the issue of spousal assault and to discuss the problem in public forums. That Task Force stated that spousal assault is becoming "a community

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problem" rather than a personal or familial one.<sup>1</sup> The research team found that family violence is a very sensitive topic, and one which many people are reticent to discuss. For example, the focus group at the women's shelter in Yellowknife attracted only one aboriginal client although there were four women in the shelter at the time. Additional clients were contacted; however only two agreed to be interviewed individually. After considerable negotiations, arrangements were made to do an individual interview with a female client of the Yellowknife Women's Centre but the woman did not keep her appointment. Other reasons for reluctance to participate in a group discussion or a personal interview were: references to culturally sensitive topics (eg. those of a sexual nature), lack of privacy and confidentiality (eg. in order to comfortably talk about violence and abuse (eg. difficult in crowded housing conditions), and difficulty communicating/explaining terms/concepts particularly to/by unilingual Chipewyan speakers.

Certain aspects of family violence such as child sexual abuse are particularly difficult to discuss. For example, in a meeting in Lutsel K'e spousal assault was identified as the most common form of violence/abuse in the community but outside of the meeting, child sexual abuse was identified as the most serious problem. As was suggested, if every child in the community has been sexually violated in some way every family in the community is affected by the violence. Further due to strong kinship ties there is a likelihood that children are molested by relatives. This may have affected people's willingness to come forward and speak of the problem.

The difficulty of speaking about family violence has been reported in other studies done in Dene communities. The Traditional Dene Justice project, in spite of extensive and long-term training of community researchers and efforts to involve the community in all aspects of the research, also found that interviewees were reluctant to discuss family violence. It was only after a lengthy meeting with the elders of Lac La Martre, where the research team directly asked the elders what the problem was in discussing this topic, that the elders agreed to be interviewed again on the topic. Although the report does not say, it is assumed that after the elders meeting the research team was able to get more data on family violence. (Traditional Dene Justice, Draft Report pg. 26)

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1. Bayly, J., McCracken, I., Vandell, M., Kikoak, L., Giroux, G., Allen, B., and Goulet, M.J. (1985). Report by the Task Force on Spousal Assault. Yellowknife, NT: Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Government of the Northwest Territories, Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT.

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### **\*Lack of Statistical Data:**

The research team was told by many study participants that there are no complete data which illustrate the extent of family violence and abuse in the N.W.T. This is mainly due to reticence of individuals affected by family violence to report and inability/ill preparedness of agencies to capture information on family violence and abuse. Agencies (eg. McAteer House and the GNWT Family Violence Program) with a particular mandate for family violence and abuse do maintain data on family violence and abuse. These data however generally show only a small part of the picture, namely the number of women and children seeking safety and protection.

### **\*Cultural Issues:**

There may be cultural constraints related to speaking about the topic of family violence. Dene people have traditionally believed that words carry great power. Saying things out loud can make them happen. Words have the power of persuasion: thus some words are "harsh" and "strong". A Dogrib woman elder put it like this: "The yabahtis had strong words.....they taught the people how to live. After they [yabantis] have all died. These elected chiefs had no strong words. That is why the police could take over. When there were strong words, the people would listen to each other." (Traditional Dene Justice, Draft Report pg. 67)

### **\*Scepticism About Research:**

Aboriginal people in the N.W.T. and in Lutsel K'e in particular have not been exempt from the numerous and sometimes insensitive research studies conducted for the purpose of advancing knowledge. Moreover the topic of family violence has been the subject of some study over the past decade (Appendix B). In various contexts people have given their views on this topic and in some cases described painful personal experiences. Yet from an individual and a community perspective, residents can see little change in the situation because the violence has not stopped. In fact, it is seen to be increasing. In this respect residents of both Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e were sceptical about the benefits of the research, and this influenced both the quality and quantity of participation.

### **\*Scepticism About the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples:**

Residents of Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e are sceptical about the ability of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to affect change. While RCAP is commended for seeking input from aboriginal people, and endeavouring to ensure a strong knowledge base upon which to make decisions/recommendations, some people particularly those who have been frustrated by the now all too common response "there is no money," perceive RCAP's approach as a questionable use of limited resources. This posed some difficulty for the

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research team which has then been required to "serve two masters" as it were - that is, meet the research objectives approved by the Royal Commission and meet the needs of Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e residents and agencies as articulated during the research project.

### **\*Lack of Comprehensive Documentation:**

The research team undertook an extensive review of documentation related to family violence in the N.W.T. and of traditional Dene values. The literature enabled the research team to clarify and/or to corroborate findings in this research. While a significant amount of documentation exists (Appendix B), there are few comprehensive sources available.

The research team relied heavily on two particular documents: The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality and the Traditional Dene Justice (Draft document). The former report provides the most current and comprehensive review of legal issues facing N.W.T. women, particularly those seeking to deal with family violence. While the latter report was at the time of writing, unpublished, it provides the most comprehensive documentation of traditional Dene knowledge of individual and collective rights and responsibilities, and the protection of them. It is unfortunate that such traditional knowledge is not available in any codified way nor is it accessible as an organized philosophy such as one might experience in a school curriculum. While both the Dogrib Dene and the Chipewyan Dene are a focus of this family violence research, the Traditional Dene Justice report relies exclusively on the traditional knowledge of the Dogrib. For this reason, the traditional views of the Chipewyan Dene may be under-represented in this family violence study.

## APPENDIX B: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## **APPENDIX C: Service Agencies Interviewed**

Canadian Bar Association, Lucy Austin  
Status of Women Council of the N.W.T., Lynn Brooks  
NWT Counselling Services, Gregg Badger  
North Slave Housing Corporation, Bobbi Bulmer  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services, Alcohol, Drug and Community Mental Health, Angus McKay  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services, Alcohol, Drug and Community Mental Health, John Campbell  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services, Alcohol, Drug and Community Mental Health, Bruce Smith  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services, Alcohol, Drug and Community Mental Health, Vera Morin  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services, Family and Children's Services, Doug Sage  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services, Family and Children's Services, Ann Enge  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services, Community and Family Support Services, Shirley Heslip  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services, YK Area Office, Carolyn Mandrusiak  
GNWT Dept. of Justice, Policy and Planning, Robert Hay  
GNWT Dept. of Justice, Corrections Service, John Dillon  
Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, Tom Eagle  
GNWT Dept. of Education, Student Support, Barb Hall, Joan Heyland  
Canadian Mental Health Association, NWT Branch, Barb Hall-Hood  
Salvation Army, Yellowknife, Al Hoeft  
RCMP Criminal Operations, Yellowknife, Staff Sgt. Eric Lafoy  
RCMP, Lutsel K'e, Corporal Hugh Gardipy  
Northern Addiction Services, Nicole MacIntosh  
McAteer House, Janice McKenna  
Yellowknife Correctional Centre, Randy Poltaruk  
Legal Aid, Yellowknife, Greg Nearing  
Mackenzie Court Workers Services, Dianne Rattray, Jackie Carson, Angela Davis, Irene Denoyoua  
Justice Canada, Pierre Rousseau  
Native Women's Association of the NWT, Riki Sato  
Yellowknife Housing Authority, Susan Saville  
Yellowknife Public Health Clinic, Jan Sterling, Kate Hamilton  
Stanton Yellowknife Hospital Mental Health Services, Dr. Ross Wheeler  
Lutsel K'e Dene Band Council, Chief Angie Lantz, DiAnne Blesse

### **Other Persons Contacted**

Darrell Beaulieu, sub-Chief, Ndilo  
Arlene Hache, Yellowknife Women's Centre  
Lawrence Norbert, GNWT Dept. of Justice  
Joan Chesley, Victims Assistance Program  
Dr. Carolina Palacios, Stanton Yellowknife Hospital  
Violet Erasmus, GNWT Dept. of Social Services  
Margie Crown, GNWT Dept. of Health  
Kevin White, Stanton Yellowknife Hospital  
Bruce Stewart, Stanton Yellowknife Hospital

## FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

*The purpose of this group is to share information about: 1) the extent and nature of family violence and/or abuse within aboriginal families and 2) the services that are available to deal with family violence and/or abuse. This group is not a therapeutic, counselling or self-help session.*

### **A. DEFINING FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

1. Family violence means different things to different people. When you say the word "family" which relatives do you include?
2. Looking at the attached list, which actions are violent and/or abusive? Are there other kinds of things that have happened in families that you would consider violent and/or abusive?
3. Under what circumstances would any of these acts be acceptable to you? Does how often (the frequency of) these acts happen effect whether or not they are violent and/or abusive?
4. Did any violence and/or abuse happen in Dene/aboriginal families a long time ago? How did people deal with family violence and abuse then?
5. A long time ago were there any situations when it would have been okay to act this way to someone in the family?
6. A long time ago when children were treated badly or in a mean way, or were neglected, what was done about it?
7. Do you know any traditional (old time) stories or legends which deal with violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

### **B. HOW MUCH VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE IS GOING ON**

*Certain forms of violence and/or abuse (particularly sexual assault and wife beating) happen a lot in the N.W.T. Little is known about how often violence and abuse occur within the family. This set of questions asks about your own experience with and knowledge about family violence and/or abuse.*

8. What kind of family violence and/or abuse do you know of? How bad is the problem of family violence and/or abuse in this community (in your community)?

9. How did/do people affected by family violence and/or abuse handle the situation? What did/do they do, if anything?

10. Do the things that people do to handle family violence and/or abuse help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families?

11. What if any, personal involvement have you had with family violence and/or abuse either as a child or an adult? Was alcohol involved in any of these situations? Which relative was involved? Why did this violence and/or abuse happen?

12. Was your mother or father ever involved in family violence and/or abuse either as a child or an adult? Was alcohol involved in any of these situations involving your parents? Which relative was involved? Why did this violence and/or abuse happen?

13. Do you know of any elders who have been involved in any kind of family violence and/or abuse? What kind?

14. Do you know of any children/young people who have been involved with family violence and/or abuse? What kind?

15. Are the kinds of family violence and/or abuse different within Dene/aboriginal families than within non-Dene/ aboriginal families? How? Why is it different?

### **C. THINGS THAT ARE RELATED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

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*To stop violence and abuse in families, everyone needs to understand what might cause it.*

16. What are the things related to family violence and/or abuse? What things seem to start family violence and/or abuse? What things seem to make it worse once it has started? Are there other things that may effect the kind or amount of violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

17. What were the things that caused family violence and/or abuse a long time ago?

18. Where one or more family members have stopped drinking, does the violence and/or abuse usually stop, continue or take a new form (eg. jealousy, control over money, more gambling, child neglect)?

*Research in the north finds that most victims of violence and abuse know their assailant. Violence and/or abuse in families is more secretive because it is the one place where people do not expect there to be violence so they are ashamed when it happens. Violence and/or abuse in families can be particularly scary for the victims because the people hurting them are people they love and want to trust.*

19. What family members usually intervene to stop the violence and/or abuse? What do they do? (eg. talk to the people involved) How do these actions stop, decrease or increase the violence and/or abuse?

20. If you were a victim of family violence and/or abuse, did you go to any family member for help? To which relative? What did they do to help? Did their help change the violence and/or abuse?

21. If you were an offender, did you go to any family member for help? To which relative? What did they do to help? Did their help change the violence and/or abuse?

22. If you were a victim, did any member of your family protect you from further violence and/or abuse? Which relative? What did they do to help? Did their protection change the violence and/or abuse?

23. Is there a lack of trust or protection within Dene/ aboriginal families? Does this make the violence and/or abuse continue? A long time ago could family members rely on each other more for trust, protection and help than they can today?

24. Do the government, schools, residential schools, churches, businesses or any other groups influence the kind or amount of violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? How?

25. Leaders in the north seem to have had lots of experience with family violence and/or abuse. How does this effect family violence and/or abuse in your community?

#### **D. DEALING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

There seems to be three basic ways of dealing with family violence and/or abuse: treatment, prosecution and prevention. We would like to know about your experiences, if any, dealing with family violence and/or abuse in one or all of these ways.

##### ***Seeking Help and/or Treatment***

26. Thinking of people involved in family violence and/or abuse, what do they do to deal with their situation? If you have personally been involved in violence and/or abuse in your family, how did you deal with it?

27. After a violent or abusive incident, did you or someone else go for help? Who did you go to first? What happened when you went for help? Of all the things you did, what seemed to help the most? Why?

28. Have you ever had to leave your community to receive help for family violence and/or abuse? Why? Was leaving your community good or bad? Why?

29. Have you, or anyone you know, ever had a peace bond or restraining order? Did this stop the violence or abuse in the family? For how long?

30. How bad does the family violence and/or abuse have to be before you or others will go outside of the family for help? Does help from outside of the family stop the violence and/or abuse?

31. If you or others go outside the family for help, what agency or professional would you go to? As a Dene/aboriginal person, what do you want from the agency/professional? (What kind of help do you expect to get?)

32. Would you feel more comfortable talking about family violence and/or abuse problems with a Dene/aboriginal or a non-Dene/aboriginal person? Why?

33. When you went for help were you able to use the aboriginal language of your choice? Was the person helping you able to speak your aboriginal language? Was there an interpreter available, if you had needed or wanted one? Was this, or is this, important to you?

34. Did you feel you had enough control over the situation once you went to an agency or professional for help? What kind of control would you like to have had over the situation?

35. Did getting help from these agencies/professionals stop the family violence and/or abuse in the short term? In the long term?

36. Did any of these agencies/professionals encourage or force you to leave your situation (eg. go to alcohol/drug treatment, go to jail, leave your husband, have your child removed)? Did/do you see leaving as the solution to stopping the family violence and/or abuse?

*Victims and offenders experience long term effects from family violence and/or abuse (for eg. child sexual abuse or wife battering). Usually these long term effects are emotional and psychological rather than physical.*

37. Have you ever used a long-term service (eg. for 3 months or more) to deal with problems that may result from family violence and/or abuse? Did these services help to stop the violence and/or abuse? Did these services help people to recover from the effects of the violence and abuse? Why or why not?

### **Prosecution**

38. Have you, or anyone you know, ever charged another family member for being violent and/or abusive? (eg. before mandatory charging came into effect when victims had to press charges.)

39. Are there situations where a victim should be able to have the charges withdrawn (eg. a wife against her husband)? What are these situations? Do you know of anyone who wanted to withdraw the charge after it had been laid, but could not? Why did they want to withdraw the charge?

40. What role have you played, if any, in the prosecution of someone involving family violence and/or abuse (eg. complainant, witness, offender)?

**IF YOU HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE PROSECUTION OF  
SOMEONE IN A FAMILY VIOLENCE/ABUSE CASE:**

41. Have you ever called the police (or had someone call them for you) in a family violence and/or abuse case? What did the police do? How helpful was their action in stopping the violence and/or abuse? Have the police ever been called on you in a family violence and/or abuse case?

42. Once charges had been laid, how well did you understand the process (eg. of mandatory charging, giving testimony, sentencing, victim's assistance programs and peoples' rights)?

43. Were you kept informed by the authorities (eg. by the RCMP, the Crown Prosecutor, your lawyer) as the case proceeded? Was there anything you would like to see changed about how that was done?

44. What support, if any, did you receive (eg. Did anyone help you out financially or emotionally? Did anyone prepare you for court or during the process of charging or during the court proceedings? Did anyone help while the offender was in jail?) What would you change about the kind of support you received?

45. How did you feel about the outcome (eg. of the verdict, the sentence, the punishment)?

46. In the cases that you know about (including your own) did court/jail stop the family violence and/or abuse in the short term? The long term (eg. more than 3 months)?

**Prevention**

47. Has your community ever held any workshops or training on family violence and/or abuse? Have you ever been involved in any training to help service agencies better deal with violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

48. Do your children study anything related to family violence and/or abuse in school? Does this help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families?

49. Have you ever read an advertisement in a newspaper or magazine which was aimed at recognizing and preventing family violence and/or abuse? Have you ever seen/heard an advertisement on the radio or TV which was aimed at recognizing and preventing family violence and/or abuse? Do ads help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families?

50. Have you ever received any pamphlets or other public information about family violence and/or abuse? What? How did you get it? Does this kind of information help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families?

51. What do parents do to discourage violence in their families, particularly among their children?

### **E. MAKING CHANGES**

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52. What can be done to stop family violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? Who is responsible for dealing with and stopping the violence and abuse in Dene/aboriginal families (eg. parents, husbands, wives, government, leaders, schools, churches)?

53. How could services be improved to help stop the violence and abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? What advice would you give a person who has just begun to work with Dene/aboriginal people affected by family violence and/or abuse (eg. learn the Dene language, have patience, listen more, try not to be too bossy)?

54. What can the community do to help families affected by violence? (eg. Band Council, Community Education Council rather than the Gov't of the NWT or the Federal Government.) What help might they need to do that (eg. sober leadership, training, community support, money)?

55. What kind of short-term services are needed immediately in this community to deal with and stop family violence and abuse? What long-term services are needed in this community (eg. counselling for families, offenders treatment programs)?

56. In this community, what can individuals do to protect people (particularly women and children) who are not safe in their own homes (eg. have safe

houses, show people to care for each other)? What can families do to protect people (particular women and children) who are not safe in their own homes?

57. How should offenders be dealt with (by the family, the community, the courts)?

## **F. PERSONAL DATA**

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*In this last section we need to find out more about the people who participated in the focus group. We do not want to know your name or address.*

58. \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

59. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ years of age

60. What is the highest level of education you have?

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ High School Diploma \_\_\_\_\_

Technical/Business Diploma \_\_\_\_\_

College Diploma \_\_\_\_\_ University Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

61. What is your marital status?

\_\_\_\_\_ single

\_\_\_\_\_ married/common-law

\_\_\_\_\_ separated

\_\_\_\_\_ divorced

\_\_\_\_\_ widowed

62. To which of the following groups do you belong (or do you identify the most closely with)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Inuit \_\_\_\_\_ Inuvialuit

\_\_\_\_\_ Dene \_\_\_\_\_ Métis

\_\_\_\_\_ other aboriginal group \_\_\_\_\_ non-aboriginal

63. How do you normally earn your living? (eg. homemaker, student, trapper, unemployed) \_\_\_\_\_

64. How comfortable were you speaking about family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_\_ very comfortable \_\_\_\_\_ okay \_\_\_\_\_ not very comfortable

65. Were there things you wanted to say but didn't or felt you couldn't?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

66. Is there anything else you would like to say?

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PLACE LUTRA CARD HERE

Please remove this card and keep it. If after being interviewed you feel the need to talk to someone about the issues that have come-up in the discussions here please call either Lois Little or Cvnthia Chambers at the number on the card.

ACTIONS WHICH MAY BE ABUSIVE OR VIOLENT IN A FAMILY

- ☐ ignoring/silent treatment
- ☐ neglect (eg. being left alone, not fed properly)
- ☐ stealing (eg. pension cheque)
- ☐ forced to babysit for long periods of time
- ☐ relatives living off you without contributing/helping
- ☐ begging or bothering for money
  
- ☐ insulting
- ☐ name-calling
- ☐ yelling
- ☐ hair-pulling
- ☐ slapping
- ☐ kicking
- ☐ biting
- ☐ nagging
- ☐ blaming (eg. finding fault)
- ☐ swearing
- ☐ shaking
- ☐ pushing
- ☐ hitting
- ☐ punching
- ☐ choking
- ☐ being harassed
  
- ☐ being threatened (physically or verbally)
- ☐ being threatened with a weapon
- ☐ having something thrown at you (eg. rocks, boiling water)
- ☐ being forced to watch and hear violence
- ☐ being threatened to be run over
- ☐ being burned
- ☐ being forced into sex
- ☐ any sexual touching not agreed to
- ☐ any sexual touching not wanted
- ☐ sex or sexual touching with a person under age
- ☐ sex or sexual touching with a person mentally or physically  
unable to refuse (eg. passed out, mentally handicapped, in  
a wheel-chair)
- ☐ being forced to touch someone else's private parts
- ☐ being forced to watch others have sex (eg. on videos)
- ☐ rape in marriage
- ☐ suicide
- ☐ murder
- ☐ trying to kill someone (eg. by smothering, drowning)
- ☐ withholding love or affection for money, sex or other favours

THINGS RELATED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

- \_\_\_ family interference/pressure (eg. from in-laws)
  - \_\_\_ loss of job/kicked out of school
  - \_\_\_ cheating on partner/suspected of cheating
  - \_\_\_ pregnancy
  - \_\_\_ too many children
  - \_\_\_ money problems
  - \_\_\_ death in family
  - \_\_\_ "asking for it"
  - \_\_\_ needing someone to pick on
  - \_\_\_ family breakdown
  - \_\_\_ jealousy
  - \_\_\_ feeling powerless
  - \_\_\_ too much education
  - \_\_\_ leaders setting bad example
  - \_\_\_ caught between the old ways and the new ways
  - \_\_\_ lack of family support and direction
  - \_\_\_ bad attitudes about Dene/aboriginal people
  - \_\_\_ being raised in a violent/abusive family
  - \_\_\_ people don't think it is wrong
  - \_\_\_ beliefs that men should have more power
- \_\_\_ not able to have children
  - \_\_\_ children acting up
  - \_\_\_ illness
  - \_\_\_ card games/bingos
  - \_\_\_ laziness
  - \_\_\_ low self esteem
  - \_\_\_ drinking/drugs/solvents
  - \_\_\_ crowded housing
  - \_\_\_ residential schools
  - \_\_\_ not enough education

CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS  
AND INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

I have been informed of the objectives of the study on family violence in Lutsel K'e and Yellowknife being conducted by Lutra Associates Ltd. I have also been informed about the methods for collecting information on family violence and about how I will be asked to participate in the study. I agree to participate in this study in order to increase the understanding of family violence, and to help stop it from happening.

I understand that none of the personal information that I provide will be attributed directly to me unless I authorize this to occur. I understand that I may find it emotionally trying or difficult to talk about family violence and I accept this as part of my participation in this study. I understand that I do not have to participate in this study and that I can withdraw from the study at any time. If I have any questions or concerns about this research, I can register these with:

Beatrice Medicine,  
Research Coordinator--Women's Perspectives  
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples  
427 Laurier Avenue West, 6th Floor  
P.O. Box 1993, Station "B"  
OTTAWA, Ontario K1P 1B2

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Over  
16 Years of Age

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Confidential****FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE QUESTIONNAIRE**

This interview is to collect information about: 1) the extent and nature of family violence and/or abuse within aboriginal families and 2) the services which are available to deal with family violence and/or abuse. This interview is not a therapeutic, counselling or self-help session.

**A. DEFINING FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

1. Family violence and/or abuse mean different things to different people. When you say the word "family" which relatives do you include? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following actions would you consider abusive and/or violent in a family?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ignoring/silent treatment   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> neglect (eg. being left alone, not being fed properly)  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stealing (eg. pension cheque)   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> forced to babysit for long periods of time  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> relatives living "off" you without contributing/helping   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> begging or bothering for money  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> insulting   | <input type="checkbox"/> blaming (eg. finding fault)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> name-calling  | <input type="checkbox"/> swearing                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yelling   | <input type="checkbox"/> shaking                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hair-pulling  | <input type="checkbox"/> pushing                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> slapping  | <input type="checkbox"/> hitting                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> kicking   | <input type="checkbox"/> punching                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> biting  | <input type="checkbox"/> choking                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nagging   | <input type="checkbox"/> being harassed               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attempting suicide  | <input type="checkbox"/> committing/attempting murder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being threatened (physically or verbally)   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being threatened with a weapon  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> having something thrown at you (eg. rocks, boiling water)   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being forced to watch and hear violence   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being threatened to be run over   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being burned  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being forced into sex   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> any sexual touching not agreed to   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> any sexual touching not wanted  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sex or sexual touching with a person under age  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sex or sexual touching with a person mentally or physically unable to refuse (eg. passed out, mentally handicapped, in a wheel-chair) |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being forced to touch someone else's private parts  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being forced to watch others have sex (eg. on videos)   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being raped by your partner (eg. rape in marriage)  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trying to kill someone (eg. by smothering, drowning)  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> withholding love/affection for money, sex or favours  | 1   |



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<u>      </u>	all of the time	<u>      </u>	most of the time
<u>      </u>	some of the time	<u>      </u>	none of the time

5. Does how often these things happen effect whether or not they are violent and/or abusive? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no  
 \_\_\_\_\_ don't know

6b. How did people deal with family violence and/or abuse then?

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6c. A long time ago, were there any violent or abusive situations which would have been okay in a Dene/aboriginal family?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. A long time ago when children were treated badly or in a mean way, or were neglected, what was done about it?

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8. What traditional (old time) stories or legends deal with violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

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**B. HOW MUCH VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE IS GOING ON**

Certain forms of violence and/or abuse (particularly sexual assault and wife beating) happen a lot in the N.W.T. Little is known about how often violence and abuse occurs within the family. This set of questions asks about your own experience with and knowledge about family violence and/or abuse.

9a. Do you know of any family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

9b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. How bad is the problem of family violence and/or abuse in this community (your community)?

\_\_\_\_ really bad      \_\_\_\_ bad  
\_\_\_\_ not so bad      \_\_\_\_ not a problem at all

11. How do people affected by family violence and/or abuse handle the situation? (eg. What do they do?)

____ pray	____ withdrew
____ cry	____ got mad
____ drink alcohol/use drugs	____ eat
____ scream at the kids	____ work
____ go for a walk	____ go to a relative
____ go to an elder	____ call police
____ go to the nursing station	____ go to social worker
____ run away	____ go shopping
____ read	____ sleep
____ smoke	____ went for treatment
____ gamble	____ do nothing
____ go visiting	____ go to the bush
____ get away and be alone	
____ become abusive/violent to others	
____ other (explain) _____	

12. Do any of these things help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ don't know

13a. Have you ever been involved with any kind of family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no  
\_\_\_\_ don't want to talk about it

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13b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14a. Were you involved in any kind of family violence and/or abuse as a child? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_ don't remember  
\_\_\_\_ don't want to talk about it

14b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14c. About how old were you when you were first exposed to family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ years old  
\_\_\_\_ don't remember

14d. Was alcohol involved? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_ don't remember

15a. Have you ever been involved with any kind of family violence and/or abuse as an adult? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no  
\_\_\_\_ don't want to talk about it

15b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15c. Is/was alcohol involved? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_ not sure

16a. Do you know if your mother, either as an adult or a child, was involved in any family violence and/or abuse?  
\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_\_ don't want to talk about it

16b. By which relative? (eg. brother, grandmother, uncle)

16c. Why did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17a. Do you know if your father, either as an adult or a child, was involved in any family violence and/or abuse?  
\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_\_ don't want to talk about it

17b. By which relative? (brother, grandmother, aunt)

17c. Why did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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18a. Do you know of any elders who have been involved in any kind of family violence and/or abuse?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ don't want to talk about it

18b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19a. Do you know of any children/young people who have been involved with family violence and/or abuse?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know ☐ don't want to talk about it

19b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20a. Are the kinds of family violence and/or abuse different within Dene/aboriginal families than within non-Dene/aboriginal families? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

20b. If yes, how is it different? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20c. Why is it different? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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C. THINGS THAT ARE RELATED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

To stop violence in families, everyone needs to understand what might cause it.

21. What are the things related to family violence and/or abuse? (What things contribute to it?)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> family interference/pressure (eg. from in-laws) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> loss of job/kicked out of school                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cheating on partner/suspected of cheating       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pregnancy                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> not able to have children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> too many children                               | <input type="checkbox"/> children acting up        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> money problems                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> illness                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> death in family                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> card games/bingos         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "asking for it"                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> laziness                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> needing someone to pick on                      | <input type="checkbox"/> low self esteem           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> family breakdown                                | <input type="checkbox"/> drinking/drugs/solvents   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jealousy  | <input type="checkbox"/> crowded housing           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeling powerless                               | <input type="checkbox"/> residential schools       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> too much education                              | <input type="checkbox"/> not enough education      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> leaders setting bad example                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> caught between the old ways and the new ways    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lack of family support and direction            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bad attitudes about Dene/aboriginal people      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being raised in a violent/abusive family        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> people don't think it is wrong                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> beliefs that men should have more power         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) _____                           |  |

22a. Are there any other things that may effect the kind or amount of violence and/or abuse in Dene/ aboriginal families? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

22b. If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What were the things that caused family violence and/or abuse a long time ago? \_\_\_\_\_

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24a. Are there situations where one or more family members have stopped drinking but the violence and/or abuse has continued or situations where the violence/abuse has taken a new form (eg. jealousy, control over money, more gambling, child neglect)? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

24b. If yes, please describe at least one of these situations. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Research in the north finds that most victims of violence and abuse know their assailant. Violence and/or abuse in families is more secretive because it is the one place where people do not expect there to be violence so they are ashamed when it happens. Violence and/or abuse in families can be particularly scary for the victims because the people hurting them are people they love and want to trust.

25a. Thinking back on situations where people have been involved in family violence and/or abuse, did any family members intervene to stop the violence and/or abuse?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

25b. If yes, which relative? \_\_\_\_\_

25c. What did they do? (eg. talk to the people involved) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25d. How did these actions change the violence and/or abuse?

☐ made it worse ☐ decreased it  
☐ stopped it ☐ didn't help at all

26a. If you were a victim of family violence and/or abuse, did you go to any family member for help?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember  
☐ don't want to talk about it ☐ not applicable

26b. If yes, which relative? \_\_\_\_\_

26c. What did they do to help? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

26d. Did their help change the violence and/or abuse?

☐ made it worse ☐ decreased it  
☐ stopped it ☐ didn't help at all

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27a. If you were an offender, did you go to any family member for help? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember  
☐ don't want to talk about it ☐ not applicable

27b. If yes, which relative? \_\_\_\_\_

27c. What did they do to help? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

27d. Did their help change the violence and/or abuse?

☐ made it worse ☐ decreased it  
☐ stopped it ☐ didn't help at all

28a. If you were a victim, did any member of your family protect you from further violence and/or abuse?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember  
☐ don't want to talk about it ☐ not applicable

28b. If yes, which relative? \_\_\_\_\_

28c. What did they do to protect you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

28d. Did their protection change the violence and/or abuse?

☐ made it worse ☐ decreased it  
☐ stopped it ☐ didn't help at all

28e. If no, did the lack of trust or protection within the family make the violence and/or abuse continue?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember ☐ don't know  
☐ don't want to talk about it ☐ not applicable

29. A long time ago, could family members rely on each other more for trust, protection and help than they can today?

☐ more ☐ less ☐ about the same ☐ don't know

30a. Do/did the government, schools, residential schools, churches, businesses or any other groups influence the kind or amount of violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know  
☐ don't want to talk about it

30b. If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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31. Leaders in the north seem to have had lots of experience with family violence and/or abuse. How does this effect family violence and/or abuse in your community?

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**D. DEALING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

There seems to be three basic ways of dealing with family violence and/or abuse: treatment, prosecution and prevention. We would like to know about your experiences, if any, dealing with family violence and/or abuse in one or all of these ways.

Seeking Help and/or Treatment

32. Thinking of people involved in family violence and/or abuse, what do they do to deal with their situation?

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33. If you have personally been involved in violence and/or abuse in your family, how did you deal with it?

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34a. After a violent or abusive incident, did you or someone else go for help? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember

34b. If yes, who did you/they go to first?

<input type="checkbox"/> family member/relative	<input type="checkbox"/> friend/neighbour
<input type="checkbox"/> police	<input type="checkbox"/> elder
<input type="checkbox"/> priest/pastor	<input type="checkbox"/> women's shelter
<input type="checkbox"/> social worker	<input type="checkbox"/> nursing station
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) _____	

34c. What happened when you/they went for help? (eg. to the police) \_\_\_\_\_

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34d. Of all the things you/they did, what seemed to help the most? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

35a. Have you ever had to leave your community to receive help for family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no  
35b. Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

35c. If yes, was leaving your community \_\_\_\_ good or \_\_\_\_ bad? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

36a. Have you, or anyone you know, ever had a peace bond or restraining order? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

36b. Did this stop the violence or abuse in the family?  
\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ don't know

36c. If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

37a. How bad does the family violence and/or abuse have to be before you or others will go outside of the family for help? \_\_\_\_ really bad \_\_\_\_ bad  
\_\_\_\_ not too bad \_\_\_\_ after one incident

37b. Please describe what you mean by this.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

37c. Does help from outside of the family stop the violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ sometimes

38. If you or others go outside the family for help, what agencies or professionals would you go to? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

39. As a Dene/aboriginal person, what do you want from these agencies/professionals? (What kind of help do you expect to get?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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40. Would you feel more comfortable talking about family violence and/or abuse problems with a \_\_\_\_ Dene or a non-Dene person? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

41a. When you went for help (eg. RCMP, nurse, social worker, shelter, courtroom) were you able to use the aboriginal language of your choice? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

41b. Was the person helping you able to speak your aboriginal language? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

41c. Was there an interpreter available, if you had needed or wanted one? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

41d. Was this, or is this, important to you? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

42a. Did you feel you had enough control over the situation once you went to an agency or professional for help?

\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no  
42b. If no, what kind of control would you like to have had over the situation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

43a. Did getting help from these agencies/professionals stop the family violence and/or abuse in the short term?

\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ sometimes  
44b. Stop it in the long term? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ sometimes

45a. Did any of these agencies/professionals encourage or force you to leave your situation (eg. go to alcohol/drug treatment, go to jail, leave your husband, have your child(ren) removed)? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ sometimes

45b. Did you/do you see leaving as the solution to stopping the family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ sometimes

Victims and offenders experience long term effects from family violence and/or abuse (eg. child sexual abuse or wife battering). Usually these long term effects are emotional and psychological rather than physical.

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46a. Have you ever used a long-term service (eg. for 3 months or more) to deal with problems that may result from family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_\_ jail/court

\_\_\_\_\_ treatment/rehabilitation program

\_\_\_\_\_ counselling

\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

46b. Did these services help to stop the violence and/or abuse in the family? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes

47c. Did these services help people to recover from the longer term effects of the violence and abuse?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes

47d. Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

Prosecution

48. Have you, or anyone you know, ever charged another family member for being violent and/or abusive? (eg. before mandatory charging came into effect when victims had to press charges.) \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

49a. Are there situations where a victim should be able to have the charges withdrawn (eg. a wife against her husband)?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

49b. If yes, what are these situations? \_\_\_\_\_

50a. Do you know of anyone who wanted to withdraw the charge after it had been laid, but could not? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

50b. Why did they want to withdraw the charge? \_\_\_\_\_

51. What role have you played, if any, in the prosecution of someone involved a family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_\_ complainant (the one who was a victim)

\_\_\_\_\_ witness

\_\_\_\_\_ offender (the one who allegedly committed the offense)

\_\_\_\_\_ don't want to talk about it

**Confidential**

**IF YOU HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE PROSECUTION OF  
SOMEONE IN A FAMILY VIOLENCE/ABUSE CASE:**

52A. Have you ever called the police (or had someone call them for you) in a family violence and/or abuse case?

\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

52b. What did the police do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

52c. How helpful was their action in stopping the violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_ very helpful      \_\_\_\_ helpful      \_\_\_\_ not helpful at all

52d. Have the police ever been called on you in a family violence and/or abuse case? \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

53. Once charges had been laid, how well did you understand the process (eg. of mandatory charging, giving testimony, sentencing, victim's assistance programs and peoples' rights)? \_\_\_\_ very well      \_\_\_\_ okay      \_\_\_\_ not very well at all

54a. Were you kept informed by the authorities (eg. by the RCMP, the Crown Prosecutor, your lawyer, etc) as the case proceeded? \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

54b. Was there anything you would like to see changed about how this was done? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

55a. What support, if any, did you receive (eg. Did anyone help you out financially or emotionally? Did anyone prepare you for court, during the process of charging or during the court proceedings? Did anyone help while the offender was in jail? Or while you are/were in jail?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

55b. What would you change about the kind of support you received? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Confidential**

56. How did you feel about the outcome (eg. of the verdict, the sentence, the punishment)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

57. In the cases that you know about (including your own) did court/jail stop the family violence and/or abuse in \_\_\_\_\_ the short term or in \_\_\_\_\_ the long term (eg. more than 3 months) or \_\_\_\_\_ not at all?

Prevention

58. Has your community ever held any workshops or training on family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ don't know

59. Have you ever been involved in any training to help service agencies better deal with violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

60. If you have children, do they study anything related to family violence and/or abuse at school?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ don't know

61. Have you ever read an advertisement in a newspaper or magazine which was aimed at recognizing and preventing family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

62. Have you ever seen/heard an advertisement on the radio or TV which was aimed at recognizing and preventing family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

63a. Have you ever received any pamphlets or other public information about family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

63b. If yes, what was it and how did you get it?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

64. What do parents do to discourage violence in their families, particularly among their children? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E. MAKING CHANGES

65. What can be done to stop family violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

66. Who is responsible for dealing with and stopping the violence and abuse in Dene/aboriginal families (eg. parents, husbands, wives, government, leaders, schools, churches)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

67. How could services be improved to help stop the violence and abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

68. What advice would you give a person who has just begun to work with Dene/aboriginal people affected by family violence and/or abuse (eg. learn the Dene language, have patience, listen more)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

69a. What can the community do to help families affected by violence (eg. Band Council, Community Education Council rather than Gov't of the NWT or the Federal Government)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

69b. What help might the community need to do that (eg. sober leadership, training, community support, money)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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70a. What kind of short-term services are needed immediately in this community to deal with and stop family violence and abuse? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

70b. What long-term services are needed in this community (eg. counselling for families, offenders treatment programs)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

71a. In this community, what can individuals do to protect people (particular women and children) who are not safe in their own homes? (eg. have safe houses, show people to care for each other) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

71b. In this community, what can families do to protect people who are not safe in their own homes?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

72. How should offenders be dealt with (by the family, the community, the courts)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**F. PERSONAL DATA**

In this last section we need to find out more about the people who completed this questionnaire. We do not want to know your name or address.

73.      Male or      Female

74. How old are you?                      years of age

75. What is the highest level of education you have?

Grade              High School Diploma             

Technical/Business Diploma      College Diploma             

University Degree             

Other   

76. What is your marital status?

     single      married/common-law

     separated      divorced      widowed

77. To which of the following groups do you belong (or do you identify the most closely with)?

     Inuit      Inuvialuit      Dene      Métis

     other aboriginal group      non-aboriginal

78. How do you normally earn your living? (eg. homemaker, student, trapper, unemployed)   

79. How comfortable were you speaking about family violence and/or abuse?      very comfortable      okay  
     not very comfortable

80. Were there things you wanted to say but didn't or felt you couldn't?      Yes      No

81. Is there anything else you would like to say?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PLACE LUTRA CARD HERE

Please remove this card and keep it. If after being interviewed you feel the need to talk to someone about the issues that have come-up in the discussions here please call either Lois Little or Cynthia Chambers at the number on the card.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: SHELTER			
Sutherland House, Tawow Society, Fort Smith	To provide physical accommodation and safety, appropriate counselling and referrals, rehabilitation and follow-up services which respond to community needs. <b>Target:</b> Abused women and their children in Fort Smith and surrounding area	One of nine short term shelters in the NWT providing counselling; women's group; referrals; walk-in second stage housing.	Open 24 hours, 7 days/week. Length of stay flexible, averaging 6 weeks in duration.
McAteer House, YWCA, Yellowknife	To provide physical accommodation and safety, appropriate counselling and referrals, rehabilitation and follow-up services which respond to community needs. <b>Target:</b> Abused women and their children in Yellowknife and in areas of the NWT where such services do not exist.	Short term safe, secure shelter for 14. Childcare, women's group, support counselling, alcohol awareness, personal assistance and support (eg. legal, education and financial information, life skills, clothing), limited post-counselling, and some advocacy. McAteer enforces a policy of no physical discipline (eg. spanking children).	Clients can stay up to 6 weeks with some flexibility. Open 24 hours, 7 days/week. No waiting list with overflow provided by Fort Smith or Hay River shelters or local hotels with Social Services authorization. No follow-up or second stage housing available. Men are not allowed. Individuals must be "dry" to enter the premises. No alcohol or drugs are allowed. Located in high rise facility with limited play area for children. The cultural appropriateness of the program is regularly questioned.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Yellowknife Housing Authority and the Lutsel K'e Housing Authority	To secure and maintain in accordance with need, adequate, suitable and affordable shelter at a reasonable cost. <b>Target:</b> Persons, especially families experiencing problems securing adequate, suitable, and affordable housing.	Long term housing. No other services are provided. The current Yellowknife inventory is 242 units. Economic rates charges at no more than 25% of the household income. Lutsel K'e has a smaller number of units. Both housing authorities have waiting lists but in Yellowknife victims of family violence are among the highest priority for housing.	Must demonstrate need of housing, be of 19 years of age, have resided in the NWT for a minimum of 3 months, and able to live independently. McAteer clients are often referred to the Yellowknife Authority in the absence of second stage housing for abused women. In Yellowknife, part of lease agreement that in case of family breakdown, the partner responsible for the children maintains the unit.
North Slave Housing Corp., Yellowknife	To provide affordable housing for Yellowknife aboriginal people. <b>Target:</b> Aboriginal people living in an urban environment.	Holistic long term housing programs which include appropriate accommodation and support services (eg. money management, personal counselling, tenant rights/obligations, information on day care, taxation, treatment programs, employment and education, personal development/life skills workshops, etc. Tenant counselling and relations are a main focus of the organization. North Slave has 67 units.	Must be resident of Yellowknife for 6 months, have proof of aboriginal status, and 19 years of age. The main caregiver (eg. person responsible for the children) is considered the family head. In the case of family problems, the secondary parent is asked to leave the home.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: TREATMENT/REHABILITATION			
Salvation Army, Yellowknife	To supply basic human necessities, provide personal counseling and undertake the spiritual and moral regeneration and physical rehabilitation of all persons in need. <b>Target:</b> All persons in need.	Short term treatment funded by the Gov't of the NWT Department of Social Services and the Yellowknife Correctional Centre to provide a 28 day residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation program.	Persons exiting this program may continue residency on work release or day parole. In this manner the program operates as a half-way house. A religious basis to the Salvation Army's Program may not be appropriate for all individuals.
Territorial Treatment Centre, Yellowknife	Residential facility for various emotional and/or behaviour problems. <b>Target:</b> Youth aged 6-14 years. (Younger children are generally handled by the medical system.)	Eight beds are available on a short to mid-term basis. Individual programs are developed from assessments. Therapeutic services are provided by qualified therapists.	Must be referred by a medical professional. The Dept. of Social Services' Assessment and Treatment Team provides mental and emotional assessments for young people with behavioural disorders. There is a lengthy assessment and referral period prior to placement at the Centre.
Northern Addictions Services, Yellowknife	To provide drug and alcohol detox, rehabilitation treatment and after care counselling to the community. <b>Target:</b> All northern residents.	Short-term (28 day) residential detoxification and rehabilitation program for persons withdrawing from and seeking treatment for the effects of alcohol and drug dependency. After care counselling is also available. The program includes components on sexual abuse, battering, and other elements of family violence.	Must be 19 years or older. Rehabilitation treatment is based on a referral from an alcohol/drug specialist or medical professional. Counselling is provided by counsellors rather than therapists. The cultural appropriateness is frequently questioned.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Fort Smith Women's Centre, Fort Smith	To incarcerate and rehabilitate offenders. <b>Target:</b> Female offenders	Minimum security for 10 with overflow facilities.	Females offenders are placed here unless they are a risk to themselves or others. Inmates are viewed as victims unless they prove otherwise. Most have been abused and are treated essentially as family violence victims.
Yellowknife Correctional Centre, Yellowknife	To incarcerate and rehabilitate offenders. <b>Target:</b> Male offenders	YCC is a varied-level security centre built for capacity of 132 but has had a population of up to 198. Each inmate is assessed upon entry and a program is developed to guide his rehabilitation. Services include AA, lifeskills, mens support group, counselling with respect to family/marital relations, anger management, suicide. Inmates can gain access to services outside the Centre such as through the Tree of Peace and Salvation Army.	Short term sentences (average of 3 months) makes it difficult to do effective rehabilitation programming. Priority to develop more work and culturally specific programs. Most federal inmates (eg. violent crimes) are sent to maximum security institutions in southern Canada.
South Mackenzie Correctional Centre, Hay River	To incarcerate and rehabilitate offenders. <b>Target:</b> Male offenders	A minimum security, work related institution with a capacity for 52. Individual programs are developed based on entry assessments. Program emphasis is on counselling and work specific activities.	Programming is particularly relevant for spousal assault offenders, sex offenders and marital relationships.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Mental Health Services, Stanton Yellowknife Hospital	To provide short term acute psychiatric therapy. <b>Target:</b> General public	Persons are treated within the hospital facility. Short term therapy is provided to deal with immediate crisis.	Patients are admitted by referral of outpatients clinics, doctors and nursing stations. The number of persons being served has been reduced by a change in mandate which restricts of these services by persons with addictions or those affected by family violence.
John Howard Society, Yellowknife	To help prevent crime and make the justice system more effective and human. <b>Target:</b> Offenders	Operates the Fine Options Program and the Community Service Order Program to provide alternatives for offenders.	Endeavours to provide a program in accordance with court orders, the needs of the offender and community support.
Primary Service: COUNSELLING			
Mental Health Clinic, Yellowknife	To provide crisis intervention. <b>Target:</b> General public.	Crisis intervention services and counselling to individuals and families.	Must be referred by a medical professional.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
NWT Counselling Services, Yellowknife	Long and short term therapy and counselling focusing primarily on family violence/abuse. <b>Target:</b> Offenders and victims of family violence in Yellowknife and surrounding area.	Individual/family/group counselling related to family violence and abuse. Individual/ group counselling for victims of spousal assault. Group counselling for batterers. Child sexual abuse and adult survivors of sexual abuse counselling/ groups. Public education/liaison, training, and consultation involving other agencies.	Mostly Yellowknife based. Waiting period can be up to 2 months. EAP and Social service contracts get priority. Not used by GNWT employees. By referral through medical doctor or other professional. Also available by appointment. Provides after care for abusers released from institutions. Trying to work more with family/couples and children. The only agency to see people on a long term basis for therapy/ counselling.
Yellowknife Counselling & Addiction Services, Yellowknife	To provide counselling services. <b>Target:</b> the General Public	Provides individual, marital and family counselling for anger management, and alcohol and drug abuse counselling.	By appointment on a fee for service basis.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY			
Lutsel K'e Drug and Alcohol Program, Lutsel K'e	To educate and undertake promotional activities related to reducing/eliminating alcohol and drugs abuse. <b>Target:</b> All residents of Lutsel K'e.	Home visits, individual counselling, referrals for treatment, AIDS awareness workshops, child sexual abuse workshops, and various support groups such as the women's groups and men's group. Alcohol and Drug programs exist in virtually every NWT community.	The program is designed primarily for awareness and promotion but the high demand for individual counselling has become the focus. Counselling is frequently sought by adolescents as there is not treatment facility available in the NWT.
Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, Yellowknife	To improve the quality of life for aboriginal people in Yellowknife. <b>Target:</b> All urban aboriginal people.	Alcohol and drug awareness; employment/education/social/housing program referrals, counselling and liaison; recreation and drop-in programs.	Programs at the Centre do not deal specifically with family violence and abuse.
Canadian Mental Health Association, Yellowknife	To promote mental health throughout the NWT. <b>Target:</b> General Public.	Information/publications and workshops on mental health. Work with the John Howard Society, Victims' Assistance Program. Operates a Helpline or crisis intervention on personal, family and community problems.	A voluntary organization which depends heavily on public participation and funding to stage programs.
Yellowknife Women's Centre, Yellowknife	To support and advocate on behalf of women in Yellowknife. <b>Target:</b> Women in Yellowknife.	Counselling; referrals; advocacy and group support groups for victims of rape, and of child sexual abuse. Some emergency accommodation is available.	The Centre is developing and services are provided within this context. Operates 5 days a week.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Status of Women Council of the NWT, Yellowknife	To advocate on behalf of the needs of women and children in the N.W.T. <b>Target:</b> Women and children throughout the NWT	Information and advocacy on issues of importance to women in the NWT including housing, legal, and personal referrals and advice.	To meet needs identified to and by the organization. Operates 5 days/week.
Native Womens' Association of the NWT, Yellowknife	To preserve and enhance the health, cultural social, economic and educational well-being of aboriginal women in the western NWT.	Information and advocacy on issues of importance to aboriginal women in the NWT. About half of the Association's programs focus on family violence (eg. workshops on self-esteem, conflict/anger management, parenting skills, and healing camps).	To meet needs identified to and by the organization. 5 days/week. Priorities are established by the board and pursued as funding permits.
Yellowknife Victims Assistance Program, Yellowknife	To serve victims in crisis. <b>Target:</b> General public	Provides emergency assistance to victims of crimes, loss, or disaster. Provides immediate emotional support/assistance and works with existing agencies to access information. The program is located in the RCMP detachment and is staffed by a full-time coordinator and volunteers. The program is administered by the Canadian Mental Health Association (previously by the YWCA).	The program combines police-based and community-based information and advocacy services to assist a variety of individuals/families in a crisis situation. Provides immediate services only.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e Schools	To provide formal education and the supports needed by children to access an education. <b>Target:</b> School aged children	School community counsellors promote the value of education and provide a link between the family and school and provide individual support for students. NWT schools provide information and advocate on behalf of children; help to identify abused and neglected children; and provide personal counselling. The health curriculum (mandatory from K-Grade 9) has numerous units dealing with family violence.	Services vary within schools depending on the needs of students, the background/skills of school staff; and resources available to provide supports to school age children. For example, Sir John Franklin Territorial High School in Yellowknife offers career, social, crisis and peer counselling to students in Grade 10-12. A 1990 survey found that only 30% of NWT teachers were teaching the whole health curriculum. Training is compulsory for school community counsellors.
Parents Resource Institute or Drug Education (PRIDE), Yellowknife	To provide information on drug (ab)use. <b>Target:</b> Parents	Information and assistance with counselling/treatment referrals.	PRIDE is a voluntary organizations that is as active as its members.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: LEGAL INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE			
Arctic Public Legal Education and Information, Yellowknife	To educate and inform on legal rights and obligations. <b>Target:</b> All NWT residents	Legal education and information and a telephone (toll free) law line for residents outside of Yellowknife.	To meet needs identified to and by the organization. 5 days/week. Priorities are established by the board and pursued as funding permits.
Legal Aid Centres, Yellowknife and Fort Smith	To enable access to legal services. <b>Target:</b> Only people who cannot afford to pay all or part of a lawyer's fees themselves qualify for legal aid. All NWT residents	Legal aid seeks to overcome limited access to a lawyer resulting from geographical, financial or linguistic factors. Legal Aid may pay a lawyer's fee for any family law or criminal matter being negotiated between lawyers or brought to the Territorial or Supreme Court. These fees may include representation in court and follow-up to court orders and agreements.	Available upon application. The application criteria is complex and related to the financial situation, risk to the offender, and the type of situation. The client has no choice in the lawyer that represents him/her. Legal aid services have been impacted by government cutbacks and a limited number of hours may be available to each client.
Mackenzie Court Workers, Yellowknife and Fort Smith	To provide counselling and referral services for those in conflict with the law. <b>Target:</b> All residents of the NWT.	Courtworkers are legal aid representatives who give advice and information on the Criminal Code, to Family Court/Young Offenders, to inmates, on alcohol and community services. They assist people to secure legal counsel.	Available 5 days/week. Courtworkers are not lawyers. Services may be available in aboriginal languages.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Yellowknife	To help victims get compensation for damages/injuries from an assault. <b>Target:</b> Victims of assault	An individual may sue the person who assaulted him/her or apply to the government for compensation.	May be a lengthy and expensive process. Must sue within two years of the assault. In the case of government compensation, application must be made within one year of the assault. Compensation is for out-of pocket expenses resulting from the assault, income lost as a result of missing work, and for any pain and suffering caused.
Victims Services, Dept. of Justice, Yellowknife	To provide a range of support services and programs to victims of family violence. <b>Target:</b> Victims of family violence	Funding provided to various community based assistance programs. Victim Assistance Fund provides minimal funding for conferences and other support to victims.	Funding is minimal. A three member Ministerial Committee administers the Victims Assistance Fund.
Corrections & Victims Services Programs, Justice Canada, Yellowknife	To assist during court proceedings. <b>Target:</b> Victim and prosecutors requiring assistance	Familiarizes the victim with the court system, and counsels on how to be a witness. Helps victim and prosecutor during court proceedings.	Victim Witness Assistants are available in Yellowknife and Iqaluit only. Efforts are being made to put such as position in Inuvik.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT			
Dept. of Social Services, GNWT, Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e	To provide services according to need which promote healthy lifestyles and spiritual soundness, protect social well-being and further develop independence. <b>Target:</b> All NWT residents	Information and program support related to family violence; child sexual abuse; suicide; alcohol and drug abuse; the needs of the aged; and financial support. Professional services include: community-based Social Services workers who assist victims to get to a safe shelter; investigate suspected child abuse or neglect; access specialized assessment and therapeutic services; provides counselling, referrals, and emergency financial assistance. Alcohol and Drug workers provide information, counselling, and referrals to deal with substance abuse. Social services staff also participate in training programs and coordinate/participate in special response teams.	Five days/week as required. Front-line social services workers provide generalist information, program and personal support services. Specialists are available in each region as required in each program responsibility area to undertake/assist in assessments, investigations, education programs, facilitate support programs/ groups, or refer individuals to other professionals. Lutsel K'e is seen as not getting its share of therapy services due to other priorities in the region.
Primary Service: SELF HELP GROUPS			
Alanon-Adult Children of Alcoholics, Yellowknife	To support persons whose life is affected by someone else's alcoholism. <b>Target:</b> General Public	Self help group sessions.	This is a voluntary organization that is as active as its participants.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Alcoholics Anonymous, Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e	To support persons in their efforts to live a life of sobriety. <b>Target:</b> General Public	12 step program.	A similar organization exists for persons endeavouring to live a life without drugs.
Informal Healing and Support Groups, Yellowknife and Lutsei K'e	To support particular needs as identified by community people. <b>Target:</b> As identified by the group	Self-help, peer support, and at times professional support. In Lutsel K'e a men's and women's support group exists.	Groups are run informally in both communities. Some are sponsored by church groups, others are initiated by professional service agencies while others are gatherings of people with like interest.
Primary Service: COMMUNITY POLICING			
RCMP "G" Division Headquarters in Yellowknife; Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e detachments	Federal and Territorial policing responsibilities in addition to developing policies on victim services, crime prevention and drug awareness. <b>Target:</b> General public	Detachment staff respond to complaints, investigate, lay charges, take offenders into custody, facilitate the safety and protection of victims. It is a national RCMP policy to treat family violence in a sensitive manner.	Due to mandatory charging, the RCMP has taken much of the responsibility for laying charges against family violence offenders.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: MEDICAL SERVICES			
Yellowknife Public Health Clinic and Lutsel K'e Nursing Centre	To provide public health education, immunizations, prenatal programs, well-baby clinics, and crisis counsell- ing and intervention. <b>Target:</b> General Public	Limited services are available to assist in cases of family violence beyond immedi- ate physical care and crisis counselling.	In Yellowknife long relationships with public health personnel have meant that incidents of family violence/abuse are brought to the attention of these staff. In Lutsel K'e the opposite is seen to occur.



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participation from aboriginal women in the community, as well as other community members. The participants provided rich data on all aspects of the issue but particularly on

defining family violence and ascertaining the extent of the problem, as well as its causes. They made specific recommendations for change as well. The focus group at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre provided an aboriginal male perspective on family violence, particularly definitions, causes and a critique of existing (or non-existing) services to meet their needs. In the individual interviews, agency representatives, some of whom are aboriginal people, were candid and critical of existing services and provided excellent statistical and anecdotal data on the magnitude of the problem as well as specific recommendations for change. The follow-up focus group with agency representatives provided additional rich data as well as validation for our emerging analysis.

#### Problems Encountered

Not all of the focus groups which were originally planned were held. In Yellowknife, the focus group with the youth was not possible. The young aboriginal woman organizing "Youth on the Move," the urban youth program, was unable to fit a focus group on family violence into their summer program. Given the urban nature of Yellowknife, it is not have been possible to successfully organize an aboriginal youth focus group without the cooperation of such a program.

Focus groups for men, women, youth and children were planned for fùtsel K'é. During the month of July, the principal investigators travelled to fùtsel K'é on two different occasions to conduct the focus groups. On the first trip an elder had died and her funeral precluded any research activity for a few days. In addition, the social worker and drug and alcohol counsellor, both of whom are Chipewyan women from fùtsel K'é, were unable to attend the focus groups on the dates planned. In conjunction with fùtsel K'é agency representatives, particularly the social worker and drug and alcohol counsellor, we organized a series of focus groups for the following week. Unfortunately, at that time

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another elder died (the sister of the previously deceased elder) and the community was basically shut down. The bereaved family requested that facilities such as the youth center, (where we were to hold the youth focus group) be closed during the wake and funeral. The day following the funeral, we were able to conduct the agency focus group which had significant aboriginal participation.

Due to previously planned events in the community, it was not possible to reschedule the focus groups and still maintain our research schedule. The community held elections for Chief and Council the week beginning August 2nd. In addition the entire community was preparing for a one week community assembly to be held at Fort Reliance. This celebration which combines the taking of treaty with community meetings and spiritual activities is an event of major proportions. Trying to conduct focus groups in conjunction with preparation for this event was not feasible.

There are two other factors at work which affected our ability to conduct the research in the way we had originally planned. First of all, we have experienced a reluctance to discuss family violence, particularly on the part of victims. For example, the focus group at the women's shelter in Yellowknife only attracted one aboriginal client although there were four women in the shelter at the time. Additional clients were contacted; however only two agreed to be interviewed individually. After considerable negotiations, arrangements were made to do an individual interview with a female clients of the Yellowknife Women's Center. However, the woman did not show up for her appointment. It has been our experience that family violence is a very sensitive topic, and one which many people have difficulty discussing.

Secondly, the people of fútsel K'é continually reminded us that it is very difficult to do research of any kind in the summer in their community. For example, on both our trips to fútsel K'é there was exceptionally good weather which had

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followed periods of bad weather. During good weather people leave town to go out on the lake to fish and hold picnics. In Dene communities, summer is seen as a time for relaxing, for recuperating from the winter. It is not seen as a time to engage in stressful and emotionally draining activities.

This entire set of circumstances is unfortunate but in retrospect understandable. In small northern aboriginal communities, deaths affect everyone in the community and ceasing all but the most essential services is considered a sign of respect. In addition, elections, community

assemblies and other community level activities must take priority over outside research in the eyes of community members and leaders. Communities have their own seasonal rhythms which we are not prepared to interrupt and for which we do not have the resources to fully accommodate. Under the circumstances, it would have been highly inappropriate, if not impossible, to push through focus groups.

After consultation with community representatives in fùtsel K'é, we opted to rely more heavily on the one-to-one interview data in that community. The research associates from fùtsel K'é have faced the same problems outlined above. With over half of the interviews done, the researchers were discovering that the interviews were becoming quite difficult to do. Interviews were taking longer than originally anticipated, people are initially reluctant to discuss the matter of family violence, and as well many are involved in preparations for the Fort Reliance Assembly. As a consequence, the fùtsel K'é researchers requested additional time to conduct the interviews. It is their intention to complete the remaining interviews during the community assembly, and to have completed a brief summary of the data by 18 August.

#### Request for an Extension

Given these delays we would like to request an extension on the date for submission of the final draft. Our original

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workplan stated 31 August as the deadline. However, it will not be possible for us to include the fútsel K'é data into the report in such a short period of time. Therefore we are requesting that the deadline be extended to 10 September 1993. At that time we will send the final draft to your office as well as to the fútsel K'é band office and to the cooperating agencies and individuals in Yellowknife. Any feedback and revisions will be incorporated into an amended final report which will be submitted to RCAP on the 30th of September as originally planned.

We trust that this letter brings you up to date on the research study. Should you require clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to call. Otherwise we will submit our report on 10 September.

Yours truly,



Cynthia Chambers/Lois Little  
Principal Investigators

Encl.

cc: Dara Culhane, Deputy Director, Social and Cultural  
Research, RCAP

7650-3

## Lutra Associates Ltd.

Socio-Economic Research • Community and Economic Development

9 July 1993

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P.A.

1/13/93 4:57 PM

Dear Ms. Culhane:

Re: Progress on the Family Violence and Abuse  
Community-Based Study in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e

Please accept this letter as a report on the progress made to date on this community-based study.

### 1. Community-based Researchers:

Lois Little and Lutsel K'e Band leaders and staff held a community meeting in Lutsel K'e on 8 June 1993. At this time, the nature and process of the research, and the process of researcher selection was discussed and decided upon. Based on community and agency input, the Band Council of Lutsel K'e selected two researchers to work on this study. These researchers will: assist principal investigators to prepare the focus group guidelines and an individual questionnaire; collect data in Lutsel K'e; and analyse Lutsel K'e data.

The Lutsel K'e Band selected Bertha Catholique and Alizette Abel to participate in the research project. Both women are fluent and literate in English and Chipewyan. They are from two different age groups (mid-thirties and mid-fifties) and two different extended families in the community. We are confident that these researchers will encourage a broad cross-section of Lutsel K'e residents to participate in the  
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study. Both women have worked as translators/interpreters and Bertha has received formal training in legal interpretation. Bertha also has considerable previous experience conducting one-to-one interviews. Alizette has considerable personal experience and professional expertise in certain aspects of family violence and abuse. To date their input into the study, particularly into the development of the research instruments, has been invaluable.

In Yellowknife, Aggie Brockman has been engaged to work with the principal investigators to identify key family violence and abuse issues and uncover statistical data on the subject. Aggie has most recently been involved in research on traditional justice practices and structures in Lac La Martre for the Dene Cultural Institute.

## 2. Agency Interviews

Interviews have been conducted with over thirty representatives of agencies which provide services to deal with family violence and abuse (see attachment #1). These agencies are located in Yellowknife, however, some serve people outside of the city (eg. the women's shelter, Crown Prosecutor) including Lutsel K'e and the Northwest Territories as a whole (eg. Status of Womens' Council, GNWT Social Services).

There are very few agencies in Yellowknife or the NWT which provide services based on ethnic or aboriginal status (exceptions include the Tree of Peace Friendship Center, North Slave Housing Corp.). There are no government services dealing with family violence and abuse which are delivered on this basis. Consequently, virtually all agencies in Yellowknife delivering services related to family violence and abuse were interviewed.

Agencies were asked for statistical and qualitative data about the extent of family violence and abuse, the use of services by aboriginal clients, and a description of the services provided. Because of undifferentiated mandates and universality of services, statistical data on aboriginal

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family violence and abuse are limited. Data collected from service agencies to date are being analyzed. For example, information collected about services are being profiled in chart form. (see attachment #2. Please note that this profile is incomplete. Once completed the agency profile will be validated in the focus group involving agency representatives).

### 3. Focus Groups

The key research method for this study is focus groups or group interviews. For the most part, these sessions are not open to the public and are not intended to be "town hall meetings" or to replicate the hearings held by the Royal Commission. Participants in these groups are pre-selected. Ten to twelve people meet for two to three hours to discuss a series of questions which they have previously read and reflected upon. The questions are open-ended and intended to elicit perceptions, informed opinion and knowledge about family violence and abuse within aboriginal families.

The following focus groups are scheduled in Yellowknife.

#### \*19 July - Public

Clients of the Yellowknife (Public) Housing Authority and the North Slave (Urban Native) Housing Corporation and whatever people respond to public notices posted in the Ndilo Band Office and at health and social agencies in Yellowknife have been invited to participate.

#### \*20 July - McAteer House for Abused Women

Invitees are women (and possibly their children) who are currently residing at the shelter. (McAteer House is the only women's shelter in Yellowknife. There is no shelter specifically for aboriginal women and children.) Women from Lutsel K'e who use a shelter, prefer McAteer over the shelters available in Fort Smith and Hay River. This focus group will provide us with the most direct access to aboriginal women who are currently accessing immediate services for family violence and abuse. The actual numbers of aboriginal women who participate will depend on who is using the shelter on the date of the focus group.

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**\*29 July - Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

Two focus groups have been scheduled for the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. Persons incarcerated here are from communities throughout the N.W.T. and are mainly males of aboriginal ancestry. Given that the literature indicates that offenders have typically been victims at some point in their lives, these focus groups may provide data from both the perspective of offenders and victims.

**\*30 July - Agencies**

This focus group will bring together professionals who provide family violence or related services to aboriginal families and who have demonstrated (eg. through initial agency interviews) an ability and a willingness to offer their professional opinion on and critical judgement of the issues related to violence and abuse in aboriginal families.

**\*Additional Focus Groups**

Two additional focus groups are being scheduled - a focus group with youth and a validation or peer review focus group. Youth will be organized through the "Youth On the Move" group. This group is coordinated by a young aboriginal woman and we hope that with her cooperation will be successful in obtaining the views of some aboriginal youth. The second group will involve peers of research team members who are articulate, well informed, professional and semi-professional aboriginal people (mostly women with children) who have direct or indirect experience with family violence and abuse. The purposes of the second focus group will be: to validate the initial analysis of the data; to identify any additional issues; and to answer any outstanding questions.

In Lutsel K'e, four focus groups have been scheduled from July 21 to 25 - with an existing women's group, an existing men's group, the youth and with community-based service agencies.

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The focus group guideline (see attachment #3) is divided into five areas: i) how aboriginal people define family violence and abuse; ii) perceptions of the extent of family violence; iii) perceptions of the causes of family violence; iv) experiences with and assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of existing services (short-term and long-term treatment, prosecution, and prevention); and v) making recommendations for change. The questions posed are based on a thorough review of existing literature on family violence and abuse in the NWT, a more cursory review of the literature on violence in aboriginal families outside the NWT, an analysis of Yellowknife agency interviews, and community input from Lutsel K'e. Moreover, the entire

research team met 8-9 July to critically review the content, cultural appropriateness and the wording of the questions. Focus group guidelines will be distributed to all potential focus group participants during the week of 12 July.

#### 4. Individual Interviews

At the request of Lutsel K'e to broaden the research methodology, one-to-one interviews and focus groups will be done in the Lutsel K'e portion of the study. This addition to the research plan, has necessitated the preparation of an extensive personal interview questionnaire (see attachment # 4). The questionnaire is fashioned after the focus group guideline. The questionnaire will be piloted in Lutsel K'e on July 12 to 15 and revisions will be made as required. It is estimated that Lutsel K'e researchers will conduct approximately forty one-to-one interviews. The exact number will however depend on the cooperation of individuals and the time required to complete the questionnaire.

#### 5. Critical Issues Arising from the Literature Review and Agency Interviews

A number of issues have been identified in the review of the literature on family violence and abuse in northern/ aboriginal families, as well as in agency interviews.

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Generally these relate to skilled human resources, funding, and authority. Specifically, the issues are:

1. Legacy of colonization. Has this created certain political and governmental institutions and practices, and perpetuated a dependency on government?
2. Legacy of undifferentiated services. The NWT is one jurisdiction that has for all intents and purposes, implemented the "White Paper". How this has made the NWT different than southern Canada (eg. for aboriginal families) is not clear?
3. Lack of clarity in responsibilities among the state, the community, the family and the individual. What constitutes the "state" is at question given for example, constitutional development and self-government processes, regional land claims, and the division of the NWT.
4. Spiritual notions about the relationship of the individual to the cosmic order, cause and effect relationships, and feelings of fatalism or hopelessness. Spiritualism among aboriginal cultures impact on individual and societal responsibilities as well as on action taken.
5. Cultural conflicts over the (end) result of intervention/treatment. Agencies may see ending relationships as a desirable solution but aboriginal people may be looking for solutions which stop violence and abuse but keep the family in tact.
6. Patriarchy and issues of power. Contrary to claims that violence against women is unacceptable it appears to be tolerated to some extent, in northern aboriginal communities. Many solutions do not address the imbalance of power between men and women at work in violent and abusive aboriginal families.
7. Availability of services. A large number of services seem to be available but services to mainly aboriginal

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communities outside of Yellowknife (particular services for the immediate safety for victims, long-term counselling, and services for offenders, young people and elders) seem to be lacking.

8. Abuse in traditional aboriginal societies. The understanding and knowledge of the nature and extent of family violence and abuse within aboriginal families a long time ago is poor or not shared.

9. Influences of Christian institutions and practices. The influence of residential schools, and the role and silence of the church on family violence is questioned by some aboriginal people in the NWT.

10. Changing family structures. Women are becoming the main wage earners in aboriginal families. This is due to the decline of trapping and hunting, jobs being available for those with high levels of formal education and training, and the movement of aboriginal people into the "wage" economy. This has upset the balance of power and responsibility within aboriginal families and eroded traditional gender-specific roles. Further, the extended family is diminishing in importance and nuclear families are becoming more prevalent, particularly among aboriginal people who have moved to a large centre such as Yellowknife.

11. Influence of the media, particularly on sexual abuse. Videos are mentioned in some literature (eg. the NWT Task Force on Spousal Assault, 1985) as related to an increase in violence and abuse.

12. Aboriginal languages. Are services sufficiently available in the aboriginal languages? Even if aboriginal people using services speak English, are there more subtle communicative differences which impede understanding or with non-aboriginal service providers?

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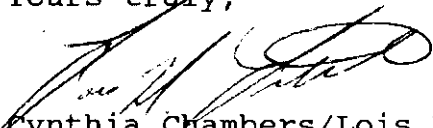
Focus group guidelines and the questionnaire have been prepared to enable a better understanding of these issues. A thorough discussion of these issues will be provided in the final report.

In closing, we want to thank Dr. Bea Medicine for her helpful comments in her letters dated 15 June and 28 June. We have considered her points and have amended the focus group guidelines and questionnaire accordingly. Particularly, we have included questions on the generational aspects of family violence; possible prevention strategies from contemporary and traditional aboriginal cultures; and reasons for reporting and not reporting incidents. Dr. Medicine's phone number and address has been added to the

the consent form as well as an explanation that the participant may call her if they have any questions or concerns about how this research is being done (see attachment #5).

We trust that this letter brings you up to date on the research study. Should you require clarification or additional information, please don't hesitate to call. Otherwise we will be in touch at the end of the month.

Yours truly,



Cynthia Chambers/Lois Little  
Principal Investigators

Encl.

cc: Dr. Bea Medicine, Research Coordinator, Women's Perspectives

AGENCIES TO BE CONTACTED FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE FAMILY VIOLENCE  
STUDY IN YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E (Revised July 7, 1993)

YELLOWKNIFE

1. Jim White/Susan Seville, Yellowknife Housing Authority
2. Bobby Bulmer, Manager, North Slave Housing Corp.
3. Janice McKenna, McAteer House for Abused Women
4. Arlene Hache, Womens Resource/Society Against Family Abuse
5. Lynn Brooks, Ex. Dir., Status of Womens Council
6. Riki Seto, Ex. Dir., Native Womens Association
7. Tom Eagle, Ex. Dir., Tree of Peace Friendship Centre
8. Greg Badger, Family Counselling Services
9. Jan Stirling, Public Health Clinic, GNWT Dept. of Health
10. Ross Wheeler, Mental Health Clinic, Stanton YK Hospital
11. Ron MacLellan, Director, Community & Family Support Services,  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services
12. John Campbell, Coordinator, Alcohol and Drugs Programs  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services
13. Angus MacKay, Director, Alcohol, Drug and Community Health
14. Shirley Heslip, Coordinator, Aged and Handicapped  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services
15. Bruce Smith, Coordinator, Clinical Services Program  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services
16. Ann Enge, Coordinator, Family Violence  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services
17. Doug Sage, Coordinator, Child Sexual Abuse  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services
18. Carolyn Mandusiak, Area Supervisor  
GNWT Dept. of Social Services
19. Lawrence Norbert, Victims Coordinator, GNWT Dept. of Justice
20. Robert Hay, Policy and Planning, GNWT Dept. of Justice
21. Alice MacKenzie, Corrections & Victims Assistance Program,  
Justice Canada
22. Pierre Rousseau, General Counsel & Director, Justice Canada
23. John Dillion/A. Patenaude, Corrections Service, Dept. of Justice
24. Violet Erasmus, Community Corrections Specialist  
Dept. of Justice
25. Barbara Hall, Director, Student Support,  
Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment
26. Sgt. Grimm, RCMP, Yellowknife
27. Lucy Austin, Canadian Bar Association
28. Dianne Rattray, Executive Director, Mackenzie Courtworkers
29. Captain Al Hoef, Salvation Army
30. Robin Dupis/Nicole McIntosh, Northern Addictions Services
31. Barb Hood, Canadian Mental Health Association
32. Mary Broussard, Stanton Yellowknife Hospital
33. Chief Darryl Beaulieu, Ndilo - Yellowknives Dene Band
34. Kim Chemerika, Victims Assistance YWCA
35. Greg Nearing, Legal Aid

LUTSEL K'E

1. Nurse in Charge, Lutsel K'e Health Care Centre
2. Chief A. Lantz, Lutsel K'e Dene Band
3. Keith Haskins, Lutsel K'e School
4. RCMP
5. Emily Sanders, Alcohol and Drug Coordinator
6. Addy Johnason, Social Services

# FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

*The purpose of this group is to share information about: 1) the extent and nature of family violence and/or abuse within aboriginal families and 2) the services that are available to deal with family violence and/or abuse. This group is not a therapeutic, counselling or self-help session.*

## **A. DEFINING FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

1. Family violence means different things to different people. When you say the word "family" which relatives do you include?
2. Looking at the attached list, which actions are violent and/or abusive? Are there other kinds of things that have happened in families that you would consider violent and/or abusive?
3. Under what circumstances would any of these acts be acceptable to you? Does how often (the frequency of) these acts happen effect whether or not they are violent and/or abusive?
4. Did any violence and/or abuse happen in Dene/aboriginal families a long time ago? How did people deal with family violence and abuse then?
5. A long time ago were there any situations when it would have been okay to act this way to someone in the family?
6. A long time ago when children were treated badly or in a mean way, or were neglected, what was done about it?
7. Do you know any traditional (old time) stories or legends deal with violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

## **B. HOW MUCH VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE IS GOING ON**

*Certain forms of violence and/or abuse (particularly sexual assault and wife beating) happen a lot in the N.W.T. Little is known about how often violence and abuse occur within the family. This set of questions asks about your own experience with and knowledge about family violence and/or abuse.*

8. What kind of family violence and/or abuse do you know of? How bad is the problem of family violence and/or abuse in this community (in your community)?

9. How did/do people affected by family violence and/or abuse handle the situation? What did/do they do, if anything?

10. Do the things that people do to handle family violence and/or abuse help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families?

11. What if any, personal involvement have you had with family violence and/or abuse either as a child or an adult? Was alcohol involved in any of these situations? Which relative was involved? Why did this violence and/or abuse happen?

12. Was your mother or father ever involved in family violence and/or abuse either as a child or an adult? Was alcohol involved in any of these situations involving your parents? Which relative was involved? Why did this violence and/or abuse happen?

13. Do you know of any elders who have been involved in any kind of family violence and/or abuse? What kind?

14. Do you know of any children/young people who have been involved with family violence and/or abuse? What kind?

15. Are the kinds of family violence and/or abuse different within Dene/aboriginal families than within non-Dene/ aboriginal families? How? Why is it different?

### **C. THINGS THAT ARE RELATED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

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*To stop violence in families, everyone needs to understand what might cause it.*

16. What are the things related to family violence and/or abuse? What things seem to start family violence and/or abuse? What things seem to make it worse once it has started? Are there other things that may effect the kind or amount of violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

17. What were the things that caused family violence and/or abuse a long time ago?

18. Where one or more family members have stopped drinking, does the violence and/or abuse usually stop, continue or take a new form (eg. jealousy, control over money, more gambling, child neglect)?

*Research in the north finds that most victims of violence and abuse know their assailant. Violence and/or abuse in families is more secretive because it is the one place where people do not expect there to be violence so they are ashamed when it happens. Violence and/or abuse in families can be particularly scary for the victims because the people hurting them are people they love and want to trust.*

19. What family members usually intervene to stop the violence and/or abuse? What do they do? (eg. talk to the people involved) How do these actions stop, decrease or increase the violence and/or abuse?

20. If you were a victim of family violence and/or abuse, did you go to any family member for help? To which relative? What did they do to help? Did their help change the violence and/or abuse?

21. If you were an offender, did you go to any family member for help? To which relative? What did they do to help? Did their help change the violence and/or abuse?

22. If you were a victim, did any member of your family protect you from further violence and/or abuse? Which relative? What did they do to help? Did their protection change the violence and/or abuse?

23. Is there a lack of trust or protection within Dene/ aboriginal families? Does this make the violence and/or abuse continue? A long time ago could family members rely on each other more for trust, protection and help than they can today?

24. Do the government, schools, residential schools, churches, businesses or any other groups influence the kind or amount of violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? How?

25. Leaders in the north seem to have had lots of experience with family violence and/or abuse. How does this effect family violence and/or abuse in your community?

#### **D. DEALING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

There seems to be three basic ways of dealing with family violence and/or abuse: treatment, prosecution and prevention. We would like to know about your experiences, if any, dealing with family violence and/or abuse in one or all of these ways.

##### **Seeking Help and/or Treatment**

26. Thinking of people involved in family violence and/or abuse, what do they do to deal with their situation? If you have personally been involved in violence and/or abuse in your family, how did you deal with it?

27. After a violent or abusive incident, did you or someone else go for help? Who did you go to first? What happened when you went for help? Of all the things you did, what seemed to help the most? Why?

28. Have you ever had to leave your community to receive help for family violence and/or abuse? Why? Was leaving your community good or bad? Why?

29. Have you, or anyone you know, ever had a peace bond or restraining order? Did this stop the violence or abuse in the family? For how long?

30. How bad does the family violence and/or abuse have to be before you or others will go outside of the family for help? Does help from outside of the family stop the violence and/or abuse?

31. If you or others go outside the family for help, what agency or professional would you go to? As a Dene/aboriginal person, what do you want from the agency/professional? (What kind of help do you expect to get?)

32. Would you feel more comfortable talking about family violence and/or abuse problems with a Dene/aboriginal or a non-Dene/aboriginal person? Why?

33. When you went for help were you able to use the aboriginal language of your choice? Was the person helping you able to speak your aboriginal language? Was there an interpreter available, if you had needed or wanted one? Was this, or is this, important to you?

34. Did you feel you had enough control over the situation once you went to an agency or professional for help? What kind of control would you like to have had over the situation?

35. Did getting help from these agencies/professionals stop the family violence and/or abuse in the short term? In the long term?

36. Did any of these agencies/professionals encourage or force you to leave your situation (eg. go to alcohol/drug treatment, go to jail, leave your husband, have your child removed)? Did/do you see leaving as the solution to stopping the family violence and/or abuse?

*Victims and offenders experience long term effects from family violence and/or abuse (for eg. child sexual abuse or wife battering). Usually these long term effects are emotional and psychological rather than physical.*

37. Have you ever used a long-term service (eg. for 3 months or more) to deal with problems that may result from family violence and/or abuse? Did these services help to stop the violence and/or abuse? Did these services help people to recover from the effects of the violence and abuse? Why or why not?

### **Prosecution**

38. Have you, or anyone you know, ever charged another family member for being violent and/or abusive? (eg. before mandatory charging came into effect when victims had to press charges.)

39. Are there situations where a victim should be able to have the charges withdrawn (eg. a wife against her husband)? What are these situations? Do you know of anyone who wanted to withdraw the charge after it had been laid, but could not? Why did they want to withdraw the charge?

40. What role have you played, if any, in the prosecution of someone involving family violence and/or abuse (eg. complainant, witness, offender)?

**IF YOU HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE PROSECUTION OF  
SOMEONE IN A FAMILY VIOLENCE/ABUSE CASE:**

41. Have you ever called the police (or had someone call them for you) in a family violence and/or abuse case? What did the police do? How helpful was their action in stopping the violence and/or abuse? Have the police ever been called on you in a family violence and/or abuse case?
42. Once charges had been laid, how well did you understand the process (eg. of mandatory charging, giving testimony, sentencing, victim's assistance programs and peoples' rights)?
43. Were you kept informed by the authorities (eg. by the RCMP, the Crown Prosecutor, your lawyer) as the case proceeded? Was there anything you would like to see changed about how that was done?
44. What support, if any, did you receive (eg. Did anyone help you out financially or emotionally? Did anyone prepare you for court or during the process of charging or during the court proceedings? Did anyone help while the offender was in jail?) What would you change about the kind of support you received?
45. How did you feel about the outcome (eg. of the verdict, the sentence, the punishment)?
46. In the cases that you know about (including your own) did court/jail stop the family violence and/or abuse in the short term? The long term (eg. more than 3 months)?

**Prevention**

47. Has your community ever held any workshops or training on family violence and/or abuse? Have you ever been involved in any training to help service agencies better deal with violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?
48. Do your children study anything related to family violence and/or abuse in school? Does this help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families?

49. Have you ever read an advertisement in a newspaper or magazine which was aimed at recognizing and preventing family violence and/or abuse? Have you ever seen/heard an advertisement on the radio or TV which was aimed at recognizing and preventing family violence and/or abuse? Do ads help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families?

50. Have you ever received any pamphlets or other public information about family violence and/or abuse? What? How did you get it? Does this kind of information help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families?

51. What do parents do to discourage violence in their families, particularly among their children?

## **E. MAKING CHANGES**

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52. What can be done to stop family violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? Who is responsible for dealing with and stopping the violence and abuse in Dene/aboriginal families (eg. parents, husbands, wives, government, leaders, schools, churches)?

53. How could services be improved to help stop the violence and abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? What advice would you give a person who has just begun to work with Dene/aboriginal people affected by family violence and/or abuse (eg. learn the Dene language, have patience, listen more, try not to be too bossy)?

54. What can the community do to help families affected by violence? (eg. Band Council, Community Education Council rather than the Gov't of the NWT or the Federal Government.) What help might they need to do that (eg. sober leadership, training, community support, money)?

55. What kind of short-term services are needed immediately in this community to deal with and stop family violence and abuse? What long-term services are needed in this community (eg. counselling for families, offenders treatment programs)?

56. In this community, what can individuals do to protect people (particularly women and children) who are not safe in their own homes (eg. have safe

houses, show people to care for each other)? What can families do to protect people (particular women and children) who are not safe in their own homes?

57. How should offenders be dealt with (by the family, the community, the courts)?

## **F. PERSONAL DATA**

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*In this last section we need to find out more about the people who participated in the focus group. We do not want to know your name or address.*

58. \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

59. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ years of age

60. What is the highest level of education you have?

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ High School Diploma \_\_\_\_\_

Technical/Business Diploma \_\_\_\_\_

College Diploma \_\_\_\_\_ University Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

61. What is your marital status?

\_\_\_\_\_ single \_\_\_\_\_ married/common-law

\_\_\_\_\_ separated \_\_\_\_\_ divorced \_\_\_\_\_ widowed

62. To which of the following groups do you belong (or do you identify the most closely with)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Inuit \_\_\_\_\_ Inuvialuit \_\_\_\_\_ Dene \_\_\_\_\_ Métis

\_\_\_\_\_ other aboriginal group \_\_\_\_\_ non-aboriginal

63. How do you normally earn your living? (eg. homemaker, student, trapper, unemployed) \_\_\_\_\_

64. How comfortable were you speaking about family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_\_ very comfortable \_\_\_\_\_ okay \_\_\_\_\_ not very comfortable

65. Were there things you wanted to say but didn't or felt you couldn't?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

66. Is there anything else you would like to say?

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PLACE LUTRA CARD HERE

Please remove this card and keep it. If after being interviewed you feel the need to talk to someone about the issues that have come-up in the discussions here please call either Lois Little or Cynthia Chambers at the number on the card.

**FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE QUESTIONNAIRE**  
For Testing

This interview is to collect information about: 1) the extent and nature of family violence and/or abuse within aboriginal families and 2) the services which are available to deal with family violence and/or abuse. This interview is not a therapeutic, counselling or self-help session.

**A. DEFINING FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE**

1. Family violence and/or abuse mean different things to different people. When you say the word "family" which relatives do you include? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following actions would you consider abusive and/or violent in a family?

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| _____ ignoring/silent treatment                                 |                                    |
| _____ neglect (eg. being left alone, not being fed properly)    |                                    |
| _____ stealing (eg. pension cheque)                             |                                    |
| _____ forced to babysit for long periods of time                |                                    |
| _____ relatives living "off" you without contributing/helping   |                                    |
| _____ begging or bothering for money                            |                                    |
| _____ insulting   | _____ blaming (eg. finding fault)  |
| _____ name-calling  | _____ swearing                     |
| _____ yelling   | _____ shaking                      |
| _____ hair-pulling  | _____ pushing                      |
| _____ slapping  | _____ hitting                      |
| _____ kicking   | _____ punching                     |
| _____ biting  | _____ choking                      |
| _____ nagging   | _____ being harassed               |
| _____ attempting suicide  | _____ committing/attempting murder |
| _____ being threatened (physically or verbally)                 |                                    |
| _____ being threatened with a weapon                            |                                    |
| _____ having something thrown at you (eg. rocks, boiling water) |                                    |
| _____ being forced to watch and hear violence                   |                                    |
| _____ being threatened to be run over                           |                                    |
| _____ being burned  |                                    |
| _____ being forced into sex                                     |                                    |
| _____ any sexual touching not agreed to                         |                                    |
| _____ any sexual touching not wanted                            |                                    |
| _____ sex or sexual touching with a person under age            |                                    |
| _____ sex or sexual touching with a person mentally or          |                                    |
| _____ physically unable to refuse (eg. passed out, mentally     |                                    |
| _____ handicapped, in a wheel-chair)                            |                                    |
| _____ being forced to touch someone else's private parts        |                                    |
| _____ being forced to watch others have sex (eg. on videos)     |                                    |
| _____ being raped by your partner (eg. rape in marriage)        |                                    |
| _____ trying to kill someone (eg. by smothering, drowning)      |                                    |
| _____ withholding love/affection for money, sex or favours      |                                    |

3. What other kinds of violence and/or abuse have happened in families?

<u>      </u>	all of the time	<u>      </u>	most of the time
<u>      </u>	some of the time	<u>      </u>	none of the time

5. Does how often these things happen effect whether or not they are violent and/or abusive?        yes        no  
       don't know

6a. Did violence and/or abuse happen in Dene/aboriginal families a long time ago?        yes        no        don't know

6b. How did people deal with family violence and/or abuse then?

6c. A long time ago, were there any violent or abusive situations which would have been okay in a Dene/aboriginal family?

7. A long time ago when children were treated badly or in a mean way, or were neglected, what was done about it?

8. What traditional (old time) stories or legends deal with violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

Confidential When Completed

B. HOW MUCH VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE IS GOING ON

Certain forms of violence and/or abuse (particularly sexual assault and wife beating) happen a lot in the N.W.T. Little is known about how often violence and abuse occurs within the family. This set of questions asks about your own experience with and knowledge about family violence and/or abuse.

9a. Do you know of any family violence and/or abuse?

☐ yes ☐ no

9b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. How bad is the problem of family violence and/or abuse in this community (your community)?

☐ really bad ☐ bad  
☐ not so bad ☐ not a problem at all

11. How do people affected by family violence and/or abuse handle the situation? (eg. What do they do?)

<input type="checkbox"/> pray	<input type="checkbox"/> withdrew
<input type="checkbox"/> cry	<input type="checkbox"/> got mad
<input type="checkbox"/> drink alcohol/use drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> eat
<input type="checkbox"/> scream at the kids	<input type="checkbox"/> work
<input type="checkbox"/> go for a walk	<input type="checkbox"/> go to a relative
<input type="checkbox"/> go to an elder	<input type="checkbox"/> call police
<input type="checkbox"/> go to the nursing station	<input type="checkbox"/> go to social worker
<input type="checkbox"/> run away	<input type="checkbox"/> go shopping
<input type="checkbox"/> read	<input type="checkbox"/> sleep
<input type="checkbox"/> smoke	<input type="checkbox"/> went for treatment
<input type="checkbox"/> gamble	<input type="checkbox"/> do nothing
<input type="checkbox"/> go visiting	<input type="checkbox"/> go to the bush
<input type="checkbox"/> get away and be alone	
<input type="checkbox"/> become abusive/violent to others	
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) _____	

12. Do any of these things help to stop the violence and/or abuse in families? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

13a. Have you ever been involved with any kind of family violence and/or abuse? ☐ yes ☐ no  
☐ don't want to talk about it

Confidential When Completed

13b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14a. Were you involved in any kind of family violence and/or abuse as a child? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_don't remember  
\_\_\_\_don't want to talk about it

14b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14c. About how old were you when you were first exposed to family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ years old  
\_\_\_\_don't remember

14d. Was alcohol involved? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_don't remember

15a. Have you ever been involved with any kind of family violence and/or abuse as an adult? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no  
\_\_\_\_don't want to talk about it

15b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15c. Is/was alcohol involved? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_not sure

16a. Do you know if your mother, either as an adult or a child, was involved in any family violence and/or abuse?  
\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_don't know \_\_\_\_don't want to talk  
about it

16b. By which relative? (eg. brother, grandmother, uncle)

16c. Why did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17a. Do you know if your father, either as an adult or a child, was involved in any family violence and/or abuse?  
\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_don't know \_\_\_\_don't want to talk about it

17b. By which relative? (brother, grandmother, aunt)

17c. Why did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Confidential When Completed

18a. Do you know of any elders who have been involved in any kind of family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_yes \_\_\_no \_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_ don't want to talk about it

18b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19a. Do you know of any children/young people who have been involved with family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_yes \_\_\_no \_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_ don't want to talk about it

19b. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20a. Are the kinds of family violence and/or abuse different within Dene/aboriginal families than within non-Dene/aboriginal families? \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no \_\_\_ don't know

20b. If yes, how is it different? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20c. Why is it different? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Confidential When Completed

C. THINGS THAT ARE RELATED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

To stop violence in families, everyone needs to understand what might cause it.

21. What are the things related to family violence and/or abuse? (What things contribute to it?)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> family interference/pressure (eg. from in-laws) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> loss of job/kicked out of school                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cheating on partner/suspected of cheating       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pregnancy                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> not able to have children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> too many children                               | <input type="checkbox"/> children acting up        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> money problems                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> illness                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> death in family                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> card games/bingos         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "asking for it"                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> laziness                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> needing someone to pick on                      | <input type="checkbox"/> low self esteem           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> family breakdown                                | <input type="checkbox"/> drinking/drugs/solvents   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jealousy  | <input type="checkbox"/> crowded housing           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeling powerless                               | <input type="checkbox"/> residential schools       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> too much education                              | <input type="checkbox"/> not enough education      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> leaders setting bad example                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> caught between the old ways and the new ways    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lack of family support and direction            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bad attitudes about Dene/aboriginal people      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being raised in a violent/abusive family        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> people don't think it is wrong                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> beliefs that men should have more power         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) _____                           |  |

22a. Are there any other things that may effect the kind or amount of violence and/or abuse in Dene/ aboriginal families? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

22b. If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

23. What were the things that caused family violence and/or abuse a long time ago? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Confidential When Completed

24a. Are there situations where one or more family members have stopped drinking but the violence and/or abuse has continued or situations where the violence/abuse has taken a new form (eg. jealousy, control over money, more gambling, child neglect)? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

24b. If yes, please describe at least one of these situations. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Research in the north finds that most victims of violence and abuse know their assailant. Violence and/or abuse in families is more secretive because it is the one place where people do not expect there to be violence so they are ashamed when it happens. Violence and/or abuse in families can be particularly scary for the victims because the people hurting them are people they love and want to trust.

25a. Thinking back on situations where people have been involved in family violence and/or abuse, did any family members intervene to stop the violence and/or abuse?  
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

25b. If yes, which relative? \_\_\_\_\_

25c. What did they do? (eg. talk to the people involved) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25d. How did these actions change the violence and/or abuse?  
☐ made it worse ☐ decreased it  
☐ stopped it ☐ didn't help at all

26a. If you were a victim of family violence and/or abuse, did you go to any family member for help?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember

☐ don't want to talk about it ☐ not applicable

26b. If yes, which relative? \_\_\_\_\_

26c. What did they do to help? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

26d. Did their help change the violence and/or abuse?

☐ made it worse ☐ decreased it

☐ stopped it ☐ didn't help at all

Confidential When Completed

27a. If you were an offender, did you go to any family member for help? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember  
☐ don't want to talk about it ☐ not applicable

27b. If yes, which relative? \_\_\_\_\_

27c. What did they do to help? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

27d. Did their help change the violence and/or abuse?

☐ made it worse ☐ decreased it  
☐ stopped it ☐ didn't help at all

28a. If you were a victim, did any member of your family protect you from further violence and/or abuse?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember  
☐ don't want to talk about it ☐ not applicable

28b. If yes, which relative? \_\_\_\_\_

28c. What did they do to protect you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

28d. Did their protection change the violence and/or abuse?

☐ made it worse ☐ decreased it  
☐ stopped it ☐ didn't help at all

28e. If no, did the lack of trust or protection within the family make the violence and/or abuse continue?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember ☐ don't know  
☐ don't want to talk about it ☐ not applicable

29. A long time ago, could family members rely on each other more for trust, protection and help than they can today?

☐ more ☐ less ☐ about the same ☐ don't know

30a. Do/did the government, schools, residential schools, churches, businesses or any other groups influence the kind or amount of violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know  
☐ don't want to talk about it

30b. If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Confidential When Completed

31. Leaders in the north seem to have had lots of experience with family violence and/or abuse. How does this effect family violence and/or abuse in your community?

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D. DEALING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR ABUSE

There seems to be three basic ways of dealing with family violence and/or abuse: treatment, prosecution and prevention. We would like to know about your experiences, if any, dealing with family violence and/or abuse in one or all of these ways.

Seeking Help and/or Treatment

32. Thinking of people involved in family violence and/or abuse, what do they do to deal with their situation?

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33. If you have personally been involved in violence and/or abuse in your family, how did you deal with it?

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34a. After a violent or abusive incident, did you or someone else go for help? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't remember

34b. If yes, who did you/they go to first?

<input type="checkbox"/> family member/relative	<input type="checkbox"/> friend/neighbour
<input type="checkbox"/> police	<input type="checkbox"/> elder
<input type="checkbox"/> priest/pastor	<input type="checkbox"/> women's shelter
<input type="checkbox"/> social worker	<input type="checkbox"/> nursing station
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) _____	

34c. What happened when you/they went for help? (eg. to the police) \_\_\_\_\_

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34d. Of all the things you/they did, what seemed to help the most? \_\_\_\_\_

35a. Have you ever had to leave your community to receive help for family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

35b. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

35c. If yes, was leaving your community \_\_\_\_ good or \_\_\_\_ bad? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

36a. Have you, or anyone you know, ever had a peace bond or restraining order? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

36b. Did this stop the violence or abuse in the family?  
\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ don't know

36c. If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

37a. How bad does the family violence and/or abuse have to be before you or others will go outside of the family for help? \_\_\_\_ really bad \_\_\_\_ bad  
\_\_\_\_ not too bad \_\_\_\_ after one incident

37b. Please describe what you mean by this.

37c. Does help from outside of the family stop the violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ sometimes

38. If you or others go outside the family for help, what agencies or professionals would you go to? \_\_\_\_\_

39. As a Dene/aboriginal person, what do you want from these agencies/professionals? (What kind of help do you expect to get?) \_\_\_\_\_

40. Would you feel more comfortable talking about family violence and/or abuse problems with a \_\_\_ Dene or a non-Dene person? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

41a. When you went for help (eg. RCMP, nurse, social worker, shelter, courtroom) were you able to use the aboriginal language of your choice? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

41b. Was the person helping you able to speak your aboriginal language? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

41c. Was there an interpreter available, if you had needed or wanted one? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

41d. Was this, or is this, important to you? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

42a. Did you feel you had enough control over the situation once you went to an agency or professional for help?  
\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

42b. If no, what kind of control would you like to have had over the situation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

43a. Did getting help from these agencies/professionals stop the family violence and/or abuse in the short term?

\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ sometimes

44b. Stop it in the long term? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ sometimes

45a. Did any of these agencies/professionals encourage or force you to leave your situation (eg. go to alcohol/drug treatment, go to jail, leave your husband, have your child(ren) removed)? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ sometimes

45b. Did you/do you see leaving as the solution to stopping the family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ sometimes

Victims and offenders experience long term effects from family violence and/or abuse (eg. child sexual abuse or wife battering). Usually these long term effects are emotional and psychological rather than physical.

46a. Have you ever used a long-term service (eg. for 3 months or more) to deal with problems that may result from family violence and/or abuse?

☐ jail/court

☐ treatment/rehabilitation program

☐ counselling

☐ other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

46b. Did these services help to stop the violence and/or abuse in the family? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ sometimes

47c. Did these services help people to recover from the longer term effects of the violence and abuse?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ sometimes

47d. Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

### Prosecution

48. Have you, or anyone you know, ever charged another family member for being violent and/or abusive? (eg. before mandatory charging came into effect when victims had to press charges.) ☐ yes ☐ no

49a. Are there situations where a victim should be able to have the charges withdrawn (eg. a wife against her husband)?

☐ yes ☐ no

49b. If yes, what are these situations? \_\_\_\_\_

50a. Do you know of anyone who wanted to withdraw the charge after it had been laid, but could not? ☐ yes ☐ no

50b. Why did they want to withdraw the charge? \_\_\_\_\_

51. What role have you played, if any, in the prosecution of someone involved a family violence and/or abuse?

☐ complainant (the one who was a victim)

☐ witness

☐ offender (the one who allegedly committed the offense)

☐ don't want to talk about it

IF YOU HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE PROSECUTION OF  
SOMEONE IN A FAMILY VIOLENCE/ABUSE CASE:

52A. Have you ever called the police (or had someone call them for you) in a family violence and/or abuse case?

\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

52b. What did the police do? \_\_\_\_\_

52c. How helpful was their action in stopping the violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_ very helpful      \_\_\_\_ helpful      \_\_\_\_ not helpful at all

52d. Have the police ever been called on you in a family violence and/or abuse case? \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

53. Once charges had been laid, how well did you understand the process (eg. of mandatory charging, giving testimony, sentencing, victim's assistance programs and peoples' rights)? \_\_\_\_ very well      \_\_\_\_ okay      \_\_\_\_ not very well at all

54a. Were you kept informed by the authorities (eg. by the RCMP, the Crown Prosecutor, your lawyer, etc) as the case proceeded? \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

54b. Was there anything you would like to see changed about how this was done? \_\_\_\_\_

55a. What support, if any, did you receive (eg. Did anyone help you out financially or emotionally? Did anyone prepare you for court, during the process of charging or during the court proceedings? Did anyone help while the offender was in jail? Or while you are/were in jail?) \_\_\_\_\_

55b. What would you change about the kind of support you received? \_\_\_\_\_

56. How did you feel about the outcome (eg. of the verdict, the sentence, the punishment)? \_\_\_\_\_

57. In the cases that you know about (including your own) did court/jail stop the family violence and/or abuse in \_\_\_\_\_ the short term or in \_\_\_\_\_ the long term (eg. more than 3 months) or \_\_\_\_\_ not at all?

### Prevention

58. Has your community ever held any workshops or training on family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no      \_\_\_\_ don't know

59. Have you ever been involved in any training to help service agencies better deal with violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

60. If you have children, do they study anything related to family violence and/or abuse at school?

\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no      \_\_\_\_ don't know

61. Have you ever read an advertisement in a newspaper or magazine which was aimed at recognizing and preventing family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

62. Have you ever seen/heard an advertisement on the radio or TV which was aimed at recognizing and preventing family violence and/or abuse? \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

63a. Have you ever received any pamphlets or other public information about family violence and/or abuse?

\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

63b. If yes, what was it and how did you get it?

64. What do parents do to discourage violence in their families, particularly among their children? \_\_\_\_\_

E. MAKING CHANGES

65. What can be done to stop family violence and/or abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? \_\_\_\_\_

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66. Who is responsible for dealing with and stopping the violence and abuse in Dene/aboriginal families (eg. parents, husbands, wives, government, leaders, schools, churches)?

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67. How could services be improved to help stop the violence and abuse in Dene/aboriginal families? \_\_\_\_\_

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68. What advice would you give a person who has just begun to work with Dene/aboriginal people affected by family violence and/or abuse (eg. learn the Dene language, have patience, listen more)? \_\_\_\_\_

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69a. What can the community do to help families affected by violence (eg. Band Council, Community Education Council rather than Gov't of the NWT or the Federal Government)?

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69b. What help might the community need to do that (eg. sober leadership, training, community support, money)?

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70a. What kind of short-term services are needed immediately in this community to deal with and stop family violence and abuse? \_\_\_\_\_

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70b. What long-term services are needed in this community (eg. counselling for families, offenders treatment programs)?

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71a. In this community, what can individuals do to protect people (particular women and children) who are not safe in their own homes? (eg. have safe houses, show people to care for each other) \_\_\_\_\_

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71b. In this community, what can families do to protect people who are not safe in their own homes?

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72. How should offenders be dealt with (by the family, the community, the courts)? \_\_\_\_\_

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F. PERSONAL DATA

In this last section we need to find out more about the people who completed this questionnaire. We do not want to know your name or address.

73.      Male or      Female

74. How old are you?                      years of age

75. What is the highest level of education you have?

Grade              High School Diploma             

Technical/Business Diploma      College Diploma             

University Degree             

Other   

76. What is your marital status?

     single      married/common-law

     separated      divorced      widowed

77. To which of the following groups do you belong (or do you identify the most closely with)?

     Inuit      Inuvialuit      Dene      Métis

     other aboriginal group      non-aboriginal

78. How do you normally earn your living? (eg. homemaker, student, trapper, unemployed)   

79. How comfortable were you speaking about family violence and/or abuse?      very comfortable      okay

     not very comfortable

80. Were there things you wanted to say but didn't or felt you couldn't?      Yes      No

81. Is there anything else you would like to say?

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PLACE LUTRA CARD HERE

Please remove this card and keep it. If after being interviewed you feel the need to talk to someone about the issues that have come-up in the discussions here please call either Lois Little or Cynthia Chambers at the number on the card.

CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS  
AND INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

I have been informed of the objectives of the study on family violence in Lutsel K'e and Yellowknife being conducted by Lutra Associates Ltd. I have also been informed about the methods for collecting information on family violence and about how I will be asked to participate in the study. I agree to participate in this study in order to increase the understanding of family violence, and to help stop it from happening.

I understand that none of the personal information that I provide will be attributed directly to me unless I authorize this to occur. I understand that I may find it emotionally trying or difficult to talk about family violence and I accept this as part of my participation in this study. I understand that I do not have to participate in this study and that I can withdraw from the study at any time. If I have any questions or concerns about this research, I can register these with:

Beatrice Medicine,  
Research Coordinator--Women's Perspectives  
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples  
427 Laurier Avenue West, 6th Floor  
P.O. Box 1993, Station "B"  
OTTAWA, Ontario K1P 1B2

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Over  
16 Years of Age

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Incomplete

## FAMILY VIOLENCE AND RELATED COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS OF YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: SHELTER			
Sutherland House, Tawow Society, Fort Smith	To provide physical accommodation and safety, appropriate counselling and referrals, rehabilitation and follow-up services, and a service which responds to community needs. <b>Target:</b> Abused Women and their Children in Fort Smith and surrounding area	Counselling; Women's Group; Referrals; Walk-in Second Stage Housing; Shelter	Open 24 hours, 7 days/week. Length of stay in .....
McAteer House, YWCA, Yellowknife	To provide physical accommodation and safety, appropriate counselling and referrals, rehabilitation and follow-up services, and a service which responds to community needs. <b>Target:</b> Abused Women and their Children in Yellowknife and surrounding area	Childcare, Women's Group, Support Counselling, Alcohol Awareness, Second Stage Housing, Shelter	Short Term Only. Clients can stay up to 6 weeks. Open 24 hours, 7 days/week. No follow-up or second stage housing is available. Men are not allowed. Individuals must be "dry" to enter the premises. No alcohol or drugs are allowed.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE AND RELATED COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS OF YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E con't

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: COUNSELLING			
NWT Counselling Services, Yellowknife	Long and Short Term Therapy and Counselling focusing primarily on Family Violence. <b>Target:</b> Offenders and Victims of Family Violence in Yellowknife and surrounding area. Trying to work more with family/couples and children.	Family counselling, individual/family/ marital counselling. Individual/ group counselling for victims of spousal assault. Group counselling for batterers. Child sexual abuse counselling.	Mostly Yellowknife based. Long waiting lists. Not used by GNWT employees. By Referral through medical doctor or other professional. Also available by appointment.
Private Counsellors: Yellowknife Counselling and Addiction Services, Yellowknife	To provide counselling services. <b>Target:</b> the General Public	Provides individual, marital and family counselling for anger management, and alcohol and drug abuse counselling.	By Appointment. on a fee for service basis. Cost per hour .....
Primary Service: INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY			
Status of Women Council of the NWT, Yellowknife	To advocate on behalf of the needs of women in the N.W.T. <b>Target:</b> Victims, Offenders, Service Providers throughout the NWT	Information and Advocacy on issues of importance to women in the NWT	To meet needs identified to and by the organization. 5 days/week. Priorities are established by..... and pursued as funding permits.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE AND RELATED COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS OF YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E con't

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Native Womens' Association of the NWT, Yellowknife	To preserve and enhance the health, cultural social, economic and educational well-being of aboriginal women in the western NWT.	Information and Advocacy on issues of importance to aboriginal women in the NWT	To meet needs identified to and by the organization. 5 days/week. Priorities are established by the board and pursued as funding permits.
Arctic Public Legal Education and Information, Yellowknife	To educate and inform on legal rights and obligations. <b>Target:</b> All NWT residents	Legal education and information and a telephone (toll free) law line for residents outside of Yellowknife.	To meet needs identified to and by the organization. 5 days/week. Priorities are established by the board and pursued as funding permits.
Primary Service: LEGAL ASSISTANCE			
Legal Aid Centres, Yellowknife and Fort Smith	To enable access to legal services. <b>Target:</b> All NWT residents in need.	Legal Aid may pay a lawyer's fee for any family law or criminal matter which are being negotiated between lawyers or brought to the Territorial or Supreme Court. These fees may include representation in court and follow-up to court orders and agreements.	Available upon application. Only people who cannot afford to pay all or part of a lawyer's fees themselves qualify for legal aid. Legal aid seeks to overcome limited access to a lawyer resulting from geographical, financial or linguistic factors. The client has no choice in the lawyer that represents him/her.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE AND RELATED COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS OF YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E con't

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Mackenzie Court Workers, Yellowknife and Fort Smith	To provide counselling and referral services for those in conflict with the law. <b>Target:</b> All residents of the NWT.	They are legal aid representatives who give advice and information on the Criminal Code, to Family Court/Young Offenders, to Inmates, on alcohol counselling and community services.	Available 5 days/week. Courtworkers are not lawyers. Services may be available in aboriginal languages.
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Yellowknife	To help victims get compensation for damages/injuries from an assault. <b>Target:</b> Victims of assault	An individual may sue the person who assaulted him/her or apply to the government for compensation.	May be a lengthy and expensive process. Must sue within two years of the assault. In the case of government compensation, application must be made within one year of the assault. Compensation is for out-of pocket expenses resulting from the assault, income lost as a result of missing work, and for any pain and suffering caused.
Victims Services, Dept. of Justice, Yellowknife	To provide a range of support services and programs to victims of family violence. <b>Target:</b> Victims of Family Violence	Funding provided to various community based assistance programs. Victim Assistance Fund provides minimal funding for conferences and other support to victims.	Funding is minimal. A three member Ministerial Committee administers the Victims Assistance Fund.
Corrections & Victims Services Programs, Justice Canada, Yellowknife	To..		

## FAMILY VIOLENCE AND RELATED COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS OF YELLOWKNIFE AND LUTSEL K'E con't

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY/TARGET	TYPE OF SERVICE	AVAILABILITY/LIMITATIONS
Primary Service: COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM/FINANCIAL SUPPORT			
Dept. of Social Services, GNWT, Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e	All residents of NWT	Information and Program Support addressing: family violence; child sexual abuse; suicide; alcohol and drug abuse; and financial support. Professional services include: Social Services workers who assist victims to get to a safe shelter, investigate suspected child abuse or neglect, counselling, referrals, and emergency financial assistance. Alcohol and Drug workers who provide information, counselling, and referrals to deal with substance abuse.	Five days/week as required.

Government of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada

REQUEST FOR TRANSLATION

DEMANDE DE TRADUCTION

1. REQUEST NUMBER — N° DE LA DEMANDE

4440848

7650-3.1

2. SECURITY CLASSIF. — COTE DE SECURITE

PK, (P.A.)

READ INSTRUCTIONS OVERLEAF

LIRE LES INSTRUCTIONS AU VERSO

ALL REQUESTS FOR TRANSLATION FROM ONE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE TO THE OTHER MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE COORDINATOR FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SERVICES

TOUTES LES DEMANDES DE TRADUCTION D'UNE LANGUE OFFICIELLE A L'AUTRE DOIVENT ETRE SOUMISES A L'APPAREIL D'ADJUT

PLEASE SUPPLY TWO COPIES OF TEXT TO BE TRANSLATED, NO ORIGINAL

PRIERE DE FOURNIR DEUX EXEMPLAIRES DU TEXTE A TRADUIRE, JAMAIS L'ORIGINAL

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT FIRMLY IN BLOCK LETTERS — PRIERE D'ECRIRE A LA MACHINE OU EN LETTRES MOULEES EN APPUYANT FERMEMENT

3. Department — Ministère

05.6

4. Branch — Direction

REAP / CRPA 7.3

5. Division

20

6. Originator file number — Référence du demandeur

7. Originator — Demandeur

MR. MME (Pence)

8. Position title — Titre du poste

Recherche

9. Area code — Ind. rég.

Tel. no. — N° de tél.

10. No. — N°

427

Street — Rue

Lawrence Street

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City — Ville

Ottawa

Province

Postal Code postal

11. Author or Resource person (If different from Box 7) — Auteur ou personne-ressource (Si différent de Case 7)

MR. MME

Michelle Woch

12. Area code — Ind. rég.

194

Tel. no. — N° de tél.

717.65

13. Document title or description — Titre ou description du document

Different Guidelines & Research Plans

14. Date submitted — Soumise le

9.3.06

15. Tentative return date — Retour souhaité le

9.3.06

16. LANGUAGES — LANGUES

Source — Départ

anglais

Target — Arrivée

français

17. DELIVERY OF TRANSLATION — MODE DE LIVRAISON

Call for pick-up / Téléphonez pour faire prendre la traduction

Mail to address in Box 10 / Postez à l'adresse de la Case 10

TELECOMMUNICATE BY (CHECK ONE ONLY) / TÉLÉCOMMUNIQUEZ PAR (COCHER UNE SEULE CASE)

Facsimile / Facsimile

Telex / Télex

System make — Marque du système

Tel. no. — N° de tél.

18. REFERENCE MATERIAL — DOCUMENTS DE REFERENCE

Included / Inclus

Not included but list attached / Non inclus mais liste ci-jointe

19. INTENDED USE — DESTINATION

1

Outside the Public Service / A l'extérieur de la fonction publique

AND/OR ET/OU

2

Within the Public Service / A l'intérieur de la fonction publique

20. IF TEXT IS A CONTINUATION OF OR AN AMENDMENT TO A PREVIOUS TRANSLATION, ENTER ORIGINAL REQUEST NUMBER AND DATE SUBMITTED. S'IL S'AGIT D'UNE MODIFICATION OU DE LA SUITE D'UNE TRADUCTION ANTERIEURE, INSCRIRE LE NUMERO ET LA DATE DE CETTE DEMANDE.

Request No. — N° de la demande

Date

Y-A

M

D-J

21. Special instructions — Instructions spéciales

1

Translate indicated changes only / Ne traduire que les modifications indiquées

2

Draft copy acceptable / Copie brouillon acceptable

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Summarize in target language shown in Box 16 / Résumer dans la langue d'arrivée de la Case 16

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5

Revision — Révision

22. SIGNING AUTHORITY — FONDE DE POUVOIRS / DE SIGNATURE

Name (Print) — Nom (Lettres mouillées)

Position title — Titre du poste

Signature

Number of words or pages / Nombre de mots ou de pages

46 pages

23. SCIENTIFIC OR TECHNICAL TEXT IN A NON-OFFICIAL LANGUAGE / TEXTE SCIENTIFIQUE OU TECHNIQUE EN LANGUE NON OFFICIELLE

I certify that this text has not been previously translated according to CISTI / Je certifie que ce texte n'a pas déjà été traduit d'après l'ICIST

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24. TYPE OF DOCUMENT — NATURE DU DOCUMENT

3

Correspondence / Correspondance

9

Agenda or minutes / Ordre du jour ou compte rendu

8

Circular or directive / Circulaire ou directive

6

Manual / Guide ou manuel

7

Job description / Description de fonctions

4

Publication

1

Report / Rapport

5

Other (Specify in Box 27) / Autre (Préciser à la Case 27)

25. Date received — Reçu le

Y-A

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D-J

26. PRIORITY — PRIORITE

1

2

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5

27. REMARKS / OBSERVATIONS

Retour à l'origine de la demande de 15 jours pour traduction

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29. RECEPTION — RÉCEPTION

Unit — Service

Date received — Reçu le

Y-A

M

D-J

30. Target return date / Date cible de retour

Y-A

M

D-J

31. Specialty code(s) — Code(s) de spécialité

50500

32. RATED PRIORITY / PRIORITE PONDérée

1

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3

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33. \* / \*

34. NO. OF WORDS / NBRE DE MOTS

5. Rephrase 416

Final — Définitif

35. TRANSLATION — TRADUCTION

Unit — Service

Date received — Reçu le

Y-A

M

D-J

36. File number — Référence

I 16-30

37. No. of documents / Nbre de documents

38. Cancellation date / Date d'annulation

Y-A

M

D-J

39. Date returned to client / Date de retour au client

Y-A

M

D-J

40. Translation — Traduction

JMV ①

41. Revision — Révision

Délai: le 14 juin à 10 heures au plus tard

42. Typing — Transcription

J.M. GAZET ②

43. Proofreading — Relecture

Qualité: pas plus de fautes mineures

2 - DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE / SECRÉTARIAT D'ÉTAT

44. REQUEST NUMBER / N° DE LA DEMANDE

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GC 81 (88/06) 7540-21-900-3654

Le 19 mars 1993

par télécopieur (613) 943-0125

Madame Dara Culhane  
Projets Dimensions féminines  
Commission royale sur les peuples autochtones  
C.P. 1993  
Succursale B  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 1B2

Madame,

OBJET : Étude locale sur la violence familiale

Nous vous donnons dans la présente une estimation des coûts et un aperçu de l'orientation générale d'une étude locale sur la violence familiale. Si nos renseignements sont bons, vous avez déjà en dossier les curriculum vitae des directrices de recherche (Cynthia Chambers et Lois Little). Lorsque le budget et la méthodologie auront été approuvés, nous vous ferons parvenir un plan de travail détaillé ainsi que les c.v. d'autres personnes recrutées localement pour les travaux de recherche. L'équipe de recherche devrait compter au moins deux autochtones.

Objectifs proposés

La Charte des droits et libertés a beaucoup contribué à faire comprendre aux gens que l'agression physique, mentale ou sexuelle d'une autre personne, quels que soient son âge, son sexe ou son lien de parenté, est un acte immoral et inacceptable; on sait maintenant que les victimes d'agression ont le droit de se plaindre et d'être protégées contre toute forme de violence ou d'agression et que les contrevenants peuvent être punis. Cette sensibilisation du public et les pressions qui sont faites pour qu'on mette fin à la violence familiale ont changé l'optique dans laquelle les collectivités voient ce problème, ainsi que leur façon de le combattre. Ainsi, on exige de plus en plus que les agresseurs soient traduits devant les tribunaux et que des services thérapeutiques soient mis sur pied à l'intention tant des victimes que des agresseurs.

Ce phénomène et d'autres changements sociaux et politiques ont eu d'importantes répercussions dans le Nord. Dans les localités nordiques, les gens recherchent ou organisent des forums où ils peuvent parler plus ouvertement de violence familiale et chercher des moyens de s'appuyer mutuellement dans cette démarche. Malgré les progrès importants qui semblent avoir été faits, la violence familiale et la myriade de questions qu'elle soulève demeurent un important sujet de préoccupation.

Par exemple, dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest, l'ampleur du problème de la violence familiale est en grande partie inconnue. Le nombre d'agressions rapportées et de cas portés à l'attention des organismes sociaux et faisant l'objet de poursuites devant les tribunaux augmente. Des entrevues et des enquêtes effectuées auprès de travailleurs de première ligne révèlent que la demande de services reliés à la violence familiale va en augmentant. Par exemple, 80 p. 100 environ de la clientèle de l'organisme Family Counselling Services de Yellowknife reçoit des services reliés à la violence en milieu familial. En outre, des questions particulières concernant l'aide aux victimes, comme la disponibilité et l'utilisation de refuges, l'hébergement prolongé, les soins médicaux et hospitaliers, l'intervention policière, les poursuites devant les tribunaux et la réaction du système judiciaire, ainsi que des questions d'ordre général comme celles de la prévention et de la sensibilisation, de l'éducation et de la formation, des liens à établir avec l'alcoolisme et de l'aide à procurer aux agresseurs, continuent pour la plupart de faire l'objet de très peu d'attention. Et ce qui est peut-être le plus grave, c'est que ces questions n'ont pas été examinées d'un oeil critique en tenant compte des problèmes particuliers auxquels sont confrontés les familles autochtones du Nord. Quels sont les facteurs culturels et linguistiques qui peuvent rendre les services sociaux et les pratiques judiciaires existants inefficaces quand vient le temps de lutter contre le problème de la violence familiale chez les autochtones?

Sans fermer les yeux sur l'ampleur des questions soulevées par le problème de la violence familiale tel qu'il se pose dans les localités autochtones du Nord, nous nous proposons de faire porter notre étude sur deux questions principalement. Premièrement, il semble que le problème de la violence familiale soit perçu et traité différemment dans les petites localités éloignées des territoires du Nord-Ouest que dans les grands centres urbains comme Yellowknife. De plus, la myriade de facteurs socio-politiques et culturels qui peuvent causer la violence familiale peuvent différer entre les contextes ruraux et urbains qu'on retrouve dans le Nord canadien. Par exemple, les conditions de stress associées à la violence familiale dans les réserves et les localités nordiques (comme le chômage, le manque d'espace de logement et le fait d'être constamment en contact avec des membres de sa famille et d'autres membres de la collectivité) peuvent différer quelque peu de celles qu'on retrouve en milieu urbain (stress relié au travail, aliénation, solitude, etc.). Deuxièmement, on considère aussi que ces types de violence familiale et la façon dont celle-ci est reconnue et traitée changent à mesure qu'augmente le nombre d'autochtones du Nord qui migrent vers des centres régionaux comme Yellowknife dans le but de se prévaloir de possibilités d'emploi et d'instruction et de services qui ne sont pas offerts dans leur collectivité.

L'étude sera effectuée à Yellowknife et ses objectifs seront les suivants :

- 1) décrire l'étendue de la violence familiale à Yellowknife et dans une petite localité avoisinante (Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes ou Lutselk'e) et situer cette description dans un profil sociologique des deux milieux;
- 2) donner un aperçu de la nature et de l'utilisation qui est faite des services offerts pour contrer la violence familiale à Yellowknife et dans une petite localité avoisinante (Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes ou Lutselk'e);
- 3) répertorier les éléments associés à la violence familiale recensées jusqu'ici à Yellowknife et dans une petite localité avoisinante (Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes ou Lutselk'e) et déterminer les relations existant entre ces éléments et d'autres facteurs d'ordre socio-politique, culturel, économique, judiciaire et éducatif;
- 4) montrer comment la violence familiale est perçue et la façon dont elle est combattue dans une petite localité (Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes ou Lutselk'e) et dans une grande ville, et en particulier comment les autochtones (tant les victimes que les agresseurs et les autres personnes des deux sexes et de tous les âges autrement concernées) nomment, définissent et comprennent la violence familiale;
- 5) évaluer d'un oeil critique, dans l'optique des clients (tant les agresseurs que les victimes) l'utilité et les conséquences de leur participation active ou comme bénéficiaire à la prestation de services visant à apporter des solutions aux problèmes de violence familiale, ainsi que la convenance des méthodes de prévention, de répression et de traitement actuellement en vigueur;
- 6) proposer des orientations futures en vue de la mise en place de mécanismes plus appropriés de prévention de la violence familiale et de la liaison entre eux des services de prévention de la violence familiale offerts dans les petites localités et les grands centres.

Les objectifs seront considérés de la quadruple perspective des victimes, des agresseurs, des organismes de service et des décideurs.

#### Démarche

Une analyse approfondie de l'information recueillie à la faveur d'une série d'initiatives nordiques récentes et reliées entre

elles fournira une bonne partie des données requises pour réaliser les objectifs 1, 2 et 3. Ces renseignements comprennent une évaluation d'un programme d'aide aux victimes, (Min. de la Justice du GTN-O); des audiences locales sur les services sociaux et de santé (Assemblée législative du GTN-O); des sondages menés auprès de travailleurs de première ligne (Assemblée législative du GTN-O); des transferts de services, y compris des transferts de services sociaux à des collectivités (Conseil exécutif du GTN-O); un examen des besoins particuliers dans les écoles (Min. de l'Éducation du GTN-O et différentes commissions scolaires); une conférence de fournisseurs de soins qu'il est proposé de tenir à Hay River (Min.(s) de la Santé et des Services sociaux du GTN-O), et l'établissement de liens entre les conditions de logement et les problèmes sociaux (YMCA, Conseil du statut de la femme). L'équipe de recherche puisera à ces sources (ci-joint une bibliographie provisoire) et aux bases de données que pourraient avoir établies la GRC, le ministère des Services sociaux (services correctionnels, alcoolisme et toxicomanies, protection de l'enfance, violence familiale), l'organisme Family Counselling Services et le ministère de la Justice.

Les objectifs 4 et 5 seront réalisés au moyen d'entrevues personnelles et de travaux en groupes de réflexion thématique. Ces activités auront lieu à Yellowknife et s'adresseront aux victimes et auteurs d'actes de violence familiale des deux sexes et du plus grand éventail d'âges possible. L'échantillon sera constitué de gens résidant à Yellowknife depuis longtemps et d'autre personnes ou familles qui y résident présentement mais qui viennent de petites localités situées en dehors du territoire de la capitale (p. ex. Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes ou Lutselk'e). L'équipe de recherche espère trouver ces personnes ou familles en s'informant auprès d'organismes comme MacAteer House (refuge pour femmes battues), le Yellowknife Correctional Centre, la North Slave Housing Corporation (projet domiciliaire urbain pour autochtones), Family Counselling Services, le YMCA, le ministère des Services sociaux et les organismes Native Courtworkers et Northern Addictions. Les participants pourront aussi être recrutés au moyen d'annonces publiques et de contacts personnels. Il sera suppléé aux témoignages des victimes et des agresseurs par des comptes rendus antérieurement enregistrés pouvant provenir de transcriptions d'audiences comme celles du Comité spécial sur la santé et les services sociaux.

Pour réaliser l'objectif 6, il sera suppléé à l'analyse des données recueillies auprès des clients par des renseignements recueillis lors d'entrevues particulièrement instructives effectuées auprès de représentants de d'organismes comme le Conseil du statut de la femme, l'Association des femmes autochtones, l'Arctic Legal Aid Society, Native Courtworkers, les ministères de la Santé, des Services sociaux, de l'Éducation et de la Justice du GTN-O et le Comité spécial sur la santé et les

services sociaux.

Dans tous les cas, l'information sera traitée conformément aux lignes directrices établies par la Commission royale à l'égard de la recherche. Pour ce qui est de l'examen approfondi des constatations, des groupes de réflexion tiendront des discussions à Yellowknife et dans la petite localité participant à l'étude, et nous espérons que ces groupes seront formés de clients, de représentants d'organismes sociaux ainsi que de représentants d'autres instances de décision locales comme les conseils de bande.

Nous espérons que vous nous ferez rapidement connaître votre réponse à cette proposition et que l'occasion nous sera offerte de contribuer aux travaux de la Commission.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Madame, l'expression de mes sentiments les meilleurs.

D<sup>r</sup> Cynthia Chambers  
Faculté d'éducation  
Université de Lethbridge



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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

March 19, 1993

via fax 613-943-0125

Ms. Dara Culhane  
W. P. P. J. →  
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples  
P.O. Box 1993  
Station B  
OTTAWA, Ontario K1P 1B2

947-1988

*Directrice des projets - Dimensions humaines*

Dear Ms. Culhane:

RE: Community-Based Study on Family Violence

This letter provides a cost estimate and general approach to a community-based study on family violence. We understand that curriculum vitae are on file for the Principal Investigators (Cynthia Chambers and Lois Little). Upon approval of the budget and approach, a detailed work plan together with cv's for additional local research staff will be submitted. It is anticipated that the research team will include at least two aboriginal researchers.

Proposed Objectives

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms has contributed greatly to an awareness that the physical, mental or sexual abuse of another individual, regardless of their age, gender or familial relationship, is unacceptable and morally wrong; individuals have the right to speak out and be protected against violence/abuse; and offenders can be punished. Public awareness of and demands to address family violence have changed perspectives on, and the manner in which communities are dealing with this issue. This has given rise to an increased demand for prosecution of offenders and treatment services for victims and offenders.

The north has been affected significantly by these as well as other social and political changes. Within northern communities, residents are creating or locating forums where they can speak more openly about family violence and exploring ways to support one another as they do so. Regardless of the significant strides which appear to have been made however, family violence and the constellation of issues which it entails remains problematic.

For example, in the Northwest Territories, the extent of family violence is to a large extent unknown. More incidents of family violence are being reported, and more cases are being brought to the attention of social agencies and being prosecuted in the courts. Interviews with and surveys of front-line workers show an increasing demand for client services related to family violence. For example, an estimated 80% of the clients of Family Counselling Services in Yellowknife are related to violence in the home. In addition, specific issues related to victim assistance such as availability and use of shelters, second-stage housing, health and hospital care, police intervention, prosecution and judicial response, as well as general issues such as prevention and awareness, education and training, relationship to alcohol abuse and assistance for abusers remain for the most part unexamined. Perhaps most significant, the above have not been critically examined in light of the specific issues facing northern aboriginal families. What are the cultural and linguistic factors which may make existing social services and judicial practices ineffective for addressing family violence in aboriginal homes?

Without ignoring the breadth of the questions raised by family violence as experienced by northern aboriginal peoples, this study proposes to focus primarily on two issues. Firstly, there is a perception that the way in which family violence is identified and dealt with is different in small remote N.W.T. communities than in large urban centres such as Yellowknife. Moreover, the myriad of socio-political and cultural factors which may cause and effect family violence may differ between the rural and urban contexts in the Canadian north. For example, stress factors which have been correlated with family violence on reserves and in northern communities (such as unemployment, crowded housing, intense and relentless contact with family and other community members) may differ somewhat from those experienced in the urban setting (job-related stress, alienation, loneliness, etc.) Secondly, there is also the view that those patterns of family violence as well as how it is identified and treated are changing as more aboriginal northerners migrate to regional centres such as Yellowknife to avail themselves of employment and educational opportunities, and to access services unavailable in their home community.

The study will be undertaken in Yellowknife. The objectives of this study will be:

- 1) to describe the extent of documented family violence in Yellowknife and a small community nearby (eg. Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes or Lutselk'e), and to situate this description in a community profile of the two settings.
- 2) to profile the type, nature and use of services available to address family violence in Yellowknife and a small community nearby (eg. Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes or Lutselk'e),
- 3) to identify issues associated with family violence that have been recorded to date in Yellowknife and a small community nearby (eg. Lac La Martre,

Rae Lakes or Lutselk'e) and identify the inter-relationship of family violence issues with other socio-political, cultural, economic, judicial, and educational factors.

- 4) to describe how family violence is identified and addressed in a small and large urban community (eg. Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes or Lutselk'e) and in particular how aboriginal people (victims, offenders and people otherwise affected, of both genders and various age groups) name, define and understand family violence.
- 5) to assess critically from the client's perspective (both victims and offenders), the efficacy and consequences of participating in/receiving services to address family violence issues, and the appropriateness of methods for prevention, prosecution and treatment currently in use, and
- 6) to propose future directions for providing more appropriate mechanisms to address family violence and for linking family violence services in small and larger urban centres.

The objectives will be addressed from the perspective of victims, offenders, service agencies and policy makers.

#### Approach

A thorough analysis of information which has been collected in a range of recent and related northern initiatives will provide much of the data required to address objectives 1, 2 and 3. These include an evaluation of a victims' assistance program (GNWT Dept. of Justice); community hearings on health and social services (GNWT Legislative Assembly); front-line workers survey (GNWT Legislative Assembly); transfer of services including social services to communities (GNWT Executive Council); review of special needs in the schools (GNWT Dept. of Education and various school boards); a proposed caregivers conference in Hay River (GNWT Depts. of Health and Social Services); and linkages between housing and social issues (YWCA, Status of Women's Council). The research team will draw from these sources (preliminary bibliography attached) and such data bases that may be maintained by the RCMP, the Department of Social Services (corrections, alcohol and drug, child welfare, family violence), Family Counselling Services and the Department of Justice.

Objectives 4 and 5 will be addressed through personal interviews and focus groups. These will be held in Yellowknife and will target victims of family violence and offenders from both genders and as wide an age range as possible. The sample will consist of both long term Yellowknife residents and persons/families currently residing in Yellowknife but originally from small communities outside of the capital (eg. Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes or Lutselk'e). The research team would hope to identify these individuals/families through advice rendered by such agencies as MacAteer House (for battered women), the Yellowknife Correctional Centre, the North

Slave Housing Corporation (urban native housing project), Family Counselling Services, the YWCA, the Department of Social Services, the Native Courtworkers and Northern Addictions. Participants may also be identified through public advertising and personal contacts. Evidence provided by victims and offenders will be supplemented by previously recorded accounts that may be available from hearing transcripts such as those of the Special Committee of Health and Social Services.

To address objective 6, analysis of data from clients will be supplemented by information collected in key informant interviews with representatives of such agencies as the Status of Women's Council, the Native Women's Association, Arctic Legal Aid Society, Native Courtworkers, GNWT Departments of Health, Social Services, Education and Justice, and the Special Committee on Health and Social Services.

In all cases, information will be managed in accordance with the research guidelines established by the Royal Commission. With regard to vetting the findings, focus group discussions will be held in both Yellowknife and the small community participating in the study and we hope these focus groups will include clients, agency representatives as well as representatives from other local decision-making bodies such as the Band Councils.

We look forward to your early response to this proposal outline and to the opportunity of contributing to the work of the Royal Commission.

Sincerely,



Dr. Cynthia Chambers  
Faculty of Education  
University of Lethbridge