



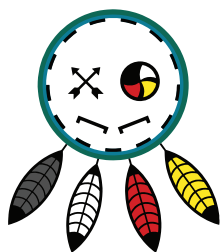
Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence

N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre and the Greater Sudbury Police Service

Niigan ni Naabidaa ji Bizhikaad wa Mnidoo-da-ji-jaakmowaan Kwewag  
Kendaming Mno- Bimaadiziying Mnji-doodaagewin tesinog.



LEARNING TO LIVE FREE FROM VIOLENCE



Canada 



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### **Message from Chief Paul Pedersen, Greater Sudbury Police Service**

We all have a role to play in ensuring the safety of Indigenous women and girls. This is Our Shared Commitment and we are proud to be partnered with N’Swakamok Native Friendship Centre for this important project. We are acutely alive to the national discussions surrounding the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Here in Greater Sudbury, our goal is to prevent the possibility of any missing persons in the first place and if we don’t have any missing persons, then we reduce the chances of having murdered Indigenous women as well. For us, it really is a strategy that moves forward together.

We have shifted our business model away from merely reactive policing to thinking ahead to initiate partnerships to achieve change in community outcomes. While this isn’t just a police issue, the police do play an important role. Our Police Service is fully committed to helping as much as it is to learning new response approaches.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Project is a collaboration that has helped police educate themselves on how to address issues in an appropriate and respectful manner. It supports what I see as a collaborative step forward that will build support and help reduce violence against Indigenous women and girls in our community. Our strategy is about building the spirit of our young women and preventing violence. We are part of the solution striving to build a brighter future for our young girls and women ensuring they do not have to live in fear of violence.

I would like to thank Marie Meawasige, Lisa Osawamick and Constable Shannon Agowissa for their guidance and support throughout through the development of the strategy and the Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence project.

We are grateful to all of our partners and the work that has been achieved in ‘The Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project. Many positive results have and will continue to be achieved.

### **Message from Marie Meawasige, Director of N’Swakamok Native Friendship Centre**

N’Swakamok Native Friendship Centre is proud to be in partnership with the Greater Sudbury Police Service. The ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project shows the respect and commitment of our local Police Service to make our community a safer place to call our home and to help each other to address the local needs of our Aboriginal community.

I thank Chief Paul Pedersen for his genuine interest to work with the Aboriginal community, as well as, the Advisory Committee members who represent the Police, Friendship Centre and other community organizations for their hard work in the first year of the project.

Congratulations to Lisa Osawamick and all those involved. I look forward to seeing this partnership grow and prosper in the years to come.



### Message from Aboriginal Women Violence Prevention Coordinator

The Greater Sudbury Police Service and N’Swakamok Native Friendship Centre in collaboration with community organizations are taking a proactive approach to end violence against Indigenous Women and Girls in the City of Greater Sudbury. The issue of unsolved and unidentified Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) has been on the political forefront for many years with the fight for a National Inquiry that was finally launched in September 2016. We know that there are approximately 1,800, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls from coast-to-coast across Canada. This is tragic and unimaginable to have so many young Indigenous women and girls who have gone missing and have never returned home to their families.

Here in Greater Sudbury, there are not known to be any unsolved cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We want to continue to be proactive by focusing on preventative measures to ensure we are playing an active role in reducing victimization of this vulnerable population of women. By creating a collaborative Strategic Plan regarding this sensitive issue, we will be promoting a lasting relationship with community partners and our Indigenous communities through prevention, education and awareness as key components of this strategy.



### Situational Context

The City of Greater Sudbury offers a rich mix of urban, suburban, rural and wilderness environments. Geographically, Greater Sudbury is the largest municipality in Ontario and second largest in Canada. The City serves as a regional hub for many Ontario residents who live in nearby communities and offers an array of cultural and educational experiences, for entertainment, for shopping and for conducting business.

According to the 2006 Canadian Census, with a population of close to 158,000, Greater Sudbury’s Indigenous population represents 6.4% of the total population.<sup>1</sup> This proportion continues to increase, as the National Household Survey conducted in 2011 revealed that 8.5% of the population of Sudbury identified as Aboriginal.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, “with 13,405 Aboriginal people now

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal Population Profile for Sudbury*. 2007. [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-638-x/2009001/article/10830-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-638-x/2009001/article/10830-eng.htm) (accessed 10 06, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. *Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury, CMA, Ontario (Code 580) (table)*. *National Household Survey (NHS) Aboriginal Population Profile*. 2013. 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada



living in Sudbury, it has the fourth largest urban Aboriginal population in Ontario.”<sup>3</sup> Since 1981, the Aboriginal community in Sudbury has grown by 526%<sup>4</sup>, one of the fastest growth rates of any city in Canada.

Greater Sudbury is home to three post-secondary institutions, the McEwen School of Architecture, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Health Sciences North and treatment facilities that are vital to the growth, development and healing of our Indigenous communities. The Indigenous population of Canada is subjected to intergenerational and systemic trauma stemming from colonization.

In 2014, a joint working committee was formed consisting of members of the N’Swakamok Native Friendship Centre and the Greater Sudbury Police Service under the direction and support of Executive Director Marie Meawasige and Chief of Police Paul Pedersen. The purpose of this committee was to develop community-based strategies to reduce the victimization of Indigenous women and girls and to increase the awareness of the “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls” (MMIWG) issue in Canada.

The purpose of this strategy is to bring Greater Sudbury Police and Indigenous communities together with an overall goal of ending the cycle of violence and ensuring future generations of Indigenous women can live in safety and without fear. Although there have not been any unsolved cases of MMIWG in Greater Sudbury, our objective is to prevent such incidents from occurring. To assist us in our efforts, the committee wrote and successfully submitted a proposal for funding through the Federal Government’s Justice Canada Fund.

Collectively, we shall move forward and make public our strategic plan of ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its “94 Calls to Action”<sup>5</sup>. This strategy supports all of the recommendations and looks to specifically influence change in conjunction with the following recommendations:

### **Child Welfare<sup>6</sup>**

1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal Children in care by:

- iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
- iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.

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Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011007. Ottawa. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/aprof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed 11 05 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Fitzmaurice and Suzanne Shawbonquit. *Pathways to Mino Biimzadiziwin in the City: A Profile of Urban Aboriginal Economic Success in Sudbury* (Sudbury, ON: University of Sudbury, 2016), 20.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Calls to Action*. Report, Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015.

[http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf) (accessed 11 05 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1.



### **Justice<sup>7</sup>**

30. We call upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade, and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so.

31. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.

38. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in custody over the next decade.

40. We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

41. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls. The inquiry's mandate would include:

- i. Investigation into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.
- ii. Links to the intergenerational legacy of residential schools.

### **Professional Development and Training for Public Servants<sup>8</sup>**

57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

## **Strategy Foundations**

### **Greater Sudbury Police Service**

#### **Vision**

Our Shared Commitment is founded in our proud traditions to provide exemplary service. As inclusive leaders we ensure community safety and well-being through collaborative partnerships, innovation and community engagement.

#### **Mission**

Invested in Our Shared Commitment, our members are ambassadors for a team-based approach to safety, security and wellness as champions for effective and efficient risk-focused policing.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015: 7.



## Values

Proudly, we pursue our vision while living our "RICH" values:

**Respect** - Our actions demonstrate our mutual respect for the community and each other.

**Inclusivity** - We value the unique qualities of our members and communities by promoting an inclusive environment guided by fairness, respect, equity and dignity.

**Courage** - We are committed to serving with distinction and pride for justice.

**Honesty** - We are professional, open, fair and accountable ethically performing our duties with integrity and trust.

## Our Community ~ Our Commitment

### “Our Shared Commitment to Community Safety and Well-being” – Nickel Model

The, ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’, initiative is directly linked to a number of our Strategic Themes outlined in the Our Shared Commitment to Community Safety and Well-being Nickel Model.

Our Shared Commitment to Community Safety and Well-being service delivery model demonstrates a commitment to increasing community safety and well-being, with the assistance of community partners and community members. Our model has four components including: Initiate and Partner to Achieve Positive Change in Community Outcomes, Champion Community Safety, Security and Wellness, Intervene Collaboratively to Reduce Elevated Risk Situations and lastly, Enforce Laws and Hold Offenders Accountable. The emphasis of the model is collaboration, intervention and prevention.



### 2015 – 2017 Business Plan

Several key priorities identified in our Business Plan are aligned and linked directly to the strategy as follows:

#### *Strategic Theme 1: Mobilizing and Engaging Our Community*

Goal 2: Identifying new and enhanced strategies to further assist community members through working groups, service support networks and public input.

Objective 2.1: Intertwine Our Shared Commitment Model of Community Safety and Well-being with existing and new partners.

Objective 2.2: Work with our partners to develop Protocols/Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) around information sharing to ensure that all participants understand their roles and responsibilities.



### *Strategic Theme 3: Service Excellence*

Goal 3: Demonstrated service commitment that recognizes and respects community diversity.

Objective 3.1: Demonstrate our commitment to youth, seniors, aboriginal people and multi-cultural and diverse Indigenous communities in Greater Sudbury.

### **Indigenous Community Partnerships with the Greater Sudbury Police Service**

The Greater Sudbury Police Service hired its first Indigenous Officer in 1986, Constable Grant Dokis. In 2000, Constable Dokis became the first Aboriginal Liaison Officer with our Service, making him one of only three in Ontario. Throughout his 30-year career, Constable Dokis was instrumental in establishing positive partnerships with our Indigenous communities having made many significant contributions, such as developing the MKWA opportunity and our Aboriginal Community Police Advisory Committee.

Constable Dokis along with former Police Chief, Ian Davidson, recognized the importance of understanding the unique priorities and traditions of our Indigenous community. This led to the creation of the Aboriginal Community/Police Advisory Committee (ACPAC). Through steadfast determination,, along with the assistance of Elder Jim Eshkawkogan, the Committee was implemented to bridge the gap between the Indigenous community and the Police Service through a cohesive, mutually beneficial relationship and partnership.

In 2005, Constable Dokis presented the idea of the MKWA Education Opportunity Circle to build positive relationships with Indigenous youth through friendly interactions with GSPS Officers. The program is currently in its 12<sup>th</sup> year and 17<sup>th</sup> session where approximately 200 students have participated to date.

Paul Pedersen commenced his tenure as Chief of Police in 2014 and immediately identified the national issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Greater Sudbury as a priority. Constable Dokis and Chief Pedersen reached out to our Indigenous community partners to begin talks to chart a course of action that would ensure the preservation of the Indigenous peoples proud traditions while addressing their concerns. A steering committee was formed consisting of representatives from the Greater Sudbury Police Service, N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, Better Beginnings Better Futures and Réseau Access Network. This group then began to examine the issues from both sides. As an outcome, the MMIWG project came to fruition in April of 2016, shortly before Constable Dokis retired with 30-years of Exemplary Service. Miigwetch Grant!

### **About Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)**

In March 2016, the Department of Justice Canada announced the funding for Greater Sudbury's MMIWG initiative, 'Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence' Project. The project committed the Greater Sudbury Police Service, N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre and community partners to work together to end violence against Indigenous women and girls and to develop strategies to reduce the victimization of Indigenous women and girls.





## Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence

Early on, Lisa Osawamick was recruited as the Aboriginal Women Violence Prevention Coordinator (AWVPC) and she is primarily responsible for implementing community-based strategies focused upon prevention and education of historical and current violence that affects Indigenous women and girls today.

The work of the AWVPC will also include the development of a proactive approach to help prevent Indigenous female youth from entering high-risk situations and to improve the Police response to Indigenous victims of crime.

### **N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre**

**Our Vision:** The N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre is a holistic, healthy Indigenous community centre which promotes culture, language and well-being in a balanced way.

**Our Mission:** N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre is committed to preserving language and culture, enhancing quality of life and empowering family and community by providing supports, services and partnerships for the Aboriginal community in an urban setting.

### **Goals & Objectives**

To provide a medium for the meeting of Native and Non-Native people and the development of mutual understanding through common activities.

To stimulate and assist Native self-expression and the development of Native leadership by providing assistance in the implementation of programs and services which provide opportunities for Native people to improve their social and economic status.

To assist and encourage the study of Native needs and the planning of services with Native people in both public and private agencies.

### **Protocol**

A Protocol is being developed between the Greater Sudbury Police Service and the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre that will formally commit the partners to respective roles and responsibilities.

### **Key Project Partners**

The project is in partnership with the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre with key measures of success being the programming partners, including the following:

- Aboriginal Courtwork Program
- Aboriginal Family Court Worker Program
- Wasa-Nabin Program
- Healthy Kids Program-(self-defense classes offered to youth)
- Healing and Wellness Program-(Domestic Violence Awareness collaboration day, skirt making, internal supports)
- AKWE: GO Program-(drum circle)





- Cultural Resource Program-(sweatlodges, cultural teachings)
- I Am A Kind Man (Domestic Violence awareness collaboration day).

Without these partnerships, the project would not have positively reached the number of people that it has in its first full year.

### Strategy Pillars

#### Seven Grandfather Teachings<sup>9</sup>

The partnership between the Greater Sudbury Police Service and the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre is based on mutual respect and understanding.

In optimizing the potential of the, 'Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence,' project, the partners recognize the value, importance and relevance of the Seven Grandfather Teachings in relation to this initiative and have adopted them as key pillars to guide activities.

1. Nibwaakaawin-Wisdom  
To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom.
2. Zaagi'idiwin-Love  
To know love is to know peace.
3. Minaadendamowin-Respect  
To honour all of creation is to have respect.
4. Aakode'ewin-Bravery  
Bravery is to face the foe with integrity.
5. Gwayakwaadiziwin-Honesty  
Honesty in facing a situation is to be brave.
6. Dabaadendiziwin-Humility  
Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation.
7. Debwewin-Truth  
Truth is to know all of these things.



#### The Medicine Wheel<sup>10</sup>

The Strategy is also very much guided by the Medicine Wheel. This external publication has been created from an Indigenous context utilizing the Medicine Wheel known to promote

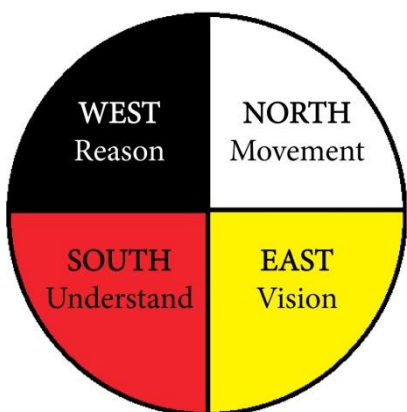
<sup>9</sup> Native Women's Centre. *Aboriginal Healing & Outreach Program, Traditional Teachings Handbook*. 2008. [http://www.nativewomenscentre.com/files/Traditional\\_Teachings\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.nativewomenscentre.com/files/Traditional_Teachings_Booklet.pdf) (accessed 12 05 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Frye Jean Graveline. *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 1998.



healing and wellness within the Indigenous community. Using Medicine Wheels as a tool for analysis in healing and learning demands the continuous and ongoing reflection of oneself in relation to others – thus balance must be maintained while embracing change.

“The teaching and healing process is evolutionary and cyclical in nature, as is the continuum of medicine wheels. It begins with a desire to understand and identify with the balance, wholeness and interconnectedness expressed in the medicine wheel.”<sup>11</sup>



The purpose of the public strategy is to provide a tangible guide that law enforcement agencies and government officials can use as a benchmark to assist in the development of an initiative relative to their respective community. The success of the ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’, project is dependent on the input and acceptance from external Indigenous communities and Elders. This has been accomplished by ensuring mutual benefits and contributions with a strong focus on understanding and Indigenous traditions.

#### **Eastern Direction – Vision: “See it” – Awareness**

As the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is receiving national attention, so too has the Greater Sudbury community’s will to combat the victimization of Indigenous women and girls.

As a community, we recognize and appreciate our uniqueness. Greater Sudbury is known as the “hub of the North” with countless opportunities, both positively and negatively. Greater Sudbury is known as an educational hub because of its post-secondary and specialized institutions; Laurentian University, College Boréal, Cambrian College, McEwen School of Architecture and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. In contrast, Greater Sudbury bears the reputation of being a hub for human trafficking. “Sudbury is a hub of Northern Ontario; you have a lot of intersections of highways,” said Laurie Scott, MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. “And what happens is the girls will move from community to community, so they’re separated even further from their families. They’re moved around and sold from pimp to pimp.”<sup>12</sup> This is just one of the factors leading to the victimization of our Indigenous women and girls.

#### **Our City and Indigenous Communities**

Within Greater Sudbury city limits there are Métis, Inuit, Anishnawbek and Cree communities among other Indigenous populations, as well as, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiitae First Nation. Our area also has eight other First Nations communities within 150 kilometres; Henvey Inlet, Sagamok, Whitefish River, Nipissing, Dokis, Aundeck Omni Kaning, Sheguiandah and M’Chigeeng. Indigenous people, some as far as the James Bay coast, come to Greater Sudbury for economic and educational opportunities, as well as, our specialized health

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>12</sup> Jim Moodie. “Sudbury a Human Trafficking ‘Hub’.” *The Sudbury Star*. 06 17, 2016. [www.thesudburystar.com/2016/06/17/sudbury-a-human-trafficking-hub](http://www.thesudburystar.com/2016/06/17/sudbury-a-human-trafficking-hub) (accessed 01 30 2017).

care. Greater Sudbury has hosted evacuees from Kashechewan who have chosen to remain permanently.

In addition, the Statistics Canada 2006 Census highlights the growing size of Aboriginal population in Canada. For instance, the 2031 population projections indicate that Greater Sudbury will have the largest proportions of Aboriginal People in a metropolitan area in comparison to census metropolitan areas.<sup>13</sup> Between 2001 and 2006, the Aboriginal population in Greater Sudbury grew by 35 percent, from 7,385 to 9,970 people.<sup>14</sup>



Furthermore, over one in four Aboriginal people in Greater Sudbury live below the before-tax, Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) where 34 percent of Aboriginal children (14-years and under) in Greater Sudbury are living under the before-tax LICO, compared to 15 percent of Non-Aboriginal children. Aboriginal Women between the ages of zero-39-years, had higher proportions of person's living below the before-tax LICO.<sup>15</sup> Greater Sudbury's Aboriginal population has higher unemployment rates than that of Non-Aboriginal people (7.8 percent compared to 5.6 percent).<sup>16</sup>

Research of the Native Women's Association of Canada indicates that, "between 2000 and 2008, Aboriginal women and girls represented approximately 10 percent of all female homicides in Canada. However, Aboriginal women make up only 3 percent of the female population."<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Aboriginal women are almost three times more likely to be killed by a stranger than non-Aboriginal women.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Statistics Canada reported that Aboriginal women and girls are three times more likely than Non-Aboriginal women to report having been a victim of violent crime.<sup>19</sup>

Canadians are becoming more aware of the atrocities that our Indigenous peoples have faced. The Canadian government officially apologized in 2008 for the residential school system that

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada. *Population Projections by Aboriginal Identity in Canada, 2006 to 2031*. 2011. [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-552-x/2011001/ana-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-552-x/2011001/ana-eng.htm) (accessed 10 06 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal Population Profile for Sudbury*. 2007

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Native Women's Association of Canada. *Fact Sheet Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls*. 05 2015: 1. [www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact\\_Sheet\\_Missing\\_and\\_Murdered\\_Aboriginal\\_Women\\_and\\_Girls](http://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls) (accessed 10 06 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada. *Violent Victimization of Aboriginal Women in the Canadian Provinces*. 2009. [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11439-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11439-eng.htm) (accessed 10 06 2016).



decimated our Indigenous populations, as these schools resulted in children being physically and sexually abused, malnourished and subjected to disease that resulted in numerous deaths. There has been an entrenched system that has marginalized Indigenous peoples. For instance, the “60’s Scoop” refers to the mass removal of Indigenous children from their families into the child welfare system; in most cases, without the consent of their families or bands.<sup>20</sup>

In March of 2016, the University of New Brunswick and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police released a National Framework for Collaborative Police Action on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and identified barriers faced by Indigenous women and girls, stating that “Indigenous women and girls experience higher rates of violence, and more extreme forms of violence, than non-Indigenous women in Canada.”<sup>21</sup>

In addition, the National Framework indicated that, “Indigenous women are over-represented as victims of homicide, representing 4 percent of the female population, and 16 percent of all murdered women. The impact of colonization on Indigenous people’s sense of identity, belonging and self-worth has created vulnerabilities unique to this group – particularly for women. Many have experienced systemic racism, have scarcity of supportive services, and feel isolated. The history of residential schools has left a painful legacy behind that continues to result in making Indigenous women less likely to rely on authorities for help. Research shows that Indigenous women are fearful of losing their children to child protective services, distrust the Police, and all too many are dealing with poverty.”<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, “Geographic isolation is also a significant barrier faced by Indigenous women. Resources and services depend on the type of community they live in (on-reserve/off-reserve).”<sup>23</sup>

This strategy recognizes that the spirit of our Indigenous women and girls needs to be rebuilt. Moreover, it identifies that the previously reported statistics by the Native Women’s Association of Canada dated between 2000 and 2008 in comparison to this IPV framework dated March 2016, in relation to the number of female homicides versus the number of female Indigenous homicides, has sadly increased.

The ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project has adopted a vision that focuses on the following priorities:

- Promoting access to and participation in the justice system by victims.
- Sharing circles and outreach with a goal to improve access to and participation in the justice system by victims.
- Holding safety planning sessions and engaging high-risk missing Indigenous female youth.
- Promoting the development of law, policies and programs for victims.

<sup>20</sup> Indigenous Foundations UBC. *Sixties Scoop*. 2009.

[www.indigenousfoundations.art.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/sixties-scoop.html](http://www.indigenousfoundations.art.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/sixties-scoop.html) (accessed 10 06 2016).

<sup>21</sup> Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. *National Framework for Collaborative Police Action and Intimate Partner Violence*. 03 2016: 28. [www.cacp.ca/index.html?asst\\_id=1200](http://www.cacp.ca/index.html?asst_id=1200) (accessed 01 04 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



## Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence

- Creating a strategy specific to Greater Sudbury to reduce victimization of Indigenous women and girls.
- Increasing awareness of the support, services, assistance and programming available to victims, and relevant legislation.
- Increasing awareness of the victimization of Indigenous women and girls through education of Greater Sudbury Police Service personnel and an external media campaign educating the general public.

### **Southern Direction – Understand: “Relate the Vision” – Knowledge**

In order to provide internal personnel, external partners and the community with a better understanding, the ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project and Action Plan was adopted that committed to a number of tasks and activities as summarized below and further expanded in this paper:

1. Building a resource for our Indigenous women and girls to assist them in navigating the justice system as a victim of violence and provide them with information regarding the support and services that are available within our community.
2. Building a resource for family members of our Indigenous women and girls to provide them with information on what to expect during a Missing Persons Investigation by Police and support services that are available during the process.
3. Conducting outreach and providing information to Indigenous women and girl while also attending Greater Sudbury Police Service Tuesday night drop-ins that are open to the public.
4. Participating in sharing and healing circles for Indigenous youth and creating sharing circles for Indigenous women and girls, both to raise awareness of victimization and provide resources and support.
5. Increasing internal awareness of the victimization of Indigenous women and girls by developing educational material for members of the Greater Sudbury Police Service.
6. Increasing external awareness of the victimization of Indigenous women and girls through a media campaign and a formal strategy.
7. Working with the Greater Sudbury Police Service Missing Person Coordinator to engage high-risk missing Indigenous women and girls.
8. Developing a contact list for First Nations within and surrounding Greater Sudbury and acting as a resource/liaison when looking for missing Indigenous women and girls.
9. Holding safety planning sessions with a holistic aspect for Indigenous women and girls.
10. Conducting outreach with the Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy on their Community Harm Reduction Outreach initiative.



11. Conducting all of the above while partnering with local community groups.
12. Providing training to internal members, as well as, members of partner organizations that assist in child-welfare investigations to better serve and understand our Indigenous community and the history and impacts of residential schools.
13. Assisting in the development of a Greater Sudbury Police Service policy and training materials to provide members with a better understanding of the intergenerational trauma suffered by the Indigenous peoples, leading to a more appropriate and effective response to the needs of Indigenous women and girls.

### **Western Direction – Reason: “Figure it Out” – Connections**

The following action items are how the ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project made internal and external Connections to create awareness and improve understanding.

#### **Build a resource for our Indigenous women and girls to assist them in navigating the justice system as a victim of violence and provide them with information regarding the support and services that are available within our community.**

Create a toolkit that provides information on navigating the justice system as a victim and the support and services available within the community

The toolkit will list advocates, support and services within our community and provide guidance for victims and survivors of abuse.

Indigenous women and girls who are victims of violence may not be comfortable reporting it to Police. This toolkit will identify places of healing and solace where they are more likely to speak about their experiences and in turn become more willing to reach out to our Aboriginal Liaison Officer through our Indigenous community partnerships.

The Aboriginal Liaison Officer and the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator will be responsible for the development of the toolkit.

#### **Build a resource for family members of our Indigenous women and girls to provide them with information on what to expect during a Missing Persons Investigation by Police and support services that are available during the process.**

The toolkit will provide information on what to expect during a Missing Persons Investigation in order to identify the steps that Police take and the questions that may be asked in order to locate the individual. The toolkit will list support and services within our community that Indigenous families can access during their time of need.

Greater Sudbury Police Service currently maintains a Vulnerable Person Registry. This registry will be available to Indigenous women and girls who wish to ensure their personal information is available to first responders. The database provides valuable information to assist Police in locating those registered, should they go missing.



Promoting the Vulnerable Persons Registry and developing the toolkit will be the responsibility of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer and the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator.

**Conduct outreach and provide information to Indigenous women and girls while attending Greater Sudbury Police Service Tuesday night drop-ins that are open to the public.**

Currently, outreach work is done by the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator. The Greater Sudbury Police Service drop-ins started in August 2016. The drop-ins are in partnership with the Aboriginal Peoples’ Alliance of Northern Ontario (APANO, 154 Durham Street)<sup>24</sup> and allows the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator to interact with at risk Indigenous Women and Girls providing support and access to resources.

Outreach through our partnership with APANO is the responsibility of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer and the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator.

**Participate in sharing circles for Indigenous youth and create additional sharing circles for Indigenous women and girls, both to raise awareness of victimization and to provide resources and support.**

Sharing/healing circles and drum circles for Indigenous women and girls began in September of 2016 and has been promoted as a safe place to share and empower one another.

Sharing circles are conducted through a partnership with N’Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre or a neighbouring First Nation.

Involvement in sharing, healing and drum circles is the responsibility of the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator.

**Increase awareness of the victimization of Indigenous women and girls to Greater Sudbury Police Service personnel by developing educational material for members of the Service.**

Greater Sudbury Police Service with the assistance of Elders and respected teachers of the Indigenous culture will create a training module for Greater Sudbury Police Service sworn and civilian members highlighting contributing factors to the victimization of Indigenous women and girls. The training is to be ongoing and forms a continuous model of learning for members.

The educational commitment will be the responsibility of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer and the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator. Greater Sudbury Police Service Training and Professional Development Branch, and Inclusion Team, as well as, community partners will also be consulted for best practices in the development of such teaching materials and course standards.

**Increase awareness of the victimization of Indigenous women and girls to the general public through a media campaign and creation of an external strategy.**

The Greater Sudbury Police Service disseminates information on events, campaigns, initiatives and incidents to the general public through media releases that are sent to media outlets. Media releases are posted to the Greater Sudbury Police Service corporate social media Facebook and Twitter accounts ensuring followers receive timely and accurate information regarding initiatives

<sup>24</sup> Aboriginal Peoples Alliance Northern Ontario Sudbury 2017. <https://www.apano.co/> (accessed 12 05 2017).





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and incidents of interest to the citizens of Greater Sudbury. Media releases are also distributed internally to keep members informed.

This will facilitate ownership, pride and sharing amongst our staff and the public. The official logo of the ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project was part of the external media campaign. A logo contest was launched shortly after the program’s inception to provide local Indigenous youth with the opportunity to submit artwork. The logo is a combination of two separate submissions. Promotional materials and give away items have been created to distribute externally.

The creation of marketing material, promotional items and content for media releases is the responsibility of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer, the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator, Greater Sudbury Police Senior Staff and Corporate Communications.



### **Work with the Greater Sudbury Police Service Missing Person Coordinator to engage high-risk Indigenous women and girls.**

The Greater Sudbury Police Service Missing Person Coordinator works with and engages high-risk youth in Greater Sudbury. The Missing Person Coordinator will assist in identifying high-risk Indigenous women and girls. The coordinator has already built a rapport with many of these individuals and will facilitate interactions with the Aboriginal Liaison Officer and the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator. These high-risk Indigenous women and girls will be provided with information on different resources and sources of support that they may feel more comfortable utilizing.

These engagements will be the responsibility of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator, Missing Persons Coordinator and the Missing Person Community Safety Personnel Coordinator.

### **Develop a contact list for First Nations within and surrounding Greater Sudbury and act as a resource/liaison when looking for missing Indigenous women and girls.**

An agency response list and resource guide will be created and distributed for missing Indigenous women and girls. By creating the response list and resource guide, First Nations persons will know who to reach out to if an Indigenous woman or girl goes missing. It will assist in generating a more effective, efficient and coordinated police response increasing the possibility of a positive outcome.

The response list and resource guide will seek the guidance and support of the Project Committee before final approval.

The compilation of information will be the responsibility of the Aboriginal Women’s Violence Prevention Coordinator.

### **Hold safety planning sessions with a holistic aspect for Indigenous women and girls.**



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Safety planning sessions will be held at N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre to better reach Indigenous women and girls. Additionally, N'Swakamok is ideally suited to organize this portion of the initiative because of the ability to smudge which adheres to the holistic approach. There are also opportunities for Indigenous women and girls to participate in self-defence classes. This will be done by working with community partners who have an interest in self-protection and can be done safely by participants.

The scheduling of these sessions will be the responsibility of the Aboriginal Women's Violence Prevention Coordinator and the Greater Sudbury Police Service Domestic Violence Unit.

### **Conduct outreach with Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy promoting their community Harm Reduction Outreach initiative.**

Outreach has been done in partnership with the Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy (OAHAS) since the Spring of 2016. As OAHAS had established a strong community outreach base, this allows for an excellent opportunity to build on an existing collaborative approach with community partners. Through OAHAS, a partnership with Sex Workers Advisory Network Sudbury (SWANS) formed whereby further outreach is conducted by the Aboriginal Women's Violence Prevention Coordinator to work with at-risk women and girls and provide them with support and harm reduction strategies.

The coordination of the outreach work will be the responsibility of the Aboriginal Women's Violence Prevention Coordinator.

### **Partner with community groups to align with outcomes of the Action Plan.**

Through our commitment to Community Safety and Well-being, the Greater Sudbury Police Service realizes the importance of a strategy that is community led and furthermore that community partners are *essential* in the success of the strategy.

Maintaining respect and decorum so that the relationship may continue to be harmonious and trusting between Police and community groups is of the utmost importance.

The following community partners have been invaluable to the success of the project thus far:  
N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre;

- Aboriginal Courtwork Program
- Aboriginal Family Court Worker Program
- Wasa-Nabin Program
- Healthy Kids Program
- Healing and Wellness Program
- AKWE:GO Program
- Cultural Resource Program
- I Am A Kind Man
- Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy;
- Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre;
- Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance of Northern Ontario;
- Métis Nation of Ontario;
- Réseau Access Network –Sex Workers Advisory Network of Sudbury (SWANS);
- Sudbury and District Health Unit;



- Sudbury Catholic District School Board;
- Rainbow District School Board;
- Health Sciences North Medicine Lodge;
- Za-geh-do-win Information Clearinghouse;
- Indigenous Community
- Sudbury and Area Victims Services;
- Noah's Hub;
- Laurentian University – Indigenous Student Affairs;
- Cambrian College – Wabnode Centre for Aboriginal Studies and;
- Aboriginal Community Police Advisory Committee

**Provide training to internal members, as well as, members of partner organizations that assist in child-welfare investigations to better serve and understand our Indigenous community and the history and impacts of residential schools.**

Greater Sudbury Police Officers are often a part of child welfare investigations regarding sexual and physical abuse. The Service is committed to providing training on the history and impacts of residential schools to internal members, as well as, members of partner agencies to allow them to better serve our Indigenous community.

Supervisors attended a multi-day Indigenous Awareness training workshop facilitated by George Couchie of Redtail Hawk Training and Consulting. The workshop focused on the history and impact of residential schools and the intergenerational trauma that was inflicted upon our Indigenous peoples including the physical and sexual abuse that occurred while at these schools.

Further, the Greater Sudbury Police Service is assisting to implement culturally safe programming through the Aboriginal Women Violence Prevention Coordinator by partnering with different community agencies in Greater Sudbury. Culturally safe family healing programming includes; the parenting support group for teens held at N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre and a mother and daughter sweat lodge ceremony at Atikameksheng Anishnawbek. Other relevant programming such as a pipe ceremony with focused discussions on historical violence and roles and responsibilities of men and women at the Health Sciences North Medicine Lodge has been undertaken thus far in the project.

**Assist in the development of Greater Sudbury Police Service policies, procedures and training to allow members to better understand the intergenerational trauma suffered by the Indigenous peoples and in turn ensuring members respond more effectively to the needs of Indigenous women and girls.**



The Greater Sudbury Police Service will review its policies and procedures on Bias Neutral Policing, Race Relations and Missing Persons to determine if revisions or a new policy should be developed to address the victimization of our Indigenous women and girls, and their protection.

Greater Sudbury Police Service will develop a tool kit and resource guide to be provided to all families of missing Indigenous women and girls. These materials will form



part of Greater Sudbury Police Service response to missing persons' procedure.

The evolution or development of the Greater Sudbury Police Service policies and procedures will be coordinated through the Planning Division with input from the Missing Person Coordinator, the Aboriginal Liaison Officer, the Aboriginal Women's Violence Prevention Coordinator, Greater Sudbury Police Service Senior Staff and the Aboriginal Community/Police Advisory Council.

### **Northern Direction – Movement: “Actualize the Vision” – Commitment**

#### **What are we doing?**

A Protocol will be established has been entered between the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre and the Greater Sudbury Police Service setting out the roles and responsibilities of the parties as part of the Strategy.

#### **Monitoring Performance**

Specific performance metrics will be established, against which quarterly evaluations will be undertaken. On an annual basis the results will be reported.

Partner agencies will meet on a regular basis to share results and identify issues that emerge through project work. Collaborative approaches will be used to ensure that project goals are attained.

Feedback and assessment measures will be informed through involved community partners and specifically in relation to the number of Indigenous victims seeking access to services as a result of outreach work, safety planning, sharing circles and other initiatives that have been undertaken. A key performance indicator is the sustainability of these current partnerships and embracing new partnerships that foster community engagement and liaison.

#### **Community Consultation**

A community consultation session with forty community members brainstorming for a day generated ideas and local issues to be addressed and implemented as part of the violence prevention and community resources segment of the strategy. A number of concerns were identified including: a lack of funding, lack of community resources, lack of Indigenous-based programming, poverty, racial profiling, lateral violence, lack of trust in Police and the justice system, lack of education, lack of safe spaces, seeing violence as the norm and the need for empowerment. The group left with a consensus that there is much work to be undertaken with commitment to work to address the gaps.

In addition, some topics were identified regarding community resources including; Roots of Violence Tree, sessions of intergenerational trauma, ceremonies, sustainable development, train the trainer, Indigenous women and youth shelter, Indigenous-based workshops for survivors and abusers, empowerment, Indigenous Violence Coordinator, Indigenous Mental Health Workers and youth specific programming. This helped to outline the programming that the Aboriginal Women Violence Prevention Coordinator initiated at the onset of the project. Providing the Indigenous community with access to the aforementioned programming brought forth at the Community Consultation demonstrated our commitment to listening, respecting and



collaborating with our Indigenous peoples to ensure the success of the ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women – Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project.

The community reiterated that priority be given to cultural sensitivity training, inclusivity and unity within the community to make the project successful and to continue with events like the consultation session.

### **Starting the Healing**

When the question, “What would healing look like?” was facilitated during a community session, members and students shared the following:

- Sharing circles
- Expressive art and art therapy
- Advocacy
- Awareness
- Safe spaces
- Mentorships
- The history of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Resisting stereotypes
- Drum circles
- Journaling
- Increased awareness of healing practices
- Equality
- Healthy role models
- Healing lodges and treatment
- Sweetgrass
- Full-moon ceremonies
- Attending to one’s spirit
- Validation – “I believe you”
- Connection to our first mother Shkagamik-Kwe

### **Summary**

This paper has been established as a first step in identifying recommendations and a charter to provide guidance for future endeavours. Input to the Strategy and project direction will continue to be invited from community partners to preserve the project’s authenticity. This very important insight is welcome and key to our success. Ongoing consultation will be undertaken for the duration of the project to help inform if our current strategy is working and to make necessary adjustments.

These results, evaluations and on-going discussions will be the subject of corporate messaging, quarterly evaluations and annual reports of the ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women Learning to Live Free From Violence’ project.

Article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states: “States shall take measures, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to ensure that Indigenous women



and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.”<sup>25</sup>

Greater Sudbury Police Service and N’Swakamok Native Friendship Centre are proud of the many milestones reached to date with the Strategy. This strategy is evolving and is the first of its kind, developed pre-inquiry for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We are fully committed to ensuring the community’s needs are addressed and ultimately guided by the findings from the Inquiry.

“There needs to be a sacred circle of healing. When the healing starts our family and community grows stronger. We have the answers; we just need to start listening.”<sup>26</sup>

### Testimonials

"Lisa's violence prevention initiatives are felt by many in this community. By aiming culture as the main focus as well as understanding the roots of violence, many indigenous (and non-indigenous) community members are learning to love themselves and offer love onto others. In other words, stopping the viscous and violent cycle and leaping toward a healing and loving cycle. I speak for myself and my family. These initiatives support a greater movement toward truth and reconciliation of self and community. My family history (i.e. suicide, hate toward the church and government) and personalities (i.e. Anger, resentment, substance abuse) have often seemed mysterious to me and my cousins. With the help of these violence prevention programs, I have gained clarity and learnt many traditional teachings that were innately in my memories. Chii miigwetch to Lisa and supporting staff for all the healing.”<sup>27</sup>

“It’s my firm belief that when we listen and hear the voices of others, we grow internally and externally. We come to new understandings about the people in our community and we are better able to put ourselves in the shoes of others. By doing so, it is possible to discover much more about our place of privilege and our own journey on this planet. Sharing our voices, ideas and opinions is essential to a more democratic society—and the dialogues, projects and writing that have resulted through the ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women’ project have ignited and rekindled some powerful and proactive conversations. One project in the collective, the writing circle, held on Friday afternoons at the N’Swakamok Friendship Centre, resulted in a really positive collection of poetry. More importantly, however, the women who joined together each week are now joined in solidarity and sustaining strength. We, too, have learned much more about ourselves through the hearts and minds of each other. We have discovered that together, we’re better.”<sup>28</sup>

“It was an incredible few days of learning. Imagine having your children taken away and sent to abusive schools?? Parents were jailed and lost treaty rights if they refused. The last residential school closed in 1996. Horrific. They have lost their history, their culture, a sense of family and

<sup>25</sup> United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. 2008: 9. [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf) (accessed 12 05 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Maggie Cywink, Voice of a Family Member.

<sup>27</sup> Eniiganiid'kwe.

<sup>28</sup> Jan Buley, Facilitator for the Writing Circle, Laurentian University: Sudbury.



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sense of self-worth. We owe it to our Aboriginal community to learn, empower and engage to help them to feel welcomed and loved as members of all our communities. I will be making a greater effort to help empower Indigenous youth to apply for our co-ops, our internships, and our jobs. I hope I can help make a difference.”<sup>29</sup>

“Jan and Lisa were such awesome facilitators for the Writing Circle! We explored so much in ourselves and accomplished a lot together as a group, even publishing an collection of our poetry dedicated to missing and murdered indigenous women in a very short timeframe. I am grateful to have had a chance to be part of this group and to feel the love and care of such a great bunch of people.”<sup>30</sup>

“I’ve learned and I’m still learning that our women's strong Spirit is built when we:

- Honour our endurance as I walked along side both elderly women and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester women in ceremony while honouring our waters.
- Honour our waters through vigilance and prayers of solidarity for those standing up against the poisoning of our waters and by adding my voice to the songs of honour, respect and love for our source of life.
- Honour our presence and visibility when we walk wearing Red representing our invisible Sisters in Spirit.
- Honour our ancestors when we call on them to walk with us and when I’ve been taught to offer tobacco for the gift of a Big Dream.
- Honour our role as women each time we put on our skirts for ceremony and claim the centre of the hoop of the hem connecting us to our mother earth.
- Honour our kind men who have welcomed my man to the teaching circle.
- Honour our stories of accumulated inter-generational trauma and recognize the symptoms and effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and lateral violence and the power that this has had on shaping my sense of self and identity.
- Honour the silence of the Spirit Moon and realize our place within all of Great Mystery's Creation as experienced through a healing lodge circle.
- Honour the care of our Spirit with a regular healthy diet of teachings and ceremony and “enjoying the gifts received from the creator on a daily basis.”
- Honour our sacredness by staying safe, creating and setting healthy boundaries and recognizing abusive relationships that batter my healing and restoring Spirit.
- Honour our individual stories through active listening and presence in the shared darkened womb of a sweat lodge that gave me courage to share.
- Honour what our heart is telling us and recognizing that when my actions are guided by this good place it gives me strength to speak out against prejudice and fear that fuels misunderstanding.
- Honour our gift of humour a product of a deeper understanding of claiming my place in this collective journey.

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<sup>29</sup> Carrie-Lynn Hotson, Manager of Human Resources and Professional Development, Greater Sudbury Police Service: Sudbury.

<sup>30</sup> Terra Kerani, Writing Circle member: 2017.



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- Honour our stories of pain and grief over the loss of more than 1,181 faceless Sisters in Spirit while grieving the loss of a sister who was honouring 'starting to a new chapter in her life’.
- Honour our resilience when lifting up the Strong Woman song in drumming circle followed by the Men's Healing song and adding my Buffalo shout punctuation.”<sup>31</sup>

"I've had the pleasure and experience of attending, listening, participating in discussions and learning at the workshops and presentations held by ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women - Learning To Live Free From Violence’ program. This part of my journey has really touched the essence of my spirit as an Anishinabe Kwe. In the Creative Writing group that I participated in I created poems of my personal experiences. Those poems allowed me to honour moments of my life. My poems went into a poem book we created from our writing group titled "I am Not a Poet". What an honourable moment for the women of our writing group when we launched our Poem Book at the Warrior Women's event. I continue with my personal growth in learning and enjoying these workshops and presentations.”<sup>32</sup>

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Brenda Killeen-Cavallin.

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