



# PROMISING PRACTICES IN ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND GIRLS

## A Jurisdictional Scan

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**Prepared For:**

*Jan Gottfred, Acting/Executive Director,  
Intergovernmental & Community Relations,  
Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation*

**Prepared By:**

*Tracy Byrne, PhD, Senior Researcher and  
Wade Abbott, Researcher  
With support from Samantha Morris, Researcher  
Knowledge and Information Services,  
Ministry of Citizens' Services*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS AND OTHER RESEARCH SNAPSHOTS, CONTACT:**

DAWN NICKEL, PHD, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH SERVICES,  
KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SERVICES, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,  
MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES  
PHONE: (250) 356-0378  
E-MAIL: DAWN.NICKEL@GOV.BC.CA

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

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Knowledge and Information Services (KIS) has been contracted by the British Columbia Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) to provide research support for the upcoming National Aboriginal Women's Conference on preventing and addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls that will be held in Vancouver in June 2011. This draft paper represents one of a suite of research products that KIS has been asked to deliver.

The paper provides examples of promising practices in addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls. It begins with a summary of principles that are considered to underpin effective practice. These principles are drawn from the program evaluations studied as well as from more general reports on promising practice in the field of violence against Aboriginal women. Descriptions of effective programs and initiatives follow. Jurisdictions included are: Canada – federal, provincial and territorial-level programs; Australia – national and state-level programs; and New Zealand – national and regional programs.

The authors of this paper have focused on identifying initiatives and programs that have been overtly recognized as effective. Wherever possible, the authors have included programs that have been evaluated and where there is evidence to show that positive outcomes are being realized for the people who access the programs. It was significantly more challenging to find such evidence for programs being delivered in Canada than it was for those in Australia and New Zealand. There appears to be a much firmer commitment to program evaluation by Australian and New Zealand governments and organizations. The information presented in this paper on programs in Canada is, therefore, somewhat less full, than that presented on programs in Australia and New Zealand.

This paper will contribute to the development of a report on current service/program gaps in British Columbia and how B.C.'s approach to addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls can be improved.

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## **2 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE**

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The literature examined consistently identifies key underlying principles for effective approaches to addressing and preventing violence against Aboriginal women and girls. The promising practices identified in this report have implemented these principles to varying degrees.

### **Community-based and community-driven design and delivery**

Across the Literature there is a considerable consensus that programs to address violence against Aboriginal women should be developed and controlled by the community. There is agreement that there needs to be broader community support for programs and that the community needs to be engaged in dealing with the issue.

### **Holistic approach**

Programs that address violence against Aboriginal women cannot only provide services and supports to the victims of violence. The solutions should be implemented across the community, and include programs for men and children. The healing process should be a positive progression with supports available for the whole community.

### **Culturally appropriate design and delivery**

The literature examined places a significant emphasis on including cultural components in programs and providing services in culturally appropriate ways. Programs should also be in line with local cultural values and beliefs and should include culturally respectful education resources.

### **Active involvement of Aboriginal women**

The need for Aboriginal women to be equally included in decision-making bodies that deal with security and well-being was highlighted by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Other reports also identify the need for Aboriginal shelters and programs to be staffed by Aboriginal women wherever possible.

### **Continuum of service delivery**

There needs to be a continuum of services available to communities, from educational resources for children and youth, to prevention, intervention and postvention programs. The supports that women receive need to be long-term and go beyond the initial intervention.

### **24/7 availability for crisis response**

Since incidents of violence can occur any time of day or night, 24-hour shelters and 24-hour access to transportation to shelters is a necessity. Telephone and crisis help lines can further supplement the need for 24-hour access to services.

### **Further Training for First Responders and Support Workers**

Addressing violence against Aboriginal women requires investment in more than just the affected communities. Adequate training for police and first responders is essential for increasing cultural sensitivity and ensuring effective responses to incidents of violence.

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## 3 PROMISING PRACTICES: CANADA

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This section will explore practices that are having a positive impact on addressing violence against Aboriginal women in Canada. The published literature on promising practices in Canada is far more focused on high level recommendations for how programs should be run, with only a limited exploration of the tangible effectiveness of practices that are already in place. The literature on programs within British Columbia is even more limited. As a result, evidence regarding the specific, positive outcomes of programs is hard to come by and that is reflected in the following program descriptions.

For additional information on “Best Practices” in Canada, please see Appendices 1 and 2 below.

### 3.1 BRITISH COLUMBIA

Over the past few years a string of deaths resulting from domestic violence incidents has led to a renewed focus by the B.C. Government on addressing violence against women. Revised and updated policies have been released to guide police and front-line workers who deal with victims of domestic violence. At the core of these changes is the Domestic Violence Action Plan which was launched in early 2010 in response to the Lee/Park coroner’s inquest. Policies implemented include standardized risk-assessment guidelines for police and prosecutors, an updated Violence Against Women in Relationships policy, and a best practices approach for social workers to address violence against women.

#### Domestic Violence Units

A common promising practice identified by both the literature and Ministry staff is the development of family violence teams, which consist of police officers and social workers. The *Moving Toward Safety* (2002) report, which examines promising practices for addressing family violence across Canada, examined the use of family violence teams in Winnipeg, Toronto and rural Ontario and found them to be effective in addressing family violence in Aboriginal communities. In British Columbia this team-based approach has been implemented through Domestic Violence Units that operate in New Westminister, Vancouver, Abbotsford, and most recently the Capital Regional District. The Vancouver, Abbotsford and New Westminister units are operated by Family Services of Greater Vancouver and feature teams made up of counsellors and police officers. The teams follow up on high-risk domestic violence cases referred by first responders. The Capital Regional District Domestic Violence Unit was established in July 2010. The unit consists of a police sergeant, two investigators, two victim-service workers and a child-welfare worker, all of whom liaise with RCMP and local police departments in the Greater Victoria area. The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides one full time social worker dedicated to the Capital Regional District Domestic Violence Unit to work with police and victim services on the most high risk domestic violence files.

#### Family Development Program, Mid-Island Tribal Council, Vancouver Island

*Moving Toward Safety* (2002) recognizes the Family Development Program provided by the Mid-Island Tribal Council on Vancouver Island as a promising practice for addressing family



violence. The Mid-Island Tribal Council represents several small bands located around Chemainus. In response to growing concerns about the prevalence of family violence in local communities, the Council created the Family Development Program. The Program integrates and links existing services to families, and facilitates healing among victims in a culturally sensitive way. The Program identifies family violence and abuse as a community problem, for which the community as a whole must accept responsibility.

## Domestic Violence Court, Duncan

The need to address cases of domestic violence quickly in the court system led to the creation of a Domestic Violence Court in Duncan in March 2009. The court is unique within the Province of B.C. and sees all domestic violence cases on one day (typically Wednesday) each week. The Domestic Violence Court is the result of a partnership between Crown counsel, defence lawyers, probation officers, social workers, victim services and Native court workers. According to the Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, the program has already decreased wait times and is improving connections between victims and services (*In the court of speaking correctly*, October 19, 2010, Cowichan News Leader).

## 3.2 ALBERTA

Sources:

- Lambertus, S. (2007). *Addressing Violence Perpetrated Against Aboriginal Women in Alberta*. Project Lifeline.
- Dreddy, K. (2002). *Moving Toward Safety*.

The literature reviewed provides an extensive examination of promising practices in Alberta. Sandra Lambertus' (2007) report focuses on promising practices in Alberta that have successfully expanded the role of community, improved the structure and capacity of local services, and increased the awareness of family violence issues. The promising practices were identified to the author by victim services workers and program administrators. Kimberly Dreddy's *Moving Toward Safety* (2002) report provides an exploration of promising practices from across Canada including a number of programs operating in Alberta.

## Mikisew Cree First Nation

<http://www.mikisew.org/>

The Mikisew Cree First Nation of Fort Chipewayn is identified as a leader in addressing domestic violence in the community. One example of the promising practices undertaken by the Nation is the implementation of community-driven programs. The Mikisew began to see success with their programs when they assumed local control over health and wellness programs which had formerly been run by the Federal Government. According to former Chief Archie Waquan, local control of the program was important because "Instead of somebody administering our health from outside, over which we had no control, wouldn't it be better for us to take on that battle-weary role? And we never looked back after that. So that at least we can promote health, wellness, and provide all the necessary health care that's out there" (Lambertus, 2007, p. 176).

The Mikisew Cree also worked in partnership with the RCMP and judicial system to take a more firm stance against domestic violence. The RCMP initiated a tighter policy on laying charges in domestic violence cases to create a shift in attitudes toward domestic violence. At the same time the courts took a more firm approach in cases involving domestic violence and increased the time that judges spent in the community. The tougher stance on domestic violence was successful because the justice system was sending a clear and consistent message to the community.

*Moving Toward Safety* (2002) also recognizes the importance of what it terms “multi-service facilities” which combine Family Resource Centres with shelters or safe houses. The Mikisew Cree operates the Paspew House in Fort Chipewayn in line with this model. The facility can house up to eleven women and children and is operated on an on-call basis. The facility also provides a 24-hour crisis line and a public education program on family violence and prevention.

## **Blood Tribe Reserve**

<http://www.btdh.ca/>

The Blood Tribe Reserve Community Option Program increases the involvement of the community in helping to resolve domestic disputes. The Program receives referrals from couples experiencing spousal abuse and brings them together, with their agreement, to talk with a panel of community members. The program is seen to be most effective in the context of early intervention and in preventing disputes from elevating to situations where violence may occur.

The Blood Tribe Reserve found that connecting local programs with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal skilled professionals from nearby cities was a promising practice for improving service. The connection with such professionals allows for the improvement of local services by providing local front-line workers with the opportunity to learn and improve local processes.

The Blood Tribe Reserve Family Violence Prevention Project holds workshops and other events every year to increase community awareness of family violence and to encourage its prevention. Workshops are based on local services and programs that address violence. The benefits of the project are twofold: it increases awareness of available programs so women can access the services in the future if they experience violence; and it educates the community at large on the issue of violence. The workshops are on topics that are related, rather than specific to family violence. The workshops use topics such as “Enhancing Relationships” to focus on the positive ways that violence can be avoided. The positive focus is seen to encourage participation and to mitigate the risk of scaring potential attendees away.

The Family Violence Prevention Project also holds annual events to increase awareness of family violence. There are a variety of events held including: workshops for elders, front-line workers and volunteers; annual wellness workshops; annual Prevention of Family Violence Day walks; annual Prevention of Family Violence Conferences; and annual prevention of family violence workshops. The regularity of the events encourages participation and creates an association between the issue and the time of year.

## Tsuu T'ina Victim Services Program

The Tsuu T'ina Victim Services Program seeks to increase the number of Aboriginal staff and volunteers working with cases of family violence. The program holds victim services volunteer training for the community to raise awareness of the issue of family violence and to encourage volunteerism. Attendees of training sessions are recruited to work as volunteers with the organization following their completion of the training.

## Ermineskin Women's Shelter

In many communities there are existing programs for prevention or intervention that can be expanded to cover the continuum of services needed to address violence against Aboriginal women. The Ermineskin Women's Shelter traditionally provided resources for suicide prevention and cases of domestic violence. The shelter expanded these services to include classes known as *Career and Life Management (CALM)* for local students. According to victim service workers, students who later witnessed domestic violence in their home directed their mothers to stay at the shelter.

## Edmonton Spousal Violence Teams

The location of victim services is identified as a barrier to women reporting acts of family violence and abuse. Specifically, there have been concerns around victim services being located at or next to police stations. Due to the stigma attached to police stations, victim service workers in Edmonton set up one of their Spousal Violence Teams away from the police station. This was found to be an effective strategy for encouraging women, who would not go to a police station, to access services.

### 3.3 MANITOBA

Sources:

- Dreddy, K. (2002). *Moving Toward Safety*.
- Government of Manitoba. (2001). *Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission Final Report*.
- Couture, J., Parker, T., Couture, R., & Laboucane, P. (2001). *A Cost Benefit Analysis of Hollow Water's Community Holistic Circle Healing Process*.

## Hollow Water First Nation Community Holistic Circle of Healing (CHCH)

Hollow Water consists of four Aboriginal communities including the Hollow Water reserve and three neighbouring Métis communities. It has a population of roughly 1,000 people. Sexual abuse had affected approximately three in four community members. In response, the 13-step CHCH was introduced to tackle the problem. The CHCH program is based on traditional teachings and holistically involves victims, victimizers and their respective families in the healing process. The program handles incidents of abuse within the community, but with the understanding that if victimizers do not meet their obligations, the incidents will be handled by the courts.

The 13-step program begins with the disclosure of an incident of abuse and the protection of the victim and children. The victimizer is then confronted and informed that if he/she cooperates fully the matter will be handled by the community in conjunction with the courts. Assistance is provided to the spouse and family and preparations are made for a 'Special Gathering' which brings the victimizer face-to-face with the healing community, the victim(s) and selected family members. This is followed by the development of a healing contract which sets out conditions that the victimizer must meet. If the conditions are not met the case is referred back to the court system. The CHCH program provided significantly better results for significantly lower costs in its first 10 years of existence. The program cost \$2.4-million over 10 years compared to the more than \$6-million it would have cost to operate government-run services. The recidivism rate among CHCH participants was only 2%.

## Winnipeg Police Services Early Intervention Pilot Project

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba (2001) recommended that "police forces establish family abuse teams which include police officers and social workers trained in dealing with domestic disputes" (Government of Manitoba, 2001, ch.9). The Winnipeg Police Services *Early Intervention Pilot Project* attempted to implement the spirit of the recommendation. Introduced in 2001, the pilot project links preventive policing with other resources in Winnipeg. The project includes an early intervention team comprised of a police officer and a social worker. The team intervenes after being referred by a first responder, assesses whether there is potential for abuse, and links the couple with services and possible treatments.

## 3.4 NUNAVUT

Sources:

- Dreddy, K. (2002). *Moving Toward Safety*.
- Stout, M.D. (2009). *Knowledge Exchange Workshop: Successful Approaches for the Prevention of Aboriginal Family Violence*.

## Family Abuse Intervention Act

In 2006, the Family Abuse Intervention Act was passed by Nunavut MLAs. The Act creates four types of orders that can be issued when family violence occurs:

- An emergency protection order – to remove an abusive family member from the home at short notice;
- A community intervention – allows family members, local elders and community members to steer those in an abusive relationship to traditional Inuit counselling;
- An assistance order – can help separate a family or couple in less urgent abusive situations, in order to prevent further violence from happening; and
- A compensation order – to help a victim pay for damages caused by an abusive person.

The Family Abuse Intervention Act was recognized as an emerging promising practice by participants in the Knowledge Exchange Workshop hosted by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Act empowers communities by engaging community justice outreach workers and

community responses. It places an emphasis on healing and on the roles of community members such as Elders.

## **Inuit Community Responses to Family Violence**

The isolated and remote Inuit communities of Nunavut have been recognized for their community responses to family violence. The small communities of Cape Dorset and Pangnirtung are both accessible by plane only. The extreme isolation of these communities has necessitated strong community responses to family violence. In Cape Dorset, the Tukkuvik Women's Shelter combines a six bed shelter with a community counselling service. As part of the counselling they receive, women residing in the shelter are invited to participate in healing groups run by women in the town.

In Pangnirtung, the Tullivik Group provides safe houses for women fleeing abuse. The Group uses private homes as safe houses and, when necessary, women and children are flown to Iqaluit if safety is a concern. The Tullivik Group also offers counselling and works with other local services such as addictions counsellors and mental health workers.

## **3.5 ONTARIO**

Source:

- Dreddy, K. (2002). *Moving Toward Safety*.

### **Temagami First Nation Healing and Wellness Centre**

<http://www.temagamifirstnation.ca/>

The Temagami First Nation Healing and Wellness Centre is located on Bear Island, a community of approximately 200 people that is accessible only by air and water. The centre provides both a 24 hour shelter and a 24 hour crisis line. The facility is staffed by an outreach worker and, when it is occupied, a family support worker. The centre also has strong links to the community and its staff members often work at local schools, day-cares, community clinics and addictions counselling services when the shelter is unoccupied. The centre also hosts spiritual and cultural events and provides programming on healthy living and nutrition. The centre receives \$240,000 per year in funding from the provincial Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy.

### **Kitchenuhmaykoosib Equaygamik Shelter**

<http://www.bigtroutlake.firstnation.ca/?q=womensshelter>

This 24-hour facility located in the fly-in-only community of Big Trout Lake provides shelter to women and children for up to five weeks. The shelter, like other successful models in remote communities, also features a 24-hour crisis line, advocacy and outreach programs, addictions counsellors and other health professionals. The shelter is also located next door to the police station, which has three officers who work with the shelter. The shelter is funded by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

## Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

<http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca/index.php>

The *Neighbours, Friends and Families* campaign was launched in June 2006 as a partnership between the Ontario government, the Expert Panel on Neighbours, Friends and Families, and the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children. The campaign was implemented under the Ontario Provincial Government's Domestic Violence Plan, and was designed to give the neighbours, friends and family of at-risk women the information they need to become involved and to help prevent further escalation of domestic violence.

Since 2006, the campaign has produced a number of promotional and educational tools and resources, including a campaign community kit, brochures, safety cards, a website, presentations, training sessions, and communications activities. The Community Action Kit is regarded as a valuable resource that provides educational information for individuals interested in increasing community support for at-risk women. Additionally, the campaign developed the Workplace Strategy and Workplace Champion Initiative in 2007-08, which aimed to improve/facilitate the sustainability of the campaign and increase public engagement.

In addition to the mainstream campaign resources, the *Kanawayhitowin Campaign* has been adapted from the *Neighbours, Friends and Family* initiative in order to address violence against women in Aboriginal communities in Ontario. The specific goal of the *Kanawayhitowin Campaign* is to increase awareness of the signs of abuse against women in Kanawayhitowin communities in a way that allows those close to at-risk women to provide support. As outlined on the *Kanawayhitowin Campaign* website, the campaign:

- Focuses on ending the isolation abused women feel;
- Emphasizes the empowerment of Aboriginal men to take responsibility and make change;
- Incorporates a variety of educational and awareness raising activities and materials (brochures, PSA's, training video, CR ROM);
- Includes guidelines on how to implement in your community; and
- Provides information about warning signs and safety planning.

The *Neighbours, Friends and Families* campaign has made a number of feedback and evaluation resources available to the public, and encourages the use and submission of these resources to help measure the effectiveness of the campaign as part of the broader province-wide initiative against domestic violence. The resources include a participant feedback form, a community coordinator presentation diary, a community coordinator media tracking sheet, community professional training evaluation, and community orientation session evaluation. Feedback received via these sources has been used to support two evaluation reports on the campaign.

The first report, *At Grass Level: Implementing the Campaign*, provides qualitative information on the effectiveness of the campaign at the grassroots level by evaluating the results of interviews conducted in February and March 2008. Information from these interviews informed



the report's discussion of the campaign's strengths, challenges, and recommendations for improving the campaign.

The report identifies the following campaign strengths:

- It is a practical and broadly accessible campaign that engages people at every level, and provides them with the information and strategies they need in order to assist at-risk women;
- It creates space for honest dialogue;
- The material and resulting dialogue fosters safety, because everyone involved in the process is a neighbour, friend, or family member;
- It provides empowering and practical information without an agenda;
- It has high quality materials that can be easily adapted to fit specific situations and needs;
- It inspires and engages ordinary people;
- It helps communities define a collective vision of guiding values; and
- It provides individuals working within the violence against women sector with a renewed sense of energy.

Challenges exist also; these are identified in the report as follows:

- Resistance in smaller communities;
- Funding issues;
- Delays in the distribution of resources;
- Difficulties in getting some individuals involved;
- Lack of infrastructure;
- Working in isolation, particularly in rural communities;
- Providing immigrants and linguistic minorities with effective resources; and
- Inconsistent support from the provincial campaign.

In addition to identifying and discussing these main strengths and challenges, the 2008 evaluation report outlines some recommendations for improvement:

- To work more effectively, which includes better coordination, stronger leadership, more consistent promotion from the province, and better planning at the community level;
- To receive continuous, long-term funding; and
- To revise or adapt the campaign's media and materials, particularly in terms of information specific to the workplace, to the safety of *Neighbours, Friends and Family* coordinators, and to youth in high schools and colleges.

The second report, *Evaluation of Neighbours, Friends and Family*, was produced by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children and evaluates the impact of the campaign between February 2007 and February 2009. This report asserts that the campaign has been successful because it fills important gaps by providing those who are close to at-risk women with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to address violence. In addition, the report identifies areas where the campaign could be expanded or diversified:

1) Community strategy

- Regular communication between the *Neighbours, Friends and Family* coordinators and the local violence against women service providers; issues or difficulties should be communicated to the provincial coordinator so that the Ontario Women's Directorate can include them in ongoing discussions of policy and resource allocation;
- Availability of a Community Action Template designed to help communities develop their own action plans; and
- Development of a brochure or other resource to provide information and advice to service providers for at-risk women.

2) Diversifying campaign reach

- Refinement of the materials needed to address the specific needs of workers/employers for outreach in workplace settings;
- Development of an effective campaign for ethnically/racially diverse populations;
- Development of a more effective strategy for engaging men in both community and professional settings; this includes reaching men who are abusive, as well as engaging men in the *Neighbours, Friends and Family* dialogue more generally; and
- Development of a campaign strategy to engage rural communities, and reduce isolation among community coordinators.

3) The *Neighbours, Friends and Family* website

- Continuous updates to reflect feedback, new knowledge, and recent initiatives;
- Inclusion of testimonials from individuals affected by violence against women;
- Development of resources for addressing violence in GLBT relationships; and
- Increased visibility of the website survey to improve response rates.

4) Refining evaluation process and tools

- Availability of a full day training session for community coordinators and/or workplace coordinators in data collection strategies; and
- Streamlined and standardized evaluation tools to allow for comparability across groups.



It is unclear how many of the recommendations from each of the evaluations have been addressed successfully. While it is clear that recommendations for a Community Action Template led to the development of a Campaign Community Kit, for example, any changes made to the campaign based on the 2008 and 2009 reports have yet to be evaluated.

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## 4 PROMISING PRACTICES: AUSTRALIA

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### Aboriginal Family and Community Healing (AFCH) Program, Adelaide, South Australia

Source:

- Kowanko, I., Stewart, T., Power, C., Fraser, R., Love, I., & Bromley, T. (2009). *An Aboriginal Family and Community Healing Program in Metropolitan Adelaide: Description and Evaluation*.

The AFCH is an Adelaide based family violence response program that works with Aboriginal men, women and youth. The program is hosted by the regional primary health care Aboriginal outreach service and uses complex and dynamic activities to respond to family violence. The program was created to address safety and wellbeing in both Aboriginal families and communities in a holistic and culturally appropriate way. Priority is placed on addressing the social and emotional wellbeing of participants and helping them recover from any substance abuse issues.

The AFCH program is offered at three primary care health facilities in the Adelaide region. The program employs 25 staff members, the majority of whom were female with a small number of male staff members who work exclusively with male clients. Staff members provide a number of services including clinical services, health promotion initiatives and early intervention supports. The program also offers transportation to clients as a means of encouraging participation and enrolment. One example of the health promotion initiatives is the Women's Family Wellbeing course that is offered weekly to Aboriginal women. The course focuses on early intervention in cases of family violence as well as on how to break the cycle of abuse. The course also teaches safety strategies and works to improve the women's self-esteem.

The AFCH program also offers men's and women's groups that meet regularly to allow for the development of trust between staff, peers and attendees. The groups are intended to be a safe and secure place to discuss family violence. Such discussion is regarded as a first step towards changing negative behaviours. The program is seen as a long term investment for clients and it is made clear to participants that healing the wounds of family violence takes a long time.

### Koora the Kangaroo Violence Prevention Program, Queensland

Source:

- Bradford, M.A., & Nancarrow, H. (2005). *Koora the Kangaroo: Violence Prevention at Woorabinda State School: Evaluation Report*.

The Koora program is aimed at preventing family and domestic violence by challenging Indigenous children's attitudes towards violence through stories about Koora the Kangaroo. The original aim of the project was to create a culturally appropriate violence prevention strategy at the Woorabinda State School in Queensland. The program includes both storytelling and activities for groups of children that address attitudes and beliefs around violence and explore respectful and cooperative ways to solve problems. An emphasis is placed on respect for self,

culture and elders, and on encouraging a reconnection with traditional culture and the sharing of cultural knowledge.

The stories focus on a group of Kangaroos living in Woorabinda and cover topics of violence, respect for elders, and healthy relationships. The stories and associated activities are designed to enable children to experience enjoyment, pride, and success in activities that connect them to their traditional culture. The program often brings in community members to read the stories and coordinate activities. The visits by community members allow the students to connect the stories with their own culture, values and behaviour.

The evaluation of the program found it to be an effective tool for improving the awareness of Aboriginal culture among teachers and increasing pride in Aboriginal culture among students. The evaluation report argues that a knowledge of and pride about culture can help Aboriginal students to overcome many of the disadvantages they face. Teachers also felt that the information provided in the stories exposed them to Aboriginal lore, language and traditional art, and helped them to better understand the family structures and values of their students. The program assisted teachers in the implementation of the Woorabinda School's Values Education program.

## **Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre (LCCLC), Family Violence Legal Assistance Services, Victoria**

Source:

- Todd, B. (2008). *Family Violence Legal Assistance Services in Central Victoria: Identifying and Responding to Unmet Need*.

The LCCLC began providing specialized family violence legal services in 2005 in response to the growing problem of family violence in the Loddon Campaspe region. The program aims to address the unmet need for legal advocacy in the rural areas of the region. The services are aimed at clients who can neither afford legal representation nor navigate the required application processes for obtaining legal aid. Prior to the introduction of Family Violence Legal Assistance Services, the demand for legal referrals following instances of family violence was far greater than could be met. Since its introduction, the number of family violence cases brought before the courts in the area has greatly increased – a fact that indicates the improved access to services for clients who would have otherwise dropped out of the system.

The evaluation of the centre found that it had formed an excellent working partnership with other family violence agencies. The strong relationships developed with other agencies improved the flow of referrals between agencies in the area. These agencies included the local La Trobe University which supported the centre by providing student volunteers. Clients of the Family Violence Legal Assistance service rated it as highly effective and indicated that they found the service to be extremely valuable. At the time of the report, there were significant demands for an expansion of the service, both in terms of the times during which it operates and the areas that it serves.

## Nawamba House Women's Shelter, Queensland

Source:

- Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse. (2007). *Issues in Good Practice*.

Nawamba House is a multi-service facility providing shelter, counselling and support for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women fleeing abuse in Mt. Isa, Queensland. The shelter was recognized by the Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse for the promising practices it employs. According to the shelter manager, Nawamba provides shelter to women and female children, as well as to boys up to the age of fourteen. The shelter is able to accept such boys because it provides individual units for families rather than sheltering multiple women in one unit.

Nawamba House had originally been an Indigenous-only shelter but over time began to accept for non-Indigenous women due to the demand in the community for services. The shelter attempts not only to provide a roof for its clients but also to provide activities to develop the clients' confidence and self-esteem. The shelter's development from a narrowly focused facility to a mainstream service provider was largely driven by the stringent requirements it had to meet to qualify for Commonwealth (federal) funding. The shelter had to develop accountable, responsible and transparent business processes that met grant requirements. In addition, the shelter was given funding to provide an increased range of programs which included sporting programs, children's programs and mothers' programs. The development of strong business processes is regarded by the shelter manager as an essential reason that the shelter was able to maintain its funding and services.

## Port Pirie Domestic Violence Action Group, South Australia

Source:

- McMahon, C., Weetman, N., Blieschke, R., Devlin. (1999). *Successful Domestic Violence Prevention in Rural Communities*.

The Port Pirie Domestic Violence Action Group's Police Professional Development program has been recognized as a successful practice for violence prevention. The program provides police from the local area with training to help them deal with cases of domestic violence. The project was developed in reaction to feedback from victims of domestic violence who identified the need for such training to social agency workers and police officers. Training was also requested by police officers who were frustrated by what they saw as weak court responses to cases of domestic violence. The goal of the program is to supplement the in-service training in Domestic Violence that police officers already received and to offer additional training opportunities for those interested. The program aims to enhance the skills and knowledge of police so that they can respond to and handle domestic violence cases more effectively.

The Professional Development program is offered on multiple dates to allow police officers who wish to attend some flexibility around their schedules. The program is offered on a voluntary basis and set-up in a way that allows individual squads to attend together. The program is also held in multiple areas to allow police from rural locales to attend the training sessions. In addition, it includes a focus on the special demands faced by officers in rural areas. The program

evaluators found that the Professional Development program proved the effectiveness of conducting local training sessions in collaboration with professional groups. The program has led to the initiation of a more streamlined practice for the reporting of domestic violence cases. The collaboration has also led to changes in restraining orders to reflect the concerns of officers that such orders were being revoked too quickly.

## Project Magellan, Australia-wide

Sources:

- Brown, T., Sheehan, R., Frederico, M., & Hewitt, L. (2001). *Resolving Family Violence to Children: The Evaluation of Project Magellan*.
- Higgins, D.J. (2007). *Cooperation and Coordination: An Evaluation of the Family Court of Australia's Magellan Case-Management Model*. Canberra: Family Court of Australia.

Project Magellan was originally introduced as a pilot program by the Family Court of Australia in the state of Victoria and as a result of its success was expanded across the country. The program began with 100 selected cases involving allegations of physical or sexual abuse. The pilot project's case management processes moved cases through the court quicker, at a lower cost and with lower rates of recidivism. Moreover, Project Magellan was widely supported by legal practitioners, staff and parents because of its successes. The evaluation reports note that although the project was not created as a response to Indigenous family violence, it may be a beneficial approach to addressing family violence cases in Aboriginal communities. The evaluators argue that the outcomes and nature of the project make it a more humane and accessible process for family violence cases.

Project Magellan originally arose from the need for the intersecting agencies and systems involved in family violence cases to coordinate their efforts. The goal of the Magellan case-management system was to bring information from the different areas together to resolve cases in a less time-consuming manner and in the best interests of children. Agencies involved in Project Magellan include police, criminal courts, state and territory child protection departments, juvenile courts, and family courts. At the core of the project is a focus on maintaining relationships between children and both of their parents while minimizing harm. The integration of the different agencies protects the best interests of children by keenly focusing evidence-gathering and trial processes to ensure a positive outcome for children who may have been abused or are at high risk of abuse. The goal of these processes is ultimately to reduce trauma for children involved in family violence cases.

The evaluations of the project found that the time spent in court for domestic violence cases was significantly reduced. Project Magellan was successful in reducing the number of court events per case by 50% and reducing the time for the completion of legal proceedings by 50%. The program was also successful in reducing the costs of Legal Aid, with average costs being 50% less than cases outside of the project. In both the original pilot project in Victoria and when it was expanded nationally the Magellan model proved to be a significant improvement over the courts' standard case management procedures. The courts' success in resolving matters in the best interests of children using the Magellan model was also noted. The number of highly distressed children was reduced from an incidence rate of 28% to 4%. The program was also

successful in reducing the number of changes in residence and care for children involved in court cases.

## Woorabinda Ending Family Violence Program, Queensland

Source:

- Hennessy, A. & Willie, C. (2006). *Ending Family Violence Program, Woorabinda*.

The Woorabinda Ending Family Violence Program in Queensland is a community-oriented rehabilitation project designed to reduce reoccurrences of violence. The program was developed specifically for Indigenous offenders who have committed offences relating to domestic and family violence. The program provides culturally-oriented intervention to discourage violent offenders from reoffending and attempts to reintegrate them into the community during the rehabilitation process.

In the program, participants learn about the culture and traditions of Indigenous people. At the outset, participants identify themselves based on their tribal identity and their tribe's location. Participants are shown videos explaining the traditional roles of Murri men and women as warriors and nurturers respectively. Follow-up or refresher courses reinforce the lessons learned by offenders in the initial program work. To engage participants in the healing process, a healing circle approach is used that first identifies the problem, then requires offenders to admit responsibility for the problem, and then helps them to deal with it and to plan for the future. The participants are provided with assistance through these elements of the process; however, they are solely responsible for completing them. In the next phase of the program, participants are asked to draw timelines that plot their first offense and their first use of drugs or alcohol, as well as the activities that were taking place in their lives at the time. This activity is often useful in bringing to light an event that triggered the participant's offences and so enabling the participant to understand the underlying reasons for the difficulties that he (or she) has experienced.

The program evaluation found that, 60% of offenders who participated in the program were diverted from committing further violent offences violence and 24% ceased offending completely. The evaluation also found that recidivism among those offenders who completed the program was significantly lower than among those who did not complete the program. Many of the offenders who entered the program were deeply engaged in the process and even requested to go through the process a second time. The success of the program increased the inclination of the community to access resources and services on a regular basis. Increased demand for programs from the community has encouraged the program facilitators to make themselves available in the community with greater regularity.

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## 5 PROMISING PRACTICES: NEW ZEALAND

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### Amokura: An Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Strategy, Tai Tokerau (Northern New Zealand)

Sources:

- Grennell, D. & Cram, F. (2008). Evaluation of Amokura: An indigenous family violence prevention strategy. *MAI Review*, 2008, 2, Article 4.
- Leitner Center for International Law and Justice. (2009). *Leitner News: Amokura Family Violence Prevention Strategy Awarded Human Rights Prize*. [www.leitnercenter.org](http://www.leitnercenter.org)
- New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse. (2010). *National Initiatives*. [www.nzfvc.org.nz](http://www.nzfvc.org.nz)

The Amokura Family Violence Prevention Strategy is an integrated, community-based initiative to address family violence and promote whānau (family) wellbeing in the Tai Tokerau (Northern) region of New Zealand. The initiative is led by the Tai Tokerau Iwi Chief Executive Consortium, which is made up of the Chief Executives of seven iwi (tribal) authorities.

The focus of the Strategy is prevention and early intervention in order to stop the cycle of abuse. The Strategy takes a zero tolerance approach to violence and emphasizes Māori frameworks and collective responses to family violence prevention. Through the Strategy, the Consortium's goal is to facilitate family wellbeing by building relationships with and between tribes, sub-tribes, families and communities; and to co-ordinate a range of family violence prevention programs, initiatives and services.

There are four project areas within the Strategy and each area has a set of defined objectives:

- *Research:*
  - Become the recognized knowledge base for family wellbeing, violence prevention and early intervention in Tai Tokerau;
  - Conduct research using locally-based researchers and apply knowledge gained to Consortium activities; and
  - Train and mentor locally-based researchers.
- *Education and promotion:*
  - Deliver a social change program about family violence prevention that is evidence-based and uses multi-media techniques.
- *Professional development and training:*
  - Empower volunteers, families and community to participate in family violence prevention and early intervention;
  - Increase capability of the non-dedicated workforce to practise early intervention and prevention across all areas of service delivery;



- Increase the pool of dedicated family violence workers; and
- Increase capability of providers in the priority areas of evaluation and supervision.
- *Advocacy:*
  - Establish the Consortium as the expert-base to advocate for prevention of and early intervention in family violence.

The Amokura Strategy was evaluated in 2007 and an evaluation report published in 2008 (Grennell & Cam, 2008). The evaluation found that across all four project areas the Strategy had met and often exceeded its objectives.

In the area of research, the Strategy has involved elders and youth in developing their knowledge and understanding of *whānau oranga* (family wellbeing). Activities have included gatherings, multi-media projects, literature reviews, identification of best practices, and participation in conferences. Youth have explored their experience and understanding of violence through art; men have explored pathways out of family violence. A key component of the research work has been knowledge sharing. This has been developed through networking with other organizations, establishing research relationships, and holding and attending conferences. Amokura has been recognized nationally and internationally for having an excellent knowledge base in family wellbeing, and in violence prevention and early intervention.

Education and promotion work has focussed on social marketing activities that advocate the “Step Back” message, which invites people to step back and think before acting, and to take responsibility for their choices. The campaign is designed to be appealing to youth. It draws on hip hop style and culture and has included concerts, promotional merchandise and radio jingles. Well-known local and national artists have become involved in the “Step Back” campaign. The reach of the campaign has spread and formal links have been established with national education programs, including the New Zealand Government’s “Everyday Communities” which is aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect. This linkage brought added resources to community-based efforts to prevent violence and has resulted in increased community engagement with the Strategy.

In the area of professional development and training, a gap and needs analysis was conducted to identify the training and development requirements of (Māori and non- Māori) service providers. Training has been offered through workshops, many of which have been oversubscribed. In response to interest from service providers, Amokura has developed a culturally-appropriate certificate-level qualification, the National Certificate in Social Services – Abuse, Violence & Neglect. The program is recognized by New Zealand’s Social Services Industry Training Organisation.

Advocacy efforts have focussed on enhancing the public’s and policy makers’ understanding of effective approaches to family violence prevention and early intervention. Amokura has worked to develop networks and relationships at the local, national and international levels in order to enhance its ability to be an effective and respected advocate for non-violence. It has also worked to support existing local initiatives.



In 2009, the Amokura Family Violence Prevention Consortium was awarded the Alumni Human Rights Prize by the Leitner Centre for International Law and Justice in New York.

## Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, Ministry of Social Development, Government of New Zealand

Sources:

- Campaign for Action on Family Violence. (n.d.). *It's Not OK – Overview*.
- New Zealand. Centre for Social Research and Evaluation. (2010). *Community Study Summary Report: The Campaign for Action on Family Violence*.
- New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse. (2010). *National Initiatives*. <http://www.nzfvc.org.nz/Initiatives.aspx>
- Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. (2007). *The Ongoing Programme of Action*. <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/initiatives/action-family-violence/taskforce-ongoing-programme-of-action-summary.pdf>
- Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. (2010). *Taskforce Programme of Action, 1 April 2010–31 March 2011*. <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/initiatives/action-family-violence/reports.html>

The Government of New Zealand's *Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families* was established in June 2005 to advise the government's Family Violence Ministerial Team on how best to address family violence in New Zealand. The Taskforce represents a coalition of senior government officials, commissioners, community and non-profit organizations, including Māori organizations. The Taskforce's vision is for a society in which "[a]ll families and whānau [Māori families] have healthy, respectful, stable relationships, free from violence".

The intent of the Taskforce is to take a long-term, sustained and collaborative approach to dealing with issues of family violence; to focus on actions and initiatives that are most likely to realize positive and sustainable outcomes; and to learn from and build upon existing work and wisdom within New Zealand's communities. The work is integrated and multi-dimensional and encompasses justice system responses; family violence service provider capacity; the work and wisdom of community groups and leaders; as well as the attitudes and understanding of the general public.

For 2010/11, the Taskforce has identified the following areas of focus:

- Inspiring behaviour change and empowering families/whānau to respond;
- Supporting and encouraging leadership locally;
- Providing support to improve family violence responses in each community, including developing and trialling an integrated case response model;
- Further integrating justice and social service responses; and
- Taking an ongoing evaluative approach and measuring results.

## ***Campaign for Action on Family Violence – “It’s not OK!”***

One of the most widely discussed and evaluated of the Taskforce’s initiatives is the *Campaign for Action on Family Violence – “It’s not OK!”* campaign. This is a social marketing program aimed at changing how New Zealanders think and feel about family violence, as well as how they act in situations that might lead to violence. The program targets all New Zealanders, including: perpetrators; victims; activists; social, work and cultural networks; and the education and justice systems.

The key objectives of the campaign are:

- To increase awareness of family violence so that it becomes visible and talked about throughout New Zealand;
- To increase understanding of family violence and its many impacts;
- To increase the personal relevance of family violence so that New Zealanders acknowledge that it involves all of them and that everyone can do something about it;
- To promote a greater propensity to act on family violence for victims, perpetrators, families and influencers; and
- To create a social climate that supports behavioural change.

The campaign does not seek to blame, shame or demonize, rather the focus is on opportunities and possibilities for change. Its central message is that family violence is not acceptable but seeking help is. This is encapsulated in the campaign slogan: “It’s not OK – but it is OK to ask for help”.

The campaign includes three core elements: communications/mass media; community action; and research and evaluation. Mass media initiatives have focused on television advertisements. One set of advertisements featured celebrities and ordinary citizens voicing short messages about what kinds of attitudes and behaviours are “not OK”, for example: “It’s not OK to blame the drink” and “It’s not OK to punch a hole in the wall to show your wife who’s boss”. A second set of advertisements featured four men relating their personal stories as former perpetrators of abuse who changes their behaviour. Media advocacy work has also been undertaken to educate journalists and to train advocates on how to get their message into local media. There is also a campaign website that houses information and personal stories, documents campaign activities and provides access to a range of resources, including a community action toolkit, a local government toolkit, and a variety of posters and advertising materials.

A Community Action Fund supports community-driven approaches to changing attitudes towards family violence. Partnerships with local authorities, Māori communities and organizations, non-profit groups, and sports teams enhance the local focus of the work.

Research has supported the development of the campaign and the outcomes are regularly evaluated. An evaluation of the impacts of the campaign conducted in 2008 found that:

- 95% of people surveyed were aware of the campaign;

- 24% said their attitudes towards family have changes because of the campaign;
- Two thirds reported that the campaign has helped them to understand more about unacceptable behaviours; and
- The campaign had had a particularly strong impact on Māori men and women, who showed the highest awareness of the campaign (98% and 99% respectively).

A community impact study that was conducted in 2008 and that focused on four communities with significant populations of Māori and Pacific peoples. This study found that:

- The campaign has given strength to local initiatives that meet local needs;
- Police, health and social agencies find it easier to raise the issue of family violence with their clients;
- More people are seeking help;
- The campaign has supported collaboration and partnerships between communities and local governments, service providers and businesses; and
- Projects funded by the Community Action Fund increased awareness of family violence and promoted changes in reporting attitudes and behaviour which has resulted in more early intervention.

In 2009, the campaign won a Gold Quill Award for communication – a global award given by the International Association of Business Communicators that recognizes outstanding achievement in communication.

### ***Māori Reference Group for the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, E Tu Whānau-ora Programme of Action for Addressing Family Violence, 2008 - 2013***

Source:

- Māori Reference Group for the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. (2008). *E Tu Whānau-ora Programme of Action for Addressing Family Violence 2008 – 2013*. <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/documents/working-with-us/programmes-services/whanau-ora/e-tu-whanau-ora-programme-of-action-2008-2013.pdf>

The *Programme of Action* represents the Māori-specific component of the New Zealand government's current initiative on family violence. Developed by the Māori Reference Group, whose role it is to provide a Māori voice to the wider Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, the *Programme of Action* details a five-year framework for addressing family violence for Māori. It sets out a vision, identifies guiding principles, establishes high-level goals and associated objectives and actions, identifies the distinct responsibilities of Government and the Māori people within a collaborative approach, and articulates the fundamental priorities for Māori. The *Programme* was developed in consultation with Māori leaders, communities, academics, tribes, non-government organizations and social service providers. The long-term goal of the *Māori Programme of Action* is: *All whānau (family members) have healthy, respectful, stable relationships free from violence.*

The framework is informed by the eight dimensions of Māori wellbeing: personal, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, cultural, social and two understandings of the physical dimension – the inner life force and the ability to cope with the external world. It is also guided by a number of key messages that emerged from the consultation work. These are:

- Māori need to find their own solutions to violence;
- Everybody needs to take responsibility and to act now;
- Reclaiming tikanga (Māori custom), fostering pride and affirming identity will be the foundation for change;
- Māori are diverse and innovative and there are many successes to learn from and build on;
- The home must be restored as a place of safety and love where healthy partnerships are the norm;
- It is time to shift the focus from talk to action;
- It is time to shift the focus from crisis intervention to prevention, early intervention and sustainable change; and
- It is time to begin to change that which is the Māori's to change.

The high-level goals of the *Programme* are:

- Developing effective and visionary leadership;
- Changing attitudes and behaviour;
- Ensuring safety and accountability;
- Providing effective support services; and
- Understanding and developing good practice.

Guiding principles include: a focus on community-driven solutions rooted in traditional and holistic Māori custom and knowledge; collaboration and connectedness; consistency and sustainability; and taking a strengths- and evidence-based approach.

Information about the nature and effectiveness of specific programs and actions arising from the *Programme* do not appear to be readily available. Nevertheless, the framework provides one example of a long-term, strategic, national plan of action to address family violence within Indigenous communities. This is something that many Aboriginal groups in Canada are calling for.

## **Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki Inc. - Tū Tika o Aro Tika, Domestic Violence Education Program for Māori men, Taranaki, North Island**

Source:

- Ministry of Māori Development. (2010). *Rangahau Tūkino Whānau, Māori Research Agenda on Family Violence*.

Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki has been providing a range of educational, health and social services to Māori in the Taranaki community for over 20 years. The organization is embedded in a web of networks and relationships with health and social work professionals, national collectives, and government agencies. These supportive relationships are a central part of Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki's service provision and program delivery.

Tū Tika o Aro Tika is a domestic violence education program for men that seeks to address violence from within a Māori cultural worldview. The program was developed in response to the realization that families affected by violence and abuse cannot heal unless men also embark on a healing journey. Tū Tika o Aro Tika is rooted in traditional cultural values and practices that assist in supporting learning and self-reflection.

The program consists of 18 weekly group sessions, each of which are two and half hours long. The sessions have specific objectives and use adult learning strategies that draw on a range of resources and styles. Participants are given the opportunity to better understand issues of violence and power and to learn to control their behaviour. Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki believes that the group structure of the program, in which participants may be challenged by others, helps men to take responsibility for their actions.

Over the course of the 18 sessions a range of themes, issues and cultural concepts are explored, including: domestic violence legislation; family relations; individual responsibility; respect; violence as a breach of Māori customs and ways; the impact of violence on emotional and spiritual wellbeing; dimensions of power and control; the relationship between violence and cultural oppression; parenting; the roles of Māori women and men; making choices and changing behaviour; and planning for the future. The sessions use storytelling and metaphor as central components of learning and teaching. Elders are also actively involved as guides, mentors and supporters of both the participants and the program facilitators. Sessions also incorporate traditional Māori meeting structures and rituals.

Staff members have extensive experience in the health and social services field, and especially in the areas of domestic violence and sexual abuse. They also have a wealth of Māori cultural knowledge upon which to draw, including traditional teachings, models and framework, processes and concepts, and philosophies and cultural practices.

## Tū Wāhine Trust Inc., Auckland

Source:

- Source: Hamilton-Katene, S. (2009). *National Stock Take of Kaupapa and Tikanga Māori Services in Crisis, Intervention, Long Term Recovery and Care for Sexual Violence*.

Tū Wāhine is a Māori service for children, young people, women and their families who have experienced sexual abuse or assault and are dealing with the impacts. Hamilton-Katene's study of Māori sexual violence services includes a case study of the Tū Wāhine Trust. The case study identifies challenges as well as strengths; however, the strengths illustrate speak to the effectiveness of providing local, culturally-appropriate service and in this regard the Trust represents an example of good practice.

Broadly speaking, the strengths of Tū Wāhine are seen to lie in its traditional and holistic approach to healing. The Trust's vision statement identifies five core values: realizing spiritual wellbeing; restoring women's strength and power; restoring family wellbeing; realizing the strength of the people; and assuring the safety of future generations. The wellbeing of women is seen as central to the wellbeing of the family and the wider community. In addition to this guiding philosophy, the Trust works to ensure that its services respond to local needs and address issues raised by community members and clients.

Tū Wāhine offers the following services to deal with the impacts of sexual violence on girls, women and their families:

- Intervention;
- Advocacy;
- Crisis response;
- Long term recovery and support; and
- Prevention education awareness.

The Trust's ability to deliver a full range of services is supported by strong networks and partnerships.

Staff members are selected based on their understanding of Māori customs, culture and traditional knowledge; their experience of working with Māori families in distress; competency in Māori language; their knowledge of the affects of violence and abuse on Māori families; and their commitment to developing their cultural competencies.

The Trust has developed a good reputation in its community and the vast majority of their clients (90%) self-refer. Eighty-five per cent of these self-referrals know about the organization through word of mouth.