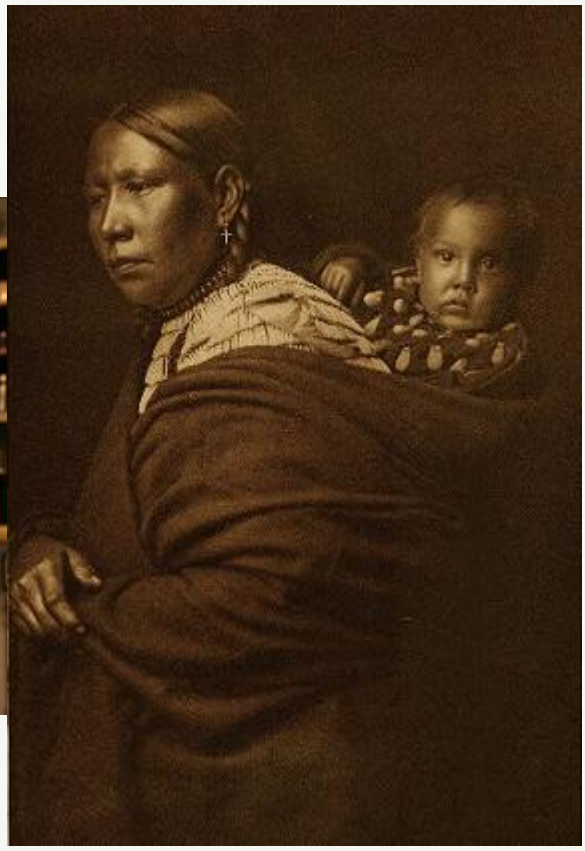
Tribal Law and Policy Institute

Listen To The Grandmothers
Video Guide and Resource:

Incorporating Tradition into Contemporary Responses to Violence Against Native Women



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Overview of this Publication

The *Listen to the Grandmothers* Video Guide and Resource was developed to provide a tool for tribal communities viewing the *Listen to the Grandmothers* video for further discussion and a resource for assisting communities that wish to incorporate the use of cultural traditions in responding to violence against Native women. In addition, this resource highlights several contemporary programs that incorporate traditions.

The goal of the *Listen to the Grandmothers* guide and the video is:

To use lessons from elders to help tribal governments and communities improve their support systems and ground their methods and techniques of supporting and protecting women in their cultural traditions.

Both the *Listen to the Grandmothers* video and this resource are the result of cooperative agreement between the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and the Tribal Law and Policy Institute.

*"Many of the practices from the past cannot address current problems. However, if the **values** attached to those practices could be **reclaimed** and new practices built upon them, then it could work. For example, if the value of respect for elders could be taught to young people in effective ways, then the knowledge of the elders could inform youthful behavior in ways which would be acceptable to both."*

-Joan Ryan (1995)
Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Calgary and
Senior researcher with the Arctic Institute of North America

This publication has several parts:

Section One: *Listen to the Grandmothers* Video Transcript

Transcripts of all the interviews with elders are included. You can follow along as you watch the video. The elders were asked to provide examples of tribal traditions and stories that can be used to provide strong foundation for effective responses to violence against women.

Section Two: Discussion Questions

After you watch the video, think about how the information might help your community. The discussion questions provide a starting point for dialogue and planning in your community. In addition, we have provided references to quotes that can be found in Part Five to encourage further thinking and discussion on these topics.

Section Three: Incorporating Traditions into Contemporary Responses

This section provides some ideas for starting points to incorporating traditional Native cultural beliefs and practices into the work to end violence against Indian women. The steps and methods that can be utilized in this process are outlined here, beginning with talking to elders. Elders in all tribal nations possess a vast amount of history in regard to tribal traditions and history. Due to the fact that some tribal traditions have not been passed on to younger generations, we often have to rely on recorded history. There are many reliable sources for this information. This may require additional time and investigation to ensure that the sources are reliable. It may be useful to convene an advisory group to guide this effort. Several contemporary programs that have successfully incorporated traditions are highlighted in this section, followed by a brief analysis of how these traditions and beliefs can be incorporated into a tribal justice system.

Section Four: Additional Resources, Academic Quotes and Voices of Women

This section includes additional quotes which reflect the theme of the film and may inspire further discussion on the topic. We have also added some poems written by Native women to help explain some of the feelings Native women have when they are victimized by violent crime.

Overview of the *Listen to the Grandmothers* Video

The *Listen to the Grandmothers* video is based on interviews with tribal elders representing four tribal nations. We realize that not all tribal nations share the same cultural traditions however it is our intent that the video serve as a starting point to inspire other tribal nations to look to tribal elders as a vital resource of information.

The *Listen to the Grandmothers* video is divided into 3 parts:

Part One: *"Who We Are"* The elders were asked to speak about their identity as Native people and secondly as Native women.

Part Two: *"What Happened To Us"* The elders provide an historical overview of some of the major events that impacted our tribal nations and were the roots of violence against women. Within this section, two of the elders share their own stories of abuse and survival in the hopes that their stories inspire change.

Part Three: *"Looking Forward"* The elders were asked to comment on how we can incorporate cultural traditions when responding to violence against Native women.

Each community is different but we hope this video will be viewed by a wide range of people in your community including:

- Survivors
- Advocates
- Tribal Leaders
- Elders
- Health Care Workers
- Law Enforcement
- Prosecutors
- Judges

How to Use the *Listen to the Grandmothers* Video and the Video Guide

These two products can be used separately or together. The guide was designed to stimulate discussion and to assist tribal communities explore the idea of utilizing cultural traditions when developing responses to violence against Native women in their communities.

A brief analysis is provided on how these traditional cultural beliefs and practices can be incorporated into contemporary tribal justice systems and into the work of ending violence against Indian women.

Precaution

The contents of this video may be disturbing. A strong reaction is common when viewing a video about violent crime. This video may cause those viewing it to remember or re-live painful experiences. There may be people who respond with intense feelings, threaten to harm themselves or someone else, or may begin to use negative coping skills (drinking, using drugs, other forms of self-harm) to deal with the feelings that it brings up. If this occurs, please seek assistance from your local women's advocacy program, mental health providers, or other human service providers. *It is crucial that there are appropriate healing and comforting resources readily available for the viewing audience.*

Biographies of Elders in the *Listen to the Grandmothers* Video

Delores Kills In Water, *78*
Rosebud Sioux

Delores Kills In Water was born on July 22nd, 1929. Delores grew up on the Rosebud Reservation as well as in Nebraska. She attended boarding schools as a young girl. She is the oldest of three and has five children, eleven grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren. Delores reeceived her Bachelor's degree in Lakota Language and works to instill the language in the younger generation.

Mary Sue Walking Eagle, *67*
Rosebud Sioux

Mary Sue Walking Eagle was in the Lakota tradition by her grandparents. She had eight children, one died as an infant, and a daughter died recently. All of her children have served in the armed forces. She has thirty-two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Larry Aitken, *62*
Leech Lake Ojibwe

Larry Aitken was born in Cass Lake, Minnesota. He speaks the Ojibwe language fluently. Larry has been married for nineteen years and has three daughters, ages ranging from three years old to eighteen years old.

Tillie BlackBear
Rosebud Sioux

Tillie BlackBear was born and raised in the community of Saint Francis, South Dakota. She is the third of eleven children. Tillie is the Executive Director of The White Buffalo Calf Women's Society Inc.

Christine Dunham, *77*
Rosebud Sioux

Christine Dunham grew up on the Rosebud Reservation and lived there most of her life. She attended Pierre Indian School in her younger years. She is a fluent speaker of her Lakota language. Christine has been married for forty-three years and is a proud grandmother of one hundred.

Herb Joe-Tixwelatsa, 63
Sto'lo Nation

T'xwelatse (Herb Joe Sr.) is a member of the Tzeachten Band (mother's family) and the Nooksack Tribe (father's family). His wife, Helen and he have four children and eleven grandchildren. He graduated from the Vancouver Community College. For the past thirty-nine years he has worked for the Sto:lo Tribal Communities and hopes to continue working for his family and for "The People" for the rest of his life.

Lillian Rice, 74
Potawatomi/ Ojibwe

Lillian Rice grew up in Star Lake, Wisconsin and spent a lot of her younger years with her grandmother. She is the middle child of 3 other siblings. Lillian is a member of the Pottawatomi and Ojibwe tribes. She is fluent in both languages. She practices the Indian way of life as much as she possibly can.

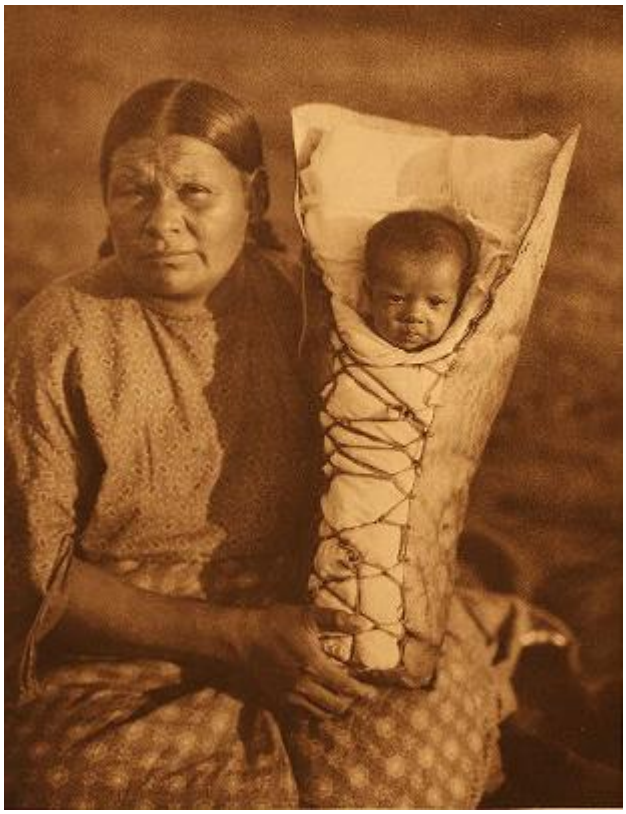
Section One:
Listen to the Grandmothers Video Transcript

It is something in our blood
It is something in our song
It is something in our soul
That makes Native Women strong

~Jayci Malone, Stockbridge,-Munsee Band of Mohicans

American Indian and Alaska Native women are experiencing violence at unheard of rates. Rape, sexual assault, domestic assault, dating violence, and stalking are more common in tribal communities than any other part of the United States.
This was not always so.
Native women, past and present, know that our lives have not always been filled with violence and despair. We are proud of who we are and where we come from.
We want to end the violence.
We know that as part of ending the violence, we must.....

LISTEN TO THE GRANDMOTHERS



We interviewed 5 women and 2 men who are considered elders in their communities. We asked them to share their wisdom about ending violence. As you listen to their stories, think about:







What role did spirituality have in keeping women safe?

Why were women considered sacred?

Where did the lessons about safety and sacredness come from?

What does it mean to be native?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NATIVE?

We use to have a grandfather that came and lived with us and he use to tell us stories about the winter, why we should appreciate all the seasons. There was a reason that Tunkasila, that means the higher power he gave us the seasons so we should enjoy them and be prepared for them. And so I guess, I was raised in a home where there was always preparation and to enjoy and try to be as happy as you can make yourself be. And it was always sharing with other relatives.

-Delores Kills In Water, Rosebud Sioux

WHAT IS A NATIVE WOMAN?

The women of our tribe have historically held great status in our tribe. As example all of the sacred gifts that are passed on down through our tribe, down through the generations are passed down through the women's lineage. It's the grandmas who safeguard those sacred gifts and they are the grandmas who choose the next generation of sacred carriers of all those gifts and they choose other women, the women of their descendents. So our people have historically held great respect for the women of our families.

- Herb Joe- T'Welatse, Sto'lo Nation

I guess the best way to describe it would be how my grandma described it, it's like we're a temple of God, Tunkasila, and you keep yourself sacred that way and you keep your Tiospaye that way and she said "and everybody would look at you and say this is a Lakota woman." The men were taught by Elders that they shouldn't abuse the females because that's where they came from. If it wasn't for their mothers or females they wouldn't be there and they should always respect women for giving them life.

-May Sue Walking Eagle, Rosebud Sioux

Over the years I was introduced to that, I have grandfathers and grandmothers explained everything to us the dos and don'ts. Things like that the elders tell you stays with you. They show by example what they are telling you. To be a pipe carrier it's very hard, you have to really always be humble and always think positive and always have healthy thoughts for all your relatives. So that's what my mother taught me and my family.

I think many people not only native society and for sure in the western society don't know what I know, that is women are stronger than men always have been and always will be. And it's because of the traditional ways that we live. When we pull apart from that that's what causes the negativity that's what causes all those things that we perpetrate against women and psych against women, do mental and spiritual things against women because we don't know how good women are, how strong they are and how we're supposed to treat them, and the further apart we get away from our tradition we get to doing negative things, abuse and neglect, all kinds of things that we do to women, because we don't like ourselves.

- Larry Aitken, Leech Lake

Part One
Who We Are

"Striking out against a woman is like striking out against everything we hold sacred, our life, our future, our customs and beliefs, because our women represent the power which is contained within all of these concepts.
"By weakening women, we are weakening our people."

-Calvin Morrisseau, Ojibwe
(Anderson 2000)

Because we're always told that a marriage is like a team of horses pulling a wagon and if one pouts or fights, doesn't pull the load then that wagon's not going to pull so we're supposed to work together to pull that load. And if one's not doing it's job that's when they'll call the Elders and they'll step in and help them along.

I think the women did decision-making and then the plan was put forth to the men to carry out. I know that my father consulted my mother a lot about things that needed to be done. When I think about individual people, different families it seemed like the women was always the one who made the decisions and the decisions were carried out by her husband.

"For a Cheyenne to attempt rape... could without difficulty be construed as "un-Cheyenning" himself, by his actions...."
(Llewelyn and Hoebel 1941)

The practices that I have heard my father talk about were that the men needed to protect their families. When the young boy started to grow up he's taught to respect his sister. Boys were raised to know the worth of young women and a lot of teachings went on between boys and girls as how they are supposed to be.

- Lillian Rice, Potawatomi/ Ojibwe

"Violence is not part of our culture. Abusing one another is not part of our culture, neglecting our elders and our babies is not part of our culture..."

-Melanie Benjamin, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

A longtime ago everyone understood the most powerful among the genders is the woman and if you men out there think I'm lying next time there's a baby in your family you have it…Women are strong way stronger than we are and yet because we know this we want to perpetrate against them we want to hurt them and want to bring them down. We don't want them to know how strong and beautiful and healthy they are, because we're not strong and beautiful and healthy that's why we put women down you ask anybody (a word in Ojibwe) Do you understand that? That is the truth. And that is the truth not only for the genders in our society but it is true for everybody.

Women are sacred because no one could do what we do and that's have a baby. We carry a life inside of us for nine months and bring forth the baby that was one of the strong values that my mother talked to me about. She wanted me to tell my daughter that this is a very special gift that we have that we are life givers, we are life bearers we bring life into this world and that men need to respect that, that's what we represent.

It was everybody's responsibility to make sure that little kid was raised right so, they'll say it takes a village to raise a child and that's true of us Indian people. It was not acceptable to be jealous and beat up on the wives. When they did that, any kind of crime that happened years ago before any of us were born, or even thought of, before the white man came, the crime that happened, the punishment to anybody that did something real bad, was that they kicked them out of the band, they had to kick them out.

- Christine Dunham, Rosebud Sioux

Rape, abuse,.. all those were unheard of until recently. Respect was always held really, really high for our women then and we were taught that it was a woman that brought the pipe and it's a woman that gives birth to children and it's the women that take care of the children at home while the men are out hunting they're not always there. It's the woman that holds the family together it's like a foundation of a building. And to mistreat a woman is like a sacrilege then years ago… and men were taught, they were raised very strict because they were taught that they pray with their mouth; words come out of their mouth, their prayers, and their hands, they should watch what they do with their hands because they hold the pipe with their hands. And all this rape and abuse it was just unheard of then.

So from that perspective then, you know we find there are some stories, about how traditionally in the old days women really didn't marry within their camp, women generally stayed in their tiospaye with our Sioux women and the man would move into that family. If there was the potential threat of violence a woman could just move her husband's things outside and he would know he was no longer welcome there because she also had male cousins that would do whatever, right what ever happened to her.

- Tillie BlackBear, Rosebud Sioux

There were very few if any crimes against women in traditional times because truly if you understand in tradition who is the strongest you honor them from day one until they die. And women really kind of were the master of the village. They were the master of the clan too, they were the one that built the leaders and instilled the right knowledge and wisdom and so if you are in charge of writing the content of your family you will make sure that, in there, there's respect for who's doing this and the women always knew, that they don't know to hurt man, even though they were in charge they didn't say or do things that would hurt the man. In that sense the man always respected and honored the women.

"The Clan Mother can remove a chief. If he is guilty of 'forcing a woman'- we don't say 'rape'... the chief is deposed instantly, even without being forewarned."

- Dewasenta, Onondaga
(Wall and Arden 1990)

Part Two
What Has Happened To Us?

During the last 500+ years, Native women have become more and more vulnerable to physical violence. We want to stop the pain. To stop the pain, we must try to find its source...

It's just shocking the way things are going now. I have worked in the police department, I worked as a social worker, I worked as a teacher and I worked in the hospital as a cook and I seen abused females that were brought in and it just breaks my heart because this is just not to be and it makes you wonder about the person that did it. Where are the grandparents where were the parents? How, why, then we ask ourselves who brought these people into this world and left them so they act this way?

I practice the Indian way of life as much as I possibly can. My values that I was raised with, a lot of it is I'm kind of private about it, I think due to the fact that being yourself when I was growing up also meant that there was a lot of fear. You didn't know when you might be taken to jail or might be punished for what you were doing, when you are practicing who you were.

For nearly 100 years, Native children were forcibly removed from their homes and forced to attend government or church boarding schools – sometimes thousands of miles from home.

"All the Indian there is in the race should be dead."

-Col. Henry Pratt, founder of Carlisle Indian School

I'm more proud of my grandma because when she first took me to school she said "everything is new, it's going to be like going to a different room from what you've been through, what we taught you, but be strong don't back off, be strong." And I didn't know what she was talking about but I found out because I had braids clear down here, to my knees, I had braids and of course I had my moccasins on and my long dress. I went in and they took me to a basement, I wasn't the only one there was a lot of girls coming in and they took us down there , and as we passed through the door we were giving some clothing a towel and we went in to the bathroom and the water was there and everything and I was watching the other girls they were taking their clothes off and getting into the bathtub so I did that and when I got done you know I came out and I had my clothes on and they made me go back in and a nun she just pulled them off and she made me put what clothes they gave me and it was a uniform. When I got done I thought I was going to go out I thought my grandmother was still waiting there so I was anxious to get out. But when I cane to the door there was a chair there and there was a nun standing there and they made me sit down and they put my head back and they cut my hair clear up here with the bangs. Then they fine combed with kerosene , fine combed my hair and after they got done they put white stuff on it. Then I was done and I was able to go out but my grandma wasn't there. I felt bad because you don't just cut your hair any time you want to. There's certain ways you have to, there are certain things you have to do, certain times when you can cut your hair and mine was just chopped off. And that's when, then I understood what she was telling me- to be strong.

Removing children from their culture, language, and traditions resulted in a break-down of the values and practices that kept women safe. Instead of valuing women as sacred life-bearers, schools taught values from a patriarchal culture.

"The Europeans assumed that one of the reasons Cherokees were uncivilized was because the women had so much power...."
(Johnson 2003)

The only place I know that women are the weaker sex is in the black book. The Bible says women are the weaker sex. A male monk in the dark ages wrote that because he really didn't want to know the truth that women are stronger than men. And that's why, from then on, from the dark ages all the way until now, we've been treating women like they are the weaker sex and you're not. And so when people know that they say "wow". That's why there's disparity in paying women and respecting women's authority and putting women in power position because it's still run by the male dominated part of society. And it goes back to that male monk in the dark ages that said women are the weaker sex and it's time we change that you know, it's simple.

"As Cherokee people began to intermarry with whites and adopt the values of the larger society, women increasingly assumed a secondary role..."
- Wilma Mankiller
(McMaster and Trafzer 2004)

When our people were here without the white influence, the women were safe because they were taken care of that way. I don't think any of that was heard of, child abuse and violence or whatever. You hear stories about things happening, but once they put us on reservations the men didn't have nothing to do and then a lot of things started to happening, crimes, the alcohol was here and things happened. Now we have drugs just a lot of things are happening. We have a lot of things that the court is dealing with, like women, domestic violence, and all the things that we think are so terrible are happening.

It was sad to see that it wasn't a stranger that molested these children. It was a relative or friend in that home and it was always a home that was very dysfunctional. It was alcohol related dysfunction in that home. And there was another incident where these boys had married these women but these women already had young children in their home, they were girls, and they started molesting them. Well, come to find out when they were caught and when they were doing the investigation they told the investigator, they said, "We didn't think we did anything wrong." You see, their father was a white man, their mother was a Lakota woman. They said, "We seen our father do this to our sisters." So to them that was a way of life in that home and so they went to prison for that because this white man had did that this to his young daughters. They thought that was a way of life for them, but it wasn't.

"As a result of centuries of colonization, the lives of Native American women have changed. These women have gone from having a valued position in their communities, to leading lives marked by illness, early death, and domestic violence. Today we see an increase in alcoholism, divorce, mortality, suicide, depression, health behavior-related illness, oppression, and loss of identity and tribal traditions among American Indian women."
(Napoli 2002)

Stories from Survivors

We are thankful to the elders for their willingness to share their stories of abuse that you are about to hear. Many of our tribal elders have maintained their silence for many years about the abuse they have experienced. We consider this as a gift to the people. These may be painful for you to hear but as you listen, consider:

Why you believe that the elders have decided to share their stories?

What are the lessons in the stories?

How do these relate to contemporary problems of violence against Native women?

What your doing is good, I think it needs to come out. Because, people that know me here don't know my life. Hopefully the kids, the younger kids or whoever watches it might be more aware of what's going on and what could happen.

I got pregnant young and I married my babies' father and we were married for quite a few years there. I had a lot of children when I was young and the marriage was very… not too good. It became very hard for me because my husband was very abusive. He had beaten me up, he had given me shiners, my face would be swelled up. He always accused me of not being a virgin when he married me, which I couldn't help because I was sexually abused when I was a little three year old. And when you are a three years old you can't defend yourself and don't know what really is happening to you and but that was something. Then he himself sexually abused me and he was a cousin of mine and yet he did that and that's where I had my oldest girl. Then after that because the parents the elderly were saying, you know you can't do this you have to get married even though I was related to him by law or what ever, that I got married. After that it was just a terrible situation for me all the way around. He would get drunk come home. Every time he would go up town and didn't come back right away I would get nervous around noon, around there I'd start getting nervous and I knew what was going to happen and sure enough when he come back and I would get beat up over any little thing. I'd have my kids, they were little and I couldn't run from him because my kids were little and they didn't know and they cried a lot when I got beat up. So they grew up knowing, being afraid all the time and that went on for many years.

All of a sudden I would see stars, where he you know. One time we was just going to go up and see my parents. So when I got in I smelled the alcohol and I said, "No I changed my mind I'm not going." He said, "You stay," he held me, and I said, "No I do want to go." He said, "You're coming, whether you like it or not you're coming." I said, "No." So we got into, it he hit me and I pushed him away and he started hitting me. I had really long hair

and when I thought I got out and he grabbed me behind here and he drug me. He was running the car and he was still dragging me and I was just seeing that wheel go and I was just flipping over and over. I was just skinned all over and where he had my hair just chunks of it came out. My brother law, my cousin's house was just a few blocks down, they seen him dragging me it was on the pavement and he was dragging me. I was cut all over, he was dragging me and my clothes were all torn he was dragging me and part of it was gravel because I would roll to the side. And he hit me in the car because he was hitting me and he was trying to drive and hit me and I was trying to get away and I couldn't. So they come, they stopped the car and when they got me up and when they got me up and pulled me away he took off. I was just hurting and burning all over. So they carried me back to the house and she put me in a bedroom and she wiped me up but my eyes were just…I couldn't even see my eyes were swollen shut. My lips were cut and I was swollen and I was just hurting all over. So they called the cops I guess and they come and took pictures. I was so embarrassed because we were taught to be modest, to even have our legs covered and we had to watch the way we sat. Here I was sitting, I just had a sheet over me because I couldn't stand anything on my skin and they come and had to take pictures. It was so embarrassing. They took pictures. I was skinned all over and he took off. They said it was going to be a federal case. I said, "I don't want anybody to know this. I don't want anybody to see me like this. I don't want nobody to come around." I said, I" want my auntie, my mom sister, I want her to come, I want to see her."

These two stories represent tens of thousands of Native women who have been battered, raped, and murdered.

They survived to share their painful memories with courage and conviction, in the hopes that by breaking the silence, people will take action.

Part Three
Looking Forward

People are beginning to speak out against it because no woman should have to endure that type of treatment, regardless of who the perpetrator is. So I think that people are being more educated that these things are not supposed to be happening to women, that were not going to allow it. I had an uncle he was a singer with the drum group, but my brother and cousins came back from a powwow and they said, “You know what, we sang with the drum group and we really enjoyed it.” My uncle said, “I know it's fun to sing, there's a lot of enjoyment in it, (Lakota word meaning, remember?) you boys remember when you pick up that drumstick,” he said (Lakota phrase meaning it is sacred), “what comes out of your mouth is always a prayer even if it's a rabbit song a happy song, those are prayers. When you get that drumstick, when you hit that drum that drum is sacred don't forget that, don’t you ever use that stick to hit anybody that goes for your hands don't ever strike a woman.” He said, “I consider myself a man, I'm a rodeo man, I break horses,” (Lakota phrase, I’m a singer) he sings, “that's one thing, (Lakota phrase if you’re a man) if you're a man don't ever lay a hand on any woman, your girlfriend, your wife, if you do that you can hurt somebody because (Lakota phrase It is sacred?) our hands are sacred our body is sacred. When you do that to somebody you can injure them, that's not nice that's not what your hands are for.”

Today because I have a big family I have eight boys and four girls. I always I tell my boys, “Don't beat on your girlfriends or your wives. Treat your girlfriends the way you would want your sisters and your grandma and your aunts and your mom to be treated, don’t be aggressive in that way sexually.” I always tell my boys, because it's very disgusting, it's embarrassing. It's not a good feeling to have. Men are stronger, they can out power a girl or even a child, I said, “don't do that”. I just come right out and tell them. I have no fancy words to use to describe the things I just tell them like it is.

If we can go back to our very basic family kinship system and say re-establish the family unit saying this is your little brother, this is your little sister, this is your older sister, your older brother. That tells you how you're supposed to relate to each other. Once you establish that, that sets the tone and how you dealt with each other.

"Apache women are strong, resilient and continue to make a difference among their tribes..."

- Carolyn Ross Johnson

Whatever I do in life it is my wife's duty to train me and I'm supposed to listen, most husbands don't listen even though they know their wives are right, they still don't listen. Which is why we this discoloration, this imbalance, we have between men and women and why men perpetrate against women.

I'm happy to say there has been a revitalization of our culture, of our historic culture and what we're trying to do is bring back the old values that that once made our families and our tribe so successful and so healthy and well. And but one of those values is value of the women of our families. We're trying to do that and I think were becoming successful now. Today is the end of warrior camp and natural changes camp. They are held at the same time and our tribe established those camps for our teenagers at the recommendation or direction of one of our elders, one of our grandmas. So natural changes camp and warrior camp were established as puberty awareness camps, where we made our young men and young women aware that they are going through a transition from being children to young adults, young men and young women.

Lakota women are very strong, intelligent, they're creative and they were always brave hearted because they had to be decision makers when the men were away. That was their role at that time. After they put us on reservations…I'm an advocate for women in leadership I feel that we still have that strong voice in the decision-making of the tribe what's going to benefit us. And so we were always told that, (Lakota word for a long time ago) a long time ago the men and women were equal there was never any the men being superior or the women being inferior because they all did their share of the work for the benefit of the camp, the tiospaye. And I think that that's happening today, we have intelligent women, we have women attorneys, and we've even gone into the medical field. In every field there's a Lakota woman and I think that this is good for the benefit of our tribes for the male and female to work on an equal level and standing for the benefit of the people.

How can we incorporate cultural traditions and belief systems into our contemporary response to ending violence against Native women?

Ask elders in your community if you can record their memories and stories.
Be sure to explain how their stories will be used.
Offer compensation and traditional gifts if appropriate.

Determine whether traditional ceremonies are appropriate for survivors of violence.
Offer, but don't require, survivors to participate in such ceremonies.

Consider adopting a set of qualifications for those who offer healing and support to survivors of violence.

Use traditional terms and phrases from your Indigenous language in developing materials.
Many traditional words do not translate directly into English. Using such language reinvigorates a traditional approach.

Develop activities in which children and elders can interact and share their concerns about ending violence.
Incorporate traditional skills into the curriculum. In some communities, this is called a "cultural camp".

Consult with elders in the establishment of programs for violent men. Tribal law should assure offenders are held accountable for their behavior.

THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR VIOLENCE.

Yes there were historic and traditional ways of showing respect and protecting our women from predators from all other abuses. It was part of our way that we saw our world. And our women had very high status in our world.

The strength and the beauty and the honor of women is before us. When we put that together and begin to honor women as we are suppose to, we are returning to our traditional codes of conduct. How we treat women, pray for women… Every day of my life as long as I live I will honor women for all that you are no matter what….You think your out of love and uncared for, don't think that, there is one person that does and that's me, that's where it starts from that one seed, can grow to be that tree. (Thank you in Ojibwe)

I think that it would be good if these practices could be incorporated into the work that people are doing when they work with Native women. Native women are looking for something that says who they are. Even though they may not know it, if it has something to do with Native, they want to do it and they think that we need to develop some strong leaderships in that area. That will help other women find those pathways like. Does that sound about right?

"...We have power....Children. Can any warrior make a child, no matter how brave and wonderful he is?"

-Marie Chona, Tohono O'odham

Section Two:
Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions

Introduction

The speakers in the video describe traditions and history of their tribes and themselves. These may or may not be similar to the traditions and history of your tribe.

If you desire to incorporate traditions into your programs that prevent violence, treat the victims and offenders and/or hold offenders accountable, starting the conversation in your community can be difficult. The video and transcript provide an opportunity to commence that discussion within your community.

The questions below are designed to initiate that discussion.

Section Four (Additional Resources) should be used as a resource in these discussions. It has a variety of quotations and poems from various scholarly sources. Reading one or two of the quotations before addressing the questions may lead to deeper and richer discussions. We reference particular sources in Section Four to particular discussion sections.

The discussion questions are divided into three sections to coincide with the video. Pick from the questions provided and/or add your own.

Keep in mind the discussion is to lead to highlighting **your** tribe's or community's important traditions. Continued discussion is necessary to incorporate these traditions into your projects.

PART ONE: WHO WE ARE

Please see pages 15-17 of this resource guide for a transcript of Part One (Who We Are).

Reading one or two of the quotations in Section Four (Additional Resources) before addressing the discussion questions below may lead to a broader understanding of the subject. The applicable Additional Resources section for Part One of the video are:

Marriage traditions page 46-48
Motherhood/Women are Sacred, page 49-50
Position/Authority/Decision making, page 51

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why are women considered sacred?

Are women considered sacred in your community? Why or why not?

What kinds of rights did women have traditionally in your community?

What is the role of men in your community?

What role did/does spirituality have in keeping women safe?

Where did the lessons about safety and sacredness come from?

What traditionally happened to people who hurt women and children in your community?

What does it mean to be Native?

Are their stories or traditions in your community that explains what a good marriage is?

PART TWO: WHAT HAPPENED TO US?

Please see pages 18-25 of this resource guide for a transcript of Part Two (What Happened To Us).

Reading one or two of the quotations in Section Four (Additional Resources) before addressing the discussion questions below may lead to a broader understanding of the subject. The applicable Additional Resources section for Part Two of the video:

Colonization, page 53-54
Boarding School, page 55-63
Poetry, page 64-66

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you believe the elders have decided to share their stories?

What are the lessons in the stories?

How do the stories relate to contemporary problems of violence against Native women?

What kinds of historical events in your community contributed to violence?

Were children in your community sent to boarding schools? If so, what kind of impact did this have on the community? On mothers? On fathers?

Do you believe that these events are related to contemporary society's treatment of Native women as targets of violence?

How have beliefs about women in your community changed during the last 500 years?

How can we honor the bravery of the survivors in this video?

PART THREE: LOOKING FORWARD

Please see pages 26-30 of this resource guide for a transcript of Part Three (Looking Forward)

Reading one or two of the quotations in Section Four (Additional Resources) before addressing the discussion questions below may lead to a broader understanding of the subject. The applicable Additional Resources section for this part of the video are:

Response to Violence and those who use Violence pages 57-63

There are also possible quotations included on pages 39-42 of Part Three of this guide in the section entitled "Examples of Traditional Practices Used As Contemporary Responses to Violence Against Native Women".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What have you learned from the video about traditional values?

How can the voices of the elders influence today's world?

Do you believe that change can happen in your community? If so, how?

What were some of the examples of tribal nations that are using cultural traditions to respond to violence against Native women?

How can we incorporate cultural traditions and belief systems into our contemporary responses to ending violence against Native women?

If you desire to develop a plan to incorporate cultural traditions into one or more programs, what should be your next steps?

Section Three:
Incorporating Tradition into Contemporary Responses to Violence Against Native Women

WHERE DO WE START?

Steps to Incorporating Traditional Practices Into Contemporary Responses to Violence Against Native Women

Not all of these steps may be useful in your community.

Step One: TALK

Interview elders in your community who have an interest in the issue. Ask for permission to record their thoughts (audio and/or video). Questions used for this video are on the following page.

Step Two: RESEARCH

Consult with your tribal librarian or other person who knows the best books and articles about your culture and language. Start with books and articles written by Native people, and then consider books/articles written by trusted historians, sociologists, and anthropologists. Look for information about gender, marriage, crime, relationships, and respect. Gather the excerpts from these materials into a binder. See Section Four of this guide for examples of quotes.

Step Three: LISTEN

Ask survivors to share experiences about what helped them stay safer and recover from the violence they experienced. If survivors feel comfortable, you can ask them to participate in a forum. Some survivors want their story to be heard – you can ask them if they are comfortable sharing their name. If not, you can use their first name – or even a pseudonym (Jane Doe).

Step Four: REVIEW AND COMPARE

Look at existing tribal laws and protocols for responding to violence. Do the laws match what you learned from the elders and the research? If not, what needs to change to make the laws and protocols consistent with the traditional concepts?

Step Five: DEVELOP BROCHURES, POSTERS, and OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Use quotes from the elders and your research in your public education materials. For example, Mississippi Choctaw developed bumper stickers that say "Domestic Violence….*NOT* a Choctaw Tradition." Using artwork, traditional terminology, and quotations, develop a tribal-specific curriculum for training your community members on responding to violence against women.

Interview Questions for Cultural Traditions Video Project

How many years living & working in your community?

Can you tell me where you were raised?

Tell me who was most influential in your life. Can you tell me if that was a family member or tribal member? Can you tell me why they had such an impact in your life?

Can you tell me if you speak your language fluently? What is your first language?

Tell me if anyone attend boarding school in your family? Can you tell me how that effected or disrupted cultural teachings in your family or tribe and do you think this contributed to violence against woman and children?

How important was spirituality in your life? Why was spirituality an important part of your life?

What types of spirituality did your grandparents practice? When did Christianity first come to your tribe? Did your ancestors practice traditional Indian spirituality or Christianity?

Can you tell me about the roles of women and men? Did women take part in decision-making in the tribe? Can you please tell me if your tribe is matriarchal/patriarchal or both? Describe how your tribal community practices matriarchal/patriarchal or both systems? Describe what it means to be a Indian woman/man from your tribe?

Can you tell me, when you think crimes against women from your tribe began happening? Tell me what was the most common crime? Sexual assault or domestic violence? How were these crimes against the women handled? Or were they?

Did your grandparents and others ever talk about women being abused or raped and what happened to men that did that to women? Did your elders ever talk about why men shouldn't abuse women?

Can you tell me any stories or teachings you heard from your elders on how women were kept safe from abuse, rape or other type of violence.

How can we use cultural traditions in our modern day lives as Indian people to end violence against Indian women?

Does your tribe have a clan system or societies? Can you describe your tribal clanships, kinships/tiospaye societies? Are the clans working in your family/tribe today? How have changes taken place?

Examples of Traditional Practices Used As Contemporary Responses to Violence Against Native Women

The following are some of the tribes that have incorporated cultural tradition into their justice system through the development of programs or laws.

Ho-Chunk Nation: Tribal Youth Program

Program Description
The Ho-Chunk Nation Tribal Youth Program is focused on reducing, controlling and preventing crime through the use of Clan Mother Organizations and the Traditional Court. They target youth from 11 to 17 years old. The Clan Mothers (a group of Ho-Chunk mothers and grandmothers) and the Traditional Court employ customary laws, traditions and practice to address problems, including crime and delinquency among the Ho-Chunk youth. The Clan Mothers conduct weekly sessions with youth and a retreat.

Traditions Incorporated
"We try to reinforce the teaching we grew up with," Myrtle Long said, "The Clan Mothers try to serve as positive role models to at-risk and delinquent girls by teaching and reinforcing traditional Ho-Chunk values." Confidentiality is important. The Clan Mothers believe and teach the young women that in order to respect each other, the young women must first learn to respect themselves. As the young women learn to respect themselves, they find an unexpected benefit: others respect you, when you respect yourself.

The Clan Mothers teach the guidelines followed by traditional Ho-Chunk women, emphasizing old-fashioned social behavior and encouraging young women to learn more about these values. They young women are warned to think before they act. The Clan Mothers remind them that every choice has a consequence, some not always pleasant.

Similar to the work done by the Clan Mothers, members of the Traditional Court are helping young men. Meeting once a week at the Courthouse in Black River Falls, the men working in the Traditional Court apply traditional knowledge and custom. They use tradition as their law library.

Perryville, an Alaskan Alutiq Village

Perryville is a remote, small Alaskan, Alutiq village of 107 people. The town is accessible only by air or sea. When they need police assistance they need to call state troopers 200 miles away. The tribal council of Perryville decided that the best way to deal with the most dangerous domestic violence perpetrators was to use the tradition of banishment. The tribal council issued a resolution banishing the perpetrator from Perryville. An Alaskan state court issued an order in conformity with the resolution, banishing the perpetrator from Perryville. The governor of Alaska tried to reverse the order in state court, but the court upheld the tribe's right to banish the tribal member, who was a threat to the community.

Tradition Incorporated

"Banishing someone from a village is a last resort, said Ginger Baim, who runs a domestic violence program out of Dillingham, Alaska. For villagers, banishment is a terrible punishment, Baim said. It means separation from family and the land, a despair of the soul reluctantly imposed on only the most incorrigible."

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

Project: The Star Quilt Project
The Grand Traverse Band Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Program's Domestic Violence Prevention Educator, Sharon Wasageshik, facilitated the Star Quilt Project to raise public awareness in the Tribal community about the prevention of domestic violence. She worked with Tribal women and quilting teacher Rene Savage, from "Rene's House of Quilts," in 6 sessions to make the quilt.

The colors chosen were symbolic of the journey of healing a survivor of abuse experiences--from domestic violence, to protection, safety, and ultimately to a place of strength and support. The turquoise center star symbolizes the Native woman. The shades of purple that radiate out from the center flow from violet to lavender to deep purple...creating a visual description of the gradual stages of domestic violence: pale violet for verbal abuse, lavender for more intense abuse, and purple for the most extreme. The surrounding halo of orange represents protection. Coupled with the orange is the rich turquoise, emphasizing what Rene referred to as fidelity. This was interpreted to be the community's commitment to the protection of Native women from domestic violence.

When the star quilt was completed, Sharon hosted a dedication ceremony in which the quilt was presented to the GTB community in honor of Native women. In attendance were the Medicine Lodge Singers, GTB community members, and Rene Savage. The star quilt will be used as a teaching tool in raising public awareness that Native women are sacred and that violence against Native women is not traditional. When it is not being used for teachings, the star quilt will be displayed in the atrium of the Medicine Lodge.

Tradition Incorporated
Historically, in Native American communities, quilts took on deep significance in the cultural practices of the people. In early times they replaced buffalo robes in wrapping the dead. They were and are given in sympathy to the family of one who has died. They are given at births. Quilts honored friends and loved ones, for birthdays and anniversaries. For the newly married couple, the star quilt is considered an essential gift, bestowing upon them recognition and respect. They are used as altar cloths in churches and are hung in schools for graduation ceremonies. They are placed atop sweat lodges. Often, young men wrap themselves in a quilt while awaiting a Vision on some secluded high place.

The star quilt is a universal symbol for Native and rural non-Native women. It is currently used in ceremonies in much the same way as the American flag - often draped over caskets or presented as a gift of honor to a newborn or child during a naming ceremony. Presenting a person or community with a star quilt is a great honor. Recipients of the star quilt know it is a labor intensive gift. It signifies the love and respect the maker has for the recipient. The star symbol is used in domestic violence prevention because it symbolizes honor and respect—one honors and respects women as one honors and respects the symbol.

White Buffalo Calf Woman Society
Mission South Dakota

The battered women and children's shelter was founded in 1977 by current director Tillie Black Bear. It is located on the Rosebud Reservation of South Dakota. White Buffalo Calf Women's Society (WBCWS) has the distinction of being the first battered women's shelter for Native American women. The WBCWS has a high visibility in the community. People know about the society and what it does. The WBCWS identifies how they use cultural traditions and how they are incorporated as keys to their success:

- Developing public policies through creation of strong victim-centered tribal ordinances.
- Educating the community about the impact of violence on individuals. Help the tribal leaders become knowledgeable about the issues facing victims of violence.
- Incorporate traditional beliefs and cultural practices into the victim services arena. Traditional stories often contain strong statements about the rights of crime victims.
- Facilitate ongoing work with tribal elders. Include elders on the board of directors, and have them assist with cultural activities.
- Encourage model leadership based on consensus decision-making. Develop leadership roles for women by training and sharing information on issues affecting tribal women.

ANALYSIS

Steps to Incorporating Traditional Practices Into Contemporary Responses to Violence Against Native Women

How did Ho-Chunk, Perryville, Grand Traverse and Rosebud incorporate traditions into their contemporary response to violence against women?

TALK

In each community, elders were consulted about the appropriate response to violence.

RESEARCH

Each community has developed specific protocol for incorporating these traditions. At Ho-Chunk, the Clan Mothers work with the Traditional Court. The Grand Traverse Star Quilt Project worked with the Medicine Lodge Singers. Perryville developed a tribal court protection order to enforce the banishment.

LISTEN

In each of community, the voices of women are heard. Ho-Chunk Clan mothers provide instruction and guidance to girls. At Grand Traverse, women advocates and survivors worked together to complete their quilt. In Perryville, the community came together to protect victims. In Rosebud SD, the voices of elders are heard through the work of the White Buffalo Calf Women's Society in their work to end violence against Indian women. They utilize traditional stories as a way to convey strong messages about the rights of crime victims.

REVIEW AND COMPARE

Ho-Chunk, Grand Traverse, and Perryville responses to not necessarily mirror non-tribal state and local responses. The Ho-Chunk Clan Mothers use sessions and retreats rather than formal Anglo-American court proceedings. The Grand Traverse Quilt Project is designed as a teaching tool for community awareness. Perryville, because of its unique circumstances, created a tribal-specific legal sanction (banishment) to enforce their values and traditions. In Rosebud SD, the White Buffalo Calf Women's Society has developed strong victim-centered tribal ordinances.

DEVELOP BROCHURES, POSTERS, and OTHER PUBLICATIONS

In each community, there are tangible benefits that can be useful in community awareness and education. Publicity about the projects sends a message to the community that there is help for victims.

Section Four:
Additional Resources

Additional Resources– Academic Quotes

Introduction

This section includes additional quotes which reflect the theme of the *Listen to the Grandmothers* video and may inspire further discussion and consideration on the topic. The quotes are grouped within the following categories:

- Marriage Traditions
- Motherhood/Women as Sacred
- Position/Authority/Decision-making
- Colonization
- Boarding School
- Puberty Ceremonies
- Response to violence and those who used violence

We have provided these additional resources to support what the elders have shared in the video. The elders in the video represent only four tribal nations sharing cultural traditions and beliefs from their own experiences and from their own tribal nations. We have added these additional resources as examples of cultural traditions and beliefs from as many tribal nations as we were able to identify through our research. We have provided these additional resources to assist tribal nations to look to their unique history for parallel or similar beliefs that can be used to provide strong foundation for effective responses to violence against women.

We have also added some poems written by Native women to help explain some of the feelings Native women have when they are victimized by violent crime.

Additional Resources– Academic Quotes

Marriage Traditions

Prior to the nineteenth century, the practice of the Anishinabe choosing marriage partners for their daughters was prevalent. (Mosay, 12/192. Churchill, 1/12/93). When selecting a good husband for their daughters, Ojibwe parents looked at the abilities and capabilities of the prospective partners. If a man was a good hunter, trapper, and fisherman, he was deemed a worthy husband who could provide for their daughters. Once the partner was chosen (or if a young man wished to marry a young woman) he had to follow custom, and bring as many gifts as he could afford to the prospective brides' parents. He also had to prove his competency as a skilled hunter by bringing them a successful game hunt. Once her parents approved the marriage occurred.

Balzar, Roma., James, Genevieve., and Liz LaPrairie, eds. 1994. *Full Circle: Coming Back To Where We Came From.* Unpublished. Copy on file with authors.

During the first year a newly married couple discovers whether they can agree with each other and can be happy- if not, they part, and look for other partners. If we were to live together and disagree, we should be as foolish as the whites.

–Black Hawk, Sauk

Nerburn, Kent. 1999. *The Wisdom of the Native Americans.* Pg. 107. Novato: New World Press.

Native women were respected and valued. Our male ancestors demonstrated their ability to protect and provide for the woman. In marriage, a woman and children did not take the father's last name because they were not property of the man. Everyone had his or her own names, acknowledging individuality and personal sovereignty.

Making a household was an agreement between a man and a woman to coexist as equals. There was no battle of the sexes. Women and men were not considered "opposites," or one inferior, the other superior. They were partners that respected and balanced each other.

For Alutiiq tribes it was customary for the man to live with the wife's family.
This custom afforded her protection and other social customs dictated who and how interactions between family members operated. These customs served to minimize the potential for conflict and served to protect women and children from abuse. If a household broke up, the woman was free to make the man leave her lodge. She did not have to fear retaliation or terrorism.

> *"Husbands treat their wives with great affection. In the presence of others, they may not speak harshly to each other, nor show a stern countenance; were one of them to do so, the other would consider this behavior an unbearable insult…"* Gideon (in Black, 1989, 60-65)

> *"Women had a good deal of power of their own, even so that it was not the men who select the women for their wives, but the women who chose the men… They divorce by either the will of the husband or the wife, and without any quarrel; but the divorces are not frequent. The children, in such case, live until grown with the mother, and after that where they will. And the man as well as the woman may at once enter into another union, without the danger of any disapproval of others…"*Davydov (1977, 48)

Sun'aq Tribe of Alaska, *Violence Against Alutiiq Women Is Not Traditional* unpublished booklet.

A Lakota woman who suffered abuse at the hands of her husband had more alternatives than women in white society. He could expect a beating from her family or she could obtain a divorce simply by placing all her husband's personal possessions outside the lodge, and no one could criticize her for having failed at her marriage.

Powers, Marla N. 1986. *Oglala Women: Myth, Ritual, and Reality.* Pg. 174. University of Chicago Press.

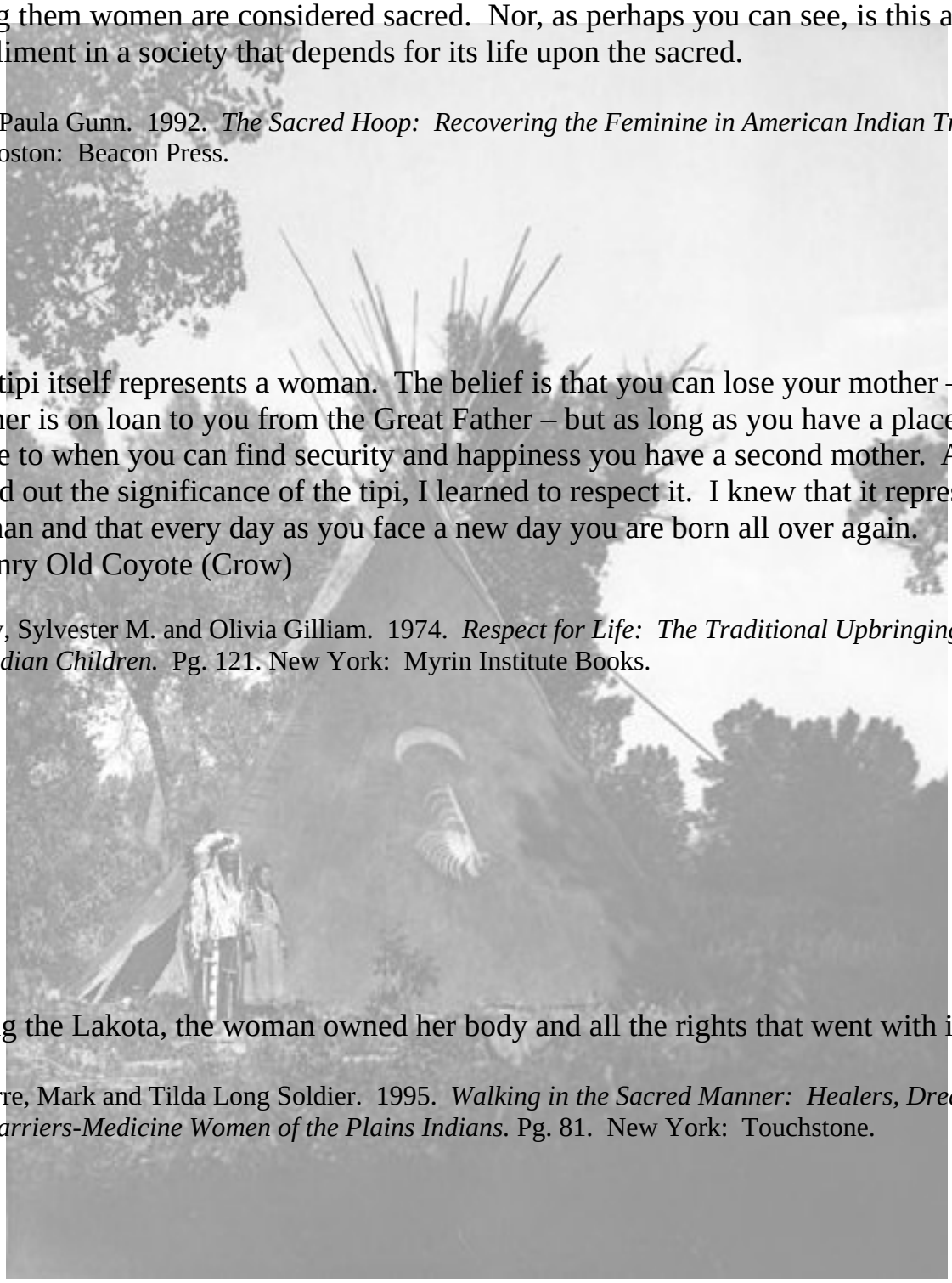
Women sometimes leave their husbands in order to protect a daughter or sister from rape, or to avenge injury or shame which has already occurred.— Maggie Wilson, Cree

Landes, Ruth. 1971. *The Ojibwe Women.* Pgs. 33, 100. University of Nebraska Press.

Motherhood/Women as Sacred

In short, the women did-and whenever possible still do-everything that maintains the life and stability of their tribal people. It is no wonder that Indian people in general insist that among them women are considered sacred. Nor, as perhaps you can see, is this an empty compliment in a society that depends for its life upon the sacred.

Allen, Paula Gunn. 1992. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions.* Pg. 207. Boston: Beacon Press.



The tipi itself represents a woman. The belief is that you can lose your mother – your mother is on loan to you from the Great Father – but as long as you have a place to come home to when you can find security and happiness you have a second mother. After I found out the significance of the tipi, I learned to respect it. I knew that it represents the woman and that every day as you face a new day you are born all over again.
- Henry Old Coyote (Crow)

Morey, Sylvester M. and Olivia Gilliam. 1974. *Respect for Life: The Traditional Upbringing of American Indian Children.* Pg. 121. New York: Myrin Institute Books.

Among the Lakota, the woman owned her body and all the rights that went with it.

St. Pierre, Mark and Tilda Long Soldier. 1995. *Walking in the Sacred Manner: Healers, Dreamers, and Pipe Carriers-Medicine Women of the Plains Indians.* Pg. 81. New York: Touchstone.

"Your respect Mother Earth. It's the same with a woman. That's why we call it Mother Earth," John Buck said.

"You teach them, do not lose your culture. That's number one. Even way back to my grandparents, my grandmother always used to tell me, never lose your culture," Buck said. Dancing is a way for women to show men how they are one with the earth. They are also the ones who pass on traditions and encourage their children to dance.

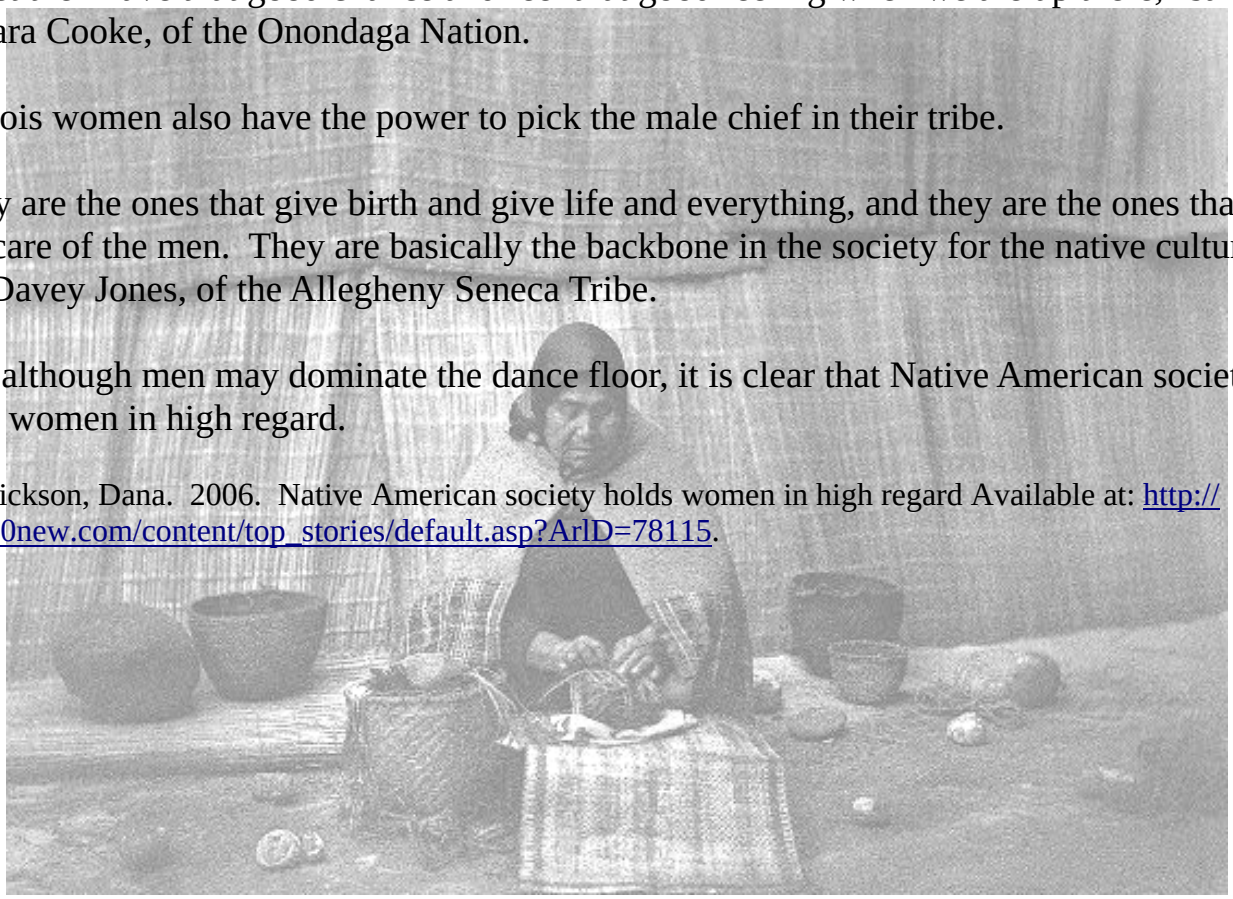
"I have so much fun dancing. I would love my child to dance, and if they don't want to, that alright. But when they want to, I will make them that outfit, and I will give it to them and let then have that good chance and feel that good feeling when we are up there," said Barbara Cooke, of the Onondaga Nation.

Iroquois women also have the power to pick the male chief in their tribe.

"They are the ones that give birth and give life and everything, and they are the ones that take care of the men. They are basically the backbone in the society for the native culture," said Davey Jones, of the Allegheny Seneca Tribe.

And, although men may dominate the dance floor, it is clear that Native American society holds women in high regard.

Hendrickson, Dana. 2006. Native American society holds women in high regard Available at: http://news10new.com/content/top_stories/default.asp?ArlD=78115.



Ray Fryberg of the Tulalip Tribes near Marysville said, "Healing efforts on the Tulalip reservation include counseling, traditional healing such as sweat lodges and culture club for youngsters."

"We want to set….an old standard that deals with respect," Fryberg said. "(We need to) implement strengths of culture back into our community. That amounts to truth and trust—not only in the field of mental health, but everything."

Reardon, Kate. 2002. Tribes seek to heal old wounds. HeraldNet. April 27.

Position/ Authority/ Decision-Making

In the woman is vested the standard of morals of our people. She is the silent but telling power behind all of life's activities. . . . She rules undisputed in her own domain. The children belong to her clan, not to the clan of the father. She holds all the family property and the honor of the house in her hands. All virtue is entrusted to her, and her position is recognized by all. -Ohiseya (Charles Alexander Eastman) - Dakota

Nerburn, Kent. 1999. *The Wisdom of the Native Americans.* Pg. 107. Novato: New World Press.

However, the most important of all social differences was that between male and female. And the position of women was notably strong. Households were organized around senior women, who owned most family property and controlled its use.

The village world was, first and foremost, a world of women. The local population was organized into large clans, and the clans themselves were composed of families- with women at the center in each case.

According to a missionary at the beginning of the 18th Century, 'it is they [the women] who really maintain the tribe…In them resides all the real authority.

These patterns, taken as a whole, meant that women kept considerable power and influence through the link to their clan. For just as they remained loyal to the clan, so, too, did the clan remain loyal to them. When subject to abuse or exploitation, they were defended by their own blood relatives; if divorced from their husbands, they would be fully supported by the same relatives.

Demos, John. 1995. *The Tried And The True.* Pgs. 27, 44, 48, 94. New York: Oxford University Press.

"I added that older women tell me how today's Navajo leaders often ignore the opinions of women, whereas traditionally women's views were extremely important. I then described that many women, both young and old, tell me that things became this way because their modern government was designed and established not by the Navajos but by non-Navajo male lawyers and federal bureaucrats.

I further mentioned that numerous elders have declared to me that their government has been manipulated for decades by male-dominated outside interests who only want Navajo resources, like coal and water.

I closed acknowledging Yellowman's observation that, because of serious citizen discontent, Navajo government reform is rightfully on the minds of female Navajo voter. I also noted that many male voters say reform is on their minds as well.

Recently, I heard that more women than usual are considering a running for tribal office. They, like Yellowman, continue to be able to draw on a heritage of iron will and wisdom from their grandmothers, which I'm certain, will assist them in carrying out good campaigns."

Utter, Jack. 2002. *Navajo 'Grammas' Provide Heritage of Will, Wisdom.* The Arizona Republic. Available at: http://turtletrack.org/Issues02/Co03092002/CO_03092002_Gramma.htm.

Colonization

The connection between gang rape and attempted suicide by young women is no secret in the community, or outside it. Medical authorities and police continue to deny the seriousness of the gang rape problem, in spite of its now public disclosure. But one has to wonder why young females predominate in the statistics on attempted suicide. The chief explains: 'Girls blame themselves when they find out they've been raped while they were drunk, especially when raped by members of their own family. It's a great shame to them.'

Shkilnyk, Anastasia M. 1985. *A Poison Stronger Than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community.* Pg. 46. Yale University Press.

There were no female executives with the Cherokee Nation- and there had never been a female deputy chief or principal chief. In historic times, women played an important role in Cherokee government and in tribal life but that role had diminished over time. In Cherokee traditional culture, it was believed that the world existed in a precarious balance and that only right or correct actions maintained that balance. An important part of the balance was equity between men and women. Women were consulted in matters of importance to the community, the clan, the family, and the nation.

Cherokee people trace their clan ancestry through women-when a man married, he took up residence with the wife's clan. Female warriors called War Women or Pretty Women were tribal dignitaries. A women's power was considered so great-the Great Spirit was believed to send messages through women-that special women were able to declare whether pardon or punishment was to be inflicted on those who offended the behavioral mandate.

As Cherokee people began to intermarry with whites and adopt the values of the larger society, women increasingly assumed a secondary role.

McMaster, Gerald and Clifford Trafzer. 2004. *Native Universe: Voices of Indian America.* Pg. 253. NMAI, Smithsonian Institution. National Library of Congress.

Two men owned the ferry, and they had a great deal of money. So my brothers took care of their horses and cows all winter, and they paid them well for their work. But, oh, what trouble we had for awhile! The men whom my grandpa called his brothers would come into out camp and ask my mother to give our sister to them. They would come in at night, and we would all scream and cry; but that would not stop them. My sister, and mother, and my uncles all cried and said, 'Oh, why did we come? Oh, we shall surely all be killed some night.' My uncles and brothers would not dare to say a word, for fear they would be shot down. So we used to go away every night after dark and hide, and come back to our camp every morning.

Winnemucca-Hopkins, Sarah. 1994. *Life Among the Paiutes.* University of Nevada Press.

Historical Context of Domestic Violence

Varying rates and patterns of abuse exist among different tribes. It is important to note, however, that domestic violence is a relatively new phenomenon in the Native American culture. Abuse of both Native American women and children by Native American men can be traced to the introduction of alcohol, Christianity, and the European hierarchical family structure. Women from the Sacred Shawl Women's Society on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota report that while domestic violence existed in pre-reservation society, it was both rare and severely reprobated.

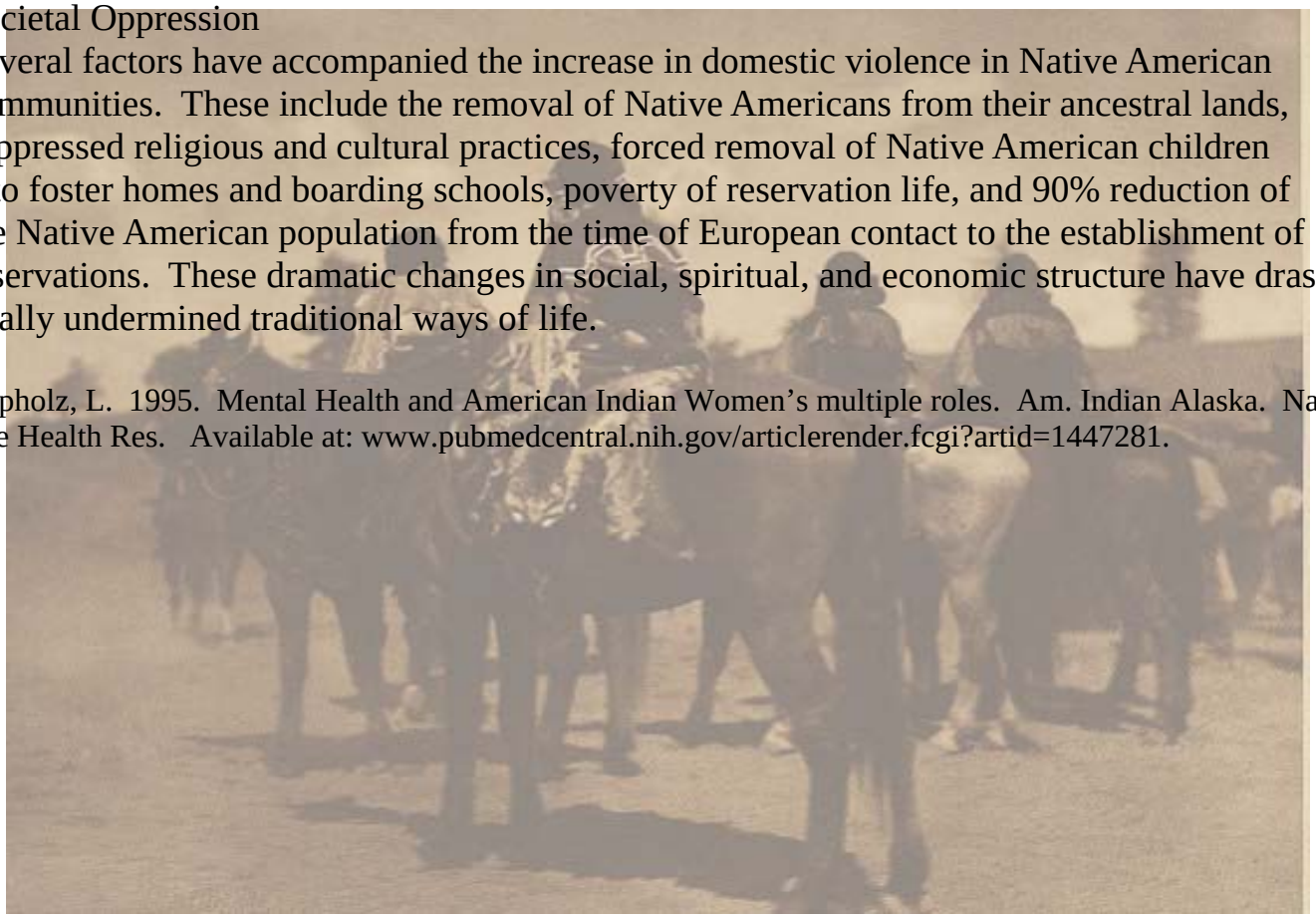
Many traditional Native American histories indicate that when domestic violence did occur, the community responded. The batterer would be banished or ostracized, or retaliation was left to the male relative of the victim. Such traditional methods of addressing domestic violence were eliminated or limited with the advent of a Western European criminal justice process.

Napholz, L. 1995. Mental Health and American Indian Women's multiple roles. Am. Indian Alaska. Native Health Res. Available at: www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1447281.

Societal Oppression

Several factors have accompanied the increase in domestic violence in Native American communities. These include the removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands, suppressed religious and cultural practices, forced removal of Native American children into foster homes and boarding schools, poverty of reservation life, and 90% reduction of the Native American population from the time of European contact to the establishment of reservations. These dramatic changes in social, spiritual, and economic structure have drastically undermined traditional ways of life.

Napholz, L. 1995. Mental Health and American Indian Women's multiple roles. Am. Indian Alaska. Native Health Res. Available at: www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1447281.



Boarding School

Boarding school distorted our ability to act as parents, sons, daughters - as family members. Our traditional parenting was nonviolent and nurtured the spirit of the child. This knowledge was replaced with experiences of corporal punishment that reflected the teachings of the church.

Denied our families and culture in boarding schools, we experienced and passed on to our children and grandchildren verbal, emotional, sexual and physical violence as acceptable means to control others when we don't get our way.

Even though many of our children have not experienced boarding school, we see them continue this attitude that being Native is not something good or something to feel proud of. We seek status, control, and feel superior over our family members, rather than supporting each other.

The cumulative effect of this series of colonization, oppression and catastrophic events in Alutiiq history has impacted the way many Alutiiq people see themselves today. Multigenerational grief, depression, anxiety, feelings of powerless and survival guilt are affecting self-esteem. Prolonged feelings of helplessness lead to a feeling of a helpless stance in life. Communities stop looking for resolutions and feel they are unable to work through past problems. Some of our men are trying to gain power and control over their lives, mistakenly turning it around and using that power to intimidate their wives and children, they keep perpetuating the cycle of violence.

The colonization era diminished the traditional male role of protector and provider. The government assumed this role and consequently some Native men have experienced a loss of identity. This loss was replaced by the dominant society's negative attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward women. Granted, this is no fault of our own; however, the reality is that contemporary Native male attitude about women and relationships have been distorted and the violent behavior of Native men towards Native women is tearing apart Native families.

Sun'aq Tribe of Alaska, *Violence Against Alutiiq Women Is Not Traditional*– unpublished booklet

Puberty Ceremonies

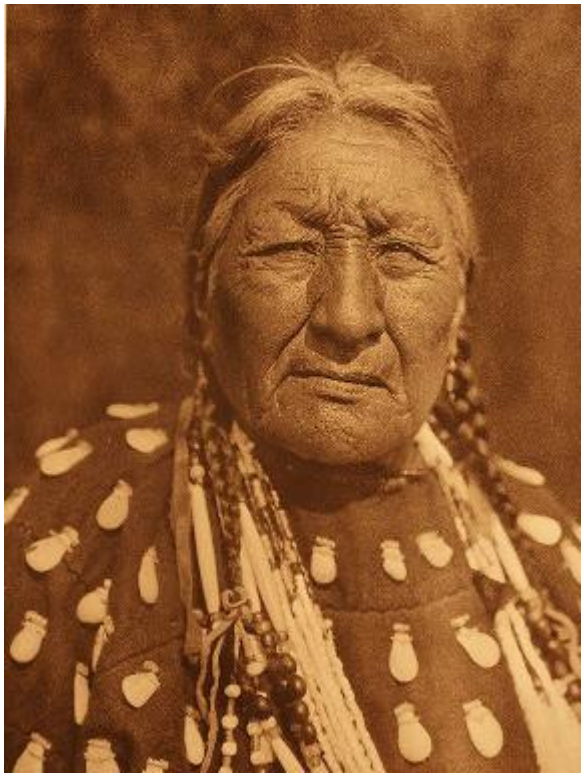
"We try to reinforce the teaching we grew up with," Myrtle Long said, adding the Clan Mothers try to serve as positive role models to at-risk and delinquent girls by teaching and reinforcing traditional Ho-Chunk values. Everything is confidential she said, and the Clan Mothers believe and tell the young women that to respect each other, they young women first need to learn to respect themselves. Faith Matter stated that as the young women learn to respect themselves they find and unexpected benefit taught by the Clan Mothers; "you respect yourself, others will respect you."

Elizabeth Deere said the Clan Mothers teach the guidelines followed by traditional women, emphasizing old-fashioned social behavior and encouraging young women to learn more about these values. The young women are warned to think before they act and the Clan Mothers remind them that every choice has a consequence, some not always pleasant. When talking about the need to make good choices, Elizabeth Deere said she always goes back to something her mother told her years ago. "You listen to me or you listen to the law. Which is the better choice?" She added that while she knows that "we live in a different time," the young women still need to learn the traditional values needed to improve their lives.

Similar to the work done by the Clan Mothers, members of the Traditional Court are helping young men. Meeting everyone Monday morning at the Courthouse in Black River Falls, these men apply their traditional knowledge when discussing a wide range of issues. Current member Preston Thompson, Jr. stated, "as far as I know we're the only ones dealing with custom, other tribes are studying us. Donald Blackhawk added, "we try to interpret what a lot of people have forgotten, using tradition as our law library."

Kozlowicz, John. 2005. *Elders Guide Ho-Chunk Youth.* Hocak Worak. Pg. 6. Available at: www.hocakworak.com/archive/2005/pdf/issue%20%2018.pdf.

Response to violence and those who used violence



Choctaw women were not economically dependent on men, since the women of a family owned their property collectively and passed it on to their children. Howe suggests that the word 'marriage' is not really appropriate to describe relationships between women and men in traditional Choctaw culture, since men might stay for awhile but then leave, and a woman's brothers, rather than the children's father, would have what a patriarchal culture would consider a father's responsibilities to her children. According to Howe, if a man beat a woman he would be 'ostracized,' and if he killed a woman, he would be killed. As for childrearing, the Choctaw believed that 'discipline must come from within' and taught their children how to behave by example; they would never beat them.

Hendrickson, Roberta Makashay. 1996. *Victims and Survivors: Native American Women Writers, Violence Against Women, and Child Abuse.* Studies of American Indian Literature. 8.1 Available at: http://oncampus.richmond.edu/faculty/ASAIL/SAIL/81.html.

Among the Indians there have been no written laws, customs handed down from generation to generation have been the only laws to guide them. Every one might act different from what was considered right if he chose to do so, but such acts would bring upon him the censure of the nation… This fear of the nations censure acted as a mighty band, binding all in one social honorable compact. - George Copway "KAH-GE-GA-GAH-BOWH, (1818-1863) Ojibwa Chief

Curtis, Edward S. 2003. *Songs of the Earth: A Timeless Collection of Native American Wisdom.* Pg. 47. Philadelphia: Courage Books.

This great respect for the person of the woman among the Iroquois was thus manifest everywhere. In two of the rituals of the condolence and installation council the following noteworthy language occurs concerning the esteem in which woman was held, namely: 'The Creator of our kind has indeed endowed the person of our mother (the woman), with high honor and also with the full measure of mind and reason. Give heed, therefore, to her works of admonition and advice.

Iroquois women in the past have occupied a very important and influential position. Through her maternal rights she had the sole control of the children. They inherited their national and clan identity from their mother, as well as all material possessions which were passed on through the maternal family. Politically, the matron who had the title of a chief ship in her maternal family had power to appoint a chief and also to depose him if his actions were not pleasing. Likewise, inherited religious titles were at her disposal. Women had the right to hold their own councils and act independently on occasion when they deemed it necessary.

In sum, Iroquois matrons enjoyed unusual authority in their society, perhaps more than women have every enjoyed anywhere at any time. The position of matron was open to all women who qualified. The matrons were socially recognized and institutionalized powers behind the throne (though one can hardly term the supremely democratic Council of Elders as a "throne"). Women were able to serve as religious practitioners, and the matrons helped to select all 'keepers of faith.' Finally, the matron ruled supreme within the long house, and domestic arrangements were such that all women had dominant power within the household.

Spittal, Wm. Guy. 1990. *Iroquis Women: An Anthology.* Pgs. 64, 112, 187. Iroqrafts.

Apache women were protected from unwanted male advances and had powerful influence in such matters as marriage, divorce, and residence.

Buchanan, Kimberly Moore. 1986. *Apache Women Warriors.* Pg. 13. El Paso: Texas Western Press.

The Apaches were known for their great love of children. Both male and female children were equally desirable, with no preference as to the sex of the firstborn. Daughters were considered to be greater economic assets due to matrilocal practices.

Buchanan, Kimberly Moore. 1986. *Apache Women Warriors.* Pg. 13. El Paso: Texas Western Press.

In the traditional culture of the Oglala Sioux (also called Lakota), women were highly honored. Domestic violence was considered a crime against the tribe. Men who beat their wives and children were held to be unfit to lead their families.

Pan, Esther. 2000. *The Medicine Wheel: A Federal Program that Actually Works.* Pg. 2. Washington Monthly.

Fathers are not symbolic of incest and rape, as stepfathers are, but they are guilty occasionally. One widower, Nahwi, lived alone with an adolescent daughter and eventually violated her. When she announced the fact to the village, the man was greeted with most insulting scorn, his relatives repudiated him as a 'dog', and until the end of his life he was ostracized by the Indians….— Maggie Wilson, Cree

Landes, Ruth. 1971. *The Ojibwe Women.* Pgs. 33, 100. University of Nebraska Press.

A husband's physical cruelty is often advanced as a reason for the wife's desertion. Deceased's daughter left three husbands because they used to fight with her, using fists, feet, and burning brands…Two Skies left her husband because he fought with her and kicked her on the buttocks…Charlie Speaker's wife deserted for the same reasons. The child of both these women was still-born or dies in infancy, and the women attributed the fact to the buttock-kicking's they had received….Peewahsheek's first marriage was a history of physical cruelty. Maggie Wilson, Cree

Landes, Ruth. 1971. *The Ojibwe Women.* Pgs. 33, 100. University of Nebraska Press.

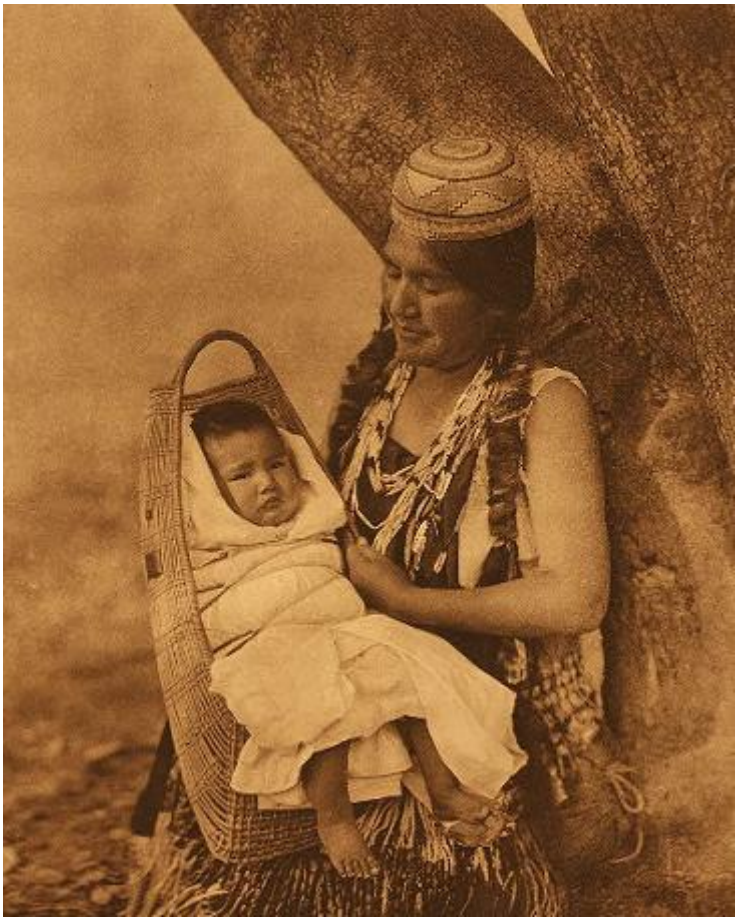
According to Deloria, Dakota women had other protection from mistreatment by their husbands, as well. She explains that a woman (or a man) could end an unsatisfactory marriage simply by leaving; no explanation would be expected, beyond, 'It was not agreeable to me' (179). Deloria also explains that a woman was not forced to remain with a bad husband out of economic necessity, 'to endure in silence,' because 'She knew that her brothers and male cousins were ready to provide for her, and her woman relatives to take her back in their midst.'

Hendrickson, Roberta Makashay. 1996. Victims and Survivors: Native American Women Writers, Violence Against Women, and Children. Pg. 14. Studies of American Indian Literature. 8.1.

In ancestral times, people were limited to certain behaviors and all those unwritten rules were well enforced.

"Back then, you didn't want to embarrass your family or yourself. Our parents used to tell us, 'if you bring any shame to you, you're just not shaming yourself, your are shaming your family." - Hayes A Lewis, Zuni Pueblo

Baca, Kim. 2001. *The Changing Federal Role in Indian Country. Available at:* www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000247c.pdf.



The Sioux also had practices to guard against wife battering. Once a man battered his wife, she was free to make him leave her lodge if they live among her tiyospaye. From then on he could never marry again. Brothers were obliged by social law to retaliate by speaking to him, or even killing him. If the couple lived among the man's relative, his parents were obligated to take her away and return her to her tiospaye. A man who battered his wife was considered irrational and thus could no longer lead a war party, a hunt, or participate in either… The wife batterer could no longer own a pipe… a man who killed his wife was thought to be not a Lakota anymore… His name would never be spoken again. He would cease to exist.

Anderson, Kim. 2000. *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood.* Pg. 94. Toronto: Sumach Press.

Traditionally, rules were made by the elders who made their decisions by consensus. Rules were changed, or new rules were developed by elders, as situations changed. Leaders had the responsibility to make sure that the rules were followed.

Many of the practices from the past cannot address current problems. However, if the values attached to those practices could be reclaimed and new practices built on them, then it could work. For example, if the value of respect for elders could be taught to young people in effective ways, then the knowledge of elders could inform youthful behavior in ways which would be acceptable to both. However, if the elders sit in judgment of youth without mutual respect, then youth will not listen nor act appropriately. If intergenerational bonding could be restored, many of the judgments might be unnecessary.

When the k'aowo felt an offence was too serious to deal with him, he would raise it at the next gathering, and the yabahti and senior men and women would put the offender in the circle. This process included the whole community. The offender was kept there until he or she admitted guilt, at which point the senior people and leadership would give the person 'harsh words.' These words usually restated the rules and how the person should have behaved; they also made reference to the harm done to individuals and/or the group. Once the harsh words were spoken, the gathering shifted to discussing how the individual might make things better. People arrived at consensus about what the person might do to restore harmony, compensate the victim, and end the matter.

Ryan, Joan. 1995. *Doing Things The Right Way: Dene Traditional Justice in Lac La Martre, N.W.T.* Pg. xxvi, xxviii, 57. University of Calgary Press.

Saturday's gourd dance offered a glimpse of what life could be like, what life should be like.

Everyone was there, from babies to grandparents, men and women, singers and dancers, young girls with sashes and crowns, veterans of all ages, from survivors of domestic violence to recovering alcoholics, drug addicts, and perpetrators of domestic violence.

And they came together to share a common message: homes should be safe places where family members love, care, and support each other; they should never be places for violence.

Battered Families Services, Inc. sponsored the Sacred Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Gourd Dance Saturday afternoon at Gallup Junior High School to honor survivors of domestic violence. Earlier in the morning, the organization sponsored its annual Domestic Violence Awareness Walk, which attracted just a small crowd of about 40 men, women, and children.

One of the walk's participants, Gallup Mayor Bob Rosebrough, said he chose to participate because of the "inordinate amount of violence" inflicted on mothers, sisters, and daughters in the local community through violence in homes.

"I don't think any of us can sleep well at night until we have a handle on this problem," he said.

Several hundred people mostly attending as families gathered for the gourd dance. Ramone Yazzie Sr. of Fort Defiance, Arizona emceed the event, which featured brief speeches by a number of men and women interspersed between the gourd dance songs.

Although gourd dancers originated as a way to honor Native American veterans, Yazzie said in his introductory remarks that it was inappropriate to honor warriors and domestic violence survivors together.

Everyone attending the gourd dance was somehow connected to a family struggling with domestic violence, he said, a struggle which he equated with war.

"We are fully responsible for our actions," Yazzie told the men in the audience. Calling Native American men the "modern warriors of today," he challenged the men to lead their families, particularly their children and their grandchildren, and to "lead in a good way."

Hardin-Burrola, Elizabeth. 2006. Gourd dance celebrates healing from domestic violence. Gallup: The Gallup Independent.

After decades of silence, Indian women are following in the footsteps of the great Cheyenne leader North Woman to guide their people into a new era.

"A people is not defeated until the hearts of its women are on the ground." -Cheyenne saying

Jamison, Michael. *Northern Lights.* The Missouliam. Available at: www.missoulian.com/specials/northernlights.

Among the Algonquin people of the Great Lakes, the relatives of the unmarried woman defended their right to regulate their own sexual activity, on the grounds that women were the masters of their own bodies. What was once denounced as wanton by early Europeans observers, is now praised as sexually liberated.

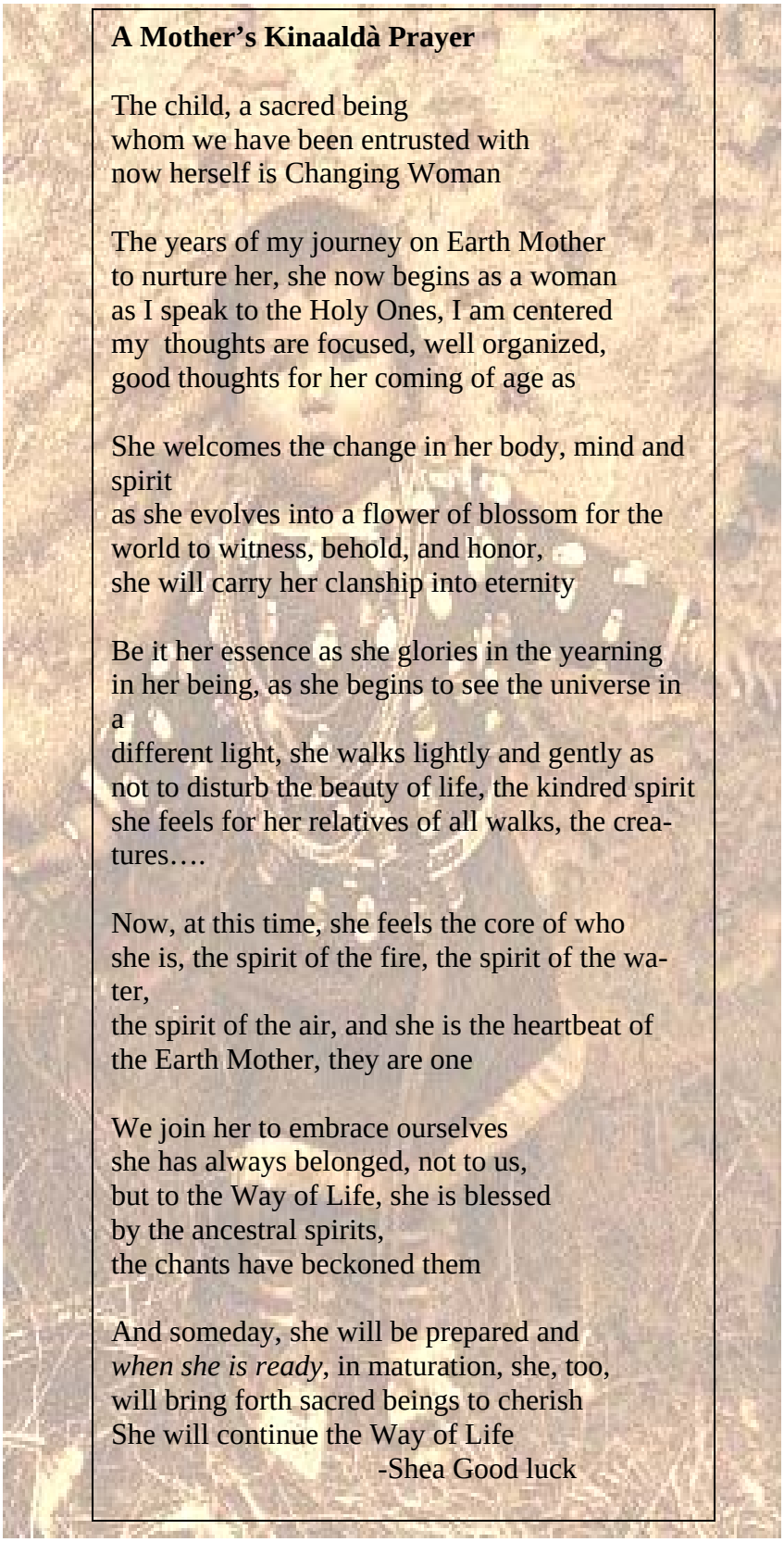
Ross, Dr. A.C. 1990. *Keeper of the Female Medicine Bundle: Biography of Wihopa.* Pg. 000. Denver: Wiconi Waste Pub.

Domestic violence, specifically, violence used by men against their wives, occurred in the past and was common enough to be noted in the literature, According to both male and female informants, the practice was considered shameful. Members of the extended family tried to stop the violence if real harm might ensue, and older family members often counseled the man to reform or to divorce his wife if they could not get along. Thus a women was neither publicly nor privately forced to accept domestic violence. Further, women had the option of leaving their husbands when violence occurred, and many did.

Rape occurred in traditional Plateau societies, though informants insisted that it was an unusual crime and was not condoned. Two narratives of the punishment of rapists were collected in the field. Both involved turning the man over to a group of women who physically molested him and publicly humiliated him. He was them ejected from the village.

Klein, Laura and Lillian A. Ackerman. 1995. *Women and Power: In Native North America.* Pg. 86. University of Oklahoma Press.

Additional Resources: Voices of Women



A Mother's Kinaaldà Prayer

The child, a sacred being
whom we have been entrusted with
now herself is Changing Woman

The years of my journey on Earth Mother
to nurture her, she now begins as a woman
as I speak to the Holy Ones, I am centered
my thoughts are focused, well organized,
good thoughts for her coming of age as

She welcomes the change in her body, mind and spirit
as she evolves into a flower of blossom for the world to witness, behold, and honor,
she will carry her clanship into eternity

Be it her essence as she glories in the yearning
in her being, as she begins to see the universe in a
different light, she walks lightly and gently as
not to disturb the beauty of life, the kindred spirit
she feels for her relatives of all walks, the creatures….

Now, at this time, she feels the core of who
she is, the spirit of the fire, the spirit of the water,
the spirit of the air, and she is the heartbeat of
the Earth Mother, they are one

We join her to embrace ourselves
she has always belonged, not to us,
but to the Way of Life, she is blessed
by the ancestral spirits,
the chants have beckoned them

And someday, she will be prepared and
when she is ready, in maturation, she, too,
will bring forth sacred beings to cherish
She will continue the Way of Life
-Shea Good luck

Wicked Sweet Loneliness

Swollen shut from the sting of His tone
Her eyes will not open
Sheer ache of suffering throb to the bone
Insufferable eyes penetrate Her soul
Her feet stand frozen
To Destroy Her essence His only goal
Her reflection rests empty
Wicked are the lips that once held her own
Her spirit lays crumbled
Paralyzed and crippled He's left Her alone

Beaten in her corner She cries for tomorrow
She can't go on
A sympathetic friend time halts for Her sorrow
She's not alone
Frozen in the dark She can hear them call
She's listening
Whispering on the wind to catch Her fall
She dries Her eyes
Mending Her soul from an intangible place
She's rising
Grandmother Time offers her warm embrace

Emerging from Her ashes She stands proud
His hand is raised
Drums thunder from a far off cloud
He's made contact
Blood mingles with tears of satisfying blend
His eyes are smug
Her once head eyes now have a message to send
He's scared
The cry of Her ancestors race through Her veins
She's not scared
No longer los She's grabbing hold of the reins
She's never alone
Spirits guiding the triumphant soul to see today
She's alive Empowering clarity gives Her strength to walk away
He's alone

-Miranda L. Hart

Your tongue is sharp,
mine is cut
Your heart is angry,
mine is crying
Your eyes do not see,
mine are swollen
Your ears do not hear,
mine have holes
Your hands are
clenched, mine are tied
Your legs have strength,
mine are broken
Your soul is lost, My
spirit has survived

Rose Rose, Ohitika Win

SCARS
The cowering, screaming, crying
My mother
The look of defeat, the look of pain
The scars are forever
Blood, crying, a drunken stagger
Not his blood, not his tears

He is the man
Who beats the weak
He is the man
Who feels strong after using his fists
He is the man
Who destroys a family with pain
He is the man
Who my mother left

Nightmares
Crying, defending my family
Hate
For that man
Guilt
For the hate
No existence in my heart
For that man

Memories
No love, no pride
No fear of that man
Just pity

I am a woman
I do not cower before men
I am a woman
I do not accept physical pain from men
I am a woman
I have learned not to accept mental pain from men
I am woman
I cry from the memories
The scars are forever

-Madonna M. Stands

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