

Islands of Safety

A Safety Planning Model for Urban
Aboriginal and Metis Families in Cases of
Violence

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Tansi/Good morning!

**Welcome to Metis
Community Services!**

Agenda for the Morning

Ideas About Practice

- Contexts of Violence
- Effects vs Responses
- Violence is Social
- Break
- Violence is Social, Unilateral, Deliberate
- Eliciting Resistance & Responses to Violence and Negative Social Responses
- Lunch

Introduction

- Through funding from the Law Foundation of B.C., & hosted by Metis Community Services, we have developed a child safety planning model to be used in cases of violence
- We are now in Phase Two, the “pilot” stage, seeking referrals from agencies
- This model can be used under Section 15, Mediation, Traditional Dispute Resolution
- This process will include an external evaluation

Cultural Teachings

- Phase One involved a process of community consultations with mothers, fathers, social workers, agency workers, advocates, family group conference facilitators, administrators, cultural teachers, elders
- Metis elder Maria Campbell shared Cree and Metis teachings, that form the central theme, layers of blankets representing “Islands of Safety”

Structure - Four Stages

1. Agency referral
2. Preparation & pre - planning meeting
3. The “Islands of Safety” meeting - a one day process (with similarities to FGC, but with an accentuated attention to safety where there has been violence)
4. Follow up meeting

The Meeting

- Introduction
- Four Rounds of Structured Conversation
- The Planning Process
- Closure

The Meeting

- Preparations are lead by those who are most vulnerable
- Family invites family & support people
- Children are invited to participate, in varying ways
- The role of the social worker is to document the presence & signs of dignity for the family
- Those who have committed violence attend if they meet the safety criteria

Safety Criteria

- The perpetrator has demonstrated . . .
 - that no immediate threat exists, as evidenced by others and those who have been harmed
 - a willingness to discuss the specific aspects of the violent behaviour
 - responsibility for the violent actions, acknowledged the actions as wrong, apologized to those harmed & taken steps to restore safety and recovery for the victim
 - a desire to become accountable, via a counsellor or third party
 - a desire to participate in child safety planning and contribute to child safety

Introduction to the Day

- Acknowledging the land, the ancestors, the diaspora
- Introduction to “Islands of Safety” meeting and agenda
- Introductions & acknowledging absent family members
- Settling in, attending to comfort and psychological & physical safety (no rules)

Round One

- Topic: Family History
 - Traditional or regular family life
 - Roles of family members
- Underlying Assumption
 - Families have pre-existing ability

Round Two

- **Topic - Family History With Professionals**
 - How is everyone doing now?
 - What do the facilitators/participants need to do to make this successful?
- **Underlying Assumptions**
 - Attending to processes that reassert affronted dignity from past encounters
 - Avoiding the replication of dominance & colonization

Round Three

- **Topic: Family Responses to Violence & Threats**
 - Protection concerns for the child (re: The Act)
 - Safety of the mother/non-offending parent
- **Underlying Assumptions**
 - Safety is promoted through accurate accounts & through eliciting safety knowledge and responses to violence
 - Risk, safety & capacity can be viewed through responses

Round Four

- **Topic: Social Responses to Family Members**
 - What kinds of social responses have the family received?
 - How do family members respond to the social responses?
- **Underlying Assumptions**
 - Social responses are predictors of outcome
 - Resilience & Capacity are “group projects”
 - Pre-existing ability & family success can be eroded by negative social responses, particularly after disclosures of violence & requests for help

Private Family Safety Planning Time

- Questions for Consideration
 - What is the family already doing to increase safety?
 - Who, what, where, why & how often?
 - Plan & Trial run
 - Plan presented to facilitators
 - Plan presented to child protection worker

Closing the Meeting

- A plan is finalized which addresses the safety of the child, the non-offending parent, and the commitment of others to upholding safety, unity responsibility to upholding safety
- The plan will be typed up by a facilitator and sent to the child protection worker & others chosen by the family
- The facilitators and family select a communications committee date is chosen for the follow up meeting, approximately three weeks in the future

Follow Up Meeting

- Held approximately three weeks after the initial meeting
- Communication team attends, consisting of the mother/non-offending parent, a facilitator, the child protection worker
- Assess ongoing community supports to ensure family safety
- Plan for closing the file

Thank you for listening

- We welcome your comments and questions
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