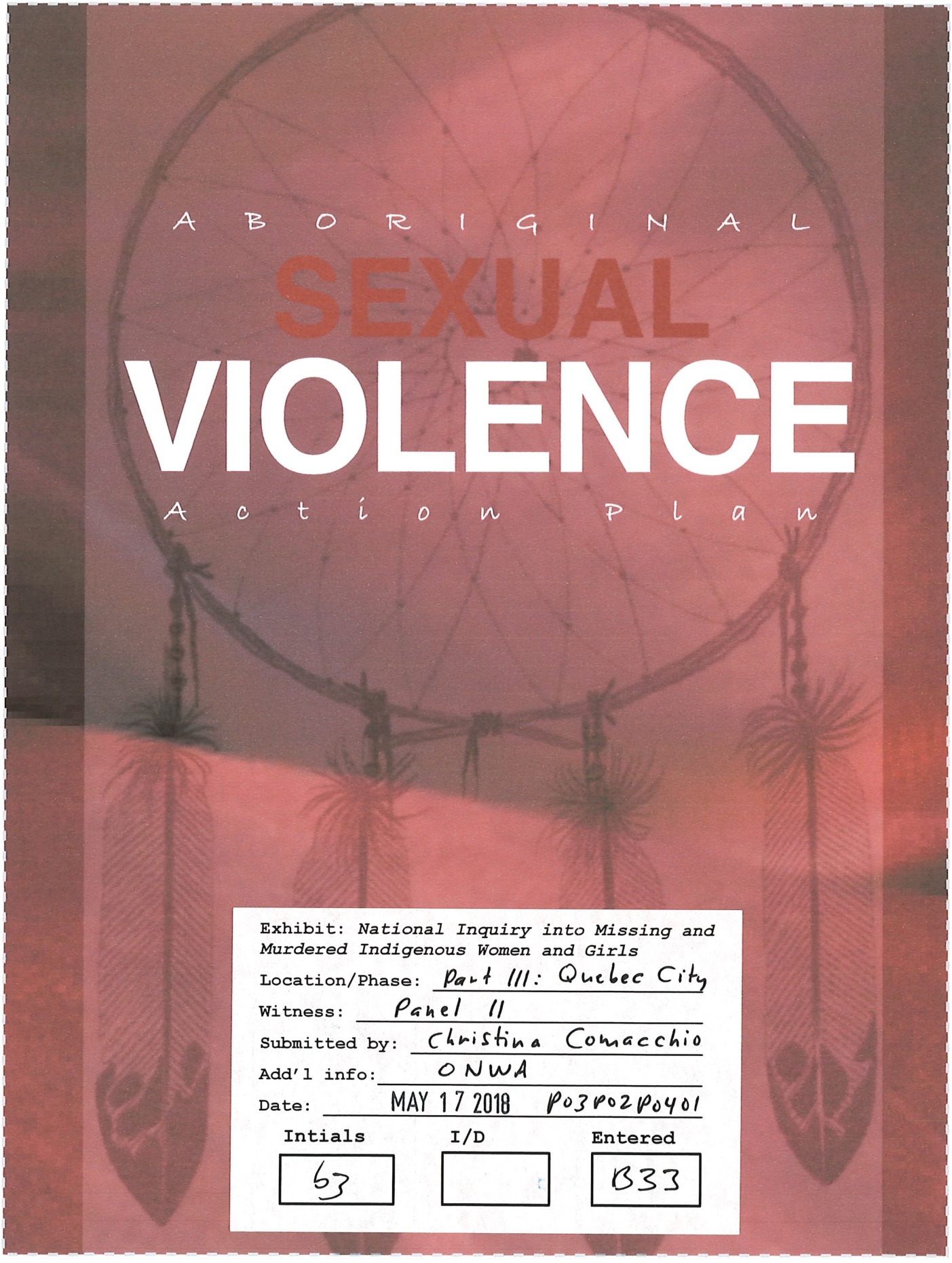


Exhibit: *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*

Location/Phase: Part III: Quebec City

Witness: Panel 11

Submitted by: Christina Comacchio

Add'l info: ONWA

Date: MAY 17 2018 P03P02P0401

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in partnership with the Metis Nation of Ontario and the Ontario Native
Women's Association

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Dedicated to the courageous Aboriginal children, youth, Elders, men, women and Two-Spirited people who have spoken out against sexual violence in Aboriginal community

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Aboriginal Sexual Violence

Fact Sheet

Child Sexual Violence

Incest: Includes family, extended family, and siblings but child sexual abuse can also include other adults and older children. Acts of sexual violence against children ranging in age from infants to teenagers can occur through the use of force, coercion, fear, duress, and/or manipulation. Sexual violence against children includes(but is not limited to) rape, fondling, exposure to adult sexual imagery, child pornography, trafficking and prostitution. Sixty-one percent of young Aboriginal women and girls and 35 percent of young Aboriginal men and boys reported having experienced some sort of child sexual abuse (OFIFC 2002, *Tenuous Connections*).

Institutionalized Sexual Violence

Prisons: Sexual violence in the prison system can include sexual assault, prison rape, trafficking and sex trade. Victims are at a much higher risk of HIV and hepatitis C transmission, with increased mental health disparities including chronic depression and suicide (*Residential Schools, Prisons, and HIV/AIDS among Aboriginal People in Canada* 2009, Aboriginal Healing Foundation). Aboriginal people experience incarceration rates 6.5 times higher than the national Aboriginal population (24% compared to 3.71%) (2006 Census Data, CANSIM Table No. 251-0001). Ninety percent of federally sentenced Aboriginal women have reported being sexually abused (CAEFS, 2006).
Foster care: Current estimates suggest that 75 to 85 percent of children in foster care experience sexual violence (North American Council on Adoptable Children, 2011, *Healing Across Systems*). Aboriginal children and youth are at a greater risk of exposure to institutionalized sexual violence: more Aboriginal children are in care then at the height of Residential school (Blackstock 2003), with a 124% increase in Aboriginal child foster care placements in Ontario between 1999 and 2005 (Best Start, 2010, *I'm Still Hungry: Child and Family Poverty in Ontario*).

Human Trafficking

Sexual exploitation: The majority of human trafficking involves sexual exploitation through prostitution, escort and "modeling" services, live-in domestic sex-work, gang-related pimping, and cyber sex. Perpetrators can include organized crime rings, small local groups and individuals. Aboriginal children and youth who experience high levels of poverty and homelessness are at a greater risk as targets.
Hot spots: Places where Aboriginal girls have limited access to resources, safe social spaces and stable living environments can become hot-spots for Trafficking. Aboriginal girls are lured with incentives such a warm meal, a place to sleep, clean clothes, alcohol and drugs. For Aboriginal youth who are homeless or living in violent, unstable homes, human traffickers may appear as their rescuers.
Gang sexual violence: Aboriginal women and girls who have been lured into gang culture are often required to perform sexual services for gang membership. Gang rapes, violent sexual violations and mutilations are common expressions of gang loyalty. Gang sexual violence can also occur as a form of payment or debt reduction for non-gang members. Aboriginal women and girls are a common commodity in gang debt payments.

Sexual Assault

Sexual Assault: includes any nonconsensual sexual act or activity committed by a stranger, friend, partner, family member, authority figure, or acquaintance through the use of power, control, coercion, drugs and alcohol, physical force, mental, emotional and spiritual manipulation or peer pressure. Sexual assault includes all of the previously mentioned forms of sexual violence, but can also include unwanted sexual grabbing, groping, kissing, or touching, physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual sexual harassment, stalking, indecent sexualized exposure, voyeurism, degrading sexual imagery, cyber harassment, and rape.
Rape: There are several types of rape (vaginal, anal, or oral penetration) and many different types of rapists:

- strangers
- dates
- spouses
- friends
- acquaintances
- groups
- gangs
- authority figures
- organized religious figures
- spiritual healers

All forms of sexual violence can lead to other forms of violence including murder

Aboriginal Sexual Violence Working Assumptions

- Sexual violence is rampant and pervasive in Aboriginal communities.
- There are "hot spots" where sexual violence is concentrated.
- In some communities, the incidence of sexual violence is 9 out of 10, much higher than the reported incidence of 1 in 10 in the mainstream.
- Sexual violence in Aboriginal communities is so pervasive that it is normalized.
- Sexual violence against Aboriginal women happens in both Aboriginal communities and in non-Aboriginal communities.
- Many of the Aboriginal men who are perpetrators of sexual violence have also been victims of childhood sexual abuse.
- Aboriginal women and children are targets for sexual violence and other forms of violence and exploitation.
- The majority of Aboriginal women who have experienced family violence have also experienced sexual violence.
- The perpetrators of sexual violence are primarily men, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The incidence of women being perpetrators of sexual violence is rare.
- Sexual violence is rooted in the legacy of residential schools, colonization and systemic discrimination that resulted in the loss of culture, roles, family and community structure.
- Alcohol, religion, and the loss of culture actively undermines and directly impacts on the incidences of sexual violence.
- Sexual violence is intergenerational.
- The unequal and violent relationships being built between Aboriginal people today are directly rooted on the historical legacy.

IF WE ASK ABORIGINAL WOMEN IF THEY HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED THEY WILL LIKELY SAY "NO". IF WE ASK ABORIGINAL WOMEN IF THEY EVER HAD SEX WHEN THEY DID NOT WANT TO, THE ANSWER MOST LIKELY WOULD BE "YES". SHERRY LEWIS

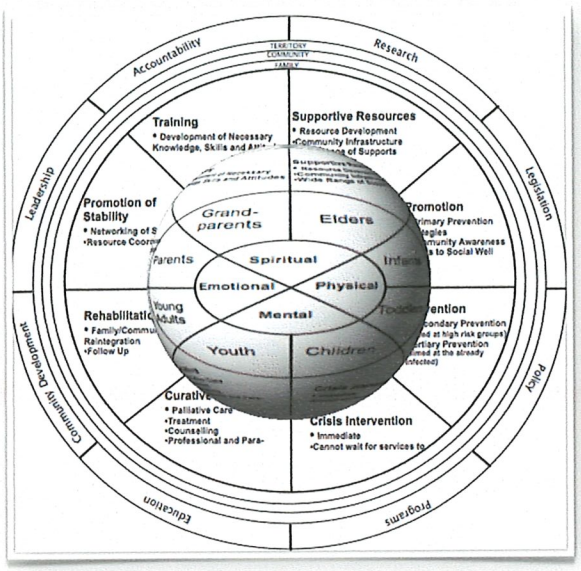


Aboriginal Sexual Violence Action Plan

Summary

In the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women, violence is violence. Yet, we need to turn our attention to the specifics of sexual violence at this time because it is a form of violence that is rampant in Aboriginal communities. Incest in many communities is a **public** secret – people know but it is not discussed. Gangs and gang rape are increasingly being described as part of an Aboriginal young person's experience.

The Aboriginal Sexual Violence Action Plan is a cohesive, integrative strategy for ending sexual violence in Aboriginal (urban, rural, and reserve) communities. The Action plan is an integrated component of the *Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women* (Strategic Framework) in order to coordinate a holistic community-based strategy that addresses the urgent need for immediate action while also laying the foundation for long-term healing and recovery. The Action Plan takes an "immediate response" approach to addressing the pervasiveness of sexual violence in Aboriginal communities, the concurrent issues that contribute to sexual violence and the intense silence that permeates all aspects of sexual violence in Aboriginal communities.



Prior to colonization, Aboriginal culture "looked to the natural world to get instructions for life"(Sylvia Maracle, 2011). Culture provided the guidance for relationships and described what was proper with one another. Violence was not a common element of our lives.

The Aboriginal approach to dealing with sexual violence will consider every member of the community that is affected: starting with the victim, then the abuser; the families of both and the community that has been a witness to the abuse.

As described in the Strategic Framework, a coordinated, integrated approach that includes healing and accountability is required.

A coordinated approach: is one that includes the work done at the community level, with support from the activities and capacities of regional Aboriginal community organizations and partners, combined with the support of federal and provincial stakeholders in a cohesive and transparent manner.

An integrated approach: is a holistic model that accounts for the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of the healing continuum that includes men, women and Two-spirited peoples at all stages of life in every aspect of the Strategic Framework Wheel.

Immediate Responses: are the outputs, or tangible deliverables that are required for immediate action. A consistent level of action is required to address the urgent state of sexual violence in Aboriginal community.

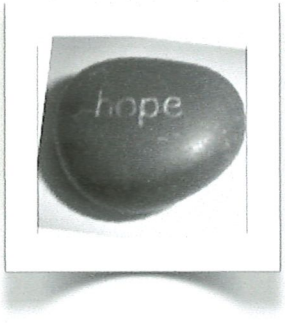
Aboriginal Sexual Violence Action Plan Background

Sexual violence is a silent issue in Aboriginal community. It is embedded in the historical legacy of colonization and today, sexual violence continues in many manifestations. The pain of the violence is so entrenched that it becomes a conversation that cannot start without safety and care around the person, the family and the community.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the level of violence in Aboriginal communities was revealed through a study done by the Ontario Native Women's Association entitled "Breaking Free". The report concluded that there were exceptionally high rates of violence affecting Aboriginal people.

In 1997, the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy was created with a key objective to address family violence in Aboriginal communities. In 2007, *the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women* was developed that again reaffirmed specific objectives and clear strategies to end violence in Aboriginal community. The government of Ontario has given its support for the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women. A Joint Working Group to end violence against Aboriginal women was created May 26th 2010 consisting of Aboriginal partners (ONWA, OFIFC, MNO, Independent First Nations) and inter-ministerial partners (MAA, OWD, MAG, MCYS,MCSCS, MCSS,MOE, MOHLTC, MMAH) for the purpose of advancing and implementing the Strategic Framework.

The Aboriginal Sexual Violence Action Plan recommendations are rooted in the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women Summit recommendations gathered from 2007-2011, the 2011 Metis Nation "Strong Women" summit, with additional development during a two-day Consultation on Sexual Violence and Aboriginal Community, March 21-22, 2011. This consultation brought together representatives from the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Independent First Nations and the Chiefs of Ontario to review the issues and establish priorities. The Summit recommendations, the consultation, and lastly, the Catalyst Research and Communications report on the Consultation on Sexual Violence and Aboriginal Community entitled, *After the Healing is Healthy Living* (Sept. 2011) laid the foundation for the Aboriginal Sexual Violence Action Plan.



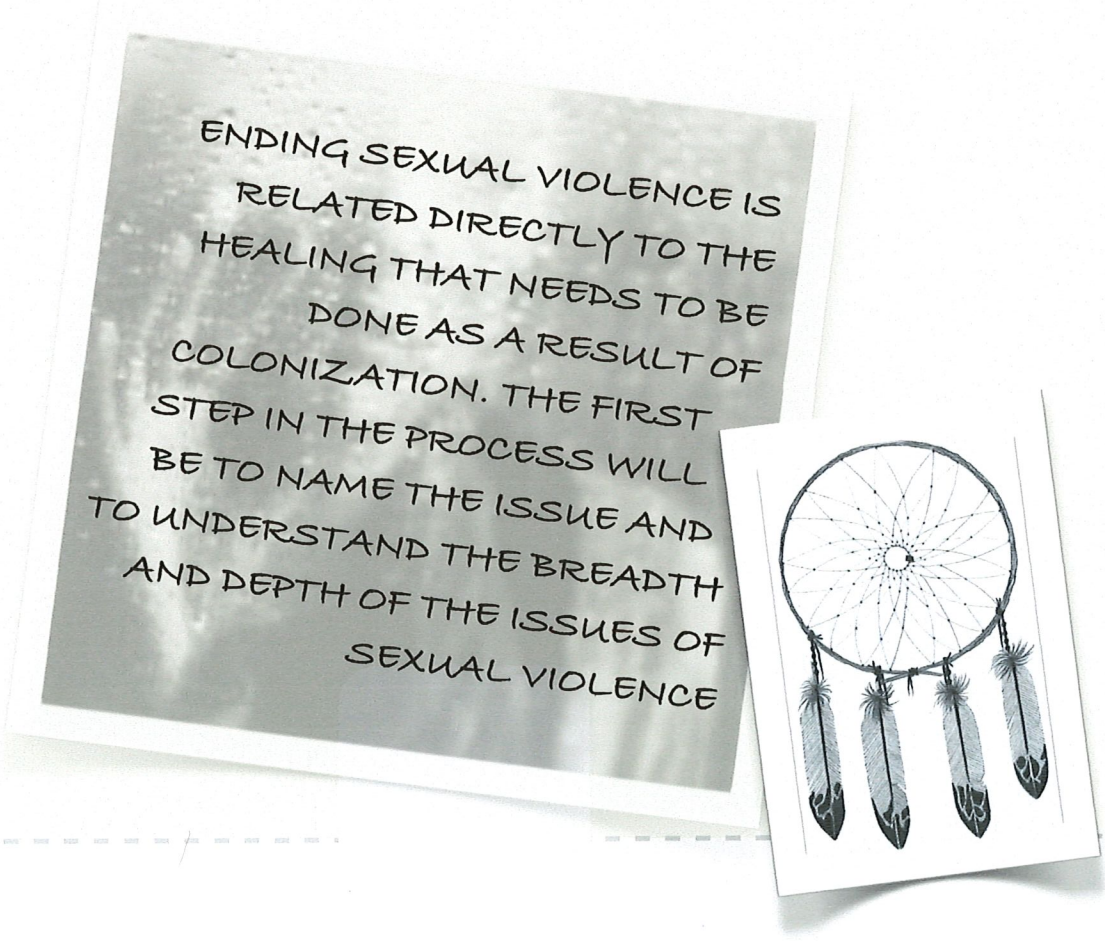
Background Continued

It is however, the courageous voices of Aboriginal people who have spoken out about sexual violence, and the Elders, leadership, and community allies who are willing to support them to end sexual violence in Aboriginal communities that make this action plan possible.

Sexual violence will continue to be embedded in the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women, but there is a need for specific investments in three areas:

1. **To engage the community in a safe, coordinated community building approaches to ending sexual violence.**
2. **To educate partners and the public to the issue.**
3. **Promotion of the recovery process through the Healing Continuum.**

The Aboriginal Sexual Violence Action Plan is designed to address these needs



The Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women

Foundational Principles

1. Violence against Aboriginal women must end.

2. To successfully end violence, all people affected by violence against Aboriginal women (victim, abuser, the families impacted and the witnesses of the violence) need to have specific supports.

3. Violence against Aboriginal women is always done within the context of a community, and as such, the community as a whole has a central role to play in addressing the issue.

4. Violence against Aboriginal women is rooted in systemic discrimination, and consequently, issues of gender, race and cultural exclusion must be considered in addressing these contributing factors.

5. A social/health determinants model must be applied to ensure that the causal issues of violence are addressed.

6. Flexible, evolving and ongoing efforts must ensure government and Aboriginal community co-ordination and collaboration.

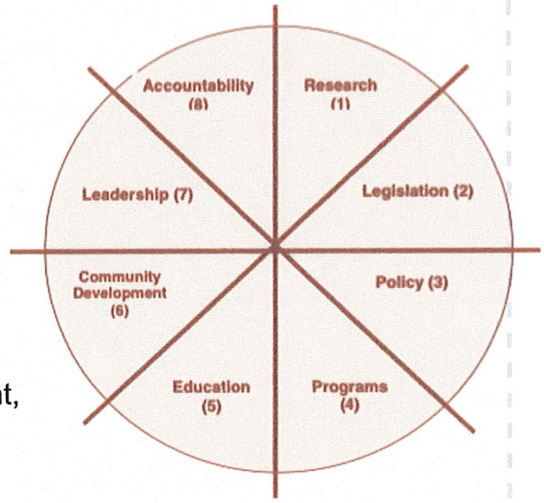
7. To be effective, all activities required to address violence against Aboriginal women must be directed, designed, implemented and controlled by Aboriginal women.

8. Recognition and implementation of a framework will involve changes in research, legislation, policy, programs, education, community development, leadership, and accountability.

9. Gender-based analysis must underlie all work involved with this strategy.

10. The capacity of Aboriginal communities and governments to respond to violent crimes committed against Aboriginal women must be strengthened.

11. All perpetrators of violence against Aboriginal women must be held accountable and are offered culturally based healing programmes to prevent future incidents.



THE ABORIGINAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN IS AN INTEGRATED COMPONENT OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Strategic Direction 1

Research

Undertake Comprehensive Research and Data Collection on Issues Related to Aboriginal Women and Violence

FRAMEWORK GOALS

Research Goal 1.1:
That all levels of government, across various relevant areas of jurisdiction will commit to supporting Aboriginal organizations and communities in the undertaking of comprehensive research and data collection on specific issues related to Aboriginal women and violence. This comprehensive research and data will be utilized to inform and guide policy planning and development.

Sexual Violence Action Plan Immediate Responses:

Goal 1.1

Aboriginal Sexual Violence report and on-going database study that monitors:

- The prevalence of sexual violence in urban, rural, and First Nation communities, including Aboriginal men and women in prisons, children in CAS care, Two-Spirited people, sex workers, victims of human trafficking, Aboriginal youth and Aboriginal women in shelters
- The needs and gaps in Continuum of Care service provision
- Aboriginal-specific approaches to and teachings on addressing sexual violence
- Aboriginal community responses to sexual violence including prevailing attitudes, police involvement, Aboriginal justice initiatives, reporting and investigation procedures (sexual violence specific safety audits)
- Concurrent issues (physical,mental, emotional, spiritual health, suicide, incarceration, sexual health, murder, etc.)
- Intergenerational trauma impacts
- Database of community specific strategics and resources for addressing sexual violence
- Sexual violence program availability, and effectiveness (for victims and offenders)
- Funding needs and gaps

Sexual Violence key concerns

There is not a high investment in addressing sexual violence. As a consequence the response to sexual violence has been primarily through the mainstream sexual assault centres or the Aboriginal shelters. This has not been an appropriate approach for Aboriginal people. Comprehensive research is needed in order to guide policy planning and program development.

Sexual Violence Action Plan: Research

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Local Aboriginal communities	• Community consultations on the research • A community safety plan is developed for during and after the community research	• Research facilitation and data gathering training • Research commences	• Communities now have increased capacity to provide on-going input for policy and program development and local sexual violence strategies • Communities take ownership of updating database, education, and training
Regional Aboriginal organizations	• Identify communities to engage in research • Design the broad research questions • Develop comprehensive holistic approach that reflects all stages of the life cycle • Work as partners on research and share capacity and knowledge. •Coordinate and implement Aboriginal Sexual Violence research	• Collect and analyze community data • Develop the on-going data base Disseminate findings to community and government stakeholders • Conduct community safety Audits specific to sexual violence service provision **Goal1.1 Aboriginal Sexual Violence Report**	**Goal 1.1 Aboriginal Sexual Violence database is created** • Training for on-going database input and local Sexual violence strategies • Identify new communities to engage
Provincial and Federal Stakeholders	-Commit to supporting Aboriginal organizations in the undertaking of comprehensive community-based research via the Joint Working Group.	- Respond to community Safety Audits - **Goal 1.1 Establish an Aboriginal-specific database of continuum of care services** using culturally relevant GBA to document Aboriginal access to Federal and Provincial sexual violence resources, services, and programs - On-going support for research data-base on Aboriginal Sexual violence	

Research Goal 1.1: Policy planning and development is informed by comprehensive research on Aboriginal sexual violence, supported by all levels of government

Strategic Direction #1

Comprehensive Research and Data Collection on Issues Related to Aboriginal Women and Violence is implemented

Strategic Direction 2

Legislation

Legal Reform and Legislative Change

FRAMEWORK GOALS

Goal 2.1:

That specific legislation be created that expressly prohibits violence against women, with a particular focus on violence against Aboriginal women and recognizes and enables Aboriginal women's rights to respectful, informed and judicious treatment under the law.

Goal 2.2:

To ensure that the Aboriginal Justice Strategy makes the issue of violence against Aboriginal women a specific priority, and that a specific strategy that addresses violence and Aboriginal women be developed, with dedicated resources attached.

Goal 2.3:

That relevant existing legislation is reviewed to identify the contributions to the social constructs leading to violence against Aboriginal women.

Sexual Violence Action Plan Immediate Responses:

Goal 2.1

- Legislation includes support for culturally appropriate immediate and consistent responses to:
  - Sexual Violence disclosures
  - Investigations
  - Offenders
  - Community healing

Goal 2.2

- Aboriginal Justice Strategy includes specific sexual violence objectives for early intervention, proactive prevention, and restorative justice

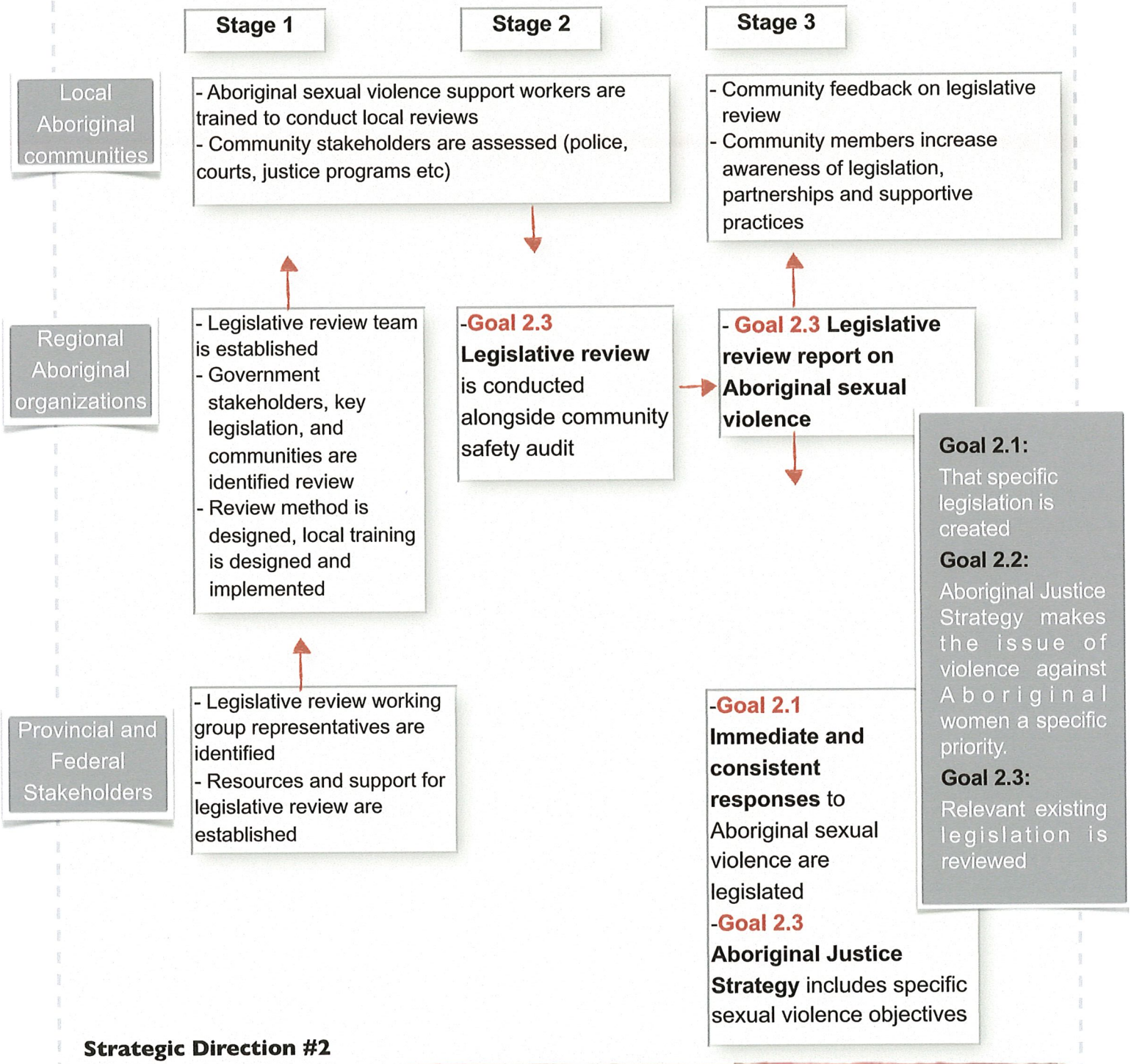
Goal 2.3

- A Legislative review and recommendations report that addresses:
  - The issue of child sexual abuse in Children's Aid Society
  - Aboriginal Sexual offense recidivism
  - Aboriginal-specific Human trafficking
  - Sexual violence investigative practices in remote communities and "hot-spots"

Sexual Violence key concerns

Historically, Governments have played a role in perpetuating sexual violence in the Aboriginal community (residential schools, legislation). Jurisdictional issues need to be addressed so that sexual violence responses are immediate, consistent, and integrated.

Sexual Violence Action Plan: Legislation



Strategic Direction #2

Legal Reform and Legislative Change is established

Strategic Direction 3

Policy

The Creation of a Comprehensive Policy to Target and Address Violence Against All Aboriginal Women in Ontario

FRAMEWORK GOALS

Goal 3.1: That ongoing intergovernmental policy coordination will be proactively pursued for the purposes of innovative and comprehensive policy development and integration.

Goal 3.2: That an Aboriginal-specific strategy is included in all provincial and federal government policies designed to address violence against women.

Goal 3.3: That Aboriginal organizations and communities are directly involved throughout the process of policy planning and development on every matter of concern or interest to Aboriginal women.

Sexual Violence Action Plan Immediate Responses:

Goal 3.1

- An intergovernmental Sexual violence response policy that includes Aboriginal strategies for addressing:
  - Social determinants of health
  - Continuum of care

Goal 3.2

- Sexual violence action plan is integrated into the Strategic Framework strategy

Goal 3.3

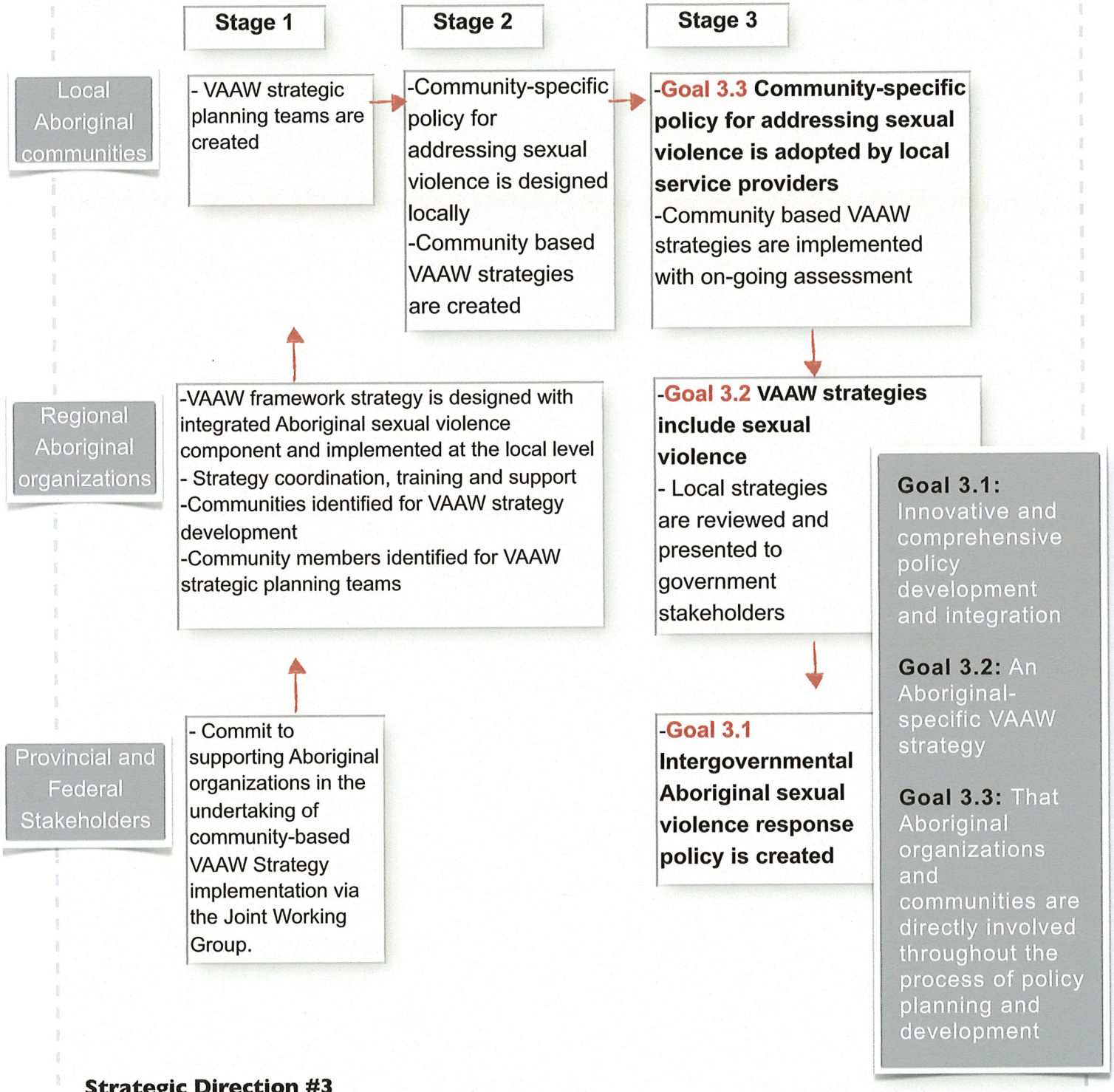
- A Community-specific policy for addressing sexual violence is designed locally and adopted by local service providers that includes:
  - Safety measures for at-risk children and youth
  - Provisions for human trafficking
  - Pre and post investigation safety plan
  - Community justice
  - Community intervention MOU's (that include child welfare, School boards, police, criminal justice, and mental health services)

Sexual Violence key concerns

Have an inter-connected Urban and Reserve Strategy

A many-pronged approach that respects the specific needs of the Aboriginal community will be necessary. This would include First Nation people living in their community, First Nation (status not in their home community and non-status), and Métis people living throughout Ontario.

Sexual Violence Action Plan: Policy



Strategic Direction #3

A Comprehensive Policy to Target and Address Violence Against All Aboriginal Women in Ontario is created

Strategic Direction 4

Programs

The creation of a sustained policy and program infrastructure

FRAMEWORK GOALS

Goal 4.1: That adequate fiscal resources are dedicated on an ongoing basis to policy and programs designed specifically to address violence against Aboriginal women.

Sexual Violence Action Plan Immediate Responses:

Goal 4.1

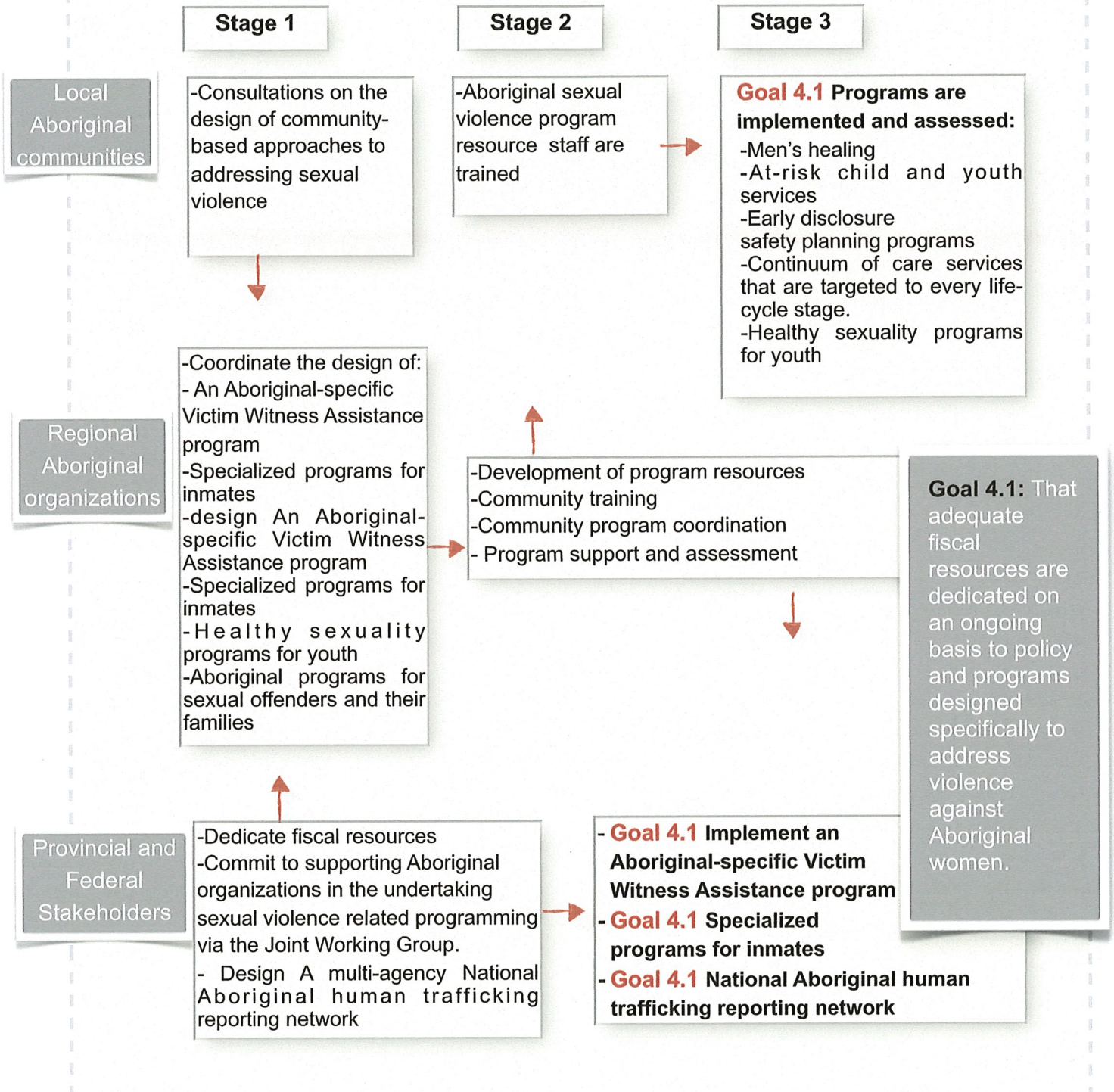
- Design, resource and implement a community-based approach to addressing sexual violence that includes:
  - Men's healing
  - At-risk child and youth services
  - Early disclosure
  - Safety planning
  - Community awareness and training
  - Continuum of care services that are targeted to every life-cycle stage.
  - Local sexual violence policy development and implementation
  - A multi-agency National Aboriginal human trafficking reporting network
  - An inter-connected urban-reserve approach
  - An Aboriginal-specific Victim Witness Assistance program
  - Healthy sexuality programs for youth
  - Specialized programs for inmates

Sexual Violence key concerns

A family and community approach is required to address the issue. There is a process to recovery from sexual violence. Once it has been named, there are often other issues (e.g. addiction, mental health issues) that are part of the person's way of coping or hiding from the trauma of sexual violence. All of these issues need to be considered and addressed.

For example, the OFIFC Initiative, Healthy Indigenous Males (HIM) provides an opportunity to focus on men as abusers and as abused, as participants in their healing process and as leaders supporting other men to heal. Other groups need to address and prioritize family and community approaches to addressing sexual violence.

Sexual Violence Action Plan: Programs



Strategic Direction #4

A sustained policy and program infrastructure is designed, resourced, and implemented

Strategic Direction 5

Education

Public education campaign to raise awareness of violence against Aboriginal women

FRAMEWORK GOALS

Goal 5.1: To develop an ongoing, integrated public education campaign

that teaches communities and stakeholders about the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women, violence prevention, and how to develop and maintain healthy relationships while opening up an ongoing dialogue about respectful relationships.

Goal 5.2: Development of a province-wide media strategy and social marketing plan.

Goal 5.3: Strengthen public knowledge and understanding of the historical context of violence against Aboriginal women.

Sexual Violence Action Plan Immediate Responses:

Goal 5.1

- A healthy sexualities awareness campaign for Aboriginal youth is implemented across communities and through social media

Goal 5.2

- An Aboriginal youth-led education campaign is launched to address sexual violence.
- Sexual violence community tool-kits based on community-specific policy and implementation plans are designed, resourced and disseminated (strength and resiliency based).
- Specialized sexual violence tool kit for Aboriginal inmates

Goal 5.3

- An intergovernmental, cross-community training is designed, resourced and delivered that addresses:
  - -History of Aboriginal sexual violence
  - - Contemporary forms of sexual violence
  - - Impacts of social determinants of health
  - - Community-based holistic practices for addressing sexual violence
  - - Training for Aboriginal organization staff to deliver sexual violence programing

Sexual Violence key concerns

Issue is not widely acknowledged. Women, communities and leaders do not yet know the magnitude of the issue of sexual violence. The embedded nature of sexual violence in Aboriginal communities makes it difficult to raise the issue. Since sexual violence has been an unspoken part of many women's lives, it has likely been unspoken for many leaders. Leaders may feel that they cannot disclose sexual violence because they will be perceived as being weak. The leaders will need to be supported and new messages need to be presented. Strength needs to be defined not as silence but as speaking out and healing. A woman who has survived sexual violence is STRONG. To stay silent is just another form of control.

Sexual Violence Action Plan: Education

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Local Aboriginal communities	-Community-based input on Healthy Sexualities campaign design is conducted -Aboriginal youth are engaged and trained to design and deliver youth-led education campaign -Workers are trained to deliver cross-community sexual violence awareness training	→	**-Goal 5.1 A healthy sexualities awareness campaign for Aboriginal youth is implemented across communities and through social media** **-Goal 5.3 Cross-community training is implemented** **-Goal 5.2 An Aboriginal youth-led education campaign is launched to address sexual violence**
Regional Aboriginal organizations	-Design Sexual violence community tool-kits based on community-specific policy and implementation plans are designed, resourced and disseminated (strength and resiliency based). -Education campaign support and coordination -An intergovernmental, cross-community training is designed	→	**-Goal 5.2 Sexual violence community tool-kits based on community-specific policy and implementation plans are designed, resourced and disseminated (strength and resiliency based).** **-Goal 5.3 Aboriginal Sexual violence training is delivered**
Provincial and Federal Stakeholders	-Dedicate resources via the Joint Working Group. -Specialized sexual violence tool kit for Aboriginal inmates and corrections officers are designed	→	**-Goal 5.3 Intergovernmental training is implemented** **-Goal 5.2 Specialized sexual violence tool kit for Aboriginal inmates is resourced and implemented**

Goal 5.1: An ongoing, integrated public education campaign is developed

Goal 5.2: A province-wide media strategy and social marketing plan is developed

Goal 5.3: Public knowledge and understanding of the historical context of violence against Aboriginal women is strengthened

Strategic Direction #5

Public education campaign to raise awareness of violence against Aboriginal women is implemented

Strategic Direction 6

Community Capacity

Build and sustain Aboriginal community and organizational capacity, as well as government capacity to end all forms of violence and abuse against Aboriginal women

FRAMEWORK GOALS

Goal 6.1: Government to increase its staffing to work with Aboriginal organizations and communities, to act as interface, to develop and maintain relationships, etc.

Goal 6.2: Increase Aboriginal community and organizational capacity.

Sexual Violence Action Plan Immediate Responses:

Goal 6.1

- Aboriginal specific sexual assault teams are created that address:
  - Local sexual violence training, education and program design
  - Local community-based policy implementation
  - Sexual violence strategy implementation
  - Interagency networking and relationship building
  - Local research stewardship and data-base coordination
  - Coordination of restorative justice initiatives for addressing sexual violence
  - Coordination of Aboriginal youth leadership initiatives on sexual violence
  - Elder involvement in sexual violence strategies

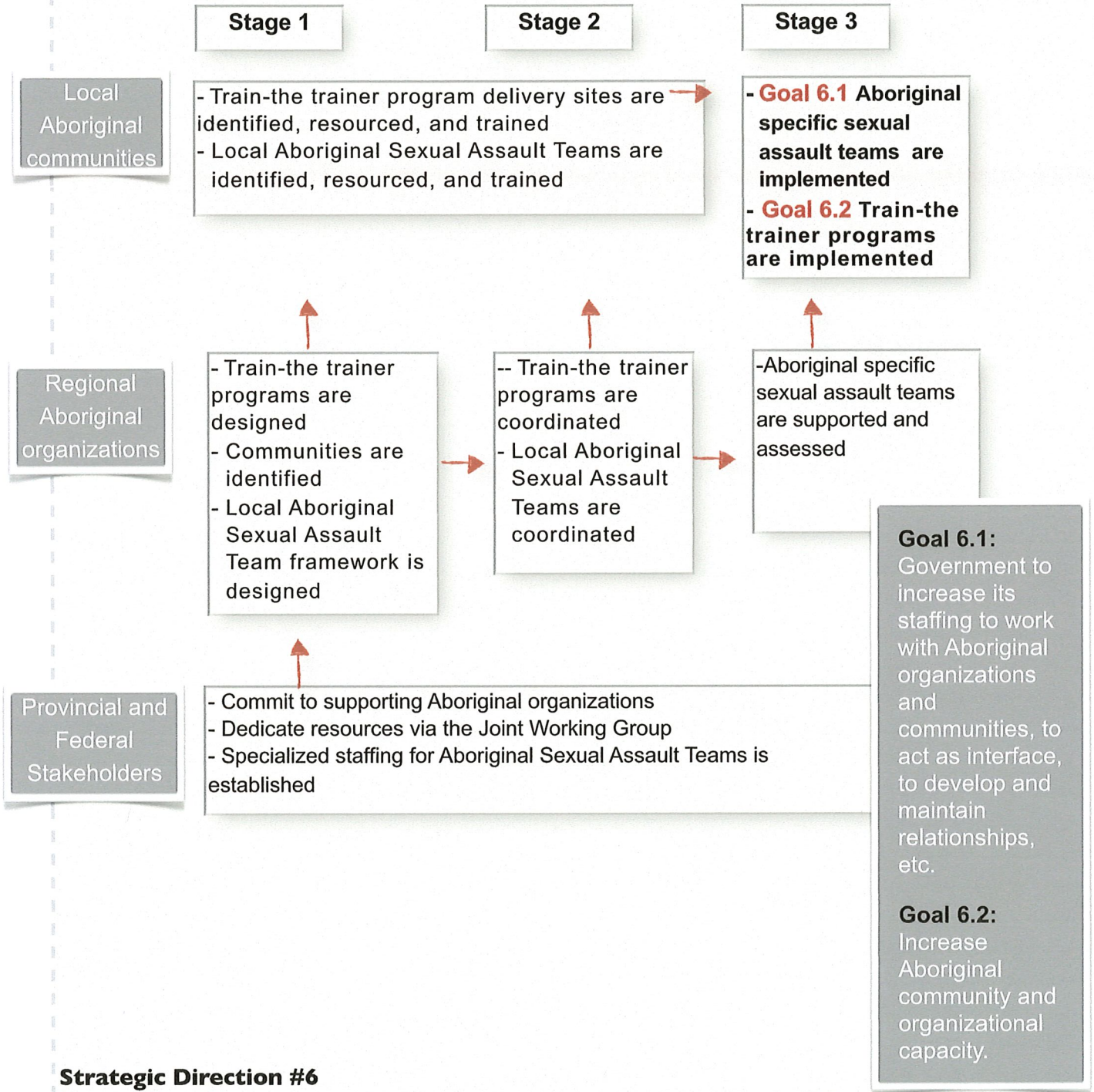
Goal 6.2

- A train-the trainer program is designed for Aboriginal community organizations that addresses:
  - how sexual violence has become normalized in Aboriginal communities.
  - An understanding of the historical context
  - The dynamics of power and control
  - The scope of the term sexual violence
  - Community preparedness
  - Using the same language
  - How to handle disclosure
  - How to handle difficult questions.

Sexual Violence key concerns

Resources and capacity to address the levels of sexual trauma are severely lacking. There is insufficient support for Aboriginal sexual violence survivors. The shelters are often relied upon when women raise issues of sexual violence, yet shelter workers are not necessarily trained to deal with issues related to sexual violence. Aboriginal women are not going to Sexual Assault Centres even when they are available in their community.

Sexual Violence Action Plan: Community Capacity



Strategic Direction #6

Aboriginal community and organizational capacity, as well as government capacity to end all forms of violence and abuse against Aboriginal women is increased and sustained

Strategic Direction 7

Leadership

Support and Build community leadership that works towards ending the violence against Aboriginal women

FRAMEWORK GOALS

Goal 7.1: The creation and sustaining of effective, proactive leadership through education, awareness, and training.

Sexual Violence Action Plan Immediate Responses:

Goal 7.1

- A community-wide Aboriginal youth social Justice Leaders project is designed, resourced and implemented to address sexual violence and role-model healthy relationships for youth and adults
- Specialized training for community Elders is designed, implemented and delivered to ensure they are prepared to assist in community

Sexual Violence Action Plan: Leadership

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Local Aboriginal communities	-Goal 7.1 Aboriginal youth Leadership training project is implemented -Goal 7.1 Community Elders receive sexual violence training		
Regional Aboriginal organizations	- Aboriginal youth social Justice Leaders project is designed - Specialized training for community Elders is designed	- Aboriginal youth social Justice Leaders project is coordinated - Specialized training for community Elders is implemented	- Aboriginal youth social Justice Leaders project is supported and assessed - Specialized training for community Elders is supported and assessed
Provincial and Federal Stakeholders	- Commit to supporting Aboriginal organizations via the Joint Working Group		

Strategic Direction 8

Accountability

Ensuring Accountability for Broad Commitment to the Strategy

FRAMEWORK GOALS

Goal 8.1: Commitment and Involvement of all Relevant Parties

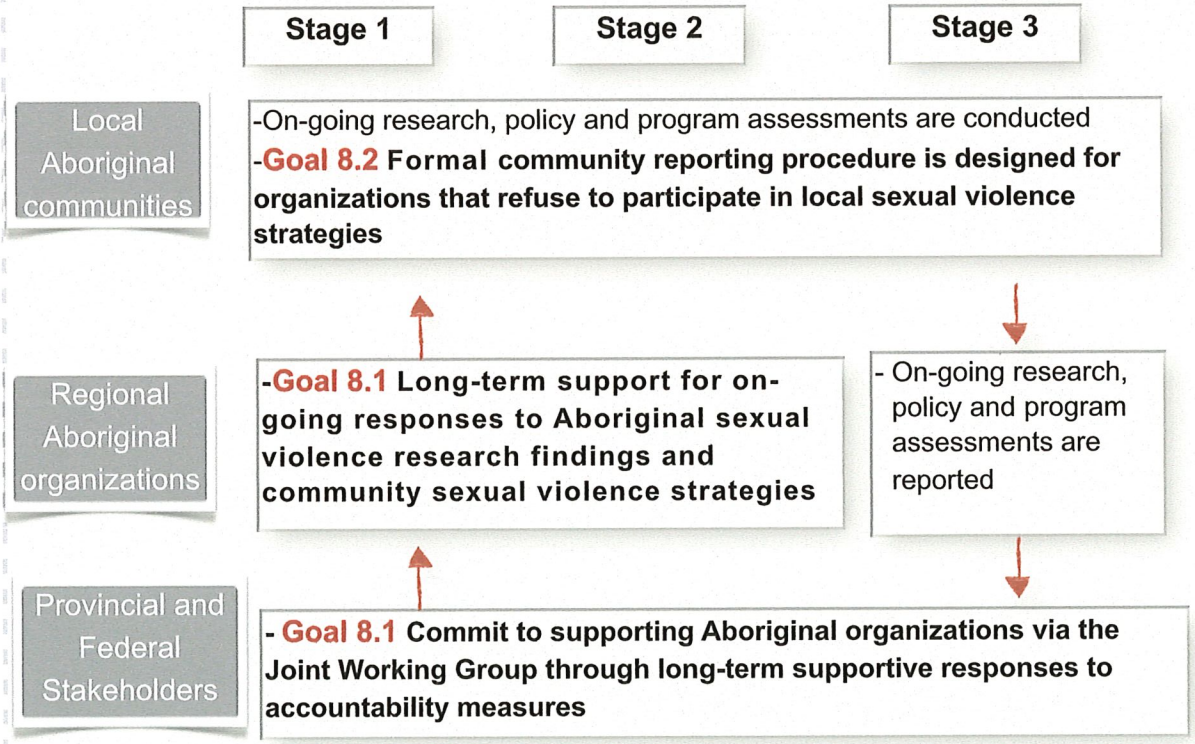
Goal 8.2: Creation of mechanisms to ensure the ongoing accountability of all relevant parties

Sexual Violence Action Plan Immediate Responses:

Goal 8.1
- Long-term support for on-going responses to Aboriginal sexual violence research findings and community sexual violence strategies

Goal 8.2
- Formal community reporting procedure for organizations that refuse to participate in local sexual violence strategies

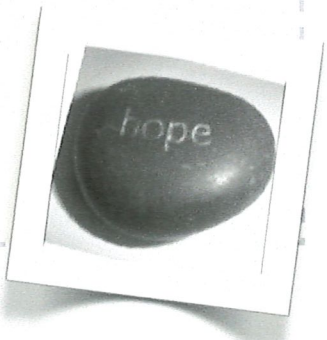
Sexual Violence Action Plan: Accountability



ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS: RESEARCH

RESEARCH MUST LEAVE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES WITH HOPE AND A VISION THAT SEXUAL VIOLENCE CAN BE DEALT WITH IN A GOOD WAY.

- Ensure (at the local level) that in each group, there are peers so that every woman can have someone who shares her perspective.
- The language that is used needs to be respectful.
- Have a set of key messages and reinforce them throughout the consultation process.
- Use a variety of interventions and approaches to engage with the women.
- Do the groundwork so you can speak about the experiences of sexual violence that have happened in the community.
- The connection to sexual violence, gangs, bikers and the criminal element is real and in some communities it might not be safe at this time for anyone to have a conversation about sexual violence.
- The Elders need to be specifically trained to do this work and they need to be cared for because the work can be draining for them.
- It is also important to support Elders to do their own healing from past experiences of sexual violence.
- Have people from service organizations be part of the consultations and make sure that individuals are connected to helpers before they leave the consultations. If there are no service providers than make sure that people have a buddy from the group after they leave the consultation. No one should walk away without some extra support in their life.
- It is important to figure out, beforehand, whether the research will be open to the media. If any part of the consultations will be open to the media, everyone needs to know and feel safe. The media need to be briefed and educated if they are to be part of any process.
- Be ready for those who oppose having any conversations about sexual violence in a community.
- Connect with the Sexual Assault Centres because they have resources and understand the issues. Their ideas can be adjusted to be appropriate for Aboriginal communities.
- The police play a key role in the communities around sexual violence. It is a long term relationship that will need to be started as part of the consultations but the relationship between the police and key community members will need to continue once the consultation is over.
- Be prepared to hear that there are some violators that consistently fly below the radar -- they are often the unspoken truth that everyone knows. If community members start to talk some of these people will be exposed.
- The group proposed that any conversation about sexual violence be started:
  - By discussing other issues (e.g. wellness, sexual health and reproduction). When we come to the issue of sexual violence, we can ask a non-specific question, e.g. ***Have you ever had sex when you did not want to?***
  - By linking sexual violence to other forms of violence that women are more comfortable talking about. For example, start with saying "family violence and sexual violence."
  - Develop questions that have meaning and relate to the real experience of people.



ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS: PROGRAMS

Some key strategies have emerged to respond to sexual violence in Aboriginal communities that are not always directing related to sexual violence investments.

1. If you are in a leadership position and running a program that can support women who have experienced violence, push the rules and approaches to respond to the needs of Aboriginal women.
2. Use harm reduction models.
3. Offer supportive listening instead of structured counseling.
4. Create programs that allow sexual violence to be discussed in the context of other issues: wellness, reproductive health and sexuality.
5. Be resiliency and asset focused in all the work that we do with women.
6. Provide sensitivity training to the government so they can understand the issue from an Aboriginal perspective.
7. In program work, offer alternative models
8. Look at how existing programs can be adjusted to promote healthy relationships and provide women with a safe place to disclose sexual violence. Some programs that were suggested included: Healthy Babies, shelter work, housing work, Court Workers Program.

A culturally based gender analysis will be used

The Aboriginal perspective on sexual violence is based on a different worldview. When engaging with the mainstream on these issues, the conversation has inherent tensions. An example used was the conversations around the sex trade. The mainstream position is that the sex trade is not inherently violent and is based on a woman's choice.

When we apply an Aboriginal worldview, sex trade work is rooted in colonization and the resulting patriarchy that defines the historical conditions for Aboriginal women as having few choices, and which is maintained through systemic discrimination. As such sexual violence and sex trade work is part of the continuum of violence against Aboriginal women that started with colonization.
as being part of their lives.

Address roadblocks and concerns

A key question for organizers before any consultation is how to deal with roadblocks to having these discussions. The experience of sexual violence is one of isolation. There are many components to isolation including geographical and cultural isolation. Breaking through the isolation is part of the process in dealing with sexual violence.

The influence of the church and the reluctance of the church to have these discussions has had a huge impact in some communities.

There is a clear relationship between sexual violence and concurrent issues

There are many factors that have a direct impact on the individual, the family and the community's ability to respond to sexual violence. Sexual violence is often connected to the other issues: an addiction; specific mental health conditions (PTSD and Anxiety Disorders); teen pregnancy; homelessness and FASD. A person who has multiple issues is often ignored when they name sexual violence as being part of their lives.

Social determinants have a direct impact on the incidence of sexual violence. There is direct relationship between being under-housed and being exposed to situations that make a person vulnerable to sexual violence. It is known that pimps are using homeless shelters to house women they are trafficking.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS: PROGRAMMES

The current systems in place to address sexual violence do not work

Once someone is identified as having experienced sexual violence, they are categorized as "victims." Women are resilient and have multiple identities. The definition of "victim" reinforces learned helplessness and is based on relationships of dependency that were established as part of colonization.

Clinical Approach
The experience for many Aboriginal women in clinical counseling is often one of shock and horror. "How bad is your story?" It then can move to a focus on the negative and create a deficit approach that is not helpful for healing.

Justice system
Women do not want to use the judicial system because it does not address their multiple needs: the violence to end; healing for themselves, often healing for the perpetrator and maintaining a family structure. It reinforces the woman as a victim. The judicial system also has huge systemic barriers: inadequate responses; racism; time consuming; high cost investment; revictimization of women and reinforcement of the shame.

Victim Witness Assistance Program
The program has limited value, because it is an arm of the crown and therefore cannot hear the victim because they need to be neutral in the process. There is little confidence in the video process in protecting victims, especially those in small, remote and rural communities.

- ***Youth*** have a normalized relationship with sexual violence. It has become incorporated into their sex lives and the relationships they are establishing. Young women in their relationships are often pressured to have sex with threats and intimidation by their boyfriend. Students at school have specific pressures because sexual violence is often part of the social norms.
- ***Two-spirited people,*** particularly youth, have few places to address sexual violence. The lack of awareness and homophobia leads to youth not speaking about their sexuality or sexual violence, particularly same-sex sexual violence. An organization, "Two Spirits in Motion" did a study that found that 1/3 of the youth who attempted suicide in northern Alberta were youth were questioning their sexuality.
- What is happening in the communities of ***Northern Ontario*** is very different and specific solutions need to be developed: women are often living in sub-standard housing and are sharing space with up to 10 people in the same house; they are isolated if a situation does occur and often have to wait weeks or months for a perpetrator of violence to be moved away from the community or for them to leave. The level of addictions in the Northern communities is high.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS: EDUCATION

Support healthy relationships and healthy ways of living

For many people, particularly young people, they are not clear on what is a healthy relationship. Sexual violence becomes part of family life, dating life and being accepted.

There is a need to describe and show healthy ways of living. The medicine wheel and other teachings that reinforce healthy ways of living are good tools to use.

Part of the healing process includes learning about the different roles that each person has to play, particularly the role of men and fathers to protect the people they love.

Aboriginal organization staff need on-going training on sexual violence, teaching about healthy relationships and intensive training for the delivery of sexual violence related programming, policy and educational tools. Space needs to be made for their healing during the training process.

Address the external messages that normalize sexual violence

Over time stereotypes become reality. The direct result of colonization is that Aboriginal people see images of themselves that are disrespectful and stereotypical. Any group of people, put through the circumstances of colonization, would manifest in similar ways. The media and public institutions today have a responsibility to end any stereotypical images and messages that lead to the promotion of violence.

- The media and social media reinforce particular messages about sexual violence.
- Pornography continues to be normalized. Child pornography continues to be prevalent. Like the South, Northern Ontario First Nations communities can get access to over 100 stations that are pornographic. What learned behaviour and messages are being reinforced?
- The lack of mainstream media coverage on stories about sexual violence, particularly when it relates to Aboriginal women, makes it invisible.
- Social media is creating new forms of sexual violence: sexting, internet photographs, and facebook exposure.
- The Internet lures women into situations that make sexual violence probable.
- Women hating women is reinforced and a form of misogyny. There is an increase in the number of gangs and bullying. Young women are becoming as aggressive as men. We are creating circumstances where women, girls and children are violated and their violence is a coping mechanism.
- Institutionalized patriarchy is entrenched in many key institutions. For example, the church has reinforced ideas that women and children are not to talk about sexual violence; and lateral violence and vicarious trauma is happening in many workplaces and educational settings.

Develop key messages

- Rethink the story of sexual violence from an Aboriginal perspective which begins with culture and answers different questions, including, How does this violation impact on our spiritual, emotional, physical and mental life? There are many spiritual people who are inviting Aboriginal people to reframe life experiences in a completely different way. The consultation process could provide that opportunity.

There are a number of key words and messages that need to be part of the consultation process, such as: love, resiliency, wholeness, and forgiveness with accountability. Some examples of key messages are:

- The story is yours. Tell it in your way.
- The healing journey has many starting points and many tools. Choose what and who works for you.
- It is not your fault.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS: CAPACITY

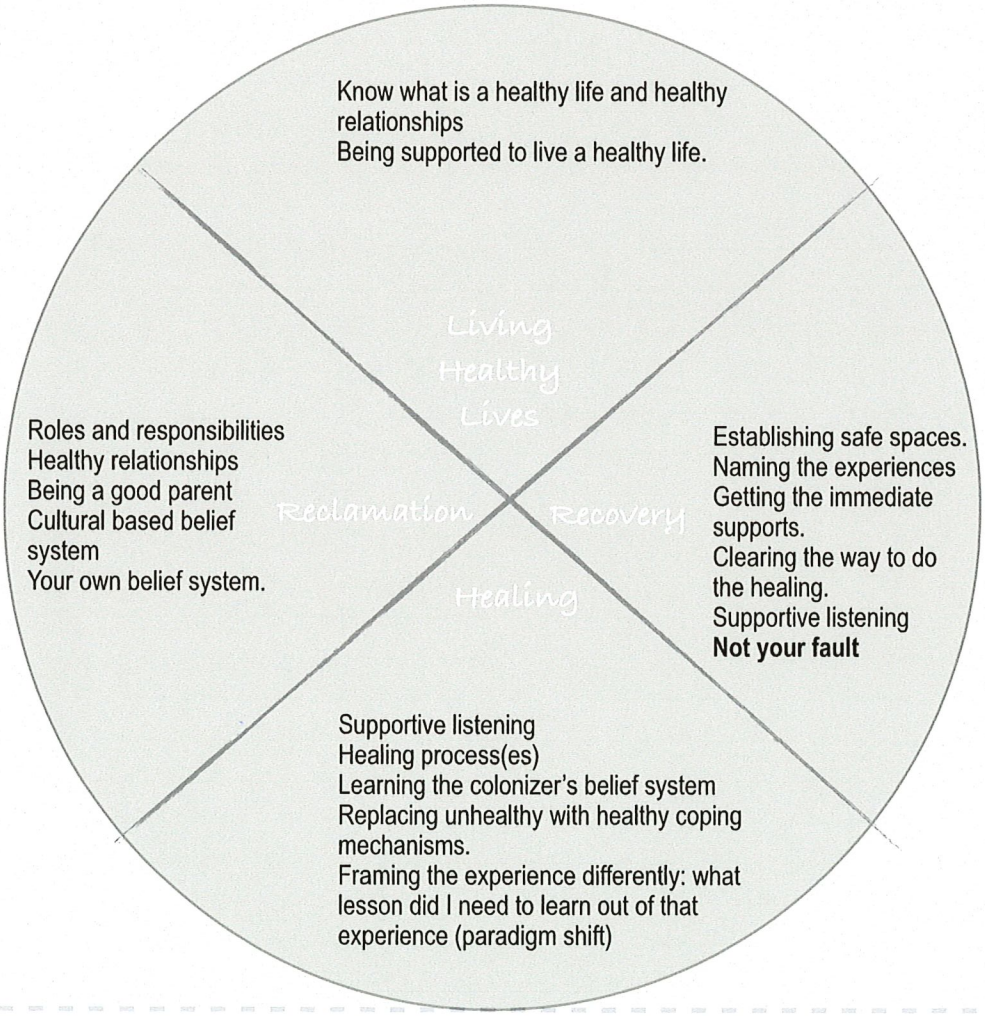
Sexual Violence Community Capacity Building Wheel

It is important to reinforce that the starting point is to **end** sexual violence and not just to **talk** about the issue of sexual violence

The wheel starts in the east with recovery. Safety and telling the story of the experience of sexual violence is the beginning of the process. In the south is healing where people can have the opportunity to understand their experience. In the west, each person can reclaim the strengths and roles that can move him or her beyond the experience of sexual violence. In the north, people can live a healthy life.

The ability to address sexual violence in another person's life requires specific skills and abilities:

- Helpers need to be supported to do their own personal work around sexual violence.
- Sexual assault teams need to be created that are Aboriginal specific.
- A strength and resiliency based approach is needed.
- Many healing processes need to be in place for people to choose from, including healing circles.
- Develop ways to support women to address sexual violence earlier in their life and not carry it is a burden and shame for so long.
- Restorative justice is a tool that needs to be shared and used more.



Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women Outcomes:

If there is adherence to the broad guidelines, goals and principles set out in the Strategy there are real and achievable outcomes that can be produced. These include:

1. That governments and Aboriginal organizations and communities work collaboratively to develop a 'continuum of care' to address issues of violence against Aboriginal women.

2. That we have clear, issue specific legislation to end violence against Aboriginal women.

3. That all Aboriginal women in Ontario are protected from every form of violence, be it physical, sexual, emotional or financial.

4. That Aboriginal women will once again join their rightful place as equal partners within Aboriginal communities, fully protected and enfranchised.

