

Closing Written Submissions Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario

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Closing Written Submissions Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario

Background of Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario (ASOO)

ASOO is a collaboration of 26 Member Organizations and 41 Associate Members that are specifically mandated to provide coordination, training, research and support to shelters and to provide family violence prevention and intervention services to Aboriginal families in the Province of Ontario. A list of all Member organizations and Associate organizations is attached as Appendix A to the Survey Report that is recorded as Exhibit # 48, May 31, 2018, Part II, Volume 4 and is attached here for ease of reference.

ASOO recognizes that its work is all about maintaining healthy relationships. This is done by recognizing the interconnectedness between organizations and an individual, their family, their extended family, the community, and the land and to understand that they are never alone and there are always resources to support them. All Indigenous shelter workers understand the importance of safety, and they have the expertise in differentiating each individual's service and program needs. All shelters must ensure there is a prevention plan in place for every individual client.

ASOO has standing in all Parts of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. With the review of hundreds of exhibits and transcripts of all of the hearings provided by the National Inquiry, many gaps, barriers and challenges were identified. Numerous reports have reported many of the same issues (i.e. not being heard, underfunding to First Nations communities, systemic violence, lack of anti-violence programs, violence prevention outreach programs and lack of police training for family violence.) A common theme in all of the evidence provided is that Indigenous people know how to take care of and protect each other, regardless of profession or discipline, they know what is needed to be successful.

These final submissions will provide the issues that are of importance and significance to ASOO to assist in preventing violence and its relationships with families of MMIWG.

Part One

The first part of the submissions provides a summary of the evidence that was presented to the Inquiry by ASOO's President Sandra Montour.

New Beginnings Standards for Ontario Indigenous Shelters¹

The New Beginnings Standards for Ontario Indigenous Shelters is prepared by an Indigenous Working Group. It is as a resource for non-Indigenous shelters to assist their staff in understanding the needs of their Indigenous clientele.

There are 6 Standards for Ontario Indigenous Shelters.

1. Accessing Services outlines, access criteria, shelter capacity, intake and assessment, length of stay, transitioning from the shelter, referrals to other services, shelter-to-shelter transfer, resident not returning to the shelter policies.
2. Person/ resident rights and responsibilities discusses the right to receive service, resident rights and responsibilities, privacy and right to confidentiality, Consent from Persons and Dependents, person's records, food and nutrition, Complaints Process, supporting the safety and security of shelter persons/residents and the use of substances and supports for persons and dependents with mental health needs.

This policy includes all shelter staff, board members, chief and council representatives, placement students, volunteers, clients and their dependents. All individuals will sign a confidentiality agreement to maintain in confidence all current and previous clients. The shelter will not disclose ANY type of information about any client past or present, unless there is an imminent risk to the client and their children or unless required by law. When consulting with referrals for other services the shelter will obtain consent from the individual.

3. Program standards discuss crisis line services, residential support, safety planning and risk assessment, individual support planning, supports for children, duty to report, and culturally safe supports.
4. Staff and volunteer section weighs in on staff orientation, safety for staff and volunteers.

¹ Evidence of Sandra Montour presented at Calgary "Government Services" hearing, May 28-June 1, 2018, Part II, Volume 4, Exhibit 50.

5. Health and safety sector of the report speaks on; adherence to laws, health and safety such as general health and safety and infectious diseases and outbreaks, first aid and CPR, Food safety, Fire safety and Emergency services, Safety for children, resident medication, serious occurrences and reporting them, as well as the continuity of service.
6. Service and monitoring and evaluation. Details are provided regarding service review and evaluation.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) template is included with this document. This establishes protocols of cooperation and understanding between the shelters and local CAS, which is made after an oral agreement and before a legal contract. This initializes the details of the agreement entered into and outlines future involvement of both parties. This MOU can be tailored to each individual shelter's requirements. Within this template it identifies the parties, the background, shared values, purpose and agreements, duration and term of memorandum/termination process, meetings/ reporting details, financial considerations, and signatures with dates.

Although these standards are set in place, ASOO advises that they do not have the necessary resources to implement all of them.

Aboriginal Family Violence in Ontario Needs Assessment²

An Aboriginal Family Violence Needs Assessment was conducted over the course of one year in 2013 to 2014. The people who participated in the assessment were shelter executives, shelter clients, shelter staff, mainstream shelter executives, and federal and provincial government representatives. The purpose of this assessment is to provide the government and other interest parties with important information on how to strengthen the response to family violence in Aboriginal communities as well as provide efficient support to the crucial role that Aboriginal shelters provide in that response.

It was identified that there was a need for the following supports, programs and services:

- A holistic and cultural integrated approach to addressing the needs of a client;
- Support to create a specific framework to end family violence on and off reserve;

² Evidence of Sandra Montour presented at the Calgary hearings, "Government Services, May 28-June 1, 2018, Part II, Volume 4, Exhibit 49.

- Need to undertake community-based research projects to describe the scope and context of services;
- Training needs for all shelter staff, on- reserve, off-reserve;
 - Top percentage for training to include;
 - mental health issues,
 - mental health assessment,
 - family law,
 - stress management,
 - substance abuse issues,
 - health trends,
- Recognizing specific realities of the violence across the range of communities;
- Cultural safety in services;
- Core funding;
- Recognizing the unique situation in Northern communities;
- Refined evaluation and data collection to support sound planning, to tell the complete story of the work being done;
- Long-term coordinated investment by the federal and provincial governments to be developed with ASOO and First Nations organizations, to address family violence.

ASOO members identified the following observations in Aboriginal shelters:

- Practice of culture and language is important to the healing of not only the clients but the entire community. Thus, generic models do not work with Aboriginal people.
- When women enter shelters, they have a number of issues to take care of not just the violence experienced.
- Women often cannot leave the shelter because of lack of housing. For shelters on the reserve, women and children have to leave their community causing displacement.
- Violence against aboriginal women and children is systemic that it is not even recognized as violence and transforms to oppression.
- Aboriginal women do not want to leave their entire family and want the entire family to heal instead.

- Shelter leaders have an inconsistent title name which causes lack of respect for the work, undervalue and underfund the position.
- Aboriginal shelters have a wealth of knowledge and expertise that can be shared with other service providers.

Recommendations following the Needs Assessment:

1. Building on the work of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women and other Framework documents, support is needed to create a specific framework to end Family Violence that reflects on and off reserve realities of service delivery in responding to Family Violence.
2. Support through a number of community-based research projects.
3. Support research that will tell the story of what is happening in Northern communities.
4. Support work with governments to refine evaluation and data collection tools that are useful to support sound planning and that tell the complete story of the work being done at shelters and the journeys that women take to end violence in their lives.
5. A long-term coordinated investment plan be developed between the federal and provincial governments and with the ASOO and First Nation organizations to address Aboriginal family violence. Addressing jurisdictional issues between on-reserve and off-reserve funding.
6. ASOO be supported to provide training to Aboriginal Shelters to support them in better responding to the complexity of the issues they have to address.
7. ASOO be supported to provide tailored training to ASOO partners including: Chiefs of Ontario and non-aboriginal shelters.
8. ASOO receive core funding to support their continued capacity to respond to the level and complexity of violence and provide training, evaluation and best practice collection that is needed in the sector in order to maximize the investment of all resources while also supporting the existing and future Aboriginal leadership and VAAW sector.
9. ASOO receive financial support to describe, highlight and promote current best practices.

10. On reserve shelters must have a second stage housing Indigenous women to transition to once they are stabilized within the shelter. They could live in second stage housing for up to two years and gain more skills through counselling and support. These second stage housing programs also need their own adult and children s counsellors.³
11. To educate community members about violence, resources are required to hire community education workers in the community to work directly to educate members about what family violence is, what abuse is and what healthy relationships look like, etc. These workers can also let the community know the shelter is there to help them. This could also save lives.

In conclusion, Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario are prepared to assume that greater role to assist Indigenous families and communities in preventing, healing and eliminating family violence.

Ganohkwasra, Youth Lodge Family Assault Support Services Pamphlet⁴

The purpose in highlighting Ganohkwasra’s support services for youth is to demonstrate the work that is being done, specifically at the Six Nations Grand River Territory, to prevent violence amongst the youth. The importance of the Ganohkwasra Youth Lodge is to heal the youth who continue to suffer from the intergenerational trauma of colonization, residential schools, systemic racism and oppression in the community. Many youth have first-hand experience of family violence in some form, whether it be physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. These experiences cause youth to steer off path. As Onkwehonwe people [the original people], they have a duty to take care of their people by thinking seven generations ahead. This includes healing our children and guiding them back on the good path by learning their cultural teachings and teaching them to be accountable for their actions.

“My Home on Turtle Island” is a First Nations group home for youth ages 12-18 years old. It operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The fundamental mandate for the Ganohkwasra Youth Lodge is adhering to the respect and the safety of all participants and staff. The Youth Lodge applies a culturally sensitive therapeutic method to the healing of the Youth’s physical,

³ This is supported in evidence presented at Canada, Interim Report Call Into The Night: An Overview Of Violence Against Aboriginal Women (Canada: Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2011) at 25-26.

http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/parl/XC71-403-1-1-04-eng.pdf

⁴ Evidence of Sandra Montour presented at the Calgary hearings, “Government Services, May 28-June 1, 2018, Part 2, Volume IV, Exhibit 51.

mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. The purpose of this program is to assist participants in self-evaluation by helping them identify their less than effective behaviours. In addition, participants learn healthy alternatives and skills to make effective choices to apply in their daily lives. Residents of the Youth Lodge are given responsibilities such as: participating in the daily upkeep of the residence, attend school or a work/volunteer program and participate in individualized programming, which include but not limited to; health, life skills, culture, and leisure activities. Once a participant successfully reaches their individual plan objectives. They are then discharged with aftercare support and resources.

Summary of Sandra Montour’s Evidence at Part II Hearing, Government Services⁵

Sandra Montour is a Mohawk woman from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. She is the President of the Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario as well as the Executive Director of Ganokwasra (Love Among us), a Family Assault Support Service located in the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Additionally, she is a therapist assisting people with their healing through sexual abuse, family violence, grief, and trauma. Sandra’s position as Executive Director at Ganokwasra gives her front-line experience in dealing with Aboriginal victims of family violence. Ganokwasra is very unique to its structure as they are family-oriented meaning they don’t just accept women into the shelter. They accept Aboriginal women and their children. They provide children with programs and services they need for healing because they are witness to or have experienced family violence. Ganokwasra also accepts men into their shelter, as Ganokwasra recognizes that Aboriginal men to are victims of abuse. Programs and services are also provided and available for men in and out of residence.

During Sandra’s presentation at the National Inquiry, she identified the gaps and barriers and challenges that need immediate attention:

- lack of accessible specialty services;
- lack of transportation to access programs and services;
- lack of services available;

⁵ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Truth-Gathering Process, Part II Institutional Hearings, “Government Services” Calgary, Alberta, Part II, Volume IV, Thursday May 31, 2018, Transcripts of Sandra Montour’s Testimony at 206.

- lack of adequate funding to provide necessary services;
- the pay is significantly less for the amount of work provided in caring for individuals who do have access to services and programs;
- Northern communities in Canada have a significant difficulty in accessing resources for programs and services; the expenses in the North are double than in the south, yet the shelters in the north receive same funding as on-reserve shelters in the south; Transportation services are outrageous in the north as well.
- lack of space available for those who are in need of programs and services;
- not being heard by the Government;
- not being able to be proactive and develop important relationships with other organizations;
- lack of access to addiction services;
- lack of holistic approaches to healing, including culture, health, education, youth services;
- shelters losing good workers due to underfunding, specifically low salaries;
- lack of beds available in shelters, turning people away who need the services immediately;
- executives in shelters constantly battling professionals, government to be understood.

Part Two

This part identifies gaps in services and specific issues that ASOO want to highlight. This section also provides multiple recommendations. Some of them may be repetitive to the work already highlighted above but the repetitiveness also brings attention to what is required at the present time.

Gaps in Services

The Standing Committee on the Status of Women, in 2011, did a study and gathered many frontline workers and activists to address the issue of violence against Aboriginal women. In that report, there was a discussion about the continued housing challenges for Aboriginal women when they want to end a violent relationship or to prevent violence. As noted,

To leave when violence occurs, emergency shelters must provide a place to which a woman can escape, ideally with her children. To relocate her family, even within a reserve community, requires adequate affordable housing to which she and her family can move. Aboriginal women and service providers told the Committee that these housing resources are rarely, if ever, available, leaving too many with little choice but to stay in a violent situation, or to return to one. While the situation of women in smaller and isolated communities and those living in or relocating to larger cities are different, the lack of services and shelter spaces is a constant for all Aboriginal women seeking to escape violence.⁶

ASOO Members identified the many gaps and barriers which prevent women from accessing shelter services. The majority of these gaps and barriers are the result of the lack of adequate funding to provide necessary services. Executive Directors are constantly searching for money to keep their shelters running and to provide the necessary services to their clients. There is a lack of beds available for women and children. They are waitlisted which leaves them unsafe, no access support services and more vulnerable to violence. Many waitlisted women and children go back to the family violence home they are fleeing from. There is a need for transportation for access service especially in the true northern areas of Ontario. Another barrier is the fear women have of reporting abuse when they have children. They don't want their children taken away when they are trying to protect them by leaving. There are gaps for clients suffering from family violence and compounded issues such as: addictions, and homelessness. In addition to the barriers, there are no prevention services or funding for staff to conduct outreach education. And most shelters do not accept men.

The gaps identified to prevent services to women, men and family members of MMIWG include lack of available beds within shelters, lack of funding to provide the sufficient amount of staff needed, family violence education and awareness. Those who require such services are falling through the cracks. Many have shortage of beds in shelters and many Aboriginal women and children are turned away. Many of them return home, back to their communities or their abusers, even after six weeks of shelter stay. There is not enough transition housing from shelter to the outside. This should be mandatory in order to keep Aboriginal women safe and

⁶ Canada, Interim Report Call Into The Night: An Overview Of Violence Against Aboriginal Women (Canada: Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2011) at 24.
http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/parl/XC71-403-1-1-04-eng.pdf

alive when there is no other option such as housing or having to leave their own community to seek housing. It put them directly at risk of being missing or murdered. It puts their children as witness to more violence, homeless and poverty. Many women return to the violence because they have no money to permanently leave their abusers and often times they don't have the finances to live on their own as a single parent.

ASOO has identified that there needs to be more money put into healing of the entire family women, men, children, aunties, uncles, grandparents. Everyone is affected. There needs to be appropriate staffing to provides these services. ASOO members also believe that the men they serve require healing and the men do want to heal. Aboriginal men also have had their identity taken away. They need the help and support as well. Having a cultural worker involved in the shelters would be able to provide the teachings of our history, or workshops could be offered such as moccasin making. Cultural programming needs to be offered. Not all men are abusers. ASOO also acknowledges the abusers. They need healing as well. Healing of the entire family is needed. They also suggested removing them from the community to rehabilitate at a culturally appropriate healing lodge.

ASOO members gathered in discussion of the above information and when asked about what they think and what do they see or hear? They responded:

- hear from the kids - "fix my family"
- "love and respect"
- "safe space"
- "making healthy/healthier choices"
- "get to the roots"
- "know your ceremonies and use them"
- "Hear the voice of men" – "they don't want to be the way they are"
- "We've all been traumatized – we have to understand, our trauma comes from one place, once understood can move forward"
- "Need to be informed – everything has a pattern – to keep us down"
- "Preparing ourselves, the documents – take into ceremony – evaluate the intent of the work"

- “The law of mother earth”
- “The reclamation of traditional family law”

Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario are working together providing support for each other and provide their best practices for Aboriginal women with their limited funding. With that they remain dedicated to ending family violence and violence against Aboriginal women. They provide culturally sensitive programming to their shelters and committed to the healing the entire family affected by family violence and these families are the survivors who continue to suffer from the intergenerational trauma.

With the focus on prevention of violence and the members of ASOO’s frontline workers’ expertise in working with families dealing with domestic violence in their communities, ASOO makes the following further recommendations:

1. Federal and Provincial Governments must consult with Aboriginal Shelters with issues directly related to Family Violence Prevention
2. Consistent Multi Year Funding for Programs Services to address gaps in services
3. Collecting Data
4. ASOO (like the non-Aboriginal shelters) must be at the provincial level negotiations to address the recommendations to end violence against Indigenous women.
5. Northern recommendations: intense interventions are required in the north with more funded shelters and resources and a full awareness of what the northern reality is.

Funding disparity

There are 242,495 First Nations people in Ontario. There are 133 First Nations communities in Ontario. As of 2014, there were 23 Aboriginal shelters in Ontario, 14 on reserve and 9 off reserve. There are only nine (9) shelters that receive federal funding. There are 14 shelters in Ontario that do not identify as Aboriginal shelters but indicate the majority of their residents are Aboriginal. There are 171 Violence Against Women Shelters in Ontario. The shelters are funded by the following federal and provincial funding sources:

- CMHC- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: provided capital funding for the building shelters mostly on-reserve;
- Indigenous Services Canada: provided funding for core and operating costs;

- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services;
- Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy;⁷ this is funded by Ontario Government

Ministries:

- Children and Youth Services,
- Community and Social Services
- Health and Long-Term Care
- Aboriginal Affairs
- Ontario Women’s Directorate

As noted, shelters are funded through a variety of sources and through different levels of federal and provincial government. Over the last six years, the Ministry of Community and Social Services have not increased their funding. The main issue identified by ASOO members is that mainstream shelters receive more funding than Aboriginal shelters as a result the mainstream shelters have more staff and resources. Some have staff lawyers and nurse practitioners. ASOO wants to know why they cannot access more funding for services like mainstream shelters. Although one shelter with ASOO is funded through mainstream funders, it does not have the capacity to have professionals coming in nor does it have access to the same funding formula.

Some First Nations Shelters now own their shelters, however, they still do not have enough resources to fully run the necessary programming and to run its shelters. The Shelter Leaders of these shelters felt that they were set up for failure. Initially most shelters were not built strictly as a shelter, some were old or some were other buildings which were renovated into shelters.

ASOO members have identified the issue of funding disparity as a crucial gap for Indigenous women stating:

We hope to shed light on the issue of funding disparity amongst the Ontario shelters. While the Aboriginal shelters tend to the real issues of Aboriginal women throughout Ontario, we are grossly under-funded compared to mainstream shelters. Could this be one of the

⁷ Ontario. Ministry of Community and Social Services. *Supporting Aboriginal People*, https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/community/programsforaboriginalpeople.aspx/programs/ahbhc/AHWS_renewal_letter.aspx

participating factors that have caused vital gaps for Aboriginal women, leaving them on the streets to care for their children as best they can, and in doing so, leaving them vulnerable to abuse, violence and death?⁸

There is a tremendous amount of inequality regarding the amount of funds given to mainstream shelters compared to Aboriginal shelters. In order to be “accepted” to receive funding like a mainstream shelter the Aboriginal shelter has to incorporate. However, incorporating affects the political status of Aboriginal communities, specifically the issue of sovereignty. This should not be a barrier to Aboriginal shelters.⁹

All members of ASOO are not funded equally as each shelter has its funding coming from different areas. Some are federal, some are provincial, some fundraise and some get funding from their band. They are all struggling to maintain their shelter buildings, staff and programs and services. Shelter directors spend far too much time and resources applying for funding and writing proposals. Some do not have the resources/capacity to write proposals and apply for funding. Recently ASOO applied for Status of Women funding; however their application was unsuccessful and they are curious to know how many Indigenous shelters had applied and if any were successful in their application. Individual shelters that are not incorporated were not eligible to apply for these gender-based violence calls for proposals that was offered by the Status of Women. Consequently, this eliminates all on-reserve shelters in Ontario, leaving only urban Indigenous and mainstream shelters eligible to apply.

RECOMMENDATION: Governments to provide appropriate and equal funding to Indigenous Shelters. When proper funding is provided, Indigenous Shelters would have the proper infrastructure rather than the current situation where shelters are poor and in need of serious upgrades and repairs. With proper funding the Indigenous Shelters could house holistic services with a women’s health clinic, child welfare workers, healers, Elders/Knowledge Holders (to teach about Indigenous family law and responsibilities), cultural resource workers, community

⁸ Aboriginal Family Violence Needs Assessment Report, *supra* note 2 at 14.

⁹ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Truth-Gathering Process, Part II Institutional Hearings, “Government Services” Calgary, Alberta, Part II, Volume IV, Thursday May 31, 2018, Transcripts of Sandra Montour’s Testimony at 216.

educators and other types of services that could work collaboratively with Indigenous Shelters. Since Indigenous women are in need of these Shelters and the Shelters are working directly with Indigenous women, it would be great if the government possessed the vision to invest in Indigenous shelters to help Indigenous women before they are murdered or go missing. Perhaps we could save lives.

The following are the proper resources that are required by ASOO – a wish list per se:

- Provincial and Federal core funding
- Funding to go directly to on-reserve Shelters rather than the funds being flowed through Chief and Council where 10 to 20 percent of the funds are taken for administrative fees
- To have funding for counselling – onsite within our shelters
- To allow Family Violence Prevention to be run by shelters
- That every Indigenous shelter to be given consistent increases in infrastructure funding for shelter repairs and maintenance
- That every shelter have an increase in funding for transportation expenses
- That there is an increase in funding to adequately increase wages and salaries of Indigenous shelter staff comparable to mainstream shelter salaries
- That every Indigenous and non-Indigenous shelter have a cultural resource worker
- That every Indigenous shelter have a cook/life skills worker/maintenance staff
- The federal government to provide supports for cultural recognition
- The provincial government to provide support for cultural recognition
- The federal government to provide funds of a minimum of \$20,000 for each shelter to hold ceremony/gathering for MMIWG
- Need intervention supports to focus on the men as well - Money for resources, counsellors and programs for all life stages
- To have a collaborative relationship with funders
- ASOO needs to have a chair with the Ministry
- ASOO needs to be identified as an expert for violence prevention
- ASOO needs to be identified as an expert for ending violence against indigenous women government discussions.

- Need to have a community educator in every shelter
- Need a traditional healer in every shelter
- Need systems to be able to offer these to the families
- Need to be offering Indigenous Partner Assault Response (PAR) groups
- Need no discrimination
- Develop Indigenous legal orders to teach own laws, roles and responsibilities
- Need intensive interventions in the north
- Needs to be more shelters in the North
- Need to understand what the northern reality is and the higher costs of living in the north
- Need to increase funding in the North to accommodate high northern expenses
- Need an increase to travel budget to allow women to be transported to access northern resources
- Need capital funding for consistent infrastructure and to repair and replace northern shelters worn to due harsh cold climate conditions

ASOO's Relationships with Families of MMIWG

Many of the ASOO Members have had direct relationships with Indigenous women who have unfortunately went missing and/or found murdered. Many of the ASOO members were unable to provide services to those women because of the lack of resources which sometimes meant that they were put on waiting lists. Many of the ASOO members have provided services to many family members of MMIWG.

A MMIWG survey¹⁰ was conducted with ASOO Members and they answered the following questions:

1. Has the shelter been impacted by MMIWG?
2. Were they aware of any clients who had accessed shelter services become murdered and/or missing at some point afterwards?

¹⁰ Evidence of Sandra Montour presented at Calgary "Government Services" hearing, May 28-June 1, 2018, Part 2, Volume IV, Exhibit 48.

3. Number of women/men/youth and children who accessed shelter services for support after the murder of their loved one.
4. What are the gaps and barriers that prevented women from accessing services.
5. What are the gaps preventing services to family members of MMIWG?

Following the survey, ASOO members demonstrated that, nearly ALL but three of its members have been impacted by MMIWG either directly or indirectly. The two of the ASOO members who did not fit in to this criteria simply, did not know and were unable to give an answer. However, they felt they could provide an answer if they had the funds to create a database to store past client information.

Fifty percent (50%) of ASOO members are aware of their clients who accessed their services and became murdered or missing at some point. One ASOO member identified 15 MMIWG who were clients of their shelter. Another ASOO Member has completed two missing persons reports on a weekly basis. The other fifty percent (50%) of ASOO members again did not know but felt they could provide an answer given the appropriate funds for database creation.

Regarding the number of men/women/youth and children that access shelter services for support after the murder of their loved one, two shelters stated that 75% of their clientele accessed services. One shelter stated that 25% of their clients were family members of MMIWG who accessed services. Another shelter, which has a database, confirmed that 4700 of their clientele past and present have been affected directly or indirectly on some level. Two shelters are aware of at least one client who accessed services. Another shelter was unsure of the exact numbers of the clients who accessed support services; however, stated that “women are more reserved because they don't trust society, making it harder to really find the suitable help they need. They act like it is just a life milestone, like if one of their family members aren't missing or murdered its NOT normal” (ASOO Member). Two ASOO members have no known statistics.

In terms of the MMIWG in each Indigenous community, each shelter wants to be able to acknowledge the spirits of these women and girls. They want to do this by hosting an event such as a Celebration of Life. This would be a traditional honouring to help send the spirit

home. Some ideas of doing this would be a powwow or ceremony. ASOO members encourage their people and communities to come together and support those individuals and their families affected by MMIWG.

Relationship of Indigenous Women with Policing (RCMP, Ontario Provincial Police and First Nations Policing)

ASOO members identified that Indigenous women in shelters have a fear of police, they lack trust and have fear of reporting missing persons. If this is the case, then drastic changes need to occur in order for Indigenous women to feel safe not only in their own spaces but with policing. Commissioner Michele Audette stated in her opening address; “We’ve heard through fifteen community hearings that there is a double standard with the police and our women.”¹¹

A. RCMP

Before Examination-In-Chief Commissioner Brenda Lucki requested to make a few opening remarks and apologized on behalf of the RCMP as follows:

On behalf of myself and my organization, I am truly sorry for the loss of your loved ones and the pain this has caused you, your families and your communities. I’m sorry that, for too many of you, the RCMP was not the police service that it needed to be during this terrible time in your life. It is very clear to me that RCMP could have done better, and I promise to you we will do better.¹²

Commissioner Lucki also stated:

We know we have a large role to play when it comes to preventing this violence and bringing perpetrators to justice.¹³

One of the major challenges to the information provided by Commissioner Lucki in her testimony is that there are no Ontario Statistics. In May 2017 the Working Together to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls was produced as a National Scan of RCMP

¹¹ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Institutional Hearing “Police Practices and Policies,” Regina, Saskatchewan, Part II, Volume VI, June 25, 2018, Transcripts of Michelle Audette at 26.

¹² National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Institutional Hearing “Police Practices and Policies,” Regina, Saskatchewan, Part II, Volume VI, June 25, 2018, Transcripts of Commissioner Brenda Lucki at 34.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Initiatives. This report provided a summary of family violence prevention, MMIWG and related initiatives that the RCMP have conducted or participated in at the national, divisional and detachment levels. However, concluded in this report it is stated:

The RCMP does not have jurisdiction for contract policing in Ontario and Quebec, which have provincial police forces. In these jurisdictions the RCMP conducts federal policing investigation. However, there are Indigenous policing initiatives in partnership with the provincial police forces in these provinces.¹⁴

The difficulty about this lack of jurisdiction is that it creates jurisdictional nightmares. RCMP policies do not apply to Ontario. It has developed a Police Service Agreement with the Province of Ontario. These agreements are between Public Safety Canada and Ontario. This allows the Province to conduct its policing service independently, which is also known as Self-Administered Policing. The RCMP is available on federal matter only and will be called upon to assist in major investigations, emergencies whether they are national or emergencies beyond the policing capacity of a province to address alone. The RCMP does have offices within the Province; however, its primary focus is on federal policing such as Federal and International Operations; National Security Criminal Investigations; and Protective Policing. There were a number of questions through cross-examination to a number of police witnesses about jurisdictional issues that spreads through all police departments. The RCMP only becomes involved in Ontario policing when there are major criminal investigations or an area outside the scope of what provincial police can do. It is not clear as to whether the RCMP who work with Ontario policing services federally. The difficulty that was brought forward was that when an Indigenous woman goes missing, there is no coordinated effort by potential relevant policing jurisdictions to do a search.

The following is a list of policing initiatives in partnership with the RCMP and the Ontario Provincial Police (O.P.P):

Policing, Investigative and Justice Initiatives

- Detachment-specific family violence statistics;
- Focus on women at high-risk;

¹⁴ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Working Together to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls. A National Scan of RCMP Initiatives*. May 2017 the <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/wam/media/1830/original/c9e8444da1a3ddb48aefae3f48a7306.pdf> at 33, fn 7.

- Missing person coordinator/ direction;
- Restorative justice.

Crime Prevention

- Aboriginal Shield Program;
- Camps & conferences for girls & youth;
- Community MMIWG events;
- Chronic missing persons initiative;
- Community safety plans;
- Elders, grandmothers & grandfathers;
- Indigenous language material;
- Social media campaigns (local);
- I am a kind man;
- White and purple ribbons;
- Victim services coordinator;
- Working with MMIWG groups;
- Youth Diversion;
- 40 Developmental Assets.

Training

- Children and Youth
- Bullying & Cyber-bullying
- Drugs, alcohol and addictions;
- Elder safety;
- Family violence;
- Family violence and historic trauma;
- Family violence frontline training;
- Girls empowerment and safety;
- Human trafficking & exploitation;
- Mental health for youth;
- Self-defence/ martial arts;
- Sexual assault and interference;
- Suicide prevention & intervention;
- Victim services;

Other

- Family violence Initiative-funded project;
- Protocols with Indigenous organizations.

RECOMMENDATION: ASOO also wants to highlight that despite policing initiatives in partnership with the RCMP and the Ontario Provincial Police (O.P.P), these initiatives are required at the grassroots First Nation community levels.

B. OPP

ASOO wishes to highlight the role of the OPP and MMIWG and highlight its Missing Persons Policy. It is hoped that these processes and protocols will be followed without discrimination. Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is a division of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional services (MCSCS).¹⁵ They are governed by the *Police Services Act (PSA)* R.S.O. 1990.¹⁶ The PSA sets out the rules and responsibilities of the Solicitor General (s.3)¹⁷, municipalities (s.4-8)¹⁸ and the OPP (s.17-20).¹⁹ The OPP is the largest police service in Ontario and the second largest in Canada.²⁰ The highest ranking member of the OPP is the Commissioner. The Commissioners' responsibilities include overseeing all aspects of OPP's operations.

The OPP consists of four (4) divisions and its' constituents; which are led by a Provincial Commander.

1. Traffic Safety and Operational Support:
 - a. Highway Safety Division,
 - b. Field Support Bureau,
 - c. Security Bureau,
 - d. Communications and Technology Services Bureau.
2. Corporate Services:
 - a. Business Management Bureau,
 - b. Career Development Bureau,
 - c. Fleet, Supply and Weapons Services Bureau,
 - d. Municipal Policing Bureau.
3. Investigations and Organized Crime:
 - a. Investigation and Support Bureau,

¹⁵ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Institutional Hearing "Police Practices and Policies," Regina, Saskatchewan, Part II, Volume X, June 28, 2018, Transcripts of Chief Superintendent Mark Pritchard, OPP, Exhibit 137, Overview of Pritchard Evidence at 4.

¹⁶ *Police Services Act*, R.S.O 1990

¹⁷ *Police Services Act*, Rules and Responsibilities of Solicitor General s.3

¹⁸ *Police Services Act*, Municipalities s. 4-8

¹⁹ *Police Services Act*, Ontario Provincial Police s.17-20

²⁰ *Supra* note 15.

- b. Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau,
 - c. Professional Standards Bureau,
 - d. Provincial Operations Intelligence Bureau,
 - e. Investigation and Enforcement Bureau (AGCO),
 - f. Chief Firearms Office,
 - g. Project Support Centre.
4. Field Operations:
- a. Indigenous Policing Bureau,
 - b. Central region,
 - c. East Region,
 - d. North East Region,
 - e. North West Region,
 - f. West Region,
 - g. Community Safety Services.

Missing Persons

In 1980, the missing person investigations was first incorporated into OPP police orders. To date it has been revised approximately 15 times. The legal framework for missing person investigations in Ontario include:

1. Regulations include:
 - a. Major Case Management, Ontario Regulation 354/04. This requires all police forces to use the Major Case Management system.
 - b. Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Service Regulation s.29, Ont. Reg. 3/99, Police Services Act). This requires the police services board to have a missing person's investigative policy.
 - c. Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Service Regulation s. 12(1)(l), Ont. Reg 3/99 Police Services Act. This requires the Chief of Police, and in the case of the OPP the commissioner, to develop and maintain procedures on and processes for undertaking and managing investigations into missing persons.
1. The Ministry (MCSCS) creates and updates the Policing Standards Manual. This manual provides the guidelines on how to follow the standards for Missing person investigations, criminal investigation management procedures, homicides and ground searches.
 2. Police Orders are also known as OPP policy, contain rules and guidelines for OPP employees. These are issues by the Commissioner. The police orders set out concise expectations

of practice, bestow consistency, withhold accountability which can result in discipline actions if orders are not followed.

3. Missing Person Policy is conducted in accordance with OPP Police Orders, in conjunction with Criminal Investigation Management Procedures, and the Missing Person Manual. The Missing Person Policy defines a “lost” person being; a person who has a known whereabouts ie: hiker, berry picker, Alzheimer’s sufferer, child, hunter, suicidal person. A “missing” person is a person with an unknown location i.e. a person left in a car but never arrived at their destination. The car is not located and person is not at last point seen. This evidence confirms the person leaving.

4. Missing Person Manual addresses:

- a. The facts that Indigenous communities are culturally diverse;
- b. The impact of historical relationships with police may have on an individual/ community receptiveness to police response;
- c. Importance of seeking local advice (i.e. Band Administration Office, Friendship Centres, Aboriginal agencies, etc.);
- d. The need to keep community leaders briefed;
- e. The importance of respecting traditional practices and ceremonies;
- f. The importance of respect, compassion and empathy when conducting investigations.

Reporting a Missing Person to the OPP

All reports of a person lost or missing are accepted, regardless of jurisdiction. When reports are made outside of the OPP jurisdiction, the information is forwarded to the correct police service. If there is ever doubt to jurisdiction or if any police service refuses, OPP will conduct the investigation.

Reporting a missing person

Reporting a missing person can be done by telephone or in-person at an OPP Detachment. The information is entered into the OPP’s Records Management System. Once entered it generates an electronic occurrence report. The Provincial Communication Centres (PCC) will also be contacted.

Future of Missing Person Investigations

In 2018, Ontario introduced the *Missing Persons Act, 2018*. This Act has been passed by legislature but is not yet in force.

Roles and Responsibilities

Provincial Communications Centre Role (PCC)

The PCC role is to obtain as much detail as possible from the person reporting. Generate an electronic occurrence report. The PCC will then proceed through the following steps:

1. Determine priority of the call,
2. Determine the jurisdiction, if required,
3. Broadcast on radio to all OPP officers,
4. Dispatch uniform officers to attend and interview the complainant
5. PCC creates an “event”, this becomes available to every officer as well as dispatcher.

Responsibility of First Officer attending the scene of missing/ lost person report:

1. To attend the location and establish perimeter control,
2. Immediately report incident to supervisor/ detachment commander,
3. Interview complainant in person,
4. Determine if the person is really lost or missing,
5. Input as much information as possible to the Lost/Missing Person questionnaire (LPQ),
6. If possible ground search; complete Evaluating Search urgency Form; provide copies to each respective officer,
7. Consider the Missing person Checklist,
8. Update OPP Records Management System,
9. Complete general occurrence, LPQ and Evaluating Search Urgency Form.

Missing Person Investigative Responsibilities

A uniform member investigating a missing person is required to:

- Verify that the person is missing by immediately attending the scene;

- Conduct a missing person investigation in accordance with the Missing Person Manual;
- Conduct preliminary interviews in-person;
- Determine/verify the person is actually lost/missing;
- Assess to determine whether foul play is involved;
- Complete the Lost/Missing Person Questionnaire (LPQ);
- Complete the Evaluating Search Urgency Form;
- Determine the point last seen;
- Search the residence, including the missing person's room/sleeping area for clues;
- Search outbuildings/vehicles/containers;
- Document the times/locations searched;
- Evaluate the circumstances surrounding the disappearance;
- Ensure that local community family support resources are made available to the family, and all required forms are completed as soon as possible;
- Ensure that face-to-face interviews are completed with the complainant and any associate of the missing person in order to assess the validity of the report,²¹

Police Orders 2.18.9 Missing Person, Missing Person Investigative Responsibilities, and the Missing Person Manual²² assess whether foul play is involved, and to determine the point the person was last seen;

- Collect information to assist in identifying a missing person such as dental records, photographs, fingerprints, DNA samples; and
- Update RMS Niche before the end of their shift, including creating the electronic Missing Person report in RMS

The Lost or Missing Person(s) Questionnaire (LPQ) is a 12- page long form and its completion is mandatory. This form is designed to be used as a review to assist investigating officers.

²¹ *Ibid* at 14.

²² *Ibid* at 9.

The Evaluating Search Urgency form is designed to assess urgency by assigning numeric values to specific factors. Thus, the higher the number, the higher the urgency is assigned to the search. It is mandatory for investigation officers to complete this form. The form assesses the following factors that affect urgency:

1. Age;
2. Medical or health conditions;
3. Number of persons missing;
4. Whether the person(s) are knowledgeable of the area and/or experienced with the outdoors;
5. Weather;
6. Equipment the person may have with them and their clothing;
7. The terrain along with any known hazards such as water or difficult terrain

The following additional factors will be added to the Form by the OPP in the near future, in order to assist in assessing search urgency:

1. Indigenous identity;
2. Child welfare involvement; and
3. Residence on-reserve where the occurrence is in an urban area.

OPP investigating officers are required to keep victims and/or their families informed during on-going investigations. They are also responsible for providing an overview of the criminal justice system and providing the dates, locations and outcomes of all significant judicial proceedings.

Responsibility of a Supervisor

The immediate supervisor of the investigator of a Missing Person is responsible for ensuring that:

1. A Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) is assigned;
2. Consulting with the assigned investigator;
3. Consulting with the Area Crime Sergeant (ACS) to discuss the circumstances of the investigation and to determine the appropriate action to be taken;
4. Ensuring that the investigator has the necessary resources to complete the investigation;

5. Confirming that the investigating uniform member has completed their investigative responsibilities;
6. Maintaining ongoing communication with the Detachment Commander.

Area Crime Sergeants (ACS) are required to:

- a. Determine the most appropriate investigative response;
- b. Continue to assess the ongoing appropriateness of the investigative response;
- c. Assume the lead responsibility in an investigation for all supervisory duties including notifications and approvals related to that investigation.

These officers liaise with other criminal investigators, other OPP Bureaus and with other agencies as required.

The Criminal Investigations Branch attends at the request of First Nations Police agencies for major criminal investigations. (i.e. missing person, homicides, suspicious death etc.)

Overview of Major Case Management System (MCM)

MCM assists police in investigating major cases by :

1. Providing an efficient way to keep track of and sort and analyze large amounts of information about a crime i.e. police notes, witness statements, door-to-door leads, names, locations, vehicles and phone numbers;
2. Promoting consistency in major case investigations;
3. Establishing data entry standards;
4. Enabling the circumstances of the case to be centralized within the software databank by utilizing PowerCase;
5. Assisting police to identify common links and between crimes committed in different locations;
6. Promoting professional police practices, standards and training;
7. Providing accountability, oversight and structure for every aspect of an investigation; and
8. Providing a multidisciplinary approach by requiring consultation and case conferences with coroners and pathologists in certain circumstances.

The Ontario Major Case Management Manual

- a. The Manual, along with the standards identified in it, is one of the mechanisms by which the Solicitor General fulfills the statutory role set out in section 3(2) of the Police Services Act.
- b. Manual sets out MCSCS's position in relation to policy matters specifically related to cases classified as threshold and non-threshold.
- c. The Manual also promotes the inter-disciplinary approach to major case investigations.

The MCM is available to all First Nations Police Services in Ontario.

There are currently 3 First Nations Police agencies that use MCM, they are²³:

1. Six Nations Police;
2. Akwesasne Mohawk Police,
3. Wikwemikong Tribal Police

Role of Provincial Liaison Teams in Indigenous Policing Bureau (IPB)

The IPB provides support and resources to ensure the OPP maintains and continues to develop the abilities to serve Indigenous communities appropriately and to contribute to effective First Nations policing. The IPB consists of a Provincial Liaison Team (PLT). The PLT members are specifically trained to provide communication and act as liaison between OPP and involved parties. All PLT members have attended the OPP's five-day Indigenous Awareness Training.

FBI Model (Victim Specialists and Written Communication)

As part of the OPP's organizational preparation for the National Inquiry, two senior members of the OPP National Inquiry team met with the FBI in order to determine whether there were best practices for missing person investigations they could implement. Part of the communication plan is to engage with Indigenous leadership and communities.

Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) (Ontario)

In March 2018, the OPP and the Indigenous Justice Division of the Ministry of the Attorney General Ontario finalized a protocol to facilitate their work to support MMIWG families.

²³ *Ibid* at 22-23.

The Ontario Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (OCMPUR)

The OCMPUR structure includes three (3) positions that focus on Indigenous-led initiatives such as:

1. Community Mobilization and Outreach Specialist,
2. Indigenous Liaison,
3. Victim and Family Liaison Specialist.

Raising Awareness

The OPP released the 2015 publication of a report entitled OPP Report on Missing and Unsolved Murdered Indigenous People.²⁴ In 2011 the OPP began reviewing all homicide investigations and unsolved missing person and identifies remains in its jurisdiction. Specifically, where the victim was identified as Indigenous. This review period was from 1956-2014. During this review it was found that there were 54 homicides involving Indigenous females, and eight (8) remained unsolved. During the same time period eight (8) were reported missing and still remain missing, with one of them suspected in foul play. The OPP never closes homicide or missing person investigations unless they have been resolved.

OPP programming: Outreach to First Nations; Missing Persons Day

The OPP has partnered with Aboriginal Policing Bureau in four (4) Missing Persons Awareness Day events in Kenora, Whitedog First Nation, Shoal Lake and Treaty 3 communities. The OPP has developed two (2) programs, Project Journey and Project Sunset geared toward youth in Indigenous communities. These programs conduct art and culture activities, sports programs, summer and youth employment. None of these programs include anti-violence programming.

RECOMMENDATION: OPP must establish protocols with Indigenous Shelters.

c. First Nations Policing

There is a First Nations Governance Council (FNPGC) which is a Part of the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG). The FNPGC is an independent operation, governed by Indigenous people who represent Indigenous police services. (Self-Administered police services.) The purpose of the FNPGC is to advocate for cultural sensitivity and instill this into

²⁴ *Ibid* at 38.

modern First Nations policing model. However, FNPGC are not police officers, they are the governors of the police services within Indigenous communities.

The responsibilities of the FNPGC include:

- Oversee and direct police and peacekeeper services individual or collective First Nations,
- Providing a form of forward oversight,
- Setting the direction of the service,
- Ensuring community involvement and reflecting community values,
- Ensuring Chief and Council support,
- Evaluating and redirecting the service in the implementation of its mission.²⁵

The First Nations Policing Program has two policing models. They are Community Tripartite Agreements (CTA) and Self-Administered Agreements (SA). The Community Tripartite Agreements (CTA) is an arrangement between the Government of Canada, RCMP and Indigenous communities. SA agreements are between the Government of Canada and a provincial government, (in this case the Province of Ontario) and an Indigenous community. The First Nation is responsible for administrating its own police service pursuant to provincial legislation through the creation of a police governance board. In Ontario, the police governance board authorizes the employment of constables who are appointed by the Commissioner of the OPP. These agreements are signed with the Chief and Council of a First Nations Community. The SA police service operates under the direction of the Chief of Police who reports to the Police Commission. In Ontario, there are eleven (11) SA agreements that serve 103 Communities. Within those communities the population served is 86,629, with 427 police officers serving this area. The communities that FNPP agreements are in place must be responsible to the cultural characteristics of the community they serve and must have knowledge of the community socio-demographic and cultural profile.

Community Survey rating Self-Administered Police Service vs RCMP CTA

²⁵ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Institutional Hearing “Police Practices and Policies,” Regina, Saskatchewan, Part II, Volume VI, June 28, 2018, Transcripts of Daniel Bellegarde, Exhibit 15 Document “Presentation by the First Nations Police Governance Council of the Canadian Association of Police Governance to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, June 4, 2018” at 3.

Attributes	SA%	CTA%
High level of professionalism	75	93
Working with other police services	75	87
Independent from in appropriate political influences	67	86
Protecting property	58	72
Being visible	50	72
Enforcing band bylaws	67	64
Enforcing Criminal Code	67	50
Enforcing provincial statutes	50	44
Keeping citizens safe	50	39
Providing crime prevention information	33	33
Preventing Crime	33	31
Prompt response to calls for service	33	28

***Public Safety Canada (2010a,14)²⁶

In recent changes in the legislation it is required that the police board prepare strategic plans for the delivery of police services and also prepare an annual review of the performance of the Chief. A major challenge to Ontario policing is described in the article dated May 6, 2014, titled First Nations policing program slammed by auditor general.²⁷ Since 1991, Ottawa has spent more than 1.7 billion on First Nations policing programs. According to Auditor General Ferguson “We also noted in Ontario, the program does not ensure that police services on First Nations reserves meet the standards that apply to police services elsewhere in the province.” Thus, First Nations communities in Ontario do not receive the same level of policing like the rest of the province does. It is believed that according to Auditor General Ferguson, “This report shows that First Nations have been set up for failure and the federal approach to First Nation policing is seriously flawed.”²⁸ In the fly in communities in Ontario, auditors observed that the houses the

²⁶ *Ibid* at 6.

²⁷ *Ibid* at 10.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

officers were living in were “crowded, contained mould, and were in a state of despair.” It was also found that First Nations communities were not involved in the policing agreements. Seven out of nine of them contained no documented evidence of the nature and extent of input by the communities.²⁹

STATISTICS, PATTERNS & STRATEGIES

From a national standpoint, Bellegarde noted the following rates for First Nations in relation to Canadians:

- Crimes are 3.8 times higher.
- Violent crimes are 5.8 times higher
- Assaults are 7 times higher,
- Sexual assaults are 5.4 times higher,
- Drug trafficking are 3.8 times higher.

Current crime patterns are as follows:

- Increase in aboriginal gang activity,
- Increase in bootlegging, opioids and illegal drug and resulting property crime and violence,
- Instances of human trafficking for the sex trade,
- Increase in Elder abuse and domestic violence,
- Increase in victims of crime.

Current crime control strategies:

- Crime prevention programs: anti-gang, cadets, education programs,
- Partnerships in the communities: the HUB model of assisting at-risk people,
- Enforcing First Nation law: banishment,
- Community and family empowerment,
- Language and cultural revitalization,
- Community policing models.

Self-Administered Policing and Impact on Crime in First Nations:

- 22% decrease in incidents of crime,

²⁹ *Ibid.*

- 36% decrease in homicides (Canada had 16% decrease)
- 19% decrease in violent criminal incidents,
- 20% decrease in assault,
- 23% decrease in sexual assaults.

In conclusion, if policing (i.e. OPP and First Nations policing) had everything in place and provided the services that they claim to provide (ie. missing persons policy and protocols), then maybe the number of Indigenous women and girls going missing and found murdered might not be as high as they are. The RCMP and NAPS state that they work collaboratively to investigate and they state that race has no bearing on the intensity or length of investigations; however, the statistics indicate differently.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consultations with Frontline workers at Shelters (with resources attached);
- Ontario Provincial Police develop similar policies as RCMP relating to domestic violence training;
- Establish funded independent Indigenous Liaison Positions to work between community and the police. “In order to have a working relationship with the police, we needed to hire someone in between the community and the police so that the women could go to that other person instead of going to the police and she would support them and she would help them make that first form, that -- that -- that initial form that you have to fill out when someone goes missing. That she would help with the language barrier, that she would help with support services, that she would follow up, because a lot of the times, the police take a report and then they don’t ever contact you. So she would pressure them to make sure, 24 12 hours later, they would follow up.”³⁰
- “Jordan’s Principle-type” Navigator between all policing jurisdictions to address the jurisdictional nightmare of police services in Ontario. Much like the jurisdictional

³⁰ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Truth-Gathering Process, Part II Institutional Hearings, “Government Services” Calgary, Alberta, Part II, Volume 4, Thursday May 31, 2018, Transcripts of Nakuset, Montreal Native Women’s Shelters at 95.

issues (federal and provincial) in health services, police services are similar, in that Indigenous peoples get caught in between all of the police jurisdictions. If an Indigenous woman goes missing from her First Nations community and there is knowledge that she has friends and family in other cities and towns in Ontario or nationally or internationally, all police jurisdictions must establish protocols to work together to search for her.

Best Practices in Ontario

According to both the Ministry Shelter Standards and Indigenous Shelter Standards, it was recommended that each Shelter develop a protocol with their area police force on issues of violence against women and missing persons. In 2014, the Six Nations of the Grand River community developed a High Risk Committee as a strategic effort to address and reduce the high risk incidents of violence and abuse impacting the lives of individuals and families within the Six Nations Community. The member groups of this committee includes the, Six Nations Police, Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services, Six Nations Social Services, Ogwadeni:deo Child Welfare, Brant Child and Family Services, Six Nations Health Services, Six Nations Public Health Services, Six Nations Education and Kawenni:io/Gaweni:yo Private School. Organizations that are members of the Six Nations High Risk Committee must send representatives that have the authority to make decisions on behalf of their organization.

The purpose of the committee is:

To provide a confidential, professional forum for a range of Six Nations service providers to present and discuss high risk cases to determine a coordinated community response focusing on mitigating risks of lethal harm to community members (self and/or others) in situations precipitated by violence and abuse of Six Nations Community Members. The safety and protection of community residents shall remain the paramount consideration of the Six Nations High Risk Committee.³¹

The objectives of the multi-disciplinary team are:

³¹ Six Nations High Risk Committee, Terms of Reference

1. To identify and remedy gaps in the system impeding the resolution of violence and abuse within the Six Nations Community
2. To coordinate and improve the flow of communication between agencies in order to develop and promote best practices for intervention in high risk cases.
3. To reduce the incidence of high risk violence and abuse within community by recommending and promoting community prevention and intervention strategies
4. To increase and strengthen active and on-going partnerships with all community agencies in order to enhance community safety in high risk situations.
5. To ensure that the member organizations/agencies are accountable to each other in the delivery of their respective services
6. To oversee and evaluate the progress of the Six Nations High Risk Case Reviews
7. To foster collaborative community based, inter-agency initiatives that enhance community safety

Meetings are held minimally on a monthly basis unless convened by the Six Nations High Risk Coordinator.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- When a woman goes missing from a Shelter, all Shelters must file a “Serious Occurrence Form” to the Ministry.
- Police and Shelters work in partnership on Community High Risk Committees.
- All Police Services be regularly evaluated by the First Nations mandated to oversee.
- All Police Services be regularly evaluated by the Violence Against Women or Violence Against Indigenous Women organizations (i.e. Shelters).

Conclusion

This is the opportunity for Indigenous Shelters that are a part of ASOO to say what is needed to be said. Those working in the Shelters are tireless advocates and continue to work for the best interests of their peoples. They need to have the best systems and services to heal women, men, children and families. There is so much wisdom in Indigenous peoples. When they work together, they heal together.