

FAMILY HEALING

Whether you are experiencing abuse in an intimate relationship, or acting in a controlling and hurtful manner to your partner and/or children, it is important that you and your family get help and support. It is complicated to be in an abusive relationship with someone you love. But it is possible to end the cycle of violence so that both of you can live without violence in your lives, and your children will not experience the same thing.

Services, counselling and programs are available to help you and your partner learn to build a healthy relationship, or to help you cope with ending the relationship if the abuse does not stop. Remember, children who have witnessed violence often become involved in unhealthy and abusive relationships later in life, or violence may show up in other ways such as youth violence, dating violence or crime. Programs are available to help individuals who are angry, violent and controlling. Many of these individuals themselves experienced abuse or witnessed family violence as children. It is important that everyone in the family get help to end the cycle of violence. Otherwise, it may continue for another generation.

If members of your family are experiencing abuse, or acting violently, it can affect the whole extended family and community, especially because of the strong extended family networks and community relationships in most Aboriginal communities. Abuse or violence affects the harmony and dynamics of all of these relationships. Fortunately, as extended family members, there are things you can do to help address relationship violence and begin the path to healing for your family:

**THE ROAD TO HEALING
IS POSSIBLE FOR YOU AND
YOUR FAMILY.**



* Help your family members to get protection or help

Finding out about available services and help; assisting them with developing a safety plan; providing a safe place for children with people they know; or, accompanying them during legal procedures are all ways to support family members.

* Offer a listening ear

Whether the person affected is male or female, experiencing abuse or acting abusively, living with violence can be a very isolating experience. Sometimes, just being a good listener can help people a great deal. It can help to prevent



a violent incident, or develop a strategy for dealing with abusive situations. Children who have witnessed abuse and violence may have a need to tell you about it too – listening to them can help them deal with their feelings. It is important to know that anyone who suspects that a child's welfare or security are threatened is obligated to tell child protection authorities.

* Care for yourself and your family

Dealing with relationship violence can be emotionally and physically exhausting. Find the support and strategies that you and your family need so that you care for yourself, and can continue to be a help to your family member.