

## A TOOLKIT AND WEBSITE



FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION  
IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

## WHAT IS THE HEALING JOURNEY?

The “Healing Journey” is a Toolkit and Website ([www.thehealingjourney.ca](http://www.thehealingjourney.ca)) that offer culturally sensitive resources about family violence prevention in Aboriginal communities. These resources may help people to recognize the signs of abuse, discuss the root causes, and take action at the individual, family and community levels to end interpersonal violence.

The Toolkit presents a holistic framework for violence prevention. Using a medicine wheel approach, the Toolkit fosters discussion on behaviours, feelings and attitudes about family violence across all age groups and stages of life. Increased public awareness is a first step to healing. The kit also has resources for individuals in crisis or for service providers who are trying to help clients take the first steps on their journey to well-being. Finally, the kit encourages the development of prevention strategies.

The Toolkit does not have the “solutions” to family violence; it simply offers some additional resources that Aboriginal communities can use to promote community discussions about respectful behaviour and attitudes and supportive initiatives to address the multiple root causes of family violence that meet the needs of all the people affected by it.



## WHO SHOULD USE THE TOOLKIT?

The Toolkit can be used by almost anyone. Service providers, such as crisis workers, social workers, guidance counsellors, police, health/mental health professionals and others who come into contact with Aboriginal people experiencing violence in their interpersonal relationships will find it a valuable resource to promote healing. Much of the information in the kit can be shared directly with individuals seeking help with their own relationships.

## WHAT IS IN THE TOOLKIT?

Here is an overview of the contents of the Toolkit:

### THE HEALING JOURNEY FACT SHEETS

The following five fact sheets can be used to create awareness.

- \* **RECOGNIZING THE HARM OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE** – defines family violence and explains why it is not easy to leave abuse and how family violence harms the community. The signs and symptoms of family violence are explained using the medicine wheel approach.
- \* **UNDERSTANDING THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE** – explains some of the historical factors that have contributed to the roots of violence in aboriginal communities. It provides statistics on family violence in aboriginal communities and different resources available.
- \* **COMMUNITY HEALING** – provides suggestions for community action to respond to family violence and ideas of how to get started.
- \* **FAMILY HEALING** – explains how abuse in an intimate relationship can affect the whole extended family. Provides things family members can do to help address relationship violence and begin the path to healing for their family, including: getting help, listening, and finding support.

- \* **INDIVIDUAL HEALING** – explains what a victim of family violence should know, including: that abuse is not their fault, there are people who care, abusive behaviour is always wrong, it’s okay to ask for help and begin their healing journey.

### USER’S GUIDE

This booklet explains the purpose and objectives of the Healing Journey Toolkit and details how to use the toolkit for crisis intervention, public education and awareness and prevention.

### FAMILY VIOLENCE RESOURCES AND NETWORKS

This booklet gives contact information for service providers in each province and territory across Canada. Service providers listed include: aboriginal transition houses and family violence crisis lines, aboriginal legal aid services and legal clinics, legal aid services, legal clinics and legal information sources, family mediation services, native court-worker programs, provincial agencies and government departments, and victim assistance programs.

### SAFETY PLANS FOR ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN

This booklet gives important information for abused women and children to help them develop safety plans. The safety plans are presented using the medicine wheel teachings. They deal with physical safety planning, as well as the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of being and keeping safe. This resource outlines different things to consider, ranging from safety during a violent incident, to safety when preparing to leave or when staying in the home. There is also information on safety with a protection order, safety on the job and in public, safety and drug or alcohol consumption, safety and emotional health, as well as safety on the internet, and safety for children.

## STARTING OVER: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FAMILY LAW MATTERS

This booklet provides an overview of the legal issues involved when a couple is splitting up. This resource explains the distinction between criminal law and family law matters involved in splitting up, the legal consequences of separation, custody and access, child support, spousal support and the division of marital property.

## HOW CAN I USE THE TOOLKIT? 🌿

You can use some or part of the information in the kit for:

- ✳️ **CRISIS INTERVENTION** – You can share the information in the kit with individuals or families coping with abuse and its side-effects. There is information on recognizing abuse, safety planning for women and their children, and resources for getting help in a crisis.
- ✳️ **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS** – You can use the educational resources in the kit to create public education and awareness of family violence issues. The Toolkit includes: posters, bookmarks, fact sheets and a variety of resources that you can use around the community. Creating awareness of family violence issues and resources can happen at many levels – social service agencies, band councils, workplaces, schools and other places where people live, work and play.
- ✳️ **PREVENTION** – You can use the Toolkit to encourage people in your communities to find ways, traditional and non-traditional, to support healing and new beginnings. Prevention involves addressing physical safety, as well as dealing with people's emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. Prevention includes helping people take the time to reflect on how they act, think and feel about family violence as individuals and as a community. It means fostering a community climate of respect, caring, and healing, and supporting or advocating for preventive services and resources. This might include alcohol/drug rehabilitation services, social and mental health services, counselling, housing, and income generating opportunities.

## ARE THERE OTHER HEALING JOURNEY RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR ME TO USE? 🌿

Yes. In addition to this pamphlet and the Toolkit, the following resources are available to support your family violence prevention efforts:

### ✳️ HEALING JOURNEY POSTER AND BOOKMARK

You can distribute these products throughout the community so that people find out about the website and can access the resources directly.



### ✳️ AN ABORIGINAL YOUTH'S CRY FOR HELP (YOUTH SKIT)

You can use this skit to create public awareness about dating violence among youth. This resource has a script and directions for how to put on this interactive skit with Aboriginal youth. The skit demonstrates one young woman's struggle with violence in a dating relationship, her frustration as she looks for help from friends and family who don't understand, and finally, examples of positive support.

### ✳️ LOVE SHOULDN'T HURT POSTCARD

You can hand out this postcard which has different examples of how family violence may affect friends and family members, and describes strategies that anyone can use to help.



### ✳️ COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

You or other interested community members can use the contents of this handout to create a family violence prevention group in your community. The exercise in the booklet will help you identify potential support people in your community, and help you to find the gaps in resources.

### ✳️ SOMEONE IS HURTING MY MOM: MY SAFETY PLAN

You can distribute or use this pamphlet to help abused women know the basic information and planning steps when leaving an abusive relationship.



### ✳️ SAFETY PLANNING FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

This pamphlet, written specifically for children, will help you to share appropriate tips and information with children living in violent homes.



## WHO CREATED THE TOOLKIT AND THE OTHER RESOURCES? 🌿

The toolkit was a partnership between Gignoo Transition House Inc., the only Aboriginal transition house in New Brunswick, and Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick, a non-profit organization offering the public general information about the law. The resources were developed with the guidance and assistance of an advisory committee comprised largely of representatives from various Maliseet and Mi'kmaq organizations.

## HOW CAN I GET A COPY OF THE TOOLKIT OR THE OTHER RESOURCES? 🌿

To order a free copy of the toolkit and other resources contact:



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[WWW.THEHEALINGJOURNEY.CA](http://WWW.THEHEALINGJOURNEY.CA)