

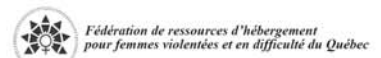
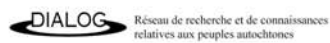
ISHKUTEU

# Domestic Violence Support Services

IN RESPONSE TO NATIVE WOMEN'S NEEDS



en collaboration avec





# ISHKUTEU

Domestic Violence Intervention for Native Women  
Sharing Our Expertise, Creating Lasting Ties

## Domestic Violence Support Services

In Response to Native Women's Needs



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.  
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.



Fédération de ressources d'hébergement  
pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec

en collaboration avec



Réseau de recherche et de connaissances  
relatives aux peuples autochtones



Service aux collectivités  
Université du Québec à Montréal

# **Domestic Violence Support Services in Response to Native Women's Needs**

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- Quebec Native Women Inc.: [www.faq-qnw.org](http://www.faq-qnw.org).

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# ISHKUTEU

Domestic Violence Intervention for Native Women  
Sharing Our Expertise, Creating Lasting Ties

Ishkuteu is a project carried out through the partnership of Quebec Native Women Inc., the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec, the Services aux collectivités (Community Services) of the Université du Québec à Montréal and DIALOG, the Research and Knowledge Network relating to Aboriginal Peoples (Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Centre – Urbanisation Culture Société).

## Project goal

The Ishkuteu Project aims at improving access to services meeting the specific needs of Quebec Native women facing domestic violence and other related problems, both within and outside their communities.

## Objectives

- To offer training to the personnel of shelters belonging to the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec in order to strengthen their intervention practices with Native women.
- To offer training to the personnel of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec in order to consolidate their intervention practices when dealing with domestic violence.
- To build lasting ties between Native and non-Native resources, to test the creation of linkages based on an exchange of knowledge, expertise and services concerning domestic violence and related problems.
- To develop an action plan and make recommendations to increase access to support services for Native women and children facing domestic violence.

ISHKUTEU means **fire** in the Innu language. This name brings to mind the sacred fire that inspires the people who work daily with women facing domestic violence. We hope it also inspires women who are staying in shelters to regain control over their lives.

## Acknowledgements

This report was carried out through the collaboration of two provincial shelter networks in Quebec. We wish to express our gratitude to all the directors, coordinators and shelter workers of the Native and non-Native shelters that responded to our invitation.

We thank the directors and shelter workers of the thirty-six member shelters of the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec for their generous collaboration. We wish to thank, more specifically, the workers who welcomed us at L'Aquarelle in Chibougamau, the Centre féminin in Saguenay, the Halte-Femmes Haute-Gatineau in Maniwaki, La Source in Sorel, and the Auberge Madeleine and the Chaînon in Montréal. We also wish to thank the directors and shelter workers at Le Nid in Val d'Or, the Auberge de l'Amitié in Roberval and Le Coin des femmes in Sept-Îles, who also participated in our survey, and especially those we met at the Toit de l'Amitié in La Tuque.

We also wish to express our thanks to the coordinators and shelter workers of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec : Ashpukun Mitshuap in Schefferville, Tipinuaikan in Sept-Îles, Haven House in Listuguj, Asperimowin in La Tuque, Waseya House in Kitigan Zibi, the Missinak Community Home in Quebec City and the Native Women's Shelter in Montreal. We also wish to thank the community workers of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services in Mistissini and the coordinator of Projet Autochtone du Québec in Montreal.

Finally, we wish to thank the members of Ishkuteu's Advisory Committee, who discussed, directed and validated our work during each step of the survey. We wish to personally thank France Robertson of Quebec Native Women, Manon Monastesse and Lucie Lortie of the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec, Irène Demczuk of the Service aux collectivités (Community Services) of UQAM, Carole Lévesque at INRS–Centre Urbanisation Culture Société and director of DIALOG, and Julie Rousseau, whose overall contribution to the collection and analysis of data was greatly appreciated.

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## Presentation of our Partners

The Ishkuteu Project is based on an innovative partnership between the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec, Quebec Native Women, the Service aux collectivités (Community Services) of the Université du Québec à Montréal and DIALOG, the Research and Knowledge Network relating to Aboriginal Peoples.

Founded in 1987, the **Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec (FRHFVDQ)** represents forty-one shelters. Its mandate is to promote and defend the rights of women who are the victims of domestic violence, have problems with drug or alcohol abuse, suffer mental health problems or are homelessness as well as working to increase their autonomy. Its objectives are: to offer the necessary support to its member shelters; act as their representative with political authorities as well as with public, parapublic and private institutions; and raise awareness among political authorities and the population at large with respect to the domestic violence women and children face, as well as the role of and need for women's shelters.

**Quebec Native Women Inc. (QNW)** has represented Native women – whether they live in Native communities or in urban areas – since its creation in 1974. It represents ten Native nations, which are further divided into 41 communities.<sup>1</sup> QNW's mission is to support Native women in their efforts to improve their living conditions and their family's through the promotion of non-violence and equality of rights, justice and health.

The **Service aux collectivités (Community Services)** of the **Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)**, founded 1979, has the mission of democratizing of knowledge by making it more accessible to social sectors and groups that traditionally would not have access to it, through training activities, research and dissemination. As an intermediary between social and university partners, UQAM's Service aux collectivités supports the creation of partnerships to carry out community projects. In 1982, UQAM signed a protocol with Relais-Femmes in response to the demands of women's associations in Quebec and Canada. The Ishkuteu Project comes as a result of the work conducted following the signature of this protocol.

**DIALOG, the Research and Knowledge Network Relating to Aboriginal Peoples** is an interuniversity, interinstitutional, interdisciplinary, intersectorial and international network of which UQAM and Quebec Native Women are members. Founded in 2001, DIALOG brings together more than one hundred twenty people from various universities and Native organizations and communities. Its objective is the promotion, dissemination and renewal of research relating to Aboriginal peoples. One of DIALOG's main challenges is producing and disseminating new knowledge that will support social reconstruction initiatives being developed by Native peoples.

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<sup>1</sup> Inuit women are no longer represented within Quebec Native Women's board of directors. They now have their own association: Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.



# Summary of Recommendations made by both Shelter Networks

The following summary outlines the results of a consultation which was held with shelter workers<sup>2</sup> employed by Native and non-Native shelter networks. The purpose of this consultation was to identify training needs in both networks so that shelter workers' approaches and intervention practices could be adapted to better respond to the needs of Native women. This summary reflects the views expressed by shelter workers. It should not be confused with the initiatives the Ishkuteu Project will undertake over the next few years within the limits of its means and objectives.

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY NON-NATIVE WOMEN'S SHELTERS

### 1.1 Training Needs

**Shelter workers from non-Native domestic violence shelters hope to:**

- a) Gain knowledge of the historical and present-day realities of Native people;
- b) Continue to integrate into their approach practices and intervention tools which are appropriate for Native realities, particularly by becoming familiar with the analysis of domestic violence developed by the Native Women's Shelter Network;
- c) Increase their knowledge of Native support services both within and outside communities.

### 1.2 Collaborative Relationships to be Established

**Shelter workers from non-Native domestic violence shelters hope to:**

- a) Increase their knowledge of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec, Native social services and other Native support resources;
- b) Assure the initiation and follow-up with Native support resources before, during and after a woman's stay;
- c) Develop a collaborative protocol relating to domestic violence intervention in Native communities, including a practical guide which would explain the roles and responsibilities of both network's support resources;
- d) Have at their disposal a regional and provincial Native resource bank which would serve as a reference tool to help Native women living in urban areas or in communities;
- e) See developed Native representation in local and regional forums on domestic violence intervention;
- f) Promote exchanges between non-Native shelters providing services to a significant number of Native women.

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<sup>2</sup> The term shelter worker is employed for the sake of concision. It includes front-line workers, managers, coordinators and directors of women's shelters. This choice is due by the fact that most directors, coordinators, and managers have some direct intervention experience with sheltered women, mainly as former front-liner workers.

### **1.3 Other Measures Needed to Improve Services**

**Shelter workers from non-Native domestic violence shelters hope to:**

- g) Promote the hiring of a Native shelter worker or provide specific training to at least one non-Native shelter worker in each shelter that takes in a significant number of Native women;
- h) Take into consideration the realities of Native women and their children when organising the shelter's living environment;
- i) Carry out immersion sessions in Native milieux where focus will be put on training and exchange.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY NATIVE WOMEN'S SHELTERS**

### **2.1 Training Needs**

**Shelter workers of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec hope to:**

- a) Strengthen their intervention practices:
  - Relating to existing social problems within the communities, including substance abuse, mental health problems, suicide, and sexual assault;
  - Regarding domestic violence, in particular by adopting domestic violence intervention tools and approaches which have been developed by non-Native women's shelters;
  - By focusing on spirituality in the healing process;
- b) Consolidate their staff and maximize their shelter's management practices;
- c) Develop prevention and awareness-raising practices in the communities and among support services available outside communities.

### **2.2 Collaborative Relationships to be Established**

**Shelter Workers of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec hope to:**

- a) Develop intrasectorial collaborative relationships with non-Native women's shelters, Native support services within communities, and services for violent spouses;
- b) Develop intersectorial collaborative relationships, mainly with the health and social services network as well as police services;
- c) Provide post-shelter follow-ups in collaboration with other resources.

## **2.3 Other Required Measures to Improve Services**

**Shelter Workers of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec hope to:**

- a) Improve the working conditions in Native women's shelters, in particular by recruiting new personnel and increasing salaries in accordance to the standards established in comparable Quebec workplaces;
- b) Develop second-stage resources for women experiencing domestic violence and related issues;
- c) Develop a therapy program for women and men who are experiencing conjugal or domestic violence;
- d) Develop support resources in the community for spouses with violent behaviour.



# The Context

## Origins of the project

The Ishkuteu Project was developed following a conference organized by the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec (FRHFVDQ) in 2005.<sup>3</sup> It is a response to concerns raised during this conference by the directors of women's shelters who are members of the Federation, as well as their desire to adapt their intervention strategies and services geared toward Native women. Many women's shelters, especially those that cater to a large proportion of Native women, have developed a strong awareness of their reality and needs, yet shelter workers continue to observe a gap between those needs and the services they can provide. This gap, they suggested, is likely the result of the particular complexity and gravity of the situation of domestic violence experienced by Native women, which is further compounded by their own lack of knowledge of Native culture.

The Ishkuteu Project is also a response to the needs expressed by Québec Native Women Inc. (QNW) and its Native Women's Shelters Network, the Réseau des maisons d'hébergement autochtones du Québec (RMHAQ). Indeed, QNW has been working for many years to ensure that Native women and children living in situations of domestic violence have access to resources adapted to their culture and needs, within and outside their communities. Shelter workers at Native shelters have expressed time and time again their desire to be provided with tools that would allow them to intervene more effectively with Native women, especially when mental health problems, homelessness, and alcohol or drug abuse are also involved.

The FRHFVDQ has already made considerable strides in responding to the needs of the women they take in, whatever their needs. To deal with the problem of domestic violence in intercultural contexts, it has most notably developed, in partnership with La Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal and the Service aux collectifs of UQAM, a training program intended to improve and adapt intervention practices and services to the realities of women from ethnocultural communities or who have recently immigrated. More than 800 healthcare, social, and community workers and police have received this training since 2000.<sup>4</sup> The Native Women's Shelters Network which has seen constant expansion since 2003, has also equipped itself with tools geared towards enhancing the skills of its personnel.

Both shelter networks have thus made significant gains in the last years, but much remains to be done to improve access to domestic violence resources and to improve intervention practices where Native women are concerned. The Ishkuteu Project aims at providing a solution to both networks' preoccupations. It embodies, in its own way, the need for a *rapprochement* between the two communities – by attempting to create lasting ties between their resources, as well as sharing their expertise, knowledge and services.

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<sup>3</sup> The conference was titled: "30 ans d'intervention, ça change le monde ! [30 years of intervention; that changes the world!]"

<sup>4</sup> Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec, Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal et Services aux collectivités de l'UQAM, 2005.

## Object of this report

This document presents the results of the first phase of the Ishkuteu Project, where the goal was to consult the shelter workers themselves to identify their training needs. This initial step also paves the way for the creation of lasting ties between support services in both networks and support services in Native communities.

This report thus serves as the foundation for the Ishkuteu Project. It provides a reference point for the implementation of training sessions and linking activities in the Native and non-Native shelter networks who participated in the project. More globally, it serves to enrich the reflection on the means needed to support shelter workers in their interventions with Native women and their children.

The preoccupations and recommendations voiced by the shelter workers during our consultation echo recommendations made in the 1995 *Politique d'intervention en matière de violence conjugale*, where actors in diverse areas of intervention were called upon to ensure their intervention strategies were developed in concert and made complementary to each other. Women's shelters were specifically called upon to invest in training activities, which would take into consideration the needs of specific clientele, most notably, Native women.

The needs for better training and linking of resources uncovered in our consultation also reflect a recommendation in the *Government Action Plan 2004-2009 on Domestic Violence* to "support training, information and assistance activities for case workers in shelters for Native women victims of violence."<sup>5</sup>

Finally, this report's recommendations find resonance in the chapter "*Service sociaux/ Services à la petite enfance* [Social Services/Child Services]" of the First Nations Socioeconomic Forum's Final Report.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, it proposes that governmental authorities and society at large take action against the violence and sexual abuse that Native women and their children continue to experience within their communities or in more urban settings. The development of expertise and training sessions for various community intervention groups, as well as the widening of partnerships between shelter workers and non-Native networks through the "*Pour le mieux-être de nos Nations*" joint committee were also proposed as means to improve family and domestic violence services.

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<sup>5</sup> Ministère de la Justice et Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration, 2005, 16.

<sup>6</sup> The First Nations Socioeconomic Forum was held in Mashteuiatsh, Québec in October 2006.



# SECTION I

## Aboriginal Populations and Domestic Violence

To better understand the realities and needs expressed by the shelter workers during the consultation, it is useful to examine the legal framework in which Native people of Canada and Quebec live, as well as the demographic situation of Native women in Quebec in particular.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1 The Aboriginal Population in Quebec

According to the *Constitution Act* of 1982, Oboriginal Peoples of Canada are defined as Indians, Inuit and Métis. Generally, the term “Aboriginal” thus designates people having declared they belong to one of these three categories, but also includes treaty Indians, Indians registered under the *Indian Act*, and members of Indian bands or First Nations.<sup>8</sup> In the vernacular, “First Nations” or “Amerindians” are terms used solely to designate people subject to the *Indian Act*.

There are 58 Native communities in Quebec: 42 First Nations communities and 16 Inuit communities. The First Nations communities are made up of ten First Nations listed here in demographic order (from the largest to the smallest): Mohawk, Innu, Cree, Inuit, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Mi'gmaq, Huron-Wendat, Abénaquis, Naskapi, and Malécite.<sup>9</sup> In 2006, 108 425 people in Quebec declared they had a Native identity.<sup>10</sup>

#### 1.1.1 Legislative framework

Both in Quebec and Canada, part of the Native population is subject to the *Indian Act*, which states that “Indians and the lands reserved to Indians” are under federal jurisdiction. This gives Natives a very different status than other citizens.<sup>11</sup> In Quebec, 52% of Natives are subject to the *Indian Act*.

Aside from the Indian Act, other legal provisions apply to Native people in Canada. In Quebec, the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) is binding upon the governments of Quebec and Canada, Hydro-Québec, the Grand Council of the Cree and the Northern Quebec Inuit Association. Similarly, the Naskapi Indian band is bound by the 1978 North-Eastern Quebec Agreement, which amended the JBNQA.<sup>12</sup> These two agreements provide a level of self-government to the nations who signed them by transferring, among other things, the jurisdiction for health and social services

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<sup>7</sup> In this report, the English terms “Aboriginal” and “Native” are used interchangeably and are translations of the French term “Autochtone.”

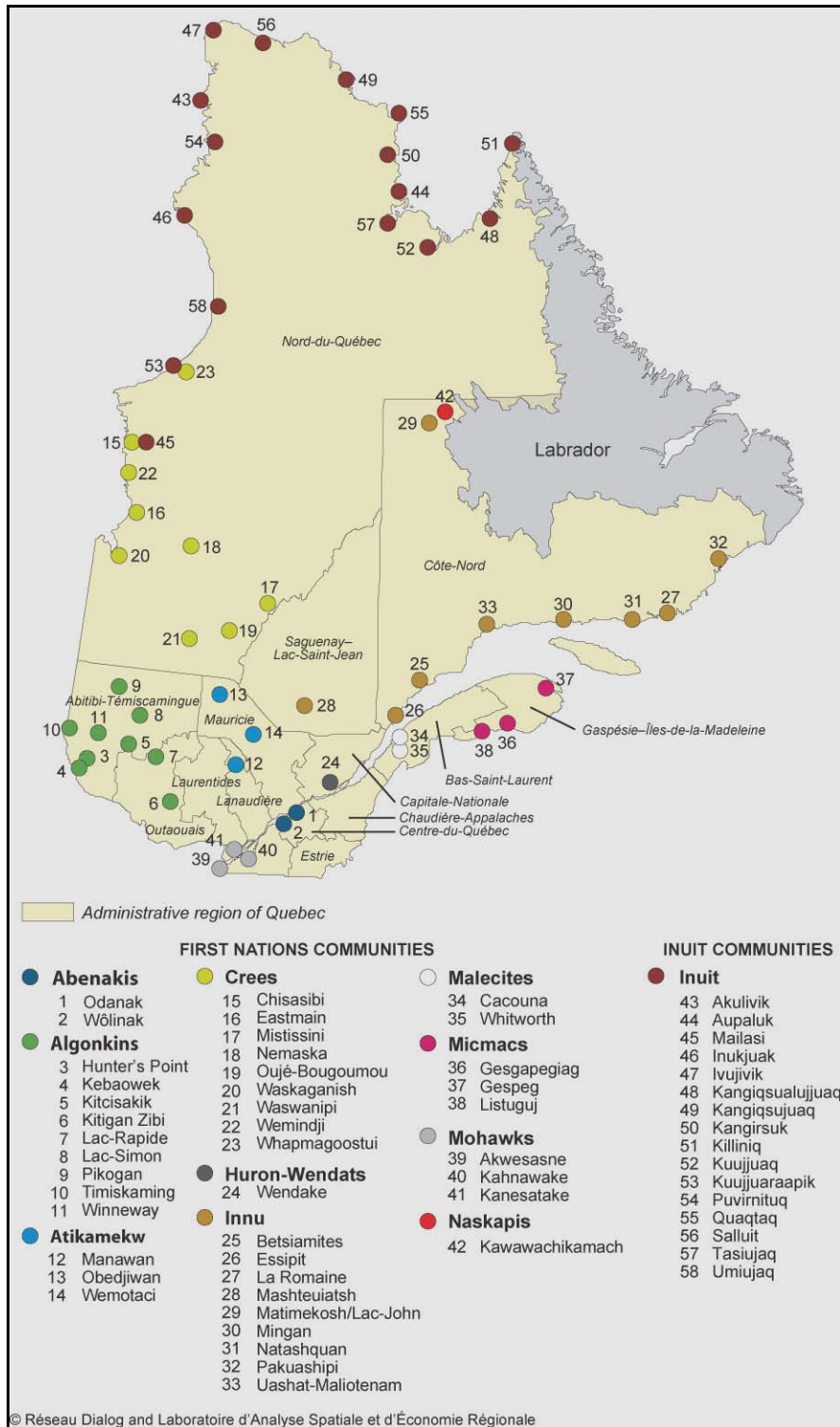
<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> DIALOG, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada.

<sup>11</sup> Pierre LePage, 2002, 21.

<sup>12</sup> Indian Affairs and Northern Canada, 1993.



## Native Communities in Québec

Source: [www.reseaudialog.ca](http://www.reseaudialog.ca)

on category I lands to Aboriginal organizations. Thus, the Cree Regional Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay manages these services for the Cree, and the Kativik Health and Social Services Council manages them for the Inuit. As for the Naskapi, a consultative health and social services committee insures their interests are represented within other organizations.<sup>13</sup>

Aside from restrictions that apply to all Natives under the *Indian Act*, Native women must additionally contend with legal discrimination. Indeed, the discriminatory situation that existed due to certain provisions in the *Indian Act* prior to the adoption of the *Act to Amend the Indian Act* (better known as bill C-31) in 1985 have only partly been corrected. Bill C-31 sought to eliminate the provisions in the *Indian Act* that allowed for gender discrimination, and thus to rectify the latter in accordance with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Yet 20 years after its adoption, discrimination toward Native women still prevails. For instance, their status, and the privileges this status confers, is not always transferable to their children.<sup>14</sup>

Native women in Quebec live in a complex legal environment, principally governed by the *Indian Act*, but also by the agreements which have been signed by the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi. This situation has put a strain on their autonomy. For example, it is difficult for them to pass down matrimonial property or have access to support resources. Although like other female citizens in Quebec, Native women can take advantage of services offered by shelters, in reality, these services are often inaccessible to them simply because there are none (or very few) in their communities.

### 1.1.2 Demographic markers

Some clarification is needed with respect to the methodological limits of the two principal sources of data on the Canadian Aboriginal population: the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Statistics Canada. In the case of the former, the data available is only concerned with registered Indians. But INAC's Indian Registry only contains the names of those who have requested this registration, not the name of all the people who have the right to be registered. Consequently, the data on the registered Indian population does not reflect the exact population in each Indian reserve. Further, the Inuit are not included in the Indian registry because they are not considered Indians under the law.

As for Statistics Canada's data, the censuses of 2001 and 2006 underestimate the Native population. Indeed, in Quebec, in 2001, the census was not authorized or completed within 5 Native communities, including the 3 populous Mohawk communities.<sup>15</sup> One must therefore be very prudent when analyzing these data.

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<sup>13</sup> Indian Affairs and Northern Canada, 1993.

<sup>14</sup> Native Women's Association of Canada, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> DIALOG

**Table 1**  
**Population with an Native Identity, Quebec, 2006**

Native Population	North American Indians		Metis		Inuit		Other Native Identity	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Total</b>	31 690 48,7 %	33 395 51,3 %	14 300 51 %	13 680 49 %	5 470 50 %	5 480 50 %	5 470 50 %	5 480 50 %
<b>108 425</b> <b>100 %</b>	<b>65 085</b> <b>60,0 %</b>		<b>27 985</b> <b>25,8 %</b>		<b>10 950</b> <b>10,1 %</b>		<b>4 405</b> <b>4,1%</b>	

Source: Statistics Canada, 2008. 2006 Population Census.

Statistics Canada puts the female Native population in Quebec at 58 000; 23 000 of which are aged between 18 and 49, the predominant age group in non-Native shelters.<sup>16</sup>

It can be observed that 30% of the registered Indian population lives outside of Native communities. This urbanization does not necessarily signify that Natives all live in cities. They are in fact dispersed in about 40 municipalities in the province, with relatively high populations in Montreal, Gatineau, Quebec, La Tuque and Val d'Or.<sup>17</sup> Women and children, who, for the most part, have fled their communities due to a climate of violence and insecurity, make up 65% of this urbanized population.<sup>18</sup>

**Table 2**  
**Registered Indian Population, Quebec, December 31st, 2006**

Place of residence	On a reserve		Off-reserve		Total	
Sex	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	24 471 50 %	24 504 50 %	9 378 45 %	11 396 55 %	33 849 100 %	35 900 100 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>48 975</b> <b>70 %</b>		<b>20 774</b> <b>30 %</b>		<b>69 749</b> <b>100 %</b>	

Source: INAC, 2007. Indian population by sex and residence, 2006.

Between 1996 and 2006 the Canadian Native population increased by 45%, comparatively to 8% for the rest of the population. Half of this population is made up of children and youths under the age of 24, compared to 31% for the rest of the population.<sup>19</sup>

## 1.2 Domestic Violence in Native Milieus

When the subject of domestic violence is raised concerning Native milieus in Quebec, or more broadly of Native women's living conditions, one is faced with the same methodological limits regarding the use of the Statistics Canada data as those examined in the previous section. These data only paint a general Canadian picture. Further, they distort reality due to methodological biases. For instance, Statistics Canada's

<sup>16</sup> 80% of sheltered women are between the ages of 18 and 50, according to the FRHFVDQ's 2006-2007 activity report.

<sup>17</sup> Carole Lévesque, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Lévesque *et al.*, 2001, 13.

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada, 2008.

*General Social Survey* is conducted only in French and English, excluding Native respondents who cannot speak either language.

Despite these limits, the data all lead to the same conclusion: domestic violence has reached critical levels within the Native populations of Canada and Quebec. It is thus of the utmost importance that this situation be examined more closely.

### **1.2.1 A Statistical Portrait**

Domestic violence is a problem for all women: Native, non-Native, young, old, living in urban and in rural areas. However, some women are more vulnerable to domestic violence than others due to social, cultural, historical or geographical factors. Native women fit in this category.<sup>20</sup>

According to Statistics Canada, the rate of domestic violence among Native women in Canada is three times that of non-Native women.<sup>21</sup> The 2006 data indicate that a quarter of Native women have been victims of assault at the hand of their partner or ex-partner in the last five years, compared to 8% for non-Native women. If this proportion is applied to the female Native population in Quebec aged between 19 and 49 (23 000 women), one can estimate that almost 5 800 are victims of domestic violence and would be susceptible to have recourse to shelters or other support resources. This number should be taken with caution, as it does not take into account girls under the age of 18 and women over 50 – these two age groups are possibly more likely to fall victim to domestic violence than the former.

Native women are more often victims of the types of assaults that put life in peril than non-Native women: 54% compared to 37%. The proportion of Native women whose life is in danger when they separate from their partner has been estimated to be 8 times higher than for non-Native women.<sup>22</sup>

The role of colonialism and the *Indian Act* cannot be dismissed when attempting to explain this situation. Systematic discrimination, social and economic injustices, destruction of traditional ways of life, drug and alcohol abuse, overcrowded homes, and residential schools that created a cycle of intergenerational trauma, are all factors that must also be considered when attempting to account for the violence within Native communities in Quebec and Canada.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ministère de la Justice, Ministère de l'Éducation, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Ministère de la Sécurité publique, Secrétariat à la Condition féminine et Secrétariat à la Famille, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Ministère de la Justice et Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration, 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Royal Commission on Native Peoples, 1996.

## 1.2.2 Obstacles to Getting Help

[Translation] The fight against violence towards Native woman is especially difficult because of the legal and judicial frameworks that apply to them. They are marginalized by the current federal law which has left profound scars within Native communities. (...) They are twice-marginalized: as woman within their communities, and as Natives within society at large.<sup>24</sup>

This general observation was made by the Comité tripartite Femme-Justice in its report to the Comité interministériel de coordination en matière de violence conjugale, familiale et sexuelle du Québec. A series of obstacles discourage Native women who have suffered violence from seeking help at women's shelters, or from using other local resources: the fear of breach of confidentiality, financial dependence on their partner that makes them hesitate a long time before putting in question their relationship, the fear of being ostracised by their family and community in a context where violence is trivialized, the fear of having their children removed from their care by the Director of Youth Protection and geographical and linguistic barriers that reduce access to non-Native shelters.<sup>25</sup>

In a close-knit climate that is the reality of communities that are geographically isolated, it can be rather difficult to assure victimized women's confidentiality and even, sometimes, their security. The fear of reprisal on the part of their partner, family or community and the fear of losing custody of their children if they denounce the situation of violence in which they live, make it difficult to break the code of silence. This fear of losing custody of their children finds salience in Native children's overrepresentation in youth protection services in Canada, as well as their rapidly growing numbers in foster care over the last years. The 2000-2002 data from provincial and territorial departments of Family and Children's Services show that 30 to 40% of children placed in foster care during this period were of Native descent, yet Native children only account for 5% of the total child population of Canada. Further, from 1995 to 2001 the number of Native children placed in foster care in Canada increased by 71,5%. "[Translation] In 2003, more Native children were separated from their families than at the height of the residential school movement."<sup>26</sup>

Half of the Native population in Quebec is located in three isolated regions: the Nord-du-Québec, Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the Côte-Nord. In the absence of specialized resources, Native women living situations of domestic violence must often leave their communities to get help. There are no Native shelters in the Nord-du-Québec or Abitibi-Témiscamingue regions – two regions with an important concentration of Native populations. Women's shelters and other support resources are usually located a few hours drive away.

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<sup>24</sup> Comité tripartite Femme-Justice, 2003. 19.

<sup>25</sup> These were the principal obstacles identified by the shelter workers during the course of our survey.

<sup>26</sup> Patricia Gough *et al.*, 2005.

# SECTION 2

## Methodology

The objective of the consultations with the shelter workers in both Native and non-Native shelters was to identify their own training needs with respect to the reality of Native women who are victims of domestic violence. This consultation would also serve to prepare the field in the linking together of staff and support services in both networks.

The non-Native shelters chosen for this consultation were the 41 member shelters of the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femme violentées et en difficulté du Québec. To these were added 4 other shelters identified by Native Women of Quebec Inc. due to their location in regions with high Native populations. In total, 89% of the 45 solicited shelters participated in the survey. All of the 7 shelters of the Native Women's Shelters Network participated in the consultation.

### 2.1 Survey Strategy

The survey undertaken with the shelter workers was of a participative, qualitative and exploratory nature.

*Participative*, because it rests on the participation of all the people directly concerned, that is the shelter workers from Native and non-Native shelters. In all, 160 shelter workers participated in the collective reflection exercise proposed in the questionnaire and descriptive information sheet and 37 shelter workers participated in interviews as key informants. In total, 40 non-Native shelters and 7 Native shelters participated in the consultation. *Participative*, also because the project's steering committee participated in each step of the process. It validated the preparation and planning of the survey, the elaboration of the collection tools and the analysis of the material.

*Qualitative*, because it gives a central place to the observations of the workers met during individual or group interviews. Other qualitative data, as well as quantitative information, were also collected from all the shelter workers by means of a questionnaire.

*Exploratory*, because there exist few documentary sources on the subject and because an evaluation of needs, conducted within a pilot project, is necessarily limited in terms of time and money invested.

The data collection tools included an interview grid as well as a self-administered questionnaire and descriptive information sheet (appendices 1-3-4). The themes covered in the questionnaire were: the general characteristics of the shelter, the profile of the Native women seeking services, the perceptions of the shelter workers with respect to these women's needs, the workers' approach, intervention practices and training, and the collaboration links to be established to improve domestic violence services for Native women.

The data was collected between September and November 2007. The organisation and analysis of the data, as well as the preparation of this report, were conducted between November 2007 and March 2008.

## 2.2. Sources of Data

### 2.2.1 According to the type of resource

The results presented in this document come from 36 shelters of the FRHFVDQ and 4 member shelters of the Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement et de transition pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale (RPMHTFVVC), for a total of 40 non-Native shelters and 7 Native shelters.

### 2.2.2 According to the data collection tool

The data collection tools include the interview grid as well as the self-administered questionnaire and its accompanying descriptive information sheet. The main material used in the present analysis is thus composed of two corpuses: the data from the oral consultations (interviews) and the data from the written consultation (questionnaire).

The shelter workers in the non-Native shelters completed a questionnaire as well as a descriptive information sheet allowing to quantify and qualify the Native presence in their shelters. Key informants were met during individual interviews. Shelter workers from Native shelters were met individually or in groups.

**Table 3**  
**Sources of data according to the type of resource**

Type of Resource ----- Data Collection Tool	Non-Native Shelters N = 40	Native Shelters N = 7	Other Native Resources N = 2	TOTAL
<b>Interviews</b>	7 directors 2 shelter workers	5 coordinators 17 shelter workers	3 community workers 3 program coordinators	37 key informants
<b>Questionnaire</b>	137 shelter workers	na	na	137 respondents
<b>Descriptive Information Sheet</b>	40 directors	na	na	40 respondents
<b>TOTALI</b>	9 key informants 160 respondents	22 key informants	6 key informants	37 key informants 160 respondents <sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> 160 respondents participated in all, not 177, as one might conclude by looking at the number of respondents who filled out the questionnaire and the descriptive information sheet. Some respondents filled out both the questionnaire and the card.



## Interviews

37 key informants were met during confidential individual or group consultations (appendices 1 and 2). These informants were either shelter directors, coordinators or first line shelter workers.

The majority of the interviews took place in the shelters themselves.<sup>28</sup> 9 individual interviews and 7 group interviews were held in this manner, producing 26 hours of audio recordings.<sup>29</sup> These recorded interviews were meticulously transcribed; some parts were literally transcribed while others were summarized.

The criteria that led to the choices of key informants within the member shelters of the Federation were as follows: their shelter was situated close to one or more Native communities, they had intervention experience with Native women and they had more specific intervention experience with women in distress (with mental health problems, for example).

## Questionnaires

All the member shelters of the FRHFVDQ and 4 member shelters of the RPMHTFVVC were invited to participate in an evaluation of needs with the help of self-administered tools. In all, 45 shelters were approached. The response rate of the member shelters of the Federation was of 88% (36/41), while the 4 member shelters of the Regroupement all participated. In all, 40 shelters specialized in the area of domestic violence accepted our invitation (89% of the 45 shelters we approached).

The shelter workers were invited to fill out a questionnaire to answer: 1) what they thought of the present situation concerning their intervention practices, their training and their collaborative links with Native-related resources; 2) what they hoped for in terms of training and collaboration that might enable them to better answer Native women's needs. These qualitative data are complementary to the data gathered during the interviews ( 3).

As for the directors, they were asked to complete a descriptive information sheet in order to create a quantitative portrait of the Native presence in non-Native shelters (appendix 4).

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<sup>28</sup> Due to high travel costs, four interviews were conducted in Montreal during an annual meeting with the Native Women's Shelters Network.

<sup>29</sup> Two exploratory individual interviews which were conducted in Montreal were not recorded.

## **2.3 Significance and Limitations of the Consultation**

The primary interest of this report lies in the fact that the results presented here address a subject that has rarely been the focus of attention in previous studies and because they come from the shelter workers themselves, the very people the Ishkuteu Project aims to help. Whether in person, or in writing, these workers were almost 200 to contribute to the general picture that will emerge in the pages that follow. These rich data certainly constitute an important asset in the chosen approach.

The principal limitation of the project's methodology is linked to its experimental character, which implies, by definition, that only a part of the shelter resources of Quebec could be consulted. As the project was based on a partnership between the Federation and QNW, it follows that close to half of the non-Native shelters in Quebec participated in the exercise. Quebec has about 100 shelters that offer concrete help, support and a transitional environment to women and children in situations of domestic violence. These shelters are either members of one of the two main networks – the FRHFVDQ or RPMHTFVVC – or they are independent.

# SECTION 3

## Results of the Consultation in non-Native Shelters

The goal of this section is to present an overview of the Native presence within the non-Native shelters based on our consultations with them and from their admissions statistics. It also presents an overview, based on the shelter workers' point of view, of current intervention practices, training, and collaborative links with other resources with the needs of Native women in mind. Finally, it provides an overview of the changes hoped for by the shelter workers. Before presenting these results, we should examine the factors that distinguish the FRHFVDQ's member shelters from others.

### **3.1 The Specificity of the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec.**

As a whole, non-Native shelters in Quebec see security and the protection of women and children as their main priority. What makes the Federation distinctive in the areas of providing shelter and intervention is its mission which is centered not only on domestic violence, but also on the constellation of problems associated with it, such as drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems and homelessness.

The increase in women struggling with these problems has led shelter workers of the Federation to question the adequateness of their intervention practices. Indeed, particularly in the case of immigrant women and Native women, shelter workers often feel helpless in the face of the complex issues these women have. This new consciousness has been the engine of many initiatives intended to adapt services to the needs of these women. Notable examples are the training project on intervention in an intercultural context and the present project on intervention with Native women.

Member shelters of the Federation use intervention practices based on a feminist approach. This approach guides women toward autonomy and is intended to allow them to take control of their lives. The feminist approach used by the Federations' shelters is seen as “[translation] a global intervention strategy because it intervenes at the individual, family, community and social level. It aims at ending domestic violence against one woman in particular and against all women more generally. Its objectives are to assure the security of women and children, give power to women victims of domestic violence and repair the wounds left by this violence in their lives.”<sup>30</sup> This common feminist approach translates into practice in many different ways. Further, to better respond to the complex needs of women in difficulty, many Federation shelters have also integrated complementary approaches.

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<sup>30</sup> Ann Pâquet-Deehy, 1997, 25.

## **3.2 Native Presence in non-Native Shelters**

The portrait we develop here was compiled by the statistical data provided in the descriptive information sheets, which were completed by the 40 participating non-Native shelters. Some information was also drawn from the interviews with the key informants to complete this picture. The data presented concern the 2006-2007 year of activity.

The criteria used to provide an account of the Native presence in these shelters were the following: the number of Native women sheltered, the number of Native children accompanying their mothers, the proportion of Native women making up the shelter population, and the length of their stay.

Complementary to this information were other data provided by the Federation's member shelters, such as frequency of admission, age, source of income, reason for seeking help, type of violence suffered, and whether or not a domestic violence complaint was filed with the police.

### **3.2.1 Number of Native women sheltered**

Three hundred twenty seven (n: 327) Native women have stayed in 26 shelters among the 40 participating shelters.<sup>31</sup> In other words, 65% of participating shelters received Native woman during the 2006-2007 year.

If we only take into account the member shelters of the Federation, 22 shelters received Native women, or 54%. For the period of 2001-2002 to 2006-2007, 27 received Native women, or 66%.

### **3.2.2 Number of Native children sheltered**

Two hundred eighty nine (n: 289) Native children have stayed in 19 shelters among the 40 participating shelters. In other words, 49% of the participating shelters have received Native children, or 19 out of a total of 39. We observe a higher proportion of woman with children than women without children.

If we only take into account the member shelters of the Federation, we observe that fifteen (n: 15) shelters, or 37%, received 188 children.

### **3.2.3 Proportion of Native woman in shelters**

Native women represented 7,6% of all women sheltered in 2006-2007 in the 40 participating shelters, or 327 out of a total of 4315 women. The results of our investigation indicate that Native women constitute 4% of all women sheltered in the Federation's 36 member-shelters, or 156 out of 3904 women. This figure is comparable to the one presented in the Federation's 2006-2007 activity report, establishing that proportion at 3,7%.<sup>32</sup> We learn from the same source that the 155 Native children were sheltered, representing 5,18% of all the children sheltered.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> 85% of these 327 women were sheltered in 7 shelters situated near Native communities or in a region with a high Native population.

<sup>32</sup> Based on a compilation of 38 shelters.

<sup>33</sup> Our compilation of the data from 36 shelters indicates that 188 Native children received shelter, but not knowing the total number of children who received shelter, we cannot calculate the proportion of Native children.

This information is important. It indicates an overrepresentation of Native children and woman in the province's shelters. While the Native population makes up 1.4% of the total population, Native women who received shelter because of domestic violence or associated problems account for 4% of the shelters' clientele.

In 7 shelters located close to Native communities or in regions with high Native populations, Native women made up, depending on the case, 25 to 75% of all the women sheltered. Two shelters receive more than 80 Native women on a yearly basis, representing 70% of their clientele. Even if the number of Native women admitted in these shelters varied from one year to another, their proportion always remained largely superior to the proportion of non-Native women sheltered.

Many shelter workers felt that the data gathered in the Federation's member shelters painted an incomplete picture of the Native presence. This would be due to the fact that many Native women do not openly acknowledge their Native identity for various reasons principally related to legal status.

### **3.2.4 Length of stay**

The total length of stay of Native women in the twenty shelters that had relevant data available was 4342 days, or an average of 19 days per woman.<sup>34</sup> By comparison, the average stay of non-Native women who stayed in 38 member shelters of the Federation was 27 days.<sup>35</sup> We observed stays exceeding three months in three participating shelters.

One director of a shelter who dealt mostly with a Native clientele noted that Native women tended to stay shorter periods than non-Native women. Their shorter stays would be attributed, according to her, to the fact that Native women come to the shelter to "calm the crisis and let the dust settle." They would first and foremost be seeking a form of respite and support and rarely think, at this stage, of putting in question their relationship. Readmissions of the same Native women are common. They do not necessarily occur in the same year; shelters can receive the same Native women multiple times over the years.

### **3.2.5 Sheltered Native Women by Nation**

Half the shelters that sheltered Native women were able to determine the nation of origin of a part or all of their Native clientele. They were mostly from the Cree nation (36%), the Innu nation (18%), the Algonquin nation (17%) and the Atikamekw nation (13%). Inuit, Huron-Wendat, Mi'gmaq and Abenakis women complete the picture. The almost complete absence of Mohawk women and children, which is the largest First Nation in the province, may be explained by the presence of a shelter in Akwesasne, Ontario.

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<sup>34</sup> After adjusting for the number of women sheltered in 5 shelters that did not have any data on the length of stay.

<sup>35</sup> Fédération, 2007.

### **3.2.6 Sheltered Native Women by Age**

According to the available data, seventy percent (70%) of Native women who received shelter were younger than 36 years old; 22% were between the ages of 36 and 45 and 8% were older than 46.<sup>36</sup> No data was available on the age of 15% of the Native women who were sheltered.

### **3.2.7 Source of Income at the Time of Arrival**

More than half the Native women were living on welfare at the time they were sheltered. Fifteen percent (15%) of them lived off their own income and 15% were dependent on their partner's income.

### **3.2.8 Reasons for Seeking Shelter**

In seventy percent (70%) of the cases, domestic violence constituted the principal reason for seeking shelter. Being homeless, having mental health problems and diverse forms of addictions, also led women to seek help from shelters, although these problems were always linked, one way or another, to a situation of domestic violence.

### **3.2.9 Types of Violence Suffered**

More than half of Native women sheltered were the victim of physical violence while the overwhelming majority of women were the victim of psychological violence.

### **3.2.10 Complaints Filed with Police**

Approximately 80% of Native women who received shelter did not file a complaint to police following their stay. By comparison, the FRHFVDQ's statistics indicate that only 35% of all women sheltered did not file a complaint to police.<sup>37</sup>

## **3.3 What non-Native Shelter Workers Have Observed**

In this section, we present shelter workers' perception of the reality and needs of Native women in situations of domestic violence, the adequacy of their intervention practices, their training as well the collaborative links they have established with other support services.

### **3.3.1 Their Perceptions of the Reality and Needs of Native Women**

Most shelter workers know little about the social and cultural realities of Native women because they rarely have the chance to be in contact with them. As we have seen, Native women only represent 4% of Quebec shelters' clientele, which is a lot considering the total Native population only makes up 1.4% of Quebec's overall population.

The shelter workers interviewed generally believe that the needs of Native women seeking shelter are similar to those of all women living situations of domestic violence. Psychological and material support must be provided in a secure environment. Many workers however estimate that the reality of social distress in Native milieus exacerbates

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<sup>36</sup> Forty-two per cent (42%) of women were aged between 26 to 35, 21% were aged between 18 and 25 and 7% were younger than 18.

<sup>37</sup> Fédération, 42.

some of Native women's needs. Respect for the confidentiality of their personal history, support in overcoming the difficulties resulting from multiple problems (drug abuse, mental health, etc) and long-term support with respect to discrimination and racism (housing, employment, court, etc) seemed to them to be the needs that Native women who have been victim of violence have in common.

Some shelter workers see resilience as one of the key characteristics of Native women. Their strong links with the family and community, their central position within the community and the support of the community seem to be explanatory factors of this resilience. "Once we understand the importance of the family and the partner and that all the women in the family take care of the children, not just the mother, the rest isn't so different," one shelter director noted.

Shelter workers enumerated numerous difficulties they thought Native women faced. The obstacles that were identified relate to Native women living in Native communities as well as in urban areas. The principal obstacles observed were the following:

- The lack of financial autonomy; poverty; the almost complete lack of childcare resources; and more generally, the precarious living conditions in the communities;
- The desensitization to violence in the communities;
- The difficulty assuring confidentiality in the smaller, isolated communities;
- The lack of support services in the communities;
- The traveling needed to access available resources due to the distant location of some communities;
- The necessity of leaving the community to get help;
- The possibility of losing acquired rights by leaving the community (housing, education, property, etc);
- The exile that a stay in a shelter can represent when it is located outside the community;
- The culture shock and isolation experienced during the search for help;
- The linguistic barrier in non-Native shelters;
- The double victimization experienced by Native women in the process of reclaiming their lives.

### **3.3.2 Their Approach with Native Women**

The feminist approach appears pertinent in the eyes of all the shelter workers. The idea that the elimination of domestic violence is founded on equality between women and men represents the basis of their intervention practices. Inasmuch as this feminist perspective inspires an intervention grounded on a respect for the autonomy of each woman and the knowledge of her capacity to reclaim control of her life or her empowerment, it is unanimously embraced. Some shelter workers however mention that the feminist approach is centered on the reinforcement of the capacities of the individual, rather than those of the couple or family, and that this could represent an additional barrier for Native women.

“In the Innu culture, the family nucleus is very strong. It is much more difficult for a woman to focus only herself.”

However, feminist intervention practices prioritise individual empowerment as a first step. Only in a second step is the empowerment of the family and community made a priority. This is essentially a distinction seen at the process level, rather than the goal of the intervention. Further, shelter workers note that the feminist approach does not account for the importance of spirituality during interventions. It is important to understand that Native women have diverse beliefs; some adopting a Native spirituality, others Catholicism or Christianity and others still atheism.

Finally, shelter workers expressed their desire to find “a way to transmit values in relation to the approach.”

“There is the possibility of using several approaches with Native women.”

“We believe the goals of the feminist approach remain those to be attained, no matter the woman’s origin. The challenge is in finding a way to transmit its values in relation to the approach.”

### **3.3.3 Intervention Practices with Native Women**

The shelters that receive few or no Native women have generally not reflected on the cultural framework of their intervention practices. Those that shelter an important number of Native women claim to give particular attention to intercultural communication so as to better reach them. Shelter workers try to help these women and demonstrate openness to their realities and values as best they can.

“We must understand that it is up to us to adapt and understand their way of feeling and living, which is different from ours.”

But they unanimously express that they would be more effective if they had more knowledge on the social and cultural realities of these women. They note that some women go through a kind of culture shock when they arrive at the shelter.

Elements that appear to the shelter workers to be well adapted to the needs of Native women are:

- a place of secure respite, where to sleep and eat;
- understanding staff who listen;
- support during the process of organizing their lives;
- the rules of confidentiality which govern exchanges with shelter workers.

Most shelter workers feel that the services that best respond to Native women’s needs concern short-term help and support in a protected and secure place. “We fulfill their basic needs.” In some shelters however, shelter workers support Native women for a long time. They generally observe solidarity and exchanges of services between Native and non-Native women in the shelters. The presence of conflicts between sheltered women, when they occur, are generally due to incompatible personalities rather than cultural differences.



In the eyes of the shelter workers, the elements that seem least adapted to the needs of Native women are:

- the language;
- an intervention plan whose objectives must be determined by the woman seeking shelter;
- some shelter rules (for example, the time at which meals are served and children must be put to bed, long-distance fees for women who call their families);
- group interventions.

Some shelter workers expressed specific difficulties in dealing with Native women staying at their shelter. They mention, for example, the difficulty in communicating with them because of linguistic and cultural differences. They also note that Native women reveal little about themselves or use few words to talk about themselves or their aspirations. Their high tolerance for violence, the greater importance they give to taking care of the needs of their children and family, rather than their own, their difficulty in respecting scheduled appointments and their often sudden departure, which make regular follow-ups impossible, represent some of the challenges shelter workers face.

### **3.3.4 Training in Relation to the Realities of Native Women**

Currently, training is very limited with respect to Native realities. However, 5 shelters have one or two shelter workers on staff who have learned about Native culture through one or two-day training sessions. In two other shelters, a few workers have followed a two-day training on intercultural intervention. This desire to adapt to Native realities is usually tributary upon the number of Native women requiring their services.

Most shelter workers feel their basic training and experience do not always allow them to respond adequately to the needs of Native women and their children. Their weak knowledge of Native realities contributes to a feeling of powerlessness when faced with the difficulties Native women experience.

“We would be more helpful if we understood their reality. Native communities are right next door; we hear a lot of stereotypes, but we are lacking real knowledge about them. This would help us in our intervention.”

“If we want to intervene effectively, we must try to put ourselves in the other person’s shoes. My shoes won’t necessarily fit her.”

### **3.3.5 Collaborative Links with other Resources**

Many shelter workers know the names of the principal domestic violence services available in their region and neighbouring Native communities: health centers, Native shelters, Native friendship centers, police services, Crime Victims Assistance Centers (CAVAC). In practice however, their contact with these resources is limited.

The short term collaboration between shelters and Native support services seem to be rather effective, but communication is generally limited to referring Native women from one resource to another. This practice is more frequent in the regions with high Native populations (Nord-du-Québec, Haute-Mauricie, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Côte-Nord).

The contacts are established by phone, often between people who have never met; good follow-ups rarely occur. For example, a social worker from the community contacts a shelter worker in a Native shelter to inform her of the arrival of a woman. The woman, however, does not show up. The shelter worker will get no news from the social worker who initially called her.

Workers also deplore the fact that Native women are so quickly left to themselves when they return in their community. They generally lose track of these women they have sheltered and supported and have no contact with the few social workers in the community. Post-shelter follow-ups are basically non-existent.

Shelter workers also note and deplore the absence of Native representatives at regional joint-action committees on domestic violence. In the regions of Montreal and Quebec, a few non-Native shelters work with the two Native shelters on a regular basis.

### **3.4 What Non-Native Shelter Workers Hope for**

This section summarizes the answers given to the questions concerning shelter workers' training needs and desire for dialogue to improve their intervention practices with Native women.

#### **3.4.1 Training Needs**

We have organized the recommendations made by non-Native women's shelters into three categories. To facilitate communication with Native women and develop stronger relations of trust, the consulted shelter workers hope to:

1. Gain knowledge of the historical and present-day realities of Native people:
  - Indian Act
  - Native history
  - Contemporary Native reality (political, judicial, socio-economic reality)
  - Living conditions of Native families
  - Native women's rights
  - Differences between nations and Native peoples
  - Functioning of band councils and Native health, social and police services
  - World vision, values, beliefs, spirituality, religion, symbolism, healing paths
  - Current portrait of domestic violence in Native communities
  - Specific needs of women victims of violence and their children
2. Continue to integrate into their approach practices and intervention tools which are appropriate for Native realities, particularly by reading the domestic violence study which was developed by the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec.
3. Increase their knowledge of available Native support services both within and outside Native communities.

### **3.4.2 Collaborative Relationships to be Established**

1. To increase their knowledge of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec, of Native social services and other Native support resources;
2. To examine and follow-up with Native support services when Native women are sheltered in non-Native shelters;
3. To improve the post-shelter follow-up with Native support resources;
4. To develop a collaborative protocol relating to domestic violence interventions in Native communities, including a practical guide which would explain the roles and responsibilities of both networks' support services. This protocol would be particularly useful in the context where there are frequent changes to staff in Native communities.
5. To have at their disposal a regional and provincial Native resources bank, which would serve as a reference tool to help Native women living in urban areas or in Native communities;
6. To develop Native representation in local and regional joint-action forums involving domestic violence intervention;
7. To promote exchanges between non-Native shelters that provide services to a significant number of Native women.

### **3.4.3 Other Measures Needed to Improve Services**

The shelter workers consulted feel the following measures could contribute to improving interventions with Native women. Some are simple and are easy to apply; others necessitate greater investment.

1. To promote the hiring of a Native shelter-worker in each shelter that takes in a significant number of Native women;
2. To provide specific training to at least one non-Native shelter worker when a Native worker cannot be hired;
3. To take into consideration the cultural identity of Native women and their children when designing the shelter's living environment (for example, preparing meals using common Native foods);
4. To attend immersion sessions in Native milieus where focus is put on training and exchange (for example, at a Native shelter or social services center within the community).



## SECTION 4

# Results of the Consultation Held with Native Women's Shelters

There are seven Native women's shelters in the province of Quebec, which have formed an association for the past five years through the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec. For a greater understanding of the current situation and the change hoped for and expressed by Native women's shelters staff, the Network's history and essential purpose are presented below, followed by a brief profile of its members.

### 4.1 Background and the Raison d'être of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec

In 2003, Native women's shelter workers across the province of Quebec created a new association which was coordinated by Quebec Native Women: the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec. The creation of this network was the result of several years of time and effort to increase these shelters' skills for action and outreach. Front-line workers who performed their duties in a relatively isolated environment had everything to gain by joining together.

Among the seven member shelters, five are located in Native communities. Their budget is managed by the community's band council (Social Services Department). Their annual base-funding of approximately \$150,000 is provided by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The other two shelters are located in urban areas. They receive base-funding from the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec. As with non-Native shelters, this funding is determined according to the number of places available. Given this funding formula, the annual operating budget for these two shelters may exceed by \$100,000 the amount granted to the shelters located within communities.

In the context of considerable disparity in terms of resources, the Network provides its shelters' workers with a place to share and receive training which creates a mutual reinforcement. The Network offers support to its shelters' workers through activities that enable them to improve their practices and services. It also provides its workers with proper tools to raise community awareness regarding domestic violence and the importance of seeking help from support services.

Since 2003, the Network's shelter workers have been meeting on a regular basis in order to create ties, share and increase their knowledge and improve their support practices for Native women in situations of domestic violence.<sup>38</sup> Training themes, selected to reflect the realities of women and children staying in shelters, include: domestic violence and related issues, intervention strategies for children exposed to domestic violence, post-traumatic stress, domestic violence and the law, sexual abuse among First Nations, and HIV/Aids. Themes have also been selected to improve staff

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<sup>38</sup> Quebec Native Women. 2005.

management skills. All shelter workers who were consulted as part of this study reported that they highly appreciate the training programs which have been offered to date.

## **4.2 Profile of the Network's Member Shelters**

The profile of the seven Native women's shelters is diversified. Disparities have been observed in areas such as financial means, history, location, number of employees, personnel training, working conditions and relationships with band councils. All together, the shelters have some thirty rooms available.

In her Native women's shelters profile, France Robertson<sup>39</sup> relates the comments made by a social service worker who draws a parallel between Native women's shelters' current situation and that of non-Native women's shelters of twenty years ago: small budgets, little training, management deficiencies. Since the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec was created, training among coordinators and shelter workers has seen significant progress.

### **4.2.1 Native Women's Shelter of Montreal**

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal is the Network's oldest shelter. It was founded in 1988 to meet the needs of Native women living in Montreal who too often found themselves homeless and destitute. The shelter is located in the heart of Montreal and consists of nine bedrooms that can take in as many as 16 women with their children at once. It serves Native women living in the Montreal area (some 5,000 women) as well as those who are referred from more remote areas in the province and even in Canada. In 2006-2007, close to 450 women and 127 children of every nation were sheltered. However, the majority of these women are Cree and Inuit since the shelter's services are provided mainly in English. While these women are hundreds and even thousands of kilometers away from home, they are uprooted, and most of them are trying to reorganize their lives during their stay at the shelter, in particular by finding income support and housing. The average stay is nine weeks.

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal has seventeen employees, twelve of whom are full-time workers. The vast majority of the employees are Native and they all speak both English and French. Its staff also includes a coordinator for the *Addictions and Blood-borne and Sexually Transmitted Infections Risk Reduction Program*. A Family Care worker was also part of the staff but the position was abolished due to a lack of funds. However, this position is essential in order to provide families with follow-up services. Significant employee turnover has been observed over the past few years. Of all the employees, the director has the most seniority with seven years of service. A continuing education program is offered to the staff.

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<sup>39</sup> Quebec Native Women, 2002.

The shelter's staff has built fruitful collaborative links with Youth Protection Services of the Batshaw Youth and Family Centres. They are hoping to do the same with the police services and hospitals of the Greater Montreal Area. Over the years, collaborative links have been developed with non-Native shelters located in the Greater Montreal Area, including the *Auberge Shalom pour femmes*.

#### **4.2.2 Missinak Community Home, Quebec City**

The Missinak Community Home<sup>40</sup> is the newest domestic violence support resource in the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec. Since its foundation in 2000, Missinak has been organizing external services out of its single facility which is housed in a community centre in Quebec City (Charlesbourg). As a non-profit, urban-based organization, Missinak receives its operational budget from the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux du Québec, as is the case with the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal. Its staff plans to move shortly into a house and set up shelter services after seven years of hard work.

Missinak has seven employees. Two of its shelter workers speak Innu, including the Youth Manager. Its staff members bring a rich and diverse expertise in several areas: community work experience, bachelor degrees in social work and psychology, certificates in Native Studies, pastoral animation, addictions, violence and sexual abuse, and diplomas in special education and helping relationships.

Missinak generally serves the Native female population in the Quebec City area (some 1,000 women) in addition to women from the Innu communities located on the North Shore, newcomers to Quebec City and women who have been living in the city for some time.

This support resource is inspired by a vision which "takes root in Native pride and dignity." The women are encouraged to rebuild their lives based on this pride, through an individual and group healing process. Missinak's mission is aimed at three levels : 1) individual services of intervention, guidance and referral which have, until now, been provided externally; 2) Collective services of raising awareness and mobilization (women's circle, circle of solidarity with other communities, cultural activities); 3) awareness-raising activities among its partners and the population (inter-cultural training), and alliance-driven activities among joint-action bodies. Moreover, sharing, resourcing and healing activities are held in a natural environment, for exemple traditional teachings, sweatlodges, and purifying rituals.

Missinak's services reach out over the Quebec City area as far as the Innu communities located on the North Shore. Shelter workers travel to these communities to offer training to the women's circles. In the Quebec City area, collaborative links have been established with non-Native women's shelters, in particular the Maison d'hébergement pour femmes immigrantes de Québec in Sainte-Foy and the Maison du Cœur pour femmes in Charlesbourg. Over the next few years, Missinak plans to further develop its alliances with several non-Native support resources in the Quebec City area. Its Board of Directors, referred to as the *Circle of Geese* is made up of five Native members and two non-Native, one of whom is a man.

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<sup>40</sup> Turtle in Innu.

### **4.2.3 Asperimowin Shelter, La Tuque**

Founded in 1997, the Asperimowin<sup>41</sup> shelter is a well-established organization located in a residential area in La Tuque<sup>42</sup>, in the upper St. Maurice region. Although it is located outside the community, it is considered to be located within a community since it specifically serves the Atikamekw communities of Wemotaci, Obedjiwan and Manawan, as well as Atikamekw women who reside in La Tuque. In this regard, the shelter receives its core funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Its budget is managed by the Atikamekw Nation Council through its Social Services Department. The great distances that one must travel make access to the shelter difficult: 120 km from Wemotaci, 430 km from Obedjiwan and 360 km from Manawan – all on forestry roads.

Asperimowin's staff includes three daytime shelter workers, two night clerks, two back-up employees as well as a part-time service head. Staff members' expertise comes more from their wealth of experience than their academic training, although some staff members have received training in helping relationships. Two of the shelter workers are Atikamekw and speak the language, a valuable asset for the women and children staying at the shelter. The shelter's employee turnover is high due in part to the number of sick leaves and employees returning to school. The shelter worker with the most seniority has been employed for the past seven years. The shelter has five bedrooms.

As is the case with the Network's other member shelters, the main reason for admission into *Asperimowin* is domestic violence. However, some women in difficulty need respite to reorganize their lives due to addiction problems, depression or other types of problems. In the past year, many young mothers as young as 16 and 17 years of age were sheltered along with their children. Violence also exists in romantic relationships among adolescents. On weekends, the shelter is used at times as a mother/child meeting place, supervised by Youth Protection Services.

Over the years, Asperimowin has created ties with La Tuque's other shelter, Le Toit de l'Amitié, more specifically to exchange reference services. The shelter is also a committed member of the Regional Joint Committee of Mauricie-Centre-du-Quebec Shelters. Accord Mauricie, an intervention organization for violent spouses, is also a member of this Committee.

### **4.2.4 Haven House, Listuguj**

Established in 1991, Haven House is located in the heart of the Mi'gmaq community of Listuguj, in the Gaspé Peninsula, near the New-Brunswick border. Its staff is made up of two shelter workers who have been working for Haven House since its creation, in addition to a coordinator who joined the shelter a year ago. On-call employees are sometimes needed during the night or on weekends. Like most Mi'gmaq people of their generation, the employees speak English and understand a little Mi'gmaq, which is mostly spoken by the elders. The shelter's coordinator has a bachelor's degree in social work. The other employees have many years of experience in domestic violence intervention among Native women, children and families.

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<sup>41</sup> Hope in Atikamekw.

<sup>42</sup> 3,500 inhabitants of La Tuque report a Native identity. Statistics Canada, 2008.



Haven House has four bedrooms. Its clientele is mainly made up of young women (20 to 30 years of age) and come from Listuguj and neighbouring Mi'gmaq communities. They sometimes come from elsewhere in Canada. They have all been victims of domestic violence, most often physical violence. After focusing for some time on awareness-raising and prevention activities within the community, the shelter returned to its original mission, that is, to provide shelter services as well as intervention and support services to Native women victims of domestic violence. However, Haven House continues to provide educational and awareness-raising services to both sheltered women and the community: support group for victims of sexual abuse, grief and loss workshops, violence prevention activities, conferences in schools and handicraft clubs. In all, over 500 individuals from the community, including 75 men, were reached by at least one of these activities over the past year. The shelter is also occasionally used as a mother/child meeting place which is supervised by a social worker from the regional Centre Jeunesse.

The shelter's lack of autonomy in the administration of its budget is a source of concern, in particular when it comes to negotiating a salary increase that would keep up with the cost of living. In addition, since the Mi'gmaq communities are almost entirely English-speaking in an almost entirely French-speaking region, this creates a communication barrier among support resources even though they are neighbours. On a regular basis, Haven House collaborates with New-Brunswick's Domestic Violence Mediation Service which is located nearby. The shelter hopes to further create ties with local police services. Over the past year, police officers recorded over 58 domestic violence-related incidents in Listuguj, a community of 2,000 residents. Occasional ties have been created with Maison Émergence of Maria for reference and shelter services.

#### **4.2.5 Tipinuaikan Shelter, Sept-Îles**

Created in 1990, the Tipinuaikan Shelter reopened its doors in September 2006, after being closed for two years. The shelter is located in the community of Uashat. It serves the Innu communities which are almost all located on the North Shore: Natashquan, La Romaine, Sept-Îles, Mingan, Maliotenam, Betsiamites, Les Escoumins, Mashteuiatsh and Schefferville. Native women victims of violence travel great distances to receive shelter services. Tipinuaikan has six full-time employees. These women are educated and have basic training in helping relationships (Community Response Certificates, Special Education Certificates and other relating fields). They are experienced, have supporting competencies and they form a dynamic team. They all speak Innu and French. Two of the shelter workers also speak English. Their common passion forms the basis of their strength, as is the case with other Native shelters.

Tipinuaikan has three bedrooms and can accommodate up to six women with their children. In spite of the problems they faced in restructuring the shelter, 25 women and their children were sheltered during 2006-07. Domestic violence is the only reason for admission that is accepted due to the restricted number of places. Many Native women victims of violence are regularly put onto a waiting list.

The particularity of this shelter is its services designed for families in addition to the usual shelter services. Women may therefore consult a shelter worker through external services (for example, on parenting skills) and men may also use this service (they can meet with a shelter worker who provides them with services). In the past year, 70 women

benefited from the shelter's external consultation services. In addition, a service implementation committee was formed in order to establish services for violent men.

At Tipinuaikan, as in the other women's shelters located within communities, the lack of autonomy regarding budget administration is a source of concern. The fact that the shelter successfully maintains a staff of six full-time employees with a budget of \$150,000 is a significant achievement. The shelter actively takes part in existing regional joint-action committees (Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord, Violence Committee, etc.). The shelter therefore works mainly with non-Native women's support resources.

#### **4.2.6 Ashpukun Mitshuap Shelter, Schefferville**

The Ashpukun Mitshuap Shelter opened its doors in 1993. It is located in Matimekosh, an Innu community of 800 residents located near Schefferville. It is accessible only by plane or train. The shelter has four bedrooms and its clientele is made up of Innu and Naskapi women from neighbouring communities, including Kawawachikamach.

The reasons for admission are mainly related to domestic violence. However, there are also women without housing, women with suicide ideation or health problems. The shelter workers sometimes have to organize transfers to the Tipinuaikan Shelter in Sept-Îles when there is no housing available in Schefferville, or because these women are afraid of their spouse or his family. However, most sheltered women return home after their stay in the Ashpukun Mitshuap shelter.

Of the shelter's four employees, three have been working at the shelter since its creation. They are Innu and speak their language. Since the shelter does not have a coordinator, the four shelter workers have many responsibilities. They oversee everything: intervention, planning, management, maintenance, groceries, etc. Their administrative management and financial autonomy is practically non-existent. The workers feel powerless to improve their working conditions, particularly in reducing the number of hours worked which frequently exceed the number of paid hours since they also provide an on-call service on weekends. They suffer from isolation and exhaustion. "*It seems as though we work all the time.*" Awareness-raising activities in the school have ceased in the past few years due to a lack of funds.

A *Shaputuan* is set up near the shelter where women may take time for themselves in a peaceful environment. As needed, they may also take part in healing ceremonies that are held in a sweatlodge.

#### **4.2.7 Waseya House, Kitigan Zibi**

Waseya<sup>43</sup> House was founded in 1991. It is located in the Algonquin community of Kitigan Zibi, a few kilometers from Maniwaki. The shelter has two bedrooms and can accommodate two women with their children.

There is only one full-time shelter worker who is supported by two on-call employees. Thanks to her experience as an addiction counsellor, her training in social sciences and her certificate in Crisis Intervention, this shelter worker/supervisor constitutes the pillar of the shelter. Since she joined the shelter seven years ago, she takes all

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<sup>43</sup> See *the Light* in Algonquin.

emergency calls from the Community Police. Its two on-call shelter workers have extensive experience working closely with women who are suffering from domestic violence. They all speak English and French and understand some Algonquin.

The number of admissions has been increasing every year for the past seven years, even if the number of full-time employees has decreased. In 2000, its staff had three shelter workers. In 2006-07, the shelter accommodated seventeen women and twenty children for a total of 164 days of shelter services. The length of stay ranges from two weeks to two months. There have been a few readmissions, however, they did not occur within the same year. Sheltered women come mainly from Rapid Lake (143 km) and Kitigan Zibi, but also from Lac-Simon (255 km), Pikogan (363 km) and Kitcisakik (231 km). The main reason for admission is domestic violence, but the shelter also accommodates women who are experiencing various distressing situations. Waseya House was also used as an emergency shelter for three men who had suffered violence from a family member (they were admitted because no women were sheltered at that time).

A support group for bereaved women has been created. The shelter hosts awareness-raising activities in the community, in particular on questions of violence, addiction and healing by publishing a monthly journal. A psychologist and a play therapist are available at the shelter one day per week. They provide their services to the Kitigan Zibi community. Collaborative links have been developed with Maniwaki's women's shelter Halte-Femmes Haute-Gatineau for referral and transfers when there is no room available in the other resources.

While she does not know the exact amount of the shelter's budget, the supervisor considers that she has sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of the women staying at the shelter.

#### **4.3 What Shelter Workers in Native Women's Shelters Have Observed**

The Native shelter workers discussed the issues that affect the sheltered women's daily lives and shared their reflections regarding the problematic situations that surround them. They spoke of how their shelters' relative poverty contrasts with the extent and breadth of the problems and the endemic nature of family violence within Native communities. In the past fifteen years, Native women's shelters have enabled hundreds of women to get back on their feet again and to continue their journey feeling more self-assured. A handful of dedicated women keep these shelters together to the best of their ability and under difficult working conditions: underfunding, low wages, and low financial and administrative autonomy. In spite of everything, these women have not lost their sense of humour.

“Even when we are not at work, we always talk about work. We are always trying to add something positive. At times, I even try to be creative while I'm sleeping (laughter).”

### 4.3.1 Their Approach and Intervention Practices

The Native women's shelter workers share a common vision with respect to domestic violence intervention. Their intervention and healing approach is family and community-oriented. They claim that Native women's welfare is indissociably tied to the well-being of their children, their personal relationships, their family and their community. They also believe that the family and community healing processes inevitably include the men. Spouses, fathers, and brothers must contribute to the process in order to improve relationships within families and communities. This is why they are concerned about the lack of support services for violent men. Many are even considering the idea of providing services which would help violent spouses.

“The woman returns to her community, to her home. The wound becomes infected once again. She comes back to the shelter. It is like applying a band-aid while knowing that the pus is in the home. We realized that we were dealing with a vicious circle. We cannot work solely with the women and children given that family is very important among Native people. There are also men who want help, but they do not have the resources to help solve their problem. If we truly want to work on the problem which is in the home, it is inevitable, we must work on the entire problem.”

“Women request help more frequently for their spouses than they report them to the police. They tell themselves: If I send him to prison, my children won't see him anymore. But if he got some help, he would be able to stay.”

When we asked shelter workers what was lacking in the support and healing process, they frequently mentioned spirituality. The spiritual aspect of healing has become an anchor in intervention and healing practices in Native women's shelters.

This conclusion mirrors a finding in a study on women living domestic violence, which was completed by a group of Canadian researchers.<sup>44</sup> The researchers described the spiritual aspect as a missing link which would enable a better understanding of the needs of women who temporarily stay in women's shelters. They reported that they had been inspired by Native women's shelters in their attempt to meet the spiritual needs of women sheltered in other types of shelters.

### 4.3.2 Training Needs

Native women's shelters staff have extensive and diverse training in helping relationships. Many shelter workers have a strong academic background while others have acquired an expertise which is mainly based on experience rather than training. Some shelter workers have personally suffered from domestic violence; it was their personal healing process that led them to practice this occupation. They are natural helpers, so to speak, who see themselves as having the task of transmitting their knowledge to their sisters from the various communities. This situation explains the many training needs identified by the shelter workers.

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<sup>44</sup> R. Boehm *et al.*, 1999.

Every day, Native shelter workers deal with complicated situations and serious problems experienced by Native women in their communities. Spending eight hours with women and children in distress, who are facing critical situations, can be a very difficult and exhausting experience, particularly if the shelter worker is alone. A feeling of helplessness and exhaustion sometimes overwhelms them. They are aware of the fact that they must take care of themselves if they hope to remain employed.

“Sometimes, I go home and I wonder if my intervention was properly done. At times I would need someone to guide me. When there are a lot of people at the shelter, I feel a little lost. Answering the telephone, doing an intervention with a woman, then another. At times, I have too much to deal with. As time goes by, more and more often I wonder: “Who am I going to see for me?”

We have observed among many shelter workers a need to go beyond crisis intervention or domestic violence intervention training so that they may learn to deal with burn-outs and compassion fatigue.

#### **4.3.3 Their Collaborative Relationships with other Domestic Violence Support Services**

Native women’s shelter workers know of the support services available in their area, however, in reality, the collaborative links with these resources are unevenly developed. Depending on the region, links have been strengthened with some non-Native shelters, some Native support services within the communities and other resources.

“What works in our collaboration with other services, whether or not those services are Native, is due to the fact that we know each other. This is why we have the reflex to call.”

They unanimously deplore the lack of post-shelter follow-up with other support resources.

«When the women go to Sept-Îles, it is often because they have no apartment and are afraid of their spouse or their spouse’s family. We sometimes transfer these women. They pay for their travel fare and they travel by train. We lose contact with them when they leave.”

#### **4.3.4 The Shelters’ Funding and Working Conditions**

Underfunding for Native women’s shelters represents a great source of concern for workers. Added to the difficulties in budget management due to their lack of control and some local authorities’ lack of transparency, these obstacles create an environment where working conditions are frequently described as difficult and unfair.

## 4.4 What Shelter Workers in Native Women's Shelters Hope for

### 4.4.1 Training Needs

We have divided the training needs as expressed by the coordinators and shelter workers into four key areas.

#### 1. Consolidate the intervention practices among sheltered women and their children

- A) Better understand the social problems experienced in the communities in order to provide sheltered women and children with a more adequate evaluation, intervention and follow-up.

Themes mentioned include the following:

- Addictions and abuse (drug, alcohol, medication, gambling etc.).
  - Mental health problems: evaluation, intervention, follow-up.
  - Sexual abuse among women: evaluation, intervention, follow-up.
  - Child sexual abuse: evaluation, intervention, follow-up.
  - Children exposed to family violence: evaluation, intervention, follow-up.
  - *Youth Protection Act* (update concerning regulatory amendments).
  - Suicide and suicidal ideation: detection, intervention, follow-up.
  - Historical bereavement trauma among Native people and personal bereavement.
- B) Establish a connection between the approaches and the individual intervention tools regarding domestic violence, which are used in Native and non-Native shelters. Adopt, in a general manner, the approaches and tools used in non-Native shelters (clinical supervision, intervention plan, evaluation tool, admission file, follow-up reports, etc.).
- C) Focus of healing process should be put on spirituality, whether it is Native spirituality or religious beliefs.

#### 2. Consolidate the work team

Themes suggested include:

- Building long-term team solidarity.
  - Rules of ethical conduct for shelter workers towards residents.
  - Shelter living code and conflict management.
- #### 3. Consolidate women's shelters administrative and financial management
- Statistical data bank on sheltering.
  - Financial planning tools.
  - Shelter's administrative and financial management.
  - Role and responsibilities of Board members.

4. Develop prevention and awareness-raising practices among the communities and other related resources of the milieu
  - Domestic violence awareness-raising tools in schools.
  - Domestic and family violence awareness-raising tools for communities.
  - Promotion and awareness-raising tools among non-Native support services to ensure recognition of Native specificity in domestic violence intervention.

#### **4.4.2 Collaborative Links to be Established**

1. Develop intra-sectorial collaborative relationships with non-Native women's shelters, Native support resources in the communities and services for violent spouses.
2. Develop intersectoral collaborative relationships mainly with health and social services and police services.
3. Provide post-shelter follow-ups for women in collaboration with other resources.

#### **4.4.3 Measures Needed to Improve Services**

1. Improve the working conditions in the Native women's shelters, in particular by recruiting new trained personnel and increasing salaries, in accordance to the standards established in comparable Quebec workplaces.
2. Develop second-stage resources for Native women who are experiencing domestic violence and related issues.
3. Develop a therapy program for women and men who are experiencing domestic or family violence.
4. Develop support resources in the community for spouses with violent behaviour.





# Development Opportunities

The consultation which was conducted among Native and non-Native domestic violence shelter workers has helped to better identify their training needs regarding intervention with Native women victims of violence. The consultation also served as an opportunity to take steps to create a closer relationship between both networks regarding this issue.

As this step has been accomplished, the Ishkuteu Project is now proposing to initiate activities designed to enhance the skills of shelter workers of both shelter networks through training and building collaborative links of support services. Because of budget restrictions, the project cannot respond to all the concerns raised by the participants during the consultation. However, the project is committed to carrying out a number of actions depending on their feasibility, in an experimental fashion.

The purpose of the training and networking activities is to provide Native and non-Native organizations with the means to improve their services so that they will be better able to meet the needs of Native women who are experiencing domestic violence and related issues.

The target groups for these training and networking activities are made up of the following:

1. Directors and shelter workers who are employed by member shelters of the Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentée et en difficulté du Québec, as well as the other shelters that took part in the consultation;
2. Coordinators and shelter workers of the Native Women's Shelters Network of Quebec;
3. Staff from health and social services, Native community police officers and other Native support resources.

Over the next few years, the actions planned as part of the Ishkuteu Project will be divided into four key actions:

## **1. Provide a training session to non-Native shelter workers**

A two-day training program will be provided to non-Native shelter workers in ten regions across the province of Quebec. This activity will be carried out in collaboration with 40 non-Native women's shelters, seven Native women's shelters and support resources from 24 Native communities.

## **2. Provide training sessions to Native shelter workers**

One-day training activities will be offered to the shelter workers of the Native Women's Shelter Network. These activities will be carried out in collaboration with directors and shelter workers from non-Native women's shelters.

The general objectives of these training sessions will be to consolidate their approach and intervention practices regarding domestic violence and social problems experienced within the communities.

### **3. Carry out intra-regional collaborative linkages**

Identifying strategies and means to create lasting ties between non-Native shelter resources and Native support services is planned as part of this project. The purpose of these collaborative activities is to provide both networks with an opportunity to share knowledge, expertise and services. The creation of ties between the networks will be accomplished through collaborative internships between non-Native and Native women's shelters.

These multiple experiences will inevitably be different from one region to another. They will be recorded and assessed in order to identify the characteristics of a successful collaborative linkage experience.

### **4. Organise a National Overview and Evaluation Session**

At the end of the training and networking activities, an exchange forum will be organized to pool the experiments of the Ishkuteu Project. This evaluation session will bring together individuals from the ten regions across the province of Quebec, who took part in the pilot project. The purpose of this session will be to identify the best practices in domestic violence intervention and joint-action for Native women, assess the pilot project benefits, and set forth recommendations in order to enhance the Native component of the *Government Action Plan 2004-2009 on Domestic Violence*.

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**Internet resources:**

[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca)

[www.faq-qnw.org](http://www.faq-qnw.org)

[www.fede.qc.ca](http://www.fede.qc.ca)

[www.missinak.org](http://www.missinak.org)

[www.nwsm.info](http://www.nwsm.info)

[www.reseaudialog.qc.ca](http://www.reseaudialog.qc.ca)

[www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)

[www.tipinuaikan.com](http://www.tipinuaikan.com)



## APPENDICES

- 1 - Interview Guide for Native and non-Native Shelters
- 2 - Consent Form
- 3 - Questionnaire for Non-Native Shelters
- 4 - Descriptive Information Sheet for Native and non-Native shelters





## APPENDIX 1

### Interview Guide for Native and non-Native Shelters

#### 1- General characteristics of the shelter

- History of the shelters; sheltering of children or not
- Number of rooms and beds
- Number and type of full time, part time and on call employees
- Work experience of the shelter-worker coordinator
- Type of services offered and internal and external functioning

#### 2- Profile of the women sheltered and their request for help

- Number of women sheltered, length of stay, repeated stays
- Socio-economic profile of the women sheltered: age, place of residence, origin, occupation, source of income, number and age of children
- Reasons expressed for seeking help
- Type of services most often dispensed
- Origin of the reference

#### 3- Approaches and intervention practices

- Type of intervention : welcome, group and individual intervention, intervention with children, collective activities (meals, sharing rooms, etc), references, sensitization in the area, promotion of services, etc
- Type of approach used: describe it. In which way is it adapted to Native women?
- Services offered: principal strengths and draw-backs
- Security of women in relation to the presence of the shelter in the community (Native shelters)
- Confidentiality of the intervention in relation to the size and the level of isolation of the communities (daily proximity of shelter workers and other residents).

#### 4- Perception of the reality and needs of Native women victims of domestic violence

- Difficulties met by Native women in general
- Needs of these women as perceived by the shelter workers
- Support that can be obtained within and without the community
- Perception by the community of the shelter
- Obstacles met during the request for help and in the services obtained (availability, geographic and cultural access to resources, personnel training, etc)

#### 5- Personnel training

- Basic training received in relation to the employment exigencies
- Training needs of the personnel: intervention, management, sensitization, promotion

#### 6- Collaborations with other resources providers in the area

- Current collaborations with Native and non-Native resource providers
- Collaborations to be established

#### 7- Suggestions for improving services

- Training
- Collaboration with resource providers
- Promotion of the shelter's services
- Welcome and intervention practices



APPENDIX 2  
Consent Form (in French only)



Fédération de ressources d'hébergement  
pour femmes violentées et en difficulté  
du Québec



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.  
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.



Service aux collectivités  
Université du Québec à Montréal

**Formulaire de consentement**  
Projet ISHKUTEU

**Information sur le projet**

ISHKUTEU est un projet-pilote partenarial réalisé par Femmes Autochtones du Québec inc., la Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec et le Service aux collectivités de l'Université du Québec à Montréal.

Le projet ISHKUTEU vise l'amélioration des services d'aide et d'hébergement aux femmes autochtones du Québec vivant de la violence conjugale et d'autres problématiques associées en renouvelant les pratiques d'intervention et en adaptant les services concernés.

Votre participation au projet implique que vous acceptiez d'être rencontrée pour un entretien qui durera environ deux heures et qui sera enregistré sur bande audio. Les informations que vous fournirez demeureront confidentielles.

Votre participation est volontaire et vous pouvez vous retirer du projet en tout temps.

Pour toute question ou commentaire, vous pouvez vous adresser à :

Sylvie Pharand  
Coordonnatrice  
Projet ISHKUTEU  
Téléphone : (514) 987-3000 poste 2479  
Télécopieur : (514) 987-6845  
Courriel : [pharand.sylvie@uqam.ca](mailto:pharand.sylvie@uqam.ca)

**Consentement de la participante**

J'accepte d'apporter volontairement ma collaboration au projet ISHKUTEU.

Je comprends que toutes les informations que je fournirai seront traitées de façon strictement confidentielle et aux fins du présent projet. Les noms des participantes n'apparaîtront sur aucun rapport sauf si elles le souhaitent. L'ensemble du matériel recueilli pendant le projet sera gardé sous clef au Service aux collectivités de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Une fois le projet complété, les responsables s'engagent à disposer du matériel recueilli de façon sécuritaire.

J'accepte que ces informations soient utilisées à des fins d'analyse pour répondre aux objectifs du projet.

Je peux retirer ma participation au projet n'importe quand si je le désire.

J'ai lu et compris le présent formulaire de consentement. On a répondu à ma satisfaction à mes questions.

Signature de la participante

Nom en lettres moulées

\_\_\_\_\_  
Titre du poste

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX 3  
**Questionnaire for Non-Native Shelters (in French only)**

**IDENTIFICATION DE LA MAISON D'HÉBERGEMENT**

Nom de la maison et sa localisation (nom de la ville)

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Avez-vous hébergé des femmes autochtones au cours des cinq dernières années ?

Oui \_\_\_\_\_ Veuillez répondre à toutes les questions.

Non \_\_\_\_\_ Veuillez répondre aux questions des sections 2, 3 et 5.

**1. APPROCHES ET PRATIQUES D'INTERVENTION AVEC LES FEMMES AUTOCHTONES HÉBERGÉES**

**Dans cette section, nous aimerions connaître votre expérience d'intervention avec les femmes autochtones que vous hébergez (ou avez hébergées).**

Avez-vous développé une approche et des pratiques d'intervention spécifiques en ce qui concerne les femmes autochtones et leurs enfants, dans l'un ou l'autre des services suivants ?

Répondez oui ou non. Si oui, précisez.

- Accueil
- 

- Intervention individuelle
- 

- intervention de groupe
- 

- Intervention avec les enfants ou concernant les enfants
- 

- Activités collectives (repas, partage de chambre, etc.)
- 

- Référence
-

- Sensibilisation dans le milieu

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- Promotion du service

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- Autre (spécifiez)

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Croyez-vous que les pratiques d'intervention et les services que vous avez développés sont bien adaptés aux réalités et aux besoins des femmes autochtones ?

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a) Selon vous, quels sont les services et les pratiques d'intervention qui sont bien adaptés et pourquoi?

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b) Selon vous, quels sont les pratiques d'intervention et les services qui sont moins bien adaptés?

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c) Avez-vous rencontré des difficultés particulières dans votre intervention avec les femmes autochtones et leurs enfants? Lesquelles?

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Préciser l'approche principale que vous utilisez dans votre intervention.

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Croyez-vous que l'approche que vous utilisez (féministe, systémique, holistique, etc.) soit adaptée aux réalités et besoins des femmes autochtones que vous accueillez? Pourquoi?

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**2. PERCEPTIONS DES RÉALITÉS ET BESOINS DES FEMMES AUTOCHTONES VIVANT DE LA VIOLENCE CONJUGALE**

Dans cette section, nous aimerions savoir comment VOUS percevez la situation des femmes autochtones qui vivent de la violence conjugale et d'autres problèmes associés.

2.1. D'après votre expérience, quels sont les besoins des femmes autochtones vivant de la violence conjugale et d'autres problèmes associés ?

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2.2. D'après votre expérience, les femmes autochtones vivant de la violence conjugale éprouvent-elles des difficultés particulières ? Si oui, lesquelles ?

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2.3. Lorsqu'elles recherchent de l'aide, les femmes autochtones vivant de la violence conjugale rencontrent-elles des obstacles particuliers? Si oui, lesquels ?

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2.4. Quelles sont les principales ressources d'aide disponibles pour les femmes autochtones vivant de la violence conjugale et d'autres problèmes associés :

- dans leur communauté d'origine ?

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- en dehors de leur communauté ?
  - a) dans votre région

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- b) dans leur région d'origine

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### **3. FORMATION DU PERSONNEL DE LA MAISON D'HÉBERGEMENT**

Dans cette section, nous voudrions connaître VOS besoins de formation particuliers à l'égard des femmes autochtones et de leurs enfants.

3.1. Combien d'intervenantes ont reçu une formation spécifique concernant les réalités autochtones ?  
Pour chacune, spécifiez le type de formation, la durée, le dispensateur et le lieu de la formation.

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3.2. Croyez-vous que votre expérience comme intervenante en maison d'hébergement vous permet de répondre adéquatement aux besoins des femmes autochtones et de leurs enfants ?  
Oui \_\_\_\_\_ Non \_\_\_\_\_ Plus ou moins \_\_\_\_\_

Expliquez pourquoi.

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3.3. Quels sont vos besoins de formation pour mieux intervenir auprès des femmes autochtones ayant recours à votre ressource ?

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### **4. PARTENARIAT AVEC LES RESSOURCES DU MILIEU CONCERNANT LES FEMMES AUTOCHTONES**

Dans cette section, nous voulons connaître les liens de concertation que vous avez établis et ceux que vous souhaiteriez établir avec les ressources d'aide autochtones.

4.1. Est-ce que votre maison travaille en partenariat avec les ressources d'aide autochtones ? Si oui, précisez avec qui.

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4.2. Est-ce que ce partenariat répond aux besoins de votre maison dans votre travail avec les femmes autochtones ?

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4.3 Que souhaiteriez-vous développer ou améliorer dans vos liens avec les ressources d'aide autochtone ?

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**5. PISTES POUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES AUX FEMMES AUTOCHTONES**

Ici, permettez-vous de rêver ! Précisez les moyens à mettre en place même s'ils ne vous apparaissent pas toujours réalistes dans le contexte actuel.

Compte tenu de vos perceptions des besoins des femmes autochtones et dans le but de mieux répondre à ces besoins, quelles seraient selon vous les améliorations à instaurer dans votre maison (ou dans les maisons en général) :

- au plan des pratiques ?

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- au plan de la formation ?

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- au plan de la concertation ?

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- au plan de la sensibilisation ?

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- sur tout autre plan (précisez)

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**IDENTIFICATION DES RÉPONDANTES**

Nom de l'intervenante-rédactrice:

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Titre du poste :

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Téléphone :

Courriel :

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Nombre d'intervenantes ayant participé au remue-méninge du questionnaire : \_\_\_\_\_

Spécifiez par type de poste (ex : 2 intervenantes femmes, 1 intervenante jeunesse)

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APPENDIX 4  
**Descriptive Information Sheet for Native and non-Native shelters  
 (in French only)**

**Fiche descriptive à l'intention des maisons d'hébergement participantes**

**1. Caractéristiques de la maison d'hébergement**

1. Nom de la maison
2. Nombre de chambres et de lits
3. Accueil des enfants : oui \_\_\_\_\_ non \_\_\_\_\_
4. Nombre total d'employées
5. Portrait du personnel de la maison d'hébergement

Nature du poste	Horaire de travail	Nombre de personnes
Intervenante femmes		
Intervenante jeunesse		
Personnel administratif		
Personnel de soutien		

**6. Types de services offerts**

<b>SERVICES INTERNES</b>	<b>Oui</b>	<b>Non</b>
Accueil/écoute		
Hébergement transitoire		
Consultation individuelle		
Intervention de groupe		
Soutien-accompagnement dans les démarches		
Activités d'information (droits et ressources)		
Autres (spécifier)		
Autres (spécifier)		
<b>SERVICES EXTERNES</b>	<b>Oui</b>	<b>Non</b>
Activités de sensibilisation dans les écoles		
Activités de sensibilisation dans le milieu		
Activités de promotion des services		
Écoute téléphonique		
Suivi post-hébergement		
Activités d'information (droits et ressources)		
Autres (spécifier)		
Autres (spécifier)		

## 2. Caractéristiques des femmes autochtones hébergées

1. Nombre de femmes autochtones hébergées en 2006-2007
2. Nombre total de femmes hébergées en 2006-2007
3. Nombre d'enfants autochtones hébergés en 2006-2007
4. Nombre total de jours d'hébergement pour les femmes autochtones en 2006-2007
5. Admission et réadmission pour une même femme autochtone

Fréquence des admissions	Nombre de femmes
1 <sup>ère</sup> admission en 2006-2007	
2 <sup>e</sup> admission	
3 <sup>e</sup> admission	
4 <sup>e</sup> admission et plus	
Inconnu	

## 6. Âge des femmes autochtones accueillies

Groupe d'âge	Nombre de femmes
Moins de 18 ans	
18-25 ans	
26-35 ans	
36-45 ans	
46-55 ans	
56-65 ans	
Plus de 65 ans	
Inconnu	

## 7. Source de revenus des femmes autochtones accueillies :

Source de revenus à l'arrivée	Nombre de femmes
Salaire personnel	
Salaire du conjoint	
Sécurité du revenu (revenu familial)	
Allocations familiales	
Assurance emploi	
Bourse d'études	
Autre (spécifier)	
Inconnu	

8. Raison(s) de la demande d'aide

Raison(s) de la demande d'aide	Nombre de femmes
Violence conjugale	
Autre forme de violence	
Agression sexuelle	
Sans ressources financières	
Sans abri	
Santé mentale	
Toxicomanie	
Jeu compulsif	
Autre (spécifier)	
Inconnu	

9. Type(s) de violence subie

Type(s) de violence subie	Nombre de femmes
Physique	
Psychologique	
Sexuelle	
Économique	
Harcèlement	
Inconnu	

10. Plainte à la police

Plainte à la police	Nombre de femmes
Déposée	
Aucune plainte déposée	
Rapport d'événement seulement	
Article 810	
Inconnu	

11. Nation d'origine des femmes autochtones accueillies:

Nations autochtones du Québec	Nombre de femmes
Abénaki	
Algonquin	
Attikamekw	
Cri	
Huron-Wendat	
Inuu (Montagnais)	
Malécite	
Micmac	
Mohawk	
Naskapi	
Inuit	
Inconnu	