HOW DO WE FORGIVE OUR FATHERS: ANGRY/VIOLENT ABORIGINAL/FIRST NATIONS MEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOCIAL WORKERS

by

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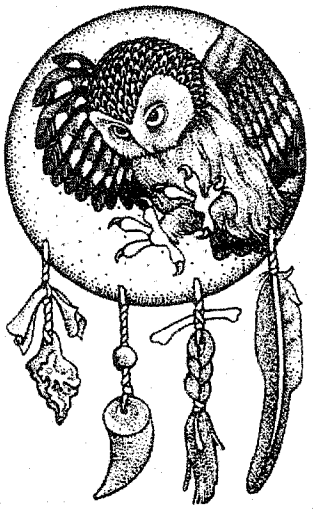

ABSTRACT

The extent of male violence in its many forms has been reported by the Report of The Royal Commisssion on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) as being of epidemic proportions and escalating. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the elimination of violence and to discover, through the stories of Aboriginal/First Nations males who have experienced issues with violent behaviour, what aspects of helping relationships are perceived as beneficial, and what aspects of helping relationships are perceived as detrimental.

An emergent themes grounded theory case study methodology is used to examine the life stories of six First Nations men who are participants in a talking circle program to ameliorate violent behaviour. The researcher undertook an ongoing holistic autobiographical process to establish authenticity of identity while engaging in a 14 week participant observer process prior to conducting the interviews. The autobiography and participant observer process are material to the outcomes of the interviews.

The six men's stories are told against the back-drop of First Nations colonial history and a description of First Nations contemporary social conditions. The stories tell the legacy of violence, drug and alcohol abuse, residential school trauma, received from parents and grandparents and passed on to spouses, children and grandchildren.

An emergent themes grounded theory approach generated 1054 statements made by participants regarding social relationships in their lives from early childhood to the present. The individual statements led to the emergence of 29 categories of relationship which were further refined into four themes:

1. Powerfully contradictory experiences and feelings related to immediate and extended family.

2. Multigenerational trauma and multigenerational post-traumatic stress disorder .

3. Marginalization and alienation within the community at the micro and macro levels.

4. Relationships with helping professionals and policy/program structures that are inconsistent, erratic, irrelevant and irrepressible.

The study findings provide valuable insights into relationship, policy and program requirements in a number of social work practice areas.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Nearly thirty years ago in Kenora, Ontario, I stood before my first class of university students to teach Introduction to Social Work at Lakehead University. To say I was undertaking pedagogy by the seat of my pants would have been generous, however I did have my wits sufficiently engaged to indicate to those assembled that they were to remember that I was a Social Worker, specifically a Social Groupworker, not a teacher. My decision to embark on that tack was twofold. Several members of the class were in fact high school teachers taking the course as part of mandatory professional development and I did not wish to be measured by their criteria because it was foreign to my profession. Second, it was my intent to address the curriculum established for the course via development of a groupwork relationship. The factor of a holistic relationship for social work practice and social work educational experience was as important for me then as it has been since. Recently, growing awareness of the importance of a holistic relationship with self has been examined using the terms of holistic autobiography.

Over the past three decades I have had the opportunity to teach and speak at a number of colleges and universities across western Canada, as well as to make presentations at conferences and professional development workshops on the topic of First Nations Social Issues. My attempts to emphasize the value and importance of holistic relationship have been received with mixed, sometimes puzzled, occasionally astonished and frequently querulous responses. This dissertation draws upon the experiences and the questions raised with regard to the practice of social work and social work education.

Through an integration of autobiography, authenticity, and participant observer qualitative research, I have undertaken a grounded theory case study of the life experiences of six First Nations/Aboriginal men and their experiences with social workers and others in the human service, helping professions.

In order to appreciate individual circumstances, it is essential to have an understanding of the societal context of an individual or group. In order to appreciate contemporary circumstances, it is essential to understand precipitating historical events. For far too many members of mainstream society, with regard to First Nations individuals and groups, this requires gaining a basic awareness of First Nations realities past and present.

For the past several years, United Nations measures have rated the quality of life for Canadians as first in the world; however, the quality of life for urban First Nations people has been rated as thirty-fifth, and for those living on reserves, the quality of life has been rated as sixty-third (Fleras & Elliott, 1999, p.163). The most recent United Nations index (2001) now places Canada third in the world. Comparison of First Nations social conditions over the past five decades reflects a degree of improvement in some areas and deterioration in others. However, the reality of a discrete population living in third world conditions in the midst of postmodern high tech prosperity still pertains to urban and rural First Nations people. Fleras & Elliott (1999) identify a few of the socio-economic factors that contribute to the discrepancy in the quality of life ratings:

> With rates nearly three times the national average, unemployment is a major cause of aboriginal distress in leading directly to poor housing, illness, a sense of

> powerlessness, cultural disintegration and social decay, and cycles of poverty....On certain reserves, up to 95 percent of the population subsists on welfare or unemployment benefits. Individual incomes are half of that of all Canadians, while the ratio of social assistance to aboriginal people is five times that of the population at large....The internalization of white racism and/or indifference is reflected in violent death rates, which are up to four times the national average....with alcohol-related deaths accounting for up to 80 percent of the fatalities on some reserves. Domestic abuse is so endemic within aboriginal communities, according to some observers that few children grow into adulthood without first-hand experience of interpersonal violence. Violent deaths and suicides are also disproportional when compared to the general population....Nearly three-quarters of aboriginal males will have been incarcerated in a correctional centre at some point in their lives by the age of 25. (pp. 171 &172)

Since the Constitution Act of 1867, through section 91(24), designated "Indians and lands reserved for the Indians" to be a federal responsibility, a plethora of legislation, policies, programs, royal commissions, committees, studies, reports and court cases have regulated and examined the micro and macro aspects of First Nations life. During the past half century in particular, many initiatives have been introduced in the areas of family services, child protection, health, social development, economic development, housing, education and criminal justice. In the same time frame, social workers, or individuals functioning in the role of social worker, have played significant parts in each of the above

identified areas. Despite the interventions of over half a century, amelioration of difficulties and the improvement of social conditions has not been commensurate with the extent of the interventions.

The Purpose/Need for the study

The overall purpose of the study is to contribute to the elimination of family violence amongst First Nations individuals, and in First Nations communities. In order to achieve that overall purpose, I feel it is essential to have First Nations and non-First Nations social work practitioners with education, skills and competencies relevant to addressing violence in the context of First Nations individuals, families and communities. At the present time, schools of social work are handicapped in not having curriculum materials and programs to prepare graduates for this particular area of social work practice.

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to discover, through the stories of Aboriginal/First Nations males who have experienced issues with violent behaviour, what aspects of helping relationships are perceived as beneficial, and what aspects of helping relationships are perceived as detrimental. Information derived will serve to generate theory, practice methods and curricula to more fully prepare First Nations and non-First Nations social work students and practitioners to engage in a holistic healing process.

The rationale for the study

First Nations people have comprised, and continue to comprise a disproportionately high number of social services users, and a disproportionately low number of services providers. Health reports show that First Nations people have tuberculosis rates that are 43 times greater than the Canadian population in general and diabetes rates two to five times greater than the Canadian population. These conditions among others have contributed to hospital admission rates for First Nations people that are double that of the Canadian population (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001, p. 72). In other health and social development areas, the ratio of First Nations people receiving social assistance is five times greater than that of all Canadians. The proportion of First Nations children in care across Canada is six and half times higher than for the non-First Nations population. Disproportionately over-represented in correctional institutions, in Western Canada First Nations inmates make up 64 percent of the federal inmate population (Fleras & Elliott, 1996, p. 172). Consequently, it is almost inevitable that a person practicing social work in Canada will come into contact with First Nations individuals, groups and communities.

Social workers have been a common feature in the lives of First Nations men, women and children for five or six generations. As they are a common denominator in the lives of First Nations individuals and families, it seems natural to want to know what social workers have done that is helpful, and what have they done, unwittingly or not, that may have been negative and/or triggered toxic reactions. One of the greatest challenges for social workers in British Columbia and elsewhere is cross-cultural practice. Members of

mainstream society who make up the majority of social work students, instructors and practitioners have seldom taken the time, nor been encouraged to holistically reflect upon, discover and articulate personal cultural identity. Without a clearly articulated frame of reference, cultural differences are often perceived as a threat to be feared, rather than as diversity to be celebrated. Social work education and social work practice until recently have taken place solely within the context of the same mainstream value systems that have contributed to the disparate living conditions of First Nations people.

The extent of male violence in its many forms has been reported by the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) as being of epidemic proportions and escalating. Moreover, the literature indicates male violent offenders to be amongst the more difficult individuals with whom to work. It is thought that to improve healing programs it is necessary to give respectful voice to the men and their experiences with social workers. The purpose is not to excuse violent behaviour, but to understand what is behind it and to become aware of factors that contribute to such behavioural patterns.

Terminology

As a Social Worker, my preference is to use language and terminology that is inclusive as opposed to exclusive, however, I will be writing about the nature of the past and present relationship of members of two cultures, each with distinct and fundamentally different worldviews, values, and norms. Sherilyn Calliou's (1998) reflections on the contemporary use of binary nomenclature point out many of the challenges experienced in choosing terminology.

> Labels appear to be highly significant in the (re)claiming of identity, belonging, place and voice. Yet the differentiation seems to reassert an identity to honour, which may unwittingly obscure or entirely displace a primary sense of planetary family. We are, after all, also a group of two-leggeds, ideally conceived as one human family ....First Nations is a term chosen and defined by the Assembly of First Nations which is a geopolitical, spiritual, voluntary "nation" al organization, established in 1980, as representative of persons of First Nations ancestry....this term--First Nations--has come to be an acceptable substitute for previous terms, which include *Native* (usually capitalized), *Indian* (always capitalized), *Aboriginal* (sometimes capitalized) or *indigenous* (seldom capitalized). Some believe First Nations to be a more respectful substitution for the original terms used to focus on an uncivilized or less civilized status. (pp. 29 & 33)

The significance of the cultural differences and proscribed identities for the social issues addressed will be discussed at some length in various parts of the paper. For the purposes of this study and thesis, the terms Aboriginal and First Nations will be used interchangeably; non-Aboriginal and non-First Nations will be used to refer to all individuals and groups who do not regard themselves as members of these two categories.

Overview of the study

Chapter one introduces the topic, indicates purpose and rationale, and identifies methodology .

Chapter two provides the essential elements of micro and macro historical events that have contributed to the contemporary epidemic levels of violence in First Nations families and communities. The conflict of cultures that began at the time of contact will be addressed. The nature of the relationships between First Nations people and colonizing bodies at various periods will be described and analyzed with reference to the chronically marginalized conditions of the former. Legislation such as the Gradual Civilization Act of 1854, the Indian Act 1876, Potlatch Law 1884, and the White Paper of 1969 will be examined with respect to derivation and subsequent influence, past and present. One section of chapter two will be devoted to addressing the impact of Indian Residential Schools past and present.

Chapter three provides a brief history of Social Worker activities with First Nations individuals and communities from the late 1940s to the present. The conceptual basis of social work philosophy, theory and practice will be examined vis-a\-vis the many micro and macro practice areas in which social workers have been and are active in our communities: community development, economic development, income assistance, child protection, health, drug and alcohol programs, education, criminal justice, marital and family therapy, individual and couples counselling, mental health.

In chapter four the current situation of First Nations men will be examined to illustrate the manner in which social conditions, identity issues, and individual and community attitudes contribute to violent behaviour. Traumatic stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and multigenerational post-traumatic stress disorder will be discussed with regard to the relevance to violent behaviour, as will drug and alcohol

abuse. Brief comment is made with regard to the nature of male violence generally and First Nations male violence specifically, in relation to effective intervention methods.

Beginning with a brief synopsis of the history of research conducted in First Nations communities, chapter five describes the methodology used for the study The relevance of both quantitative and qualitative research in the First Nations context will be examined. The focus is upon the qualitative participant observer, case study and grounded theory methodologies and perspectives used in the study.

Chapter six presents the researcher's autobiography, a key element in the participant observer process which prefaced the grounded theory case study interviews. The autobiographical material, shared in part with study participants during the course of a 14 week *Warriors Against Violence* talking circle, also serves to situate the researcher for the reader.

Chapter seven describes the research process. A brief biographical statement describing each of the participants will be provided. Each biography is followed by the story, as told by each participant, in adherence to an emergent themes grounded theory process.

The emergent themes, grounded theory process through which the information was analyzed will be described in chapter eight. The six interviews produced two hundred and eighty pages of transcribed material. An emergent themes grounded theory approach generated 1004 individual statements made by the six participants regarding social relationships in their lives from early childhood to the present. The individual statements

led to the emergence of 29 categories of relationship that were further refined to four themes identified as:

1. Powerfully contradictory experiences and feelings related to immediate and extended family.

2. Multigenerational trauma and multigenerational post-traumatic stress disorder.

3. Marginalization and alienation within the community at the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels.

4. Relationships with helping professionals, and policy/program structures that are inconsistent, erratic, irrelevant, and irrepressible.

Chapter nine presents a summary of the research and examines the implications of the findings for current policy, programs, and curricula. Recommendations will be made with respect to policy, program development, practice methods, curricula development, and future research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE

Gathering Strength, volume three of the 1996 RCAP, identifies family violence as a major concern in all the communities visited over a five year period. "Aboriginal people perceive that the family as an institution is under severe stress from internal violence, which is both a symptom of stress and a cause of further distress" (RCAP, vol. 3, 1996, p. 54).

Cultures in Conflict/First Nations Family Violence

Historical and contemporary factors contributing to the current climate of violence will be examined in this chapter. Conflict of cultures, assimilation policies, government programs, systemic and systematic racism, identity and role issues will be examined from macro and micro perspectives. Examination of the influence of Indian Residential Schools is imperative to any discussion of family breakdown, traumatic stress disorder, multigenerational traumatic stress disorder and the other health and social issues with which First Nations people and communities are confronted. The chronic dilemmas or *double bind situations* in which First Nations individuals and groups have been placed at both the macro and micro level precipitate what I have come to term as an "impotent toxic rage." Impotent toxic rage is a term I began to use several decades ago as a marital/family clinician working with couples for whom personal finances and consumer credit issues were taking a toll on relationships. Individuals who had pursued the modern

western goal of material achievement found themselves feeling betrayed by an economic system in which they had invested time, energy and resources. Feeling impotent to express their anger against an omnipotent system, they turned their feelings inward against self and family members in a toxic manner that destroyed relationships further. Freire (1995) identifies this response as fatalism in the face of oppression (p. 43), and Duran (1995) speaks of decompensation as a means of coping with trauma (pp. 41 & 42). As stated elsewhere in this thesis, understanding contributing factors is not to be mistaken for excusing or rationalizing the violent manifestations of the toxic rage against family, community and self, but is a necessary step to bring about change.

Insightful understanding of contemporary social conditions must be premised upon an appreciation of contributing historical events. Study of contemporary First Nations social issues accordingly has to be done with reference to the five hundred years of contact between North American First Nations and European colonial powers. Furthermore, consideration of the respective worldviews/philosophies of First Nations and of Europeans prior to contact is similarly a prerequisite to an understanding of the history after contact. Patricia Monture-Angus (1999), in examining the struggle and strife currently manifest in First Nations communities maintains the influence of a colonial history cannot be ignored.

> When I considered the consequences of colonialism, including suicide, conflict with the criminal justice system, child welfare apprehensions and intrusions, violence against women and children, sexual abuse, and so on, I began to notice that all the consequences had one thing in common--that is, the creation of varying and multiple degrees of disconnection. (p. 11)

Disconnection is a factor to be considered at the individual as well as at the societal level. *Smoke Signals,* the feature film based on Alexie Sherman's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven,* conveys with humour and tragedy the multiple levels of disconnection and the identity issues facing First Nations men and women on a daily basis. As Thomas Builds-the-Fire, the philosophical story-teller, and Victor Joseph, the stoic warrior, journey to bring home the ashes of Victor's father Arnold, we are afforded insight into the struggles involved in finding authenticity in self, other and community.

Authenticity, a key theme to this study, is described as an ongoing *intra* and *inter* personal process. Aoki in Pinar (1996) offers the following:

> An educated person, first and foremost, understands that one's way of knowing, thinking, and doing flow from who one is. Such a person knows that an authentic person is more than a mere individual, an island unto himself or herself, but a being in-relation with others and hence is, at core, an ethical being. (p. 428)

Meath-Lang and Albertini in Pinar describe a process applicable, I maintain, beyond the student teacher relationship. "To be authentic teacher-writers, our own voice must be examined, expressed, heeded and continually clarified. Our student's voices in writing must be elicited, discussed, and honoured, thoughtfully and, in the best sense of the word, critically" (p.532). In the First Nations idiom authenticity is derived from an ongoing critical analysis of self as a holistic, intellectual, affective, spiritual and physical being in relation to all of creation.

The challenges of truly knowing the other, particularly our mother and father, are compounded by the simultaneous challenge of finding self and then the greater challenge of accepting self, in order to accept the humanity of the other. *Smoke Signals* illustrates very powerfully the range of behaviours in which many engage to avoid these challenges. As Thomas' storytelling renders him as a mythical figure, do we abhor Arnold Joseph as the drunk responsible for the fire that killed Thomas' parents, or admire him as the serendipitous hero who saved Thomas from the same fire? How do we relate to Arnold the father, who is as impulsive and unpredictable in his displays of affection as he is in his violent outbursts? If you are Victor Joseph, who seems to both adore and fear his father, you present a stoic and fierce warrior's demeanour trying to convince yourself that you are untouchable. In telling their story of family relationship, the men who participated in my research echoed the powerfully contradictory feelings expressed by Victor Joseph towards his father.

Thomas' final soliloquy provides powerful insights into the cycle of abuse and confused emotions that exist between fathers and sons and, I would suggest, between members of First Nations groups and mainstream society. It also raises the compelling question of what we do once we arrive at authentic awareness and acceptance of one's individual and collective history. Thomas asks:

> How do we forgive our fathers, maybe in a dream? Do we forgive our fathers for leaving us too often, or forever, when we were little? Maybe for scaring us with unexpected rage, or making us nervous, because there never seemed to be any rage there at all?

> Do we forgive our fathers for marrying or not marrying our mothers,
> for divorcing or not divorcing our mothers? And shall we forgive them for their excesses of warmth or coldness? Shall we forgive them for pushing or leaning, for shutting doors, for speaking through doors, or never speaking, or never being silent?
> Do we forgive our fathers in our age or in theirs? Or in their deaths, saying it to them or not saying it?
> If we forgive our fathers, what is left?
> (Alexie & Eyre, 1998)

If we forgive our fathers, what is left? Breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence is complex. What is left once fathers are forgiven is the challenge to forgive ourselves in order to move on to becoming a full human being in Paolo Freire's terms. At a societal level, or cross-cultural level, if we forgive our oppressors whether we refer to them as invaders, colonialists, Whites, or non-First Nations, we individually and collectively have to look at ourselves and take charge of our destiny. Freire remarks that the oppressed strive to be like their oppressors, sons strive to become like their fathers and in doing so perpetuate a new generation of violence and abusive behaviour. Forgiving our fathers goes towards the restoration of humanity in fathers and the acceptance of humanity in fathers and sons.

The nature of relationship with self, other, community, and the cosmos will be addressed within the context of a discussion of respective worldviews (Appendix A).

Frideres (1998) outlines and juxtaposes the values and norms of the two cultures relevant to the positions to be taken. The value comparisons are offered only as one basis of comparison and as one of many places from which to begin the necessary discussion of a complex topic. First Nations people continue to struggle to gain awareness of the historical relationship between comparisons. There is a seductive simplicity to dichotomous comparisons that must be avoided by looking deeper.

Identity issues are significant factors in the state of alienation and disconnectedness that leads to chronic outbursts of violent behavior. The opportunity to define self via achievement of role and status in a healthy manner has been denied people of First Nations ancestry for many generations. In the social work idiom, proscription of identity suggests the labelling or imposition of legal or quasi-legal inferior status, rendering individuals and groups deviant vis-a\-vis social values and norms.

James Frideres (1998) states quite categorically the premises upon which the relationship Aboriginal-White relations have been based as follows:

> The underlying basis characterizing Aboriginal-White relations in our history is that Europeans have always assumed a superiority over Aboriginal people....this is racism--the belief that one group is biologically inferior to another group. (p.9)

Diversity of Cultures Prior to Contact:

Dumont (1989) and Boldt (1993) offer comparisons of the two worldviews and indicate how the First Nations view was manifested in society.

> "In the Judeo-Christian view, which still continues to influence modern thought and behaviour, man and woman were the last to be created and their creation was a special creation. From this, Western thought has concluded that the human being is the pinnacle of the creation process, as reflected in the evolutionary theory, in which the human is evolution's highest achievement. It's assumed from this that human persons have rights that place them above the rest of creation. The Native view also believes that human beings were the last to be created, but it considers the human to be the youngest family member and the one most dependent upon the rest of the family of creation. Among all the persons of this family, it's the human person who has to learn from [the rest of creation]...that is it's the youngest one who is required to learn how to be in harmony. The way to do so is to be a natural being and to have respect. This way of seeing the original and the necessary balance in the world leads to belief in the inter-relatedness of all things in creation. (Dumont, 1989, p.49)

First Nations people made sense of, and gave meaning to their universe by observing the world around them. Looking, listening, and learning from the heavens, the elements, animal and plant life, the First Nations worldview and the social systems that they developed enabled them to interact harmoniously as holistic, cognitive, affective, spiritual and physical beings. Menno Boldt (1973) portrays the practices in the following terms:

> Most indigenous tribes/bands were predisposed to organize their social systems holistically....Spirituality, for example, was not organized into specialized religious institutions separate from other functions; rather, it permeated the customs,

> traditions, and norms that governed all tribal functions. Moreover, because their survival was so directly dependent upon their environment, most Indian tribes/bands held a spiritually rooted respect for the land and all life forms. They viewed themselves as one part of the natural order, related to all things, and they emphasized harmony and unity with this universe. Because the survival of most tribes/bands depended on cooperation among members, they emphasized kinship relations, mutual aid, generosity, and cooperation within the community. Additional pan-tribal similarities could be observed in the practice of social and political egalitarianism, a strong commitment to consensual decision making, personal autonomy, and respect for elders.(p.192)

The Medicine Wheel depicted in Appendix B gives one illustration of the symbols used to guide intra and interpersonal relationships with all of creation. Individuals, family, extended family units and communities functioned simultaneously as intellectual, affective, spiritual and physical beings. While one aspect of self may have had brief precedence, at all times each of the four elements was considered with respect to the other three for balance in all things. Ceremonies and rituals at the individual and collective level, conducted on a regular basis, served to maintain sense of self and cultural identity. Myths and legends were used to teach children and to remind adults of the dangers and consequences of breaking important cultural norms and values. Behaviour that jeopardized the safety of the group would result in banishment, which in a hostile environment might mean death. Duran and Duran (1995, p.5) report that the fragmented soul of contemporary Native

American men and youth, the state of anomie and toxic rage that fills too many lives, can be attributed to the legislated loss of ritual and meaningful rites of passage.

Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) notes that in earlier times Aboriginal people and Europeans were more in concert in their respective worldviews. She states:

> Early European societies would not have made much distinction between human beings and their natural environment. Classical Greek philosophy is regarded as the point at which ideas about these relationships changed from 'naturalistic' explanations to humanistic explanations. Naturalistic explanations linked nature and life as one and humanistic explanations separate people out from the world around them, and place humanity on a higher plane (than animals and plants) because of such characteristics as language and reason. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are regarded as the founders of this humanistic tradition of knowledge. (pp. 47-48)

Jared Diamond (1997) attributes the fundamental differences of values and life style to the distinct and idiosyncratic environmental features of their respective home territories. He maintains that "the striking differences between the long-term histories of people of the different continents have been due not to innate differences in the people themselves but to differences in their environment"(p. 405). Diamond's work is in response to a seemingly simple question posed by a New Guinea tribal leader, Yali, who asks why do white people have more "cargo" than his own black people; "cargo" is idiomatic for "material goods of all forms."

While commerce and the capitalist free enterprise system have afforded a great deal in improved standards of living, the social costs are also high. As a marital and family therapist, a good deal of my casework, from the chronically poverty stricken to the wealthy upper class executive, has been with regard to relationship conflicts and issues pertaining to the achievement and maintenance of one's place in the economy and the workforce. In the history of interaction between First Nations people and colonial powers, the influences and priorities of commerce and trade have played and continue to play a significant role in social relationships and identity issues.

George Manuel (1974) notes that a significant exchange of technologies occurred when contact was first made, allowing European and First Nation cultures to flourish and grow (pp. 13-15). Europeans gained many new sources of food and First Nations gained access to refined metals for tools and weapons, and horses and the wheel for transportation. First Nations people and their leaders were quick to see the benefits of much of the new technology and rapidly integrated them into their lifestyle. Cherokee leader Sequoia, in the early 18th century, saw the advantage Europeans had in being able to read and write, and in a twelve year period developed and implemented a syllabary for the Cherokee language. Within a short duration the Cherokee people achieved 100% literacy in the syllabary through the establishment of the first coeducational public school in North America (Diamond, 1997, pp. 210-211). Sitting Bull advised his people, "Take what is good from the White Man and let's make a better life for our children" (Duran, 1995, p.19). The full consequences of the rapid technological changes, costs and benefits, were not realized until generations had passed.

Inter Cetera Papal Bull, Terra nullius, Doctrine of Discovery

When the Spanish and Portuguese came to Central and South America, the conflict of cultures was manifested as a brutal introduction of methods used in the inquisitions undertaken on their home territory. Using superior military weaponry and bolstered by the 1493 Inter Cetera bull of Pope Alexander VI that ordered the subjugation and annihilation of non-Christian and barbarians, the Europeans seized the lands and possessions of indigenous people. The Spanish and Portuguese conquests of the indigenous nations were not without outcries for more humane treatment from both the Church and the State. Early in the fifteenth century, Dominican monks Antonio de Montesinos and Bartolome de Las Casas argued with some brief success against the forced conversion and enslavement of Indians. Las Casas' primary opponent in the debates for humane treatment was Court lawyer Juan Gines de Sepulveda, who adhered to Aristotle's belief that barbarous peoples were destined to be slaves.

> In 1542 Las Casas and his associates managed to induce Charles V to issue the *Leyes Nuevas* to safeguard the Indians....However, when the 'New Laws' became known across the Atlantic, they aroused such resistance among officials, landowners, and even clerics that three years later Charles V was obliged to repeal. (Bitterli, 1989, p. 85)

The contemporary debate amongst politicians and lawyers with regard to land claims to a large extent continues the debates of de Las Casas and Sepulveda. The First Nations people at the time of contact did not have enough "cargo" to be considered

civilized by the newcomers. In the present day, in a classic double-bind, they are said to have acquired too much "cargo" to have authentic inherent title. British Columbia Chief Justice Allan McEachern's 1991 reasons for ruling against the Gitskan Wet'suwet'en land claim shows that little has changed in five hundred years. McEachern ruled:

> The evidence suggests that the Indians of the territory were, by historical standards, a primitive people without any form of writing, horses, or wheeled wagons....The defendants....suggest the Gitskan and Wet'suwet'en civilizations, if they qualify for that description, fall within a much lower, even primitive order. (Monet & Wilson, 1992 , p. 188)

The powerfully toxic impact of such statements upon First Nations listeners, male and female, will be discussed in a later section. The echoes of the unified power of the Church and State first mounted by the Spanish and Portuguese reverberate in the halls of justice to this day and serve to dismiss consideration of aboriginal title At the time of first contact, First Nations people failed to take into consideration that the newcomers might be functioning within the context of a completely different value system in their interpersonal relationships. In particular, they were not functioning within the value context of a reciprocal economy with regard to private property and land ownership. This initial lack of insight into cultural and value differences proved to be of considerable negative consequence, as pointed out by Dominique Temple in David and Boonstra's early 1990's article, "Themes to Challenge the Mission of the Church."

> The mistake, the confusion consisted in the fact that the Indians interpreted the European as another Indian: that is, like any other who participates in a system of reciprocity and not as a participant in a different system (based on trade). The Indians didn't know that a system different from that of reciprocity could exist, much less one in which private interest was more important than community interests.[27] (p. 15)

Economics of the Fur Trade

When the French came to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, motivated by a combination of imperial expansion and mercantile profit, the first signs and manifestations of culture conflict in the northern part of the Western Hemisphere appeared. First Nations men were regarded as a good source of labour for the fur trade and were the source of the raw material itself. Hunting and trapping for profit broke the traditional ethic of hunting trustfully and respectfully to meet one's immediate needs.

First Nations men and women were commodified by the French and later the English. The French newcomers sought First Nations women to fill the shortage of women available to be wives for the Frenchmen arriving in the New World. The French failed or refused to recognize and/or did not respect that a social structure might exist whereby First Nations men and women were betrothed and became life partners.

The economy of the fur trade irreparably broke the First Nations' circle of life and harmonious coexistence with the rest of Creation. First Nations adapted quickly to the efficient use of horses, firearms, tools and implements made from refined metals. The

ecological balance that had existed for eons before contact was lost. As entire regions were trapped out, there was movement into more remote regions of other's territories seeking a continuous supply of the raw material. The economics of the fur trade were dependent upon the skills and knowledge of First Nations men and women to provide the furs.

Like the people of the Fertile Crescent, First Nations people destroyed their own resource base and became increasingly dependent upon trade goods and less able to sustain themselves. When traders introduced the beverage alcohol as a means of getting better bargains in the trade relationship, a catastrophe of massive proportions was set loose, one that continues to touch in the most profoundly negative manner every person of First Nations ancestry to this day. Members of religious orders such as the Jesuits worked to protect the indigenous people from the corrupting influences of the fur trade, however, this brought them into conflict with leaders of state and commerce. The conflict of cultures became manifested as the negation of First Nations philosophy, religious practices, life styles, and languages. Influence was exerted to have First Nations people deny their genetic and cultural heritage and to live in a sense of shame in the individual and collective identity as First Nations people. The shame is two-fold, first because one is First Nations and second, because one is not European.

Deloria (1973) writes that the role of the Church and its members in the assimilation process is not amenable to simple categories. Even to speak of the Church in the singular is difficult and does not the reflect the broad and diverse relationship Church(s) members had with First Nations individuals and their communities.

> Even where the two religions have clashed the picture is not clear as to villain and hero. Father A.M. Beede, a missionary to the Sioux at Fort Yates, North Dakota, told Ernest Thompson Seton, "I am convinced now that the Medicine Lodge of the Sioux is a true Church of God, and we have no right to stamp it out." ....The Reverend Samuel Worcester, a missionary to the Cherokees in the 1830s, remained a faithful friend to the tribe in defiance of the State of Georgia....For his loyalty he was imprisoned by Georgia....
>
> At the opposite end of the spectrum is the Reverend John M. Chivington, an infamous Methodist minister...[who] planned, led, justified, and celebrated...an unexpected dawn attack on a friendly band of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians....Between these two extremes are hundreds of cases of Christian people who reflected generous portions of both religious beliefs and their cultural values in their relationship with Indians. (p. 249)

Military Alliances

The history of altercations between warring groups, particularly First Nations and Europeans, depicts warriors in negative terms. First Nations warriors were demonized as savages who murdered innocent settlers during massacres, while Europeans were triumphant soldiers in wars and battles in which their cause prevailed over the First Nations.

Once Wolfe had defeated Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham in 1759 and Britain was briefly dominant in North America, the need for military allies diminished and

therefore so did the status of the Indian warriors. Ottawa Chief Pontiac anticipated that with wars between the British and French over, traditional Indian lands would be in jeopardy. Until given assurances in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 that recognized First Nations inherent title to land, Pontiac and his forces occupied British forts bringing pressure to bear on the British during the tenuous period following the French defeat at Quebec. *The Royal Proclamation of 1763* recognized inherent aboriginal title and "declared that Indian land rights could only be alienated at a public meeting or assembly of the Indians called for the purpose and then only to the Crown" (Frideres, 1998, p. 50). To this day, the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* is regarded by First Nations as the basis of land claims across Canada, although the *Proclamation* has been breached on many more occasions than it has been honoured.

With wars over and with the demise of the fur trade as a significant economic component, First Nations men and women became redundant, a barrier to progress. The era of elimination and assimilation was ushered in with attitudes of superiority and paternalism on the part of colonial powers. Witness the 1830 statement of the British secretary of war and the colonies:

> It appears to me that the course which has hitherto been taken in dealing with these people[Aboriginals], has had reference to the advantages which might be derived from their friendship in times of war, rather than to any settled purpose of gradually reclaiming them, from a state of barbarism, and of introducing amongst them the industrious and peaceful habits of civilized life. (Frideres, p. 9)

Assimilation

In spite of recent discussions on self government there is really no evidence to suggest that the ultimate goal of government is no longer assimilation. First Nations individual and collective identity have been under insidious attack throughout the assimilation period. D.C. Scott's 1920 report to the House of Parliament reflects the attitude prevalent throughout this period. "Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question and no Indian Department" (Jamieson, 1978, p. 50).

The current circumstances of male violence in First Nations communities are strongly influenced by five hundred years of colonial history. As Patricia Monture-Angus notes, the legacy of colonialism is the multiple degrees of disconnection. Chrisjohn, Young and Marauam (1997) point out that until we replace "the standard account" of history with the more authentic "alternative account" of what took place, true healing cannot begin. Ameliorative programs may not take the same five hundred years to develop as it took the problems to develop, however, there are no quick fixes. Gentle, insightful, comprehensive approaches are necessary as the circle of the community is still broken. If one wishes to know oneself as an intellectual, affective, spiritual and physical being capable of balance and control, one must avoid the traps of denial, projection, and suppression while on the healing path. Over the past decade, steps have been taken in a number of jurisdictions to establish diversion programs such the circle sentencing and healing circles as a means of addressing high rates of violence and criminal activity in urban and rural settings. Ten years of experience with the Vancouver Police Native

Liaison Society's victim witness support program cause me to question whether the motives of provincial and federal authorities are more towards cost reduction than the achievement of justice for both victim and offender. It is important to resist economic expediencies that may bring pressure to bear in oversimplifying complex social matters. For social work educators and clinicians, this entails facilitating a process to enable those with whom we are engaged to not only ask Thomas' question, "If we forgive our fathers, what is left? " but also time and again to seek out the answer as we and our circumstances evolve.

The matter of male violence cannot be addressed in isolation. Historical and contemporary social conditions, values, attitudes and behavioural norms must be put under scrutiny, not to detract from the accountability and responsibility of individual perpetrators, but to strengthen all involved.

Dilemmas, Double Binds and Impotent Toxic Rage

While it can be stated that in many instances First Nations people have been active, albeit unwitting, participants in the changes to which their cultures have been subjected, colonial powers have for numerous generations advanced policy and programs that have led to dilemmas and frustration related to basic elements of individual and collective identity. Policy initiatives gauged to bring about assimilation have served outright to thwart adaptation and viable lifestyles within the context of any cultural norm.

The *Gradual Civilization Act of 1857* was a pre-confederation turning point that also was the harbinger of attitudes and approaches that would be manifest in the Indian

Act of 1876 (RCAP, 1996,Vol. I, p. 271). The *Gradual Civilization Act* ignored the guarantees of protection of Indian Land afforded by the *Proclamation of 1763* through the break-up of communal reserves into individually owned 50 acre parcels. Indian identity and community membership became legal versus social functions that were controlled by authorities outside the community and were to be patrilineal. This latter factor would divide families and communities against each other for many generations. Chrisjohn et al.(1993) describe the arbitrary nature of imposed legislation as Kafkaesque and contributing to a sense of impotence in dealing with the bureaucracy overseeing Indian affairs. A sense of impotence leads to shame and the shame becomes manifest as violent behaviour against oneself or intimate significant others in a vicious cycle of diminishing returns (p. 8). Compliance with the Act demanded repudiation of the very core of one's being, thus the 1857 Act began the multigenerational process of eroding the individual and collective identity and self-esteem of First Nations people.

> Finally, the tone and goals of which the *Gradual Civilization Act,* especially the enfranchisement provisions, which asserted the superiority of colonial culture and values, also set in motion a process of devaluing and undermining Indian cultural identity. Only Indians who renounced their communities, cultures and languages could gain the respect of colonial and later Canadian society. In this respect it was the beginning of a psychological assault on Indian identity that would be escalated by the later *Indian Act* prohibitions on other cultural practices such as traditional dances and costumes and by the residential school policy. (RCAP, 1996 , p. 273)

In chapter one I pointed out that a trust relationship exists between First Nations people and the federal government in accordance with section 91 (24) of the Canadian Constitution. Assigned to reserves that were not intended to be demographically or economically viable, First Nations people lived under the supervision of Indian agents who were given absolute authority. Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs during the first three decades of the twentieth century, implemented many of the more punitive and assimilationist measures. His attitude and approach were epitomized in 1920 when he spoke in Commons Committee to an amendment that would provide for the compulsory enfranchisement of "more advanced Indians."

> D.C. Scott explained it thus: " Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question and no Indian department. That is the whole object of this Bill." (Jamieson, 1978, p. 50)

First Nations people were thwarted time and again by those in whose trust they had been placed, as the following illustrates. In 1914 when the Nisga'a were petitioning the government to be allowed to go to court to have their land claim heard, Scott prepared a federal cabinet order in council that would allow the Nisga'a their day in court if: (1) they agreed in advance to surrender title to their land if they were successful in their court action; (2) they would accept the recommendations of the McKenna -McBride Commission regarding the size of their reserve in advance of the court date; and (3) "the province would take part in the case, represented by legal counsel of its own choosing, the Indians would be 'represented by counsel nominated and paid by the Dominion'"

(Tennant, 1990, p. 93). Outraged and angry, the Indians refused to accept the order in council and continued to press their claim through the courts, which led to more unilateral moves on the part of the federal government. Tennant states:

> Now Scott prepared an amendment to the Indian Act which Stewart introduced, and it was quickly passed by Parliament. Appropriately, it was inserted as section 141, next to section 140, the anti-potlatch provision....Without the minister's approval, no Indian or other person acting for the Allied Tribes or the Nisga'a Land Committee, for example, could now request or receive from a registered Indian any fee for legal or other services or any money for postage, travel, advertising, hall rental, refreshments, research expenses, legal fees, or court costs. The amendment quite simply made it impossible for any organization to exist if pursuing the land claim was one of its objectives....In Indian memories section 141 is usually linked with the potlatch prohibition, and the combination of the two produces the still common belief, which presumably existed from 1927 until 1951 as well, that any gathering of Indians or any discussion of land claims was illegal without the permission of a missionary, Indian agent, or police official.
>
> (pp. 111-112)

Circumstances such as the above can only be described as Kafkaesque: a double bind in which if you win, you lose. We make the rules of the game, we decide who will play on your behalf and if you work or study to improve yourself, you relinquish cultural identity. The cultural and legal activities did continue, in an underground manner, which contributed to an individual and collective sense of deviancy and shame. The consequent

sense of shame further precipitated the impotent rage that in turn contributed to epidemic levels of violence. Dr. Clare Brant contends that First Nations men who feel impotent to combat their oppressors, for fear of reprisal, vent their anger at those who provide them with unconditional acceptance and trust, their families (RCAP vol. 3, 1996, p. 74).

One means of avoiding the frustration of disappointment is to stop having expectations. Unfortunately such coping methods lead to personal stagnation and loss of self-esteem. Ernie Crey of the Sto:lo First Nation was ignored and ostracized as he attempted to improve himself by attending school in his local community In *Stolen From our Embrace* he recalls:

> At school I concentrated on surviving with some of my dignity intact; actually learning anything was secondary. At first I was bright and eager to learn....I learned not to expect smiles from teachers. I'd stick my hand up to answer a question, but knew I wouldn't be called on. (Crey, 1997, p. 28)

After chronicling the history of land claims in British Columbia, Tennant provides examples of contemporary double binds related to land claims. During the Gitskan-Wet'suwet'en 1989 land claims court hearings, authenticity of identity became another classic double bind issue as government representatives simultaneously declared the claimants as historically "too Indian" and contemporarily "not Indian enough" for a claim to be considered. "Too Indian" meant "Indians were too simple and unsophisticated before contact to be regarded as having individual or collective rights" (Tennant, 1990 p. 15). "Not Indian enough" meant that because the contemporary Indian may drive a car or eat pizza, legitimate links with cultural ancestry are forfeited. The stress of having such

fundamental elements as identity and community membership controlled and dictated by external government bodies has led many First Nations people to be defensive and more inclined to be exclusive rather than inclusive.

Lack of economic development and chronic high rates of unemployment are perennial topics for which First Nations individuals and communities come under continual criticism. Although there are serendipitous exceptions, where reserves are adjacent to large urban centres or have revenue potential as recreational properties, reserve lands are for the most part of poor quality and capable of supporting marginal agricultural endeavours at best. The lands reserved for Indians were never intended to be the basis of viable communities either demographically or economically but rather intermediate steps towards complete assimilation. The following realities, Buckley (1993) says, are seldom taken into account when First Nations communities are targetted as a drain on the economy:

> At the national level, it has been estimated that Canadian Indians have one of the smallest land bases per capita in the world: Indians represent 3 percent of the population of Canada, but retain less than 0.2 percent as reserves. (p. 13)

In British Columbia reserves were established to provide no more than 10 acres of land per family of five when European homesteaders were being given 160 acres with opportunities to pre-empt additional acreage. On the prairies, reserves were established at the rate of 80 acres per family of five when homesteaders were receiving 640 acres. Northern Saskatchewan Cree refused to sign Treaty Six until reserves permitted 640 acres

per family of five, although many bands are still in court seeking the full land entitlement. An inadequate land base was not the only challenge with which First Nations were faced. The agricultural equipment with which they were to undertake farming was inadequate and antiquated. Local Indian agents had absolute control over use of the land and the inhabitants. Stock, seed and equipment could not be purchased without the permission of the agent and produce could not be sold without the permission of the same agent. Assisted by the RCMP, the same agent also controlled the pass system without which Indians could not leave the reserves. The same authorities also imposed and controlled a chit system which was used in local stores, as Indians were not permitted to make cash purchases. All of these served as devices of control.

The policies and programs imposed on Indians well into the twentieth century seem calculated to frustrate and lead to failure. Helen Buckley's (1993) *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare* tells of Dakota farmers adapting well to an agricultural life style and being as successful as their white neighbours when farming on the same scale and with the same methods and equipment as the non-Indian farmers.

> One of their chiefs planted test crops and ranked among the earliest farmers in the West to plant the newly developed Red Fife wheat....In 1890, the first prize for wheat was won by reserve farms, both at Prince Albert and Regina. (p. 52)

The initial success was soon to fall prey to the imposition of federal department policy dictating the types of farming in which Indians were to engage in spite of their proven success. The new policy aimed at creating a kind of peasant agriculture, making the reserves quite separate from the surrounding commercial farming. Well into the twentieth

century First Nations farmers were simultaneously being criticized for not being competitive while they were forced to till 40 acre plots without the benefit of machinery while European farmers had determined that 640 acres was the necessary minimum to make ends meet. Tennant (1990) reports that in the same time frame West Coast Aboriginal fishers, when finally permitted to take part in the commercial fishery, were not permitted the use engines in their vessels for a number of years.

Residential School

As a second generation survivor, I am still becoming aware of the damage done to my grandmother, father, my children and my partner by the Residential School system. The families of all six of the participants in the case study and the overwhelming majority of the men who attended the talking circles had been influenced by the same system. Many of the works cited for this thesis -- Haig-Brown, Miller, RCAP vol.1, Fournier and Crey, Duran and Duran, Manuel, and others -- provide compelling and detailed examinations of the Residential School System. The *standard account* and the *alternative account* in Chrisjohn et al.'s *Circle Game* (1997) present in unapologetically graphic terms a summary of perspectives that prevail with regard to the influence and consequences of the Residential School System. The *standard account* suggests that the well-intended efforts of church and state to civilize and provide an education may have caused some damage to children in isolated incidents. If so, those individuals who are experiencing adjustment problems should be given assistance in order to get on with their lives. Such an approach further pathologizes the victim; furthermore, pursuit of premature healing based on a

perspective of "methodological individualism" (p.90) will not address the underlying issues.

To speak of "loss of language," "loss of culture," "loss of family" and "loss of parenting skills" is misleading and leads to revictimization of the First Nations people who "lost." Very simple put, they were not lost but taken via legislation and programs established for that very purpose. Following reports by Ryerson and Davin (1879) that encouraged the establishment of industrial, and then residential schools, the joint efforts of the federal government in concert with the churches were fully underway by the end of the nineteenth century and carried on until 1984 when the last school was closed. Residential Schools used harsh punishment to enforce rules of conduct, particularly with regard to language and culture. For the most part, the staff until the 1960s were not qualified to provide the education the children were to receive and the schools became little more than workhouses. Food was used a means of control and hunger was a constant. Even when a school had a productive farm, the students were not allowed to benefit from their labours. George Manuel's memories of his childhood at the Kamloops Indian Residential School capture both concerns.

> Hunger is both the first and the last thing I can remember about that school. I was hungry from the day I went into the school until they took me to the hospital two and half years later. Not just me. Every Indian student smelled of hunger.
>
> After we came from the fields or finished the barn chores, we went to the dining hall. For supper each boy got one ladle full of mulligan and a piece of bread. (Manuel, 1974, p. 65)

School administrators used student labour to produce cash crops that could be sold to offset the costs of operating the school. Overworked, malnourished, poorly clothed and housed in crowded, poorly constructed buildings, the death toll to disease, primarily tuberculosis, was as high as 47 per cent. When informed of such morbidity rates in a medical report of 1907, Director General Scott remarked "fifty per cent of the children who passed through these schools did not live to benefit from the education which they had received therein"(RCAP vol. 1, 1996, p. 357). In spite of the information available, no steps were taken to remedy the causes of such high death rates and the schools were promoted as having "efficiency towards acculturation" (p. 350).

The lack of meaningful action to resolve the painful legacy of the Residential School system continues to the present time and propagates intergenerational trauma. Over the past ten to fifteen years, the extent of physical and sexual abuse that was perpetrated by individuals in trust positions upon those in their care, has been revealed to be of massive proportions nationwide. Development of Chrisjohn et al.'s (1997) *alternative account* of the Residential School System is an essential precursor to meaningful healing. The *alternative account* describes the Residential School System and the consequences to be a well thought out component of assimilationist policy (pp. 41 & 59). For far too many First Nations children, men and women, the challenge of facing their story is more than can be tolerated and solace is sought through a broad range of self destructive, addictive behavioural patterns. During one summer in the late 1990's, eight men in Lytton committed suicide after testifying to the sexual abuse they had experienced at the hands of staff members in the Anglican school in Lytton (Napier, 2000). Tragically

such extreme behaviour tragically is a far too common occurrence in all First Nations communities.

A duality exists in the feelings and attitudes many First Nations people have about family as a result of the primary, secondary and tertiary trauma of residential school experiences. Most recognize the importance of the extended family as a source of love, nurture and protection, and keep track of family lineage in a purposeful manner. There is also the spectre of shame, fear and hurt as the family unit is also a reminder that parents for many generations were powerless to protect their children from the trauma of the residential school experiences. When the pain of the loss of children became too much to bear, parents and grandparents turned to alcohol to kill the pain, thus further diminishing their ability to be effective parents. Once back in their communities, those who fell victim to the predatory behaviour of school authorities repeated the learned patterns of sexual abuse and physical violence against their own families, whom they had been taught to despise for their fundamental Indianness. Families are now having to deal with the reality of generations of abuse which, until recently, has been kept as a shameful secret or hidden under an alcoholic shroud. Many families and communities are still struggling to develop the parenting skills stolen over many generations by the socialization in the residential school's institutional environment. Wholesale apprehension and relocation of First Nations children away from their home environment made parental roles redundant and has confirmed the image that First Nations people are not capable of caring for their own children.

This chapter has described elements of the five hundred year history of contact between First Nations people and the colonial powers relevant to contemporary discrepant social conditions. As indicated at the outset, I believe that the extensive, though certainly not exhaustive, history is necessary to put current behaviour in context. The men who participated in the interviews, and those who were part of the *Warriors Against Violence* circle, said that such information was relatively new to them. This included those whose life experience encompassed attendance at residential school. Time and again the men would describe their lives as marked by a debilitating depression, an all consuming shame, and at times a rage the source of which they could not fathom. Having an awareness of their own history at the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels has enabled them to develop insights into the circumstances of their grandparents, their parents and themselves and to take steps to bring about change.

Achievement of insight into one's history is fraught with challenges. Just as Chrisjohn et al (1997) describe the discrepancies between the *standard account* and the *alternative account* of Residential School System, there are numerous renditions of Canadian history and the treatment of Aboriginal people. "Canadians must come to understand what the true history of this country is and how they (as well as their ancestors) are complicit in both the overt and more subtle forms of colonialism and oppression" Monture-Angus, 1999, p. 22). Frideres and Gadacz (2001) state "racism is undeniably the underlying ideology of the manifest policies regarding Aboriginal-White relations throughout the history of Canada" (p. 9).

Menno Boldt (1993) states that Canadians do not deal with the realities of history but they do feel guilty. The guilt is managed through a threefold process of: civilization or saving Indians via forced assimilation; providing charitable aid; and filling history books with myths.

> One deeply rooted historic myth is that the British Crown possessed a moral and legal right....as a right of 'divine source; as a right of 'first discovery'; because Indians were barbarians; because lands were 'unoccupied' ...and because aboriginal title was extinguished through 'voluntary cession.'....
>
> But trying to hide our injustice to Indians by mythologizing our past isn't working. It is almost impossible to hide the fact that a mere 150 years ago this was Indian country,' and that Canada exists as a product of colonial greed and fraud. (pp. 20-21)

Perpetration of the myths is aided by the prevalent use of euphemisms such as "contact", and "assimilation" to refer to events that were "invasion" and 'social and cultural genocide". Reconciliation of terms and perspective is necessary if there is to be insightful reconciliation of the toxic affective response First Nations people have to history and the discrepant manner in which it is popularly portrayed.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

In this chapter the various roles that social workers have played in First Nations communities and with First Nations people will be examined. I begin with a brief excerpt from an early session with the *Warriors Against Violence* talking circle, during which the negative impressions of one participant in particular were made quite clear.

The single word was spoken softly and slowly during the talking circle check-out exercise at the end of our second three hour session. As agreed, the facilitators, Dan and Joe, had informed the two dozen men in the *Warriors Against Violence* healing circle of my several roles in the group: as a human being, as a man dealing with many of the same issues as they, and as a social worker/educator whom they had invited to conduct a program evaluation. The word "concerned" spoken in response to the checkout question "how are you feeling?" summarized clearly and concisely the speaker's impression and opinion of members of the helping professions in general and of social workers in particular. There was also the request that more time be taken in future sessions to discuss more fully the nature of program evaluation and our respective roles in the process.

Social workers and individuals serving in social work roles have been a notable presence in the lives of First Nations individuals, families and communities. An understanding of the "concern" can be gained only by examining this presence over the past several generations. In a 1998 address, Glenn Drover, a former director of the UBC School of Social Work, reflected on the roots and future of social work. Review of the article also affords insight into the roots of the "concern" expressed in the talking circle.

> It is widely recognized that the professionalization of social work is a consequence of industrialization, the emergence of the nation state, and a conviction, grounded in western culture, that human need can be met in a rational fashion. Historically, social work in Canada was associated with the rise of Associated Charities in the late 19th century. Associated Charities differed from other relief organizations of the time in placing an emphasis on systematic investigation into the causes of human need rather than the simple relief of poverty even though the two, then as now, were often closely related. About the same time as Associated Charities developed, the Settlement House Movement also was taking shape in working class urban areas of Canada. It too was to have a significant impact on the emerging profession of social work. (p. 79)

The modern western liberal philosophy has had dramatic influence upon the development of social policies and programs inflicted upon First Nations individuals and communities over the past half century. Major changes with regard to social policy were made within the context of 1951 amendments to the Indian Act, as chronicled by Johnston (1983):

> The end of the Second World War saw a tremendous proliferation of government operated and funded social services. This was a natural extension of a five-year period of war, when the preeminent role of government was acknowledged and accepted. At the same time, the profession of social work was gaining in credibility; its horizons were expanding, as many held the firm belief that in such endeavours lay the answers to world problems. Before long, attention was

> drawn to the child welfare services provided or, rather not being provided to Native people. (p. 2)

First Nations writers Fournier and Crey (1997) also point out the role played by the social work profession in demanding changes in social legislation and social programming:

> The Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers argued in a 1947 brief to the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons that "Indian children who are neglected lack the protection afforded under social legislation available to white children in the community." They condemned the internment of any aboriginal child, neglected or not, in residential school, and charged that "the practice of adopting Indian children is loosely conceived and executed and is usually devoid of the careful legal and social protections available to white children." Ottawa listened. Amendments made in 1951 to Section 88 of the Indian Act stipulated that all laws of general application in force in a province should apply on reserves, unless they conflicted with treaties or federal laws. (p. 83)

Johnston (1983) wrote that no consideration was given to cultural differences or to the unique needs of First Nations individuals and communities' program needs. Fourteen years later Fournier and Crey offered a First Nations critique that is less forgiving and in fact impugns the motives of both levels of government and the social workers.

> With these amendments, Ottawa effectively delegated the responsibility for Aboriginal health, welfare and educational services to the provinces, although it

> remained financially responsible for status Indians. It took a few more years for social workers to act on these changes, however, while Ottawa negotiated separately with each province how much it would pay per capita for services delivered to Indians. In the end, inequity persisted not only between aboriginal child and white but also from province to province.
>
> Once the provinces were in charge, and guaranteed payments for each Indian child they apprehended, the number of First Nations children made legal wards of the state quickly ballooned. Only 1 per cent of all children were native in 1959, but by the end of the 1960s, 30 to 40 per cent of all legal wards were aboriginal children, even though they formed less than 4 per cent of the national population. (p. 83)

A variety of researchers over the years have come to the conclusion that the child welfare system and the social workers became another element in support of the government's overall assimilationist agenda. Across the country there is virtually not a single First Nations family or community that has not been affected by the child welfare practices that became known as the "60s scoop" whereby entire generations were lost. Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey's 1997 *Stolen From Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities* tells of the influence social workers have had on the lives of First Nations families. Unfortunately there is not a balance between the positive and the negative illustrations available, with the latter severely disproportionate to the former.

> Bridget Moran, who toiled as a B.C. government social worker in the worst days of child apprehensions from northern reserves, recalls those days with sadness and anger. One of few civil servants to publicly challenge what was happening, Moran recalls that social workers "had no resources that might conceivably have helped them to keep families together, and children in their natural homes....After six years, Moran reluctantly concluded that "the welfare department which employed me was the biggest contributor to child abuse in the province." (p. 86)

Bridget Moran's outspoken advocacy on behalf of the families and children with whom she worked was unfortunately an exception to the wider spread practice of colleagues who unwittingly pursued the assimilationist agenda of the federal and provincial government. Moran (1992) expresses her frustration at having insufficient staff and resources to work with the families on her caseload and eventually finding herself working with the next generations who were struggling with the same issues. Public expression of her concerns led to ostracization by colleagues, reprimands and eventual dismissal by her superiors.

> It was probably a mistake for me to have remained in one place, the Prince George office, for ten years, I told them. 'What happens is that the chickens come home to roost. The children I failed ten years before haven't disappeared--instead they grew up and they are on my caseload again. Now their problems have increased five and tenfold. The shortcomings in the service I witnessed ten years ago keep coming back to haunt me.'

> I repeated Roderick Haig-Brown's statement, ' When we talk about one person now, we end up with all his children in the next generation,' and illustrated his statement with the case history of a thirteen-year old girl who had given evidence at her father's trial when he was charged with incest. The ordeal in court left her in a very distressed state; for lack of any treatment centre she was placed in the girls reform school. When she 'graduated' after two years, she was a confirmed alcoholic. Ten years after her incarceration, she had given birth to five children, all of them in foster homes.
>
> "I don't see why this government doesn't understand that the failure of ten years ago is now costing the taxpayer thousands of dollars in support payments for these children.," I told reporters, nor did I understand why taxpayers were not up in arms over such short-sighted and inhumane practices. (pp. 118-119)

Over the past several decades the challenges and issues of First Nations child protection have surfaced in a cyclical pattern, usually with respect to a tragic event such as Richard Cardinal's death in Alberta, Lester Desjarlais' death in Manitoba or with regard to the activities of numerous commissions and inquiries such the *Berger Commission* of 1975 or the *Gove Report* of 1995. With regard to child welfare in general and to First Nations child welfare in particular, similarities are apparent in the recommendations made for remedial action and the degree to which the recommendations have been acted upon in a minimalist manner, if at all.

"In the best interest of the child" has been the motivation behind the actions of individual social workers wrestling with the matters of child safety. The practice, implemented within the hegemony of modern western urban values, has been to the detriment of entire families and communities over many generations.

> A particularly zealous social worker named Edith Oram told an interviewer in 1989 that of thirty Spallumcheen children still living in foster homes in 1981, she could take credit for apprehending more than half of them while she was on duty between 1962 and 1966. Her successor, Mary Poggemoeller, apprehended fifty children in a one year period alone. Poggemoeller, who was employed as a government social worker until 1970, recalled apprehending several whole families of children, sometimes as many as ten at one time. Many were placed with Mormon families living throughout southeastern B.C. and the northeastern United States. One weekend, a social worker chartered a bus to apprehend thirty-eight children from the Spallumcheen reserve, recalls Ernie Klassen, the former district superintendent for Indian Affairs....who remembers that by 1970 there were at least sixty Spallumcheen children in permanent care, and an unknown number who had already been adopted out....a bizarre holdover from the residential school days dictated that native children could be better acculturated and assimilated if they grew up away from their brothers and sisters. (Fournier & Crey, pp. 86-87)

The best interests of the child have more often than not fallen through the jurisdictional cracks of federal and provincial responsibility. When the section 88

amendments were made to the Indian Act, the necessary funding was not put in place to provide for the programs to which First Nations families were to have access. The federal government has not had a national policy with regard to child welfare, so over the years a wide range of ad hoc, bilateral and trilateral arrangements have been in effect at various times. Well into the 1980s the lack of formal funding arrangements in several provinces--Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba--led to minimal services being made available on reserve. In such circumstances, First Nations communities' only interaction with social workers was at times of life and death crisis and the apprehension of children.

> Generally speaking, the band councils and/or Indian Affairs employees attempt to provide child welfare services, but they have neither the resources nor the training to do an adequate job....The reluctance of the province (Saskatchewan), as of 1982, to become involved on reserves, except in life and death situations, is not a new position. In fact, it has been policy since the 1960's. (Johnston, 1983, pp. 9-10)

One would think that with a policy ostensibly against apprehension of First Nations children there would be very few in care at any particular time. However at the time of Johnston's writing, although First Nations people represented 8.3 per cent of Saskatchewan's population, a full 63.8 per cent of the children in care were First Nations children. While other provinces may show lower figures, they were all disproportionately high and have remained so over the ensuing decades.

The *Annual Report of the Children's Commissioner* for the Province of British Columbia (2000) indicates that the trends of several decades still prevail.

> First Nations children make up about 8% of the population of children in B.C. and about 35% of children in care. In the 143 child fatalities we have investigated over the past year 40 (28%) of those children were known to have aboriginal heritage.... What was problematic in some of these cases was a lack of clarity about whose responsibility it was to ensure that the child was safe. (p.19)

First Nations families and children have not been afforded access to preventative and remedial programs such as family support counselling. With the Department of Indian Affairs devolution of services to the province and to local tribal council and band authorities, levels of service remain inadequate and inconsistently funded. Local staff turnover is high, and burnout a constant feature, as resources are stretched to address crisis situations. The resources to mount programs of a preventative nature to address underlying pathogenic circumstances are limited and usually short term in nature.

When is a social worker a social worker

In four provinces, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia, social work is not a regulated profession. In many of the provinces, adoption of legislation requiring social work education and registration to work in the field has come about as a consequence of investigations into tragic situations. The public at large, and First Nations people in particular, have little or no appreciation of this fundamental reality. Also judging

by the response of the participants in this study, First Nations people have a very limited perspective of the full spectrum of practice areas in which professional social workers are engaged. The common assumption held is that social work practice is limited to child protection and income assistance. During the course of the interviews, I became aware that many of the participants have had very positive experiences with individuals they described as counsellors or therapists. I was aware that in many instances the individuals named were in fact social workers with BSW or MSW degrees. At the present time individuals with social work education and those individuals in social work positions but without social work education are undifferentiated in the public eye.

The *Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection* (1995) noted the above as a significant factor in the inadequate delivery of child protection services and made several recommendations to remedy the situation. The Gove Inquiry found that: "Academic qualifications are preferred, but they are not required: the ministry prefers an MSW, a BSW or a Bachelor of Arts, but will accept an 'equivalent combination of education and experience'"(p. 149). This contributed to a situation whereby 46% of the province's child protection workers had no social work education and, that in the critical and highly specialized area of intake, 50% of the workers did not have university-level social work education (pp.152 & 153).

It is important to note that most of the First Nations comunities that are assuming delegated authority for child protection require staff to have a social work degree and be registered for practice with the provincial regulatory board. In such circumstances, First Nations workers are more qualified than the individuals to whom they have to report in

government offices. Maslach (1978) reported that individuals with professional training were better equipped to deal with ongoing stressful circumstances and less likely to suffer burnout. Conversely those individuals without the benefit of formal social work education lack the insight and skills to deal with highly stressful situations and bring harm to themselves and clients in a vicious cycle of diminishing returns. Such findings are of particular relevance to First Nations social issues which are long-term, complex, of great intensity, and call for highly skilled, well balanced and insightful practitioners.

Medical Social Work

In chronicling the history of health to Aboriginal people in British Columbia, Kelm (1998) provides a glimpse of the early role social workers played in medical services. Unfortunately the role is similar to the enforcement and policing role social workers have played in child protection and income assistance. Kelm comments:

> The late 1940s also saw the advent of the professional social worker, whose agenda as field matron focussed on enforcing health regulations through the use of legal control and jail sentences. One such worker, Ruth Atkinson worked in Prince Rupert, tirelessly tracking down Native women sufferers of venereal disease and jailing them to remove them as health risks....Gradually only qualified nurses or social workers could hold these positions. (p. 149 & 150)

More recently, graduate social workers have been employed as staff, on contract or on a fee-for-service basis in the provision of therapy and counselling in the areas of

substance abuse, trauma counselling, and abuse related to the Residential School System. Important and valuable services have been afforded, however, the funding for such programs is on a relatively short-term basis and provides for limited access for the service users.

Community Development and Social Assistance

Community development, economic development and social assistance are also areas of practice in which social workers and individuals acting as social workers have been involved in First Nations communities. To understand and appreciate the impression First Nations people have of social workers, a review of these practice fields is warranted.

Throughout the latter half of the 20th century First Nations communities have been subject to wave upon wave of economic development and community development initiatives. The initiatives, invariably relatively short-term, and imposed from without, have been staffed in many instances by transient social workers trained in the community development tradition of the urban settlement house movement.

Tester and Kulchyski (1994) describe the attitudes that prevailed at this time and, while they write of the Inuit in *Tammarniit: Mistakes,* their words have relevance on a broader scale as the same approaches were applied to First Nations people and communities across Canada:

> The task of guiding Eskimos during this difficult transition period falls upon an increasing staff of Northern Service Officers and trained Social Workers....The role of northern service officers was consistent with a liberal humanitarian view that

> Inuit were entitled to and should have the same rights, privileges (and status) as non-Inuit Canadians, and to gain those rights they should adopt the values of non-Inuit citizen. In short, that they should be assimilated into the dominant Canadian. society. (pp. 326 & 327)

Chapter 11 of the RCAP (1996) vol. 1, *Looking Forward, Looking Back* provides a detailed examination of the manner in which First Nations communities were relocated throughout the 20th century in accordance with economic and social development initiatives of the federal government. Many contemporary social issues such as the tragedies at Davis Inlet and Sheshatsui [1] can in part be traced to the attitudes and practices of that era.

Community development programs in southern Canada began in the mid 1960s. Walter Rudnicki, a graduate social worker, formerly in the North, had a key role in the developments. In McFarlane (1993) he recalls program initiatives as follows:

> The first was a community development program for Indian communities that fit with the broad range of initiatives of the Pearson era. Rudnicki remembers that,"the department went along with it because it seemed fashionable." The plan was to train thirty non-native community development officers and thirty Indian community development workers for a year, for three years.(p. 71)

Community development workers were engaged in a three month program that reflected the radicalism of the 1960s. Working as cross cultural partners, their role was to raise

[1] Davis Inlet and Sheshatsui communities were re-located within Labrador and over the past several decades have had high youth suicide rates and epidemic levels of children and youth addicted to sniffing gas.

awareness and act as catalysts for community based activities. George Manuel, later President of the National Indian Brotherhood, was among the first to take the training. He commented on some of the limitations:

> In the field, he noticed some of the C.D. officers took their passive role too seriously and in George's words, would "sit around and not do a damn thing....he discovered that his non-native partner Tony Karch, was being paid eight hundred dollars a month while he was receiving three hundred dollars. (ibid, p. 78)

For his part, George Manuel used his position to gain improved housing for the Cowichan First Nation and to organize for change at senior government levels. Both endeavours could be seen as successful from a community development perspective. However, when the newly empowered communities demanded initiatives beyond the scope of existing government programs and demanded a more meaningful role in their own destiny, the short-lived programs were terminated. Peter McFarlane (1993) writes that the Minister of the day, Arthur Laing, was disturbed by the ingratitude demonstrated by First Nations people:

> The whole community development staff were increasingly seen by the upper bureaucrats as untrustworthy boat rockers who were part of the 1960s radical opposition to the existing order....More forcefully--and more insultingly to Indian people--he (Laing) claimed that community development was not "a process of agitation and revolt," but a means to "arouse the people from sloth and apathy".... Living in this world is first of all a personal challenge and the individual who

> demands attention and then accuses his benefactor of a patronizing attitude is not going to go very far. (p.91)

Projects since that time have become short-term ventures of the make-work variety tied to income assistance programs. At the individual community level, staffing levels are set based upon the department's perception of those required for financial accountability. In the eyes of community members, the band social worker became cast in the role of gatekeeper, policing access to limited funds. They are not provided with the time or resources to engage in more meaningful relationships and human development activities in the form of preventative programs. In each province, income assistance and child protection policies for First Nations communities are written to mirror provincial legislation.

Schools of Social Work have begun to make limited progress in ensuring the educational experience of graduates encompasses First Nations content. The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Saskatoon has had a First Nations BSW program since the early 1970s and has been affording students a culturally relevant social work curriculum. Laurentian University in Sudbury, and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in Merritt, B.C. have developed similar programs. Other schools prefer applicants to have taken at least one course in Native Studies as a pre-requisite and include a single mandatory course in the undergraduate curriculum. Courses at the graduate level are electives. Most schools have adopted an affirmative action equity process to encourage more Aboriginal and First Nations students to enroll in BSW and

MSW programs. There is a dramatic shortage of social workers who are of Aboriginal and First Nations ancestry to fill the positions of community based agencies. In addressing and resolving the need for qualified social workers, Paolo Freire's cautions regarding the *banking method* of instruction must be remembered if truly effective educational programs are to be achieved. Freire (1995) cautions:

> the leaders cannot utilize the banking method as an interim measure, justified on the grounds of expediency, with the intention of *later* behaving in a genuinely revolutionary fashion. They must be revolutionary--that is to say, dialogical--from the outset. (p. 67)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CURRENT SITUATION

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) required nearly 4000 pages to articulate conditions that led to the current condition of First Nations people. The following compilation paraphrases excerpts of the RCAP volumes 1 and 3 and provides a brief list of the factors that have particular relevance to the topic of male violence:

- Notions of racial superiority, manifest destiny, and liberal philosophies of a modern industrial state, complemented by social Darwinism have produced a series of Indian Acts and other initiatives that have maintained First Nations people as refugees in our own territories.
- Lost our harmonious relationship with Mother Earth to the fur trade.
- Devastated by alcoholism, smallpox and tuberculosis.
- Confined to tiny tracts of land. First Nations people comprise three percent of Canada's population but are restricted to reserves that in total comprise less than one half of one percent of Canada's land mass. This allocation is totally inadequate to provide a landbase for a viable community or a viable economy.
- Declared wards of the federal government, the trust relationship has been breached more than it has been honoured.
- Potlatch Law 1884 to 1951 outlawed all cultural practices including use of traditional language.

- Generations of First Nations were indoctrinated to believe that to be First Nations is to be intrinsically evil and the basis for individual and collective shame.
- Residential school system that tore apart the family system. Children felt abandoned to abusive situations by those responsible for their care and generations lost the opportunity and ability to parent their own children.
- First Nations farmers and fishers prohibited the use of machinery and criticized for not being competitive while simultaneously criticized for having an unfair collective advantage.
- Efforts to improve oneself through education and training during the early twentieth century would result in loss of status and identity.
- Individual and community identity defined by outside agencies, excluding First Nations women, turning families and communities against themselves.
- Decades of judicial and legislative prevarication in the resolution of land claim issues.

During the mid to late 1970s, I made several trips into the Town of Churchill, Manitoba, on the shore of Hudson Bay. While my primary purpose was to provide social work/family therapy services to the military families stationed there, I was also volunteering time for the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. In this latter capacity, I visited some of the local villages and met with First Nations people living in town. A young Anglican minister was situated in Churchill and spent time with the local Dene people as well as going north into more remote areas to meet with Inuit people. He took great relish in describing a local CBC reporter's interview of an Inuit man. His delight was in the

man's response to the question as to what religious beliefs the Inuit had before the Anglican and Catholic churches came into the far North. The Inuit man's response had been that before contact with Europeans his people had no faith and no religion. I expressed my astonishment at the minister's pleasure and pride in having an Inuit deny his cultural heritage, only to be further astonished and outraged that he really had not the slightest grasp of my concern.

The editorial pages, particularly at times of crisis such as Oka, Adams Lake, Gustafson Lake, Ipperwash Park, or the annu al debates over food-fishing, demonstrate potent public reaction opposing inherent title and Aboriginal rights.[2] To monitor government response to First Nations issues or to review the platforms of provincial and federal political parties is to be reminded that the goal, as Scott phrased it, "until there is not a single Indian in Canada" continues in the present.

Contemporary Circumstances, Identity, Attitudes and Nature of Violence

The history chronicled above contributes to chronic disconnectedness from self and community. Over a number of generations the level of disconnection and lack of identity constitutes in Apache psychologist Eduardo Duran's (1995) terms, a "soul wound." Duran describes violence as an expression of self-hatred: "domestic violence... can be interpreted as a venting of anger toward someone that is helpless and as a

[2] For 78 days in 1990, the Mohawk people of Kanesatake were surrounded by military and police as they protected a burial ground against development as a golf course by the adjacent town of Oka, Quebec. The Mohawk claim dates from 1717. During the summer of 1995 Secewpemc people at Adams Lake and Gustafson Lake came into conflict with authorities for several months, over unceded land in the interior of British Columbia. In September, 1995, Dudley George, a member of the Stony Point First Nation was shot and killed by a member of the Ontario Provincial Police. George was participating in an occupation at Ipperwash Park, land which had been expropriated for wartime military use and not restored to the Kettle and Stony Point First Nations when the military base was closed.

reminding of the perpetrator of himself. ...any attempt at catharting anger toward its root results in swift retaliation by the oppressor" (p. 29). In the face of a perceived omnipotent oppressor, aggression is directed against one's most intimate loved ones, confirming one's own inadequacy. Duran goes on to say that over a period of time the behavioural pattern becomes integrated as an undifferentiated part of the perpetrator's personality.

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined as a "psychological reaction to experiencing an event that is outside the range of usual human experience" (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1993 p. 196). Duran and other clinicians and writers believe PTSD of multigenerational proportions contributes to the perpetuation of interpersonal violence in First Nations families trauma, physical, psychological or emotional. Whether initially experienced in the residential schools, in the communities, in the home or a myriad of other venues, unless resolved is passed on from one generation to the next. The nature of PTSD is that contemporary events that "trigger" flashbacks can be minor, yet they precipitate the full emotional response of the initial trauma itself. On an intergenerational basis, an infant child exposed to a PTSD episode of a parent or other significant adult would be traumatized and the cycle continued. "If these traumas are not resolved in the lifetime of the person suffering such upheaval, ...that will then become the learning environment for their children ....these children grow up with fear, rage, danger, and grief as the norm" (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 31).

For First Nations, the stress syndrome has been exacerbated as there was no healthy or safe outlet for the expression of emotions either within the family or the community. With the Potlatch Law in effect from 1884 to 1951, the practice of culture

and traditional spirituality, which may have afforded some relief, was made illegal. Those who went underground and continued traditional practice surreptitiously, did so at the cost of a personal sense of deviancy. The oral tradition was further under attack when 1884 legislation forbade the discussion of controversial matters such as land claims issues: "A new offence was created under the *Indian Act*, that of inciting 'three or more Indians, non-treaty Indians, or halfbreeds' to breach the peace or to make 'riotous' or 'threatening demands' on a civil servant" (RCAP vol. 1.1996, p. 289) It was specifically forbidden by law to organize around land claim issues from 1927 to 1951 so there was no way available to address issues that caused stress and frustration (Tennant, 1990, p. 112).

Dr. Clare Brant, a Mohawk psychiatrist, has extensive clinical and research experiencein the area of suicide and violence in First Nations communities. Among the first medical doctors of Aboriginal ancestry in Canada, Dr. Brant became a psychiatrist as a consequence of his own struggles in establishing his identity as a Mohawk. He provides important comment and analysis of the role of current social conditions in precipitating violence.

> There is an erosion of the self-esteem in Native men by chronic unemployment, [which contributes to] poverty, powerlessness and anomie. Any threat to this fragile self-esteem will be vigorously defended against, usually by aggression....Indian men...unemployed and idle, are constantly humiliated by having their families being supported by the welfare system. The little work which does exist on many Native reserves, such as community health representatives, child protection workers, cleaning staff, and secretarial staff, is often awarded to

> women. A power struggle ensues when the Native woman is the breadwinner and the exercise of intimidation and violence may be the last resort of the down-trodden warrior. (RCAP, vol. 3, 1996, p. 74)

The lack of a healthy identity and the presence of a powerfully negative identity and subsequent behaviour was a theme of both Aboriginal men and women who reported to the Royal Commission (1996). Roy Fabian of Hay River made the following observations on the subject of male violent behaviour.

> When you are talking about oppression, there is a process that goes on. [First] there is a process that demeans us, that belittles us and makes us believe that we are not worthy, and the oppressed begin to develop what they call cultural self-shame and cultural self-hate, which results in a lot of frustration and a lot of anger. At the same time this is going on, because our ways are put down as Native people, because our cultural values and things are put down, we begin to adopt our oppressors' values and, in a way, we become oppressors ourselves....Because of the resulting self-hate and self-shame we begin to start hurting our own people.
>
> When you talk about things like addiction and family abuse, elder abuse, sexual abuse, jealousy, gossip, suicide and all the different forms of abuses we seem to be experiencing, it's all based on [the original] violence. It's all a form of [internalized] violence....[Churches and governments] made us believe that the way we are today is the Dene way. It is not Dene culture.(ibid., p. 60)

At another panel meeting of the Commission, Donna Sears of Atenlos Native Family Violence Services, described the consequences of generations of racial stereotyping on First Nations women.

> The portrayal of the squaw is one of the most degrading, most despised and most dehumanizing anywhere in the world. The squaw is the female counterpart of the Indian male savage and, as such, she has no human face. She is lustful, immoral, unfeeling and dirty. It is this grotesque dehumanization that has rendered all Native women and girls vulnerable to gross physical, psychological and sexual violence.
>
> I believe there is a direct relationship between these horrible racist, sexist stereotypes and violence against Native women and girls.
>
> I believe, for example, that Helen Betty Osborne was murdered in 1972 by four young men because these youths grew up with twisted notions of Indian girls as squaws. Racist and sexist stereotypes not only hurt Aboriginal women and their sense of self-esteem, but actually encourage abuse, both by Aboriginal men and others . (ibid., p.63).

The history of colonialism and oppression that has been experienced by generations of First Nations people should in no way be construed as a justification or rationalization for the perpetration of violence in any setting. While it is true that most perpetrators of violence were at one time victims of violence themselves, not all victims of violence become perpetrators. It is essential for perpetrators and victims to have an awareness of the extent to which colonialism and oppression has had an influence over

their lives and their identities for many generations. Only with this insight as a foundation will effective rehabilitation be possible.

Establishment of individual identity as a First Nation person is not a simple feat. Roland Chrisjohn et al. (1997) in *The Circle Game* indicate that mainstream society is comfortable with First Nations people being First Nations people, as long as it is within the comfort zone of their terms of reference. Chrisjohn et al.'s pointed critique of premature moves towards healing and therapy within the context of what they term the "standard account" affords important insights for legitimate healing to eventually occur. He advocates research towards an "alternative account" which will not resort to euphemism and prevarication in identifying events as they actually took place. Such insights will be a challenge for both First Nations and Non-First Nations to address meaningfully, but again are essential for true healing to be possible.

Conditions of Contemporary First Nations Males

The world of First Nations men is marked by a number of features that are both a consequence of and a precipitator of violent behaviour. Statistics Canada and Health Canada data as presented in the RCAP Report (1996) and in Frideres (1998) offer an overview:

- Disproportionately over represented as inmates in jails and prisons. A First Nations male youth has a 70% likelihood of being incarcerated. Once convicted they are subjected to longer sentences and are less likely to be granted parole.

- Death rate due to violent incidents such as homicide double national rate, and a suicide rate three to six times greater than the national rate.
- Disproportionately under represented in post-secondary institutions. A First Nations youth has only a three per cent chance of attending a college or university.
- In comparable occupations income is 21.5% less than white counterparts.
- Unemployment rates two to three times the national average.
- Aboriginal men employed in primary industries at unskilled entry level without security.
- Aboriginal male average age at death 20 years less than Whites.
- Aboriginal male life expectancy seven years less than Whites.
- Death due to accidents and violence four times national rate.
- Tuberculosis rate 43 times higher than national rate.
- Disproportionately high rates of cardio-vascular disease and diabetes rates two to five times higher than mainstream population. Records show that diabetes in the Aboriginal population was virtually non-existent before the 1940s.

The social indicators are that First Nations men and women live on the margins of society in conditions dramatically below the standard acceptable for the majority of the population. The profile of male offenders as having low self-esteem, feeling alienated, lacking any basis of trust in self or relationship is without doubt exacerbated by the social conditions in which they find themselves. While many of the characteristics of First Nations male offenders are the same as those of offenders in general, the pervasive nature

of violent incidents in First Nations families when compared to society in general is a significant difference. The overall social conditions of the urban and rural First Nations community further contribute to the extent and intensity of the incidents of violent behaviour.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Alcohol abuse has been identified by 60% as a community problem. I would suggest that it would be difficult to find a First Nations person who has not been negatively affected, directly or indirectly, by alcohol abuse. Since it was introduced by fur traders to expedite bartering in their own interests, First Nations people have had difficulties with consumption of beverage ethyl alcohol. Considerable research continues to be undertaken to determine whether alcoholism is a symptom or a primary social problem. Whether alcohol abuse is the result of learned behaviour, genetic differences, or enzyme differences that control the metabolism of C2H5OH and other carbohydrates, the reality is that it is associated with a epidemic levels of pain and suffering in our communities. Pharmacologically a depressant of the central nervous system, ethyl alcohol medicates effectively to relieve stress, reduce anxiety, reduce inhibitions, impair higher brain functioning and reduce impulse control. Consideration of the history, current social conditions and characteristics of offenders indicates many reasons to seek reduction of anxiety and stress. The other pharmacological features of beverage alcohol is that it is addictive, progressive and terminal. Body chemistry adapts so that a physical addiction develops; increasingly larger doses are required to achieve the sought after effect, and

eventually the dose will be sufficient to cause death. This pattern left fur traders with incredible control once our ancestors had become addicted and the behavioural patterns were passed along the generations.

With regard to family violence, various studies are inconclusive. There has not been any cause-and-effect relationship determined, however, alcohol is seen as one of many factors in the complex set of circumstances that contribute to male violence.

D.J. Sonkin et al. (1985) in *The Male Batterer: A Treatment Approach* catalogue some of the characteristics that have been observed in males who are physically abusive to their partners and families.

> Battering men are likely to minimize and deny their violent behaviour....
>
> Battering men tend to externalize in an attempt to explain behaviour which seems to be out of their control....These men will often see the women as the cause of their violence....Men who batter are usually very dependent on their partners as the sole source of love, support, intimacy, and problem solving....Battering men are unassertive (Rosenblaum & O'Leary, 1981 a,b), in that while they can intimidate and bully their partners into giving them what they want, they lack the skills and self-confidence to ask affirmatively for what they want in a nonthreatening manner... Many of the dynamics described thus far are likely to produce feelings of low self-esteem...These men's lack of trust toward a particular woman is evident in their intolerance of her differences, their extreme sensitivities to rejection and/or criticism and ultimately their abusiveness and violence.... batterers tend to be angry and depressed, and more than half are feeling quite anxious about these intense

> feelings....with problems in impulse control and chronic acting out....denial and intellectualization as defense mechanisms....others may use hostility, withdrawal and/or substance abuse as a defense in reaction to their vulnerability....feeling out of control of their lives. (pp. 42 - 45)

Sonkin et al. indicate that males who batter also have positive characteristics that can be drawn upon in treatment programs to ameliorate behaviour. "They have the capacity to be loving, caring, and gentle partners. Many times they are excellent parents. They can be charming, humorous, sensitive, and emotional people." (ibid., p. 48). It is important to note, however, that these positive characteristics are often part of the denial and rationalization syndrome. Often those who are not victimized by a male batterer are deceived by the humour and charm and find it hard to believe that the same person is capable of perpetrating a reign of terror against those closest to him. Early in my career I discovered the lengths that not only a perpetrator but also abused family members will go to hide their shame in a veil of silence and present a false image to the outside world. A senior non-commissioned officer who was impeccable in his work, his dress and deportment explained without hesitancy how his wife had suffered a broken jaw. When he had merely intended to push her shoulder, his hand had slipped and struck her jaw. Furthermore, he added that if his wife had not tried to move out of the way of a gentle shove, she would not have been hurt. In other words his wife, the victim, was responsible for her injury. The tyranny of a twenty year marriage relationship was hidden by an

impeccable work record and the outward appearance of an attentive and caring husband in social settings outside the immediate family.

The charm and affection are also used to manipulate the victim into believing the remorse felt following a violent episode. The cycle of violence and escalating abuse is described by the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project as follows: 1. a period of tension building, 2. precipitating event, 3. a violent outburst, 4. periods of remorse, 5. a brief honeymoon period, and then 6. a tension building phase, with the cycle repeating and escalating.

Sharon Blakeborough, a survivor of the St. Mary's Residential School, is one of a number of courageous contributors to Ernie Crey and Suzanne Fournier's book *Stolen From Our Embrace*. Sharon and others describe generations of physical and sexual abuse experienced at the hands of school teachers, siblings, parents and partners. Sharon describes not only the physical abuse but also the obsessive control to which she was subjected by her first husband, who isolated her from any outside support.

> I had a very addictive relationship to John, my first husband, the father of my first child. He paid attention to me and groomed me from a very young age. When I was nine, he told me he was going to marry me. I first dated him when I was fifteen. He always had many, many women. When he finally got me, he put me out in he country in a shack so I wouldn't be in town where men could look at me. He was very possessive. (Fournier & Crey, 1997, p. 131)

Sharon Blakeborough's story illustrates a number of characteristics of male perpetrators of violent behaviour. Older men intimidated by mature women their own age prey upon younger girls, grooming them to be submissive and accepting of their behaviour before they are old enough to have formed as mature personalities. Younger girls, no doubt flattered by the attention of older men, find themselves isolated, cut-off from any potential alternate means of support, ensuring complete power and control for the men.

Rupert Ross (1996) is a former Assistant Crown Attorney who spent many years prosecuting perpetrators of spousal violence, and physical and sexual abuse in Canada's north. In *Returning to the Teachings,* Ross explores the history that has led to epidemic levels of violence in First Nations communities. He also examines the pros and cons of alternative means of addressing the behaviour which brings people into conflict with the criminal justice system. Recently implemented healing circles, restorative justice, and circle sentencing present both benefits and challenges in the area of family violence. The characteristics of male perpetrators of family violence, in its many manifestations, constitute a difficult area of clinical practice as per Ross' observations.

> As a master manipulator, won't he come into a sentencing circle surrounded by his friends and supporters--all people who either fail to see the truth or totally agree with his self-serving version of it? Feeling that he had done nothing more than what was "righteous" ....Does it not say that he was right after all when he told her in so many ways that he has all the power and she has almost none?...the victimizer will not be able to acknowledge either that pain was caused or that his inflictions

> of that pain is indefensible....at Hollow Water.... men who have moved far enough down their own healing paths that they have come to understand the lies they once hid behind....come together to tell their stories in a heart-speaking way, the truth about abuse becomes irresistible, and the lies that fostered the abuse begin to crack and fall away. They can read people so much better than I can, relying on tiny signals of sincerity and progress....ex-offenders are not shunned forever, but seen as important resources.... they tell their personal stories in the circle....the lies that once protected them....gently, but inflexibly...leave offenders with no room to hide...They expect ...abusers will try every manipulative trick....they expect minimization, blaming the victim and using childhood abuse as an excuse... The stories of other victims start to crack the "tough guy" barriers that have been erected to keep the truth at bay. (pp. 180 - 184)

Ross goes on to describe the beneficial effects of a gentle but no nonsense process in which the perpetrator is a full participant rather than being processed by a criminal justice system in which he becomes a victim.

> Criminal trials tend to leave criminal identities untouched ....Indeed, degradation tends to harden them. It is not a major challenge in identity-management for a tough guy to sustain his identity during a criminal trial....that challenge is more difficult within the sophisticated dynamics of a properly conducted Aboriginal healing circle....which follows traditional teachings against blaming.... offenders ultimately react to their own pain...acknowledge that their "toughness" regularly

> hides their own history of significant unhealed injury....the first step in altering the "criminal identity." (ibid., p.185)

The key phrase in the previous passage is with respect to the conduct of circles. "In too many communities, or among subgroups within Aboriginal communities, violence has become so pervasive that there is a danger of it coming to be seen as normal." (RCAP, 1996, vol. 3, p. 75). Skewed notions of the term "warrior" that have more to do with a macho Hollywood stereotype than with tradition, if pursued within the context of a healing circle will enable "a tough guy" to avoid uncomfortable realities. Individuals who conduct sweat lodge and other ceremonies have a responsibility to be vigilant in this regard. Both First Nations women and men have expressed concern that offenders may prematurely aspire to the role and responsibilities of pipe carrier or lodge-keeper and not fully address their own comprehensive healing needs. Of even greater concern are incidents of First Nations men who abuse other men and women within the context of a ceremony. Many of the women who made presentations to the Royal Commission stated very clearly that First Nations political leaders, usually men, had not been as assertive as necessary in dealing with issues of violence. A number went on to say that in some communities leaders were in fact the offenders.

A further factor to be considered in the current situation for First Nations males is the nature of interventions and treatment programs currently available in the communities. Programs such as Native Courtworkers which advocate for the rights and needs of First Nations offenders have been around since the 1960s and 1970s, however, programs designed to protect the interests of First Nations victims and witnesses to crimes have only

been developed in the past decade. As stated earlier, caution is warranted if innovative measures in addressing and ameliorating violence in our communities are to be effective and just. The whole matter of balancing the rights of all parties in the restorative justice, alternate dispute resolution, healing circle, circle sentencing process are still being negotiated at the provincial and federal level. Emma Laroque (1993) in her report *Violence in Aboriginal Communities,* submitted to the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,* identified a number of key concerns and ways in which a victim of crime in a First Nations community can be re-victimized via the restorative justice initiatives. As has been described, the factors contributing to male violence are complex and not amenable to simple solutions in which the motivation may be financial expedience not the truly effective programs for the victims and perpetrators.

In this chapter the current situation of First Nations males has been presented with respect to identity, social issues at the micro and macro level, and specific issues related to violent behaviour and intervention methods in both the social and criminal justice systems. This information along with the historical material presented earlier were instrumental in decisions taken in determining an appropriate research methodology and the research process to be pursued for this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The Research Design: Seeking a New Paradigm

Deciding upon an appropriate design is a matter of considerable consequence in any research undertaking. The qualitative method for this study follows a grounded theory case study approach. Autobiography and participant observer activities are drawn upon to serve as the foundation for primary data collection. A primary goal in the selection of a research design was that it be respectful of, and congruent with, First Nations values in giving voice to the participants and their circumstances. In consideration of the history of research activities to which First Nations people have been subjected, I maintain that qualitative design, conducted in an inclusive and respectful manner, provides a greater scope of outcomes which can be acted upon to improve the quality of life for First Nations individuals and communities.

Quantitative Research Methods: A First Nations Perspective

The imposition of quantitative research methods developed in the modern Western world has contributed significantly to the veil of suspicion through which all research activities are seen, as reflected in the Willie Dunn lyric, circa 1960s.

> And the anthros still keep coming like death and taxes to our land.
>
> To study the feathered freaks, with funded money in their hands.
>
> Like a Sunday at the zoo, their cameras click away,
>
> Taking notes and tape recording all the animals at play

Here come the anthros, better hide your past away.

Here come the anthros, on another holiday. (Dunn, n.d.)

For many generations, Eurocentric research has been an element in the ongoing colonization process of indigenous people. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) remarks that the same dilemma still exists with regard to ethical research protocols.

> Some scholarly communities of scientists may have well established ethical guidelines....the problem to be reiterated again is that it has been taken for granted that indigenous peoples are the 'natural' objects of research. It is difficult to convey to the non-indigenous world how deeply this perception of research is held by indigenous peoples. (p. 118)

The foundations of quantitative methods synchronize well with the colonial institutions imposed upon our communities. They are not, however, at all in concert with a First Nations holistic world view. Apache/Pueblo psychologist Eduardo Duran (1995) states that the suspicions of anthropologists reflected in the Willie Dunn lyric also apply to psychologists and other social scientists who would undertake research in First Nations communities. Furthermore, the suspicions apply to researchers of Native American ancestry as much as to members of mainstream society.

> One important barrier encountered while attempting to conduct research in the Native American community is the residual feelings still fresh in most Native American memories for the colonizing techniques of the anthropologists and other well-meaning, albeit arrogant social scientists. A high level of distrust exists among Native American people to anyone asking questions regardless of the good

> promised by the results of the research and often regardless of the tribal affiliations of the researcher. (p. 25)

The challenge is to counter the legacy of mistrust by engaging individuals and communities in research activities that are truly community based and that use a completely new research paradigm.

Qualitative Research Methods: A First Nations Perspective

Maxwell (1996) presents qualitative research as having strengths when undertaking investigations in five particular areas:

> 1. Understanding the *meaning,* for participants in the study, of the events, situations and actions they are involved with and of the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences....
>
> 2. Understanding the particular *context* within which the participants act, and the influence that this context has on their actions....study small numbers...preserve the individuality....
>
> 3. Identifying *unanticipated* phenomena and influences, and generating new grounded theories about the latter....
>
> 4. Understanding the *process* by which events and actions take place....the interest ...is in process rather than outcomes....
>
> 5. Developing causal *explanations*....Process theory...deals with events and the processes that connect them...analysis of the causal processes by which some events influence others. (pp.17-20)

The above characteristics I find are most amenable to the examination of First Nations men's experiences with social workers and other helping professions. Cresswell (1998) presents Denzin and Lincoln's complex and comprehensive definition.

> Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials--case study, personal experiences, introspective, lifestory, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts--that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals lives. (p. 2)

Particularly relevant to my own research is Cresswell's remark: "The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (p. 15).

Creswell states that while he presents five traditions of qualitative research--biography, phenomenological study, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study--he is aware that researchers have and will use them in a variety of combinations for good effect. The researcher as "bricoleur" or jack of all trades has particular application in developing a research paradigm congruent with and helpful to the First Nation cultural contexts, permitting adaptability in addressing the unique features of individuals and communities. As stated above, the research design for this study is derived from an integration of grounded theory and case study methods.

Case Study

> Cresswell (1998) defines a case study as follows:
>
> In qualitative research, this is the study of a "bounded system" with the focus being either the case of an issue that is illustrated by the case (or cases) (Stake, 1995). A qualitative case study provides an in-depth study of this "system," based on a diverse array of data collection materials, and the researcher situates this system or case within its larger "context" or setting. (p. 249)

The six men, members of the *Warriors Against Violence* talking circle, who participated in the study comprise a bounded system. Participants in the *Warriors Against Violence* come together for the common purpose of ameliorating behaviour and circumstances that have led to violence on their part. While the open-ended invitation to share life stories could be interpreted as a solicitation of biographical material, the focus of the study was to determine the nature of their relationships with social workers and other helping professionals. The systems studied to provide context are the historical and contemporary policies and programs of colonization and assimilation at the individual and societal level as presented in Chapter two, along with myriad elements of social and community systems.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, as defined by Glaser (1978), will be the means of analyzing the data derived in the case study process. "Grounded theory is based on the systematic generating of theory from data, that itself is systematically obtained from social research....

all guided and integrated by the *emerging* theory" (p. 2). Just as it is not simply a matter of First Nations researchers taking the place of mainstream researchers to achieve effective research, neither will success be achieved via indiscriminate rejection of all mainstream methodologies.

"Research is, as are countless other things, an institution of Western culture, and as much a reflection of the ideology of the West as government, religion, or anything else that might be named." (Chrisjohn et al., 1997, p. 157) First Nations academics struggle with this matter on a daily basis as we strive to find our place in our respective institutions and at the same time maintain, or, for many of us, recover our First Nations sense of self. Most first generation First Nations academics have come through conventional institutions functioning within the idiom and value base of Western culture. Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) says that one of the chores to be undertaken by indigenous scholars is to decolonize research methodologies, the theories that inform them, the questions they generate and the writing style they employ (p.39). She goes on to say that this must be a thoughtful and discriminatory undertaking.

> Decolonization, however does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centring our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. (p.39)

I find that grounded theory, and in particular the emergent themes methodology advocated by Glaser, is commensurate with a desire to undertake research that is reflective

of the holistic First Nations cultural values. An approach to research that is respectful of, and able to react to and integrate participants' input, will serve to ameliorate the residual suspicions about preconceived research agendas. The very nature of grounded theory, inductively developed in constant interaction with data from the study (Maxwell, 1996, p. 33), contributes to the evolution of First Nations research methodologies. As stated by Glaser (1978), grounded theory can be effectively used in conjunction with a case study approach, as well as other methods.

> The grounded theory method, though uniquely suited to field work and qualitative data , can be easily used as a general method of analysis with any form of data collection: survey, experiment, case study. Further, it can combine and integrate them. (p. 6)

Finally, in keeping with the pursuit of a decolonizing methodology, a grounded theory approach encompasses the full participation, perspective and interpretation of all of the actors. Corbin & Strauss, (1994) comment:

> Grounded theory methodology incorporates the assumption, shared with other, but not all, social science positions concerning the *human* status of actors whom we study. They have perspectives on and interpretations of their own and other actors' actions. As researchers, we are required to learn what we can of their interpretations and perspectives. Beyond that, grounded theory requires, because it mandates the development of theory, that those interpretations and perspectives become incorporated into our own interpretations (conceptualizations). (p. 280)

Community Based Research

To varying degrees participant observer research can be considered community based research, the variable being the degree of integration in the community. It is not without hazards, however, the benefits are many, beginning with the sense of empowerment, and the opportunity for capacity building. Respectful community based research gives the community voice in every step of the way, i.e. in deciding what aspects of their community and its functioning do they wish to look at. Simply put, it gives them a voice in what is of importance in their eyes.

In instances in which there is the desire to engage in collaborative research First Nations researchers have a responsibility to maintain a personal wellness program to maintain themselves in light of the challenges that will come from within and without. In this research, the potential candidates were made aware of the program evaluation I had been asked to conduct and, following that, the case study I wished to undertake. During the 14 week course of the *Warriors Against Violence* talking circles and related activities such as sweatlodge ceremonies, they came to know me and to know of the proposed research. The open-ended questions and the interview process were such that they set the pace and the focus of the interviews. To a significant extent, the participants determined the content of the interview.

Autobiography

An authentic affirmative voice, not solely counter to or on the margins of mainstream methodologies, but functioning within its own right, is the sought after goal

for First Nations. Ongoing critical holistic autobiography will afford the authenticity necessary for respectful, collaborative, culturally congruent community based research activities. This thesis is derived from research activities which encompassed elements of autobiography, authenticity, ethnography/participant observation and grounded theory case study.

As indicated earlier in this chapter and elsewhere, past events have led to a legacy of suspicion towards research activities held in the First Nations communities. The opportunity to be a participant observer in the group from which volunteers would be recruited provided an opportunity to establish a level of rapport and trust that would ameliorate long held suspicions. Similarly, the autobiographical elements in which I had been engaged prior to and throughout the study were essential to a positive outcome for the participant observations.

Participant Observer Ethnography

As defined by Creswell (1998) " ethnography involves prolonged observation of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives or through one-on-one interviews with members of the group" (p. 58). Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) present some of the background to the evolution of ethnography and participant observer qualitative research which I believe is evolving to be much more appropriate and relevant for First Nations traditions and culture.

> Both ethnography and participant observation have been claimed to represent a uniquely humanistic interpretive, approach, as opposed to supposedly "scientific" and "positivist" positions. At the same time, within the ethnographic tradition there are authors espousing a "scientific" stance as opposed to those who explicitly reject this in favour of an engaged advocacy and a critical stance....[the] history of ethnography ...reflects the continuing tension between attraction to and rejection of the model of the natural sciences, yet with few abandoning one pole wholeheartedly for the other. (pp. 249 & 251)

As a social group worker I have long advocated and been aware of the benefits derived from the multiple roles possible in therapy groups especially when compared to the defined roles of clinician and client in the casework setting. Talking circles operate on the premise that all participants are equal and are to be respected. Information gained from Ross (1999) and Laroque (1993), as well as relevant portions of the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, portrays First Nations male offenders as highly defended in response to multigenerational colonialism and oppression. The survival skills that have enabled them to survive have been developed from a very early age. Among the skills is the ability to "read" social situations and /or individuals with great efficiency, but, in ways that are not always in their own best interests. As indicated in other chapters of this paper, such "reading" of social situations and/or individuals as authentic or inauthentic will be immediate in most situations. I maintain that a research project in which they are

full collaborative participants will have commensurately greater credibility and impact on their lives.

Over the past several years I have become aware of the importance of ongoing reflective critical and holistic autobiography in establishing and maintaining authenticity of self. Reflective autobiography to contribute to authenticity of self has to adhere to the First Nations concepts of self as an intellectual, feeling, spiritual and physical being. Any amelioration of what Eduardo Duran, an Apache/Pueblo psychologist, refers to as a "soul wound" will only be as a consequence of such reflection.

For educators, clinicians and researchers, it is a professional responsibility to engage in an ongoing personal autobiographical process in order to situate self holistically with respect to the activities in which they are engaged. From my experience, for autobiography to be effective, reflection must include a balance within the realms of cognitive, affective, spiritual and physical self. Grumet, Clandinin, Connelly's comments regarding the characteristics and attributes of autobiography for curriculum can be extrapolated for those seeking insight and balance in the four directions of the First Nations Medicine Wheel.

> I would be naive if I refused to admit influence in what we notice, what we choose to tell, and how and why we tell what we do. Nevertheless, autobiographical method invites us to struggle with those determinations. It is that struggle and its resolve to develop ourselves in ways that transcend the identities that others have constructed for us that bonds the projects of autobiography and education. (cited in Pinar et al., 1996, p. 540).

> Via autobiography Grumet details these movements....Autobiography becomes a means of disclosing the experience of women that has been banished from curriculum discourses. It allows lived experience to be revealed and expressed , unlike mainstream educational research which in its obsession with measurement obliterates subjectivity.(ibid, p. 549).

> Personal practical knowledge is knowledge which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person's being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of, a person's experiential history, both professional and personal....Narrative is defined as "the making of meaning from personal experiences via a process of reflection in which storytelling is the key element and in which metaphors and folk knowledge take their place (ibid, p. 557).

The challenges of achieving authentic voice in personal storytelling are complicated and difficult for many First Nations people due to the generations of colonialization and oppression which have become internalized and propagated from within individuals and entire communities. Reflective autobiography that leads to a holistic awareness of self affords the relief from fear that others may have greater insights about who we are than we possess ourselves. Goodson addressed both the importance of personal life history to our teaching and the importance of making ourselves vulnerable in

order to be less vulnerable. While the Goodson's comments are directed to curriculum and teaching, I maintain they warrant notice by clinicians and researchers as well.

> To the degree that we invest our 'self' in our teaching, experience, and background therefore shape our practice....the inclusion of 'personal' in a study of 'practical' knowledge points to the importance of 'biographical perspective' ...A more valuable and less vulnerable entry point would be to examine teachers' work in the context of teachers' lives. Why he regards teachers private lives as making teachers less vulnerable requiring them to feel less exposed, is not clear. (ibid, p. 563-564).

Ongoing critical autobiographical reflection affords individual authenticity. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) notes that "the notion of authenticity is highly contested when applied to, or by indigenous people"(p.72). Therefore a balanced sense of self as authentic in the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical realms is an important and healthy foundation for research and other endeavours.

Selection of Participants

In May of 2000 the sponsors of the *Warriors Against Violence* engaged me to undertake an evaluation of the program to determine the feasibility of establishing a similar program for First Nations youth. This serendipitous opportunity was in concert with my earlier clinical practice as well as with my research interests. Over the past decade, through my academic, professional and volunteer activities, I was keenly aware of the

extent of violence in First Nations communities. It was agreed that the program evaluation would be conducted using participant observer methodology and I was given the opportunity to recruit volunteers to participate in my study regarding the men's experiences with social workers.

In 1998 I conducted a participant observer research pilot project while attending a Men's Healing Circle in my home community in the Interior of British Columbia. The purpose of the weeklong gathering was to ameliorate the extent of violence perpetrated against women by First Nations men. Within the pilot project my role, within the range discussed by Adler and Adler (1994), was that of a complete member, "...[those in the] complete membership role, are those who study scenes where they are already members" (p. 380). Circumstances were such that my role with the *Warriors Against Violence* circle began as "active-member-researcher" and evolved to "complete-member-researcher." The multiplicity of roles in the pilot project that took place as a live-in program, 24 hours per day, for five days was very demanding and made recording of the *rich field* notes an ongoing challenge. I learned within the first fifteen minutes of the first day that use of any writing materials would set me apart from the other participants. The *Warriors Against Violence* talking circle met for two hour meetings twice a week over a fourteen week period. Following a psycho-educational format, the talking circle format provides the opportunity for active listening. The nature of the talking circle format is that participants engage as cognitive, affective, spiritual and physical beings. Based upon my 1998 experience in the Interior, any notes required for the program evaluation were made following the session.

During the first session I introduced myself and said that I had been tasked by the sponsors and leaders with undertaking a program evaluation. At a subsequent session I described the research that I would be undertaking with regard to participants' experiences with social workers. A conscious decision was made on my part to introduce the two projects separately, primarily because we were in the orientation phase of the process and I did not want to have my information interfere with the primary purpose for the group. Immediately upon learning of the research project, several individuals indicated that they wished to volunteer. Other members expressed "concern" regarding both undertakings. As the program progressed, more of the men expressed an interest in the project and sought further information. The two members who were the first to express interest and who ultimately participated in the research asked from time to time when the interviews would begin. Several of the men who expressed an interest in participating, left the group for a variety of reasons, such as work re-location, etc.

Sampling for the study is categorized as purposeful in that all potential volunteers were participants in the *Warriors Against Violence* Program. As stated earlier, the talking circle comprised a bounded group coming together for the common purpose of ameliorating behaviour and circumstances that have led to violent behaviour. Within the talking circle group, the sampling would not be considered random as participants self identified to volunteer for the study.

The fourteen-week *Warriors Against Violence* program began in September and ended in December. The following January, telephone contact was made with those individuals who had expressed interest. As several individuals were no longer available,

telephone contact was made with other group members to request their participation. In all, twelve men expressed interest in participating. Ultimately a decision was made to conduct interviews with six men, including the member who had expressed serious misgivings with my presence in the early stages of the group's meetings.

As stated in the section giving the participants' profiles, when offered anonymity in the interview process, five of the six participants stated that they wanted full disclosure of their identity. To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all participants, all interview materials have been kept in a secure filing system and a stand alone computer has been used in transcription of data and preparation of this thesis.

Data Collection Method

Individual interviews, ranging from one and a half to two and a half hours, were undertaken with each of the six volunteers, who were all members of the *Warriors Against Violence* talking circle. The interviews were conducted at a location chosen by each participant. Three invited me to their home for the interview and the other three were interviewed at two neighbourhood community centres in the city.

For three of the interviews, two in the home and one in the community centre, the participant's partner was also present. For the two home visits, the partner was simply present in adjacent rooms. As the focus of the interviews and the emergent themes analysis was on the men's storytelling it was not determined whether the presence of the partners influenced the study's outcome. As stated earlier, the interviews were held at times and locations of the participants' choice. The two longest interviews were held in the home,

and although the content was relatively the same as the shorter sessions, the pace was slower. This factor is seen as a reflection of the participants' comfort of being in their own environment.

It is the tradition of many First Nations people to offer a gift of tobacco when one is making a request for a teaching. At the outset of the interview each participant was presented with a pouch of tobacco to honour them for sharing their story and in gratitude for the teachings that would be derived. The acceptance of the tobacco reflects the individual's willingness to share their teaching. Each participant was grateful for being honoured and recognized in this manner.

Before the interview began, each participant was provided with an information package (see Appendix C) which described the purpose and structure of the research process and included an informed consent form. The evocative nature of the topic was discussed and participants were informed that supportive counselling would be available to them should it be required. Each participant was given the opportunity to read the material and ask any questions. The use of audiotape to record the proceedings was also discussed. All agreed to its use. The semi-structured open-ended interviews were guided by the following ten questions.

1. What was your home life like when you were growing up?
2. What traditional ceremonies did you or your family participate in when you were growing up?
3. What do you know about your parent's school experience?
4. What do you remember about your school years?

5. What activities have you been involved with since leaving school?

6. What can you tell me about your present family?

7. What is your recollection of your first contact with social workers?

8. What contact have you had with social workers since then? How would you describe the nature of the relationship, what have you found helpful and what have you found caused you difficulty?

9. What have social workers said or done that caused you to feel angry or violent?

10. What is your experience with the practice of First Nations ceremony such as long house, big house, talking circle, sweat lodge, and sun dance? Have you found traditional healing practices helpful? If so, in what way? Have any traditional healing practices caused you difficulty, and if so, in what way?

In most of the interviews it was not necessary to do more than ask the first question, "What was your home life like when you were growing up?" As each man told his story at his own pace and in his own manner, the subsequent questions were addressed in part or in full. The length of the interviews reflected the pace of the story telling set by each person rather than content volume. During the course of the interview I refrained from any note taking in order to afford the participant my full attention. In keeping with the grounded theory analytical method, no notes were made regarding the interview process or content. In adhering to an emergent themes approach, I wished to embark upon the open coding process without any influence that might derive from my written impressions. Participants were provided transcripts of the interview to check for content.

Follow-up contact was made with the participants one to two weeks later depending upon their availability.

CHAPTER SIX

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

In the previous chapter I described the importance of maintaining an ongoing autobiography to maintain authenticity as a cognitive, affective, spiritual and physical being. The grounded theory case study undertaken was built upon relationships established in a 14 week participant observer community based research activity. My ability to participate in the talking circle was enhanced from having embarked on a journey of determining my own story and situating myself as best I could with the topics and issues that arose. While the participants did not read my story, over the course of the 14 weeks they came to know me and many aspects of it, just as I became aware of their stories. I include it here in order that the readers will be able to put my words and the research I have undertaken in some form of emergent context for themselves. I suggest that, without my having undertaken the work towards the autobiography, the stories I heard may have been dramatically different.

My Story

It is early morning on Sunday, November 1, 1998. Seated next to me in the sweatlodge for which I share responsibilities as lodge-keeper is my father Hector. He has told me that it has been over sixty years since he was last in a sweatlodge. On that occasion in 1938 he shared the experience with his grandfather. It has been over 21 years since I first entered the lodge in 1977, however this will be the first opportunity that he

and I will have to share this experience. We hope that it will give him strength and keep him balanced during the surgery that he is scheduled to undergo.

Over a half century of thoughts and memories play out in my mind as I contemplate the events that have brought us to this time and this place. I cannot help but dwell on the many journeys my father has taken since his last time in the sweatlodge and what he must be thinking and feeling. In 1938, participation in a sweatlodge ceremony would have been a criminal offense. Having recovered sufficiently from the rheumatic fever he contracted during three years in the Cariboo Indian Residential School, Hector will soon enlist and serve overseas in the army of a country that will not regard him as a citizen for another 22 years, in 1960.

Sitting in the lodge, I wonder in joy at the simplicity of the moment while also recalling past decades when the simple matter of discussing our First Nation ancestry was a forbidden topic. I remember the many times throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood when to simply broach the topic of our racial/cultural heritage and ancestry, obvious in our features and dark complexion, would have a elicited a quiet angry response from my father. The ominously clear message "do not go there" did seem strange. However, that was how it always had been. With many questions left unanswered for many decades, it has only been with an aggressive approach to seeking out my Secwepemc identity, that some gaps have been filled. Today there is a feeling of awkwardness as I lead my father in a ceremony in which I feel he should be the teacher, I the student. Nevertheless we are here together. Not too many years ago I harboured a deep-seated anger toward my father for depriving me of contact with family and culture.

The residue of the anger arises still from time to time, anger based upon a misperception of what I thought were his deliberate choices regarding where and how to live and what information he was prepared to share with my brother, my sisters and myself. My perception was of a physically powerful and strong willed individual who kept people at a distance through an ever present, foreboding anger. I took it for granted that how such a person chose to lead his life could only be the result of deliberate choice. My anger was due to a feeling of being isolated from and deprived of contact with family/culture as a consequence of that deliberate choice. It was beyond my comprehension that the man, who I regarded as a hero at times and who terrified me at other times, would do anything not based upon a freely considered choice. On occasion, while discovering aspects of our background, I have felt as if I was appropriating another's story, as the information was gained not via a legacy of childhood storytelling of family history but more as a revelation of secrets long kept hidden. The recently gained information about my father Hector's early childhood spent in the Cariboo Indian Residential School has filled a number of informational gaps and has put other information into a relevant context. As will be shown in this chapter, Hector was not making choices as much as he was reacting to the circumstances of his Residential School, and other racist experiences that, while not spoken of, were of such gravity that he did not return to his territory for a period of 30 years.

Personal authenticity, gained through ongoing holistic autobiography, has played an important and valuable role in my education, research, clinical practice and teaching activities and, in particular, was essential to the research conducted for this study. I have

to acknowledge that the discovery of new personal information led to the question: "Is it there because I am looking for it"? The research of First Nations scholars such as Dr. Roz Ing's (2001) research on residential school survivors has served to verify my own findings and feelings about the secretiveness which many Residential School System survivors have used to avoid discussing painful memories and to deal with issues of identity. Dr. Ing's description of one woman's story is all too familiar:

> Sara spoke about the denial in her and her mother's life when the topic was brought up....Having to lie about one's past and family history is a decision made to 'fit-in' to the kind of society for that period (1920-30) in Canada's history. (p. 86)

In this chapter, the important role of autobiography, particularly for everyone involved in cross-cultural, education, social work education and social work practice, will be explored. Autobiography is essential for educators and social workers who wish to situate themselves holistically with respect to the people with whom they are engaged.

Self-awareness and self-disclosure are important skills for clinical social work and, I believe, for educators in all disciplines, particularly if they are engaged in multicultural relationships. Both, I suggest, should be premised upon an ongoing reflective autobiography in order to be authentic and effective. Kirst-Ashman and Hull (1993) describe lack of self-awareness is described as a barrier to effective multicultural social work:

> By [insufficient self-awareness] we mean a lack of understanding of your own culture (including ethnic heritage, values, beliefs, expectations, and behavior). We also may have a lack of sensitivity to our own biases....we tend to see life through set of cultural sunglasses that colors all we experience, personally and professionally. (p. 403)

In clinical social work practice, self-disclosure, a sharing of excerpts of autobiography, is regarded as an effective interview technique/practice skill but with a number of qualifications and guidelines:

> Historically, what and how much about yourself should be disclosed during a professional interview is a controversial issue (Olkun, 1976). On the one hand, there is substantial research indicating that some amount of self-disclosure enhances relationships (Johnson, 1973, 1986)--people are more apt to like others who reveal things about themselves. (ibid., pps. 61-62)

The authors go on to state that self-disclosure must be undertaken for the client's benefit, be relevant to the client, and be kept short and very simple. For autobiography to be effective one needs to go beyond the realm of clinical self-disclosure, so with some trepidation I will portray elements of my own personal history. With a developing awareness of some of the critique to which some autobiographical writers and theorists have been subjected (that their work is solipsistic, purely personal and narcissistic), Iwas somewhat reassured to find that other autobiographical writers have concerns similar to

mine. Nakanyike Musisi's (1999) introduction to her paper in *Emigre Feminism* captures my thoughts and feelings on this whole process.

> Writing about my self, my consciousness, my history, subjecting my thoughts, my work, my words, activities, and lived experiences to self-reflection for public consumption has been one of the biggest challenges of my life. Here I am, given a discursive space but wishing it had not been given. The procrastination has proved one thing to me--the depth of my fears of self-exposure, even when I am given a friendly discursive space....I work from the conviction and acknowledgment that personal reflection past and present, out of which our discourses and knowledge are produced is crucial. (p.131)

Political Context: Personal as Political/Political as Personal

In June of 1968 I received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Western Ontario. During the three years as an undergraduate I had only become briefly aquainted with the other two First Nations students in attendance at the time, an Inuit woman and a Mohawk man. My knowledge of First Nations history and contemporary First Nations issues was effectively nil at that time.

In June of 1969 the Federal Government's *White Paper* proposed to resolve all Indian problems through a constitutional amendment that would eliminate the legal status of "Indians" and thereby also eliminate "Indians'" legal standing to bring forward land claims. Due to my upbringing I had no idea that the proposed legislation had anything to do with me. In fact it could be said that the assimilationist policies and programs of the

government over several generations had been extremely successful with regard to my family of origin. Through the 1969 *White Paper,* the devolution of the Department of Indian Affairs and the elimination of Indian Reserves over a five year period was presented by the federal government as constituting a generous and benevolent measure to improve the quality of life of Canadian Indians. The *White Paper* however served as a common issue around which Indians across the country rallied and organized in a manner that had not been possible previously. The National Indian Brotherhood became active in organizing and developing policy positions and programs in all sectors of First Nations peoples' lives from the national to the local level.

In 1972 the National Indian Brotherhood compiled a position paper on education, *Indian Control of Indian Education,* which articulated the following philosophy:

> We want the behaviour of our children to be shaped by those values which are most esteemed in our culture. When our children come to school, they have already developed certain attitudes and habits which are based on experiences in the family. School programs which are influenced by those values respect cultural priority and are an extension of the education which parents give children from their first years. These early lessons emphasize attitudes of:
>
> ....self-reliance
>
> ....respect for personal freedom
>
> ....generosity
>
> ....respect for nature
>
> ....wisdom

> all of which have a special place in the Indian way of life. While these values can be understood and interpreted in a different way by different cultures, it is very important that Indian children have a chance to develop a value system which is compatible with Indian culture. (1972, pps. 2-3)

When I first read *Indian Control of Indian Education* a year or two after it was made public, my initial response was that it presented a rather naive and romantic position. Furthermore, I thought that as Indian people, if we were to improve our lot in life then we should get with the government's program and stop dwelling in the past. David Maybury-Lewis'(1997) editorial "Brave New World or More of the Same?" in the *Cultural Survival Quarterly* describes the point of view, common at the time, that had significant influence on my perspective and reflects the silent shame-based perspective with which I had been raised.

> Twenty-five years ago it was widely assumed that indigenous peoples were dying out; that they were either being physically extinguished by disease and the savage onslaughts of the modern world or that they were abandoning their indigenous identities and disappearing into the mainstream of the societies that surrounded them....Yet this assumption represented a kind of wishful thinking in official circles where it was argued that the ways of life of indigenous peoples were archaic and incompatible with the modern world. It would therefore benefit them if they abandoned their cultures and accepted the benefits (and the costs) of modernity. (p. 4)

My perspective at that time was that of a thirty-year-old father of two, spouse of one, with a newly minted Master of Social Work degree from a major Canadian university. At the time I was also a Captain in the Royal Canadian Air Force (Canadian Armed Forces). Although I had long been aware that First Nations comprised part of my ancestry, it was in the same year that the National Indian Brotherhood statement on education was published, 1972, that I discovered I was a member of an Indian Band of the Shuswap Nation in the interior of British Columbia. At that time my perspective, determined by a mainstream education and by my military career, was that education should best be left to the experts. Furthermore, I believed that education, benign and culturally neutral, would afford individuals of all racial, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds opportunities for advancement and a higher quality of life.

When first reading the N.I.B. paper I was not aware of the powerful lessons I had received from my parents and society, both prior to and throughout my educational years, about what it meant to be Indian. My parents, I believe, were not aware of lessons that they imparted, which followed the theme of a colonialized, marginalized and subordinated people. The statement: "When our children come to school, they have already developed certain attitudes and habits which are based on experiences in the family" has veracity. In pre-contact times the early family socialization would more likely have been balanced, positive and a source of strength. After six to seven generations of colonial oppression, early socialization has in many instances become a source of shame and self-doubt. For my parents, particularly my father, the cost of trying to get by in a modern

world was to deny fundamental elements of racial/cultural heritage and to isolate himself and his family in a cultural vacuum.

Shuswap: Born in Wartime England

Born in wartime England 1944, of an English mother, Mary, and Shuswap father, Hector, a soldier in the Canadian Army, I was to spend the first eight years of my life in a milieu that continually reminded me that I was different and did not belong. By the time I was six months of age, a local merchant had declared to my mother that I was "half-caste" due to my features and dark complexion. My mother, not familiar with the term, no doubt surmised from the manner in which it was expressed that it was not positive in nature and I expect that the term became a source of shame.

As part of an effort to ameliorate public criticism, my younger brother and I were always well turned out and admonished to be on our best behaviour in public. The term "half-caste" would be murmured from time to time in various settings reminding us of our peculiar place of shame in the world. In elementary school, until my brother Bob enrolled two years later, I became accustomed to keeping my own company as my physical appearance set me apart from the classmates. I learned that avoiding contact was preferable to risking rejection.

Queries as to why I (we) looked different and were treated differently brought no information. My mother had no information to share other than that she thought that my father may be part Canadian Indian. I learned at an early age that to ask my father about such things was not acceptable. His powerful unspoken reaction was, "Don't go there!" I

learned quickly that to avoid his angry disapproval it was not safe to ask simple questions about who we were. Years later, as a marital and family counsellor, I would learn that in working with families it is equally important and sometimes more important to listen to what is not said as much as to listen to what is said in order to understand the rules, formal and informal, via which a family unit operates. One of the most powerful rules in my family was that it was not okay to discuss any aspect of our family heritage that pertained to being Indian. In a later section I will describe how, years later, with information gained from my father as to his experience and feelings about growing up as Shuswap in the British Columbia interior, I am now able to put into context his negative reaction to discussing our ancestry.

For several years, school in England became tolerable as there was the promise of all things becoming much better once we moved to Canada. My response to being ostracized by classmates was to dwell upon a "When I move to Canada" theme. Several months before we left in 1952, a teacher sent a note asking my parents to encourage me to seek alternate themes and topics for school writing assignments.

In Canada we settled in the Niagara Peninsula, and although I did not know it at the time, the traditional territory of the Haudenausaunee. I was intrigued by the fact that two boys, children of itinerant workers at a nearby fruit farm, had the same appearance as my brother and I. Even more intriguing was that when I visited their home and met their adult older brother, his high cheekboned features, complexion, and shiny black hair caused me to think the man could be my father's brother. When I told my parent's that I had met some boys and a man who looked so much like us that we could be related, the response

was that there was no possible way that we could have anything in common with people like that. We were in Canada and some things had not changed. A short time later the family returned to their home on the Six Nations Reserve and we had no further contact.

Shuswap: Growing up a Long Way from Home:

While southern Ontario in the 1950s and 1960s was not a place of overt racism, the regular but subtle events that could be described as having racial overtones were all the more powerful as I had no context in which to deal with them, nor was it safe to discuss them at home. Remarks such as "Can I help you boys?" directed to my father, or "It is nice to see an Indian family doing so well" delivered with a condescending paternalism served to reinforce our place on the margins of the community in which we lived. When I was a young adult some acquaintances remarked that although I may be of Indian ancestry, I did not have to worry because I could easily pass for a person of Mediterranean background. The remark was made, I expect, with the best of intentions as a reassurance. Such remarks and attitudes served to reinforce the need for an "defensive" protective posture against discrimination but also served to keep at a distance others with whom I might have become better acquainted in a positive manner. An embedded unconscious preoccupation with and an anticipation of being negatively judged has had an influence upon the unrealistic demands I have placed upon my children with regard to their public behaviour and I expect has had influence upon the nature of my interaction with students and colleagues over the years.

Nearly twenty-five years after the N.I.B. *Indian Control of Indian Education* position paper was published, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples again looked at the education of First Nations people.

> The federal government's response to "Indian Control of Indian Education" was to adopt a 'devolution' approach, transferring the administration of education to Aboriginal education authorities in reserve communities This has been a slow process, still under way more than twenty years later....The federal government has generally insisted that schools conform to provincial regulations with respect to curriculum, school year and so on, thereby restricting schools' ability to include innovative, culture-based curriculum. Funding is very basic with little money for Aboriginal curriculum development and few resources to address special needs....
>
> For nearly 30 years, Aboriginal leaders have made policy recommendations to governments, and governments have conducted internal studies. The Commission examined 22 reports on Aboriginal education written between 1966 and 1992....
>
> What we find most disturbing is that the issues raised at our hearings and in interveners' briefs are the same concerns that Aboriginal people have been bringing forward since the first studies were done....From our analysis, we offer the following observations:
>
> Federal policy has been moving in the right direction since 1972 , but federal authorities have failed to take the decisive steps necessary to restore full control of education to Aboriginal people. Nearly 70 per cent of Aboriginal education has

> been in the hands of provincial or territorial authorities, with few mechanisms for effective accountability to Aboriginal people and involvement of parents. Aboriginal people have been restricted in their efforts to implement curricula that would transmit their linguistic and cultural heritage to the next generation . Financial resources to reverse the impact of past policies have been inadequate. It is readily apparent that Canadian society has not yet accomplished the necessary power sharing to enable Aboriginal people to be authors of their own education. This suggests that there are persistent barriers to be addressed if education for Aboriginal people is to change significantly. (RCAP, Vol. 3 ,1996, pp. 440 - 441)

Considered together, Mayberry-Lewis' remarks and those of the RCAP can be interpreted to show that the authors of the 1972 N.I.B. position paper have played a visionary leadership role. Although various levels of government are still having difficulty coming to grips with or even acknowledging fundamental tenets of the paper, First Nations people themselves have grown a great deal in their perspective. There is still a great deal to accomplish but significant steps have been taken at the community and individual level.

In a recent conversation with my parents reflecting on the ostracization my brother and I experienced as school children in England, they allowed that while they were aware of and troubled by the situation, at the time they felt powerless to take meaningful action on our behalf. The sentiment expressed as *you may as well forget about it because there was nothing you could do anyway* represented the culmination of many years of dealing

with an absolute and autocratic bureaucracy where withdrawal and non-engagement became one of the few available means of coping.

My father Hector was born in May of 1923 as a member of the Clinton Indian Band in Shuswap territory. This was six years before the British Columbia First Nations population reached its lowest point of 22,605 in 1929, and then began a slow recovery from the devastation of imported diseases (Duff, 1964. p. 44). Only in the last few years has he felt comfortable discussing his early life and as he has done so, I have come to have an understanding and appreciation of earlier events that previously seemed enigmatic and without context.

At the age of five or six Hector was enrolled, as required by law, at the Cariboo Indian Residential School at St. Joseph's Mission, near the Sugar Cane Reserve. One memory he has shared of his first day at the school is being met by a large man dressed in black, wearing cowboy boots and carrying a bull-whip that was used frequently for maintaining control and administering punishment. Randy Fred's father, who was in attendance at the Port Alberni residential school at approximately the same time reported similarly harsh means of discipline and punishment. Students had sewing needles stuck in their tongues if caught speaking their First Nations language(Haig-Brown, 1988, p. 11). George Manuel (1974), who attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School in the 1920s also shared similar experiences:

> Hunger is both the first and the last thing I can remember about that school. I was hungry from the day I went into the school until they took me to hospital two and a half years later. Not just me. Every Indian student smelled of hunger. (p. 65)

Hector was taken out of St. Joseph's residential school by his grandparents after three years because he had contracted rheumatic fever. As a child and youth he worked with extended family in ranching, forestry and the orchards. In the late 1930s as a labourer for a company that held contracts with the town of Williams Lake, he was informed that although regarded as a valuable and hardworking employee, he had to be let go as towns-people were complaining that an Indian should not be working when there were white men unemployed.

He learned that no matter had how hard you work or how smart you may be, there are some things you cannot change and that to be Indian was a distinct disadvantage. The frustration would certainly contribute to a feeling of shame and an attitude of despair represented by the statement *you may as well forget about it because there was nothing you could do anyway*. Shortly thereafter he volunteered to serve in the army of a country that would not consider him to be a citizen or allow him to vote for another 20 years. Following six years of military service in England, North Africa, Italy, and Holland and another six years as a professional hockey player and coach in England and continental Europe, he settled his family in Southern Ontario, a long way from the Shuswap. It would be nearly 30 years before he returned to the area where he was born and grew up. *You may as well forget about it because there was nothing you could do anyway* was only one of many powerful lessons that I received from my parents. Their beliefs included a strong work ethic, an attitude that life is serious no matter what your age, a fierce self-sufficiency in all things, a propensity to isolate self and family from community, the avoidance of vulnerability by not letting anyone get too close, maintenance of a cynical

critique of one's peers, an exaggerated deference to those in positions of authority or perceived positions of authority, avoidance of disappointment by reduction of expectations (of course in such situations thoughtful goal-setting would be irrelevant), a gratitude for what comes your way, the control of as many aspects of life as possible, and the avoidance of change as much as possible. Each of the above can be useful components in a broader repertoire of coping behaviours when warranted by specific circumstance. When used, however, as an unbalanced general approach to all circumstances, such coping can be counter productive and maladaptive.

"You may as well forget about it because there was nothing you could do anyway; the lesson runs deeper and more pervasively than one initially imagines, as Paolo Freire (1970) notes in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

> "What can I do? I'm only a peasant."...
>
> When superficially analyzed, this fatalism is sometimes intepreted as a docility that is a trait of national character. Fatalism in the guise of docility is the fruit of an historical and sociological situation, not an essential character of a people's behavior. It almost always is related to the power of destiny or fate....Submerged in reality, the oppressed cannot perceive clearly the "order" which serves the interests of the oppressors whose image they have internalized. (p.43-44)

Students World View

For the past 25 years I have taught a variety of First Nations courses addressing both contemporary social issues and social work theory and practice for undergraduate students and for practitioners engaged in professional development. I have believed and continue to believe that it is essential to spend time describing historical as well as contemporary events in order to establish the context within which social work theory and practice can be discussed.

To varying degrees over the past 25 years, in each course a significant number of students have had difficulty with some of the historical and contemporary realities with which they are faced. Even though it has been my practice when introducing the course to caution that the curriculum to be embarked upon is extremely evocative and disturbing, as the history and reality gets closer to home, those non-First Nations students who identify with the colonial oppression, tend to tune out or become overwhelmed with feelings of guilt and resentment that lead to anger and the assumption of adversarial positions. Until the past several years I had been, or at least I thought I had been, endeavouring to present the course material in an objective, academic manner and dealing with affective aspects only in a scholarly, cognitive manner.

Dorothy Van Soest's (1996) article " Impact of Social Work Education on Student Attitudes and Behaviour concerning Oppression" reported finding resistance and responses similar to those that I have experienced in teaching the course *First Nations Social Issues*:

> An essential element of the course is the students' exploration of their own cultural backgrounds and the meaning and significance of their own positions (as privileged or disadvantaged) in a racist, sexist, and heterosexual society. By asking students to look at their side of the oppression equation, the course challenges personal world views and self-concepts. (p. 192)

Van Soest measured social work students' attitudes, values and reaction to course content along several continua: 1. Belief in a Just World Scale (BJWS); 2. a Social Justice Advocacy Scale (SJAS); and 3. Level of distress. Students with high belief in a just world experienced greater levels of distress when presented information not congruent with their beliefs and this led to increased but uneven and inconsistent advocacy activity (p. 198). Her findings indicated that:

> students who had a stronger tendency to accept the just world ideology and who engaged in fewer advocacy behaviours reported greater distress when confronted with evidence of injustice in curriculum content....This tendency of social work students to accept the just world ideology raises concerns, as studies have shown a negative correlation between acceptance of just world ideology and political and social activism (Rubin & Peplau, 1973)....those who have a strong belief in a just world will blame victims of social harm or unfairness even in the absence of evidence suggesting victims were responsible for their misfortune....Just world ideology is viewed as a deep-seated, primitive set of beliefs that plays a central role

> in a person's life--having an impact similar to the belief that one is a decent, worthwhile person.... resistant to change...unaffected by exposure to information that contradicts them ...or they may be embraced even tighter....[with a] tendency to screen out information that does not conform to one's beliefs.(p.198).

With respect to my own experience related to the above findings, I feel that the same issues and challenges need to be addressed by both educators and students when dealing with cross-cultural issues, regardless of the individual perspective. For educators, it is a professional responsibility to engage in an ongoing personal autobiographical process in order to situate self holistically with respect to the curriculum with which they are engaged. From my experience, for autobiography to be effective, reflection must include a balance within the realms of cognitive, affective, spiritual and physical self. Grumet, Clandinin, Connelly and Goodson's (cited in Pinar et al., 1996) comments in the previous chapter, regarding the characteristics and attributes of autobiography for curriuculum, can be extrapolated as advantages for those seeking insight and balance in the four directions of the First Nations Medicine Wheel.

As also stated in the previous chapter and emphasized here, the challenges of achieving authentic voice in personal storytelling are complicated and difficult for many First Nations people due to the generations of colonialization and oppression which have become internalized and propagated from within individuals and entire communities. Reflective autobiography that leads to a holistic awareness of self affords the relief from fear that others may have greater insights about who we are than we possess ourselves.

Within the context of the Medicine Wheel, and in giving thanks for the gifts of the four directions, I ask that people be able to see and hear with understanding, to feel with compassion, to look within with courage, and to walk with conviction in a good way. If when turning to the West, the place where one looks within to the spiritual self, one does it of one's own volition; that is, if one makes oneself vulnerable by choice, one achieves freedom of the fear of being made vulnerable by others.

Chrisjohn et al., (1997) provide details and insights into both the historical and contemporary experiences of First Nations people and the manner in which they are being addressed. They show that making oneself vulnerable is seldom comfortable and is frequently hazardous if it is to be meaningful and productive. Material is presented in a compelling and evocative manner that does not allow the reader to avoid primary issues. Many of the situations addressed by Chrisjohn et al. are also addressed on both an individual and societal level by Paolo Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Together the two provide some insights into directions for meaningful change.

Chrisjohn et al., (1997) note that the circle, important in First Nations culture as a metaphor for "The sun; unity; wholeness; the change of seasons" (p.115), has become a merry-go-round that has made us dizzy, confused, and disoriented and we want to get off. The "standard account" of Residential Schools offered by mainstream society is that residential schools were "created out of the largess of the federal government and the missionary imperatives of the major churches as a means of bringing the advantages of Christian civilization to Aboriginal populations" (p.1). Unfortunately some First Nations individuals have had adjustment difficulties that need to be treated as a result of their

residential school experiences. The "irregular account" suggested by Chrisjohn et al. is that "Residential Schools were one of many attempts at the genocide of the Aboriginal Peoples inhabiting the territory now commonly called Canada" (ibid., p.3). The advocates of the standard account, in Chrisjohn et al.'s opinion, wish to engage in a quick fix before the underlying issues have been fully examined. The rush toward healing is tantamount to placing a band-aid on an abscessed wound that has not been fully cleansed. Of further concern is the fact that First Nations people themselves are being drawn into the standard account and, in doing so, avoid fully coming to terms with their painful past experience. This propagates malaise. Another factor that keeps the merry-go-round in a dizzy cycle is that representatives of institutions that perpetrated generations of harm are now directing how and when a mutual healing should take place. "[Is it not] more than a little odd that those who admit responsibility (to a limited degree to be sure) for a crime have assumed prominently and without challenge, the role of defining it, judging it, and passing sentence upon it?" (ibid., p.15). Individuals in educational settings become distressed if they find themselves being pushed to examine details of the standard account and find even the slightest foray into the irregular account content areas overwhelming.

That First Nations people have in many instances unwittingly come not only to accept but also to propagate the "standard account" can be explained within the context of the relationships that Paolo Freire (1970) describes between oppressor and oppressed. Along the way I will point out the degree to which Freire's observations assisted me in dealing holistically with my own biography and its impact upon the curriculum with which I am involved.

> The "fear of freedom" which afflicts the oppressed, a fear which may equally well lead them to desire the role of oppressor or blind them to the role of oppressed, should be examined. One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness. Thus, the behaviour of the oppressed is a prescribed behaviour, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor.... The oppressed having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. (p. 28).

In the oppressed First Nations person, Freire's fear of freedom leads that person to accept the "standard account" as presented by Chrisjohn et al.and to react negatively if shown alternatives or given information not congruent with that account. First Nations people have not only had their behaviour prescribed but for many generations have had their very identity proscribed by the various Indian Acts and subsequent amendments that have been exclusionary and divisive. Apart from a full range of pejorative references during my lifetime, the terms: Indian, Canadian Indian, Native Indian, Native Canadian, Aboriginal and First Nation have been applied. Today legal proscriptions are many: Status Indian, Non-status Indian, Metis, Inuit, Band Member, Bill C-31 Indian, Treaty Indian, Non-treaty Indian. Although more and more First Nations people identify themselves with regard to their tribal heritage, adherence to legally proscribed identity is still required for maintenance of legal entitlements.

In an earlier section I made reference to Duncan Campbell Scott's efforts as Director General of Indian Affairs to once and for all resolve the Indian population via aggressive assimilationist policies. Scott's attitudes and that of historians of the same era still have far too much currency today and continue to contribute to ongoing identity issues. Daniel Francis (1992) in *The Imaginary Indian* captures school textbooks' references to Indians at the turn of the century as "savage, dusky fiendish, wily or filthy. In Eastern Canada he (W. Clement) presents them as antagonistic to early European settlers, as an obstacle which had to be overcome before the colony could flourish" (p. 160).

Whether derided as *the drunken Indian living in squalor*, feared as the *noble savage/warrior*, or romanticized as *the archetypal environmentalist,* escaping the burden of proscribed identity is a difficult challenge. A friend and Elder from the Shuswap, Ernie Phillips, demonstrated that a sense of humour can help maintain a healthy balance regarding identity. While in a story telling mode, Ernie commented that, whenever asked what kind of Indian he is, the simple and straight forward response is that *he is a pretty good Indian.*

In the course of reflecting on my personal history over the past several years I have come to realize that my reaction to having my identity proscribed has been to take a cognitive approach in dealing with the outside world. While growing up, safety meant never fully engaging in community. More recently it has meant not being holistically engaged with curriculum. Since taking early retirement from the military in 1977 in order to work full-time with and on behalf of First Nations people, for a long period of time I was of the opinion that education of a solely intellectual focus was the means to a higher

quality of life for First Nations people. Whether I was presenting the "standard account" of events or the more volatile "irregular account." and although I invited active discussion, my overall aim was to present a curriculum so comprehensive, concise and accurate as to be indisputable, leaving no room for concerns of personal identity to arise.

During my military career I only had to look to the braid on my shoulders to determine who I was and to Queen's Orders and Regulations to determine appropriate behaviour. When I moved to Shuswap territory I was eager to determine how I should conduct myself as an adult Shuswap male; for example, what was the job description, what was the expected appropriate behaviour? A conundrum arose that is reminiscent of an R.D. Laing (1970) poem:

There is something I don't know

that I am supposed to know .

I don't know *what* it is I don't know,

and yet am supposed to know,

and I feel I look stupid

If I seem both to not know it

and not know *what* it is I don't know.

Therefore I pretend I know it.

This is nerve-racking

since I don't know what I must pretend to know .

Therefore I pretend to know everything. (p. 56)

From such a perspective, issues of authenticity, fear of seeming to appropriate others' experiences and questioning of personal judgement arise on a regular basis. The intellectual self is only one direction of the Medicine Wheel. My default position however has been to try to use the intellectual direction as a panacea in all things. "Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to be it must become. Its duration (in the Bergsonian meaning of the word) is found in the interplay of the opposites of permanence and change.The banking method emphasizes permanence and becomes reactionary" (Freire, 1970, p. 65). From a position of imbalance and lacking an awareness of personal biography and how I was holistically situated with the curriculum until recently, I have adhered to and pursued the false security and comfort of static, linear, cognitive absolute truths in presenting information--that is, *the banking system.*

Change took place when I began not only to talk about the four directions of the Medicine Wheel representing intellect, affect, spirit and body but also to experience it holistically and to engage students in a holistic talking circle process. Autobiography permitted, or rather provided, an avenue through which to engage with curriculum phenomenologically. "Van Manen observes that phenomenology comprehended intellectually differs from phenomenology understood "from the inside." (Pinar et al.,1996, p. 406)

Beginning to Feel at Home with Self

While I have been active with community organizations and in my home territory for the past two decades, as I have participated in traditional ceremony my community

role has taken on different and added dimensions. My position has changed from that of interested bystander to a more fully incorporated participant prepared to take personal risks. When my brother recently presented me with reproductions of school photographs of he and I at seven and nine years of age, my motivation towards personal biography was deeply influenced. In looking at the photographs for the first time in several decades there is no doubt that they are the pictures of two *qelmucw*, First Nations boys. I came to the realization that whatever sense of self I had 49 years ago, the world was seeing and relating to a First Nations boy. Later in life, despite well meaning but false reassurances from acquaintances, whether I was wearing jeans, a business suit, officer's uniform or academic gown, I was in essence a First Nations person in jeans, suit, uniform or academic robe.

I wish to identify myself as *qelmucw*, a Shuswap man, and as I am a Shuswap I should therefore know how to conduct myself. Unfortunately it is far from a simple matter, and I am rapidly back with R.D. Laing's conundrum, quoted earlier. The myriad government prescriptions provide little that affords a sense of authenticity. Daniel Francis (1992) in *The Imaginary Indian* articulates some of the popular, if not home grown images, that First Nations people have been and are expected to fulfill. While perhaps not home grown, many of the images have been integrated into the First Nations psyche. They range from Howdy Doody's Chief Thunderthud with his exclamations of " Kowa Bonga" to the contemporary masked militant dressed in camouflage gear and, in between, the spiritual environmentalist, the noble savage, the romantic Hollywood warrior, the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show Indian, the cigar store Indian, the instinctively artistic Indian, and of

course the drunken, slovenly, disreputable, unreliable Indian. Chrisjohn et al.(1997) indicate that society is more comfortable with the *standard account* of First Nations history than they are with the *alternative account.* Similarly society is more comfortable when dealing with First Nations people within the context of ***boutique multiculturalism***, of museums, art galleries and cultural events than within the context of political protests, land claims, debates over Aboriginal rights or social issues. Society is never comfortable in dealing with First Nations people who insist upon being related to on their own terms, in a manner outside the boundaries of prescribed or proscribed roles.

The stress of having fundamental elements such as identity and community membership controlled and dictated by external government bodies has led many First Nations people to be defensive and more inclined to be exclusive rather than inclusive in their interactions. In this regard we have become our own oppressors and are divided amongst ourselves. During my journey, I have experienced both the support of family, elders and traditonal teachers who have been welcoming and generative, and others who been elitist and exclusionary. As I have developed a more extensive relationship with extended family, I have come to understand and accept that I am a part of the stories. The family events of earlier generations, both positive and negative, are an authentic part of who I am and I have been a participant, not a spectator. While they are my father's stories, they are also my stories. Such insights have helped me to be less vulnerable to those who would be exclusionary in defining identity. "The oppressed feel an irresistible attraction towards the oppressors and their way of life....Self-deprecation is another characteristic of

the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them." (Freire, 1970, p. 44-45)

My understanding of traditional teachings is that prior to contact, the differentiation of self from community would be considered to be a false dichotomy. The individual was the community, the community was the individual. Patti Lather (1991) in *Getting Smart* indicates that among some, postmodern can be defined as ultramodern and among others, postmodern can be defined with respect to that which went before. In the postmodern world or ultramodern world, the focus upon materialism has become a focus upon the imagery of materialism, for example a world economy which is based on currency and commodity speculation. First Nations proscribed identity becomes reduced to Baudrillardian simulacra (1991, p.32), as nothing of authentic substance went before within the modernity unilaterally imposed upon First Nations people. The false consciousness which has resulted, I believe, can only be addressed through reflective autobiography that returns to the elements of traditional First Nations ontology, theology and epistemology as a point of departure.

Chapter two of the RCAP volume 3 (1996) addresses the issues facing the First Nations family and the impact of violence upon individuals, families and communities. The issues are exactly those that will be faced by educators, teachers and social workers to varying degrees with the First Nations people with whom they interact. Dealing with personal shame and anger and their various of manifestations has been and continues to be a significant component of the autobiographical work that I have undertaken. Unless it is

addressed, the shame leads to defensiveness which becomes manifested as violence in its many forms against those to whom we are closest, our children and our families.

> Our children are vastly affected by family violence even when they are not the direct victims. The cost to our children is hidden in their inability to be attentive in school, in feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem, and in acting out behaviour which may manifest itself in many ways, such as vandalism, self-abuse, bullying; and often these children suffer in silence....
>
> First, Aboriginal family violence is distinct in that it has invaded whole communities and cannot be considered a problem of a particular couple or an individual household. Second, the failure in family functioning can be traced in many cases to interventions of the state deliberately introduced to disrupt or displace the Aboriginal family. Third, violence within the Aboriginal communities is fostered and sustained by a racist social environment that promulgates demeaning stereotypes of Aboriginal women and men and seeks to diminish their value as human beings and their right to be treated with dignity.
>
> (RCAP, vol 3, 1996, pps. 54 & 57)

One only has to read the editorial pages to see that attitudes pertaining to First Nations people have not improved a great deal and that it does not take a great deal for earlier attitudes to return.

A reflective autobigraphical process is fundamental for all who would be involved with First Nations children and adults, either as educators or social workers. Whether they are aware of it or not , First Nations people of all ages are affected and influenced by the

experiences of relatives who have gone before them. The historical and contemporary attitudes and values within which the Canadian population relates to First Nation people can be ameliorated if they have an opportunity to come to a better understanding and appreciation of self as First Nation people.

Educators and social workers, First Nations and non-First Nations, are significant in their role as either facilitators or barriers to the achievement of holistic autobiographical awareness. As indicated previously, an ongoing personal autobiographical process is a professional responsibility towards developing an inclusive, safe environment. In sharing personal excerpts of personal biography, I have shown the influence of historical events upon First Nations professionals. Non-First Nations professionals also need to situate themselves with both *the standard account* and *the alternative account* even though they may believe there is no responsbility for historical events. Just as First Nations people unwittingly carry the burden of generations of colonialism and marginalization, others may not be fully aware of the extent to which their privileged position in Canadian society is based upon the same historical events. Having had the courage to look within and deal holistically with what is found there, educators and social workers will be better situated to accept themselves as human beings and to relate openly and honestly with those with whom they interact. Just as self-disclosure must be in the best interests of the client, I do not believe that autobiography needs to declarative to be effective.

Previously, in addressing controversial and evocative elements of First Nations history and contemporary social issues, I have felt obliged to impress upon the students and have them accept the import of the content. As I have become more aware and

accepting of my place with respect to the curriculum, my personal vested interest and concern that all students accept the curriculum has been reduced. An increased sense of personal authenticity derived from biography has left me less vulnerable to external validation and, I believe, has contributed to a more open and safer environment in which to address evocative issues. This is a process that requires ongoing monitoring to maintain a healthy balance of internal and external validation. Paolo Freire's (1970) cautions apply in this regard: "The fear of freedom is greater still in professionals who have to yet discover for themselves the invasive nature of their action, and who are told that their action is dehumanizing" (p.137). The role of educators is to provide a safe environment and to convey the importance of autobiography as well as the fundamental influence the individual has upon the educational or social work experience.

With respect to the work of theorists, as well as from personal and professional experience, I have endeavoured to demonstrate the benefits of autobiographical reflection for educators and social workers, particularly for those engaged in cross-cultural practice. To look within with courage, and to accept what one finds, is not without cost or risk and should not be undertaken lightly. The historical precis presented in this paper represents the legacy not only of all First Nations people but of all society and cannot by ignored if meaningful change is to occur. Excerpts of personal biography have been forwarded to demonstrate the confusion, shame, anger and other responses that many people of First Nations ancestry experience in attempting to find authenticity of place and self. Autobiography as an ongoing process has enabled me situate myself cognitively, affectively, spiritually and physically with regard to the First Nations Social Issues

curriculum with which I have been involved and in doing so has enabled a more balanced and open environment for students. Future work will involve encouraging students to engage in a similar process in holistically situating themselves with regard to both the historical and contemporary circumstances of First Nations people. Such a process will enable a more meaningful relationship with First Nations students and clients.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The Participants

The six men who came forward to tell their story for this thesis were among a core group of 24 participants of the *Warriors Against Violence* talking circle in which I was a participant observer for a period of fourteen weeks. In the summer of 2000, the *Warriors Against Violence* program administration offered me a research grant to conduct a program evaluation to determine the relevance, applicability and potential benefit of engaging First Nations youth in a similar program initiative to prevent and ameliorate violence. The invitation to undertake such a research project was most propitious as through my doctoral studies and my work at the UBC School of Social Work, I had been seeking culturally congruent intervention methods to address a range of social issues, and in particular, the high rates of violent behaviour in First Nations communities. As well, with colleagues of the Wunska, First Nations Social Work Educators Network, I had been active in seeking respectful ways of conducting community based research with First Nations individuals and groups.

In response to the request by the *Warriors Against Violence* to conduct a program evaluation, I suggested that it be conducted based upon a participant observer information gathering process rather than by what might be considered more conventional means. I believed that participation in the full program, which consists of meeting for two to two and half hour sessions twice a week, over a fourteen week period would provide valuable

insights into the program which could not otherwise be gained. The twenty-eight evening sessions I attended were complemented with participation in half a dozen sweatlodge ceremonies that the *Warriors Against Violence* coordinators conduct each Saturday morning. In return the *Warriors Against Violence* Program gave permission for information gained to be used for my academic purposes. I was also given permission to recruit volunteers from amongst the participants. Participation in the fourteen week group program contributed to the rapport which was established with the six volunteers in the subsequent interviews.

The case study respondents range in age from 25 to 45 years. Two are from prairie First Nations communities, the other four are from the south, central and northern coast of British Columbia. Formal education for one of the participants was discontinued prior to completion of elementary school due to the racial discrimination experienced after he moved from a reserve day-school to a school in the adjacent town. Two had completed high school and gone on to post-secondary education; one became a surveyor, while the other is still working towards credentials as a Certified General Accountant. All participants had been or were involved in some form of educational upgrading and/or lifeskills training programs.

Dennis attended the Port Alberni Residential School for five years and also spent several years at St Mary's Mission. He was also aware that his parents and grandparents had attended residential schools on the coast. Tom, who grew up with only limited contact with his mother, was not aware of any family members having attended residential school. Three of the men were aware of having at least one parent and some grandparents having

attended residential schools. Don indicated that his maternal grandparents had adopted an itinerant life style in order to avoid having to send children to residential school on the prairies. He was aware that members of his mother's extended family had been required to attend residential school. Edward was in foster care from the time of birth and met his birth mother as a young adult. As a young boy, Shawn witnessed his father physically abuse his mother while they were living on reserve and in Vancouver. Darren's earliest memories of his family home is that it was a war zone.

During their lifetime, each participant has had to deal with anger related to drug and alcohol abuse and violent behaviour, the manifestations of which led to conflict with the police and criminal justice system, in some, but not all instances. Each has been involved with the *Warriors Against Violence* for at least a year and all are taking the difficult steps to bring balance to their lives. It is both a privilege and a challenge to be entrusted with their stories in order to work toward healthy change for individuals and in our communities. Five participants said that they wished to have their story told openly and without anonymity as they felt that a great deal of harm had been done due to secrecy and the withholding of information. As difficult as it might be, to tell their story in an open manner was an important part of their own healing journey, as expressed by Dennis:

> I didn't ask for confidentiality, so no confidentiality, anyone can read this, I want to be open with what I am talking. You know, this is about the First Nations men with their anger and violence. Why bother hiding it, when everybody, the people that you have hurt, why not make amends to them. This is what they say at A.A., and N.A. and to do that, is to be open with what you are dealing with .

A brief biography prefaces each story in order to personalize the stories courageously shared for this study. The excerpts presented are in the words of each man, in the sequence spoken. With minimal editing to maintain fidelity to the speakers, selected portions of the approximately two hundred pages of transcriptions are presented to illustrate the themes that emerged. In the following text, comments made by the interviewer are italicized.

Edward:

Edward, the oldest of the six, and a member of a midcoast community, grew up in a family group foster home in the Lower Mainland after being placed into care at birth by his birth mother. Edward left school at the first opportunity due to a lack of interest and experiences of racial discrimination within the school. He felt his foster parents supported him in his First Nations identity. He cultivated a defiant manner expressed as, "When you are a D----- you've got to think tough," that enabled him to hold his own with numerous foster brothers and sisters, but it also resulted in altercations at school with students and staff and contributed to a hostile relationship with his foster mother.

Having travelled widely across North America, Edward has worked in the fishing industry, with race horses, in the trucking industry, and for twenty years as a self-taught cook in major hotels in the United States. He acknowledges an earlier eight year long common-law relationship which terminated due to chronic alcohol related mutual physical abuse. His former partner later spent time in jail for stabbing a man she met following their breakup.

Edward has maintained regular contact with his birth mother since he first made contact with her in their home community about twenty years ago. He and his wife, together for seven years, have two children aged four and two and a half years. The children have been in care for a period approaching two years, during which time Edward and his partner have been enrolled in a series of parenting skills courses and he in anger management programs.

Edward's Story

My mom gave me up.

She wasn't treated well by her parents. She was like a scapegoat for anything that went wrong it the family; it was my mom's fault. She'd get beaten for just about anything

She didn't want that to be put on me, so she gave me up....Fostered.

Yeah. first time I went to see her (birth mother) was about 17 years ago. I went up and then we just went up. Two years ago again to bring her granddaughter up to see her. It's a nice boat ride up there you know.

Have you had any contact with your birth father?

No, he's dead.

Actually, it's been a sore spot in my life since I've found things out. I am the result of a rape. I had no idea who my dad was, but you know, 17 years ago, when I went up there the first time in Bella Bella, I was brought into his family at a gathering. We were having a party and I had no idea that this was my dad's family. Out of the blue I was asked, what would you do if your dad came walking into the room? I'd probably smack him. Just due

to the fact that I was the result of a rape....I got to know my uncles from his side of the family.

Yeah , my mother (went to St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay).

No, but some of her aunts said that my mom was really intelligent and how she got into the residential school and it seems that she just withdrew.

And you grew up in one foster home.

Yeah, in Richmond (on a three acre farm). I had a good upbringing. I never wanted for anything.

Yeah, they had seven kids of their own, and they took eight of us in. They were an emergency home for other children. My mom counted 600 kids walked through their doors that were just emergencies. It seems like dad was more for the foster kids and mom was more for her children, I guess for herself. She had seven children.

Yeah. Growing up as kids, my dad wouldn't allow social workers around. He told them no everything is fine, stay away. I think he had no use for it. He figured he had us kids and he was raising us. We never wanted for anything.

Yeah, with growing up, we just never seen a social worker as a child. Probably at 16, 17 years old and that. The guy that my dad got his training for was dating a social worker. That was the extent of that.

I got along pretty good. There was quite a bit of scrapping but that really wasn't because of being Native, that was because of being a D-----. My foster family was the D-----s. Because I was from a D---- family my older brothers and sisters they were always fighting

and I was forced to carry on the tradition. When you are a D----, you've got to think tough.

At first I thought I was from Bella Coola. That was grade five, I guess....That's when I asked exactly where I was from, because during our Canadian History class, when the teacher talked about the Canadian Native, she's always stand beside me and explain to the class about being Indian. I didn't like that....I felt ashamed and it made me feel funny that I was the only Indian in school and when she stood beside me, I guess I felt that she was picking on me. One week, we were on the subject for three days and she was standing beside me the whole time and finally I just got up and said look I don't want you to stand beside me. I said there are other kids in the class, why don't you stand beside them. I actually got strapped for that ....She wouldn't move. She kept standing there and yelling and screaming.

School, me and the teachers just weren't on the same page cause again there were my older brothers and sisters. Some of them were really good in school and the ones that weren't were always in trouble....then I quit junior high school in Richmond. My mom and dad were really pushing for me to complete school and they enrolled me in Vancouver Tech and I went there. I had already got used to making nine dollars an hour....I worked with my dad for a while at the track with the horses and they got me a private tutor that I'd go see him a few times a week after working at the track...He wasn't teaching me

anything new. It was after only two hours working he would say let's go out and he proceeded to light up a joint....I told my dad that it was a waste of time.

I have been cooking off and on for 20, 23 years.... I cooked for Howard Johnson's Hotel down there. Then in Chicago, I cooked for the Arlington Hilton in New York.

Where did you do your training?

In an old greasy spoon in Chicago. The cook was retiring after 15 years and I just happened to ask the owners. I said, well, I figured I could do that if they would let me give it a try and from there it just continued.

What got you down to the states?

I started working with the circus, actually, when I was 21. I was actually at home for a bit and then the circus came to town and me and my (foster) mom throughout our life we had times when we just could not get along. Anything she could try and do for me was wrong in my view and anything that I was doing was wrong. She actually told me that. She came into my room one day and said, well the circus is in town and looking for people to work with the horses. I think you should go. I was gone. I went there and they hired me right away....

Yeah, but it got to be OK for me, because it taught me how to drive the semi-truck, and I got to drive. Other than that, you sat in the back with the horses.

Did they worry about licences?

No, they just taught me and I drove it.

Yeah, my ex just before Nikki. It wasn't a healthy relationship at all. She was a really heavy drinker....I was on the other end of the spectrum of spousal assaults...my leg was in a full length cast at the time. She busted a coffee pot and she was trying to slash my face with it and I gave her a backhand....The cops ended up coming. She'd cut herself with the pot when she was trying to cut me up with it and I ended up getting charged with bodily assault....Yeah, and when I struck back, I got charged. Actually, that relationship ended within a few months after that happened. My ex ended up in jail for stabbing the guy she was going out with after me.

No, I had to see a parole officer and I did anger management and I went to Helping Spirit Lodge.... Yeah, it did. Not so much angry I was mostly disappointment.Then when I was at Helping Spirit, my first time there the guy that was running the show, the counsellor, he took me aside and said I am going to make you cry and you are going to understand that you are one of the worst woman abusers that there is. I said what did you say? He told me you're just like everyone in this group. You're all the same from what I see. And I told him that's where you're wrong right now. And I told him that I wasn't going to come to this program if that was going to be his attitude, that we were all the same.That I'm here and that throws me in the same category, that I'm a woman beater. I said I'm not, I told him that I gave her a backhand because she was trying to stab me with a coffee pot. That doesn't make me like everyone else in this room. It doesn't....I am not sure that I was ashamed, I was definitely hurt....No, He just said that was the way they conducted things. I thought that to throw us all in together as one like he was, was wrong right there because we're not all the same.

Two years ago on my birthday, and I ended getting pretty loaded. Nikki was down at Lion's Bay at her mom and dad's house with our son. I had my daughter up in Bella Bella. When I was out, they took my uncle and I actually talked to him. He wanted to talk me into going out. He said it's your birthday we have to go out and have a few drinks....Umm I don't know, when I drink, I can control myself with beer, whereas with the hard stuff, I can't. But, yeah, so I ended up after we got into a 26'r of rum... Somehow or another I ended up fighting with my other uncle that showed up there.... My daughter was crying she was having a bit of a temper tantrum (Edward decribed how he would clap his hands to get his daughter's attention when she was misbehaving)..She(aunt) thought that I was spanking her excessively, it was just like that (clapping hands). One time I gave her a pop on the diaper and she just basically covered her bum and laughed at me. There is never a reason, it's never acceptable to spank a child.

....After I had the scrap with my uncle... they arrested me for assaulting my daughter. And then, nothing ever came of it. They took my daughter to the doctors, and the doctors looked her over and he said there's definitely no signs, and no emotional factors associated with her being physically abused.....I had, we have never been to court. No. Myself I had never been. It kinda seems strange because just on that alone we should have gotten the kids back. Then they keep attacking Nikki and questioned our capability of raising the children....But also with the postpartum issue, post partum depression there are moms that hurt their babies but with Nikki that was never the issue.

Social workers are, it hasn't been one time, when this relationship with a worker, who's now our teamleader, A-----. There hasn't been one time when I've felt comfortable with this worker....She's just downright unwilling, and she was just there for herself....I was halfway, three quarters way through the alcohol assessment and there she is telling me it's not good enough. And then I said well what do you mean, I have got to finish it. To me, I get the feeling that because I'm First Nations, that I'm wrong. She has her idea of what parenting is and what a father is, and I don't match. This is my third parenting program. I had two drug and alcohol assessments and they both came back that I'm not dependent on alcohol, I am not dependent on drugs. We did a urinalysis. They all came back negative.... She said I don't care who you talked to, I am your worker and I'll do how I please. The very first thing she did when she came back from holiday was she stripped our weekend visits away...It's just with A-----, nothing we do is good. We had First Nations here supervising our visits for two to three months, and the reports we're getting back is all good for the parents, and how we love the children and how they love us, and how they don't really have to do anything, and they don't have to correct us or anything....

I have taken this *Warriors Against Violence*. The reasoning is because I raised my voice to A-----, to the worker, she's continually saying how violent I am. I don't yell and scream at her. I don't smash things in front of her. I don't swear at her. I don't know why she's taking our kids away. I said why are you taking our visits away? I say why are you taking our kids away? What more can we do for you? That's how high my voice gets. she says that it's because I'm full of anger.... I raised my voice to an adult....

They put five days aside and A----- and their lawyers approached our lawyers and they said look we're going to move the kids to Surrey, we'll move the case to Surrey if we would agree to back out of court. That's what we've been trying to do all along, because never once have we been treated fairly by A-----. Never once, and we actually thought we could win...So, we backed out of the court date with an understanding that the kids would move to Surrey so that we could have greater access and more access. Two months went by and the kids were not moved. In another half month they got moved. But they didn't get moved closer....they got moved to Fort Langley,which is further and harder to get to.

Tom

Tom grew up with his father and brothers in small shack on a prarie reserve. He had very little contact with his mother,who left due to alcohol related violence at the hands of his father. The youngest member of his family, Tom as a pre-schooler was physically and sexually abused by a brother. As a child he witnessed a good deal of violent behaviour, usually in conjunction with drinking.

At the age of seven Tom was introduced to drinking by his older brothers, after which time he went on to sniff nail polish. Sniffing solvents and marijuana use continued for a long period of time into adulthood. Tom left school as a pre-teen due to the racial discrimination that he experienced in the public school system. As a child and adolescent he engaged in petty theft and spent time in a juvenile corrections centre. As an adult he worked as a labourer and continued to drink extensively and has been charged and

convicted a number of times for spousal assault, common assault and driving offenses that were all alcohol or drug related.

Tom has three adult children and two grandchildren from a first marriage that lasted for 15 years. The marriage broke up, he acknowledges, due to his abusive behaviour and his drug and alcohol abuse. He and his second partner, together for 10 years, have two children, four and nine years of age. Tom and his wife came to the coast to escape an increasingly violent and gang related lifestyle on the prairies. He has been engaged in lifeskills programs and educational upgrading in order to take vocational training and has been involved in anger management programs for approximately one year.

Tom's Story

What was your home life like when you were growing up?

Very sad, I was brought up in a little shack, eight by ten shack, me and my dad lived there and my brother Leslie was about 14 years old I guess. I lived in that shack for about four years....

No, my mother was gone, she was living somewhere else. I don't know where she was. She left us when I was about two years old, when I was about a year and a half, I guess...something like that. My baby sister was just about three or four months old when my mother left.....She came back to the reserve a couple of times. I was a little guy, I remember she come back. I was about five or six years old, but she only stayed for about one or two nights....I uh, I was glad that she was home. Well she wasn't right at home, but she was over at my brother's place. She wouldn't have nothing to do with my father, eh.

My brother's house was built in the community. We lived quite a ways from the community.

All I remember was that she came back that one night and then I was happy to be with her, but when I woke up, she was gone again. She'd left. I was very sad and I cried....

They used to drink home brew a lot. She told me later. I was an adult when she came back and I'd always side for my dad, cause I blamed her for leaving us and telling her that you know she wasn't any good, that if it wasn't for dad, I don't know, maybe I'd be dead because I'd starve or something. Then she'd tell me, well, "your dad used to pull me around by the hair" I couldn't believe that about my father....There's only about twice that I'd seen my dad mad. I was crying for my mother....he said something in our language, but I think it meant your mother's no good.

He (father) worked on a mink ranch....They used to pay him three dollars a day.....I used to go down there, and go see my dad down there, cause I'd get money off them, eh. Sometimes, like a quarter and buy a bag of chips and soft drink.....Anyway, when I go down there, there's a bunch of turkeys down there about 200 turkeys, maybe more. The turkeys used to land on my back, used to attack me, eh, because I was small. I'd cry and then my dad would kinda get mad at me and tell me not to be afraid of them. I was terrified of them.

I started drinking when I was about seven years old I guess, seven or eight years old. My brothers (introduced me to drinking), I watched my brothers and then I'd steal it from under their bed or else in their car....That was just beer. But wine, too, sometimes. They'd go to the bootlegger at about one or two o'clock in the morning and then I'd go for a ride

with them late at night and stay up all night drinking. That was pretty rough....Oh yeah, the happiness was there for a little while, a few hours and then they'd start fighting. I'd get terrified. I used to say to myself I wouldn't be that way, but I ended up turning out that way. I didn't like to abuse people, but I didn't even know that that was abuse, until just lately.

I stayed at the school at the reserve till about grade five, I guess. Then they sent us to Selkirk , Manitoba. And there it was prejudice. The students the white kids would tease us....

I only went to school, think about three weeks and then I'd start skipping out and walking around Selkirk. I used to sniff nail polish remover. I was sniffing besides drinking.

You were about 11 or 12.

Yeah, something like that. I was sniffing nail polish remover. I used to sniff gas and all that hanging around the reserve, eh. I was so bored. I guess it was boring. But then, I seen this other guy named Reggie. He was an adult, sniffing gas and uh, seen him laughing all the time, so I thought I'd try it. Got really high on it, but it has really scary effects, too. After a while, I tried that nail polish remover, it was more calmer, you didn't stink as much. The gasoline really took effect, and then I started breaking into places too. On the reserve, they had these couple of stores down there. The band office had this little place where candies and soft drinks wers sold... so we broke in there late at night....

The cops were asking around, but I never got caught in there. I broke into the store down the river. I got caught for that because one of the guys that was with us told on us. So they thought the main guy was me because I was leading those other people, I guess.

They were older than I am, but I don't know, I was more daring, I guess and we felt it felt good to us to be chased. I guess because we found it boring on the reserve, but when the cops were after us, we felt important, but we didn't know that what we were doing was wrong. We got sent to Vaughan Street. There's more bullies in there. I didn't know that. There were bigger boys in there that were bigger than me, and I got pushed around a lot and I got beat up and I cried....Just the probational officer, that's all I had, was the probational officer. But that was later, I didn't have probation right away, anyway. They had one woman there trying to teach us about school and that, but I don't remember too much, and I wasn't really into school and that anyway, so I just kept quiet and shied away from everything, eh. All I would do is watch TV. I was even planning to break out of there. I didn't know where I was, anyway....And they took me back to Selkirk to go to court and I went through court and I got out. But soon as I got out, I shoplifted nail polish remover again. And I started sniffing at it again. I wasn't even out of custody for a full hour and I was right back into doing wrong.

They were working for garbage company....I lived at my brother's place and then they got me a job there....I was only 14 years old, but I was big for my age....We were getting $92 a week....But I would drink it up. I was sitting in a bar when I was 14 years old and that hotel was very close to where we worked....They didn't question me about ID, that's what I was doing, I was sitting in bars at 14 years old....

Yeah, I was running around with a woman, I mean a girl. She was 14 years old. I got three kids with her. I got two adult boys and one adult daughter and I got two grandchildren. A five year old grandson I never seen....I talk to the mother once about

every three years. I just ask her how she's doing and how the children are doing. She tells me about it.

How long were you together?

Since I was 14 years old 'til I was about .....aaaahh, I'm not too sure now, about 15 years or so....She didn't want me to drink and I just kept drinking. I was running around on her because of the alcohol, cause she didn't want to drink that much and I don't know, I was just too wild. I didn't grow up the right way. I didn't know the responsibilities of being a parent....I kept losing my job because of the alcohol....I went to jail when I was about 21 or 22 for assault....and every fall time, I would end up in jail because of the problem I had....Most of my assault charges was on women. But it was always the alcohol too. I didn't know how to control myself drinking alcohol. I was scared to go back to jail. I knew the gangs were in there, so that's why I left the province.

He (older brother) abused me when I was five years old. My dad was working at the mink ranch and he sexually abused me when I was sleeping. In the rear, and I felt really hurt by that, because I trusted my brother and I loved my brothers. I still love my brothers. It doesn't hurt to talk about it anymore, but it used to hurt to talk about it....All the secrets they have, they keep them. They never tell me. The only one I communicate with right now is G-----.When I was 14 years old, I beat up L----- real bad because I remembered what he did to me. I was five years old and was sexually abused.G----- asked me why are you doing that to your brother? But I never answered him, I just held it back because I felt ashamed. I felt ashamed for all that stuff I was carrying around....And I didn't say nothing about it, but when I'd get drunk, I'd beat'em up. I'd beat'em up when I get drunk. I'd

attack'em again and I'd fight'em, I'd beat'em up. I wasn't telling them I didn't like that what he was doing to those other kids. In my way, I thought I was doing good by coming to their rescue by beating him up. But I wasn't, I wasn't really. All I was doing was making that cycle of abuse go around and round. And I didn't know any other way. But in July of this year... I told him I'm sorry for all the stuff I did....I said I forgive you for what you did to me. I said you didn't know any better.

It must have been very hard to do.

It was, but it feels better to let that go. I gotta let that go. I don't wanna do that anymore. To hate my brothers....I don't want to be that kinda person that I've been doing all my life, that's hurting people and holding grudges. So I gotta let that go.....*The Warriors Against Violence*, that was exactly what I was looking for. That spirituality was what I was looking for. I feel really great when I go to those meetings and then I leave from there. I go to the lodge (sweatlodge). I feel great, to release a lot of that stuff I carry. It's good to talk to other men....

Four and half years ago, they (social assistance workers) ave me a really hard time when I first got out here....The only reason that they helped us was because we had two kids....we had that one check we cashed and I got food out of that....My friend helped me, we'd seen a mattress down in the back lane and we carried that ....from the garbage....We slept on that, too....some of that stuff stink.

For nine years, I had been waiting for her to quit drinking and she had a problem and then in April, my son was telling her that he didn't want her to be drinking anymore. She got angry at my son and then I got angry at her and then I got violent, and I didn't take a time

out, and I swung a stick at her, and then she put up her hand and it hit her on the thumb...I got charged for that....I got thrown in jail overnight and then the kids were taken away, the Children's Aid took the kids, but I told the cops to tell the Children's Aid to take the kids until I could at least get this straightened out, because I had to bring this out in the open...I went by the wrong way by assaulting her, I know, but I had to get through to her, I guess...

Anyways, the kids were taken away for thirteen days, but the worker was really nice....we went to see her and she agreed to let us see our kids a couple of days later....The kids were really sad, they wanted to come home....I felt so, really lost without my children and I could understand the way they feel, because I felt that way when I was a kid and my mom was gone. But what really opened me up was when the Children's Aid took the kids. That's when I really opened up and really seen how important that is to let that drug and alcohol go, to not hurt the children. I had to let that go. I don't want that stuff anymore, that alcohol or drugs in our household.....The Ministry for Children and Families are there for a reason. I believe that. They are there to help children. Some people look at them in a different way.

I went to the First Nations Life Skills program....I feel there's abuse there because they swear, they use swear words there....The life skills counsellor does that, and I asked him why they do that and they said that it's more effective....I don't feel comfortable around that because as a kid to hear my brothers swear and call down their wives terrified me, and I still feel that way sometimes when those words are used....I don't feel right when there's swear words around....When I go to the lodge then sometimes it gets hot, yeah , but that's

OK, because part of that suffering is good and when I walk away from the lodge, I feel good and like a new person....

In a follow-up interview Tom says he continues to be haunted by the images of two tragedies he witnessed as a young child: a house fire and a vehicle accident, separate incidents in which he witnessed numerous people killed and dying.

Dennis

Born in a midcoast community, Dennis was raised by his grandparents and as the favourite grandson he feels he was indulged as a young child, although he also says he experienced abuse at an early age. At age five he was taken to the Port Alberni Indian Residential School where the abuse continued and escalated. He is aware that both his parents and his grandparents went to residential schools on the coast. Dennis feels this may in part explain the fact that his grandfather, while indulgent at times, was also a violent alcoholic.

After leaving residential school at the age of 16, Dennis worked in logging, fishing and more recently in the drug trade and the sex trade. Dennis is the father of five children with five different mothers and is the grandfather of three. He has contact with some of his children and is quite isolated from others. He and his partner have been together for 10 years and have a son aged seven who is currently in care partly as a consequence of drug trafficking charges. For the past several years Dennis and his partner have been attending parenting skill programs, drug and alcohol treatment programs, and programs to deal with anger and violence, and meeting with childcare workers on a regular basis in order to

regain custody of their son. Dennis has also been attending treatment programs to assist him in coping with the years of abuse he experienced while he was a residential school student.

Dennis' Story

I was brought up by my grandparents from the age of 18 months. Until I went to the residential school I was on reserve in Bella Bella. My grandfather had a pool room and a convenience store and did some fishing. I always went out fishing with him as long as I can remember...

My father went to St. Michael's and my mother went to Port Alberni.

They (grandparents) both went to St. Michael's....No, all I was told was, if they didn't sent us to residential school, because there were consequences associated with it. They never spoke about their experiences with it.

My mother was both into alcohol and drugs. My father was a really heavy alcoholic.

But with my grandparents there was violence because my grandfather was a heavy alcoholic...He would come after us if we did something wrong. If we listened to him we would never get a spanking. He never intended to hurt any of us, cause he loved all us grandchildren.

I was the favoured one because of the fact that my mom and dad were together....When I turned four, that's when he taught me how to play pool.... Here I was sitting between two of them there smoking a cigarette.

How old were you when you went to Port Alberni?

Before my fifth birthday.

They forced us to eat what we didn't want to eat... Everything that was on the plate, we had to finish it. I, you know, never liked their food, anyway they made us eat it. Before we were sent there, we ate better. I could eat rice everyday if I wanted, you know, rice, salmon, seaweed, a healthy diet.

I had to fend for myself when I was in residence. If not, I wouldn't have survived...with other kids we had to fend for ourselves.

The sexual assaults that happened to me there started the second year I was there...The other students, the senior girls. That went on for about three years. And you know the last two years I was there it started with the judo instructor....he never showed up in any of the application forms and his name, I can't even remember. It's blanked out, nothing, all I can remember is he was the judo instructor.

That year I got kicked out of Port Alberni for slapping a kid because they were accusing me about my hearing...They used to slap me on my ear and it made a pinpoint hole in my eardrum.... Apparently that happened to my mom when she was there....

(I was) About ten years old. I was kicked out. In the report they sent it out to all public schools in Port Alberni not to accept me into the school because of what I did .

The other abuse that I went through there (Port Alberni) was with J.A. Andrews. So every Saturday, my grandparents used to give me money to go shopping, and when I'd come back, I'd be called right to the office and every Saturday I would get the strap on my hand. Big whip it was a big harness it was about that thick, that wide and that long. That was by the principal.

I ended up with her and I was her first boyfriend. She's two years older than me. When I was 16 or 17 I had to get permission from my parents to get married....they said no....we never really connected again.

He (son) will be 26 in July....I have talked with him, but he's got anger towards his mom and me not bringing him up. And his mom tried to tell him you know we weren't taught any parenting in the residential school. It's like what happened too with me. I stayed with my mom 'til so long and then with my grandparents. It was the same with him.

It upsets me. With what happened to me. I turned to alcohol and drugs,. You know my oldest son has anger towards me. My 23 year old daughter, don't even talk to, my 21 year old son says he has no anger towards me, but you know...you know when he was four years old, his mom asked me to take him and I had him for 14 months and I phoned the Ministry back and told them it was in his best interest, or I would have hurt him really bad and I didn't want to do that, so I gave him back up to the Ministry, I was too heavy into the alcohol and drugs....Well, I never really got into contact with any of social workers until... I never met any, until my son at 21 years old.... I never really got to know her (social worker). I just talked to her over the phone and only met with her once or twice. The way I'd seen her, 14 months that I had my son, there were no problems.

So your children are?

26, 23, 21, 17 and youngest one is 6, she's with the Ministry. I might have another one older than the 26 year old. I'm not sure....They are from different mothers. My 23 year old

daughter, her mother died of an overdose...My oldest is an alcoholic. I don't know about my oldest daughter. My 21 year old is an alcoholic and a drug addict. My 17 year old daughter, she lives in Nanaimo, she should be 18 now, her mom is an alcoholic.

Warriors Against Violence, I've been taking this program for the last two years and this is my fifth program with them. The first two programs, I really couldn't understand why. I guess the reason why it wasn't going through me was because I was active in the drugs. I've never been to the sweats with the Warriors.... I've gone to a pipe ceremony in Sahltenalem...

Yes, it's very powerful there. Then in '86, '87, I went to a sweatlodge I was in a drum group, but this was a back east culture....I never really found out about my culture until just the last three to four years and I never realized how ours was towards theirs it's similar....So I took the drum into the sweat lodge and I never knew how powerful it was with the grandfathers and the grandmothers they are speaking to you and you are in the womb of mother earth.

Yes, my 21 year old son, when we used to drink, we always used to fight. He took a broken glass to my face in the bar and gave me a scar over here.

No. when I was young and stupid, I used to rob people and never got caught... I was a kid on the rampage....

Both of us had a habit that was expensive. We'd spend our rent cheque all the time. We always managed to get our financial aid worker to pay our rent. We'd give her a story

that it was stolen or lost....I have never found anything bad about them (social workers).... Some have tried to get us to do what we did not want to do. Like go to parenting things. I know we weren't good parents, well me at least....With both of us going to parenting we had to go, even if we didn't want to go, we still had to go....It was like a court order, so without that, there would have been no other way to get our son back. We didn't pursue what they wanted us to, so they took the full rights of having unsupervised visits with our son. In other words everything was copacetic, we tried to do it their way, but I guess you know what they say about the power of drugs and alcohol, it takes over your life, just like that.

It has become me. Even if I wasn't ordered by a judge to go to treatment, I would have done it myself.

What made you get to that frame of mind?

Our son, my son, you know, my wife's and my son. It's hard, even if we didn't have the parenting school, I think he would have been more of an inspiration to us....Now that we're both cleaned up, we're doing our darndest to stay clean and sober for him....It used to hurt him every time he'd seen us when we had been visiting with him. He'd start crying because he had to go back to the foster home. Then, when he got used to us, he'd just say we'll see you next week. What my wife and I are trying to do is we're keeping base with the social worker.

I was charged with trafficking in '98 and '99 selling to an undercover cop...but the worst charge I ever had was sexual assault on a young girl. It was back in '90, '91. The stories they told and the report they gave the RCMP didn't match the story when they took the stand....they came back and they found me not guilty...I'm on three years probation and the programs I go to. I have to attend them and I have to report to my PO once a month....Once a month, you know, not even five minutes. Just check-in and she gives me another appointment for the next month.

At the time of the study Dennis had been involved in court action against the government and the Port Alberni Residential School and he made some remarks about that process.

What we're going through, everything's mostly done, it's just that I have to see the government and the church's lawyers again, or their representatives for another discovery. I did the first one and then I went to the vocational consultant, and I've got to see...my lawyers, want me to see a psychologist for our case. Everything's going well. I'm seeing a trauma counsellor. I see her once every two weeks. I used to see her every week but since I've been doing alright with the lawyers.... Just what I talk about. It's not mostly of the school anymore because I got most of that out already. But what goes on with my personal life and with my partner....I wish my grandmother was still alive to see this, but she's listening to me now. I wish I could have said it to her before she went off. Everythings fine....

Dennis described some of the difficulties he had giving testimony as follows:

While giving testimony in court against the United Church and Arthur Plint, he was overcome with anger as he recalled the abuse to which he was subjected as child. The

violent feelings were expressed in a healthy manner; at the time, however, Dennis was aware that the two counsellors who were there to support him seemed to be shocked by his story told in court, and were afraid of his expresssion of anger. He said he was glad that his wife was not there to witness his anger as she would have been afraid of him. He was also concerned about the effect his expression of anger would have on the two counsellors who were present.

Dennis said he and his wife are on Income Assistance and their social worker and financial aid worker are aware of the stress they are under in attempting to maintain a clean and sober life style while also dealing with the stresses of court actions related to residential school sexual abuse. Despite having to attend regular meetings with lawyers and trauma counsellors at offices some distance apart they have been refused bus passes.

Dennis continues:

You know if I could talk to them (his children) sit down and talk to them for a good hour or so. I'll say that over again ...sit down and talk to them for a good hour or so and explain to them what I went through and you know, they're products of the residential school and feeling effects of what I went through.... and explain the reasons why we weren't together as a family when they were born....the one over here, he's the one that encouraged me to get into a treatment centre. Now that I've done that, he's into the alcohol and drugs.

One day at a time. I want to get this court case over with before I start pursuing a long-term goal. With everything I'm doing now, it's just in the short term....Besides doing that,

I was thinking of going to a business school for a business degree/course for an art gallery. That's what I want to open up when I get my settlement.

Don

Following a confused and sometimes turbulent childhood, Don has learned to be proud of his Cree/Metis/African background and his family's prairie heritage. Don grew up in East Vancouver with his mother and two sisters until the age of seven. At seven he was taken into care by police and social workers after witnessing his mother being physically beaten by a man with whom she was drinking in their home. Don and his sisters were split up into separate foster homes, never to return to either their mother or father, who sought to regain custody for many years.

Don became convinced he was a bad kid because foster home placements never worked out, as shown by his remark, "I went to five different homes between 7 and 13 years ....And I didn't understand why." His anger and frustration led to aggressive behaviour as a child, and violent alcohol related fights that brought him into conflict with police as an adolescent. He has experienced frustration with social workers who he felt abandoned his sisters to a foster home where they were sexually abused. And he has felt betrayed by his own social workers who would ask him what he wished to do and then ignore his input. He feels fortunate to have had at least one foster family that was sensitive to his needs, even if it meant bending some rules. He also acknowledges the positive influence of one counsellor and one social worker. The support he received came as a pleasant surprise and carried him through to high school completion.

Don recalls his Black-Canadian father's frustration with the polite racism that thwarted his attempts to gain custody of his son and his daughters. In spite of establishing a stable home life and secure employment history, he felt he was deemed unfit to parent his own children primarily due to racist attitudes. The negative consequence of losing his family at age seven and of a series of social workers briefly being a part of his young life and then leaving unannounced, is that Don has had difficulty trusting and in committing himself to relationships. A relationship with a partner with whom he had a son, now 14 years old, succumbed to that difficulty.

Trained as a constuction site surveyor, a number of years ago his work to took him to the prairies where he had the opportunity to get in touch with his mother's family roots. In the past several years he has also benefitted from getting in touch with his deceased father's family. For a number of years Don has engaged in First Nations traditional healing practices on the coast and on the prairies. He feels that the holisitic spiritual aspects have helped to bring balance to his life.

Don's story

I grew up, I was born and raised in Vancouver. Mainly all my family came from northern Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. Cree, Black and Chippewa.
I was in the east end of Vancouver until I was seven years old when I guess you could almost call it being apprehended. My mom had a drinking problem and one night...she was geetting physically abused by one of the men that were there...the next thing I knew there was a social worker and the police brought me out to the social worker's car. Me and my

two sisters....They didn't say anything about where they were going or anything, or where I was going and the next thing you know, I was brought to this house and they told me well you are going to have to stay with these people for a while. And I said whaaat..... I didn't get any explanation. It was just you are going to have to stay here for a while. I didn't know what was going. I said, well, I want to be with my mom....Cause I was worried about her I had seen her getting beaten up.

I went to five different homes between 7 years and 13 years of age I must say. And I didn't understand why, why people get stressed out. Social workers would pick me up and just say well you are going to another place, and they would not say why or anything and I started to think that I was a really bad kid. And they wouldn't give me any contact about where my sisters were.

I'd be going to court lots of times too, because my dad would be trying to get custody of me. And my mom would be there, but the courts would look at her as if she was unfit or whatever because she still had a drinking problem but they wouldn't give my dad custody. Because he was working and everything. I don't know why.

But the courts would ask me, the social worker would ask what I wanted to do and I would say I wanted to go out with my mom or my dad. So they would say OK fine and so. The social worker would take me to a back room and she would go back to the courtroom and then come back in and take me to a different home. I didn't like it though, I would wonder why they would ask me and then set me up....a counsellor would come in and talk to me and ask me what was going on, but every time I would see a counsellor it would be a different person. I just didn't know what to say hardly to them. I was telling

them like I was scared, I don't know where my family is. I miss my sisters and my mom. And I, and I, because, I would ask them how come you people don't tell me where they are.

My foster dad he managed to somehow to get a hold of some of my other relatives, my uncle and he when he came back up to Toronto, he said that OK you can fly back to Vancouver for Christmas and he said yes you can go see your dad. And I said WOW!
I was 13, that's when I was 13. So I went back, and he said just don't tell any social workers we are doing this thing, social workers or court workers or anything what we are doing. I said yeah OK I won't.
I got back and then when I got back my dad told me that my mom had passed away while I was travelling in the states. I didn't find out, for about, it was seven months later that I found out. But I felt it the day that she died it's amazing how it happened. Because we were in Arizona and all of a sudden I just woke up and I started running out of the trailer I didn't know what I was trying to do. My ears were bleeding. That was the exact same night that my mom passed away....she was in, uh, Nova Scotia, she committed suicide there, she left a note for my brother saying she was depressed because she had gone through so many years of trying to get her kids back and nothing would help.

During that time after I just got back with my dad. It was about a year later that my sisters came to stay with us when I was 14. My dad he had another woman in his life.

I just found, like my sisters were in the same house, all the whole time with the same people. You know they seemed quite different when I seen them, I guess. The home that they were in they were getting sexually abused and all this stuff.... They said they were trying to tell the social workers and all that and they wouldn't believe them, about what was going on. And they also said that they were trying to find me where I lived.

Well my younger sister who went to court and did that, like she is very strong willed. Like, after she did that she was just able to make decisions like crazy you know, and we were able to learn a lot from her. My other sister who is a little older than her, you know, she is still having some difficulties, like, settling down. A lot of help wasn't offered to her after it happened. You know, like, she said they didn't have any counselling or anything....And they didn't even want to ask her to help or anything they felt I guess they felt a little ashamed.

There was a counsellor in there, a guidance counsellor, and you know she would talk to me a lot....I decided to let her know my mom had passed away and then like about every three days she would be talking to me. Asking me how I was doing in school, asking if I needed any help in finding tutors, if I needed tutors...She was helping me....career choices for me...and I was, like, WOW, grade eight, grade nine, this is really alright. She would phone my dad, she would phone my aunt and everything, to see how I am doing and wow! this person is really doing is a counsellor. This is a counsellor, I was thinkin,

right....she stayed with me the whole time through graduation she was there for all but a couple of years.

When I was with my mom and that, I know when I was smaller she was showing me things it didn't matter, it didn't matter, that she had a drinking problem, she was showing me things, and I was around my grandmother and she was showing me things...She knew about smudges and eagles and feathers and you know.... I just stopped (when apprehended) I didn't even think about it (traditional ceremony) everything was moving so fast. I didn't know what was going on. You know I would be going to different schools, different friends, like I didn't have very many friends actually....Yeah I would be aggressive I would just go try to pick a fight start pushing someone around. A lot of that didn't always work I would beat up a few then. Then I started getting into the alcohol and drugs.... Ah it was mostly being drunk getting in fights downtown. I, ah, sold pot at school and all this. When I was selling it, it calmed me down and it was like I was making more friends. But it wasn't really friends....You know but they weren't talking to me about their families or anything or how their families were...You know it's just like lets party. I know some of my cousins and that, they would talk about family and it's like "wow" They would talk about what their family life is like. To me, I didn't, I felt like I didn't have a family... When I left Vancouver again and I went to Ontario for eight years. And I was just a kid and I just decided to leave Vancouver to get away from the partying and I went up there and I ended up partying and doing stupid things, and I just came back and said no way, I am not doing any of that, I need to change. It doesn't matter where I

went, I wasn't going to change.

Those are the things, that once I started going to *Warriors Against Violence*, I started meeting other people you know, I figured that were from Saskatchewan or wherever, that's when I started getting more in touch with my spirituality and what I needed to help myself with. For a long time I would go, no one is helping me. I would go on forever and no one's helping me. I would make up excuses why I would not do anything and then I guess it's up to me It took me a lot of years to learn that. I know I really enjoyed going to the sweats.

And I cried a lot, and she just said it's not being angry you know it causes of lot of stuff. I got into it and for me, it was not really anger, it was just learning more and more about what my behaviours were. Learning about what my feelings and emotions were.

That helped me, first group, it was just like 'wow'. I can talk to these men, they can talk to me, and we all listen to each other. It was a great feeling, I said this is it, this it you know.

What have you found helpful with social workers?

Well one that, the fact that I am here, cause I was not able to be around with what I was familiar with my culture and or my spiritual beliefs, none of that was taken into consideration when I was put into those other families. There were programs offered to me, but I lost a lot of trust in it because I did not feel good about myself spiritually or culturally. It happened three or four times that happened the same thing. I remember my dad telling me when I was like 11 years old, 10 or 11 years old. He said a lot of these, he

felt they were being prejudiced or that there were racial things going on. I did not understand what he meant by racial when he was saying it. I don't know what that is.

I was forced to do programs in order to receive any service or benefits. And I did not want to do them it was just like you have to do them if you want benefits or whatever. But there are these other ones that I could take that I really like. Yeah, they had no flexibility....So I learned to, I guess, cheat the program whatever, just to get money, they would not help me. Be very sensitive about their spiritual and cultural needs and be open minded and to listen to what their needs are.... There was one when I was nine or ten. She was really interested in me and my family. She was not Native or anything. She knew the area where my family was from. She was familiar with part of my background. She also mentioned to me that she might only see me a couple of times. She was really interested in helping me, she did let me know that she wouldn't be around for very long. I thought "wow" she let me know like she was very personal to me. Just to let me know that, so that I could be prepared, that's great.

A lot of the problems I had with social workers was them not ending the relationship without saying anything. I would see somebody new, I would not have any warning or anything. They were trying to build trust but for a couple of times I would feel comfortable sometimes after I had seen them for a couple times, and I would say, OK well they are being really nice, but then I would come back a third or fourth time and it would be somebody else. The relationships were not long enough, especially for me, especially being I had been in longterm care you know.

I would not be committed ... I have a son too in Ontario and I did not commit myself to that relationship to this woman and the only thing we had in common was having our son. Other than that there was no other commitment there.

That's what I learned, that's what I was shown through going to different homes, different social workers and that. Nobody is committed to doing anything for me. That's what I thought so, I don't know how to do it.

I would not let anyone know about me either.... I don't know, but I sure know it affects how I survived...It takes a long time to let people know who I am.

The way I see it you know when you do ceremonies or lodges, you know, you get to understand what other people's teachings are, what other people's beliefs are and learn to accept it....You know I have respect for all these other organizations that are out there to help people...The main thing is to utilize all of the resources that are out there.

Darren

The youngest in his family, Darren was raised by his parents on a Lower Mainland reserve with two older brothers and two older sisters. Darren says that he had two other older siblings who died in early childhood. He recalls that his family home was a frighteningly violent place with his mother the subject of physical abuse at the hands of his father until she left. The violent conditions at home translated into anti-social behaviour and violence in the school environment and academic failure led to further shame and low self-esteem. He established an identity as a tough guy in the school yard and an aggressive

competitor on the sports field. In other interactions he used aggressive, sexually precocious behaviour to control and dominate individuals and social situations.

Darren is not aware whether his mother or father attended residential school although he is aware that a residential school is situated in his mother's home community. Similarly, he is not aware of his grandparents' backgrounds vis-a\-vis residential school experience, however, they also lived in coastal communities from which children were required to attend the schools.

On several occasions he lived with extended family members when his parents were unable to take care of him due to poor health. When living with extended family members who were in a stable lifestyle, Darren says his behaviour improved, as did his interest and performance in school. In his words, he says he felt safe. When living with family members who were following an unhealthy lifestyle of drugs and crime, he returned to earlier self destructive behavioural patterns. His violent behaviour increased, as did the use of drugs and alcohol. He was in a common-law relationship for 16 years, during which time he and his partner supported themselves primarily through drug trafficking. Darren left that relationship in order to successfully cleanup his behaviour. He has been in another relationship for a number of years but he says his partner has had difficulty trusting, due in part to her own past experiences and in part to relapses he has had in resorting to violent behaviour. In spite of being involved in the drug trade and having engaged in acts of violence for a number of years Darren's only charge and conviction is for drunk driving. He acknowledges that the six months he spent in jail gave him cause to reflect upon and take responsibility for his behaviour, with a view to making change.

After leaving his father, Darren's mother regained her health through full involvement in traditional healing practices and became a respected healer in the community, often called upon to assist others in their healing journey. Darren acknowledges that he learned a great deal from his mother as he would travel with and assist her. He says that he was more or less going through the motions of ceremony until he had to face the personal crisis of his mother's death. A short time later, while he was in a residential treatment centre, he also had to deal with his father's death. He found that the exposure to First Nation culture afforded by his mother was in concert with that afforded by the treatment centre which served to assist him in reassessing himself and the direction of his life in a manner he had previously felt impossible.

As a teenager Darren had frequently worked with his father cutting firewood as a means of earning a living, and over the past years he has returned to working in the local mill when work is available. He has attended a number of treatment programs and at present is engaged in ongoing counselling to address the many issues from his earlier life.

Darren's Story

My mother was from Alert Bay, Kwakuitl. She at the age of 12 her mom left home and she had two sisters to take care of... Yeah so she had to grow up really quick and she was working in the fishing cannery....no one of her family would help her at all.
Yeah, when I grew up, in my younger years, my mom and dad, like I was saying there were always bikers around, it was really a hard life style.

You know I was never sure what was going to happen in our household, it was like a war zone, you never knew what kind of mood he was going to be in, whether he would be angry. He was physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically and sexually abusive.... you know he didn't care what he did in front of my mom so that was pretty hard to see. I used to always be scared in the household, and I would hide under my bed and soon as I heard my dad....and if he was drunk, this was when he would usually sexually abuse us. You know, I felt like I wanted to help him but I couldn't help him, but there was... I was just there, but not there.

I'd go to school and I was always violent....I felt that I had to prove myself and that was what I had to do in my household. If you didn't fight your dad, my dad, at a young age, you weren't being a man.... my brothers were always trying to fight me too. They basically beat me up and hold me down....So I think that's one of the reasons that I always wanted to fight in school....I was basically in my house, I was so scared that I did not know if I could go to sleep or not and what was going to happen. In the daytime I went to school and wanted to sleep and then people would bother me, the kids in school. I was not a quick learner so they would harass me about that and I would fight them. I had no self-esteem or self-confidence, I would always walk with my head down. I always felt alone. No. I was too scared to tell anyone I did not want to tell anybody anything. I thought my dad would come after me.

You know I'd say from the age of 8 to 10 I would be grabbing kids at the same age as me, but they would be girls, grabbing their asses and grabbing, and physically trying to put

myself on them.... acting out... In that area I felt there was some power and control that's when everything started to get really even more negative for me.

About 12 you know there was all kinds of bikers around, there were orgies going on... I found that attractive... my dad cheering me on you know .

You know in the same token I could never really ask a girl to go on a date, or anything. I was really reluctant in that area, I would say, actually shy.

I started drinking at a really young age, 13 or 14, when I was coming back here and working I was drinking and I started smoking pot and at the age of 15 my dad introduced me to coke, free basing coke.

At that time my brothers would try to fight my dad but he was a boxer, he knew karate and he was really built, and so you couldn't really do anything to him. At the time I would try to fight with my dad too, a lot. I wanted to save my mother, she was screaming, her head swollen up like a balloon, and he wouldn't stop.

We were all really abusive with women when we were drinking together... It seemed periodically, once a year, I had to be basically physically, physical with women, I raped them.

I was actually aroused by them sleeping.... so over time it started to sink in that I was doing something wrong..one girl she said I am going to charge you.....I was scared.....and that is where I started to, I would say started to get a conscience.

I started selling drugs too. I supported myself that way, along with them, and with welfare checks. You know I didn't care what I did. I had the girl friend from when I was 14 up

until I was close to 30's. She was no different she did coke, she drank, she smoked pot, did acid and did speed.

I was always on the edge ready to die that's the kind of person I was I was always ready to fight. It didn't matter to me what happened in my life it all just felt right.

But every time I felt it, I wanted to get high again but I started thinking of what I would do to people, and how I treated them during that area. I started to become a little more scared and then I became defensive and cynical with people and I was trying to go over there and the counsellor told me I am glad you came over to talk I was really worried about you.

It was around that time too that my niece disappeared in Vancouver and we were never able to find her, and I felt responsible for that, because I felt that when we were sexually abusing her we drove her out of the house and that is probably the truth.

And there were points in time where my dad would not get drunk, so we would actually, me and my mom and dad and my niece, would actually go places and have lots of fun with my mom. I do remember good things about my dad, he would be singing and just be a really happy person. My mom, you know, was a really nice person, caring and loving and when my dad would get back her mood would have to change because she just had to be basically mean. I couldn't believe the strength that she had in her.

But on this reserve you were expected to be cool on this reserve, he knew how to survive, and he taught us how to do that. That was the one thing I ever really knew about culture and he knew about plants. He would teach us the odd thing about plants and my mom knew plants. When she left my dad she started really getting into it. She started

getting into the spirituality aspect of life. When I'd leave the reserve with her and to go work on people. I never had any of these demented thoughts and I felt good with her. My mom showed me a totally different lifestyle and her love was unconditional. She had such respect for herself and for me, she was open, honest and she cared about people. At the same time though I was still involved with the cocaine.... I would lie and manipulate her. So my mom had passed away that was another big void in my lifestyle. I was still going up to see this counsellor and was becoming more aware of my feelings and when I lost my mom, that's when I cried....She passed away and she said you better stop doing drugs, stop drinking, better stop doing what you are doing, or you will end up in jail....I got put in jail for six months for drinking and driving....And then my dad passed away and then I lost it. I started drinking. I went to Round Lake... I was being confronted with my attitude, being confronted with what I had done wrong. So for me it was almost to the point in time in my life where I wanted to kill myself. ..and I had to come to this reserve where everything had happened...She (sister) died of doing drugs and talked down to me, she was clear as a bell. That's what kind of changed my mind too, seeing all this happen. My conscience coming up because I started to, these were persons that I cared about. I started to realize just how dysfunctional the family was and how dysfunctional I was.... So anyway in this time span I was living down here too, straight after my mom passed away. Someone brought me a bundle (medicine). My mom passed away, my dad passed away, and I went into a relapse. A person came down here and gave me a bundle. Didn't know I was drinking. I had the same girl friend. He gave this bundle and said your mom wanted

you to have this... So it kind of gave me a chill.... Everything was starting to come out. I looked in this bundle once, oh my god what are you doing, it scared me.

The only thing that kept me going was the counsellors, and telling me that I had enough strength.... I started to learn about the culture and started to smudge myself when I would have bad thoughts about anything, I would smudge myself...I started to let go of things and go to sweats, as many as I could you know. I was going all the time. And this is what started to help me. I'd go in there and pray for forgiveness and pray to the people who had passed on in the spirit world....

There was a lot of things said to me by counsellors and psychologists.... I have the actual uh parole officer. He was a really good guy and he offered to talk to me too. That's how open I became, I'd talk to people and I went to see, because for a time period there, on the reserve here, there were a few counsellors that got taken out, because of political stuff that was around here, and their own deep secrets of sexual abuse down here you know within the whole communities down here... I went to Peace Arch Community and they had counsellors there.... I was basically doing a lot of inside work.

I have been more comfortable, because when I was in counselling here... the counsellor ...he was stuck between council and the members. Sometimes he has to have a social worker's line, approach you know, rather abrupt, more or less ignorant but he is not really inclined to a person's feelings and I find that, you know, I have a really hard time with that at times. But then I think about it for a while and say well that's where he is at and that's all he has to work with.

I have always had a hard time being around people in my culture.

I was really concerned going there (*Warriors Against Violence*). Because I didn't know how things were going to work in the system. But then when I started getting more comfortable with the class, the place I felt really comfortable with what was going on. So initially I was nervous sitting there, cause I didn't have control but I did get the picture. To me, I, really, there was a structure, whereas, a lot of times when I go to see a counsellor or psychiatrist.... that made a big difference.

There was no strictness. My dad was strict and when he was drinking he was still strict but you had to do what he said. There was nobody there to direct me anymore. I was all on my own. So this is where the counsellors fit in on this reserve too. There is no structure and that made a big difference. But by going there having a program that is stable, and the people are reliable, that's how I look at it.

The, I have always looked at healing, it's like having a red-hot coal that I have to get hold of it. I know it's going to burn me and hurt me and the more that I grabbed a hold of it and still have a hold of it, I have been able to get it down to less and less. In that area with Warriors going to sweats and learning to pace myself.

I was always so worried about what other people thought about me and I always thought they could see the past..... I went to a lot of counsellors who have labelled, and there's a few of them that I have worked with that stopped doing that.

It's those things that I never got taught as a young child by the parents. My parents were messed up. The parenting skills that come out, and the, you know, we never had proper social development. I never knew that if you swore at somebody, you were being violent and that it's a relative trauma and now I know that if I do that I am being violent.

I can never talk to anyone about being violent, I have been violent you know I can never talk to anyone about being, you know, it's still a hard thing for me to do. You know, it's happening in our family, I am still scared of confronting, because I still feel like a little child.

The reality of it all, and say OK my mom and dad, did good to me and say my grandparents, my great grandparents must have gone through and to realize they had unhealthy upbringing and they lost traditional values, morals and scruples, the basic teaching the bad parenting skills, social skills, you know that's what I learned about in there everyone had a place where everybody did some type of community... they did the best they could and I am here and to say to myself you survived... that was the most open I have been for a long time that program was hard.... It was getting to the point in the family, I felt I was being pushed so much, I know a little bit about my early childhood. I was hurting a lot in that aspect. I felt I was being pushed further and further into my childhood.... That's what I like about Warriors is that you can talk about it in general. You don't have to be specific and it all just goes away. If I kept carrying it around I would be right back to where I was because I have that drive to whatever anger fed. I just wanted more and more.

I could see a lot of times with my dad when he was hung-over or off drugs you would get this nervous feeling about him. You could actually see his nerves going, then, he would go out and use again, and probably his feelings were coming up. You would like to talk to him and he would say I didn't want to talk to you and really, you picture, like right now, I

can see him becoming defensive, and you start using all those tools (laughs). I could see it right there.

Shawn

Now in his mid twenties, Shawn was born in the north coast First Nation community of which he is a member. As an infant he was cared for by his grandparents in his home community and at the age of seven he moved to Vancouver with his parents. They have since divorced. He has an older half brother and an older half sister as well two younger siblings and a younger half sibling. He has a four year old son from an earlier relationship with whom he is in regular contact. He and his current partner met in school and have been together for four years.

Shawn's father lived in a boarding home in Vancouver to complete high school and went on to graduate from university. He says his mother attended Port Alberni Indian Residential School and has become addicted to drugs and alcohol while trying to cope with the abuse to which she was subjected as a student. He is not aware if any of his grandparents attended residential school.

Shawn recalls that there was a great deal of violence in his parents' home, with his mother being physically abused by his father. He expects that was the norm for his grandparents as well, and the drug and alcohol related violence has become a pattern in his own life. Shawn says he was introduced to martial arts and boxing by his father when he was ten years old. He continues to spend several hours every day after school working out in the gym and in the boxing ring, as he finds that it provides an acceptable outlet for his

tensions and energy. On two occasions he has been charged and convicted for assault and spousal assault. One of the convictions, when he was 17 years of age, resulted in a five year period of probation.

As an adolescent and adult, Shawn worked as a commercial fisher with his father and his grandfather. He also admits to having engaged in drug trafficking as an adolescent. He acknowledges that he dropped out of school due to a lack of interest and a sense of not fitting in due to his race and his size, as he is a tall man who boxes in the heavy weight division.

Several years ago he was surprised to find that he has an aptitude for and an interest in mathematics and so has been upgrading and attending a post-secondary school institution where he is studying towards a designation in accounting. Attendance in First Nations groups to deal with substance abuse, anger and violence issues has afforded insights into the feelings that contribute to such behaviour. "Like I didn't realize I was violent....I started to talking about my parents and that's when I started to cry. It's really hard to talk about the past. ..... I know my past is really important."

Shawn tells his story

I grew up with my granny before when I was really young. I was here when I was in maybe grade 2. I was pretty young.

My mom she went to residential school, she went to Port Alberni, I think....

Well, she doesn't tell me much about her memories about that place, we're really close, eh, because my dad abandoned us a number of times and all we have is each other so we

got really close, she doesn't really discuss things like that, but she tells people like A----- everything. I guess she doesn't want to hurt me. But she mentioned some things like one of her brothers, you know, being sodomized by priests, and being abused by them and him goin to court about it, and the same thing to my uncle, my other uncle. She says things like they were at the same residential school and they used to see each other and there used to be one of those sliding doors with bars dividing the school (to separate boys and girls) and they used to run up to the fences and pull each other's fingers. Then she also mentioned that when they come home, finally, they wouldn't be able to talk to each other like they used to. They were close but they couldn't play like kids.

She's been trying to get some work. It's really hard for her because she's kind of stuck in a rut right now because she's living down in the Ivanhoe Hotel, a really run-down hotel, and she can't get a place. She's only on welfare and she's a Native woman. She's kind of poor right now, but she's really trying. She has an alcohol problem; she used to have a crack problem but she overcame. I'm really proud of her for that. But she found out she is diabetic....Not really, because of residential school, she can't be trapped, you know confined, like the residential school setting where you have rules. She can't go through that anymore, right. It's really hard for her to go to treatment, but she thinks about it. She wants to try it, but she can have a nervous breakdown if she does that.

I mean my mom has always been on welfare. I have never been in contact with any workers because my parents were really careful about that. They never really had no threat of welfare taking me away.

Well I started elementary school. From what I remember from there is that I was always a daydreamer. I always dreamt about finding a million dollars and getting away. I was just a little boy.

What would you be getting away from?

My parents and all the people I knew. I used to get picked on because the whole reserve knew about my dad beating on my mom, and the kids used to say that I would turn out just like my dad and I didn't like that because I loved my dad. I knew my family wasn't the worst in the reserve, because my dad always provided for us....

He liked to have a good time, laugh, but him and my mom together they would always get violent by the end of the night. When I used to drink with my mom and or dad, like by ourselves, because my dad and I used to go party together all the time because we were both fishermen, right. We both had lots of money, you know my mom wasn't around. I've only seen him get violent with mom, not anyone else, not with any of the other women he has been with....

Yes, actually, I stopped him from being violent when I turned 16, that's when he left mom. They were just starting to argue. My mom, I used to think it was my mom's fault because she used to shoot her mouth off all the time and I used to say, " just be quiet mom just be quiet." She had the right to be mad, right. But I don't know, my dad just took it out on her face and that whole cycle started, so I said that's enough. I stood in front of him and said, that's enough you're not going to hit her anymore. If you try to hit her, I'm going to hit you. My mom said she couldn't see him behind me. I was working out a lot because for a while, I just lost myself in working out with weights....When I got home, my

dad, my mom told he was actually stalking her after that happened and we moved back here and I remember they broke up, but I guess I was trying not to think about it, right. But then he was coming around once in a while and I was, well "hey dad!" I was happy to see him I didn't know it, but at that time he was stalking her....

Well, since I was 19, I was in counselling, I first started because I was drinking and fighting a lot...

Like I didn't realize I was violent until I was with Adena, but I do realize now that I was violent before with women, but not physically towards them, but I would intimidate them I noticed one time I punched a closet door and it fell on top of my girlfriend at the time. I thought I wasn't abusive until I was with Adena, but I was wrong, that was abuse. Even with my first girl friend, I pulled my arm away one time and made her fall and knew I was a lot stronger so I forced my arm away and she fell. I made it of it was her fault. Now I look back at those kinds of incidents, I realize I was messed up a long time ago....

Where do you think that came from?

Probably watching my dad and my mom. Probably came from my dad watching his mom and dad go at it, and my mom being sexually abused all her life from residential school.

That is really a courageous step to make.

Yeah, I didn't know what to do with this. I started crying with this when I went first in there. I thought I went in there because I was heart-broken. But when I started talking, I started talking about my parents and that's when I started to cry. It's really hard to talk about the past....I know my past is really important....I've been looking for a counsellor to talk to about the past and I found one that I went to, but I stopped going....

That's the one thing that set me off. Adena went to her too and she was really telling her. A---- doesn't like going to counsellors because as she told me, they tell her to leave me all the time. It's really discouraging because she doesn't want to leave me. And you know, I still wanted her to go because I want us both to go because we've both seen the same bad stuff. She has seen the same things I did. You know, it makes me feel good talking and I just want her to feel good talking....

I have been caught in that cycle for the past three years. The first year was the honeymoon phase with Adena....The second year was like the tension for half the year. Then I started battering. I felt like I was basically battering my insides and I was battering her outside and we were both being abused by me. I just didn't want to do it anymore because I was getting ulcers and I never did mean to be so bad. I always told myself that I would never be like my dad. It turns out I was exactly like him. I didn't have to be drunk. He was drunk all the time. I could tell my dad has a really bad temper. When he gets on the boat and if something goes wrong, or I screw-up he just used to scream and swear. So I almost never screw-up.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Cresswell (1998) identifies a number of challenges with which one may be faced in conducting participant observer ethnographic research. He notes:

> There is a possibility that the researcher will "go native" and be unable to complete the study or be compromised in the study. This is but one issue in the complex array of fieldwork issues facing ethnographers who venture into an unfamiliar cultural group or system. (p. 41)

It is hoped the irony of the above statement will not be lost to the reader, who, familiar with my biography, will be aware of my long journey to "go native" in establishing identity as *qelmucw,* a Shuswap man.

In his choice of the phrase "go native", Cresswell has inadvertently identified the additional challenges facing First Nations/Aboriginal and indigenous students and scholars. Those are the continual challenges of decolonizing self and educating teachers and colleagues. The perjorative use of the term "go native" to mean an abrogation of one's professional responsibility in research perpetrates the notion of Western European hegemony and superiority. The contemporary use of such language accentuates the need for research and scholarly activities that respectfully and congruently reflect First Nation's ontology, epistemology, and worldview.

That said, my own experience in this research process would indicate that Cresswell's caution is not to be taken lightly. The multifaceted role of full participant observer researcher has been challenging, rewarding and at times intimidating.

The most challenging task has been the process of analyzing the participants' stories. Through the use of an emergent themes grounded theory approach, efforts have been made throughout to retain the authentic voice of each speaker.

Emergent themes grounded theory analysis

As described in chapter five, open-ended semi-structured interviews were conducted over a three month period. The six interviews ranged in length from one and a half to three hours following the pace established by the respective participants themselves. The interview tapes once transcribed yielded approximately 280 pages of data. The transcribed material was read repeatedly over a period of several months. The first several readings were undertaken in an unstructured manner without any notes being made during the course of the reading. While the interview notes were repeatedly read, time was spent reviewing materials related to grounded theory research methodology and to First Nations social issues, male violence, traumatic stress disorder and relevant clinical practice methods. This practice is in concert with that recommended by Glaser (1978) for inductive research as follows:

> In our approach we collect the data in the field first. Then start analyzing it and generating theory. When the theory seems sufficiently grounded and developed, *then* we review the literature in the field and relate the theory to it through the integration of ideas. (p. 31)

The challenge at this point was that with over thirty years experience in my profession and comprehensive knowledge of the field, it was important to remain vigilant and not "force"

themes. The self awareness derived from the ongoing autobiographical work made this task more manageable.

Repeated and detailed reading of the data on a line by line basis eventually led to identifying statements in the participants' stories that described all manner of relationships: Social relationships at the micro and macro level, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships; relationship with self, other and one's community; relationship with significant others throughout their lives. Some of the relationship statements were relatively short. For example: "in 1993 she told me that I have to get some help," and "but I didn't even know that that was abuse until just lately." Other statements were longer but related to a single event or set of circumstances, as in "I've never claimed not to drink. Even in front of the judge and we had that case conference I told him since I've been down, I've been out eight times. Where I went out well I didn't get totally drunk but I went out and had some beers. It's probably been four times that I've gotten really intoxicated."

The data was read repeatedly until all material pertaining to relationships in the broadest sense of the term had been identified. The result was 1004 individual statements concerning some aspect of relationship to people and things . The next phase in the data analysis was to transfer each individual relationship statement to a three by five index card so that they could be moved around. Once that had been done each individual statement was read to identify key identifying factors. Statements with the same or similar terms were then grouped together. Several large tables and several weeks were required for this phase of the process. The process would be undertaken for several days and then recessed.

Twenty-nine categories, four themes

Many categories were tried and discarded during the course of the analysis with the end result that most of the statements ended up in one of the 29 categories that emerged. The 29 categories were further reviewed and matched for common characteristics, deriving the following four themes:

I: Powerfully Contradictory Family Experiences and Feelings:

Parents, Grandparents, Family of Origin, Family of Procreation, Spouse, Parents' Work, Work, Ceremony, Spiritual,

II: Multi-generational Trauma:

Residential School, Child Abuse Survivor, Childhood Trauma, Violence, Loss of Family Member, Loss of Child to Apprehension, Apprehended as Child.

III: Relationships with helping professionals and policy/program structures that are inconsistent, erratic, irrelevant and irrespressible:

School, Personal recovery, Learned program strategies, Positive helper, Negative helper, Positive Program, Worker attitude

IV: Marginalization/Alienation in Micro and Macro Community:

Juvenile Crime, Childhood Drug/Alcohol, Adult Crime, Adult Drug/Alcohol, Racism, Identity

I: Powerfully Contradictory Experiences and Feelings Related to Family

As has been described in a number of sections of this thesis and similar to other cultures and societies, immediate and extended family was and is of great importance to First Nations people. Family relationships are primary and vital, the source of

unconditional acceptance. In Virginia Satir's (1972) terms, the family in its many forms is where *the people making takes place*. Sadly and tragically the pressures of colonization and assimilation have rendered the family a source of powerful and overwhelming dissonance. Family is still a source of love, pride and security, however, family has also become a source of shame and a place of fear and hurt. The *people making* continues, but, not in a healthy balanced manner.

> Many of the Native American people who survived the onslaught were not only physically abused but also psychologically tormented....these children, now adults, have lived their lives with a series of perplexing questions and fragmented memories....it is unthinkable that the person will not fall into some type of dysfunctional behaviour that will then become the learning environment for their children. Once these children grow up with fear, rage, danger, and grief as the norm, it is little wonder that family problems of all types begin to emerge within the family system. (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 31)

On a number of occasions during the psycho-educational portions of the *Warriors Against Violence* talking circles, participants commented that they had only just learned that how they conducted themselves throughout their lives was abusive and wrong. Their conduct in relationships was the same as that of their grandparents, parents and siblings. In many instances it was also the behaviour that their partners, or their victims expected of them. Their life experience had provided no example of healthy alternatives that were meaningful and relevant to them.

Each of the six participants, in telling the story of growing up, told of how important relationships with parents, siblings and extended family had been during childhood and into adulthood. They also told of horrific abuses, terror, betrayal and shame that had been a feature of the same relationships at the hands of people who professed to love them. Darren's words summarize the conditions which were prevalent in the lives of most of the participants.

> "Even when I was a young little kid, I used to see things you have probably never seen...I was never sure what was going to happen in our household, it was like a *war zone*, you never knew what kind of mood he was going to be in ....He was physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically and sexually abusive...I remember when I was three, right up until I was five...I used to always be scared in the household and I would hide under my bed and soon as I heard my dad come in I was really afraid of him, and if he was drunk this was when he would usually sexually abuse us.

Darren used the more intimate term *dad* throughout the interview in referring to the parent who inflicted a great deal of pain, and he also has memories of happier times.

> There are points in where my dad would not get drunk so we would actually, me and my mom and dad and my niece would actually go places and have lots of fun with my mom. I do remember good things about my dad he would be singing and just be a really happy person.

While Darren was afraid of his dad he was also concerned for him from an early age. Witness: "You know I felt like I wanted to help him but I couldn't help him but there

was--I was just there, but not there."The words *I was just there, but not there* reflect the dissociative state described by Herman (1997), through which children attempt to deal with "the most extreme conditions of early, severe, and prolonged abuse" (p. 102).

The powerful contradictions that characterized the relationship that Darren has with his immediate and extended family are reflected to a degree in the stories of each of the men. In all cases, family relationships are of great importance and an area into which they invest considerable energy. Tom described being sexually assaulted by an older brother and as a teen and an adult quietly taking his revenge. He also remembers good times with his older brothers and has tried to make amends for the harm he inflicted upon them:

> The happiness was there for a little while and then they'd start fighting.
>
> G. asked me why are you doing that to your brother (perpetrator) But I never answered him I held back because I felt ashamed for all that stuff I was carrying round.
>
> The first brother I apologized to was G. He was lying in the hospital there and he seen me coming in the room and he cried. He opened his arms up and I went up to him, I hugged him and kissed him and I cried with him and told him I am sorry for all the things I done wrong to you. Because I stabbed him one time, 11 years ago.

All of the participants told stories of physical and sexual abuse and fighting as features of their childhood. In a number of cases the parents and siblings who perpetrated physical abuse also taught them how to fight. Two had fathers who were trained in boxing

and martial arts, and who were the most aggressive and violent in the abuse of their spouses. The participants' earliest memories are of having to deal with close relatives who might present a danger to them. Dennis, who was his grandfather's favourite, also described his grandfather as a "violent alcoholic" who would come after us if we did something wrong." Darren recalled that as a three year old he was always afraid of being sexually abused in a household "like a war zone." Most of the participants described early childhood as a time when they had to develop survival skills. The childhood development tasks of trust, autonomy, initiative and competence as portrayed by Erik Erikson became subordinated by the primary task of moment to moment survival. The consequences of misreading a person or a social situation would be terrifying, so such skills were developed very quickly. Rupert Ross (1996) indicates how the survival skills developed in early childhood are carried into adulthood. "They can read people so much better than I can, relying on tiny signals of sincerity and progress that my inexperienced eye would never catch," (182).

II: Multi-Generational Traumas and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Until recently the term "lack of moral fibre" was applied to individuals who were unable to function normally at times of crisis. The term was used in the military idiom along with "shell shock." A crisis is defined as a situation of potentially life and death significance and which is beyond the repertoire of previous experience of the individual(s) involved, so that the outcome is both of great significance and unknown.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined as a "psychological reaction to experiencing an event that is outside the range of usual human experience" (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1993, p.196). Duran (1995) and other clinicians believe that PTSD of multigenerational proportions contributes to the perpetuation of interpersonal violence in First Nations families. Trauma, whether physical, psychological or emotional, and whether initially experienced in residential schools, in the communities, in the home or a myriad of other venues, unless resolved is passed on from one generation to the next as secondary trauma. The nature of PTSD is that contemporary events that "trigger" flashbacks can be of a minor nature, yet precipitate the full and immediate emotional response of the primary traumatic event. Duran (1995) says an infant child intergenerationally exposed to a PTSD episode of a parent or other significant individual would experience secondary traumatization:

> If these traumas are not resolved in the lifetime of the person suffering such upheaval, it is unthinkable that the person will not fall into some type of dysfunctional behavior that will then become the learning environment for their children. (p. 31)

In the Executive summary to *The Circle Game*, Chrisjohn, Young and Maraum (1997) graphically summarize their view of the past and present circumstances of First Nations people in a series of rhetorical questions.

> What if the Holocaust had never stopped, so that, for the State's victims, there was no vindication, no validation, no justice, but instead the dawning realization that this was how things were going to be? What if those who resisted were

> crushed, so that others, tired of resisting, simply prayed that the "next" adjustment to what remained of their way of life would be the one that, somehow, they would be able to learn to live with? What if some learned to hate who they were, or to deny it out of fear, while others embraced the State's image of them, emulating as far as possible the State's principles and accepting its judgment about their own families, friends, and neighbors? And what if others could find no option other than to accept the slow, lingering death the State had mapped out for them, or even to speed themselves along to their State-desired end?
>
> What if?
>
> Then, you would have Canada's treatment of the North American Aboriginal population in general, and the Indian Residential School Experience in particular.

Duran and Duran (1995) also take the position that parallels exist between Native American trauma and Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust.

Most of the literature on intergenerational transmission of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has emerged from research done with victims of the Nazi Holocaust. Many of the dynamics in effect in the Jewish experience are similar to those of the Native American experience, with the crucial exception that the world has not acknowledged the Holocaust of native people in this hemisphere.

Dennis is a survivor of the Port Alberni Indian Residential School. For the past several years he has been involved in treatment to help him deal with the abuse he

experienced at the school. He is also involved in court action to seek redress for the damages inflicted. Several generations of his family on both sides are survivors of the residential school system.

> They (grandparents) both went to St. Michael's (Alert Bay)....
>
> My father went to St. Michael's and my mother went to Port Alberni....
>
> It must have affected her pretty badly because she was molested as well. I don't know whether it was the school, or if it was by her brothers....
>
> *rwv reflection: You went to Port Alberni? response*: Before my fifth birthday....
>
> The sexual assaults that happened to me there started the second year I was there....
>
> They used to slap me on my ear and it made a pinpoint hole in my eardrum....that (ear drum damage) happened to my mom when she was there.
>
> They forced us to eat what we didn't want to eat.

In chapter two, reference was made to the works available that offer detailed examination of the residential school system. It is, in my estimation, the single most significant factor that has determined the contemporary circumstances of First Nations families and communities and will remain so for generations to come. The negative impact is not, as some would present in defense of church and state, just an unfortunate consequence of isolated incidents. It is the consequence of well thought out and purposeful policies and programs over many generations.

The Residential School policy was designed to move communities, and eventually all Aboriginal peoples, from their helpless "savage" state to one of self-reliant "civilization" and thus to make in Canada but one community--a non-Aboriginal, Christian one."

> Of all the steps taken to achieve that goal, none was more obviously a creature of Canada's paternalism toward Aboriginal people, its civilizing strategy and its stern assimilative determination than education.....
>
> Children, he [Davin] advised, should be removed from their homes, as "the influence of the wigwam was stronger than that of the [day] school," and be " kept constantly within the circle of civilized conditions"--the residential school.
>
> (RCAP, Vol. 1, 1996, pp. 333-334)

The trust assumed via legislation and enforced by law was broken time and time again. In the early part of the 20th century, Dr. P.H. Bryce reported that conditions at most schools were marked by poor nutrition, poor clothing and high levels of tuberculosis and the death due to illness, violence and suicide rate was in some instances 40 per cent. Director General of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell's response was that it was an unfortunate reality that 50 per cent of the students attending the schools might not live to benefit from the education provided for them. However, steps were not taken to ameliorate conditions and schools continued to serve children unpasteurized milk, clothe them in bales of second hand clothing and limit diet initially in quantity and later in quality.

George Manuel, who attended residential school, in the same time frame as Dennis's parents, remembers that the school and the residents smelled of hunger. In that era survival meant being able to break into food stores or bully others. In the 1950s and the 1960s the food quantity increased but not the quality and as Dennis said, you had to clean your plate or face punishment. The bullying behaviour that occurred in those circumstances was that older, bigger residents would force the younger, smaller residents to eat their unpalatable food for them. Dennis remembers that having a friend or friends was important for survival, however, the relationship was based upon the continual need for protection and one had to be continually vigilant. Dennis recalled " No, you gotta be really careful about what they (friends) do."

For many generations First Nations children were held captive by individuals and institutions in whose care they had been placed, and were subjected to repeated, prolonged and intense trauma. Herman (1997) describes the impact of such methods and environment.

> Repeated trauma occurs only when the victim is a prisoner, unable to flee, and under the control of the perpetrator. Such conditions obviously exist in prisons, concentration camps, and slave labor camps. These conditions may also exist in religious cults, in brothels and other institutions of organized sexual exploitation, and in families. (p. 74)

The latter remark applies to the circumstances in the family of orientation for most of the six participants. Both Herman (1997) and van der Kolk (1987) address the matter

of traumatic events, singular or repeated, in a young child's life and the consequence for adulthood.

> Repeated trauma in adult life erodes the structure of the personality already formed, but repeated trauma in childhood forms and deforms the personality.... She (he) must find a way to preserve a sense of trust in people who are untrustworthy, safety in a situation that is unsafe, control in a situation that is terrifyingly unpredictable, power in a situation of helplessness.
> (Herman,1997, p.96)

> The emotional development of children is intimately connected with the safety and nurturance provided by their environment. Children universally attach themselves intensely to their caregivers. Abused and neglected children often become fearful and hungrily attached to their caregivers with timid obedience, and an apparent preoccupation with the anticipation and prevention of abandonment.
> (van der Kolk, 1987, p. 15)

Shawn described the dilemma faced by his mother in trying to seek treatment to deal with the sexual abuse she experienced at residential school, the physical abuse at the hands of his father and the consequent drug and alcohol abuse. "Not really, because of residential school, she can't be trapped you know confined like the residential school setting where you have rules." The dilemma, of course, is that the above precludes all medical institutions and most treatment centres.

Tom underwent multiple experiences that would be defined as incidents of trauma by Herman and van der Kolk. As a young child he felt abandoned by his mother and for many years harboured resentment toward her and his older siblings until he learned that she left to escape the abuse of his father. Tom loved his father and enjoyed his position as favourite son, however his father did not protect him from being sodomized by an older brother at the age of five. On other occasions, Tom also felt betrayed and not protected even when his father was present. He recalls his fear on a number of occasions as a pre-schooler.

> I'd get terrified (of the drunken fighting in his home).
>
> About 200 turkeys ...used to land on my back...used to attack me because I was small... I'd cry then my dad would kinda get mad and tell me not to be afraid of them. I was terrified of them.

The impact of those early experiences returned to him with regard to his relationship with his own children. Several years ago Tom and his wife had their two children in care for a thirteen week period and he found the loss unbearable. " I felt so lost without my children and I could understand the way they feel because I felt that way when I was a kid when my mom was gone." Tom says that the loss of his children and the impact it had on him was instrumental in his decision to seek a healthy drug free life style and to support his wife in doing the same.

Most of the participants described having some form of crisis that led to the decision to seek a healthier life style. In some instances the event described as the precipitating event was not the most traumatic event in the individual's experience The

crises are completely idiosyncratic and highly subjective in nature. The dilemma Tom faced in one treatment program was the aggressive "tough love" approach replete with yelling and swearing, which was reminiscent of the drunken fights he witnessed as a young child. In spite of the fact that as he grew older and became in his terms, a good fighter with quick hands, he is still uncomfortable with aggressive verbal or physical behaviour. It would appear that Tom is keenly aware of how precious his hard earned healing journey has become, and that he cannot afford to make any compromise, realizing the dangers of relapse. Part of his ongoing healing has been the establishment of healthy boundaries through which he is able to maintain a balanced and clean lifestyle.

During a follow-up session, Tom said that he had forgotten to tell of two other major events in his pre-school life. In a compressed time frame, he was witness to a house fire and a motor vehicle accident and, in each instance, he could see and hear victims who were dead or dying. This has been the basis of recurring nightmares since childhood, for which he is finally seeking assistance.

III: Marginalization/Alienation in Community at the Micro and Macro Levels.

Participants' stories reflected the lack of opportunity to engage as members of society, whether as children or as adults. As children, adolescents and adults they have had experiences that reminded them that they were not full members of mainstream society. First Nations people who live on reserves are marginalized geographically and socio-economically, living in conditions measured as 63rd on the United Nations Human Development Index. First Nations people in urban communities live in conditions

measured 35th on the same Index and furthermore, live adjacent to conditions which until a year ago were ranked first in the world and are currently ranked third.

Darren, as a young school child, experienced marginalization as not being afforded protection from an abusive home environment. He states, "in my house I was so scared that I did not know if I could go to sleep or not" and "In the daytime I went to school and wanted to sleep in school and then people would bother me."

Tom described being faced with racist based comments when he moved from the reserve day school to a town based elementary school. He dropped out of the school system in grade five and became engaged in sub-cultural criminal conduct and drug use.

Don experienced a sense of isolation and marginalization as a result of race and culture based identity issues. As a foster child in longterm care he said that his race and culture were not taken into consideration for his placements. The result was a sense of loss, confusion, anger and resentment. " It was like, I started fighting everybody, even my friends, you know because it was like I didn't know who I was." The identity issues and marginalization resulted in each of the participants coming into conflict with educational institutions and then the correctional system, in some instances as a juvenile and later as an adult. Arikara Social Work Scholar Michael Yellowbird (2001) describes cultural identity as a primary value: "A person's tribal identity is critical because it provides a connection to a principal cultural group that can give structure, meaning, direction, and purpose to one's life" (p. 65).

The RCAP (1996) found that alienation, marginalization and identity issues among First Nations youth are major risk factors for a suicide rate many times greater than that for non-First Nations youth.

> This sense of loss coloured virtually every statement that youth made to the Commission....The over-representation of Aboriginal youth in the justice system suggests other problems, including high unemployment and a perceived lack of opportunity, the absence of positive role models, low self-esteem, and the effects of racism and cultural devaluation.(vol 4, p. 156)

Edward and his partner have felt marginalized in their access to equitable treatment in receiving child welfare services. Edward's remark "To me, I get the feeling that because I'm First Nations, that I am wrong" conveys his frustration after attending numerous parenting courses, being successful with several alcohol urinalysis screenings, and still making no progress toward having his children returned. Don reported that his father had experienced similar frustrations several decades earlier in his attempts to regain custody of his children.

The RCAP vol 4, chapter 4: *Perspective of Youth* describes the manner in which marginalization and identity issues during childhood and adolescence evolve in life long behavioural patterns that are carried into adulthood and that may be self-defeating. The pattern described was certainly experienced by the six participants in this study.

> If they have few positive role models or clear paths to follow, Aboriginal youth may be forced to turn to one another, building tight bonds against a hostile world.

> Their inward-looking subculture may reinforce hopelessness and self-hate, and their only exits may appear to the oblivion of drugs and alcohol--or death (p. 155).

IV: Relationships with Helping Professionals & Policy/Program Structures that are Inconsistent, Erratic, Irrelevant and Irrepressible.

Each of the participants has been involved in relationships with social workers, financial aid workers, and a variety of therapists and counsellors for a number or years. When Darren expressed "concern" with having a social worker attend the talking circle, he was reflecting to a degree the sentiment of all participants, even those who were positive about the research project from the outset. Their stories of their relationships with social workers and other helping professionals is summarized in the heading to this section as inconsistent, erratic, irrelevant and irrepressible.

Apprehended and taken into permanent care at the age of seven, Don has felt the influence of social workers on his life since that time. While there was a relationship with the social work, child welfare system, Don does not feel he had a "relationship" with any of the numerous workers who were responsible for his file.

> I went to five different homes between 7 and 13 years (of age) I must say.
>
> And I didn't understand why, why people get stressed out. Social workers would pick me up and just say well you are going to another place,and they would not say why or anything and I started to think that I was a really bad kid....
>
> But the courts would ask me, the social worker would ask me what I wanted to do and I would say I wanted to go out with my mom or my dad. So they would

> say OK fine and so. The social worker would take me to a back room and she would go back to the courtroom and then come back in and take me to a different home....I didn't like it though, I would wonder why they would ask me and then set me up.

While there was a great sense of betrayal and of being ignored, Don has memories of one social worker and a school counsellor who were positive elements in his childhood and adolescence.

> There was one (social worker) when I was 9 or 10. She was really interested in me and my family. She said she grew up in Saskatoon. She was not native or anything, she knew the area where my family was from. She was familiar with part of my background.
>
> ...She also mentioned to me that she might only see me a couple of times. She was really interested in helping me, she did let me know that she wouldn't be around for very long. I thought "wow" she let me know like she was very personal with me. Just to let me know that so that I could be prepared that's great.

Don feels that the relationship he was able to have with a school counsellor was instrumental in his completing high school.

> There was a guidance counsellor, and she would talk to me a lot. This one time I just went in there and I told her what was happening and I decided to let her know my mom had passed away and then like about every three days she would be talking to me....She would phone my dad, she would phone my aunt and

everything to see how I am doing and wow! this person is really doing is a counsellor .

... This is a counsellor, I was thinking right. Like I graduated through that school and everything and she was there....she was there for all but a couple of years.

Unfortunately the two positive influences were not sufficient to temper the negative impact of other workers who did not engage with him or the workers who took no action to protect his two sisters in sexually abusive foster homes. Don feels that as a result of not having the benefit of a committed home in his childhood he has had difficulty trusting and committing to relationships as an adult. His two sisters are still struggling, through court action and treatment, to deal with the sexual abuse they experienced.

The positive relationships Don remembers were marked in that he felt he was being related to respectfully, as a unique individual, in an honest and open manner. Every social work practice course and code of ethics would indicate such qualities as essential elements in the helping relationship, but in Don's experience they were exceptional.

The other participants told more stories of not being heard, not being understood or respected and not having the benefit of engaging with workers who demonstrated any appreciation or insight into the life circumstances of the participants and their families. Many of their stories included examples of the disdain they held for the social system. Darren expressed his awareness of the challenges facing counsellors and social workers in the communities:

> On the reserve here there were a few counsellors that got taken out because of the political stuff that was around here and their own deep secrets of sexual abuse down here you know within the whole communities.
>
> .... I have been more comfortable, because when I was in the counselling here the counsellor...he was stuck between council and the members.

Darren found that social workers who were overly bureaucratic and remote were seen as policing access to programs and services and contributed to a very narrow impression of the role and function of social work practitioners and what they have to offer.

> Sometimes he has to have a social worker's line, approach you know, rather abrupt, more or less ignorant but he is not really inclined to a person's feelings and that I find, you know, I have a really hard time with that at times.

Ross (1996) says that violent men find it relatively simple to deal with a harsh environment that may be challenging and threatening. I would suggest that when such men are confronted by a punitive worker with whom there is no established rapport, threats of punishment, or withdrawal of services may have the opposite effect than the sought after compliance, as the men resort to the survival skills developed early in life. As in Edward's circumstances, an antogonistic, remote worker could become the trigger for PTSD episodes.

Several stories expressed a pervasive cynicism as a consequence of participants' encounters with staff of social service agencies. They experienced the inconsistency of programming as they were able to deceive the system to gain benefits to which they were not entitled and were not able to access resources when they were in a true state of need.

Each circumstance, even when it was to their advantage, did not leave them with a sense of involvement with a service provider that was prepared to relate to them as individuals

CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This emergent themes grounded theory case study was undertaken based upon relationships with the six participants established during the course of a fourteen week talking circle program to ameliorate violent behaviour. The researcher described the pursuit of personal authenticity through ongoing autobiography, as an important feature in the rapport that permitted the research to take place in the manner it did. The primary goal in conducting the research was to contribute to the prevention of family violence. It is believed that this can be achieved by providing voice to men for whom the expression of anger and violent behaviour has been a problem. The research methodology and process provided fidelity of voice to each of the men who told his story in response to ten open-ended questions.

During the fourteen week talking circle that preceded the interviews, and which I attended, the participants became familiar with my background and were able to make informed decisions about their involvement in the study. Chapter six presented my autobiography as a way to serve several functions. First, as a factor in the conduct of the research, as participants were afforded insight to me as an individual. Second, without my being engaged in ongoing critical holistic autobiography, my approach to the research and response to the process may have been dramatically different. And finally, the reader who will be able to situate me with respect to the interpretations offered of the participants' stories told.

In this chapter, the stories are told in part and analysis is provided for portions of the data presented. While a review of relevant literature indicates that the stories of the six men have common features with others in similar circumstances, as does the researcher's autobiography and clinical background, there is no intention to suggest that any generalization of findings is warranted; however, the findings may serve as an effective guide to cross-cultural relationship. For example, several of the participants said that being treated like a human being, and being listened to attentively, were of great importance to them and their feelings about the helping relationship. The positive relationships Don remembers were the infrequent occasions when he felt he was being related to respectfully, as a unique individual, in an honest and open manner. Don also said that knowing a social worker understood his circumstances and took a genuine interest in him was very important. As stated previously, the above aspects of the helping relationship, usually addressed at the introductory level of social work practice methods coursework, were not reflected in the stories told.

As has been described in previous chapters, the data generated four emergent themes that corresponded to:

I. Powerfully contradictory experiences and feelings related to immediate and extended family.

II. Multigenerational trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

II. Marginalization/alienation in the community (micro and macro).

IV. Relationships with helping professionals that are: inconsistent, erratic, irrelevant and irrepressible.

The overlap of categories was described in the Research Process and review of literature: Chrisjohn et al. (1997), Duran & Duran (1995) , Herman (1997), and van der Kolk (1987) addressing trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder, identity, shame and anger issues as common to each of the four categories that emerged from the data.

I. Powerfully contradictory experiences and feelings related to immediate and extended family.

The stories of violence told by the six participants can be traced to the policies and programs developed to achieve elimination of the "Indian Problem." Confined to unviably small tracts of land, forced to attend residential school and having had their cultural practices outlawed, the participants' stories are of the development of sub-cultural behavioural patterns needed survive the conditions imposed. Their stories tell of lessons learned from parents and grandparents that have already been passed on to children and grandchildren. The passage of time has not reduced or ameliorated the intensity or severity of the initial experiences of being alienated from the land.

The stories told of horrific abuse inflicted by family members. Also expressed was the love felt for abusive parents and siblings. Social workers were seen as those bureaucrats responsible for breaking families apart and preventing reconciliation. Dennis, who has come to accept the need to have his son in care and is participating in a remedial parenting program, expressed concern for a niece who is studying towards a BSW degree. In his mind a BSW degree is synonymous with child apprehension. Program

resources are needed to enable child protection workers to provide preventative services to avoid apprehension.

The stories of all participants spoke of the adversarial relationship in which they had found themselves in dealing with providers of child and family services. As pointed out by Johnston (1983), the best interests of the child are neither simple, nor short term, nor isolated considerations. Nearly twenty years ago he wrote of how "the best interests of the child' had tragic consequences for Chief Wayne Christian's family.

> Christian believes that his brother's death was the result of his treatment by the child welfare system. Actions ostensibly taken "in the best interests of the child" may have shortened his life.(p. xx)

Darren and Tom's stories describe situations in which they certainly needed protection from abuse at the hands of family members. In their stories they also tell of positive, albeit isolated, episodes in their family life. The policy of isolating the immediate interests of the child from longer term consideration for the life of the individual beyond childhood, and not taking into consideration the family and the community only serves to propagate neglectful situations across the generations. The institutional symbiosis that becomes established between social work providers and First Nations service recipients must be broken. Policies are recommended that will provide resources for preventative and remedial programs that will permit the maintenance of family integrity. I realize that such recommendations have been made repeatedly for the past 20 to 30 years in many jurisdictions. Until such policies are in place, with the long-term resources that will provide the protection to which children are entitled while maintaining and developing the

integrity of the family, all that can be anticipated are further generations of children coming into care who grow up to lose their own children into the same system.

At the present time, First Nations child protection programs approximate mainstream programs in order to meet statutory requirements. Research is recommended towards establishing the programs that contribute to building the integrity of the family while ensuring protection to children when necessary.

II. Multigenerational trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

All of the men described experiences from early childhood through to adulthood that would fall within the primary and secondary trauma categories. As Darren remarked, "it was really a hard life style, even when I was a young little kid I used to see things you probably never seen."

A recurring theme to this paper has been that of the importance of authenticity in the helping relationship. Ross (1996) described being impressed with the manner in which perpetrators were able to "read" people and social circumstances to their advantage. The participants' childhood stories told of the survival skills developed far too early in life. Herman(1992) made similar observations about the children and people with whom she worked in the following passages:

> Children in an abusive environment develop extraordinary abilities to scan for warning signs of attack. (p. 99)
>
> Chronically traumatized patients have an exquisite attunement to unconscious and nonverbal communications. Accustomed over a long time to reading their captor's

> emotional and cognitive states, survivors bring this ability into the therapy relationships. Kernberg notes the borderline patient's "uncanny" ability to read the therapist and respond to the therapist's vulnerability. (p. 139)

It is recommended that social workers and educators maintain an ongoing autobiography from which to derive the necessary sense of personal authenticity. "Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly" (Freire, 1995, p. 42). With the assistance of clinical supervisors and mentors such activity is essential to break the pattern that has been established by historical relationships. Non-First Nations professionals must situate themselves with respect to *the standard account* of history and *the alternative account* of history of the contact between First Nations and the colonial powers. Just as First Nations people unwittingly carry the burden of generations of colonialism and marginalization, non-First Nations people may not be aware of the extent of their privileged position in Canadian society dreived from the same historical events. In the latter instance, there is resistance and denial of the fact that one's contemporary privileged position is the legacy, though several generations removed, of an inequitable advantage taken at the expense of another group. By having the courage to look within and deal with all aspects of their stories, educators and social workers will be better situated to accept selves as authentic human beings and to relate openly and honestly with those with whom they interact. Just as self-disclosure must be in the best interests of the client, I do not believe that autobiography needs to be overtly declared in all instances to be effective in the helping relationship.

Weaver (2001) echoes the above with regard to working with First Nations organizations and communities. She states:

> The ability to be self-reflective is critical for culturally competent social work....Social workers must avoid imposing their own values on Native organizations and communities. This begins with the ability to honestly reflect on their own beliefs and feelings. (p. 189)

Aoki, Greene, Grumet, and van Manen along with others in Pinar (1996), note the importance of authenticity and currere with respect to curriculum. Their comments have proven to be of great value in my teaching of a cross-cultural social work practice course as well as in my clinical practice. As stated earlier, clinical relationships with male perpetrators of violence can be particularly challenging without a well based authentic sense of self. Aoki describes an authentic person as "more than a mere individual....a being in relation with others and hence is, at core, an ethical being." (p. 404)

Currere with foundations in psychoanalysis accomplishes in the educational setting what self-awareness does in the clinical social work setting. Currere is presented as a key component of the ongoing reflective autobiography that is fundamental to being an authentic person. Reflective autobiography provides the answer to Thomas' question "If we forgive our fathers, what is left?" As indicated by Pinar and Grumet, "currere does not constitute a reflective retreat from the world, but a heightened engagement with it" (ibid., p. 415).

A reflective autobiography encompassing self as an intellectual, affective, spiritual and physical being can afford balance, insight, and awareness, however some of the

insights may be difficult to accept. Duran & Duran (1995) emphasize the importance of awareness for cross-cultural clinical practice and I would add, in education:

> To assume that phenomenon from another worldview can be adequately explained from a totally foreign worldview is the essence of psychological and philosophical imperialism....[which] not only fails to capture any "truth" of native and tribal lives but also infiltrates native worlds in the form of 'epistemic violence" (p. 25).

Herman (1992) identifies burnout, depression, blaming the victim, disbelief of the victim, withdrawal and isolation within one's profession as risks factors in relating with individuals for whom PTSD is a factor. It is recommended that social work programs include more content on PTSD in order to equip graduates for the field of practice.

III. Marginalization/alienation in the community (micro and macro)

The passage of time has not reduced or ameliorated the intensity or severity of the initial experiences of being alienated from the land. The sentence is used to introduce the section on family relationship, as the family and land are among the two most important aspects in First Nations tradition.

Vine de Loria (1992) describes the importance of place for First Nations identity in the following way:

> Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a "sacred geography," that is to say, every location within their original homeland has a multitude of stories that recount the migrations, revelations, and particular

historical incidents that cumulatively produced the tribe in its current condition. (p. 122)

Kenny (1998) describes the importance of the land to the learning and healing she engages in with graduate students in Secwepemc territory:

> The theme for our studies is *the knowledge is in the land* . We attempt to assist our students in grounding their teaching practice in 'The Sense of Art.' Of course, the best way to accomplish this is to listen to the land....Much of our pedagogy is composed of experiences on the land....We go onto the land and listen and write poetry. We attempt to listen to what the land is communicating to us. (pp. 80 & 81)

In telling his story, Edward related his shame and anger at being the focus of attention during an elementary school First Nations history class. He has more recently felt discriminated against by a child protection worker due to his race. Darren spoke of feeling uncomfortable when around First Nations people and First Nations culture and not having respect for either until recently. None of the men who told their stories had any recollection of being told the history of their families or the history of their community. For all of them, along with many participants in the *Warriors Against Violence* talking circle, basic awareness of Canada's colonial history and the alienation of First Nations from traditional territories was a revelation that allowed them to put many things into relevant context. Non-First Nations people have a similar lack of awareness of both

historical events that alienated people from their traditional land and awareness of contemporary First Nations social conditions. It is necessary to have curricula that go beyond the "standard account" to provide such information.

Yellow Bird (2001) describes the importance of land as a secondary value to First Nation people and indicates that effective social work policy and practice requires a full appreciation of and consideration for this important feature. Yellow Bird writes:

> Land means life. Land insures the survival and well-being of Indigenous Peoples' cultures and thus, has tremendous spiritual, cultural, and political significance. Because First Nations Peoples are the original inhabitants of the Americas, they have special cultural ties to these lands and histories predating all other groups.....The culturally competent social worker must not only respect Indigenous People's value for the land, but must also support Indigenous People's efforts to protect their lands from outside encroachment. Justice oriented social work means social workers must vigorously advocate for returning lands to Indigenous Peoples that were illegally taken or resulted from broken treaties by federal or state governments. (p. 70)

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established in August 1991 in response to violent confrontations related to land claims issues in Kanesatake, Ipperwash and Gustafson Lake. Five years later a comprehensive 4000 page report addressing the issues facing First Nations peoples was published. Throughout the detailed findings and

recommendations, the importance of land was repeated with respect to virtually all social, health, education, economic, cultural and identity issues.

Equitable settlement of outstanding land claims and restoration of an enhanced territory will serve as the essential basis for viable healthy communities and culture. The continued equivocation and resistance to equitable land claim resolution will serve to propagate violent lifestyles within individuals, families and communities and will be counter productive to any efforts towards meaningful healing.

Glaser (1978) indicates that grounded theory can be used to confirm existing theories. In this regard, research findings confirm many aspects and recommendations of the RCAP with respect to land claims, health and social development and education. The research methodology pursued for this study incorporated the element of ongoing holistic autobiography. It is recommended that cognitive awareness of historical events is not sufficient to situate oneself authentically and that ongoing holistic autobiography with emphasis on spirituality is necessary to achieve authenticity.

IV. Relationships with helping professionals that are: inconsistent, erratic, irrelevant and irrepressible.

In the Introduction, I summarized the discrepant position of First Nations peoples in Canada. For the past several years, United Nations measures have rated the quality of life for Canadians as first in the world however, the quality of life for urban First Nations people has been rated as thirty-fifth, and for those living on reserves, the quality of life has been rated as sixty-third (Fleras & Elliott, 1999, p. 176).

The discussions at an Aboriginal Health Conference in Victoria, B.C., on January 14 and 15, 2002, serve to indicate that long-term funding issues and jurisdictional issues continue to be a barrier to needed comprehensive community based programs. The long-term policies of requiring First Nation people to leave their home communities to access treatment were described as still ineffect (personal notes , Victoria, 2002). The long-term policy of assimilation is thus pursued by making residents leave their communities to access health care, education, economic opportunities and social services.

Mary-Ellen Kelm's (1998) *Colonizing Bodies* provides an excellent summary and critique of the history of health services for First Nations people in British Columbia in the period 1900-50. Kelm describes the transient nature of the services available to First Nations patients, as well as the manner and extent to which financial resources designated for First Nations services were directed to provide services to non-First Nations populations adjacent to reserves.

The stories of study participants described the lack of continuity in the health and social services available to them in urban and rural communities. Several commented on the number of counsellors with whom they had been involved in a series of short-term programs. Don spoke of feeling abandoned by a series of social workers as he was moved from foster home to foster home. As a foster child, Edward learned from his foster father that a social worker's presence on the farm was not to be tolerated. As an adult, Edward's story relates the seemingly arbitrary exercise of unilateral power in which a case worker thwarts his attempts to be reunited with his children. In each of the participants' stories it is clear that the legacy of violence over several generations and already passed to new

generations will not be resolved through short-term interventions in which there is no working rapport and relationship.

The recommendations of the RCAP in this regard warrant repetition for policies and programs that are long-term, culturally congruent, community based and controlled by First Nations. While the federal government has been engaged in program of devolution for the past decade or so, it is difficult to determine what is being transferred to community based control. Waldrum et al. (1995) identify some of the challenges facing would be First Nations health boards as follows:

> Nevertheless, in operational and organizational terms, there is no such thing as an 'Indian Health Service' in Canada akin to that in the United States....It may come as a surprise to many that, to date, no one has determined the actual cost of health services to all the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Even in the case of the main source of services, accurate attribution of costs has proven difficult.
>
> (pp.179 & 181)

In 1996 RCAP indicated that a minimal 20 year commitment, with an investment of at least $30 billion, was required to begin healing illnesses which developed over the past 150 years. It was predicted that following the status quo in the same time frame would cost an additional $3.5 billion on top of the current $7.5 billion annual expenditure (RCAP, 1996, vol. 5, pp. 23 - 89). In April 1998 the Aboriginal Healing Foundation was established with a $350 million budget and a ten year mandate to develop healing

programs for residential school survivors. While such initiatives are an important beginning, the scope is still too limited and too short.

When students first enter schools of social work their personal values, principles and ethics are more reflective of society at large than of the social work profession. The comments made by Marvin Wideen et al. (1998) describe the situation of many student and beginning teachers: "We also find many of the program interventions having little effect upon the firmly held beliefs about teaching that beginning teachers bring to programs of teacher education" (p. 159). I maintain that the same applies to social work students to a significant degree.

At the present time, the banking method of curriculum prevails in the socially efficient goal of preparing new social workers to begin practice in the field. The focus is upon the cognitive elements of curriculum content. The challenge for social work educators is to encourage students to engage intellectually, affectively, spiritually and physically with the curriculum to make personal meaning for themselves. Monture-Angus (1999) views the myriad ways with which social workers are engaged as being the consequences of colonialism. Without situating oneself within that history there is the danger of contributing to contemporary colonialism. Monture-Angus says:

> Colonialism undoubtedly is a significant cause of the struggle and strife in First Nations communities. However, ending colonial relations against First Nations (such as the Indian Act) will clearly be insufficient to remedy the full impact of those relations. When I considered the consequences of colonialism, including suicide, conflict with the criminal justice system, child welfare apprehensions and

> intrusions, violence against women and children, and so on, I began to notice that all the consequences had one thing in common-that is, the creation of varying and multiple degrees of disconnection.(p. 11)

Again, Thomas Builds-the-fire asks in his soliloquy, "If we forgive our father, what is left?" In order to forgive our fathers we have to come know them. In order to deal with the disconnectedness that causes pain, we have to situate ourselves within our individual and collective histories. Simply knowing one's history is not at all easy, whether one is of First Nations ancestry, European or other. Monet and Wilson (1992) in *Colonialism on Trial* make reference to "The Hidden History of Canada" (p. 3). Menno Boldt (1993) remarks that Canadians deal with the history of relationships with Indians through a threefold guilt management process of civilization, charity and myth: "history books are filled with myths to abate Canadians guilt over unconscionable actions towards Indians" (p. 20). It is seductively simple to remain at a dichotomous position, particularly as First Nations people we are only recently becoming aware of our own historical perspective. The answers to Thomas' question about "forgiving fathers" and Yali's question (posed in chapter two) " why do Europeans carry so much cargo?" are complex and warrant critical examination and review.

Freire (1970) believes that members of oppressed groups who have achieved professional status will have to work particularly hard to break with their socialization to achieve authentic praxis, dialogue and conscientizacao. "The fear of freedom is greater still in professionals who have not yet discovered for themselves the invasive nature of

their action, and who are told that their action is dehumanizing" (p. 137). Tuhiwai Smith (1999) points out that this can be an even more difficult task when colleagues, 'authorities' and outside experts question authenticity. "These debates are designed to fragment and marginalize those who speak for, in support of, indigenous issues (p. 72).

In Chapter Three, Glenn Drover's (1998) article was used to define the philosophical premises underlyingthe profession of social work "It is widely recognized that the professionalization of social work is a consequence of industrialization, the emergence of the nation state, and a conviction, grounded in western culture, that human need can be met in a rational fashion."(p. 79) The six participants' stories related to the social work profession indicate that in their perspective it has become narrowed to child protection and income assistance.Research is recommended on the part of the profession and schools of social work to develop alternate models of practice relevant to First Nations culture. Research is also warranted to determine means of informing First Nations community members and the public at large of the range of fields of practice in which social workers are engaged.

Social work practitioners are involved as clinicians in each of the fields identified in the four emergent themes. It is essential that they are afforded the education and resources to address the issues effectively. Otherwise, as has been stated elsewhere several times, the only certainty is that subsequent children will be taken into care and a decade or so later will be in circumstances where their own children will be taken into care. That is the core theme to the stories of the six participants in this study which returns us to the question in Thomas Builds-the Fires' soliloquy:

How do we forgive our fathers, maybe in a dream? Do we forgive our fathers for leaving us too often, or forever, when we were little? Maybe for scaring us with unexpected rage, or making us nervous, because there never seemed to be any rage there at all?

Do we forgive our fathers for marrying or not marrying our mothers,

for divorcing or not divorcing our mothers? And shall we forgive them for their excesses of warmth or coldness? Shall we forgive them for pushing or leaning,

for shutting doors, for speaking through doors, or never speaking,

or never being silent?

Do we forgive our fathers in our age or in theirs? Or in their deaths, saying it to them or not saying it?

If we forgive our fathers, what is left?

(Alexie & Eyre, 1998)

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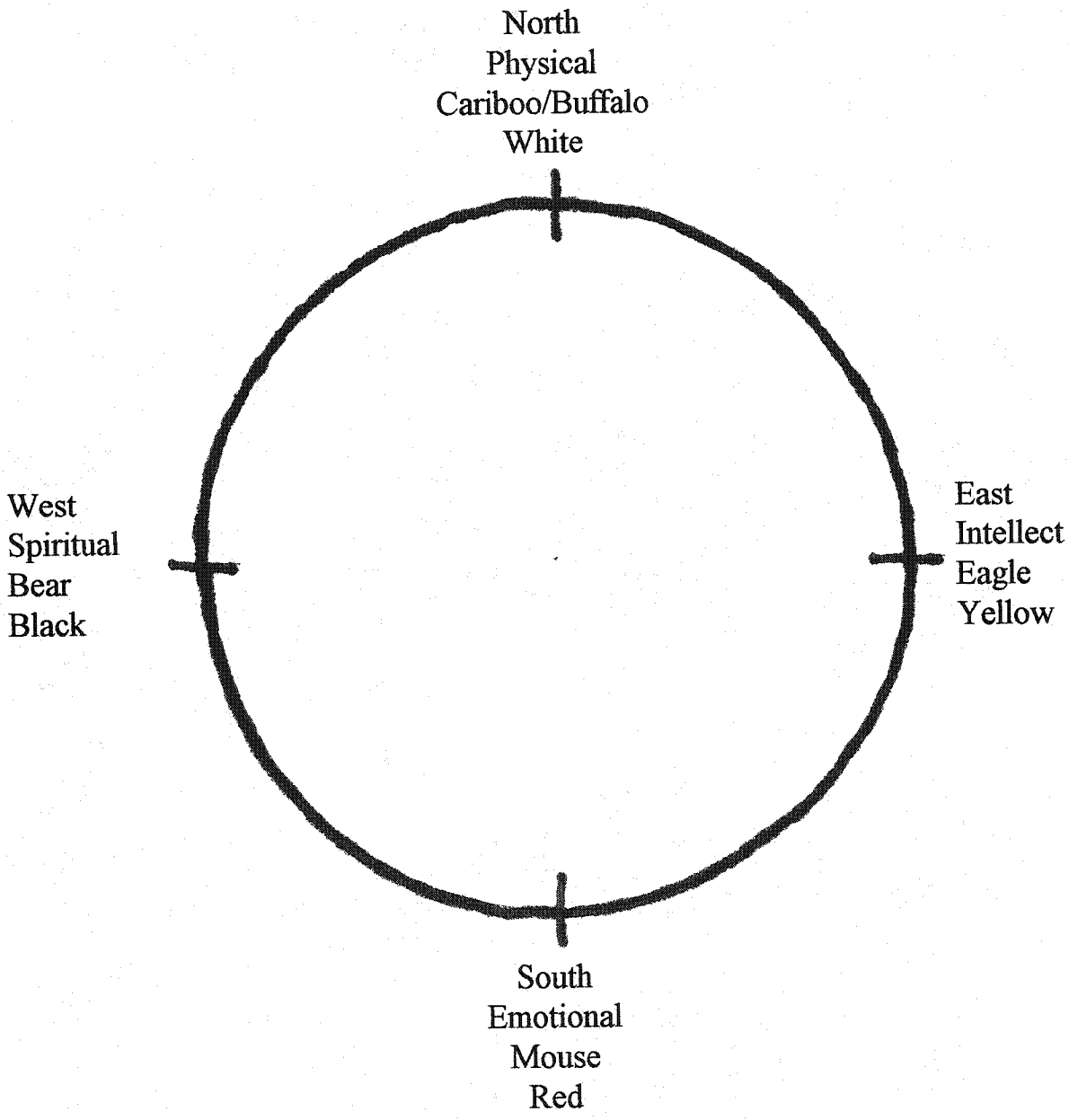
APPENDIX A

Table 10.1 Value Comparison Between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Societies

Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Fostering of individual autonomy by providing foundations for the individual's responsibility for survival; inculcating attitude of individual responsibility and respect; providing a knowledge base in terms of information and awareness of process for decision	Motivating individual autonomy by fostering assertiveness, engendering competitiveness, by providing education base for future work; by training persons in attitudes of persistence, individual creativity; success through punishment and reward method by demanding adherence to rules and acceptable goals.
Sharing as generosity which respects the personhood of all living beings who contribute cooperatively to the well-being of life; striving to bring about the greatest harmony and collective good while honouring the freedom and autonomy of oneself and others.	Sharing as an obligation, to guarantee the right to well-being of all and the right to equal opportunity, while maximizing individual achievement and success in active personal pursuit.
Wholeness as the perception of the undivided entirety of things and the visioning of the interconnectedness of all things.	Totality as the summation of all the parts that make up the whole and the quantifying and objectifying of parts to calculate the connections leading to the total picture.
Kindness, as the desire for harmony and preference for amiability in all inter-personal relations, human and other-than-human.	Charity as an admonition to exercise compassion and benevolence in acceptance of the common humanity of all, acknowledging a primary motivation of personal pursuit of individual development, success and private gain.
Honour as an essential attitude of respect for the freedom and autonomy of other persons, toward other-than-human persons, for Elders, for wisdom, and for the kinship with nature and the forces of life, both known and unknown	Consideration as courtesy and fair play toward peers and equal achievers, and stewardship toward the less fortunate and the things upon which survival and well-being depend, e.g. good order, law, and nature.
Respect for the freedom and autonomy of oneself and others and for the inherent dignity of the human person as well as for the maintenance of the collective harmony and well-being .	Respect for the personal and private property and oneself, along with the right to pursue private enterprise, personal achievement and gain, concurrent with a moral duty to recognize the equality of human persons.
Bravery as strength of character that requires greater inner strength and fortitude in situations of great difficulty or personal danger, while maintaining self-mastery, control, and the rightful dignity of others	Bravery as courage and valour, that requires one to place, even over one's own life and principles, a nobler cause or ideal or higher authority - even if this infringes upon others' rights and freedoms
Honesty as truthfulness and integrity, i.e., to act with the utmost honesty and integrity in all relationships recognizing the inviolable and the inherent autonomy, dignity and freedom of oneself and others.	Honesty as truthfulness and respectability; i.e., acting in accordance with defined laws and principles in an upright and creditable manner, with expectation of the same from others.

APPENDIX B

Medicine Wheel



APPENDIX C

FORM #2

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT OR EXPERIMENT

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. Knowledge of your identity is not required. You will not be required to write your name or any other identifying information on the research materials. Materials will be held in a secure location and will be destroyed after the completion of the study. However, it is possible that, as a result of legal action, the researcher may be required to divulge information obtained in the course of this research to a court or other legal body.

Having been asked by Richard Vedan of the Faculty of Education of Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project experiment, I have read the procedures specified in the document.

I understand the procedures to be used in this experiment and the personal **risks** to me in taking part.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this experiment at any time.

I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the experiment with the researcher named above or with Dean Robin Barrow Dean of the Faculty of Education of Simon Fraser University.

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion, by contacting:
Richard Vedan at
822-3520

I have been informed that the research material will be held confidential by the Principal Investigator.

...2

I agree to meet with the researcher for a one to two hour interview during which time I willl be asked to share information of my childhood, personal and family life and to describe aspects of my relationship with social workers and other helping professionals with whom I have come into contact.

I understand that the meetings will take place during the time period January to February 2001 at a location of my choice.

_____

_____

NAME (please type or print legibly): _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

SIGNATURE: _____ **WITNESS:** _____

DATE: _____

ONCE SIGNED, A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND A SUBJECT FEEDBACK FORM SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE SUBJECT.

APPENDIX D

FORM #5

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SUBJECTS

Title of Project: Angry/violent Aboriginal/First Nations Men and their experiences with Social Workers

Description of the procedures to be followed and a statement of the risks to the subjects and benefits of the research.

Volunteers will be asked to participate in a one to two hour open ended interview to explore the nature of their relationship with social workers during their childhood and adult life. The purpose of the study is to examine aspects of the relationships that develop between service users and service providers that contribute to and detract from healing. Information gained will serve as the basis of developing new treatment methods as well revised curriculum for those studying social work. First Nations individuals, families and communities will benefit from improved and culturally relevant treatment programs for men who are dealing with issues of anger, violence and aggression against others. The immediate benefit for the participants is that the opportunity to tell one's story is a validating experience and an important part of any healing process.

It is recognized that recalling and talking about one's personal life can be evocative and emotionally painful. Assurance of professional help(counselling and care) will be available, if needed. Participants will be provided with a copy of their interview transcript and feedback will be solicited. Scheduled follow-up interviews will also permit participants' to provide further feedback after they have had the opportunity to reflect on their participation.

APPENDIX E

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

"Angry/violent Aboriginal/First Nations men and their experiences with social workers"

Contacts: Richard W. Vedan RSW
Graduate Studies Programs
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University

The purpose of this study is to explore aspects of the relationships that exist between angry/violent Aboriginal/First Nations men and providers of social work services. The findings will be used to develop improved programs and services culturally relevant to individuals and communities.

Across Canada First Nations people, who represent less than three per cent of the population, are disproportionately over-represented as users of health, socio-economic development, and correctional services, and disproportionately under-represented as providers of those same services. In British Columbia, at any given time, 40-50% of the children in the care of the Ministry for Children and Families are First Nations sons and daughters. Many of the children currently in care are the second, third, of in some cases the fourth generation of a family to be apprehended into care.

In the criminal justice and corrections field, First Nations men and women comprise 17% of the federal and provincial inmate population. Studies indicate that many First Nations men are admitted to jail several times a year with the most common offenses being violence against individuals. Other studies estimate that 90 per cent of all adult First

Nations males have spent some time in jail. The consequences of generations of racial, social and economic marginalization are seen as among the contributing factors to the above situation. Studies have also found that a significant proportion of First Nations inmates in federal and provincial correctional institutions were apprehended as children and placed in foster care or adoptive homes.

Social Work graduates are employed in the child protection field as marital/family therapists and child protection workers. They are also active in corrections, where they serve as classifications officers, parole officers, probation officers, and courts worker (criminal and family court). Social Workers are also found providing professional services in agencies delivering medical, mental health and substance abuse programs as well as in community development work.

The Report of The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) 1996 found that family violence, including the several forms of child abuse, continues to be of epidemic proportions in First Nations communities. The RCAP Report also found that the primary perpetrators of violent acts are First Nations males striking out against their spouses and children. Social workers who have been involved with First Nations individuals, families and communities for well over fifty years have been and are a common factor in the lives of the children apprehended and the men incarcerated.

The purpose of this research project is to explore the experiences that First Nations men who are dealing with anger/violence issues have had in their relationships with individuals

in social work positions. Volunteers will be recruited from amongst the men who attend the *Warriors Against Violence Society* twice weekly group sessions. Others will be contacted via snow-ball recruitment method if necessary. Individual interviews will be conducted during January-February 2001. The men who volunteer will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will be one or two hours in length. The interviews will be conducted at a time convenient to the participant and at a location of their choice.

The focus of the research will be to explore aspects of the helping relationship which have been of benefit to healing as well as those aspects which participants have experienced as negative and/or toxic. The research findings will be contribute to the development of curriculum used to prepare social workers who will be working in our communities and with our families. The ultimate benefit will be the higher quality, and more culturally congruent and relevant services available to our families and communities