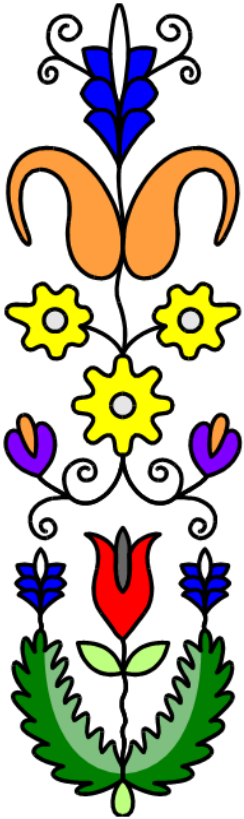


**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND  
TREATMENT ACTIVITIES  
FOR TRIBAL TANF PARTICIPANTS**

**Bonnie Clairmont,  
Tribal Law and Policy Institute  
Lonna Hunter, Sheila Wellstone Institute**

# Overview



- Domestic Violence: What is it?
- Impact of battering on Native women and children and family
- Utilizing our cultural values as effective interventions
- Myths and truths about domestic violence
- Culturally based economic justice



# Discussion

- What does the phrase 'domestic violence' mean to you?
- What acts do you think qualify as 'domestic violence'?



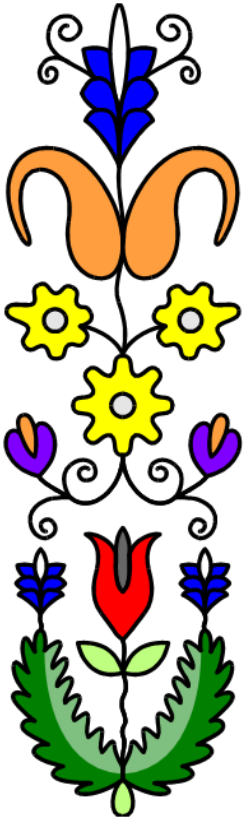
# Statistics

-61.4% of all American Indian women will be physically assaulted in their lifetime.  
(USDOJ/CDC 1998)

-Native women experience the highest rate of violence of any group in the United States.

-17% of Native women will be stalked during their lifetime.

# The Impact of a Batterers Violence

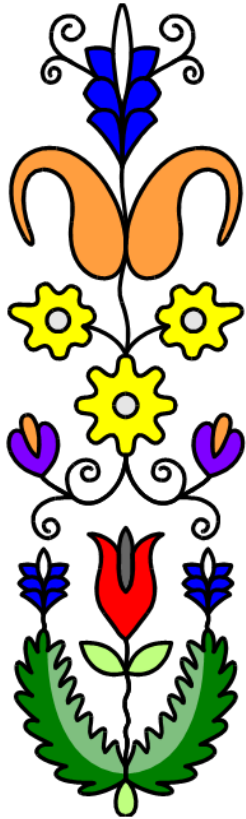


*On women...*

- Physical, emotional and sexual assault
- Results in her ability to be physically and emotionally available to her children
- Shame, guilt
- Forced to make impossible choices
- Fear, hopelessness, powerlessness

# The Impact of a Batterers Violence

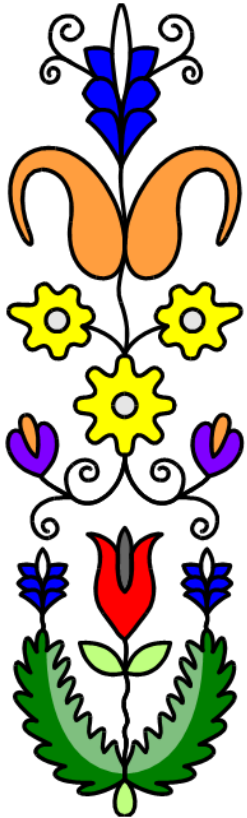
*On children...*



- Impact on values and beliefs about the sacredness of women
- Walk on eggshells in their own home
- Extremes in behavior
- Fear, shame, guilt
- Children's needs are compromised
- Short and long-term impact
  - May develop high risk behaviors

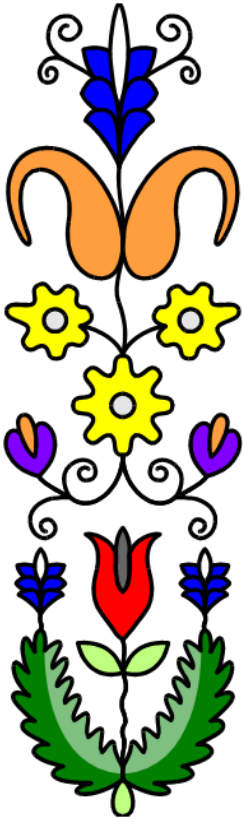
# The Impact of a Batterers Violence

*On the mother-child relationship...*



- Models disrespect towards mother and women in general
- Manipulate children to blame their mother
- Women forced to comply with wishes of battering father/step-father
- As a result of the battering father/step-father's behaviors, children exhibit behaviors that challenge a battered woman's ability to parent

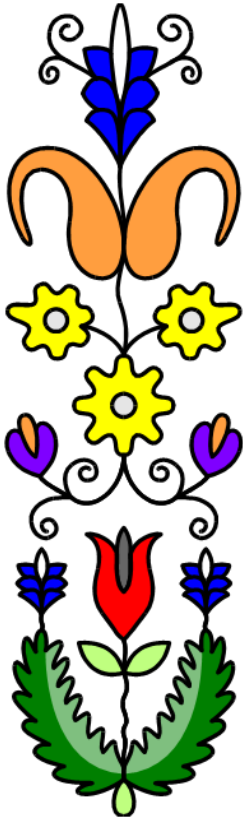
# Harm to the mother-child relationship



- The negative impact that a battering father or step-father has on the mother-child relationship can last long after the mother has left the batterer or he has stopped his use of violence



# Repairing the Harm



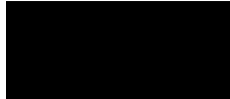
Both the mother and child  
– individually and as a *unit* –  
need our help in repairing the damage

# SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS

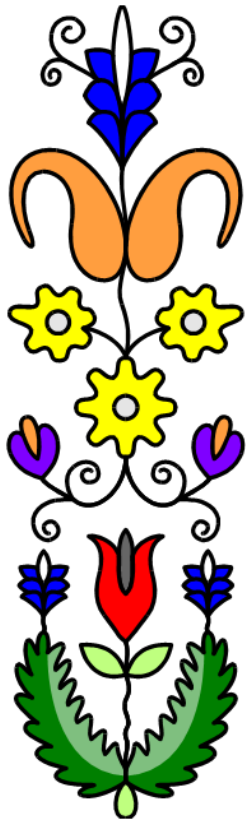
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# *How can you...*



-Teach every child in your community:

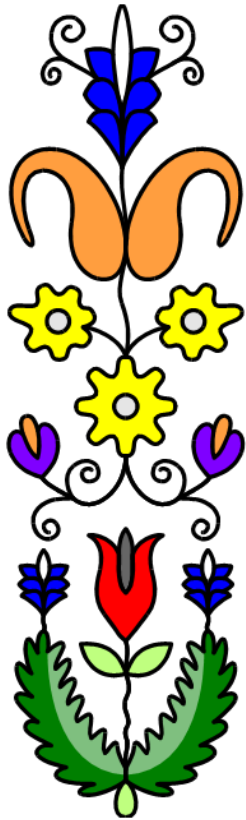
-Battering and sexual assault is not part of our traditions

-Women and children are sacred and should be treated with respect and dignity

-To care for every human being – to have empathy and with our values

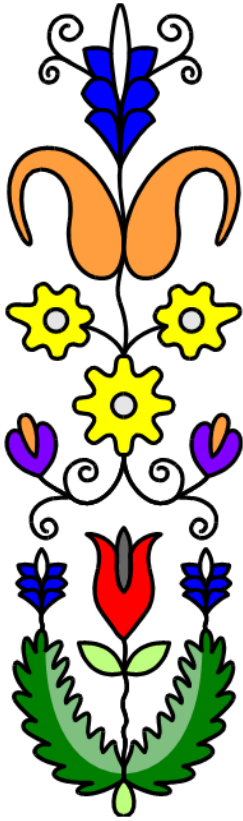
-The teachings of our ancestors

# Considerations as an Advocate



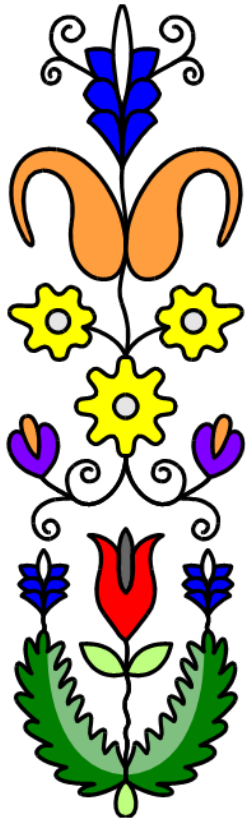
- The needs of mothers and children are inextricably linked
  - protect mothers and children AS A UNIT
  - Strengthening the mother-child UNIT gives children their best chance of surviving the abuse
  - Helps them to remain resilient to its effects
  - Increases a battered woman and her children's chances of escaping the abuse safely

# Considerations as an Advocate



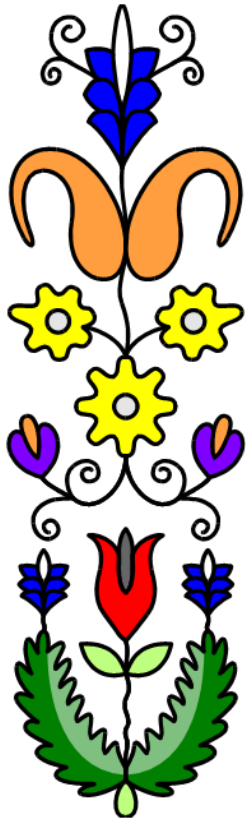
- Help battered mothers and children re-frame her understanding of what she and the children have been through
- Build upon her strengths and resiliency to effectively parent, provide for, and protect her children-
  - Assist her in identifying and listing the ways in which she is a successful parent and how she has protected her children

# Considerations as an Advocate



- Tell a battered woman good things about her kids
- Let her know that it takes time to recover– that no one can ever totally sever the mother-child relationship
- Tell her that usually children will come to realize all she has done for them; that she has not been abusive
  - that they'll come around but not necessarily in the time we want or expect

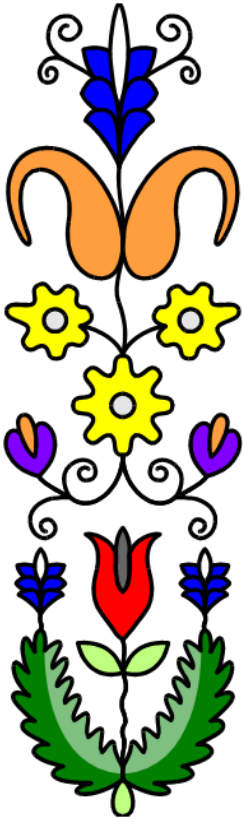
# Considerations as an Advocate



-Talk about the responsibility and challenges of parenting - even when not being battered – discuss additional challenges as a result of living with a battering father’s violence

-Help strengthen healthy ties with family and friends - those who will have a positive influence on the children.

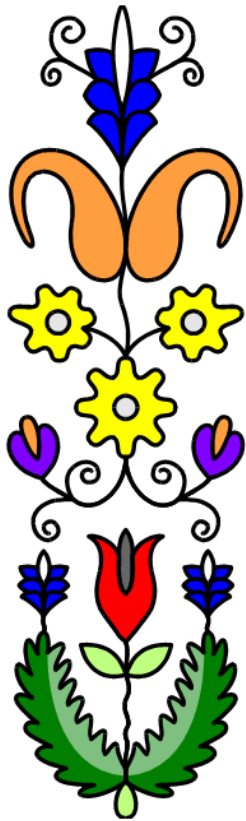
# Considerations as an Advocate



- Listen with support and without judgment
- Disagree with negative things said about a child's mother
- Provide support during a time of crisis
- Pay attention to what's really going on
- Be thoughtful in your responses
- Show respect to a battered mother around her children

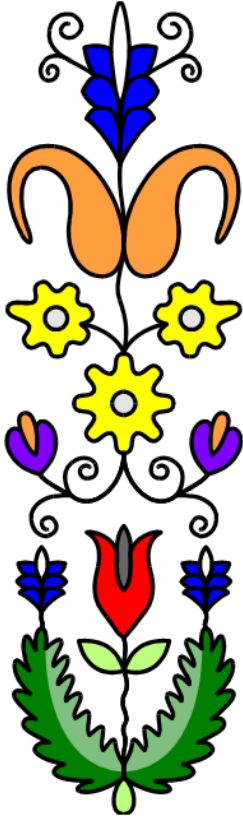


# Considerations as an Advocate



- Help children unlearn violence
- Give children messages that their mother is worthy of respect
- Tell children that the abuse is not their fault and there is nothing wrong with them – or with their mother
- Let children know the good things their mother does
- Respect the wishes of children and of battered mothers

# Our Responsibility to Every Family



-What can you say or do to help restore the financial needs of the battered mother and children?

How do children benefit?

How do battered women benefit?

How do batterers benefit?

How will this help restore your community to balance and the teachings of our ancestors?



# TRUE OR FALSE?

**Men are victims of domestic violence as often as women are.**



# TRUE OR FALSE?

**A battered woman leaves her partner  
many times.**



# TRUE OR FALSE?

**Domestic violence is due to poverty or lack of education.**



# TRUE OR FALSE?

**"Battering" overstates the case. Few women are actually beaten.**



# TRUE OR FALSE?

**Men who abuse are violent because they cannot control their anger and frustration.**




# TRUE OR FALSE?

**A battered woman has many legitimate reasons for staying in a violent relationship.**





# Why Do Native Women Stay?



National Family Violence Survey suggested that rates of “abusive violence” to women with annual incomes below \$10,000 are more than 3.5 times those found in households with incomes over \$40,000 [1].

[1] Straus, M. H. (1990). Injury and frequency of assault and the ‘representative sample fallacy’ in measuring wife beating and child abuse. In M. H. Straus & R. J. Gelles (Eds.), *Physical violence in American families: Risk factors and adaptations to violence in 8,145 families*, (pp.. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press.



## Purposes of the TANF program as described in section 601 of the Social Security Act

- provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
- end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and
- encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.



# Achieving economic justice and security is dependent upon:

- Availability of social and economic supports (child support, child care, housing, transportation, public benefits);
- Opportunities to retain a job that pays a living wage and based on a system of equal pay for women;
- Education and job training programs and
- Access to resources to aid them in developing life skills.



# Life Generated Risks

- Childcare
- Transportation
- Battered women in shelter
- Safety concerns
- Lack of support system



## Batterer Generated Risks:

- Engaging in violence before key events such as tests or job interviews
- Threatening or harassing partners at work
- Preventing them from going to work or school
- Failing to provide promised child care or transportation
- Refusing to pay bills



# Strategies for Improving Services

- Working with the TANF and child support enforcement system to provide needed support for women leaving abusive relationships with children.
- College applications/financial aid assistance information
- Employment seeking skills/Interview techniques
- Housing advocacy: Work with tribal housing authorities to prioritize housing needs for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking to obtain affordable, decent housing, home weatherization and grants for home improvements.



# Strategies for Using TANF Funds to Better DV clients

Economic Advocacy with tribal leadership, programs to leverage and direct more resources for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Some tribes are developing buffalo herds and; as well as developing projects to grow/produce traditional foods distributing food products to tribal members. Economic advocacy would include advocating that victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking would be priority for receiving such resources in order to improve the health conditions for women leaving abusive relationships and helping them extend their food budgets.

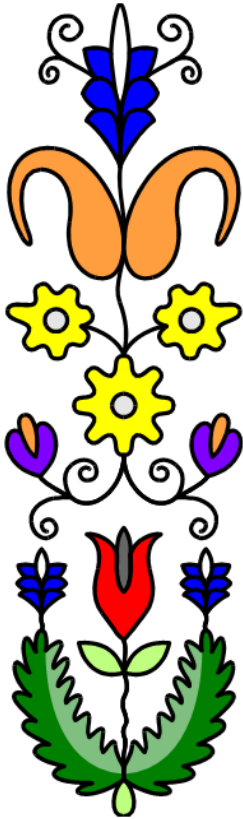




# Strategies for Using TANF Funds to Better DV clients

- Development of Tribal Child care co-ops
- Development of Private entrepreneurships & co-ops for victims to enter small business to sell crafts, beadwork, etc.
- Availability of life skills classes taught by aunties, grandmothers on making money stretch, feeding large families on a budget, cooking of traditional foods in order to improve nutritional needs of low income families.
- Navigating the Victims Compensation Assistance Program

# What Makes an Effective Intervention?



- Every intervener (individual or agency) will fully understand the dynamics of battering and what women and children experience
- A coordinated community response
- Accountability for stopping the behavior rests solely on the perpetrator
- Help to repair the harm caused by a batterers violence and control



# Strengths in Indigenous Beliefs

“Our cultures have always held women in high esteem. As life and care giver, nurtures and providers women have always been the most crucial element to a healthy society and healthy family. That respect and that value must endure for Indian Country.”

-Tex Hall, President, NCAI, August 2003