



# UPHOLDING DIGNITY & JUSTICE

## Kaska Advocates Training 2019 - 2020

**Kaska:** Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī: Dene 'A'Nezen  
Gedi' G'ūtīe Sū'aī dege.

**English:** Following Our Peoples' Way: Building  
a Circle of Dignity and Justice



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The vision and leadership of Kaska Dena women, supported by Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS) and its Executive Director Ann Maje Raider, is responsible for the Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī training project. Grounded in Dene A'Nezen traditional law and ancestral cultural knowledge, over a five-year period the project will provide participants with an understanding of response-based practice, and with advocacy skills to respond to, support, and restore dignity and safety to survivors of gender-based violence.

Indigenous Advocates participating in the project bring valuable cultural knowledge and lived experience to the training. We appreciate their heartfelt commitment to bring about meaningful change in homes, workplaces, institutions, and communities, which inspires us in this work for justice and peace. We thank LAWS Board members Leda Jules, Mary Maje, Dorothy Smith, Mary Charlie, Melissa Charlie and Maryann Dick for their contributions, along with many other Kaska Dena Elders and advisors. We acknowledge Help and Hope for Families, Liard First Nation, Dena K'éh Justice

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Principals Dr. Allan Wade and Dr. Shelly Dean (Bonnah) from the Centre for Response-Based Practice facilitated the training, and provided resource materials and counselling services. Previous work by LAWS contractors Rachael Cardiff and Art Stephenson also contributed to the development of this manual, written by Lois Moorcroft. Final production was completed thanks to support from Naomi Schatz and Vanessa James of Beringia Community Planning Inc. We would like to thank Martina Volfova for contributing photographs (on the cover page and throughout the report).

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# INTRODUCTION

Liard Aboriginal Women's Society's vision for the 5-year (2019-2024) project Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī Following Our People's Way: Building a Circle of Dignity and Justice is to connect Kaska Dena families, Elders, and youth with each other and with their Dena Keyeh land, culture and ancestral traditions, to honour individual and collective resistance to violence, and to learn advocacy skills to help women and children feel safer and supported in the community.

Kaska Dena have existed from time immemorial and have occupied and used the lands, waters, and resources of their traditional territory throughout history. Kaska Dena share a common culture based on their clan system, a common language with distinct dialects, and a common history tied to stories, myths, the oral traditions of Elders, and traditional laws. Before Europeans arrived, Kaska Dena occupied and hunted in an area of approximately 240,000 km<sup>2</sup> in parts of what today is known as Yukon, Northwest Territories, and northern British Columbia.

**The Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī Advocates program incorporates Dene A'Nezen, Kaska law that is passed on through Kaska Dena matrilineal kinship lines. It's meaning is summarized as:**

*We are held in the arms of our land and taught about our place in Creation. We call this Dena A'Nezen, the law of our land.*

*We are taught to honour all of Creation, from the Sky above to the Earth below, to all that lies between, to all things large and small, and to all things seen and unseen.*

*The land speaks to us today as it has to our ancestors of long ago. It is the source of Dena A'Nezen, teaching us about who we are, and about our place in Creation. It holds the memory of our people and shows us the way to live in harmony with all of Creation.*

*The ways of the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society are the ways of Dena A'Nezen. Dena A'Nezen opposes violence against the land and against each other, calling on us to be mindful of our words and actions, to uphold fairness, care and harmony in our relationships with all of Creation, and to know our place.*



The Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī Advocates project is designed to build a core group of Advocates in Watson Lake who have training in response-based practice and Kaska Dena principles and teachings of dignity, justice and healing. The first year of funding supported three days of training each month from October 2019 to March 2020. Dr. Shelly Bonnah and Dr. Allan Wade delivered training on response-based practice to help Advocates gain interviewing skills to better respond to, support, and restore dignity and safety for all survivors of gender-based violence. The training will build on the basic concepts and skills presented in the first year, covering advocacy skills, communications, relationship-building, and organizing violence prevention activities and community campaigns. As they build their social networks and gain more knowledge and skills through training and work placement experiences participants will have more access to future employment opportunities. Advocates will fill an important gap in the community by supporting survivors and working for change.

Kaska Dena ancestors and ceremony are part of each training session. Being connected to their land and culture makes Kaska Dena thrive. Annual Tū Chō Elders Camp gatherings is an opportunity for cultural practice and reflection that strengthens Advocates'

spirit and resolve. Creating a Circle of Support for the Advocates to support them throughout the project attends to their well-being. During the first year of the program, regular meetings with Liard Aboriginal Women's Society's companion Youth for Dignity program at Watson Lake Secondary School, with students, Elders and facilitators enhanced culture, connection, and advocacy actions for participants in both programs.

Land is medicine. Respect for Indigenous relationships, language, land, and ceremony are necessary to bringing about constructive change to the policies and practices of colonial institutions and the behaviours of people working in them. Kaska Dena people have clung to their identity, and refused to relinquish their relationships with their families. Understanding and accepting this ever-present Indigenous resistance to the violence of colonial oppression, whether it's the theft of land, the separation of family members in residential school, child welfare or justice systems, violence in policing, or racist treatment by professionals, requires humility; this new understanding of the past is a difficult but necessary adjustment on the part of people in positions of authority within these institutions.

# INTRODUCTION *(Continued)*

Advocates bring valuable prior knowledge, lived experience and cultural knowledge to the training. The training schedule was flexible and accommodated participants needs as they arose. In this way, cultural knowledge and Indigenous perspectives are built into the program delivery model. Disclosures of personal stories about past gender-based violence and negative social responses were an opportunity for the program facilitator to ask response-based questions about what happened and for Advocates to recognize their resistance. Understanding the deliberate nature of the violence and discussing their resistance to it made survivors feel stronger. Advocates also built connection and community as members of the group revealed their experiences of violence and supported one another for their courage in sharing truth-telling in these stories.

During the first year of the program, participants broke down isolation, honed their advocacy skills, and spoke up to protect the living. The systemic failure of the criminal justice system to properly investigate and lay charges when Kaska women are raped or murdered exposes a lack of accountability from the police, prosecution, the courts and society at large. Advocates prepared letters to question agencies, institutions and political leaders and hold them to account.

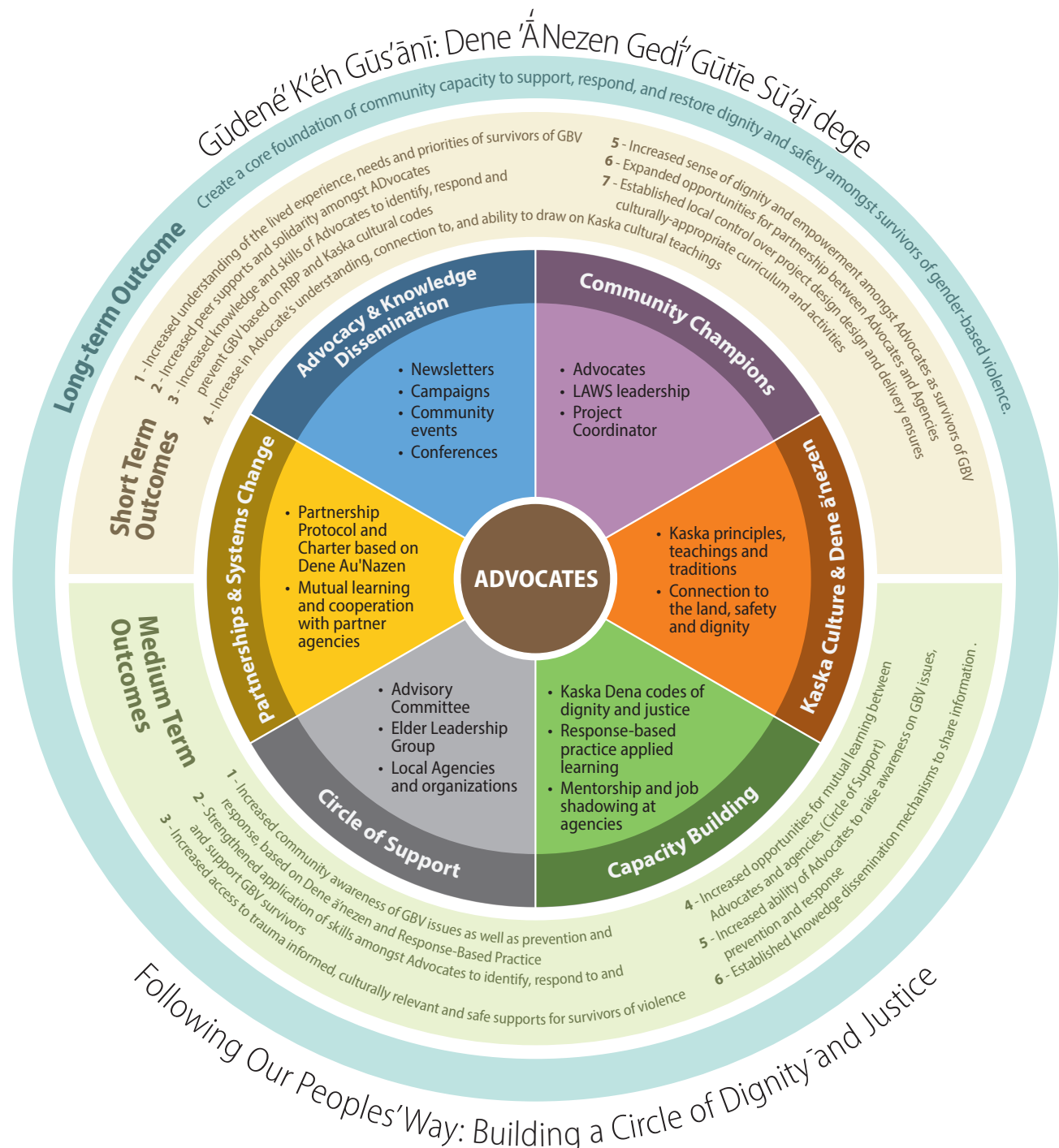
This manual is a summary of the training content from the first year of the Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī Advocates program. It profiles the Advocates' collective work to speak up for truth and justice and promote Dene A'Nazen. There's much more to do in future years. We look forward to continuing this work.



# TRAINING CONTENT

This section captures a summary of what was learned during the first year of the Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī Advocates program, which will be built upon throughout the 5-year project (2019-2024).

**PROJECT PILLARS:** This Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī project is built on the following 6 Pillars that will support a team of Advocates who will build community awareness of violence against women and provide support to survivors. The Pillars set the foundation for the program, including the approach and short, medium and long-term outcomes.



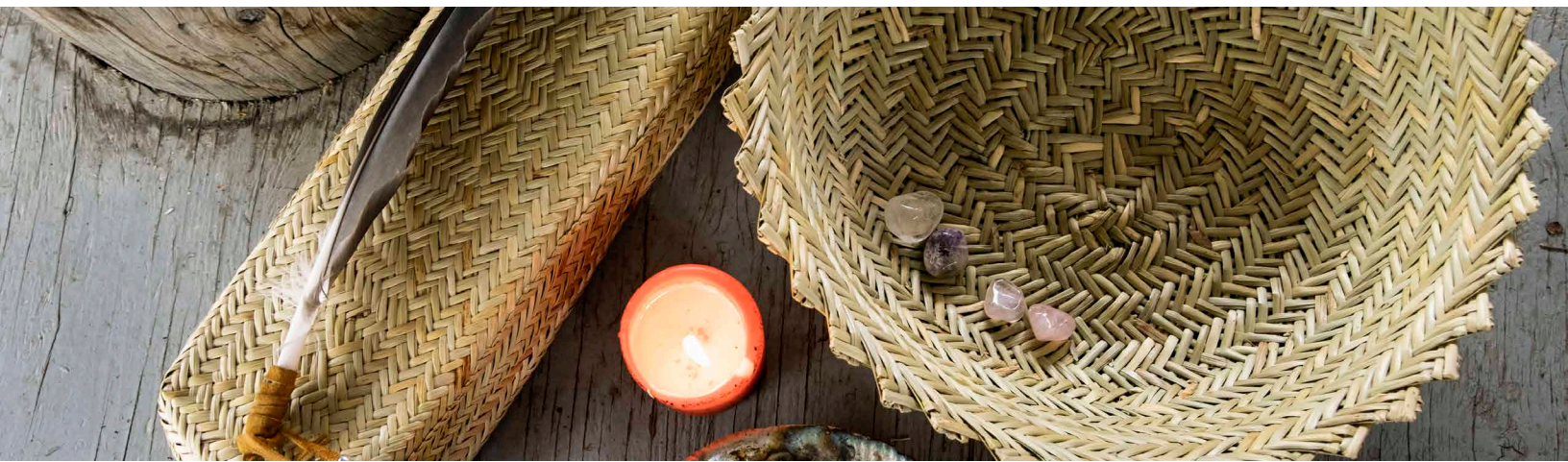
# RESPONSE-BASED PRACTICE

**Response-based practice (RBP)** is a specialized framework for responding to violence, broadly defined, and other forms of oppression and adversity. Response-based practice is evidence-based in that it is used successfully in diverse contexts domestically and internationally in social services and forensic settings, by independent practitioners.

The Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society has contributed to the development of response-based practice for 20 years. The voices and teachings of Kaska people, including people who survived the prison camps that are euphemistically called “residential schools”, have been instrumental in the development of responses-based practice from ethical and practical points of view. Principals at the Centre for Response-based Practice have published original articles, chapters and books that are widely cited by other professionals.

In addition, the core tenets of response-based practice (pages 3-4) are supported in diverse literary forms across cultural contexts: scholarship in social sciences and humanities, human rights and social justice work, memoir and autobiography, and children’s literature.

Professional and scholarly literature calls for programs that offer informed supports to victims and community-based education that explore the factors that promote and enable diverse forms of violence. Response-based practice examines the strategies of violence, the functional links between diverse forms of violence (e.g., colonial domination, rape and sexualized assault, murder, land theft, child abduction, racism, intimate partner violence), the tactics of ever-present resistance, the importance of dignity, the connection between violence and language, and the central role of social network and institutional responses.



Centre for Response – Based Practice



# CORE TENETS OF RESPONSE- BASED PRACTICE RELATING TO VIOLENCE

(Coates, L. & Wade, A. 2020)

*“I feel I learned so much more about understanding violence from a Response-Based approach – it’s very honest, direct, and action-oriented. It’s about building awareness of all forms of violence.” - Advocate*

- 1. Humans are best understood as social actors:** Individuals respond to one other continuously and orient to one another as social actors with the capacity to choose.
- 2. Analysis of social interaction in social-material context is essential to socially just research and practice:** Close analysis of social interaction in social-material context is the essential starting point for effective interventions.
- 3. Dignity is central to individual and collective well-being:** Social interaction is organized largely around dignity. Even small affronts can be met with intense responses. Violence is an affront to dignity but not all affronts to dignity entail violence.
- 4. Violence is social and unilateral:** Violence is social in that it is committed in specific interactions that involve at least two people. Violence is unilateral in that it entails actions by one person or group against the will and well-being of another person or group.
- 5. Resistance is ever-present:** Individuals respond to and resist violence and other forms of injustice as they are committed and often long after. Resistance can be open and direct or subtle and disguised depending on the situation.
- 6. Violence is, with rare exceptions, deliberate:** People who perpetrate violence anticipate and work to suppress victim resistance. Even so-called “explosive” or “out of control” acts of violence typically entail deliberate action.
- 7. The quality of social network and institutional responses is crucial:** Victims and offenders are constantly mindful of actual and possible social network and institutional responses. The quality of social responses in cases of violence is closely linked to the forms of victim responses/resistance, offender strategies, and outcomes in the short and long term.

# CORE TENETS OF RESPONSE- BASED PRACTICE RELATING TO VIOLENCE

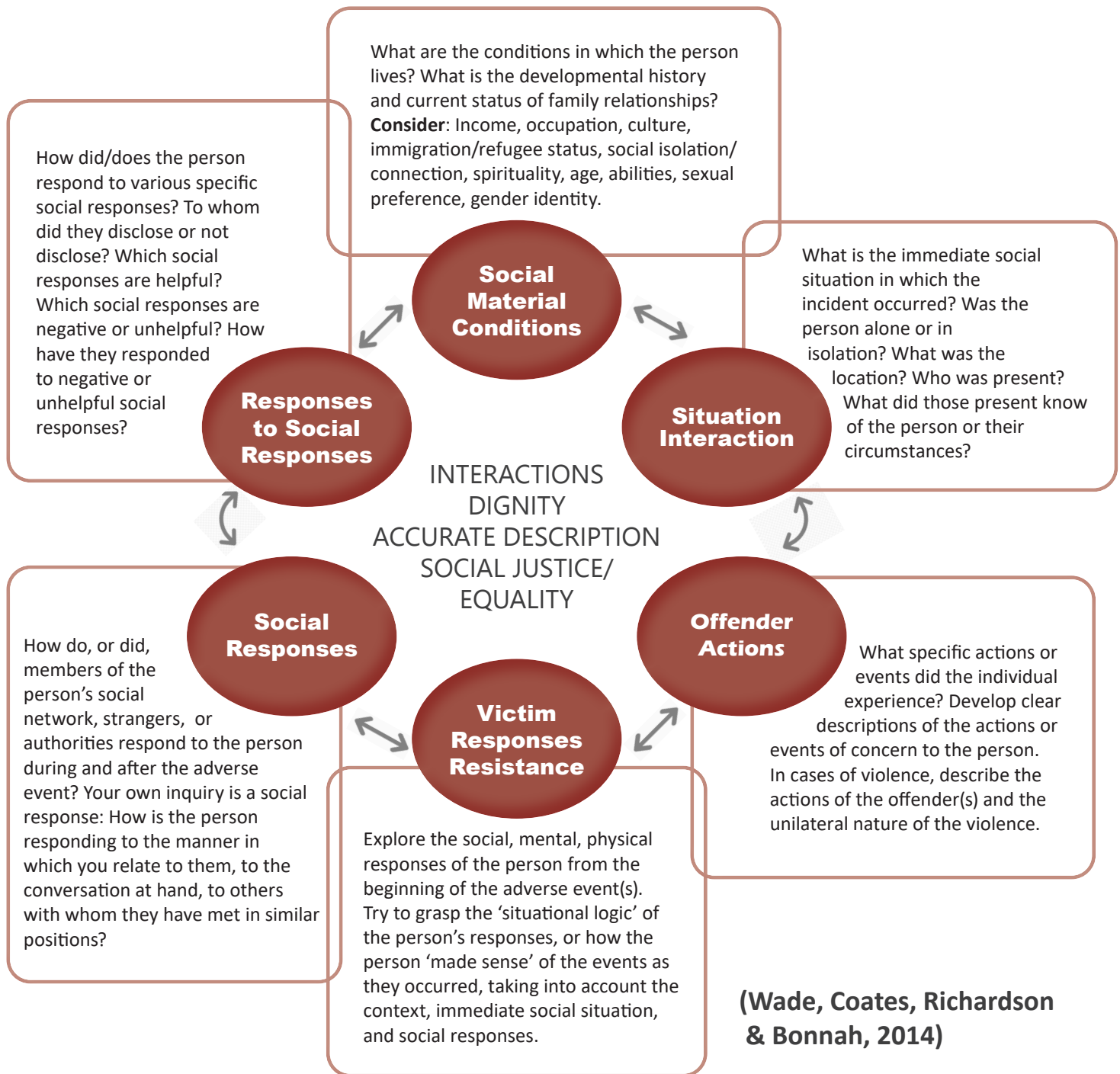
*“Dedicated to culture and upholding pre-existing knowledge and identity – RBP acknowledges pre-existing abilities and shines the light on them.” - Facilitator*

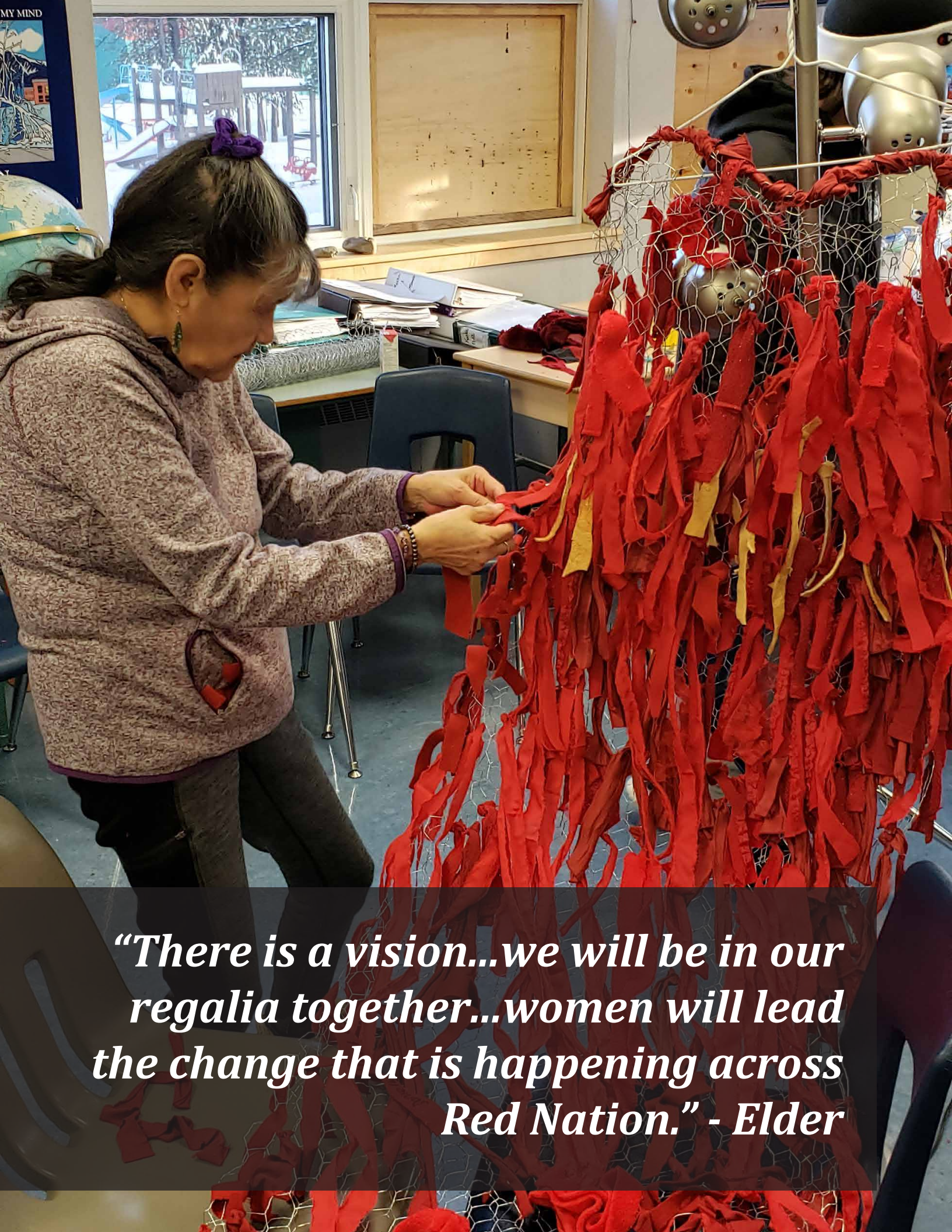
8. **Accurate descriptions are essential, but no descriptions are neutral:** Where there is violence, the question of “which words are fitted to which deeds” is crucial (Danet, 1980, p. 189).
9. **Misrepresentation (verbal and written) is common in cases of violence:** Language can be used to (a) conceal or reveal violence, (b) obscure or clarify perpetrator responsibility, (c) conceal or elucidate victim responses and resistance, (d) blame and pathologize, or contest the blaming and pathologizing of victims.
10. **The placement of “cause” is a theoretical choice with practical/moral implications:** Theories of “cause” contain premises that are open to analysis, proffer assumptions about the character and psychology of people who are victimized and people who commit violence, and powerfully direct social network and institutional responses.



# RESPONSE-BASED CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

## Assessment Tool, Documentation Instrument & Response-Based Interview Guide





***“There is a vision...we will be in our regalia together...women will lead the change that is happening across Red Nation.” - Elder***

# ADVOCACY

Ann Maje Raider, Executive Director of Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS) opened the first session with an overview of its history of promoting Kaska culture, language and traditional practices as a means of ending violence against women. An Advocate is someone who stands up for people's human rights, equality, dignity, and safety. LAWS advocacy projects include its participation in building and maintaining a coalition of equality-seeking rights-based women's groups to ensure Indigenous, feminist, activist voices were heard on the Advisory Committee to the Review of Yukon's Police Force 2010. LAWS subsequently secured multi-year funding for its projects Bridging the Gap and Together for Justice: cross-cultural conversations between Indigenous women and the RCMP. LAWS worked with the RCMP to develop the Together for Justice protocol signed in 2013, a commitment that the RCMP will work with LAWS and the community to improve police responses to those who report gender-based violence in Watson Lake. Submissions to the 2010 police review from advocacy groups and the Together for Justice journey from 2011 to 2014 generated documents and protocols that form part of the training resources for this new Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī advocacy project.

A video of LAWS expert testimony to the National Public Inquiry into Missing and Murdered

Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) provides lessons in advocacy and leadership, preserving dignity, and achieving justice in institutions and society. In its MMIWG [presentation](#), LAWS called for action that included long-term stable funding for Indigenous women's groups to continue offering proven Kaska language, cultural and land-based healing programs, Indigenous led child protection models that support families, nation-wide implementation of Jordan's Principle, and decolonization, as means to stop the murders and violence against women. Participants were inspired by the possibilities for institutional change by continuing to engage with the RCMP through the Together for Justice protocol, and by advocating for meaningful Yukon Government action in response to the MMIWG Inquiry to name two examples.

An Advocate speaks out against violence and injustice. Advocates speak the truth, whether it makes them popular or not. Advocates support other people and help them use their own voice. Anti-violence Advocates reach out to men asking them to speak up for justice for missing and murdered women.

The inset on pages 22-23 list acts of resistance carried out by Advocates during Year 1 of the training program, such as letter writing and public demonstrations of advocacy.

*"I joined a collective of all taking a stand. I don't feel I am alone." - Advocate*

*"Those fighting before us are gone- and moving forward it will be the Advocates work. Advocates - its going to be your work, your job to continue this forward." - Elder*

# DIGNITY

*“Dene A’Nezen is the highest law upholding the dignity of animals, fish, birds, and people on the earth, our mother. The rivers are her veins.”*

**Dignity is safety, dignity is care, dignity is safe touch. Dignity is fundamental to human interaction and to a person’s well-being.**

People are healthy when they are connected to their land and culture. You know you’re healthy because you’re fighting back against being treated badly. Whether it’s interpersonal or environmental or colonial violence you’re fighting. A “trauma-informed approach” is based on fixing the mind/body/spirit of the victim rather than on a study of violence. A response-based approach is mindful of the dignity of women who’ve been violated, and would ask *“Where did you get the strength of spirit to keep fighting back?”* or *“What did you do to regain your power and control?”*. If you only notice the pain and violence you’re not helping someone. You have a better understanding of violence when you study people’s activism and advocacy against it.



## RESISTANCE IS EVER-PRESENT

Response-based practice is a way of understanding violence and working with victims and perpetrators to support their recovery within a social change process. Response-based practice is a therapeutic approach to people who have experienced some form of adversity or oppression with a view to promoting recovery by creating safety, attending to dignity and by highlighting a person’s resistance to mistreatment and violence.

To understand behaviour as resistance, people should ask - What if instead of depressed, she is

oppressed? What if instead of insomniac he is wakeful...listening to ensure that his little brother is safe from harm?

What if instead of low self-esteem, she has low social-esteem...just like anybody would who felt like everyone around them had turned their backs...called them names...? What if instead of having an attachment disorder, she’s some kind of attachment specialist? She can figure out quickly who to trust, who’s a game-player, and who will leave her...she connects with people accordingly.

# SOCIAL NETWORK & INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

Social service and legal institutions often use mutualizing language to describe unilateral acts of violence. It's important to tell it like it is and use accurate descriptions of violence that fit words to deeds. An "abusive relationship" is better described as wife assault or a beating.

In a sentencing decision, what is called an argument or conflict or marriage problem may in reality be an attack or an assault. Factually, "having sex with a five-year-old child" is the act of raping a child.



*Tū Chō Gathering, Summer 2020*

A more accurate representation of violence will state who did what to whom and analyze the operations of power. Accurate descriptions reveal the deliberate nature of violence, who is responsible for it and how a victim resisted violence, and challenge negative stereotypes of victims. RBP teaches people to examine whether offenders are being cast as hapless individuals who are overwhelmed by forces they do not understand and cannot control. RBP gives participants skills to recognize and challenge language that portrays victims as passive, submissive, dysfunctional, or inviting abuse.

Women-blaming theories that say women are responsible for seeking out the "bad boy" have become part of the culture for treating victims of sexualized violence and wife-beating. These theories don't ask victims how they responded to the violence, mutualize violence, and cancel resistance. They don't see that men take the trouble to be nice at the beginning of a relationship, you didn't pick a violent man. They don't recognize language and culture, they see the problem as being in a woman's brain.

# TACTICS OF RESISTANCE & STRATEGIES OF VIOLENCE

Violence is always an affront to dignity. Resistance is a behaviour that protects dignity and sounds the alarm. People do things to oppose the abuse and to keep their self-respect and dignity. Forms of resistance may be standing up against the perpetrator to try to stop or prevent violence, imagining a better life, disengaging and making themselves very busy to avoid being at home, not doing what the perpetrator wants them to do. The victim's resistance most directly reveals the deliberate nature of the violence. Concealing resistance means concealing the violence; offenders suppress victim's resistance to violence.

Response-based practice recognizes that violence is a deliberate choice. It's not caused by someone drinking, it's caused by someone deciding to be violent. Alcohol is the weaponry of violence, a source of fear and unpredictability, but never the cause. Addiction is a response to something, and it isn't a problem in your brain, it isn't hereditary. Alcohol may be used as an escape, to numb out pain, or to fuel up for violence. RBP affirms people are able to change if they want to.

Violence is the most urgent problem of our time. Most people diagnosed with "mental illness" report violence in their lives, the violence of colonialism, racism and poverty, violence in childhood by being removed from their homes, sexualized violence, homelessness, and other forms of violence often enabled or caused by government action or inaction. The child welfare system needs

to answer when families and Advocates ask about the well-being of Indigenous children. In a spirit of activism LAWS asked Yukon Government officials for statistics about the medications Kaska children were prescribed because parents have raised concerns. Colonial institutions need to be accountable for ensuring that people are safe, that children "in care" are not being over-prescribed medications, and that they are able to maintain connections with their Indigenous roots. If we become better at addressing violence, we're better at addressing the many serious public health problems in Indigenous communities, such as addictions, that are associated with violence.

Although violence is the single biggest mental health problem, mental health professionals are taught to diagnose people without context and get very little training about the nature of violence. When people disclose violence, professionals may not ask what is going on, or inquire into social and material conditions, the immediate social situation, offender actions, victim responses and resistance, social responses, and responses to social responses. Social services workers too need training on how to interview men who've been violent. They interview the woman, put the files in her name, the woman becomes the problem, and they don't interview or intervene with the men. A response-based assessment tool (page 5) gets accurate descriptions of interactions and promotes social justice and equality.

*"Violence against women is worse since COVID. Women are being abused globally." - Advocate*

*"Violence is about isolating."  
- LAWS Executive Director*



# TACTICS OF RESISTANCE & SOCIAL RESPONSES



Social responses refer to how family, friends, police, medical professionals, counsellors, media, government, and the public respond after someone reports violence. Believing people is crucial. The quality of social responses, positive or negative, are more important to the recovery from violence and adversity than the event itself. Socially just responses depend on getting accurate accounts of the violence. They inquire about people's resistance and how they protected themselves and others.

People chose who to tell when they've been violated, because of the real risk they won't be believed. As a group, everyone needs to feel that you would get a positive, dignified, compassionate response or we're a failure. We need to have clear ideas about what we're doing, how we go about it. We're trying to improve the way people respond to violence at every turn and also trying to end violence.

Response-based practice recognizes that people are smart and proficient. It's not only a therapy model, it's a philosophical orientation and a social justice approach. RBP pays attention to the social conditions of a person's life: are they socially isolated or socially connected? These things matter. Institutional responses can mutualize social problems, professionals will put on a label and make it equally a child's problem where a caregiver or governmental actions are abusive.

Dr. Bonnah deconstructed victim-blaming through a modern retelling of "Little Red Riding Hood" and a slide presentation "*Why do I choose these Men?*". It reveals the Wolf's use of disguise and how victim-blaming attitudes fail to investigate what's really going on. Sam the Sham, Little Red Riding Hood: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b\\_K5b-JNc7E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_K5b-JNc7E)



*“Maybe you have justice issues, not anxiety issues?” - Facilitator*  
*- “There is nothing wrong with me, I have justice issues” - Advocate*

# UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL & MATERIAL CONTEXT

A chart presenting an assessment tool, documentation instrument and response-based interview guide (Wade and Bannah, 2014) outlines a response-based contextual analysis of violence that looks at interactions, respects the dignity of the victim, accurately describes the violence, and promotes social justice and equality.

## Guiding Questions:

- ◇ *What are the conditions in which the person lives?*
- ◇ *What is the developmental history and current status of family relationships?*
  
- ◇ *What is the immediate social situation in which the Incident occurred?*
- ◇ *Was the person alone or in isolation? What was the location?*
- ◇ *Who was present?*
- ◇ *What did those present know of the person or their circumstances?*
- ◇ *What specific actions or events did the individual experience?*

## Responses:

**Consider:** income, occupation, culture, immigration/refugee status, social isolation/connection, spirituality, age, abilities, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

**Develop:** clear descriptions of the actions or events of concern to the person. In cases of violence, describe the actions of the offender(s) and the unilateral nature of the violence.

**Explore:** the social, mental, physical responses of the person from the beginning of the adverse event(s).

**Try to grasp:** the “situational logic” of the person’s responses, or how the person “made sense” of the events as they occurred, taking into account the context, immediate social situation, and social responses.

*“Gives me my power back. I’m not going to be abused anymore. I’ve come a long way in my journey - I’m learning to take my power back.” - Advocate*

# POWER OF LANGUAGE

## HOW LANGUAGE IS USED TO:

CONCEAL VIOLENCE

OBSCURE OFFENDER RESPONSIBILITY

CONCEAL VICTIM RESPONSES & RESISTANCE

BLAME & PATHOLOGIZE VICTIMS

From a response-based perspective, therapy consists in part of practices that reverse the four operations of language to:

- a. expose violence;
- b. clarify perpetrators' responsibility;
- c. elucidate and honour victims' resistance; and
- d. contest the blaming and pathologizing of victims.

This is achieved in part by focusing on the details of victims' responses to particular incidents and circumstances. Through a focus on responses, many actions and subjective experiences that were

previously ignored or constructed as effects of violence are accorded new significance as responses and forms of resistance.

Believing that people resist violence changes what we do, and how we talk to people. In mental health training people are taught models like Walker's cycle theory of violence that says women learn how to be passive; "learned helplessness" is where women are affected or effected by violence and don't exercise choice or agency. It's a soda pop theory of men's violence where you shake him up and he explodes in an "acute battering episode". It's disrespectful of men to conclude that they can't control themselves.

## COLONIAL CODE & LANGUAGE OF COLONIALISM

Underpinning the response-based practice framework and exposing the oppression of Indigenous peoples, Todd and Wade (1994) named the colonial code of relationship, which can be expressed as a three-part message:

1. **You are deficient** (i.e., heathen, savage, falsely conscious, submissive, passive, internally oppressed, helpless, cognitively distorted and afraid).
2. **I am proficient** (i.e., critically conscious, expert, professional, closer to god, empowered by the state).
3. **Therefore I have the right** (duty, sacred obligation, authority) **to perform certain operations upon you** (prescribing, advising, educating, assessing, praying, counselling, legislating, apprehending children) . . . for your own good.

**This code of relationship is central to colonial violence and administrative domination. It also underpins work in the medical, psychiatric and human services sectors that ignore the crucial role of social-cultural-natural-material context. For instance, the DSM system of classification both ignores context and violence and recasts diverse expressions of suffering from violence as individual pathology and as disorders needing pharmaceutical management, rather than seeing a person needing dignity and safety.**

# POWER OF LANGUAGE

## THE FINE ART OF THE NON-APOLOGY APOLOGY

*“Power – don’t avoid it, we all have it. Use it... You stand up to power and power backs down when you have a group of 20.” - Advocate*

The central task when there has been violence is to redress the humiliation that is part of violence by restoring dignity. An apology is designed to restore dignity to the person, and to express remorse, not just to feel forgiveness. The emphasis on forgiveness can be a misuse of the apology, as a pressure strategy. Often a public apology fails to truly apologize or to result in a change in behaviour. Advocates analyzed the 2008 Stephen

Harper apology to residential school survivors and Indigenous peoples, and similar documents. The “Uluru Statement of the Heart” and Australian Psychological Association apology to Indigenous peoples is a genuine apology acknowledging harm, and a model of what could be done in Canada by psychologists and psychiatrists to acknowledge the imposition of violent colonial practices towards First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples.



# POWER OF LANGUAGE

## THE POLITICAL LANGUAGE OF EFFECTS/IMPACTS

Inaccurate language used by police, legal actors, social service and health care providers, among others, frames victims as inviting, participating in or consenting to the violence inflicted against them. For instance, it's common to refer to the violent sexualized abuse of children as "sex with children". Victim-blaming language in court decisions often frames violence as an anger management or marital problem, which protects perpetrators.

Inaccurate language often represents perpetrators' violence as accidental or uncontrollable and conceals victim resistance. Descriptions of events normalize social constructions of men's dominance, encompassing coercive control and violence, and women's submission and self-sacrifice. Women can be trapped by these victim-blaming discourses alongside threats of poverty and condemnation from perpetrators, families, church and social agencies.



From a response-based perspective, reversing the four operations of language that conceal violence and resistance is achieved in part by focusing on the details of victims' responses to particular incidents and circumstances. Through a focus on responses, many actions and subjective experiences that were previously ignored or constructed as effects of violence are accorded new significance as responses and forms of resistance.

There is a negative bias implicit in the language of effects because it locates the "problem" in women's mind, body and spirit and conceals women's resistance to violence. It's a political shift to use language that places responsibility on the perpetrator of violence for his actions and to cease using victim-blaming approaches. "*How did you respond?*" questions came from a different way of understanding humans, animals and the planet.

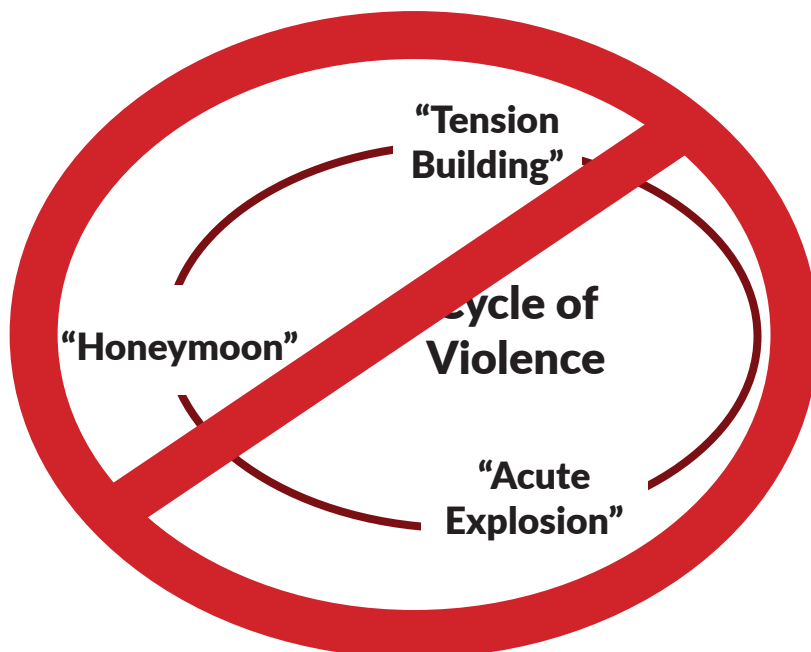
# POWER OF LANGUAGE

*“I always encourage my closest girlfriends and people around me that they can do whatever they put their heart towards. They can put themselves back together and find the missing piece.” - Advocate*

Women-blaming theories that say women are responsible for seeking out the “bad boy” have become part of the culture for treating victims of sexualized violence and wife-beating. These theories don’t ask victims how they responded to and resisted the violence. Instead, they define the violence as mutual and conceal women’s ever-present resistance. Women are said to have “learned helplessness”, a “lack of assertiveness”, a “tendency to choose abusive men”, “cognitive distortions”, and so on.

For instance, the so-called “Cycle of Violence” theory developed by Walker (1979) portrays violent men as hapless individuals who simply cannot control themselves and women as helpless

individuals who do not try escape when they could and should. According to this theory, the “honeymoon” phase of this cycle is actually a manipulation phase, in which women are trying to extend the period of calm when they can see their family or buy the kids winter clothes, for example. In the “tension-building” phase, the woman resists the man’s efforts to re-assert control. During a “violent episode”, which is usually portrayed as an “acute explosion”, the man uses violence deliberately and the woman resists and protects herself and often the children. With rare exceptions, men who use violence are in control of their actions; It is false and disrespectful to portray men as hydraulic machines who cannot understand or control their behaviour.



# COLONIAL MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICES & THE DSM SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) establishes the standard categories for diagnosing psychiatric illnesses. It can be used to misdiagnose symptoms and blame victims. The politics of making changes to the DSM are difficult, as women who challenge the ways psychology and psychiatry often position women to blame themselves for the many dire effects of the inequitable conditions of their lives have found (Verna St. Denis, 2017, p.43).

Response-based practice challenges the notion that suffering from violence and other adversities, which is invariably coloured by culture, can be reduced to individual disorders. Attributions of individual pathology, such as childhood ADHD or OD or Anxiety Disorder or Depression, can remove the problem from context, locate the problem inside the child, conceal violence and other adversities in the life of the child, and subject the child to treatments that perpetuate false diagnoses and subject the child to harmful medications. A focus on social interaction in context is more likely to reveal the social realities facing the child and hold the violent person responsible.

**The story of Paige, a young woman who committed suicide in 2013 shortly after aging out of the foster care system, was presented to illustrate systemic racism and professional indifference to the needs of an Indigenous child and her mother. A subsequent report into the circumstances found that the child protection system, health care system, social service agencies, the education system and police consistently failed in their responsibility to this Aboriginal girl.**

Frameworks that can be useful, such as an understanding of the role of belonging (i.e., “attachment”) can also be misused to place the problem in the victimized person. For instance, a person who is said to have “trust issues” and “attachment issues” may in fact be responding carefully in a context where they have learned that institutional or social network actors will not act to protect them but will instead protect the perpetrator.

**A rethinking of attachment and trust pathology through a RBP lens would say that many people don’t have “trust issues”; they have “I’ve seen this pattern of behaviour before, and I’ll be damned if I go through the same crap again” issues.**



# INTERVIEWING FOR SOCIAL RESPONSES

Asking good questions can reveal the truth and support personal accountability. For example, how do, or did, members of the person's social network, strangers, or authorities respond to the person during and after the adverse event? Your own inquiry is a social response. How is the person responding to the manner in which you relate to them, to the conversation at hand, to others with whom they have met in similar positions?

When Advocates disclosed interpersonal or gender-based violence, they were asked in ways that respected their dignity about their own and family members experiences of violence, demonstrating an RBP interviewing process. Participants shared personal experiences of encounters with police, health care and social service agencies when they disclosed violence or advocated for safety and justice.

The group analyzed the kinds of responses Advocates and victims hear, particularly from professionals like RCMP, nurses, doctors, or social workers, discussed how to respond to negative social responses and how to inform professionals about response-based questioning.

*"It's attitude. Just being aware of what's being said and how to use your words verbally, respectfully, and just being aware. Watching what I say and asking the right questions." - Advocate*

## Guiding Questions:

- ◇ *How did/does the person respond to various specific social responses?*
- ◇ *To whom did they disclose or not disclose?*
- ◇ *Which social responses are helpful?*
- ◇ *Which social responses are negative or unhelpful?*
- ◇ *How have they responded to negative or unhelpful social responses?*



# THE FUNCTIONAL LINKS BETWEEN DIVERSE FORMS OF VIOLENCE

There is a functional relationship between the different forms of violence, for example, how sexual and physical abuse in residential school has enabled the economic exploitation of victims, loss of culture, and environmental devastation. Political and micro-strategies used in diverse forms of violence include isolation of the victims, suppression of resistance, secrecy and deception, and victim blaming. The sexual and physical abuse in residential schools is part of a broader social context strategy of domination and ethnocide.



**Advocates reviewed connections between men’s violence against women and colonial violence towards Indigenous peoples and lands. They discussed the environmental destruction left behind when holes are torn out of Dene Keyeh caribou and fish habitat, the devastation of Kaska lands and waters, and the alienation of Kaska Dena from their homelands.**

Canada is an actively colonial nation. A large and disproportionate number of Indigenous children are in the custody of child protection services. At least 61 First Nations communities do not have clean drinking water; boiling water advisories are in place. 57% of the world’s mining corporations are registered on the Toronto stock exchange, which doesn’t regulate corporations’ activities or human rights abuses outside of Canada. Human rights defenders who try to prevent Indigenous communities being driven off their lands are threatened, subjected to sexualized violence, and murdered by the private security, police,

military, and militia forces that protect and defend the operations of Canadian and other resource extraction corporations globally.

Racism is a violent construct of a deficient “other”, people who don’t deserve dignity and respect. Examples of present-day racism are the denial of physical and sexual abuse in residential schools, misleading information about Indigenous peoples and colonial history in school textbooks and dominant media, and misrepresentation of government policies toward First Nations.

# HONOURING RESISTANCE

Women are sensible and competent. They resist violence in their personal lives, they protect their children, and they engage in collective resistance to improve life in their communities.

Advocates saw that violence is deliberate and discussed their own resistance to violence. They felt stronger for doing so and honoured each other's strength and resistance.



Advocates shared stories of Kaska standing up for their rights and how a protest, their collective resistance, and support from community members forced INAC to issue a reasonable timber permit to the Liard First Nation and not only to corporations in the timber industry. Advocates push positive things forward and focus on intergenerational resistance.

*“Right now when a woman gets hurt and needs help there is no help. We normalize the abnormal. Kids see it and think its normal.” - Elder*



# ADVOCACY &

LAWS and Advocates engaged in a number of acts of resistance and advocacy during Year 1 of the training program. These include awareness raising and public demonstrations, participation in research projects, political advocacy, and initiatives toward systems change.

## AWARENESS RAISING & PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS



- Students in Youth for Dignity (YFD), a youth empowerment and violence prevention program, collaborated with Advocates to create a Red Dress to raise public awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (December 2019)
- Advocates and Youth used images of the red dress for a social media campaign on preventing violence against Indigenous girls and women. (December 2019)
- Advocates and YFD students planned a Vigil and community lunch on December 6th, 2019 for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. (December 2019)
- Advocate Margaret Charlie took the lead on organizing a Watson Lake Vigil and March Against Violence with over 100 people in attendance. The Vigil was in response to the vicious assault of a young woman in the community and included powerful speeches from Kaska men, Elders, and the Mayor. Advocates did media interviews. (June 2020)
- Advocates organized and participated in the Whitehorse Solidarity March, which was in solidarity with an anti-violence vigil and solidarity march in Watson Lake, with over 60 people in attendance. The march received radio, print and Internet media coverage. Link to story and video: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/rallies-protest-violence-against-women-yukon-1.5624574>



## PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECTS

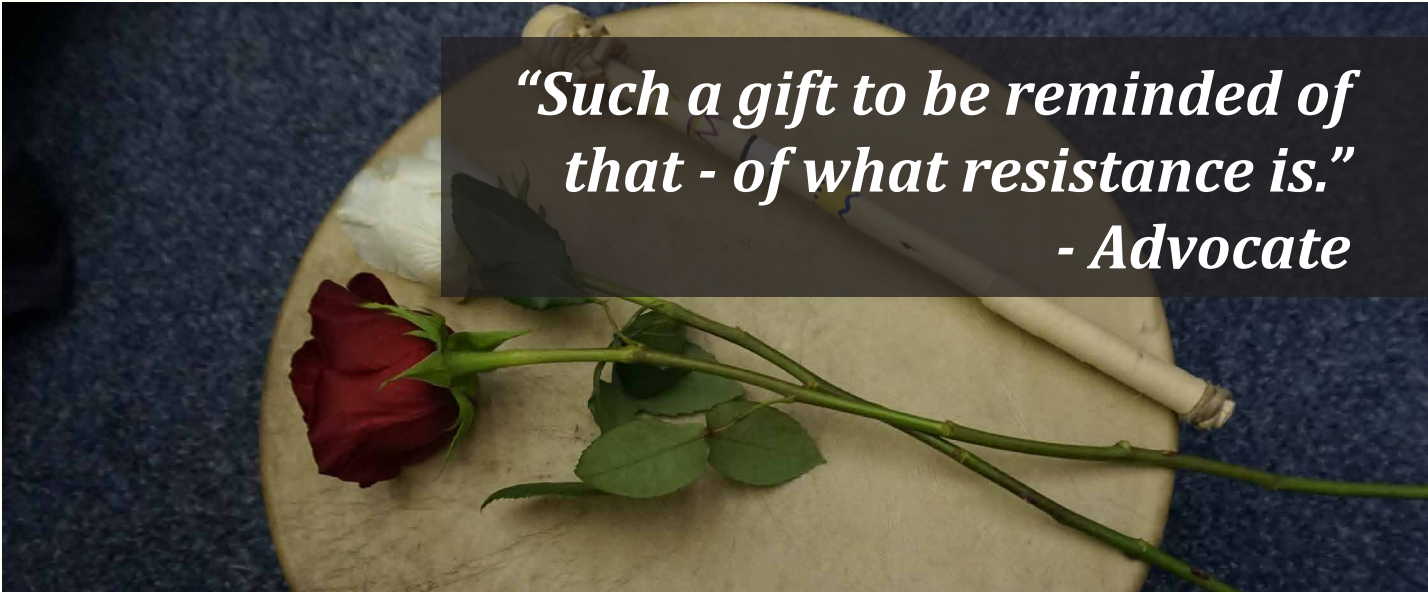
- Advocates are collaborating with the Social-Impact Assessment consultations in Watson Lake and Ross River about the proposed BMC Kudz Ze Kayah mine in Kaska heartland.
- Four Advocates are participating in an Indigenous women mine worker survey project.



## INSTITUTIONAL & SYSTEMS CHANGE

- LAWS and Advocates wrote a letter to Yukon Government requesting a seat for LAWS on hiring committees for government counsellors who work with Kaska Dena Youth.
- More than 40 people signed letters to Minister of Justice and Attorney-General David Lametti about Criminal Code amendments and protecting victims of intimate partner violence.
- Letters were written by LAWS and Advocates regarding the criminal justice system, community safety, and the Kotchea court file.
- Correspondence with Chief Federal Prosecutor, Watson Lake and Whitehorse Victims Services, regarding the Criminal Code of Canada, Bill C-75 amendments on intimate partner violence and reverse onus bail provisions where there are previous intimate partner violence convictions.

# ACTS OF RESISTANCE



*“Such a gift to be reminded of that - of what resistance is.”*  
- Advocate

## POLITICAL ADVOCACY

- During a meeting with Watson Lake town officials, Advocates asked for streetlights along the Robert Campbell Highway near Liard First Nation residential areas. This was first identified as a public safety concern more than a dozen years ago. Road lighting is a joint municipal and Yukon Government responsibility.
- Advocates signed a letter to the Town Council asking for their support of a Youth for Dignity Sexualized Assault Prevention campaign. 25 signatures were collected. (February 2020)
- Advocates signed a letter to Northwestel Inc., Yukon’s Internet provider asking for their policy on the electronic transmission of pornography into the lives of children and youth. 47 signatures were collected on the letter. (March 2020)
- Advocates met with the Mayor and one Councillor and discussed the removal of “Stop Rape” signs from the Sign-Post Forest that students from the YFD program had put up to raise awareness. The town confirmed it will designate two poles in the Signpost Forest for LAWS, where Youth for Dignity could put up their mural and Stop Rape signs. The letter was copied to Liard First Nation, Watson Lake Secondary School Council, and the RCMP to ask them to also support Youth for Dignity Sexualized Assault Prevention campaigns. The Advocates sent a follow-up letter thanking the Town. (March 10, 2020)



# HOW CHILDREN RESPOND TO & RESIST VIOLENCE



## YOUTH RESISTANCE

When youth feel a sense of injustice, they will resist. When youth feel powerless in decisions that affect their lives, they will resist. When youth feel that their safety & dignity are threatened, they will resist.

The **maltreatment of**, and **violence against**, young people is not the same as a **disorder within them**. The consequences of violence are in what is missing from each developmental model:

- the social context a child is living in,
- an individual child's response/resistance to specific circumstances,
- the actions of those around the child and interactions with the child,
- the social responses a child receives, and
- their responses to those social responses.

### Guiding Questions:

- ◇ *What if instead of depressed, she is oppressed?*
- ◇ *What if instead of insomniac he is wakeful... listening to ensure that his little brother is safe from harm?*
- ◇ *What if instead of low self-esteem, she has low social-esteem...just like anybody would who felt like everyone around them had turned their backs...called them names...?*
- ◇ *What if instead of having an attachment disorder, she's some kind of attachment specialist? She can figure out quickly who to trust, who's a game-player, and who will leave her...she connects with people accordingly.*

# VIOLENCE IN "PORN" & "SEX WORK/PROSTITUTION"

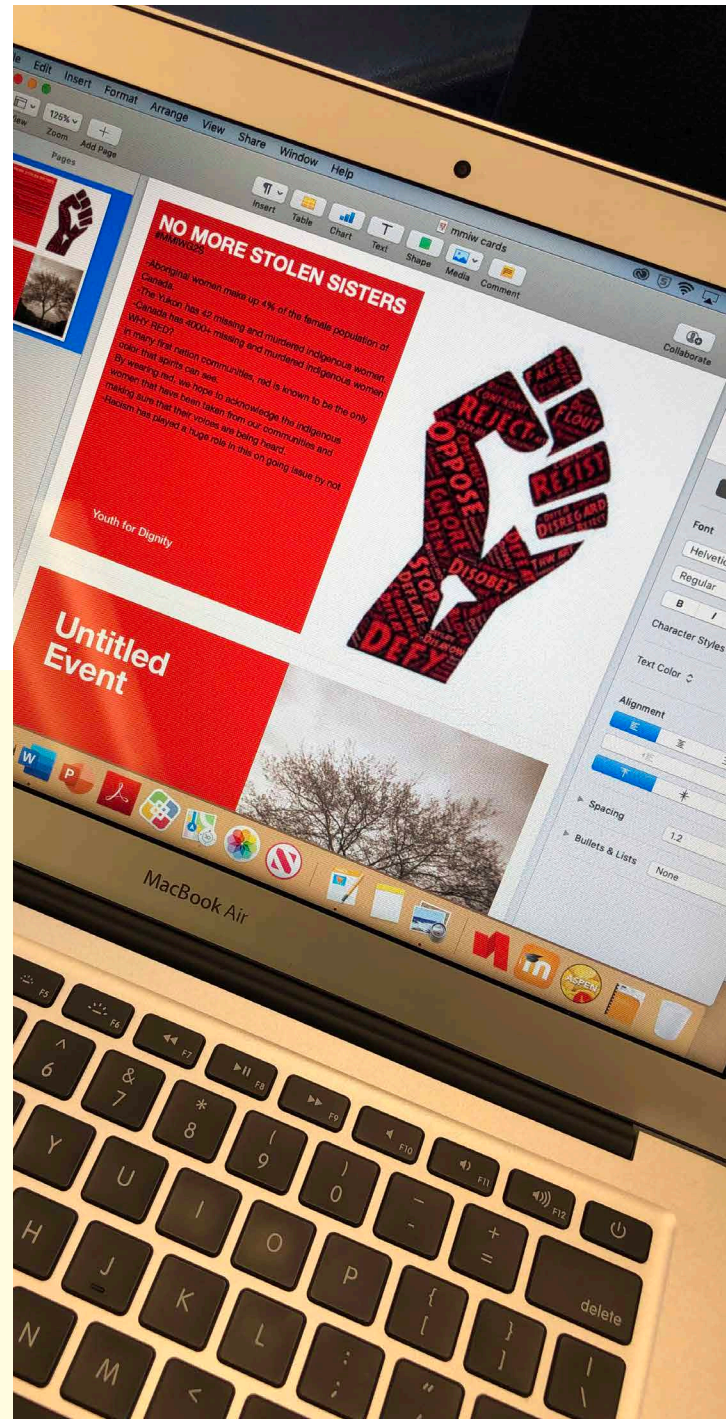
Advocates are concerned about predators' use of social media technology in northern communities to target young Indigenous girls and teens to post nude selfies for cash and then be lured into criminalization.

Advocates examined the Swedish document prepared by Talita "Reality Check: Top 10 Porn Myths". The group decided to write a letter to Northwestel asking what policies it had and what mechanisms it used to protect children and youth from pornography.

*"The more knowledgeable I get, I get more fierce. It has to end. Little Indigenous girls and boys don't deserve to be raped. It has to end." - Advocate*

## WHO PROFITS FROM PORN VIOLENCE?

Annual revenues of the pornography industry worldwide vary widely, from 6 to 93 billion dollars; generally 15 billion per year is accepted as a reasonable estimate. Because porn industries are private corporations, it's impossible to calculate an exact figure of revenues.



# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: THE COLLUSION OF EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES, RCMP, & GOVERNMENT

[Violence On The Land, Violence on Our Bodies: Building an Indigenous Response to Environmental Violence](#) (2016), the Native Women’s Association of Canada 2014 report on human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and most recently, the MMIWG report, identified a correlation between man camps associated with the resource extraction industry and higher rates of violence against Indigenous women, LGBTQ and two-spirited people at the camps and in the neighbouring communities. For Indigenous women working within these camps and these industries in general, there are elevated rates of workplace racism, sexual harassment, and violence.

The dangers of violence and racism on the bodies of aboriginal women dates back for centuries. Extractive industry man camps in Kaska Dena lands are associated with violence against women and threats by workers to girls and young women. Elders in the Advocates group disclosed some of the effective ways they resisted violence as young

women to protect themselves from harm from mine camp workers attempting to prey on them.

A pattern of violence against women occurs consistently as a result of resource extraction projects in Canada’s North. Advocates framed the YESAB process as an inevitable march towards approval that fails to take their unceded Kaska Dena land rights or women’s safety into account. The Yukon Environmental Socio-Economic Assessment Board (YESAB) in its draft screening report for the proposed Kudz Ze Kayah (KZK) mine project says the project is likely to result in “significant adverse effects to the personal safety” of women and LGBTQ and two-spirited people, such as increased sexual assault and domestic violence. Violence against women is persistently a major issue with large-scale natural resource development activities, with First Nations women being particularly vulnerable. Although YESAB determined that “the BMC Project will result in significant adverse effects to water

*“Advocates all march together. In the media too. We had a vigil. We bring awareness in the community.” - Advocate*



*Nika Young, from left, Cheyenne Silverfox, and Hannah Silverfox-Belcher shout chants with the crowd as they march to denounce violence against Indigenous women and girls during the rally in Whitehorse on June 23, 2020. Photo: Crystal Schick/Yukon News*





*The Faro Mine in south-central Yukon (abandoned in 1998). Photo: Matt Jacques/The Narwhal*

resources, wildlife, traditional land use, economy, and human health and safety.” They concluded “These significant adverse effects can be eliminated, controlled or reduced through the application of mitigation measures recommended by the Executive Committee.”

In February, LAWS held a series of meetings with women in Watson Lake and Ross River to hear concerns about the proposed KZK mine in the heart of Kaska Dena unceded territory. During these meetings, a picture emerged of the dangers posed to women. “First Nations women have every human right to be safe, to have an environment that’s safe, but that’s not always the case,” said Ann Maje Raider “because as LAWS heard through our meetings, women who work at mine sites have been targeted, women have been treated badly, women have been harassed, and so women end up quitting.”

Advocates see a lot of injustice. They’re committed to end violence, including all forms of race and gender based violence and to uphold dignity and justice for Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people in Yukon. They’re passionate about acting on the findings of the National Public Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Governments’ frameworks for action must respect and support the families of the missing and murdered women, hold institutions accountable, honour women, and create safety and justice.

Advocates mostly don’t feel safe with the RCMP. The MMIWG inquiry concluded that “The RCMP have not proven to Canada that they are capable of holding themselves to account.” Protocols like Together for Justice can be helpful in opening dialogue with RCMP members stationed in Watson Lake and community Advocates with the Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society.



# HOW CRIMINAL CODES CHANGE VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN INTO SEX WITH CHILDREN

Sections of the Criminal Code of Canada use positive terms that portray children as if they were participants in a sexual encounter rather than clearly defining sexualized violence. Criminal Code offence terms like “invitation to sexual touching” and “sexual interference” do not recognize the inherent violence that occurs when adults violate children for their own sexual

gratification. This vocabulary of sexual intercourse instead of sexualized violence is used in other countries’ criminal codes too, and can result in the use of rape myths like “she initiated the sexual activity” when adults have violated children, who are not legally of an age to give consent to sexual activity.



*“I’m sick of seeing suffering. I’m ready to step forward together - we cant do this alone. We need compassion, respect and love for one another.” - Advocate*

# NOT SO MUCH: THE INVENTION OF STOCKHOLM SYNDROME & BLAMING OF VICTIMS

Dr. Wade developed a slide presentation about the invention of Stockholm Syndrome after meeting with Kristin Enmark, one of the hostages in a Swedish bank and a misunderstood figure in psychology. None of the powerful men who made careers from inventing and propagating this theory spoke to Ms. Enmark for whom the syndrome is named. The linchpin of the theory, that as a hostage she regressed to an infantile state and developed a sympathy for the hostage-taker, fails to acknowledge how she protected other hostages and resisted violence. Every time the police intervened during this event “things got worse” and the safety of the hostage was compromised. The Stockholm Syndrome theory was invented by a criminology psychiatrist without interviewing her, to silence an indignant young woman who was speaking out about the dangerous response from the police.

*“Now that I know I’ve healed, I  
have to protect the kids.”  
- Advocate*



# "BECOMING BETTER HELPERS"

Allan Wade, Ph. D.

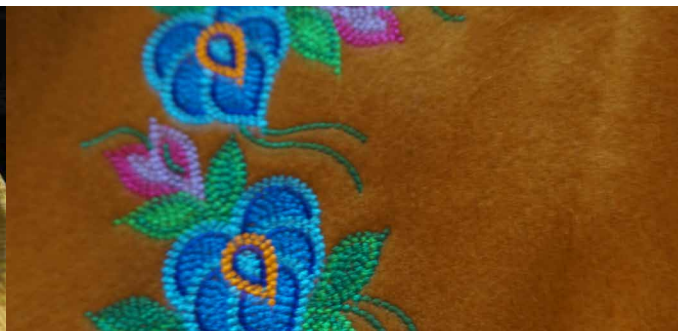
Wilson, D. Smith, R., Tolmie, J. & de Haan, I. (2015). **Becoming Better Helpers: rethinking language to move beyond simplistic responses to women experiencing intimate partner violence.** *Policy Quarterly*, Volume 11(1).

Following are two different descriptions of the same case taken from a New Zealand article on analysis of death review reports, which used response-based contextual analysis.

## DESCRIPTION 1

Rachel and Tim have a volatile relationship, which is characterised by lots of arguing, drinking and fighting. They both get physical. Last night there was a domestic incident and Rachel got hurt. While agencies are aware that Rachel can give as good as she can get, she is failing to protect her children from witnessing violence in their home.

Rachel needs to leave Tim and stop drinking, so her kids can have a stable home environment that is violence free. Lots of agencies have been involved but Rachel keeps choosing to stay with Tim and continue drinking, rather than make the changes needed for her kids. Rachel needs to put her children's needs over hers and her partner's.



*“I have committed violence on myself.  
I’m mending my broken heart. This  
(Advocacy)program has opened what I  
need to open up of myself to become a  
whole person. I know I can do it.”  
- Advocate*

*“I’ll be damned  
if someone takes  
my power away.”  
- Advocate*

## DESCRIPTION 2

Tim has a history known to multiple agencies of using coercive controlling behaviours towards Rachel, as well as his previous partners. Rachel and Tim have been in a relationship for ten years. Tim is 15 years older than Rachel; they met when Rachel was 16 and a young mother of her first child, Jason, who was conceived as the result of rape. Rachel has had two children, both daughters, with Tim.

Tim has strangled Rachel before to the point that she has lost consciousness, and he has threatened to kill her if she leaves him. Rachel’s use of alcohol has increased over the years as a way of numbing and blocking out the abuse. Both her parents were alcohol-dependent. Rachel violently resists Tim’s abuse. She has armed herself with a knife to try and stop him assaulting her.

Last night Tim was verbally abusing and threatening to beat Jason for truanting from school. Rachel grabbed a broom and stood in front of Jason; she threatened to hit Tim with the broom if he approached them. Tim grabbed a bottle of wine and smashed it onto Rachel’s head, causing her to fall to the ground. Tim then kicked Rachel repeatedly in her back and head. Jason was screaming and ran to his mother’s aid.

A neighbour heard Jason screaming and called the police. This is an opportunity for the police to intervene and put in place a plan to curtail Tim’s ability to continue abusing his partner and three children.



# "A CHILD 'RUNNER'; FREEDOM TO & FREEDOM FROM"

**Dr. Shelly Bonnah, 2020**

*"I was just a runner. Every time things got tough. I ran. Everyone knows this about me. When we were kids, I would tuck my brother under my arm, grab a backpack full of food, and run into the hills. We stayed there all night. But in the morning, I'd always go home and clean up their mess." (Rosie)*

Rosie's words capture the heart of a child's fear, love, confusion, self-protection and sibling protection. She responded to, and resisted violence with courage and protectionism. She is not yet an adult, and she is describing with great clarity her actions of running from danger, alcohol, violence, and fear while running to safety. We would wish that no child has to run from danger in fear, or to protect a younger sibling by holding him under her arm while she flees. Rosie described a home filled with adults who were intoxicated, up all night, violently fighting, and seeming to forget there were children in the house. But adults have encouraged Rosie to see herself as "messed up and broken", angry and unable to trust. Rather than understood as skillful and creative, Rosie's identity of being "fucked up" is a direct extraction from the imposed pathology from so-called "helping professions". To run away from danger, violence, substances and fear as a child is a deliberate act of seeking safety and finding peace, even temporarily. Rosie may not have trusted adults who had proven to be untrustworthy, but she trusted her internal alarm system that alerted her about when it was time to go; to remove herself and her brother from danger. She was

clear about what to take with her, such as food, clothing and comfort, and what to leave behind—chaos, distress, and the threat of harm. Rosie's creative resistance was either ignored or recast as pathology in the bloated language of "mental illness". In effect, Rosie was "rebranded" as a consumer of diagnoses and a child who grew into a young adult and was described as "broken". Actually, she knew from an early age to run from a life that was dangerous, to a place in the hills that offered peace, safety, the ability to protect her brother, and a view of everything around her. This is, at the same time, an account of her suffering and her brilliance. Not brokenness.

When children are left alone to fend off, withstand, and make sense of unspeakable violence, their overt presentation will most often cause concern(s) that can easily resemble the diagnostic categories of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, behavioural disorders, and/or personality disorders. Responses to, and resistance of violence don't always appear as strengths, graceful actions, or even safe. The "problem" remains the violence that requires some kind of protective action.

*Shelly: There are indeed some problems when children don't have adequate care. All kinds of factors influence kids helping look after their siblings. The "Parentified child" label is clearly pathologizing. It's not all negative or necessarily problematic. There are many ways that children and adults protect each other...*

*Rosie: My mom would be having a party. I would pack up my brother and food. I knew it was wrong. I've always been a runner – a child who runs from everything and doesn't deal with things...*

*Shelly: Is it about not dealing with things or is it absolutely trusting yourself above everyone else, and seeking safety? Knowing when it's ok to stay and when to go and what to take with you? Running has a negative connotation. Maybe it's an internal alarm system - when is it time to go?*

*Rosie: People guilt me because I leave, but I leave before it gets worse. I want peace so don't stay, why am I...*

*Shelly: If the situation is dangerous....is it more about knowing not to stay, than running? The guilt, and demanding an explanation is for wanting safety and peace?*

*Rosie: I'm tired of this, I'm tired of trying/having to justify myself.*

Rosie captures the torment of a child's longing for both love and safety: "But in the morning I'd always go home and clean up their mess". Even at such a young age, she knew that she couldn't have both care and protection at the same time, and running was her safest available option. How does such a young child know the art of timing, such as how long to stay in order to make sure the adults are ok, and when is it time to go in order to protect yourself and your brother? What was she thinking about as she did? What was she worried about, if anything? How did she communicate to her brother that everything was going to be ok? Did she believe that? It appears through her language that Rosie didn't have a safer person or place to go, and that she was on her own to create safety. She didn't trust that they would be saved or rescued by an adult. Children will predict and anticipate the responses of others, and then act accordingly.

The risk of misunderstanding a child who has experienced violence as Rosie did, and yearned for a safe place to go is fundamentally different than describing her as "a runner". She must have been longing for love and comfort just as all young children do, while at the same time clearly

laid awake in fear, as she describes the moment of making the decision that it was time to leave. She understood the reality of what would happen if she, and her brother, stayed. It becomes impossible, then, to maintain a position that this is a child who does not understand reality, or is always "running" when times get tough. It's because she understood her reality so well that she was able to do what she did. That she knew enough to physically escape it for her own protection, and the protection of her younger sibling.

Rosie herself has resisted the capitalizing of her distress. She was always a "social actor", not a "passive victim" who was "exposed" to violence. She hoped when it seemed impossible and somehow knew what she needed. This would always begin with "who" she needed and who she didn't, and she knew to carefully, cautiously, and intuitively adapt her information to align with the person or professional she was speaking with. Once offered the opportunity, Rosie readily embraced her wellness and dignity. Simultaneously beautiful and painful, Rosie's responses have revealed her embodied spirit and ever-present awareness.



*“Women learn from women. I am blessed with spending time with strong Kaska women; Exploring things that I haven’t explored before, opening my mind.”- Advocate*



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## **Websites**

<http://www.liardaboriginalwomen.ca> Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society.

<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca> Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National

[Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Transcripts and Exhibits.](https://www.responsebasedpractice.com/)  
[https://www.responsebasedpractice.com/ Centre for Response Based Practice.](https://www.responsebasedpractice.com/)

### **Reports & Resources Available on the LAWS Website:**

Following our Peoples Way: Building a Circle of Dignity and Justice Reports: <http://www.liardaboriginalwomen.ca/index.php/about-3/projects-and-programs/following-our-peoples-way-building-a-circle-of-dignity-and-justice>

Youth For Safety and Justice Reports and Training Material: <http://www.liardaboriginalwomen.ca/index.php/about-3/projects-and-programs/youth-for-safety-and-justice>

National Inquiry into the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Final Submission: <http://www.liardaboriginalwomen.ca/index.php/about-3/projects-and-programs/national-inquiry-into-the-murdered-and-missing-indigenous-women-and-girls>

Together for Justice Reports: <http://www.liardaboriginalwomen.ca/index.php/about-3/projects-and-programs/together-for-justice>

### **Legislation & International Agreements**

Criminal Code. (RSC 1985, c C-46). <https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/laws/stat/rsc-1985-c-c-46/latest/>

Indian Act (R.S.C., 1985, C. I-5). <https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/laws/stat/rsc-1985-c-i-5/latest/rsc-1985-c-i-5.html>

UN General Assembly, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2 October 2007

UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16 December 1966. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

The United Nations. 1948. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 18 December 1979. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.html>

### **Government Documents**

Canada, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of. Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015. <http://www.trc.ca/about-us/trc-findings.html>

