

KA PASPICIK KITIMAHITOWIN WIKIWAK

(SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)

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INDIGENOUS PARTICIPANTS IN MANITOBA

- The Manitoba Approach
 - Emphasizing the importance of relationships, relationality, and collaboration
 - Research as Sacred Stories
 - Trauma-informed and culturally sensitive approach
- 17 Indigenous participants in Manitoba
- 16 survivors
- 1 individual close to someone killed within the context of IPV

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Current Age
 - Range: 28 – 70 years
 - Average age: 43 years
- Gender
 - All 17 participants identified as female
- Ethnic/Cultural Group
 - All identified as Indigenous
 - Some participants identified specifically as Cree (3), Métis (2), Anishinaabe (1)
- Location of Abuse
 - Urban location (6)
 - Northern location (3)
 - Rural location (1)
 - Combination of urban/RRN locations (7)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Number of Children at Time of Abuse
 - 14 survivors advised that they had children at the time of abuse
 - Range: 1 – 6 children
 - These survivors also indicated that their children were exposed to violence
 - The children were: living with survivor (9), living with survivor and abuser (3), living with abuser (1), living with survivor's parents (1)
- Relationship at Time of Abuse
 - Boyfriend (5), common-law (9), husband (3)
- Current Relationship Status
 - Most survivors indicated that they were not currently in contact with their abuser
 - Two survivors advised that they are currently in contact with their abuser
- Length of Abuse
 - Average length: 11 years
 - Range: less than 1 year – 33 years

BARRIERS TO LEAVING & ACCESSING SUPPORT

Well, you know how the police like treated her when she reported the domestic violence. Again, they were putting the blame on her, and charging her with mischief or something. I was like, “What? Like, really, the cops can do that?”

And I don’t have a vehicle and I don’t drive, so... and, so, to even escape it was pretty hard.

Cause it’s like the money and you don’t have no place else to go and you don’t have a lot of people feel that way right? Like you don’t have no place to go and there should be places where you know it can be, like, like some violence happens mostly at nighttime so there should be a 24-hour thing that you can call and say, “Okay, I need to get away.”

The women’s shelter in [city in the Prairies] was telling her she needed to move to a whole new city or a new town where he wouldn’t find her. And then she would say “Okay, well I’ll take a bus, but where I go, can somebody help me?” and she always said they told her no, she would have to find that stuff on her own.

EXPERIENCES OF SURVIVORS IN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

I left my province-run housing unit to go back up North with him, that's when my jaw got broken. And then I got medevaced out of my community and then I got transferred over to the health centre.

There was only one plane in and one plane out.

Reflecting on what I went through and seeing my sister going through this right now, there has not been enough resources for a man or a woman to leave from a domestic relationship from an isolated community or an isolated town.

But it's hard to leave to leave the rez... If I had been able to go out of this community I'd leave. It's harder to get out of that... And you both have families that you've created.

MISTRUST OF COLONIAL SYSTEMS

Well the other thing is he knows – like I'm a First Nations woman. I have a bad, you know, I have a bad history. Like not just me but like my family – well and you know, personally just being mistreated and racialized by the police and he knows that I don't trust and I don't like the police and I try, you know all my best to stay away from them. So even the threat that he would – and he would do this all the time, threaten to call them on me.

I feel like people don't understand race either. I feel like race plays a big part of this in my situation. And a lot of white people – and I'm just saying white for generalization, and I know it's a clumsy word – but people don't understand and they, like I said, they end up perpetuating more violence and victim-blaming without even understanding it.

I was scared of prejudiced systems, like CFS.

I don't think CFS has that type of excess support to help families like that. Like, moms in situations because they go over and beyond to just put a case out and the children get apprehended right away. Even though the mom is going through a domestic, and then right away mom's the bad one. They're not trying to support mom.

THE DECISION TO LEAVE

I always have to remember that without my children I'm nothing, right? They mean so much, I love my kids and I wouldn't want to go nowhere so I will take care of myself. Everybody deserves to be loved, and to love you know, to be respected and to be treated.

Like they need healthy parents. If I was being abused and I wasn't being taken care of the way I could take care of myself then I can't take care of my kids, if I'm not taken care of.

I was happy that I got a different types of support because if I didn't, I would have stayed in that, in that situation for another year, or until whenever he decided he was done.

I didn't I didn't seek resources for that except my faith. Yeah. So back to survival my faith is, is a major factor in my survival and in my healing.

I love myself more than I love you [the abuser], in a way. You have to have self-love before you love other people.

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