



Safe, Sacred, and Sovereign

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Resource

- WORKBOOK -

Washington State Native American Coalition
Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault





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WomenSpirit.net

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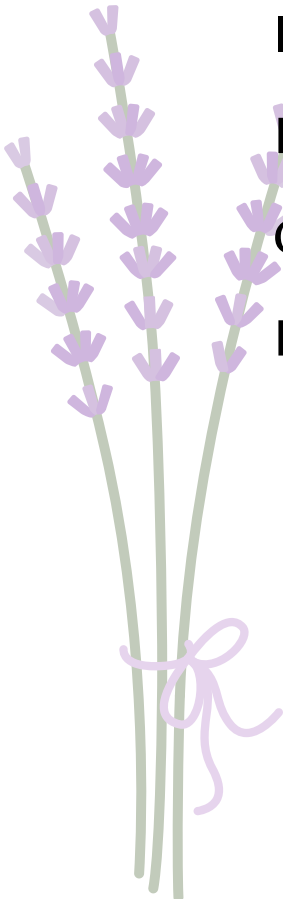
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WomenSpirit envisions a nation where Native women are treated with honor and respect, where she is protected under the law and her personal sovereignty is never compromised.

WomenSpirit is the official Department of Justice and Office on Violence Against Women Tribal Coalition. We serve the needs of tribal programs and provide direct services to those victims that tribal programs do not/cannot serve through its program areas.

WomenSpirit is the subject matter expert on matters related to ending violence against AI/AN women and their families. We provide assessment and evaluation of Tribes/Tribal programs relating to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and sex trafficking.

Reach Out to Us

WomenSpirit Coalition

526 N. 5th Avenue

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Introduction

'Even in thought, women are to be respected.'

-Tillie Black Bear, Sicangu Lakota

This resource workbook is for you and your advocate or support group leader. It is designed with your safety, sacredness, and sovereignty in mind.

Being safe means connection to a community of care and healing so you can have the support you need to navigate feelings of fear, anxiety, shame, loss, and grief. Being safe will help you trust yourself and others and to rediscover your curiosity about who you are and why you are here.

Being sacred means having compassion and respect for yourself and all creation. Realigning yourself with indigenous ways of knowing and living will help to heal your mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of life.

Being sovereign means you have the inherent power to control your internal and external relationships. Native women are sovereign and make a contribution to the safety, health, and well-being of their family and community by following their unique path.



Understanding

'We did not always live this way.'

-Sarah Deer, Law Professor, University of Kansas



On average, indigenous women experience sexual assault at a rate 2.5x higher than non-native women.

Euro-American invasion and expansion brought the brutality of rape, forced prostitution, and murder into traditional Indian communities where violence against women was mostly non-existent.

The sexual violence against Native women during European colonization and American westward expansion was an integral strategy of genocide and still sustains the high rate of violence Native women experience today.

During the 'boarding school era,' (forced assimilation) sexual abuse of children was common after separation from family protection. The 'relocation era' (1940's-1970's) encouraged Native women to move off the reservation to the city where they were vulnerable to prostitution and exploitation.

Between the 1960's and 70's, 25-50% of Native women of childbearing age were coerced/forced to undergo sterilization procedures resulting in further distrust of the government and disconnection from health services.



Understanding

'We did not always live this way.'

-Sarah Deer, Law Professor, University of Kansas



Roughly 56.1 percent of Native women have experienced sexual violence.

Prior to the influence of colonization, western expansion, and U.S. government policy, Native women were honored and respected as the carriers of their nations. Elderly women were especially responsible for socialization and transmission of culture. Across diverse tribes, the respectful treatment of women was a universal value underlying Native worldview.

Today, Native women have a high risk of exposure to traumatic experiences. Native women experience high rates of child sexual assault, domestic violence, and rape. Violence is everywhere Native women live.

Native women have been the target of extermination throughout American History. This alarming history of generational violence, emotional trauma, and policy driven poverty precedes high rates of addiction, depression, and suicide.

Coupled with contemporary traumatic events, the historical trauma that wears away Native women results in higher rates of mental distress and substance abuse than other groups.



Sexual Assault

“The land is sacred. These words are at the core of your being.”

-Mary Brave Bird, Sicangu Lakota writer and activist



Native women (94%) reported being raped or coerced into sex in their lifetime.

Sexual assault is any type of sexual activity or contact that happens without your consent and can include non-contact activities, such as someone “flashing” you (exposing themselves to you) or forcing you to look at sexual images.

Sexual violence or abuse are other ways to refer to sexual assault. Legal definitions of sexual assault vary slightly from state to state.

Sexual assault in Washington State law (RCW 9A.44.010) is defined by four legal terms.

- Consent
- Forcible Compulsion
- Sexual Intercourse
- Sexual Contact

CONSENT

Meaning - At the time of the act there are actual words or conduct that indicate freely given agreement to sexual activities. Consent does not include:



Sexual Assault

*“Women are going missing because women are easy targets.
It’s particularly stark in Indian Country.”*

- Interior Secretary Deb Haaland



Native women are 3.6 times more likely to be victims of rape than non-indigenous women.

- Someone who is drunk, drugged, or incapacitated cannot legally give consent.

FORCIBLE COMPULSION

Meaning - Is physical force that overcomes resistance, or the threat of force that causes fear of death, physical injury, or kidnapping.

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Meaning - The penetration of the vagina or anus, however slight. This can be penetration by an object, a digit (finger), or a penis. It also includes any sexual contact involving sex organs and the mouth.

SEXUAL CONTACT

Meaning - Touching the sexual or other intimate parts of a person for the purpose of gratifying sexual desire of either party or a third party.



Sexual Assault

"It's like incest - no one wants to talk about it."

-Prostitution and trafficking survivor



79% of the women had been sexually abused as children by an average of 4 perpetrators.

Writers and researchers have provided compelling evidence about the connection between the prostitution of Native women and childhood sexual assault. In 'Garden of Truth,' (Farley, et al., 2011), Native women are reported as having high rates of child sexual assault, domestic violence, and rape.

CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT (ABUSE)

Child sexual abuse can include fondling genitals, masturbation, oral-genital contact, digital penetration, and vaginal and/or anal penetration. It could also include non-contact abuse, such as exposure, voyeurism, and child pornography (ACA-PBs)

Adults who attended boarding schools were children who were physically, spiritually, and sexually abused. Without being parented, sadly many often continued the cycle of abuse once they became parents themselves (Leavens, et al., 2021).

A child abuse pediatric specialist in Fort Defiance, Arizona remarked that 9 of 10 caregivers bringing their children into the medical center for sexual abuse were abused themselves (Leavens, et al., 2021).



Sexual Violence

“When a man looks at a prostitute and a Native woman, he looks at them the same: ‘dirty’.”

-Prostitution and trafficking survivor



96% of Native women experience sexual violence by a non-Native perpetrator.

PROSTITUTION & TRAFFICKING

Experts have reported that Native women who were sexually assaulted as children are also revictimized as adults in prostitution. Native women (62%) explained that the devaluation in prostitution and colonization of Native people is identical (Farley, et al., 2011).

Emerging trends in research show Indigenous people of a colonized country are more likely than other groups to be victims of prostitution and trafficking. Much like with other types of violence against Native women, a majority of perpetrators are non-native.

TERMS & DEFINITIONS

The terms ‘prostitution and trafficking’ refer to the experiences of women exchanging sex for food and shelter and in other contexts including but not limited to street prostitution, Internet advertised prostitution, international and domestic trafficking, sauna-or-nail based prostitution, massage parlors,



Sexual Violence

'Back then I was not connected to my cultural identity. I thought prostitution was normal living.'

-Prostitution and trafficking survivor



42% of women reported racial verbal abuse by pimps and buyers.

pornography of children and adults, and live sex shows (Farley et al., 2011). Trafficking is a form of prostitution that is understood as third party control and exploitation and includes murder.

'Man camps,' the temporary housing facilities for men working on the oil-pipeline construction sites near Native communities, account for the increasing high rates of sexual violence and sex trafficking of Native women. A U.S. Dept. of State report (2015) detailed exploitation of Native women by sex traffickers near oil extraction facilities.

A STARK REALITY

Statistics taken from 'Garden of Truth' (Farley, et al, 2011) reveal that Native women involved in prostitution and trafficking were sexually abused as children (79%), currently or previously homeless (98%), used outpatient substance abuse services (80%), were physically assaulted in prostitution (84%), and wanted to escape prostitution (92%).



Threat to Harmony

"[My culture] doesn't put you around drugs or alcohol. It teaches you different values. It gives you belonging and faith."

-Prostitution and trafficking survivor



52% had PTSD at the time of the interview, a rate that is in the range of PTSD among combat veterans.

Violence disrupts harmony individually, communally, and collectively. The aggressive and oppressive act of colonization has impacted and reshaped the environment, political systems, and cultural and spiritual lives of Native Americans in devastating ways (Jumper-Thurman, et al., 2018).

Indigenous lay knowledge of the profound trauma inflicted on Native Americans since the landing of Columbus, across generations, and continuing today is referred to as the 'soul wound' (Duran, et al., 1998).

“

It is apparent that the psyche of the community recognized the wounding of the environment, and that this awareness in turn was perceived as a wounding of the psyche. Harmony had become discord and the community's unconscious perception was that the world was unfriendly and hostile. The problems that were manifested and verbalized were merely symptoms of a deeper wound--the soul wound.

”



Threat to Harmony

"We need someone to understand . . . half of us were raped, beat, and made to sell our bodies."

-Prostitution and trafficking survivor




Of 105 Native women interviewed, 72% suffered from traumatic brain injuries.

HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Synonymous contemporary terms for 'soul wound' include American Indian holocaust, historical legacy, intergenerational posttraumatic stress disorder, and the most widely accepted historical trauma first used by Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart (Duran, et al., 1998).

Historical Trauma is defined as the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma (Brave Heart, et al., 2011, 1998).

Historical Trauma captures the host of dehumanizing actions and policies by the United States government, religions, politicians, and presidents that have contributed to 1) the calamitous decline in the health and well-being of Native people and 2) the misuse and depletion of their land and resources (Jumper-Thurman, et al., 2018).



Threat to Harmony

"A john said to me, 'I thought we killed all of you'."

-Prostitution and trafficking survivor



It is reported that Native women (25-50%) of childbearing years were sterilized between 1970 and 1976.

CUMULATIVE SUFFERING

The effects of Historical Trauma represent the complex, and cumulative psyche wounding over time, over the life span, and across generations that is characterized by the unresolved grief and depression transmuted to children from birth onward (Duran, et al., 1998; Brave Heart, et al., 2011). This unresolved trauma compounds the mental health issues of succeeding generations. The cumulative suffering that compounds the contemporary lifeworld of Native women includes:





Impacts of Violence

SETTLER COLONIAL VIOLENCE

The impact of colonization values and belief systems on Indigenous values, culture, kinship system, and social controls was followed by treaties and displacement. Native people experienced environmental and ‘lifeworld’ shock. Women were dehumanized and seen as sex objects.

➤ Women and girls were vulnerable to rape, prostitution, trafficking, and murder.

ASSIMILATION VIOLENCE

The impact of military extermination and forced removal from homelands, imposition of boundaries and restricted movement on reservations (subjugation), and removing children from families placing them in boarding schools (attack on Native identity and family kinship system).

➤ Women and girls were vulnerable to child abuse, neglect, sexual assault, suicide, and forced gender roles.

CHECK IN

How are you feeling?

- Agitated, can't sit still.
- 'Freezing,' can't move forward.
- Wound up but can't think or plan.
- Spaced out, shut down, depressed.



Impacts of Violence

CULTURAL VIOLENCE

The impact of being relocated into urban areas, robbed of traditional ways of living, spirituality, food sources, and economies, experiencing poor health, lack of housing, high rates of poverty, alcohol and drug abuse to cope, and insufficient funding for services.

➤ Women and girls were vulnerable to Domestic Violence, Intimate Partner Abuse, and Self-Abuse.

SOVEREIGNTY VIOLENCE

The impact of imposed child protection and forced/coerced sterilization devalued the traditional responsibilities of women for maintaining the family kinship system, imposed sexist ideas about her womanhood, and stripped her of her body autonomy.

➤ Women and girls were vulnerable to Family Separation and Loss of Body Autonomy (Eugenics).

CHECK IN

Where are you feeling discomfort?



- Mentally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Spiritually



Confronting The Violence

Do you have family members who have experienced sexual assault or sexual violence?

- Great grandmother or great grandfather
- Grandmother or grandfather
- Mother or father
- Aunt or Uncle
- Sister or brother

My personal history



Confronting The Violence

The cedar tree represents strength and endurance and is used in a variety of ways serving many purposes in everyday life. It is sacred and traditionally used in religious ceremonies and for building sacred structures and making sacred objects. The sacred cedar is also a renewable resource and can be fashioned into many useful items like canoes, baskets, and mats. The cedar contributed to the safety, sacredness, and sovereignty of Native people.

Can you reimagine your life like the sacred cedar? Check all that apply to your journey right now.

Safe

Sacred

Sovereign

Trust

I am like the cedar,
I can Weather the Storm.

Celebrating who I am and
reconnecting to community.

Humility

I am learning to
Weave My Basket.

Committing to my health
and well-being with help,
healing & forgiveness.

Respect

I am making good choices
to Fill My Basket

Realizing my strengths, educating
myself, and discovering my
purpose.

Honor

I am ready to
Gift My Basket.

Reclaiming my power &
making my contribution.



Confronting The Violence

The journey is our way of life. The 10 Rules of the Canoe help us understand what it means to conduct ourselves in a good way with principles, values, and practices.

TEN RULES OF THE CANOE

Canoe Rule (Principle)	Value
Every stroke we take is one less we have to make.	Collaboration
Be flexible.	Adaptability
A hungry person has no charity.	Hard work
The journey is what we all enjoy.	Being present
When given any choice at all, be a worker bee – make honey!	Cooperation





Confronting The Violence

TEN RULES OF THE CANOE

Canoe Rule (Principle)	Practice
There is to be no abuse of self or others.	Be respectful.
The gift of each enriches all.	Create an inviting space.
We all pull and support each other.	Encourage self & others.
Experiences are not enhanced through criticism.	Provide positive reinforcements.
A good teacher allows the student to learn.	Grow and keep an open mind.



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Reach Out to Us



INDIGENOUS CRIME VICTIMS REFERRAL & RESOURCE CENTER

Supporting indigenous service providers and survivors of crime in Washington State.

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SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAM

Supporting Tribes and Tribal programs with training and technical assistance.

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Washington State Native American Coalition
Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

