

ISHKUTEU

Newsletter

Kuei, Kwe, Waachiyehkw, Kwai, Bonjour, Hi!

For all the participants in the training session Domestic Violence Intervention for Native Women, Sharing Our Expertise, Creating Lasting Ties, here is our first seasonal newsletter on the Ishkuteu Project. These newsletters will allow you to have the latest information on the project, its activities and especially news from the regions where the training session has taken place. These newsletters also offer you the chance to share your experiences and activities following the passage of the Ishkuteu Project in your region.

The training sessions are now well underway and the Ishkuteu team has visited five regions to date. The exchanges between Native and non Native resources have been very enriching. Several strategies for linkages have been identified in all five regions with the goal of creating lasting ties and working together in order to improve services on domestic violence for Native women and their children. Here are some examples.

Region : Saguenay/ Lac St-Jean

Training session location : Musée amérindien de Mashteuiatsh

Dates : June 5-6, 2008

Several linkage strategies were identified in order to improve services on domestic violence for Native women. The participants identified the usefulness of establishing a memorandum of understanding between public security in the community of Mashteuiatsh and the Regional Task Force on Domestic Violence. In addition, the non Native shelters mentioned that it would be useful to have the possibility of contacting a resource person on domestic violence in the community for references, exchanges of expertise and for questions. Efforts are underway and the first contacts have been established following the training session to put the strategies in place.

Participants also mentioned impacts of the project in their milieu:

Shortly after our participation in the training session, we had a Native woman stay at the shelter. One aspect that was pleasantly surprising was the approach of the workers regarding "the notion

of time” that differs from one culture to another. I observed that the workers were more understanding of the rhythm of this resident.

Isabelle Harvey, Director of La Passerelle d’Alma

Region : Montreal

Training session location : Université du Québec à Montréal

Dates : June 12 and September 11, 2008

The session in Montreal was a special moment for the Québec shelters and the Native resources on domestic violence to meet for the first time. There are many diverse resources in Montreal, but few specifically geared towards Native women. During the training session, a Native worker at the Montreal Women’s Centre invited all the resources to participate in an advisory committee with the goal of improving services for Native women in Montreal, including those on domestic violence. Because of the greater number of resources in Montreal, a second training session is planned for March 2009.

Region : Mauricie

Training session location : Club Odanak near La Tuque

Dates : October 9 and 10, 2008

Strong ties already exist between Native and non Native resources in the region of Upper Mauricie. Several linkage strategies were identified nonetheless.

- Establish a calendar of activities taking place in the resources present at the training session and inform Native and non Native women.
- Study the possibility of running joint training sessions where Native and non Native resources can participate together.
- Establish a memorandum of understanding between shelters and the police of the Atikamekw communities.
- Native and non Native shelters alike could undertake awareness campaigns in the communities.
- Ideally, have a resource person on domestic violence in each Atikamekw community for post-shelter follow-up.
- Invite Native women staying in a non Native shelter to participate in activities at the Native shelter in La Tuque, for example, for the craft workshops.

Since the session, the director of the Toit de l’Amitié in La Tuque offered a training session on emotional dependence at the Native shelter Asperimowin. This session further reinforced ties that existed between resources in the region.

Region : Nord du Québec

Training session location : Community Hall of the Town Hall, Chibougamau

Dates : November 13 and 14, 2008

The training session in Chibougamau represented a serious challenge for the Ishkuteu team. The non Native resources in this region speak primarily French while the Native resources communicate primarily in English or Cree. Thus the team offered its first bilingual session. The presence of several bilingual participants also facilitated the work of the team. Despite linguistic challenges, the discussions were very rich and several strategies were identified to improve services on domestic violence for Native women and their children.

- Develop a consent form allowing the Aquarelle shelter in Chibougamau to divulge information with the social services in the Cree communities. The social services of Waswanipi are not able to assure any follow-up because they have no information regarding the arrival or departure of Cree women at the shelter due to issues of confidentiality. The social services of Waswanipi would like to develop a consent form that a resident would sign before leaving L'Aquarelle. Thus, L'Aquarelle, with the signed consent of the resident, could divulge information to the social services.
- Pursue meetings between Native and non Native resources present at the training session in order to improve contacts and services for Cree women.
- One of the workers at a Cree resource offered to visit non Native resources to explain how she has used the medicine wheel and talk about Cree culture.
- There is a need for information regarding the rights of Cree women and their status following the signing of the James Bay Convention of 1975. In order to work better with Cree women, for both Native and non Native resources, it would be very useful to identify an expert in this field and organize an information session or be able to refer cases to the specialist.

Region : Centre du Québec

Training session location: Musée des Abénakis, Odanak

Dates : January 22 and 23, 2009

The training session took place at the Abenaki Museum in Odanak and allowed for very interesting exchanges between the participants present. The non Native shelters saw the need to understand the reality of Native women in order to better intervene with them, and the Native resources greatly appreciated the chance to know more about the non Native resources. For most of the participants the session was the first time they met. Here are some of the linkage strategies that were put forward.

- The region does not have a committee or task force on domestic violence, but the participants recognized the usefulness of this kind of concerted effort given the positive results of other task forces in the region, for example, those working on issues of neglect or dependencies.
 - The representatives of the Health and Social Services Centre of Odanak and Wolinak identified the need to develop screening techniques or methods in the area of domestic violence inside of communities. If the Ishkuteu Project could help in this area, it would be greatly appreciated.
 - The Le Far shelter offers a variety of courses for their residents and ex-residents. They offered their expertise and collaboration to other resources on the issues on which they are knowledgeable.
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The efforts that you are making to improving services for Native women and their children facing domestic violence are greatly appreciated. We recognize the importance of your work and want you to know that the Ishkuteu Project supports your efforts in creating lasting ties between resources.

A huge thank you to all of you. In every region the welcome we received and participation at the session have been essential to the success of the project.

In our next newsletter, we will let you know the news from the rest of the sessions.

If you have undertaken new activities regarding intervention for Native women, let us know. You can get in touch with us at: ishkuteu@uqam.ca. Your initiatives may inspire others.

For all questions or information, you can reach us at : 514-987-3000 local 4877 (Julie) or 2479 (Jennifer).

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ISHKUTEU is a project carried out in partnership with Québec Native Women, Inc, the Fédération des ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec, the Dialog Network and the Community Services of UQAM.