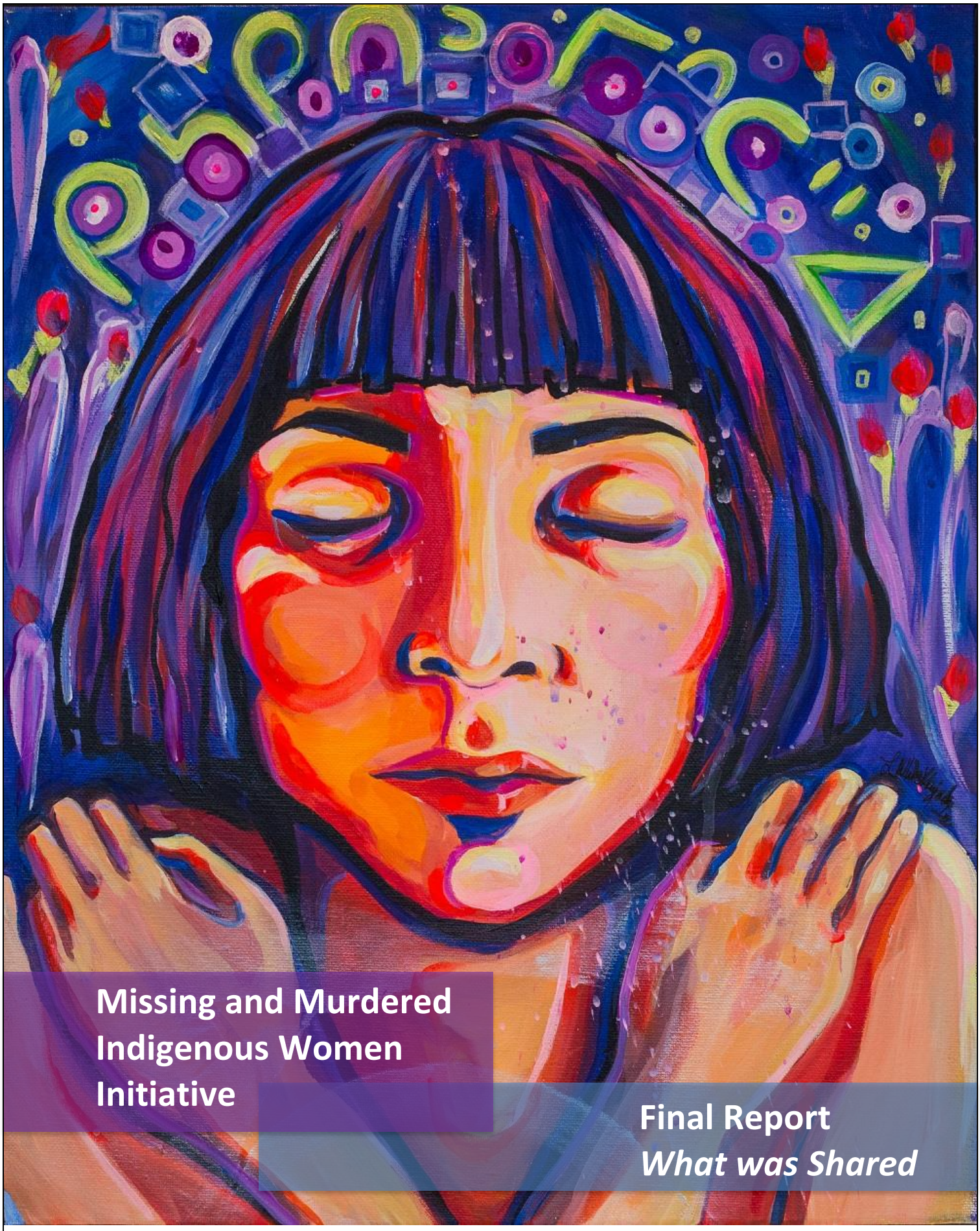

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Initiative

Final Report
What was Shared

Canada

Alberta

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About the Artist –
ayisîyiniw ôta asiskiy I am human being from this earth. Lana Whiskeyjack is a multidisciplinary treaty iskwew artist from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Treaty Six Territory, Alberta. Among her early influences and teachers were her mother's and grandmother's gifts in the traditional arts, from beadwork, medicine picking to quilting. Creating art was her first form of communicating what she could not speak, born from the deep roots and the intrinsic beauty of her interconnections with Cree language, spirituality, and her lived experiences of being a nehiyaw.

Acknowledgements

This report is dedicated to the family members of Indigenous women and girls in Alberta who have a loved one missing, or have lost a loved one to homicide.

These women and girls were daughters, mothers, sisters, aunts, nieces, friends, grandmothers and granddaughters. Each one was loved and each one will be remembered.

We acknowledge the significant contributions the families and communities of missing and murdered Indigenous women have made to this report. We are deeply grateful for the time, wisdom and experiences they shared. Their participation contributed greatly to our collective knowledge and understanding and identified where changes must be made to ensure that build a future where Indigenous women and girls are not murdered and do not go missing from their communities because they are Indigenous.

In addition to their pain, participants expressed optimism and hope; families and communities spoke passionately about what was important to them. They believe strongly that life can be better – that over time systemic transformations can be achieved to ensure that other women and girls will not experience the same fate as their loved ones. Through this collective expression of hope, families and communities came together and demonstrated their commitment to lasting change.

We appreciate the contributions of the numerous individuals, service providers, police and other stakeholder groups who gave their time and expertise to express their concern and commitment to finding solutions during the engagement process.

Finally, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Victims Services would like to thank the Government of Canada for their generous support of this initiative.

The work of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Initiative demonstrates the Government of Alberta's pledge to ensure that there will be meaningful change in the lives of Indigenous women and girls by providing consistent, culturally safe victim services responses to families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Victims Services

Executive Summary

In 2013, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) Victims Services embarked on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) Initiative to address urgent needs of Indigenous communities. This project recognizes that family members who have lost loved ones to homicide or being missing often do not receive the specialized supports they require, particularly over the long term. Thus, the initiative's purpose is to identify the needs of victims of crimes and trauma within the context of missing and murdered Indigenous women and subsequently address these needs. This report shares the findings of the first component of the project, which is based on an extensive community engagement process and a review of the grey and academic literature. These findings will inform the renewal of Alberta Justice & Solicitor General Victim Services service delivery and provide evidence for broader policy work.

Over the course of the last two decades, the Canadian public has become increasingly aware that girls and women's Indigenous identity puts them at a significantly higher risk for violence than the general population. For many years, the violence perpetrated against them went unnoticed, was disregarded and remained largely undocumented. However, the work of organizations such as the Native Women's Association of Canada and its Sisters in Spirit initiative, which gathered information about the disappearance or death of more than 580 Indigenous women and girls across Canada, as well the Robert Pickton trial and the Idle No More movement have galvanized public opinion and have placed pressure on governments to take concrete action.

With the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Initiative, the Government of Alberta is responding to this call for action. This project took shape in the context of ongoing calls for a national inquiry on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women as well as consultations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the publication of its findings. At the same time, the declaration of the new Canadian Victims Bill of Rights reinforces the need for a consistent, culturally safe victim services response for those who have lost loved ones to homicide or to being missing.

The initiative's research design committed to adopting an Indigenous research methodology and adhered to the framework for the ethical conduct of research involving Indigenous research as outlined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement (Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research, 2014). This orientation requires that researchers accept responsibility for the impact of the initiative on the lives of participants. Furthermore, it calls for a collaborative process that ensures community benefit and a sharing of what was learned. The research methodology was defined by reciprocity, honoring cultural protocols, acknowledging Indigenous epistemology and an understanding that all research is in some part subjective.

The survey instrument was vetted through ARECCI: A Project Ethics Community Consensus Initiative, an ethical review process managed by Alberta Innovates Health Solutions.

The critical components of this initiative are:

- An engagement process with Indigenous communities, stakeholders, service providers and individuals who have been impacted by this issue to gather information about their priorities and perspectives;
- The development of an annotated bibliography of pertinent grey and academic literature;
- A review of existing policy and issues that impact the safety of Indigenous women in Alberta;
- The development of support guides for both service providers and those who are dealing with homicide and missing persons; and
- The creation of a set of guiding principles for a culturally safe victim services response.

Alberta Justice and Solicitor General's (JSG) Victims Services' plan for responding to this report's findings will focus on the development of a framework to ensure a consistent, culturally safe victim services response when providing support to the families of homicide victims and missing persons**.** These guiding principles will be embedded within the work of the Victim Service Units (VSUs) and will be supported by the development of a variety of educational and informational materials.

Key Findings

Between November 2013 and July 2014, 575 individuals participated in the community engagement process. Events were hosted in eleven Indigenous communities with representation from sixteen Indigenous nations/tribes/Métis settlements. Engagements were also hosted in two urban centers across the province and two northern towns.

Participants identified that intergenerational trauma was the primary root cause of Indigenous women being over represented among those missing and murdered. They further noted this trauma was compounded by the intersection with structural inequalities such as poverty, racism and gender inequality. Structural inequalities and geographic isolation create vulnerabilities that put Indigenous women at an increased risk of becoming a victim of homicide or a missing person. The vulnerabilities become visible in the following areas:

- lateral violence;
- domestic violence;
- engaging in high-risk behaviors, including addictions;
- sexual exploitation/human trafficking;
- a lack of resources and/or low uptake of resources due to access barriers;
- policing challenges and/or lack of trust in the police as a service providers;
- transience between communities and extended families;
- transitioning from the community to a bigger urban center and not maintaining contact;
- child services involvement; and
- inconsistency/inability to proactively address youth at risk.

These in turn are further worsened by a lack of available and affordable housing, a lack of specialized shelters, transportation challenges, unemployment, involvement with child services, transience, women/girls leaving their communities with no knowledge of city life, and a general lack of safety planning at all system levels. The end result is that Indigenous women and girls in Alberta experience

multi-levels of vulnerabilities. If there is a lack of understanding of *who* the victim is, including their personal history, values, beliefs and practices, the risk of re-victimization by well-meaning service providers is high.

Community engagement participants included community service providers, community members and law enforcement representatives. Community service providers identified the need to enhance and supplement services, particularly in rural areas. They collectively spoke about the challenges and barriers to service provision. Community members expressed optimism about the future, offering many creative suggestions to pro-actively address these issues across the lifespan. Law enforcement representatives were candid about their processes and policies. All stakeholders acknowledged both the strengths and gaps in the present system of response and a commitment to addressing the latter. Their specific recommendations emphasized prevention, early intervention, healing and restorative practices.

A critical review of current approaches, policy and legislation process resulted in a number of recommendations for change that lay the foundation for during a proposed phase two of this initiative, which will focus on policy changes. These include the potential for enhanced next of kin notifications, regular gatherings for those impacted and the development of an ambiguous loss counselling resource.

Many issues that the engagement process brought forth fall outside the scope of JSG Victims Services. For example, the persistence and consequences of structural inequalities are noted in this report because they need to be acknowledged and honoured in the context they were shared. Participants spoke to their lived experience, creating an understanding of what is needed to address this issue from a holistic perspective.

Note the survey instrument uses the term "Aboriginal", which reflects dominant terminology when the project began. The more inclusive but synonymous term "Indigenous" appears most often throughout the report.

Glossary of Terms

60s (sixties) Scoop
Refers to the practice, beginning in Canada in the 1960s and continuing until the late 1980s, of apprehending children of Indigenous peoples in Canada and either keeping them within Canada and placing them in Indian Residential Schools or placing them in families across Canada, the United States and western Europe where they were in foster care or adopted, usually into non-Indigenous families.

Ambiguous Loss
Ambiguous loss is a … type of loss that occurs when a loved one is physically present, but psychologically absent. … Because the lost person is here, but not here, grief is frozen, life is put on hold, and people are traumatized. With no official verification of death, no possibility of closure, and no rituals for support, there is no resolution of grief. (Boss, 2010)

Child and Family Services
The Government of Alberta branch of Human Services that deals with issues relating to children and families, including the foster care system, adoption and kinship care, as well as programs for youth and children's mental health. For more information, see http://humanservices.alberta.ca/programs-and-services.html

Colonization
Colonization can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a peoples. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants, often legalized after the fact. For Indigenous people in Canada, colonialism resulted in a disconnection from land, language, history, culture and rights. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) theories contend that law enforcement officers, architects, city planners, landscape and interior designers, and resident volunteers can create a climate of safety in a community right from the start. CPTED's goal is to prevent crime by designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior and deters criminal activity. The theory is based on four principles: natural access control, natural surveillance, territoriality and maintenance.

Criminal Justice System
The criminal justice system (CJS) provides individuals and society with a reasonable degree of security from criminal activities that threaten their lives, health or property, and ensures that those who are charged and/or convicted with committing a criminal act are treated fairly and justly. The criminal justice system, while acknowledging that harm has been done to a victim, sees that an

offence is a crime against society. The two most important functions of the criminal justice system are the administration of justice and the enforcement of criminal law. Participants include police, victim services units, lawyers, correctional services, legal aid, the Crown Prosecutor and the general public.

Cultural Protocol
"Cultural protocol refers to the customs, lore and codes of behaviour of a particular cultural group [and how they relate to] the standards of behaviour used by people to show respect to one another. It also refers to the procedures used to guide the observance of traditional knowledge and practices, including how traditional knowledge is used, recorded and disseminated." (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Childcare, n.d.)

Cultural Safety
Cultural safety involves the interplay of three elements: 1) *cultural awareness*, the acknowledgement of difference; 2) *cultural sensitivity*, the recognition of the importance of respecting that difference; and 3) *cultural competence*, which focuses on the skills, knowledge and attitudes of practitioners. It involves self-reflection and an understanding that the cultural values and norms of the client may be different due to unique socio-political histories. This reflection, ultimately, leads to the experience of empathy in the practitioner. When service providers have this capability to share their client's emotions and feelings, this strengthens and deepens the relationship, both with that client and with their community, leading to better health outcomes.

Diversity
For this report, diversity refers to the recognition of individual differences. These differences exist in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
FASD describes a range of disabilities that result from a person's exposure to alcohol during pregnancy (in utero). The medical diagnoses of FASD include:

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)
- Partial FASD (PFAS)
- Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)

Gender Based Analysis + (GBA+)
GBA+ points out differences between women's and men's experiences in the world, as well as among diverse groups of the same gender. GBA+ ensures that the impacts and potential impacts of policies and programs on persons with different gender identities are identified and have fair and intended results across the population.

Geographic Isolation
Refers to the remote location of some Indigenous communities, and the fact this can mean limited access to resources, support services, transportation, police and other services accessible in bigger centers. It can also refer to a less tangible sense of 'being separate' from other communities because Indigenous lands are managed under federal jurisdiction rather than provincial.

High Risk Behavior
For the purposes of this report, this refers to activities or behaviors an individual engages in that put them at greater risk for victimization by increasing vulnerability. These can include substance abuse, involvement in the sex trade, criminal activities, transiency or interpersonal relationships with others engaged in these or similar behaviors.

Historical Trauma
"Essentially, the devastating trauma of genocide, loss of culture, and forcible removal from family and communities are all unresolved and become a sort of 'psychological baggage'... continuously being acted out and recreated in contemporary Aboriginal culture." (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2008)

Human Trafficking
Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harboring and/or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labor. It is often described as a modern form of slavery.

Indian Residential School
The term *Indian Residential Schools* refers to an extensive school system set up by the Canadian government and administered by churches that had the nominal objective of educating Indigenous children but also the more damaging and equally explicit objectives of indoctrinating them into Euro-Canadian and Christian ways of living, with the goal to assimilate them into mainstream Canadian society. The residential school system operated from the 1880s into the closing decades of the 20th century. This system forcibly separated children from their families for extended periods of time and forbade them to acknowledge their Indigenous heritage and culture or to speak their own languages. Children were often severely punished if these, among other, strict rules were broken.

Indigenous
"Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them." (United Nations). Given its inclusivity, the term indigenous is now more commonly favoured, but is used synonymously with Aboriginal in the context of this report.

Indigenous Awareness Training
Provides basic knowledge of the history of Indigenous peoples as the foundation to understanding the contemporary issues connected to Indigenous lands, cultures and communities.

Indigenous Research Methodology
As defined by Kevin Wilson (2011), "an Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, not just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of creation…it goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge."

Intergenerational Trauma
Intergenerational trauma is a form of historical trauma that is transmitted across generations. It is the trauma that is transferred from the first generation of survivors that directly experienced or

witnessed traumatic events to the second and further generations (Atkinson, Nelson & Atkinson 2010).

Intersectional Lens
This initiative focused on Indigenous women and girls. However, the use of the GBA+ policy lens intentionally expands this focus to include men and boys and all of their diversity. This is not to diminish the marginalization experienced by Indigenous women and girls, rather it acknowledges that men and boys have also been impacted in various ways by many of the same issues.

Kinship
"In First Nations societies families are best understood in the context of social networks of related people, called *kinship* in anthropological studies, in which an individual's identity, rights, and responsibilities are defined and given meaning. Historically, these networks were also the basis of First Nations economies. Membership in family groups determined ownership of territories, access to knowledge, and defined local systems of production and consumption." (http://family.jrank.org/pages/199/Canada-First-Nations-Families.html). Elements of this system, while deeply affected by colonialism, still exist strongly today.

Lateral Violence
"Lateral violence can occur within oppressed societies and include bullying, gossiping, feuding, shaming, and blaming other members of one's own social group as well as having a lack of trust toward other group members.(Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2014, p. 2)

Missing Person
"Missing person" refers to an individual who has not been in contact with those persons who would likely be in contact with the individual, or an individual whose whereabouts are unknown despite reasonable efforts to locate the individual, and whose safety and welfare are feared for given the individual's physical or mental capabilities or the circumstances surrounding the individual's absence. (www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/m18p5.pdf)

Neighborhood Watch
A program in which as many community members as possible are actively participating in their neighbourhood so that any threats to the area will be reported to the police, thus avoiding the occurrence of a crime.

Next of Kin (NOK)
Adult next-of-kin is defined in the Fatality Inquiries Act as mother, father, brother, sister, children, spouse or adult interdependent partner. A minor is also included if the minor is a parent, spouse or adult interdependent partner. (www.servicealberta.ca/774.cfm)

Police Jurisdiction
Police jurisdiction refers to the legal authority for police and other law enforcement agencies to enforce laws and the specific geographical area in which this authority exists.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
"PTSD occurs after the person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others, and the person's

response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, intense psychological distress at exposure to cues that remind one of an aspect of the traumatic event, persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, symptoms of increased arousal and significant distress or impairment in important areas of functioning." (www.estss.org/learn-about-trauma/dsm-iv-definition/)

Sampling, Snowball
Is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Thus, the sample group appears to grow like a rolling snowball.

Sampling, Stratified Purposive
A type of nonprobability sampling where the researcher selects subjects/elements with characteristics relevant to the study, including a variety of subgroups of interest to facilitate comparisons.

Qualitative Research
Qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues. It uses in-depth studies of groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results are descriptive rather than predictive.

Quantitative Research
Explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics).

Racism
The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.

Second Stage Housing
Temporary accommodation for individuals wishing to stabilize their housing situation while resolving other issues in their lives, such as unemployment, addictions, education and violence. These typically have access to support services helping an individual move to self-sufficiency. In Alberta, individuals can stay in second stage housing for 3-6 months.

Sexism (Gender Inequality)
Prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex.

Smudge
"Smudging is a ceremony traditionally practiced by some Aboriginal cultures to purify or cleanse negative energy, feelings or thoughts from a place or a person. Sacred medicines [such sweet grass or sage are burned in a receptacle] representing water, the first of four elements of life. The medicines represent gifts from mother earth and the burning represents fire, the next two elements. The person puts their hands in the smoke and carries it to their body, especially to areas that need spiritual healing (mind, heart, body). The smoke represents air, the final element." (www.ammsa.com/node/12407)

Social Norm
An expected form of behavior in any given situation.

Specialized Services
In this report, this refers to services that require special skills and training outside what a victims services service provider would receive. These include mental health practitioners like psychologists, social worker and psychiatrists, or providers with experience in unique areas of mental health, like PTSD, ambiguous loss or historical trauma.

Statistical Significance
An interpretation of statistical data that indicates that an occurrence was likely the result of a causative factor and not simply chance.

Victim Assistance Program
Victim assistance program is often used interchangeably with victim services unit. A victim assistance program provides information, referral and support to victims of crime and tragedy. See the *Preamble* on page 13 for more detailed information.

Victim Services Unit (VSU)
Victim services units are victim-serving organizations that provide information, support and referrals for victims of crime throughout their involvement in the criminal justice system. See the *Preamble* on page 13 for more detailed information.

Victim Services Advocate
A victim services advocate is the person(s), paid or volunteer, who are associated with a VSU and who may be called upon to assist or support a victim(s).

Women's Shelter (or Women's Emergency Shelter)
Provides temporary, typically overnight, safe shelter to women fleeing from domestic violence or other family trauma. Shelters may also provide support services related to counselling, employment, addictions and health needs. Women's emergency shelters can provide accommodation for up to 21 days with the possibility of extension. Alberta also has *second stage* shelters to accommodate women and children over an extended period of time.

Preamble - Alberta Victims Services

Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) Victims Services supports victims of crime in Alberta in four main areas. First, the province administers and funds Victim Service Units (VSUs). VSUs are organizations that aid victims of crime and tragedy by providing support, information and referral. The majority of supports to victims are delivered through a network of 75 police-based VSUs, operating out of 137 service delivery areas. An additional 36 community-based funding agreements with agencies and organizations are in place to deliver specialized assistance and programming to address gaps for vulnerable victims. Second, the province administers the Victims of Crime Financial Benefits Program, which provides a monetary benefit to victims of crime. Third, the province provides standardized and specialized training for victim services staff and volunteer advocates as well as informs the development of resources for victims. Lastly, JSG Victims Services coordinates special initiatives to address key gaps and needs of victims of crime.

VICTIM SERVICE UNITS

Police-Based Victim Services Units

Police-based VSUs are independent, non-profit agencies that are governed by a local volunteer board of directors, and staffed by both a paid victim services program manager and volunteer victim advocates. Police-based VSUs are usually co-located with local police services. They provide a continuum of services to victims of crime and tragedy from the time of first response by police, to the disposition of the case by the courts. Police-based VSUs are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to respond to crisis.

Through police-based VSUs, victims are provided with information about their case and criminal justice proceedings, emotional support and referrals to other community agencies (i.e. counseling, shelters, financial assistance, support groups). In addition, they provide victims with information about completing victim and community impact statements, applying for financial benefits, requesting restitution, courtroom orientation, and courtroom accompaniment. Police-based VSUs may also work with victims of tragic situations wherein the police become involved, including motor vehicle accidents, missing persons, fires and next of kin notifications.

Community-Based Victim Programs

Community-based victim programs are designed to help reduce the barriers faced by different victim groups in the criminal justice system. They deliver specialized assistance and programming to address gaps in services for vulnerable victims such as children, those subjected to human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, street involved persons, new Canadians, and to loved ones of those who were victims of homicide.

Community-based programs can be located as standalone programs, but more often are part of larger organizations that provide multiple services not necessarily related solely to victims of

crime. All community-based programs provide victims with information about the criminal justice system, emotional support, information about their rights and entitlements as victims of crime, and referrals to other community agencies.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS PROGRAM

The Financial Benefits Program is an important piece in the continuum of services offered to victims of violent crime; it provides a monetary benefit to eligible victims in Alberta as an acknowledgement of their victimization. Benefits are based on the severity of the injuries received with benefit amounts being set through the Victims of Crime Regulation. There are three types of benefits:

- **Injury Benefit** for victims who received physical and/or psychological injuries as a direct result of the crime.
- **Witness to homicide benefit** for persons who suffered a psychological injury as a result of witnessing the death of a loved one due to violent crime.
- **Death benefit** which is reimbursement of funeral costs.

The Financial Benefits Program also has a monthly supplemental benefit for victims who sustain quadriplegia or severe brain injury as a result of a crime that has left them fully dependent on others for their day-to-day functions. This benefit is awarded automatically if the victim's injuries meet the criteria for the supplemental benefit.

The Financial Benefits Program does not place any restrictions, allowing the victims to use their benefit however they wish. Benefits for minors (under the age of eighteen) are administered by the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee on behalf of the child. This ensures the child's benefit is protected and is released to them upon turning eighteen.

SPECIALIZED VICTIMS INITIATIVES

In addition to the Victim Service Units and the Financial Benefits Program, JSG also supports victims of crime through a number of initiatives:

Victims of Crime Protocol

The *Victims of Crime Protocol* details what victims of crime can expect from the criminal justice process from the time a crime is reported through to the police investigation, court proceedings and, if the accused is found guilty, provincial and federal custody and then probation or parole. This document is available in a written, electronic and oral format.

Translation Initiatives

- JSG contracts *CanTalk* (Canada) to provide immediate interpretation and translation for victims in over 160 languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week for all funded programs.

- The *Victims of Crime Handbook* has been translated into 12 different languages, with many of them addressing low literacy concerns.
- *Awareness posters* have been translated into a local Indigenous language, Cree.
- JSG also collaborates with other government ministries to disseminate *translated resource and support material* on connecting issues, such as domestic violence.

Training

JSG has a dedicated training unit to address the training needs of VSU program managers and their volunteers, including advocates and board members. *Program Manager training*, both basic and advanced, is offered every year. Sessions include those that focus on specialized needs or perceived barriers to service for victims of crime, including: cultural training, gender training, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder awareness and Alzheimer awareness.

Alberta has standards in place for service providers. As such, all VSU Program Managers and volunteer advocates are expected to complete the *JSG Victim Advocate Certification e-learning* course. This 35-module course provides basic information on the criminal justice process as well as specialized training on gender, cultural diversity and other issues relating to victim vulnerabilities.

Indigenous Awareness Training is a yearly three-day experiential training event for VSU staff and allied professionals (including police members). The course takes place in different communities across the province and focuses on Indigenous culture while providing sessions on trauma, Indigenous history, Indian Residential Schools, current issues and promising practices for working with Indigenous communities. Participants are also provided with experiential learning opportunities, including sleeping in a tipi, making a cultural craft item, and participating in a sweat lodge or other ceremony (Four Fire, Bear Lodge, Chicken Dance).

In Alberta, we recognize that geography can create physical barriers to service provision. As such, training events incorporate both rural and urban perspectives. Further, trainers often travel to communities to reduce training barriers. Recently learning material is also being delivered through webinars.

Counselling for Children Pilot Program

The Counselling for Children Pilot Program ensures that child victims of abuse receive additional counselling services and have access to specially trained counsellors. The additional counselling services will be available as a pilot project at the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary, the Caribou Child and Youth Centre in Grande Prairie and the Zebra Child Protection Centre in Edmonton. The three child advocacy centers received a Counselling for Children grant from the Alberta government through the *Victims of Crime Fund*, made possible by the *Children First Act*.

This assistance for child victims through the pilot project will be provided in addition to the support, information and court support already available to assist victims and their families through various community and police-based victim service organizations across Alberta.

The model of practice for the Counselling for Children Pilot Program consists of a multi-disciplinary team approach that includes law enforcement, child protection services, victim advocacy services with linkages to the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service and Alberta Human Services and have access to medical services and psychological services. The pilot projects must clearly focus on enhancing access to existing programs that provide counselling to children who are victims of sexual exploitation or other criminal offences causing physical or mental harm. A key focus of the project will be recognizing and treating the mental health issues specific to this population.

Implementation of the Canadian Victim Bill of Rights (CVBR)

The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights came into force July 23, 2015. This legislation provides clear rights for victims of crime at the federal level.. These rights are considered during every stage of the criminal justice process. Victims of crime will have the right to information, protection, participation, and seek restitution. They also have the right to make a complaint if they believe that their rights have not been respected. Through its programs, JSG Victims Services is supporting the implementation of the Victim Bill of Rights.

Aboriginal Outreach Specialist Initiative

Three Victim Services programs currently receive special funding to facilitate the provision of dedicated outreach services to Indigenous victims of crime in their home communities. The goal of this initiative is to use promising practices to reduce barriers to accessing services. There are a total of 12 Indigenous communities now receiving outreach services through the funding:

- Saddle Lake Cree Nation
- Goodfish Lake First Nation
- Frog Lake First Nation
- Fishing Lake Métis Settlement
- Kikino Métis Settlement
- Heart Lake First Nation
- Beaver Lake Cree Nation
- Driftpile First Nation
- Kapowe'no First Nation
- Sawridge Band,
- Sucker Creek First Nation
- Swan River First Nation

In their reporting over the past three years, all of the projects commented that having a consistent presence of victim services within the community increased victim participation in the criminal justice system.

VICTIMS OF CRIME FUND

Alberta Victims Services (including the Financial Benefits program) is financially supported by the Victims of Crime Fund. This fund was created through Alberta's Victims of Crime Act in 1997. The fund is fully supported by surcharges on provincial offence fines and surcharges imposed by the

courts under the Criminal Code of Canada. The Victims of Crime Fund is administered by the Public Security Division within Alberta Justice and Solicitor General.

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SECTION ONE: Summary, Goals and Methodology

THE MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN INITIATIVE

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Initiative: Summary, Goals and Methodology

This report outlines the final deliverables of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women initiative (MMIW), coordinated by JSG Victims Services and supported by funding from the Department of Justice Canada. The primary purpose of this initiative was to define specific strategies for supporting families of missing and murdered Indigenous women. The information collected will be used as the basis for provincial frameworks that help identify the partners, gaps, challenges and strengths in relation to this issue.

The families of missing and murdered Indigenous women will directly benefit from this initiative. Knowledge gained will inform a consistent, culturally safe and victim-centred victim services response that is available across Alberta. Further, all Albertans will benefit from the planned provincial framework that will inform future policy decisions.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, the Alberta Victims of Crime Consultation published a report on Alberta's ten-year vision on how victims of crime in the province of Alberta should receive services. It determined that Indigenous victims of crime were being underserved in the province and subsequently that the issue required urgent attention. The report pointed to systemic failures in the police's reporting system, as well as overwhelming apathy on the part of the media and the general public, which meant that the disappearances and homicides of Indigenous women and girls had not been taken seriously. In the same year, Robert Pickton was arrested and charged with the murders of 26 women, most of them from Vancouver's Downtown East Side, but some with an Alberta connection.

In 2005, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) launched its Sisters in Spirit initiative in order to gather data and prompt an immediate and effective response from leadership at all levels. In 2010, the association released a database identifying over 580 Indigenous women who had gone missing or been murdered, primarily between 2000 and 2010. Their work inspired a number of other Indigenous advocacy organizations, academics and politicians to take a closer look at why Indigenous women were over-represented among those missing and murdered. The over-representation of Indigenous people (women and girls, men and boys and all of their diversity) as victims of crime was recognized federally with the Department of Justice Canada providing funding in 2008 for targeted outreach to underserved victims of crime. Alberta participated in this initiative. In its 2012 report, the British Columbia *Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Report* identified the system failures that allowed Pickton to avoid detection for so long.

Since this time, a significant amount of research has been carried out and numerous reports with hundreds of recommendations have been published. Action, however, has been slow to occur. In 2012, the federal government announced funding for provinces to address the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. The intention was for individual provinces to develop initiatives that met their particular needs and priorities. In 2013, Alberta's Missing and Murdered Indigenous

Women (MMIW) Initiative was launched by Alberta Victims Services to learn what was needed to make substantive changes and to build a foundation for enhancing the supports victim services provide for individuals (women, men, girls and boys and all their diversity), families and communities dealing with the reality of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

INITIATIVE GOALS

JSG launched the MMIW initiative to assist victim services in ensuring its response to victims is entirely victim-centered, meeting each victim's unique set of circumstances and needs. Taking as a starting point the over-representation of Indigenous women as victims in homicide and missing persons cases, this initiative focused on how best to meet the needs of the family and loved ones of these women. The complex context of intergenerational trauma, accompanied by the related impacts, including racism, gender inequality, poverty, lateral violence and homelessness, have undermined previous approaches to addressing this issue, which have not yielded a significant, measureable impact over time. The MMIW initiative aims to take a more targeted approach to supporting family members who have lost loved ones to homicide or being missing through providing them with specialized services, particularly over the long term.

This initiative included and honored the voices of Indigenous women and communities across the province. This inclusive approach was achieved by engaging directly with Indigenous communities, as well as stakeholders who work with these communities (including VSUs, police and other service providers). An Indigenous research methodology was employed to inform and structure the work carried out. The tenets of gender-based analysis further informed the process.

The overarching goal of the MMIW initiative is to develop a consistent, culturally safe victim services response through the following strategies:

- engage with Indigenous communities, stakeholders, service providers and affected individuals to ensure that the Indigenous perspective is reflected in all initiative components;
- carry out a literature search and create an annotated bibliography aimed at providing context for and informing the initiative's outcomes;
- consolidate information that will assist in the development of provincial response frameworks that will identify the scope of the issue, the current and emergent responses to the issue, and the roles and responsibility of responders to this specialized group of crime victims;
- provide recommendations that will support a culturally safe victim services response by service providers such as police services, victims of crime, community services and to government departments to address gaps in existing services and system responses;
- disseminate aggregate information related to missing and murdered Indigenous women to all sectors of society (justice, education, health, etc.) and provide information back to those who participate in the engagement process;
- identify system gaps in relation to a coordinated community response to missing and murdered Indigenous women;
- examine policies and identify areas that require adjustment or change; and

- develop support guides for families and stakeholders dealing with both missing and murdered individuals, with a central focus on cultural safety[1].

The MMIW initiative will enhance the Government of Alberta's understanding of this issue as a whole, placing specific emphasis on issues related to current practices and policies that support families of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Most importantly, the initiative will build on the experiences and insights of those impacted by this issue and make recommendations to government, other stakeholders, communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to ensure that victims' loved ones are being appropriately served by a system that meets their needs.

CURRENT RESEARCH REGARDING MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN

As part of this initiative, an extensive literature review was conducted. This review, which included 65 major studies, surveys, conference proceedings, inquires and reports, provided a strong evidence base from which the research model evolved. It also validated the results of the MMIW research.

Existing research confirmed the rate of violence experienced by Indigenous women in Canada remains disproportionately higher when compared to non-Indigenous women. Indigenous women are three times as likely to experience some form of domestic spousal violence compared to non-Indigenous women. 5.8% of reported cases involving Indigenous women ended in spousal fatalities[2]. In 2014, the RCMP released a report containing data on the number and profile of missing and murdered Indigenous women across the country, which was a watershed moment because with a figure of 1,181 it presented a significantly higher number than the 800 that had circulated previously. This new data contributed to a shifting public discourse and further contributed to the sense of urgency.

Many reports indicate the long-term impact of colonization continues to be a dire reality for most Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous women. The legacy of residential schools and the 60s scoop exacerbated the effects of government policies that promoted the assimilation of Indigenous people to the general population for almost 200 years, which threatened Indigenous identity and their safety.

This centuries-old history of the dissembling of Indigenous identity resulted in what is now identified by scholars as intergenerational or historic trauma, which is cited across the literature as a significant root cause of the issues that put Indigenous women at risk of violence. This trauma created a web of structural barriers that articulates itself in the lived experience of Indigenous peoples in the form of poverty, gender inequality, racism, homelessness, lack of adequate services and lack of education. Together, these factors heighten the risk of victimization for already vulnerable Indigenous women

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[1] This is defined in the Glossary of Terms.
[2] The average rate of homicide between 1997 and 2000 for Aboriginal people was 8.8 per 100,000 population. Source: Statistics Canada.

and their children. The literature agrees that a coordinated, national plan for strategic action is needed to effectively address the risk factors and root causes that put Indigenous women at risk for violence. Recommendations for intervention include:

- investing in front-line services and shelters on reserves;
- policies to facilitate information sharing between service providers, communities and governments;
- facilitating prevention measures;
- engaging in public awareness activities;
- policing reforms;
- justice system reforms; and
- strategies to empower Indigenous women and communities.

Cultural safety was also a recurring theme. A culturally safe service environment is one that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe. For Indigenous people, cultural safety extends beyond cultural awareness, sensitivity and competence through the identification of implicit power imbalances, including recognition of privilege. In the context of victim services, the concept of cultural safety highlights the need for programs and services that are not only culturally relevant but also recognize the broader historical and social context in which Indigenous people live.

Recently, a literature review funded by the Women's Legal and Action Fund identified over 50 reports published since 1999 on the topic of violence against Indigenous women and girls which made more than 700 recommendations. The report concluded that the great majority of these recommendations have not yet been implemented.

THE ALBERTA CONTEXT

There are a number of stakeholders and communities currently working toward addressing the problem of violence against Indigenous women, and by extension, the issue of women who are missing or have been murdered. These include:

- RCMP's KARE/Historical Homicide/Missing Persons and Unidentified Human Remains Units - Serious Crimes Branch;
- RCMP Pilot Projects (working with three Indigenous communities identified as at-risk in their 2014 and 2015 reports on missing and murdered Indigenous women);
- Government of Alberta, Department of Human Services, Indigenous Relations (Moose Hide Campaign aimed at empowering men to stop violence against Indigenous women);
- First Nations and Métis Women's Economic Councils (policy recommendations and strategic advice to improve the economic security of Indigenous women);
- Friendship Centers (educational and training initiatives and pilot programs);
- Native Counselling Services of Alberta (educational and training initiatives and pilot programs); and
- The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (dedicated to promote, improve and advance Indigenous women through education initiatives).

This list is in not exhaustive; many other communities, organizations and individuals are also directing their efforts toward making change.

A lack of publically accessible data about missing and murdered women in Alberta has hampered some efforts to approach the issue. While the RCMP reports provided very useful general information, with some of it broken down provincially, a great deal of demographic information[3] remains inaccessible. This type of data would prove useful to communities, stakeholders and service providers who are looking at developing targeted solutions and interventions.

What was also missing is an understanding of the views, beliefs, and experiences of those directly impacted by the issue, either as loved ones of those who have been murdered or gone missing, or as service providers attempting to support those who are victimized by their loss. As such, a significant part of the MMIW initiative involved engagements with Indigenous communities across the province to record their stories, feelings, beliefs and ideas. VSU service providers, other stakeholders (including police and agencies serving Indigenous peoples) and individuals whose lives have been impacted were also asked to share their perspective.

Finally, the focus on cultural safety is still emerging in strategies for victim service provision. While efforts have been made to incorporate culturally sensitive practices, these have generally not proven entirely successful, as consideration of the deeper complexities of the challenges faced by Indigenous people (intergenerational trauma and its resulting impacts) have not traditionally been addressed.

THE FINAL REPORT

The primary work of the initiative has now come to an end. This report provides the following:

- a summary of the findings of the engagement process;
- community-generated ideas regarding strategies for addressing the challenges;
- a summary of the results of additional project deliverables;
- placing the initiative in the context of cultural safety for victims; and
- establish a set of guiding principles for moving forward on this topic.

This report is a living document that will inform the development of frameworks and other Government of Alberta policy and programming related to addressing the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Alberta. Fundamentally, the report recognizes the need for differential approaches for all: women and girls, men and boys and all their diversity.

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[3] This would include geographic information, relationship of perpetrator to victim (if known), the victim's involvement in any high-risk behaviour (drugs, the sex trade), parental status, any child protective services involvement, etc.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research took the form of a mixed method study, consisting of the following elements:

- a facilitator-led engagement process;
- a self-administered written survey, distributed at the in-person engagement events, consisting of qualitative and quantitative responses to a number of questions relevant to the communities' experience of the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women;
- an online version of the self-administered survey, hosted on the GOA's Opinio platform;
- targeted focus groups with service providers and stakeholders across the province; and
- one-on-one interviews with stakeholders including affected individuals, community leaders, Elders and stakeholders.

The following diagram (see Figure 1) shows the progression of the initiative, from the design and development phase of the research methodology, to conducting the community engagement sessions, to data analysis and dissemination. Evaluation will occur in phase two.

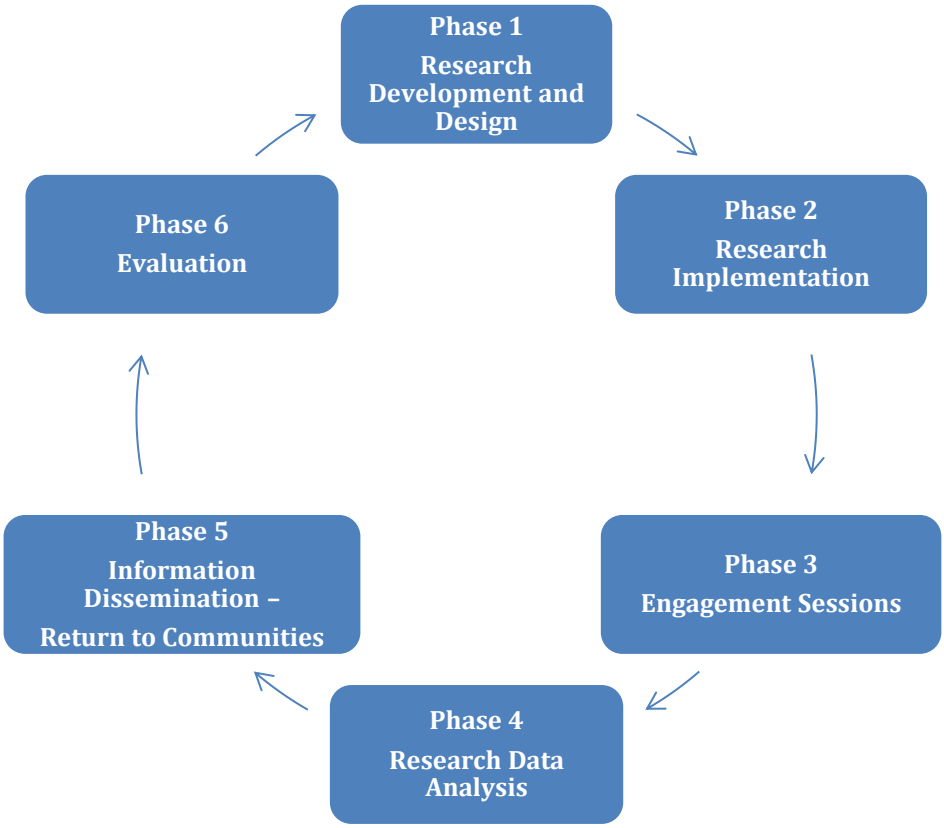

Figure 1: MMIW Research Plan

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The initiative's research design committed to adopting an Indigenous research methodology and adhered to the framework for the ethical conduct of research involving Indigenous research as

outlined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement (Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research, 2014). This orientation requires that researchers accept responsibility for the impact of the initiative on the lives of participants. Furthermore, it calls for a collaborative process that ensures community benefit and a sharing of what was learned. The research design incorporated the following principles:

- **reciprocity**: JSG Victims Services committed to sharing aggregate information collected with the community. Individual participants were invited to provide contact information if they wanted to a copy of the final report mailed to them;
- **honoring cultural protocols** included knowing specifically who is acknowledged to be missing or murdered from that community and the circumstances around that event, providing tobacco to an Elder for an opening invocation, having sacred medicines available for a smudge/cleansing ceremony, and offering community gifts. The treaty land on which the engagement occurred was also recognized;
- **acknowledgement of Indigenous epistemology**: many Indigenous ways of knowing accept both the physical and the nonphysical realms as reality. This was factored into the analysis process and honored whenever possible;
- **understanding that all research is in some part subjective**; the various perspectives of the different individuals who contributed, the facilitators and the data analyst were acknowledged, honored and/or included in all stages of the research;
- **identification of self**: at the engagements occurring in Indigenous communities, facilitators began by introducing themselves according to Indigenous protocol that emerges from a collectivist culture, which values the whole over the individual. For Indigenous people, it is customary to define oneself by one relationship to a peoples and a territory. This identification helps to establish trust; and
- **the use of narratives and storytelling** through the use of talking circles and one-on-one conversations to engage community participants.

ENGAGEMENT FORMAT

The engagement process of the MMIW initiative took place between November 2013 and July 2014. There were four formats: community engagements, stakeholder, police and service provider engagements; a written and online survey; and individual interviews.

Fifteen communities, seven individuals personally affected by the issue, ten police agencies and thirty-seven stakeholder/service provider organizations participated in the engagement process (for a complete list of engagements see APPENDIX E –Engagement).

Community Engagements

In total 575 individuals participated in the community engagement events hosted in eleven Indigenous communities with representation from sixteen Indigenous nations/tribes/Métis settlements. Engagements were also hosted in two urban centers and two northern towns:

- Chateh/Assumption - Dene Tha' Nation
- Bushe - Dene Tha' Nation
- Piikani Nation

- Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation
- Saddle Lake Cree Nation
- Fox Lake - Little Red River Cree Nation
- Wabasca/Big Stone Cree
- Blood Tribe
- Ermineskin Cree Nation - Maskwacis
- Samson Cree Nation - Maskwacis
- Lac La Biche – representing Beaver Lake Cree Nation, Heart Lake Cree Nation, Kikino Métis Settlement and Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement
- Fort Chipewyan – representing Mikisew Cree Nation and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
- High Level
- Lethbridge
- Edmonton

Communities were selected based on the following purposive sampling criteria:

- they were primarily Indigenous communities and/or had a significant Indigenous population in the vicinity;
- they were in primarily rural/remote communities, or were a central hub to rural/remote communities;
- they had not been recently consulted on related issues by the Government of Alberta or external stakeholders;
- they were likely to have been impacted by the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women; and
- the victim services unit program manager had the time to assist with planning and setting up the engagement.

JSG Victims Services staff facilitated the engagement process. Representatives from the RCMP's KARE program attended several events as part of a commitment to knowledge exchange, which included the sharing of the policing perspective on the topic of missing persons and homicide investigations. VSU volunteers were also available at the sessions to provide emotional assistance and support to participants if required.

Community engagements were public events with the local VSU coordinating the advertising process. Most were hosted on a weekday (note: Chateh was the exception as it was hosted on a Sunday) and averaged approximately seven hours in duration. Both men and women were present, with approximately 90% of the total participants being adult women. Some participants were youth, mostly in the Fox Lake and Blood Tribe community engagements. However, the goal was to engage adults on this issue. Participants were not required to sign in. Rather, numbers were tracked through the distribution of a door prize ticket to each participant.

A series of six questions (see Appendix A – Focus Group Facilitator Question Guide) were asked to initiate conversation. These questions did not limit the conversation as the facilitator ensured that the

community participants were the drivers of the discussion. All information was captured on flipcharts and later digitized for data analysis.

The format for the engagements was as follows:

- Elders' prayer and/or smudge;
- identification of missing or murdered loved ones;
- knowledge exchange about the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women;
- completion the questionnaire;
- lunch (provided); and
- Sharing circles to gather participant responses.

Stakeholder Engagements

Participants of the stakeholder focus groups were selected using purposive stratified sampling[4] based on their interest and involvement with the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. These engagements took place in small and large group sessions over the course of the engagement process. A series of set questions were asked of the stakeholders as conversation starters; the conversation evolved according to each individual organization's experience and mandate (See Appendix C – Stakeholder/Service Provider Questionnaire). In total, over 100 stakeholders participated in 28 stakeholder meetings.

Individual Interviews

Purposive sampling was used to identify and interview seven individuals who had detailed knowledge on the topic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, of either personally or through their professional practice. Four people identified that they had been directly impacted by the loss of a loved one (son, sister, mother and female Elder). Three were service providers who had worked with the families of the women that were interviewed. These interviews were customized based on the circumstances surrounding the individual's involvement in the issue.

Written and Electronic Survey

There were two separate surveys developed to support the MMIW initiative - one for community participants (APPENDIX B – Written and Online Survey Tool) and one for stakeholders/service providers (APPENDIX C – Stakeholder/Service Provider Questionnaire). These survey tools were developed by JSG Victims Services with the support of JSG researchers. Prior to the finalization of the surveys, key stakeholders and community members were asked to provide input into what questions would best serve the needs of the initiative and by extension the communities involved. In addition, themes from current literature on the issue contributed to the survey development.

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[4] See Glossary of Terms (page 7-12) for a definition

The community survey was distributed primarily at the in-person engagements. Participants were given dedicated time during the engagement to fill out the survey. Copies were also left behind in a few communities for individuals to fill out and return at a later date. The stakeholder surveys were distributed at the stakeholder engagements.

The community survey was also made available online to enable individuals who did not participate in the community consultations to fill in the survey. Snowball sampling[4] was employed to solicit respondents. JSG Victims Services' staff distributed information about the survey to their network of stakeholders and individuals, and requested they in turn forward the request to fill out the survey. In total, participants completed 218 surveys.

DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

During data processing and analysis, responses to multiple-choice questions from the written and online survey were entered into a spreadsheet. This numerical data was cleaned to ensure consistency and was subsequently analyzed to determine frequencies[5]. Non-responses to questions were taken into account to calculate the relative frequencies for each survey question response. These were calculated based on the number of valid responses to each individual question rather than the total number of respondents to the survey as a whole. This process generated tables and graphs that summarize the communities' responses.

The written notes from the in-person engagement sessions and the open-ended questions from the survey were assembled and put through a two-phase analytical process. First, a theming session was held with Alberta JSG victim services program and research staff. Responses were analyzed and themed according to consistent patterns. Second, the same qualitative data were entered into qualitative analysis software (NVIVO), to inductively and iteratively construct a coding framework based on the analysis of a portion of the data. Here inductive refers to developing themes from the data rather than using existing themes to categorize data. An iterative process means that the analyst moves back and forth between the data, developing themes and the literature, and while doing so continuously refining themes.

The results of the first and second qualitative data analysis processes were cross-referenced to verify and finalize the coding framework. Themes were included in this report when at least three different participants articulated ideas related to them. Exceptions were made when they coincided with dominant themes that emerged in the review of the literature, or were of high priority to JSG victims services.

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[5] Relative frequency compares the number of times a specific event occurs to the total number of events, and is usually expressed as percentage.

The limitations of the quantitative component of the research include that the small sample size does not allow for tests that examine relationships between variables and their statistical significance. Findings are thus not generalizable beyond the context of the study. The limitations of qualitative data and its analysis include that the analytical process consists of the subjective identification and definition of themes, which means that if others were to examine the data they may develop different themes. In addition, findings are always tied to the immediate situation from which they are derived, or ones that are very similar. Therefore, this report's findings pertain to the communities in which data collection occurred. Overall, results provide a "snapshot" of where the communities are at in their thinking and their actions – individually and as a whole – on the issue of MMIW, particularly in the context of victims services.

In the next phase of the project JSG staff will return to the communities that took part in this study to share findings, which will further contribute to the verification process. At the same time, this step reflects this project's commitment to adopting an indigenous research methodology.

Use and Care of Data

Specific participant information has been separated from the data and is accessible only to those who were involved in the data collection. When direct quotes appear in reports and other documents, participants are not identifiable; only the type of engagement is indicated. In the case of quantitative data, only aggregate information, that is, data that an individual provided that has been combined with many others', is used. These documents include provincial victims services response frameworks for both missing persons and homicide victims as well as accompanying support guides for helping professionals.

Reports, guides and findings from the MMIW initiative will be shared widely. Audiences include federal and provincial governments, stakeholders, Indigenous organizations and community service providers who work with families of missing and/or murdered women. The documents will also be made available to the general public on the JSG Victims Services website (http://www.victims.alberta.ca).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The survey instrument was vetted through ARECCI: A Project Ethics Community Consensus Initiative, an ethical review process managed by Alberta Innovates Health Solutions.

Consent was explicitly requested from participants through both a signed form and oral confirmation. All participants completed and signed an Informed Consent Statement. Youth under 18 years of age could not complete the survey unless they had signed parental permission (zero responses). Signed statements were filed separately from each participant's competed questionnaire. In order to respect confidentiality, participants were required only to identify their home community rather than their mailing address on the consent form.

Given the sensitive nature of the research support services were available on-site at each engagement session. They included:

- two JSG Victims Services staff;
- a representative from the local VSU;
- families who had questions about policing concerns were directed to the representative from RCMP – KARE when that person was present;
- participants who required follow up were provided with contact information; and
- participants were asked as a group to identify loved ones missing or murdered in their communities.

GENDER BASED ANALYSIS PLUS (+)

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is a method for examining the intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors, aiding the development of public policy.

- GBA+ points out differences between women's and men's experiences in the world, as well as among diverse groups of the same gender. GBA+ ensures that the impacts of policies and programs are identified and have fair and intended results across the population.
- GBA + uses the research and policy model of 'intersectionality,' to help identify potential impact. This is the interaction of the many factors that influence human lives – including ethnicity, age, income, education, ability, and geography.

All elements of the MMIW initiative were viewed through the lens of GBA+ to ensure that the voices of Indigenous women were heard throughout the engagement process. Researchers trained in the GBA+ process have evaluated this report and all deliverables from this initiative. This report, including its framework for a culturally safe victim services response, is a "living" document. It will adapt and change based on feedback we receive as we report back findings to communities and stakeholders as part of the evaluation process.

SECTION TWO - What Was Shared

What Was Shared

The following section of the report summarizes the information that participants shared in the community engagement process. In the spirit of the MMIW initiative's commitment to Indigenous research methodology, which includes framing the work in the context of the relational nature of the Indigenous worldview,[6] these engagements were a critical piece of the overall project. The research findings will set the strategic direction for the work on establishing a consistent, culturally safe victim services response to families of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Additionally, the dissemination process will provide a valuable example for other government departments, stakeholder groups and communities as they grapple with the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

The findings in this section are broken up into three thematic areas. First, it presents a summary of what participants identified as the ***root causes*** of the problem: intergenerational trauma, structural inequalities, geographic isolation and their resulting impacts on communities and individuals. The second part provides a synopsis of issues related to ***victim services supports*** that emerged from the engagement process. The section concludes with participant-generated ***strategies for increasing the safety of Indigenous women, girls and communities***.

It is important to note the information gathered through this engagement process generally echo what can be found in the grey and academic literature on missing and murdered Indigenous women. These points of intersection, drawn mainly from the annotated bibliography, are highlighted whenever relevant.

This report provides a summary of what the participants shared at the community engagement sessions. The language used here may not reflect the exact words used by participants, but direct quotes have been included whenever possible.

AWARENESS OF THE ISSUE

One primary question at the onset of the engagement process was: how aware and concerned are Indigenous communities about the issue of missing and murdered women?

Engagement participants demonstrated a high level of awareness regarding the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. In the written and online survey administered as part of this research, the vast majority (90%) of respondents reported that they were aware of the issue in general. Additionally, 38% of participants were personally aware of a missing woman from their community; 46% personally knew of a murdered woman (see *Figure 2:* Personal Awareness of Missing Women and *Figure 3:* Personal Awareness of Murdered Women).

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[6] The Indigenous worldview is rooted in identification with the land and is defined by relationality and reciprocity.

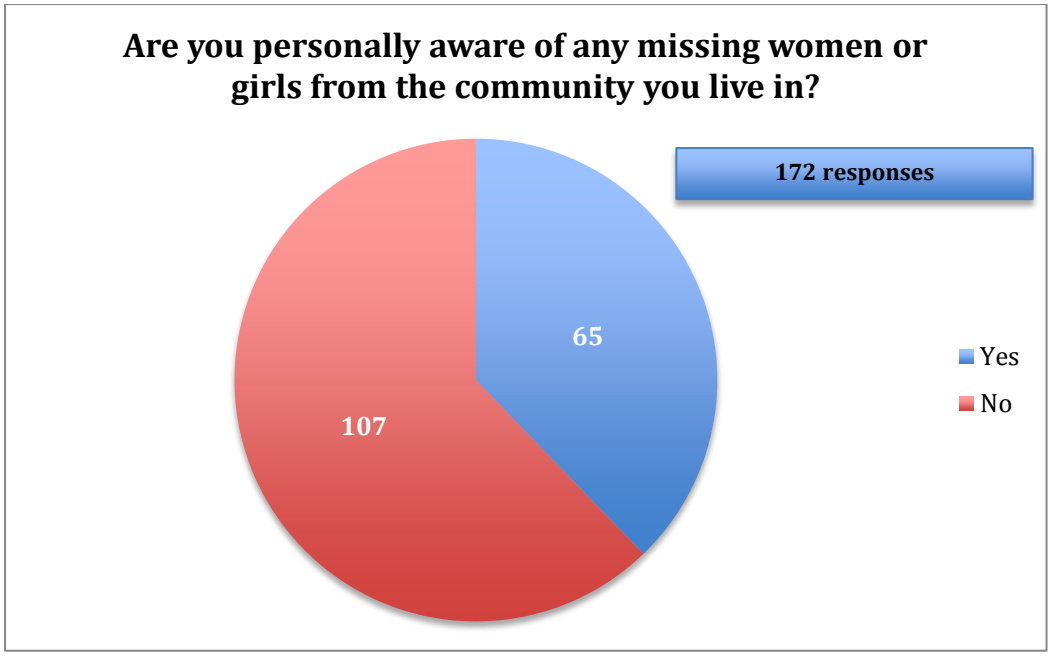

Figure 2: Personal Awareness of Missing Women

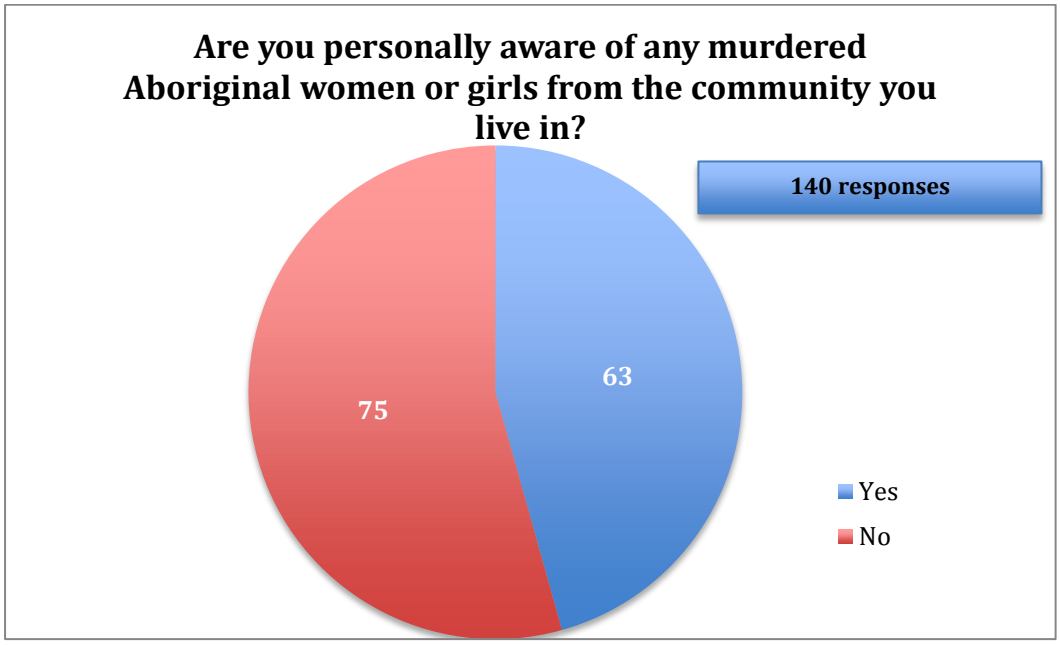

Figure 3: Personal Awareness of Murdered Women

ROOT CAUSES

Participants generously and thoughtfully shared their feelings, beliefs and attitudes about why Indigenous women are statistically over-represented among missing and murdered women in Alberta.

This sharing occurred through the engagement sessions and the survey. The dominant themes related to root causes are broken into four distinct categories, which have reciprocal effects upon one another and are layered. The broader context of all themes is colonial history.

- Historic/Intergenerational Trauma
- Structural Inequalities
- Geographic Isolation
- Impacts of Vulnerabilities on Communities and Individuals

The graph below (*Figure* 4**:** Root Causes, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women) illustrates that participants understood historic/intergenerational trauma as the central reason for why Indigenous women are statistically over-represented among missing and murdered women in Alberta. Detailed thinking about how this trauma articulates itself pointed to structural inequalities and their concrete impacts on communities and individuals. Participants also specified the profound effects that geographic isolation had on their communities. All types of factors appear equally and connectedly on the graph because they not only define the everyday lives of many Indigenous individuals and communities but they do so in complex, interrelated and layered ways, all of which combine to put indigenous women at risk of being missing or murdered.

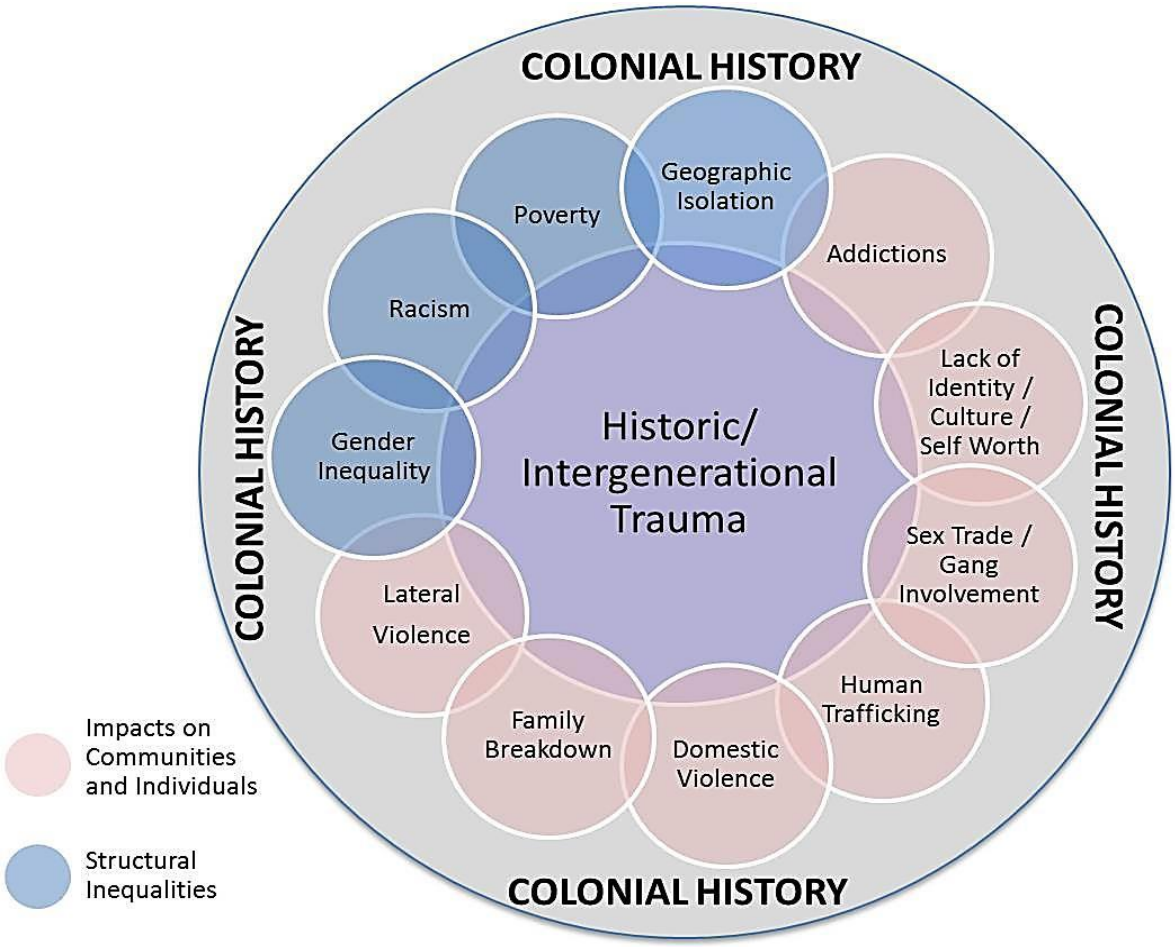

Figure 4: Root Causes, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Historic/intergenerational trauma was identified as the most significant and pervasive causal factor throughout the engagements. Participants reported significant links between this trauma and the majority of challenges facing Indigenous peoples today.

Structural inequalities, such as racism and gender inequality, are built into the fabric of the lived experience for Indigenous women. These inform both an individual's self-perception and how society as a whole perceives them. Further, they create unequal rights and opportunities and are perpetuated and reinforced by the structure of dominant organizations, institutions, governments and social networks. This includes *geographic isolation* which brings with it challenges, such as limited access to goods and services, including health care, education, access to specialized supports and as well as accomplishing day to day tasks such as shopping for groceries. Traveling between a home community and urban areas is frequently difficult and costly. The lived reality is often an under-exposure to life outside of the Indigenous community and a general lack of awareness of supports and services that may be available there.

The impacts on communities and individuals describe the consequences of structural inequalities and intergenerational trauma on the safety and mental health of Indigenous women. Sex trade involvement, the breakdown of family and community, lateral violence and the increased risk for addiction and domestic violence were all impacts observed by engagement participants. These are explored in greater length below.

Given the historic/intergenerational trauma experience is not exclusive to Indigenous women or girls, it is important to also acknowledge the impacts on men and boys. Men and boys may be perceived as less impacted because of their sex and the corresponding privilege bestowed through patriarchy; however, targeted historical institutional responses did not discriminate. All family members across many generations shared the trauma experience.

Intergenerational Trauma

Scholars recognize there are multiple types of trauma and that individuals can be impacted by more than one type. The types of trauma include:

- acute trauma – a single traumatic event that is usually time limited;
- historical trauma - is cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma; accompanied by historical unresolved grief. One form of historic trauma is *intergenerational trauma,* which is transmitted across generations. It is the trauma that is transferred from the first generation of survivors that directly experienced or witnessed traumatic events to the second and further generations;
- insidious trauma – the daily incidents of marginalization, objectification, dehumanization and intimidations that are experienced by members of groups;
- chronic trauma – the experience of multiple traumatic events which may be cumulative, as each event serves to remind the person of prior trauma and reinforces its negative impact; and
- complex trauma - results from prolonged and repeated abuse, especially if the abuse began in early childhood or came from multiple sources.

Within Indigenous people's experience, there is acknowledged exposure to many types of trauma. However, the trauma most often identified through the research process was historic or intergenerational trauma. With intergenerational trauma, "genocide, loss of culture, and forcible removal from family and communities are all unresolved and become a sort of psychological baggage ... continuously being acted out and recreated in contemporary Aboriginal culture" (Australian Human Rights Commission).

> ***"Education about the history of residential schools and the relationship between Canada and Aboriginal peoples generally can alleviate some of the guilt and shame - there are reasons why communities have so many problems. Many community members are not aware of historical trauma and its impacts. Sometimes providing vulnerable victims with an understanding that everyone has fears and vulnerabilities help make them more comfortable and willing to reach out for help."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement*

During the engagements, community members and stakeholders alike expressed a high level of concern about the effects of intergenerational trauma. Although participants spoke about this issue in different ways and using different vocabulary, the essence of this theme remained consistent.

A number of sub-themes were identified relating to this issue:

- Indian Residential School involvement;
- disruption of traditional parenting practices;
- trauma impacts on community leadership; and
- a lack of awareness of intergenerational trauma (indicative of need to know more and better inform community members).

Many of the participants acknowledged they had family members who attended Indian Residential Schools (see Glossary of Terms for a definition). Some participants had also attended an Indian Residential School themselves. In their lived experience, this event had a profound impact on the family system. Reasons for traumatization included an extended absence from families and communities, encounters with various types of abuse, little to no support for cultural traditions including language, and separation of male and female siblings within the school environment.

Participants reported the family disconnection that occurred was highly traumatic for communities and individuals. One of the key losses that occurred with the advent of legislated attendance at Indian Residential Schools was the disruption of traditional parenting practices. Not only did residential schools separate children from their families. The enforced segregation of males and females, the lack of nurturing role models coupled with rigid institutional regimes, and the repeated assaults on 'heathen' practices also effectively disrupted healthy parenting practices. Participants shared that residential school survivors often struggled with the effective parenting of their own children, further increasing vulnerabilities towards detrimental behaviors (violence, abuse in all forms, participation in high-risk activities, addictions, etc.) over generations of families.

The communities' discussion of these family challenges is corroborated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2015 report. It states: "The impacts of the legacy of residential schools have not ended with those who attended the schools. They affected the Survivors' partners, their children, their grandchildren, their extended families, and their communities. Children who were

abused in the schools sometimes went on to abuse others. Many students who spoke to the Commission said they developed addictions as a means of coping. Students who were treated and punished like prisoners in the schools often graduated to real prisons."(Hon. Sinclair, M., 2015, pp.184).

Participants also noted the effects of intergenerational trauma reach beyond the family and can be observed among those who provide governance and service to the community. Some participants shared that apathetic or unhealthy responses by leadership – its members possibly struggling themselves with the effects of intergenerational trauma – can worsen the challenges faced by already vulnerable Indigenous women and girls. This reality can result in barriers to healing activities and strategies including targeted community events, reallocation of resources or other proactive actions. Several participants stressed the need to have community leaders take responsibility for this issue at the grassroots level in order to bring about meaningful, lasting change. It is worth noting that in Alberta, Indigenous leadership in Indigenous communities is primarily male, with the majority of community caregivers being female. Further, imposed governance systems continue to exacerbate identified systemic inequalities.

A few participants further noted that some community service providers are involved in high-risk behaviors, such as the use of illicit drugs. They report these activities challenge the credibility of the service being provided, creating additional barriers (like a lack of confidentiality) which further compound the existing trauma for victims.

Finally, a number of participants remarked that many in their communities were unaware of why they face the struggles they do. They conveyed this lack of knowledge could lead to shame and apathy, creating barriers to healing. Participants expressed the belief that if awareness of the history of Indigenous people were increased, it could aid in the healing process.

Existing research echoes the responses offered by participants regarding intergenerational trauma. In *Decolonizing Child Welfare*, Terry Libesman notes that a lack of awareness of intergenerational trauma can result in reluctance to seek help or acknowledge problems in those affected. They do not see the link between past trauma and how it impacts current behaviors and attitudes. The more time passes, the greater the issues become, resulting in increased problematic behaviours such as domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse, which are difficult to address.

Structural Inequalities

Scholars link structural inequalities to intergenerational trauma. Those structural inequalities identified by participants have been grouped into the following categories:

- poverty;
- racism; and
- gender inequality.

Community-wide poverty and wage discrepancies between work on and off-reserve (e.g. in health services[7]) can lead to significant risk of vulnerability for women, reported participants. When there is little opportunity for women to make a living for themselves in their home communities, they may choose to relocate to a bigger, urban centre to access more opportunities. However, they can be unprepared for the reality and risks of city life.

Poverty may increase a woman's likelihood of engaging in high-risk behavior. The promise of food, shelter, self-medication and comfort or luxury items can make a girl or woman vulnerable to a predator disguised as a "boyfriend," who will later "call his debts" with demands of sex trade work. Poverty can also limit a woman's ability to take basic safety precautions, such as having a working cell phone, which would allow her to keep in touch with loved ones. In addition, poverty has been linked to a lack of education, which may limit literacy, employability and awareness of risk factors.

Poverty has wide reaching effects for victims of crime. Participants report that costs can prohibit access to specialized counselling. It can also make travel difficult or impossible for family attending court from afar if they have to cover their own transportation costs. For families facing the prospect of a missing adult, none of the associated costs are covered by any benefit program (e.g. time off work to grieve/search, travel, accommodation and food for out of town loved ones).

> ***"I applied for and received financial benefits. I used my half to pay for the funeral costs. My husband received the other half and did not contribute in any way."***
>
> *Individual Interview*

Some stakeholders report that Indigenous women's lack of power and control in society could mean fewer opportunities for education and employment, compounding their vulnerability. Researchers note that all the effects of poverty are exacerbated by intergenerational trauma as victims find it difficult to advocate for themselves within the various systems that have historically done damage to their families and communities.

Like poverty, participants also reported that racism and gender inequality were significant risk factors relating to missing and murdered Indigenous women. It was generally reported that Indigenous people as a whole were looked on as 'less than' and therefore 'disposable'; however, engagement participants expressed particular concern for Indigenous women. It was often referenced how the media seemed to report on their missing or murdered loved one most frequently and sensationally if there was a connection to the sex trade. Otherwise, their story was ignored or not reported on with the same intensity as non-Indigenous victims. The ongoing portrayal of Indigenous women as involved in the sex trade and substance-dependent dehumanizes them, impacts Indigenous women's self-esteem and increases their risk for abuse and violence. The cyclical process of misrepresentation increases risk and the resulting sense of apathy in the dominant culture and systems (e.g. policing, policy) has historically prevented action from occurring (i.e. if the issue is not important, it is not worth putting resources towards addressing it).In addition, engagement participants noted that

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[7] For example, nursing salaries in First Nation communities are funded through Health Canada, but set by the individual bands. These wages can often be several dollars an hour less than those funded by Alberta Health Services.

pervasive issues such as poverty and racism also factor into concerns about missing and murdered Indigenous men and boys.

Geographic Isolation

Participants additionally acknowledged that there was some inherent risk built into the geographic isolation of many First Nation communities in Alberta:

- Police response time can be an issue when the community is located some distance from the nearest detachment. Many stakeholders shared stories of long wait times for police response when violence was occurring and lives were at risk.
- Risks also exist for people who leave the community to move to a bigger town or city. Some participants reported those who live in bigger centers feel obligated to become the place where community members turn when they need to stay in the bigger center, which can put the host person or family at risk.
- In some communities, youth need to leave the community to pursue higher education. Given that youth are at the highest risk for victimization,[8] much concern was expressed about their lack of experience and increased vulnerabilities in urban settings.
- The lure of the city was also discussed by some participants. It was noted that people can make quick decisions to leave the community without adequate preparation or awareness of risks.
- Bad weather can limit access in and out of the community, increasing feelings of isolation. High risk behaviors like substance abuse and violence may increase, particularly as reported by northern communities.

> ***"Now I live in [the city], trying to give my boys a better life. Still connected with family, many who knock on my door to see if they can spend the night when they get stuck in town – no ride, no taxi, no money. Sometimes they are drunk (which is risky) but I say 'yes' even though I know I'm putting my family at risk, I can't let them freeze during the winter months because I know how far it is for them to get home and I also know there is not any other option."***
>
> *Community Participant*

- Living in an isolated community often means there are limited supports, particularly for specialized services.
- The distance to accessible resources like groceries, shopping and health care, combined with the lack of affordable and accessible transportation, can mean community members take risks including hitch hiking or walking alone late at night.
- Existing supports within small, more isolated communities often have their own challenges. Confidentiality and anonymity are often perceived to be at risk, or not to exist at all, creating

[8] 2004 General Social Survey on Victimization noted 47% of non-spousal violent incidents involved youth between 15 to 24 years of age.

a barrier to residents seeking out support when they need it. In addition, in communities where everyone knows everyone else, the possibility of exposure to lateral violence is great.

Impacts of on Communities and Individuals

Structural inequalities and geographic isolation create vulnerabilities that put Indigenous women at an increased risk of becoming a victim of homicide or a missing person. The vulnerabilities become visible in the following areas:

- lateral violence;
- domestic violence;
- engaging in high-risk behaviors, including addictions;
- sexual exploitation/human trafficking;
- a lack of resources and/or low uptake of resources due to access barriers;
- policing challenges and/or lack of trust in the police as a service providers;
- transience between communities and extended families;
- transitioning from the community to a bigger urban center and not maintaining contact;
- child services involvement; and
- inconsistency/inability to proactively address youth at risk.

Lateral violence emerged as a central theme throughout the engagement process. Bombay, Matheson and Ansiman define it as follows: "Lateral violence can occur within oppressed societies and include bullying, gossiping, feuding, shaming, and blaming other members of one's own social group as well as having a lack of trust toward other group members"(2014, p. 2). The systemic and extensive character of lateral violence was a primary concern for many participants. While stakeholders and service providers used this term directly, community members also talked about it in less formal terms, like bullying.

- Some traditional practices reportedly can lead to lateral violence. The practice of "non-interference" was noted to mean some communities refuse to acknowledge issues, crimes and victimization when they occurred.
- The kinship system of family organization, combined with mistrust of police and other systems (like Child and Family Services) they must deal with, can mean people close ranks around their own and will protect offenders in the name of keeping families together. The term "code of silence" was used by several participants.
- Participants also referenced shunning as a traditional practice used to get members to act in a way deemed to be acceptable to the community. When victims are ostracized this way, it can have an impact on their safety and their ability to fully access the justice system.
- Testifying in court and other features of the judicial process can be impacted by lateral violence. In the court system, one participant commented that "Indian medicine" is used to scare witnesses from testifying.

> ***"I think that the community should quit fighting and being envious of one another and start caring and coming together on sacred grounds and pray for women and better lives."***
>
> *Written Survey, Q 6, "Other" response*

Some participants described their fear of the risk of physical violence when discussing their reluctance to report crimes or other issues to police. Because the community is so small, the belief exists that everyone knows who reported a particular crime to police. The fear of retribution from the accused's friends and family can be strong

Domestic violence was flagged by many participants as being a great concern in considering the causal factors for missing and murdered Indigenous women. Participants report that domestic violence can be triggered by factors including a lack of boundaries, co-dependency, trauma and its side effects.

- A strong connection between domestic violence and an increased risk of going missing or becoming a victim of homicide was noted. Victim Services workers reported high domestic violence referrals and the need to for additional supports outside of their immediate crisis response. This includes the need for more targeted, accessible mental health services, transportation to services, as well as shelters and second-stage housing.
- Remote communities can experience slow response times from police when they call to report an incident, leading to increased risk of serious violence.
- There is a fear – and lived experience – of disconnection when women leave their communities to escape a domestic violence situation.
- The need to involve men in domestic violence interventions was referenced, including an acknowledgement of violence against men. Community members noted there is a need to make space for the healing of men within the family circle as well as needing men to stand up as advocates for ending violence against Indigenous women and girls.
- The shame women feel in a domestic violence situation was also flagged as a barrier to a woman leaving her abuser. Some participants remarked that all types of violence (lateral, physical, sexual and emotional) are responsible for reinforcing the vulnerabilities facing Indigenous women and girls.
- Involvement in what some participants called 'high risk' behaviors was also targeted as a significant causal factor across the engagements. Addictions and sex trade involvement were singled out as particularly concerning. One participant noted she was 'giving it away for free at home' so it wasn't a big deal to exchange sex for more tangible rewards.

"I just want the pain to stop. I don't necessarily want to punish my husband, I know he is hurting too."

Individual Interview

In discussions regarding what would lead a woman to involvement in the sex trade the need for resources was strongly identified – resources that would support families, housing, addictions, etc. Some participants reported situations where young women from their community traded sex for drugs. However, as another participant noted, the words vulnerable and high-risk are not necessarily

interchangeable with *sex trade*, and statistics bear this out. The RCMP identifies that a relatively small number - 12% - of all missing or murdered Indigenous women were involved in the sex trade.[9]

Addictions were also identified as a risk factor in some communities and families. With intergenerational trauma, studies reveal that substance abuse often arises as a coping mechanism, with this behavior passing down through several generations. Many participants reported that abuse, child welfare involvement, disconnection from the community, lateral violence, historic trauma, unemployment and many other factors significantly increase one's vulnerability to substance abuse. Addiction was identified as being the catalyst to a number of other high-risk behaviors, including involvement in the sex trade and domestic violence (it should be noted that many participants acknowledged that addiction was not the only factor involved in increasing risk for going missing or being murdered). A few participants noted that a legacy of substance abuse within families increases the challenges, with issues like fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) compounding risk and increasing vulnerability.

Participants suggested that barriers to overcoming addictions and the risks they present to Indigenous women (and by extension communities composed of girls, men and boys and all their diversity) include:

- shame, leading to feelings of worthlessness, being unworthy of help;
- the use of drugs and alcohol in communities perpetuates apathy and impairs the community's ability to take corrective action; and
- a lack of supports within communities and lack of transportation to off-reserve supports limits one's ability to address addiction.

When prompted, some participants also identified human trafficking as a concern. According to the United Nations, human trafficking involves someone engaging in actions, like recruitment, by using means, like force, fraud or deception, for purposes including sexual exploitation, forced labor, servitude, etc. This definition was provided to survey respondents to ensure they understood the difference between this and more localized sex trade work. One quarter of survey respondents reported knowing of someone who had been trafficked (as illustrated in *Figure 5:* Do you personally know of a person who has been trafficked). One stakeholder group reported that this was a higher number than they would have expected, given the lack of awareness and stigma around the issue.

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[9] In context, 5% of the general female population who are victims of homicide or are missing persons are identified as involved in the sex trade.

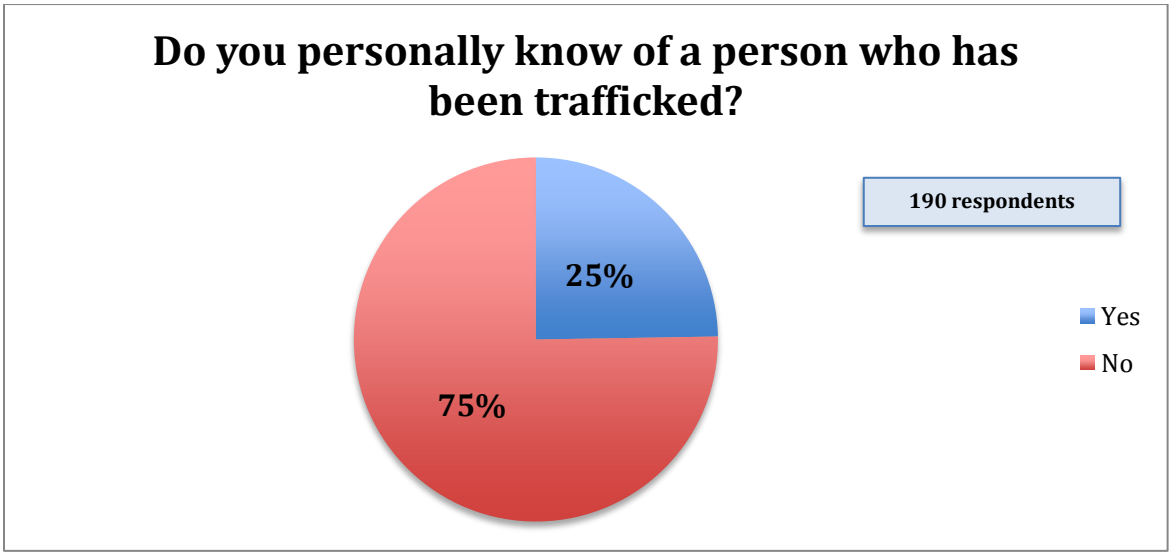

Figure 5: Personal Knowledge of Human Trafficking Victim

Reported causal factors for involvement in human trafficking varied across the engagement sessions. As demonstrated in responses to the survey (*Figure 6*: Possible Causal Factors of Involvement in Human Trafficking), the most commonly reported reasons include alcohol and drug addiction, homelessness and mental health issues.

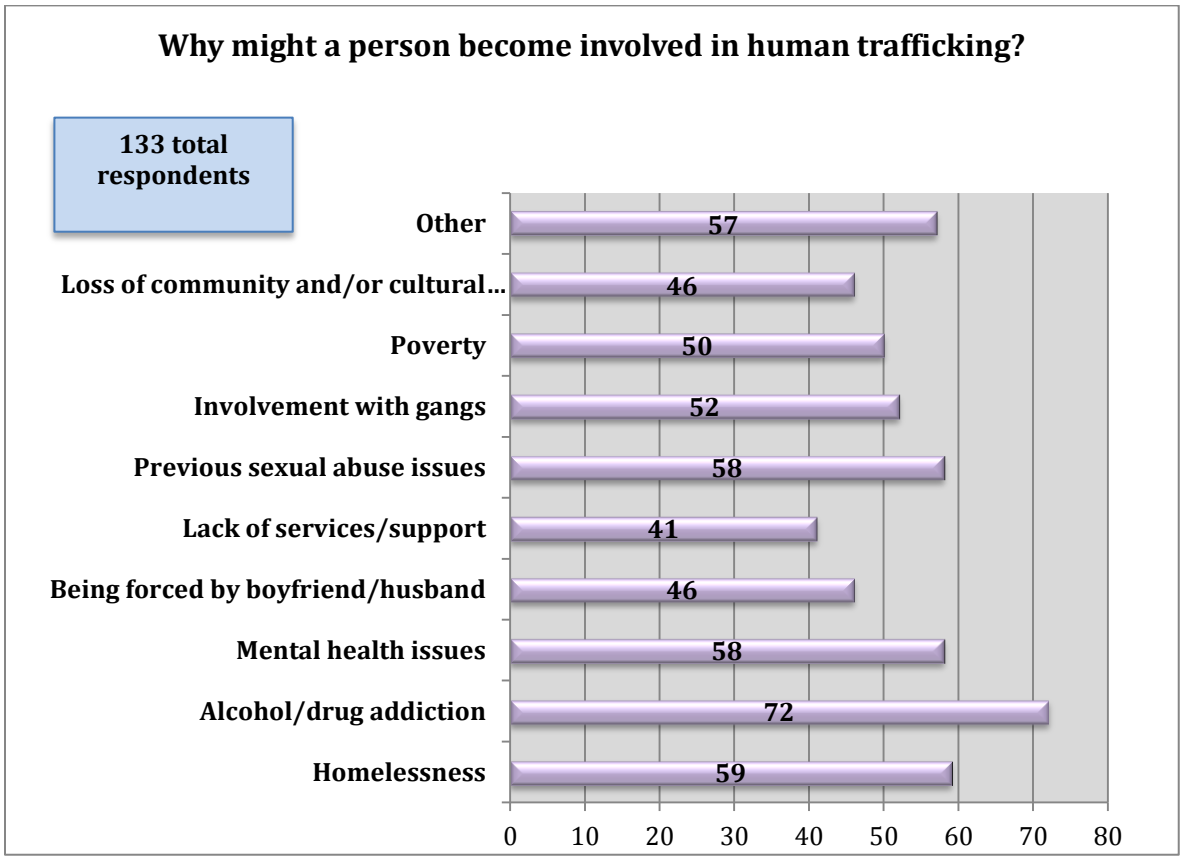

Figure 6: Possible Causal Factors of Involvement in Human Trafficking

In the community engagements and in the 'other responses' offered in the survey, participants discussed the fact that they were aware that young girls were "trading sex for drugs." The lack of healthy models for relationships can put women at risk of being taken advantage of in a relationship. Likewise, the normalization of violence and exploitation in some women's lives can mean they cannot identify that they are being victimized in the first place.

Other reported causal factors include:

- a family history of addictions;
- aging/deceased parents and/or not enough parental involvement;
- parent and friend and extended family pressure to traffic children (lateral violence);
- a lack of family support;
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) impairing decision making;
- a lack of communication skills mean women and girls may not be able to adequately advocate for themselves;
- no awareness/education currently offered to youth (girls and boys in all their diversity);
- little awareness of help for victims (counselling, support, reporting);
- poverty;
- coercion, fraud or blackmail – they are persuaded by 'friends' or boyfriend;
- foster care/child welfare history; and
- racism.

Participants also reported there are many barriers to women getting help once they find themselves a victim of trafficking, or involved in the sex trade. The social stigma and shame of the phrase 'trafficking' itself limits women's ability to seek out help. One stakeholder reported that many people equated *trafficking* with *slavery* in the minds of victims and families, and the connotations of this word (an African American issue, more historical than current) mean they do not identify with it.

The challenges listed above are often seriously worsened by a lack of resources. Indigenous women, through generations of the systematic dissembling of culture and community, are regularly confronted by systems that do not adequately meet their needs:

- there are not enough appropriate and affordable mental health supports;
- there are limits on financial benefits they can access;
- there are limited or no employment opportunities in their home community;
- housing is inadequate and/or there is no available housing;
- there is limited access to specialized services;
- transportation to and from resources (including those for meeting basic needs) is often a challenge; and
- there is not enough funding for youth interventions.

Supports for women with a variety of mental health needs are often inaccessible or inadequate, as reported by some participants. This is due in part to the complex nature of intergenerational trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other factors including the ambiguous loss encountered in missing persons' cases. Communities and stakeholders reported the following challenges:

- there is a high risk of re-victimization through inadequate counselling;
- there is a lack of awareness of Indigenous history, culture and protocol on the part of front line staff;
- there is a need to address the confidentiality issue in some communities (community members may not seek out support as they are not confident their issues will be kept confidential);
- local politics can impact what services are provided (e.g. medical transport services); and
- a lack of service provider competency (for general and specialized services) due to limited availability of staff in smaller, more remote communities is a real concern. More educated people often leave the community, leaving less trained people behind. Also noted was the phenomena of lateral violence that is expressed when educated people return to the community.

A woman may not even be able to recognize her situation as dysfunctional; the normalization of violence and abuse is inherent in the intergenerational passing down of traumatic lived experience. This can be manifested as shame, which can interfere with a woman's ability to access the services she needs. There may also be pressure to maintain the family unit at all costs to prevent any more disconnection.

Participants also spoke about the need for additional resources when their loved one goes missing. There are currently gaps in funding/benefits around missing persons – no funding is available unless the case is deemed likely to be a homicide. Impoverished families feel increased stress from a loss of income, the cost of search efforts and their inability to access needed counselling support. For families who have lost a loved one to homicide, additional expenses relating to court, counselling, service costs, transportation, accommodation and meals are also not consistently funded as reported by participants.

Many participants noted that Indigenous communities have inadequate housing. Statistics bear this out: Indigenous households across Canada have two times the rate of overcrowding compared to the rest of Canada.[10] Further, 1 in 15 Indigenous people living in urban areas are homeless, compared to 1 in 128 in the general population.[11] The quality of housing is also significantly poorer in Indigenous communities when compared to the country as a whole.[12]

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[10] Public Service Alliance of Canada, (2008). *PSAC Statement on National Aboriginal People's Day*. Retrieved from http://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/infographic-aboriginal-poverty. Accessed 15 May 2015.

[11] Belanger, Y., et al. (2013). Homelessness, Urban Aboriginal People, and the Need for a national Enumeration. *Aboriginal Policy Studies,* 2(2). pp. 4-33.

[12] Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (1981-2011). *The Community Well-Being Index,* Retrieved from https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1345816651029/1345816742083 Accessed 15 May 2015.

Participants noted that overcrowding increases the risk for stress and potential abuse. Domestic violence may be tolerated because the reality is there is nowhere else to go. The lack of housing options (including women's shelters and second stage housing) means women may have to leave the community to be safe and access services. Protection orders may have little relevance when the offender lives in the same yard or in the same small community.

Participants flagged the lack of specialized shelters in more rural, remote communities as a barrier for women who are dealing with domestic violence, homelessness, poverty, mental health issues, sexual abuse or substance abuse. There is also poor access to any type of emergency accommodation for any demographic. Participants noted that if there is no affordable or accessible place for a woman in crisis to stay, the risk of vulnerability increases.

Participants reported a high degree of sensitivity to both personal and systemic barriers in their dealings with police. This is true in both reporting a crime and in the ongoing investigation process.
Personal barriers include an historic mistrust of police[13] that can often hinder the building of positive, proactive police support in communities. This was reflected in a question asked in the survey (see *Figure 7:* Has the person you know been reported to police) regarding whether missing women from the participants' communities were reported to police. Almost 30% of respondents could not say with certainty that the missing person they knew was reported to police.

> ***"There is a safe house in [small town Alberta] but few want to access its services as they have little experience living outside of the community. The only time they really get out of the community is for medical appointments, which are not always a positive experience."***
>
> *Service Provider Engagement*

[13] "Governments in Canada have historically used the police to pre-emptively attempt to resolve Aboriginal rights disputes by arresting those attempting to exercise those rights prior to any determination as to the validity of the claims. In addition, police have been used to further the objectives of the government in terms of assimilation of Aboriginal people through apprehension of children in order to have them attend residential school, and later in support of child welfare agencies. Police also were used to support many of the most egregious provisions of the *Indian Act*…" (Rudin, J., Aboriginal Peoples and the Criminal Justice System. Retrieved from http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/e_records/ipperwash/policy_part/research/pdf/Rudin.pdf. Accessed April 13, 2015).

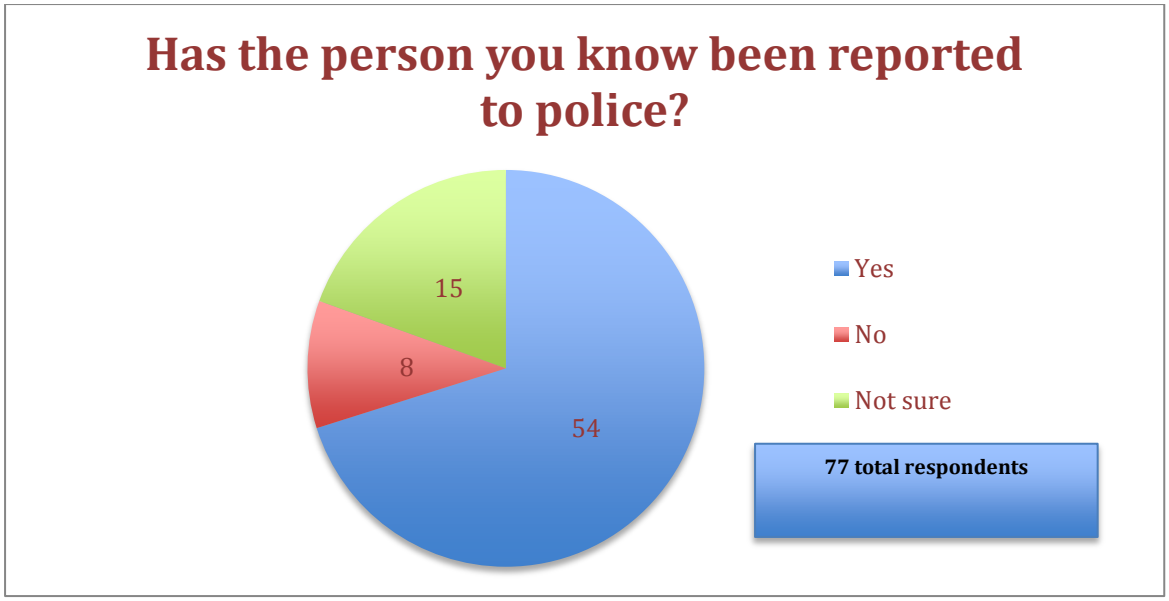

Figure 7: Awareness of Missing Person and Police Report

Participants reported feeling that police had "pre-conceived assumptions" when dealing with complaints from an Indigenous person. There was concern expressed about police *judging* the people who are reporting. For example, some participants expressed frustration about being put 'on hold' when calling police to report an emergency, citing this as feeling like rude or disrespectful behavior. Participants also reported feeling like they're 'getting the third degree' when they call to report something in their community. Whether it's the tone of the person on the other line, or the nature of the questions being asked, some participants said they were made to feel like they've done something wrong.

Other police barriers identified include:

- a belief that police do not treat their issues as high priority, resulting in increased response times, apathy, etc.;
- feeling the police do not take Indigenous people seriously when they call to report a missing person;
- a lack of anonymity in the reporting process;
- a fear of how the police will respond to a report of violence or a missing person, especially if removal of a loved one is a consideration;
- the threat of lateral violence for reporting crime is real for many community members (e.g. if one reports a crime, fear exists there could be retaliation from the victim's family);
- a learned mistrust of police, a lack of police visibility in some communities, slow response time, and the idea that police "only show up when there's trouble" are all barriers to positive working relationships in the communities; and
- the perception that most police do not understand the historical impacts and the personal (community) history of the people/communities where they are providing services.

There are also systemic barriers that impact effective police - community relations regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women:

- the distance of some communities from their nearest police detachment means that police response can take too long;
- the myth persists about having to wait 24 hours to report a missing person, with some participants noting police also told them to wait 24 hours. In fact, police report wanting people to register a missing person immediately upon becoming concerned;
- jurisdictional issues can create barriers to communication and trust. For example, when the reporting of a missing person was done in one location, but the person went missing elsewhere in the province, communication between the referring police service and the recipient VSU can become confusing; and
- police say that 'having one point of contact' is important. This can be in conflict with other ways of organizing and defining families and reportedly can limit ongoing communication.

For a number of different reasons, women may choose to leave their home community to move to a bigger urban centre. A few of the possible motivations raised by participants include the desire for better and more opportunities, work, education, following a partner, and escaping violence. However, they report that the move to the city can be fraught with risk for the following reasons:

- people from the community can be too "naïve and trusting," coming from smaller home communities and larger family networks;
- the culture shock between communities can be overwhelming;
- there is a lack of 'community' that women can experience, leading to mental health issues and vulnerabilities due to disconnection from what is familiar;
- inexperience with identifying risks in one's surroundings;
- lack of awareness of community resources, support services and places of safety all increase vulnerability;
- when women leave their community they can become disconnected from the people they know. This can cause delays in reporting if the woman goes missing. If there is no regular contact, there's no way of confirming her safety; and
- the lack of adequate preparation – in the form of informal community and family conversations as well as more structured educational opportunities – was of particular concern to participants.

"My ex-husband was abusive, especially when he was drinking. I called the police one time when he was beating me up. It took them an hour to get there. I'd be dead if a neighbor hadn't chosen to intervene and help me."

Individual Interview

For women who have been victims of intergenerational trauma, often exhibiting symptoms of PTSD, the risks of being in unfamiliar surroundings are intensified, resulting in a situation of layered vulnerabilities.

Some communities also struggle with a transient population (e.g. those located close to the oil industry in the northern part of the province). There are reportedly many strangers passing through communities, with drugs and alcohol being a concern. Participants report this increases the risk to the local population who may come into contact with these individuals. The presence of a transient population can also interfere with building a sense of community and can increase feelings of fear, resentment and decreased safety. Transience is also an issue for

Nations with more than one community making up their First Nation. Mobility between related communities can increase risk and vulnerability for members as they can find themselves in unsafe situations (participants cited gang warfare, retaliation, historical tribal feuds) in addition to previously discussed intersections with identified social norms. They may not engage in regular contact with friends and family from their home community.

Participants noted child services involvement in Indigenous communities represents a risk factor. The Alberta Office of the Child and Youth Advocate reports that in 2013-2014 Indigenous children comprised 60 per cent of all young people served, up from 56 per cent in 2012-2013. This over-representation echoes the over-representation of Indigenous women in cases of missing persons and homicide, and of the over-representation of Indigenous people in general. Engagement participants expressed that losing a child to the care of the government and the experience of growing up in a foster or group home away from family and community profoundly impacts already traumatized Indigenous individuals and communities.

- Participants spoke about the disconnection from community that occurs when children are taken away from their families and moved to a foster care placement. This disconnection was true for both the children who were removed and for the mothers who lost their children.
- Some stakeholders expressed the belief that there is a connection between child welfare involvement and sexual and physical abuse, leading to increased vulnerability.
- High rates of addiction and suicide were also identified as concerns inherent to involvement in the child welfare system.
- Challenges were noted in reporting cases of chronic runaway youth, particularly from group homes. This is true both from a caseworker and a police perspective. Many youth are considered serial runaways, frequently and regularly leaving their residence without warning or notification. The issue of when and how to report them as a missing person to police is often a difficult call for workers to make. Some participants suggested that a lack of regulation/policy, a lack of capacity, and frustration interfering with judgment all might put youth in danger. Youth, as a whole, are among the most vulnerable population in society, but are also the statistically the biggest risk takers.[14]
- Parenting challenges were cited as a key contributor to children being removed from their homes and communities. Compounding this is a lack of perceived proactive support from Child Services (i.e. in the form of parenting intervention, substance abuse support, etc.), reported to be a systemic barrier to keeping families together.

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[14] Youth aged 15-19 had the highest rate of injury death (70% of all deaths are due to injury) compared to other age groups. Injuries kill more youth than all other causes combined. Death rates due to injury are four times greater among Aboriginal people than non-aboriginal (this includes suicide). (Alberta Health Services (2010). Risk Taking: Unintentional and Intentional Injury, Retrieved from https://www.onehealth.ca/r_alberta_nwt/video_conferences/V101119-HO.pdf. Accessed May 25, 2015).

Across the engagements, all of the above elements were colored with reference to a need for stronger early intervention programs and practices as key to prevention. As reported by stakeholders, youth need to be made aware of the risks they may face and the things they can do to protect themselves as they become adults. Many participants identified that a key driver in increasing the vulnerability of youth was the lack of conversation around the issues that could place them at risk. Communities report a general lack of education around traditional teachings, the residential school era and intergenerational trauma. As well, some suggest youth need to be a part of an open discussion of the risks Indigenous people face in and out of the community, something that is reportedly lacking in some communities and families. Every single community that was engaged referenced the need to involve and empower youth (boys and girls and all their diversity).

> ***"Involve youth early in relationship education."***
>
> *Community Participant*

Other comments from the engagements:

- when youth are told "no" for supports like counselling due to inaccessibility/cost, they may lack the skillset or resiliency to work through their challenges. Good mentoring support is required when dealing with youth needing access to a system that is largely alienating and unfriendly to them;
- one service provider noted she meets with counsellors/therapists she is providing referrals to before she actually refers the clients to them. She stated clients may only try counselling support once so it is important to ensure the counsellor and the client will be a good match;
- a lack of adequate educational supports for young people can mean illiteracy, which creates barriers to future employment, education and awareness; and
- opportunities for youth – in education, employment and recreation – can protect them from engaging in high-risk behaviors.

> ***"Educate young so they bring it home to their families"***
>
> *Written Survey, Q. 12*

VICTIM SERVICES SUPPORTS

A primary goal of the engagement process was obtaining feedback regarding Alberta VSUs and the services provided to Indigenous communities. The following section discusses the challenges raised by service providers and community members when it comes to assisting loved ones of missing and murdered Indigenous women. The main challenges are:

- System navigation (including working with the police, the justice system and youth in care);
- Relationship between VSU and Police
- VSU staff and volunteer training;

- Staff and volunteer recruitments;
- Lack of awareness of the VSU and its services; and
- Service provision issues (including access to specialized services).

System Navigation

Participants expressed the belief that navigating the various 'systems' the victim must deal with often proves overwhelming. When a loved one goes missing or is murdered, the individual and often the entire community is immediately thrust into the role of *victim*. The affected individual must deal not only with the grief and stress of their sudden loss, but must also deal with police and potentially the justice system – all institutions that historically have challenging relationships with Indigenous peoples. The lack of trust in police discussed previously in this report, combined with the possible effects of intergenerational trauma, all impact an individuals' experience in dealing with police. Individuals with past trauma may lack the ability to adequately advocate for themselves, thus the risk of re-victimization is high. Frustrations and misunderstandings can occur on both sides. This is also true of VSUs, which are provincially legislated and funded.

> ***"I was told there would be a place a court for me to do a smudge, but then I was told no. I had to go outside to do my ceremony."***
>
> *Individual Interview*

The complexity of the justice system and the challenges victims face was mentioned often in the engagements. The court system can be an overwhelming, intimidating and confusing experience for Indigenous victims already dealing with the impacts of intergenerational trauma and a mistrust of the systems that essentially took apart their families over many generations. Helping victims process this 'fear of the unknown' and navigate the justice system was repeatedly referenced as important. This includes addressing issues relating to cultural ceremony.

Relationship between VSU and Police

Participants noted a number of systemic barriers to a positive relationship and a quick and efficient referral process between police and VSUs.

Some victims reported feeling uncomfortable visiting their VSU when it is located within a police station. This could bring a victim in contact with his or her abuser/the perpetrator of the crime, or add to a victim's stress if they themselves have a criminal record. While some VSUs can offer the option to meet off site, from a risk management perspective (in consideration of safety needs), this is not always possible or realistic.

> ***"Sometimes it takes two or three approaches before a victim is comfortable enough to accept help."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement*

Police across the engagements noted that missing persons essentially fall outside of the criminal justice system because 'being missing' is not a crime; people go missing for many reasons, including personal choice. Partly because of this, there have been no provincial protocols/policies developed around referring missing persons' cases to Victim Services to date. Some police services reported that there is not always a referral of their missing persons' cases to VSUs.

Referrals to Victim Services are inconsistent across the province. Edmonton has a policy and process mandating VSU referrals, while the Calgary Police Service reports that engaging victim services on a missing persons file is up to the discretion of the investigator, and depends on the specific circumstances of the case. Investigators report exercising caution due to potential involvement of families in a disappearance.

Jurisdictional issues can create challenges regarding VSU referrals. For example, if the family of a missing person lives in a different community from where the person went missing, sometimes the referral is missed because these communities have different policing services. In the *Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Report* (2012) on Vancouver's response to missing Indigenous women after the Pickton case, it was found that in many missing persons cases, several different policing jurisdictions may be involved, which can create many problems. These include the potential for patterns of offending to be missed thus reducing the seriousness with which the problem is viewed, inadequate communication, and lack of policing capacity to address the problem. These problems are compounded by the increased mobility of Indigenous peoples compared to Canadians overall. At a service provider engagement, it was noted there is a gap around VSU referrals for youth in care (teens/runaways). Youth have been identified by Victim Services as a currently underserved group. Consistent provincial policing standards designed to address these particular areas could help address these challenges, particularly in under-resourced areas.

VSU Staff and Volunteer Training

Participants indicated there was a need to enhance the training of VSU staff and volunteers – specifically those working in Indigenous communities. It was noted service providers need to take a comprehensive look at the unique circumstances faced by Indigenous peoples and explore the need for culturally safe service provision. Additionally, VSU staff and volunteers must be made aware that loved ones of missing persons and homicide victims can have complex needs that lie outside of what training has historically emphasized. A specialized response is required to ensure that families receive the best possible support.

One respondent asked the question "are victim services coordinators prepared to deal with the issue of a missing person when it happens, and provide support to the family over [a/n] indefinite amount of time?" At another engagement, it was noted that it is "risky to pair untrained VSU volunteers with families of someone who has gone missing," as the risk of re-victimization in this situation is high.

The concept of cultural safety was mentioned repeatedly as a critical component to victims services support. Training in Indigenous people's history, colonialism, historic and intergenerational trauma and its effects is essential to a successful victims' response.

Staff and Volunteer Recruitment

Challenges around recruiting volunteers are compounded in smaller, more remote communities.

Criminal record checks and the enhanced security clearance (required by the RCMP) can be a barrier to recruiting new volunteer advocates and staff. If a potential candidate has a minor criminal record or a poor credit history they may not qualify. However, they could still be effective advocates. It was noted there are not a lot of other volunteers stepping forward.

> ***"Recruiting and retaining advocates can be difficult. The idea of 'volunteerism' is tricky – people get the sense of giving something for nothing, but this can be turned around if people get a sense of personal satisfaction and pride in what they do."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement*

According to several service providers there are not enough Indigenous victims' advocates – either in rural or major centers. Ensuring there were some Indigenous representation on VSU staff was highlighted.

Persistent poverty, a lack of transportation and a small pool of available human resources can also be barriers to the recruitment of VSU volunteers and staff.

Several communities reported concerns that despite the policy of confidentiality that exists in VSUs across the province, there can sometimes be a lack of privacy and anonymity when dealing with the VSU. A lack of community trust in the VSU presents a barrier to some victims accepting help and establishing a healthy, healing relationship with the VSU service provider. Community members reported that gossip can be an issue that needs to be addressed.

Lack of Awareness of The VSU

A number of participants reported that many community members lacked awareness about the VSU and what services it provides. This was reinforced in the written/online survey, where 16% of respondents were 'unaware of the VSU,' and an additional 30% were only 'somewhat aware' (see *Figure 8*: Are you aware of your local VSU). Note the majority of survey respondents were those attending the engagements and therefore had some level of knowledge of the VSU prior to the engagement. In the online version of the survey, respondents were more closely split with 13 respondents being 'unaware' or 'somewhat aware' and 19 being 'more aware.'

A lack of awareness of what the VSU is, and what service it provides can lead to mistrust and confusion about the relationship between the VSU and police and ultimately, a refusal of service.

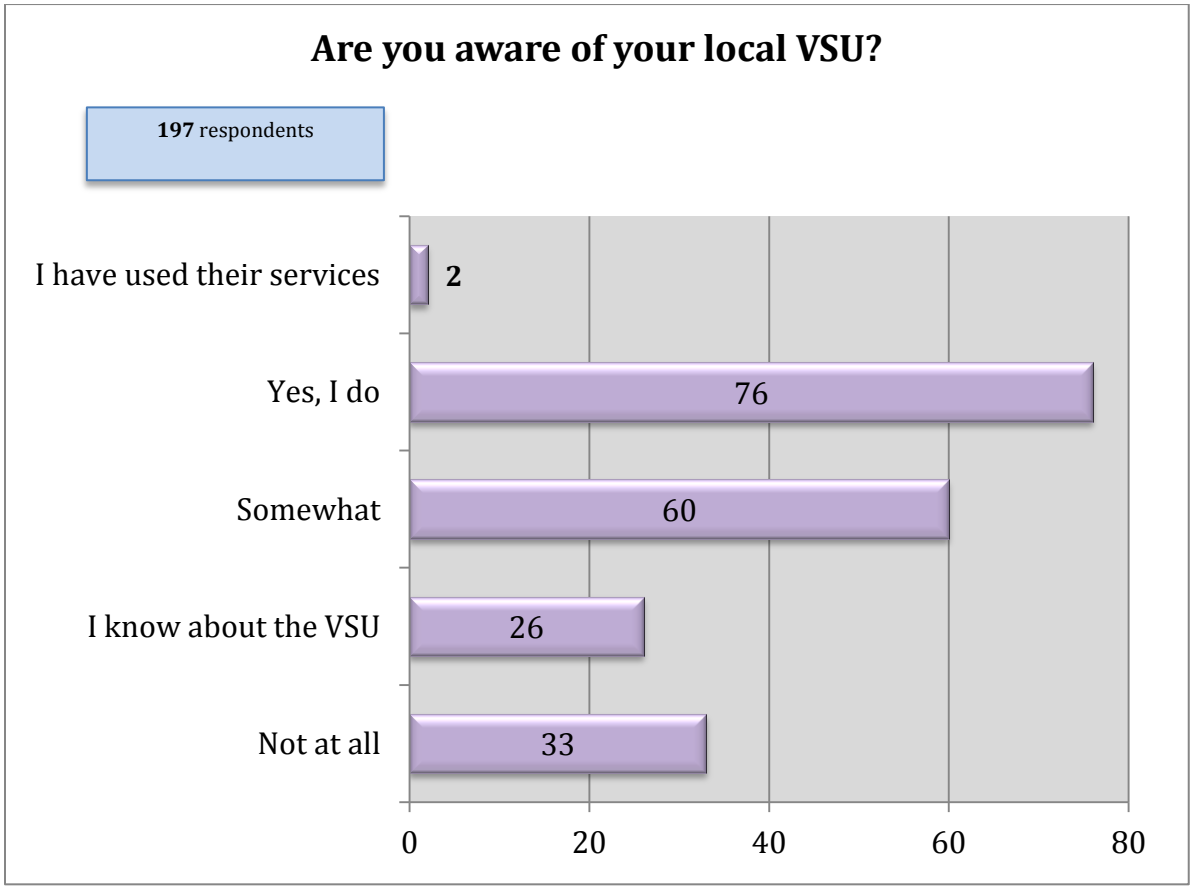

Figure 8: Awareness of Local VSU

Service Provision Issues

Community members and service providers shared some of the challenges they feel VSUs face in serving Indigenous communities and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Access to the VSU was raised by several as a barrier to accessing support. After-hours service and support is not available in all communities. There are also sometimes limited resources to support families with more complex needs (specialized counselling, travel, after-care). Further, a lack of transportation can hinder victims accessing the VSU and its referral agencies. Co-location of the VSU with the police may also be a barrier for some.

A lack of access to specialized supports was noted several times during the engagements. Issues around counselling for victims that takes into account the complex psychological needs of victims, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), ambiguous loss in the case of missing persons, and the need for cultural safety can present referral challenges to the VSU service provider.

It was noted by both community participants and stakeholders that follow-up on victims sometimes does not occur. "There needs to be emphasis on a continuum of supports," which may include ensuring support beyond the involvement of the criminal justice system is in place, or ensuring that the domestic/self-care needs of victims are being met (meals, housekeeping, etc.).

Another service provision issue is the high rate of turnover that exists among VSU staff. Self-care/worker wellness was noted as something that needs to be emphasized and encouraged as low staff levels at some VSUs can add stress to existing human resources that are already operating at maximum capacity. A full complement of staff is important for many reasons, including the very real potential that a VSU staff member or advocate could be related to the victim that has been referred. When this happens, the complexity of the response is increased so it is important to have options about which VSU staff member is available to provide support.

Stakeholders reported that bureaucracy and/or leadership can create unintended barriers. Local politics can impact what services might be available in communities and to whom. Participants also report that relationships between various community agencies are not always strong and a lack of communication between agencies can hinder the development of a continuum of supports. Also not openly addressed within the community by residents and service providers were community nuances around safety needs, inherent privilege, trust and the realities of day to day life in the current context.

Privacy and safety are also notable issues; a lack of community trust in the VSU is a barrier to some victims accepting help and establishing relationship with their VSU worker. Some community members observed there are a few staff and advocates that lead unhealthy lifestyles and thus do not make good mentors/resources. As one respondent noted, "how can we trust a service provider if they are out partying?" Confidentiality is also impacted by the relational realities – demands are made regarding information about the victim and professional boundaries are often taxed in responding to community member expectations for this information.

Finally, and most relevant to this initiative, it was acknowledged by many participants that cultural safety needs are not always met by the VSU. Engagement participants reported a lack of awareness and training around Indigenous culture and history. Some community members expressed a desire to have service providers engage in more cultural activities in the community, like sweat lodges or celebrations.

Overall, the tenor of the conversation about the VSU was positive, with most engagement participants being aware of the VSU and its role. It was noted by some participants there is the potential for an expanded VSU role that addresses community healing needs (for information, programs, initiatives, awareness, youth focused activities, etc.).

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING THE SAFETY OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Addressing the root causes of violence against Indigenous women and the missing and murdered Indigenous women epidemic is of critical importance. Healing the harm of intergenerational trauma is essential to creating healthy generations of families and individuals moving forward. "If you want to heal children and youth, you have to heal yourself as well to break the cycle" was a comment shared during the engagements.

This section of the report summarizes participants' suggestions regarding practical strategies for addressing gaps and challenges that currently put Indigenous women and girls (and men and boys and all their diversity) at risk of violence, going missing or becoming a victim of homicide.

The pathway to achieving this is multi-faceted, with some necessary remedies existing well beyond the scope of this initiative. Participants did identify a number of possible solutions throughout the engagement process so they are included here regardless of whether or not they fall under the scope of creating a culturally safe victim services response. There is a commitment to ensuring these strategies are shared with all organizations who are collectively working to increase the safety of Indigenous women and girls, men and boys and all of their diversity.

Strategies suggested by participants have been themed and are presented in four primary categories.[15]

- Cultural Safety and the VSU;
- Community Safety Strategies;
- Individual Safety Strategies; and
- System Supports for Safety

Cultural Safety and the VSU

Participants across the engagements were consistent in the priority they placed on the preventative and healing benefits of cultural safety. This relates to service providers having an awareness of traditional history, rituals, protocols and ways of knowing, and integrating this into their dealings with Indigenous clients. By extension, it should be noted that JSG Victims Services is committed to supporting diverse needs thus the concepts related to cultural safety expressed here are applicable to any victim (woman or girl, men or boys and all their diversity) with perceived or identified cultural barriers.

The concept of cultural safety was first introduced by Irihapeti Ramsden, a Maori nurse in New Zealand in 1990. For Ramsden, cultural safety moves beyond merely having knowledge about the culture of 'the other' by incorporating an understanding of power imbalances in society, as well as political ideals of self-determination and de-colonization. Ramsden states that cultural safety involves the interplay of three elements: 1) *cultural awareness*, the acknowledgement of difference; 2) *cultural sensitivity*, the recognition of the importance of respecting that difference; and 3) *cultural competence*, which focuses on the skills, knowledge and attitudes of practitioners. She further emphasizes that cultural safety involves self-reflection and an understanding that the cultural values and norms of the client may be different due to unique socio-political histories. This reflection ultimately leads to the experience of empathy in the practitioner. When service providers have this capability to share their client's emotions and feelings, this strengthens and deepens the relationship, both with that client and with their community, leading to better health outcomes.

> "[Cultural Safety means] an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together."

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[15] Based on a model created by the Alberta Coalition on Human Trafficking (ACT), 2015.

Cultural safety emerged as a key theme in the MMIW community and stakeholder engagements. Throughout the engagements and the written survey, participants regularly emphasized the need to provide culturally relevant, community-based supports to victim's families and friends. In our survey, 91% of respondents felt it was important to have 'culturally sensitive services' for Indigenous victims of crime. (See *Figure* 9: Importance of Culturally Sensitive Services)

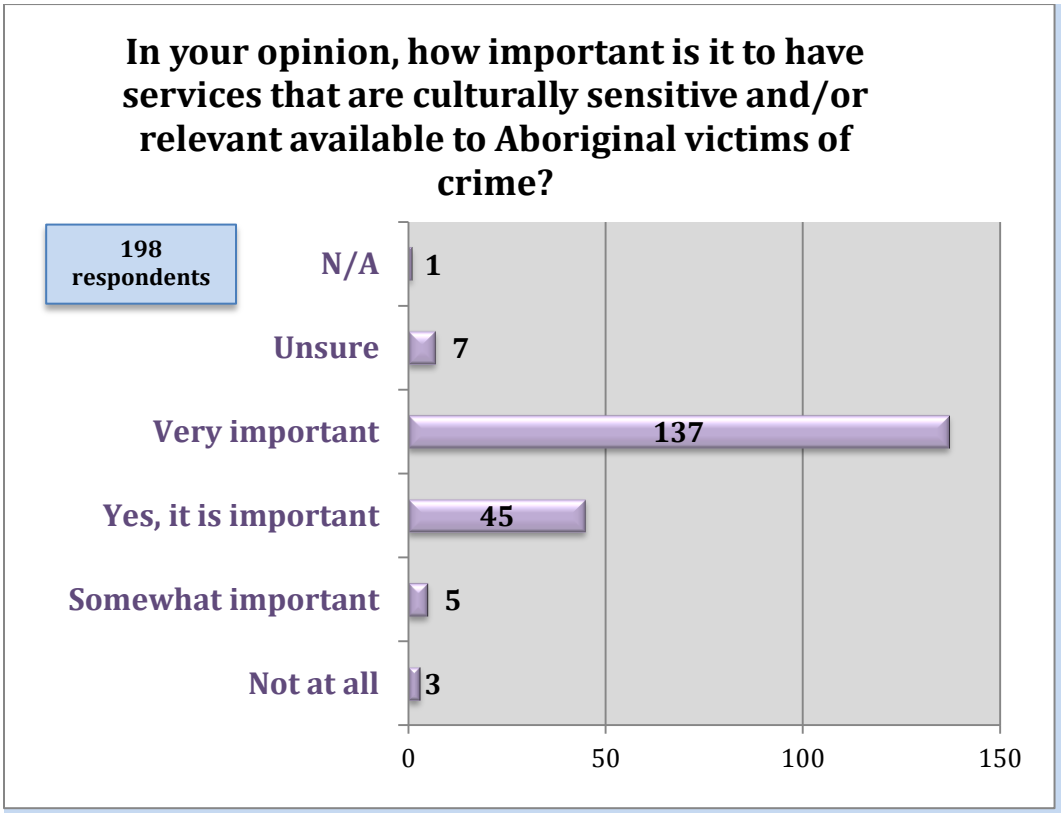

Figure 9: Importance of Culturally Sensitive Services

In the survey, participants were asked which culturally sensitive services they felt would be the most useful. (See Figure 10: Survey Response, Culturally Sensitive Victim Services for Aboriginal Crime Victims below). The most common selections were elder support, understanding of Aboriginal historical trauma and an understanding of Indigenous families and kinship.

Participants spoke about the need for Victim Services staff and advocates to offer services based on each client's individual circumstances, needs and preferences. In the Lethbridge community engagement session, it was noted that "awareness is the first step to being able to meaningfully engage with the Indigenous community". One stakeholder stated that the community "want[s] workers to understand their culture, beliefs and spirituality. They want the worker to understand the diversity of their culture but also respect their boundaries." Participation in traditional community events was noted as being a good learning opportunity for service providers.

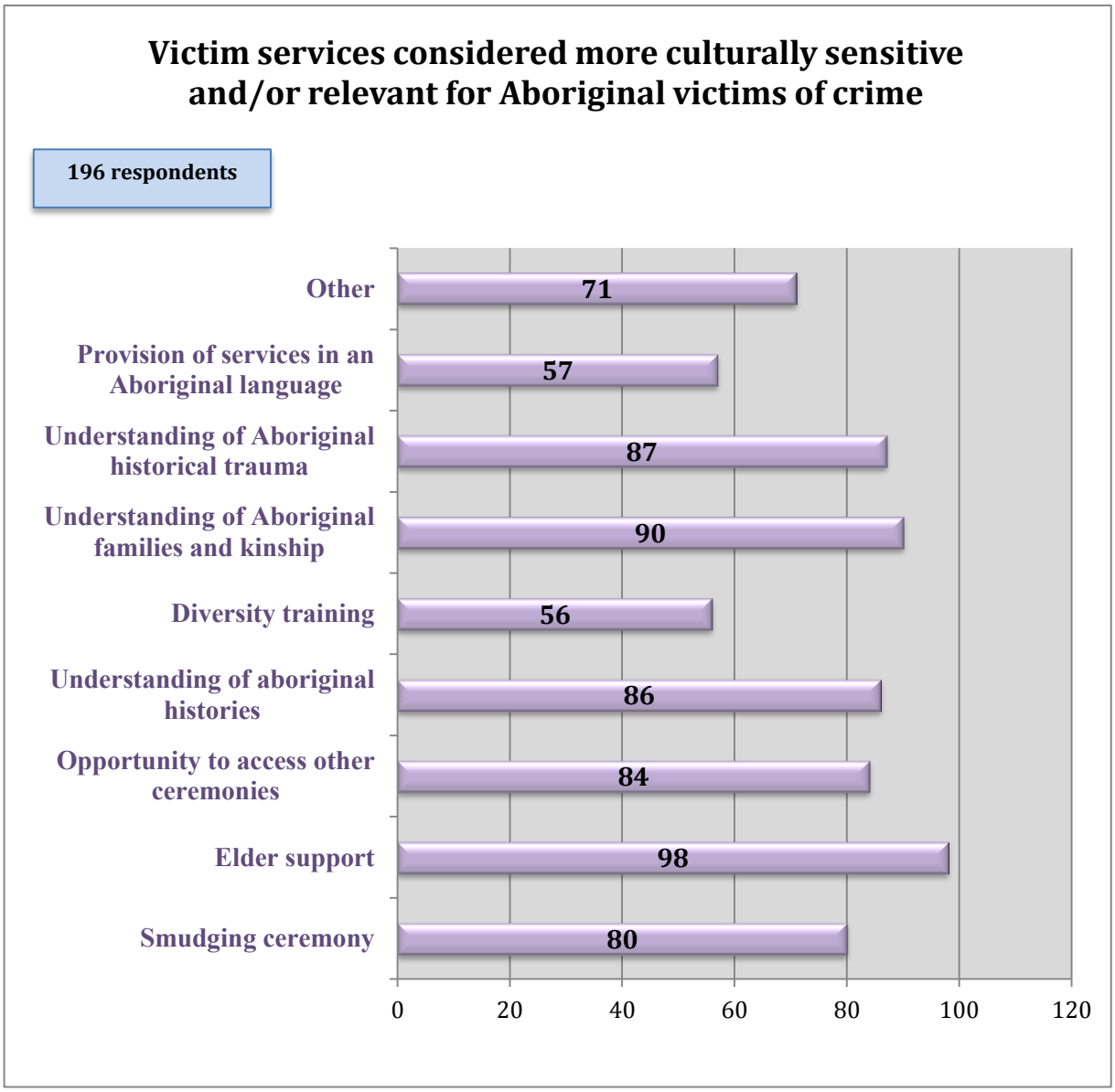

Figure 10: Survey Response, Culturally Sensitive Victim Services for Aboriginal Crime Victims

At one of the gatherings, it was noted there is a need for "varied forms of support [depending on] where the person is at with grieving." Participants highlighted the need to provide cultural support based on a client's spiritual belief systems and preferences. A message articulated by several participants was not to make assumptions about what that belief system is.

At the engagements, and in the long answer survey questions, participants made the following additional suggestions regarding culturally safe practices, most of which involve a relational lens:

- involving Elders at educational sessions about the community's traditional practices;
- using community centers to host cultural events more regularly;
- diversity training for service providers;

- involving the RCMP in training with service providers;
- ensuring service providers know protocol;
- incorporating cultural awareness in schools;
- hiring more Indigenous female victim service staff;
- understanding of impact of colonization;
- incorporating more ceremonies – sweat lodges, smudging, praying; and
- working against political interference, nepotism.

The following section reports on other issues identified in the engagements as critical to the Victim Services response that need to be informed by culturally safe strategies and practices.

1. Promising Practices
2. Participants' Understanding of the VSU Role
3. Incorporating Cultural Safety into VSU Practices and Policy
4. An Enhanced VSU Role
5. Enhanced Justice System Navigation
6. Counselling/Mental Health Advocacy
7. Promotion of Services
8. The VSU as a Community Builder
9. Proactive Support
10. Continuity of Support

1. Promising Practices

As a part of the engagement process, community members and stakeholders were asked about the role of victim services in supporting families of missing and murdered Indigenous women. The need for a culturally safe victim services response to family members was stressed repeatedly.

A number of terms were used by those engaged to describe the characteristics of an effective Victim Services advocate. These included:

- accountable
- ethical
- professional
- compassionate
- collaborative
- caring
- objective
- empathetic

Participants noted that the following skills were important for service providers to possess:

- understanding the grief cycle;
- engaging in active listening;

- providing useful and relevant information;
- supporting emotional needs of victims;
- engaging the community;
- advocating on behalf of victims;
- providing a welcoming environment;
- advocating for change (policy); and
- offering security/privacy.

> ***"Sharing, listening, honesty and humility are important when working with Aboriginal communities and will help build trust. Even if a service provider does not know protocols or customs, intention and humility will be enough – just be yourself and people will see your intentions."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement*

Participants shared their view that service provision must be comprised of attention to the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the victim. Further, the need to have bias and judgment-free service provision was identified as particularly important. One respondent noted the circumstances around supporting families of missing or murdered women are very emotional and stages of grief need to be recognized and supported in victims' families.

2. Participants' Understanding of VSU Role

When describing the specific services provided by their VSU, communities and stakeholders referenced several specific job functions. These include:

- education and workshops on related issues;
- grief and loss support;
- crisis counselling support;
- referral to specialized supports – e.g. alcohol/addictions programs; and
- court support.

3. Incorporating Cultural Safety into VSU Practices and Policies

Participation in Indigenous Awareness Training (IAT) was repeatedly identified as a best practice for any agency providing service to an Indigenous community. Areas of focus recommended by participants included Indigenous history, protocols, traditions, beliefs, spirituality, the effects of colonization, the residential school system, and creating an understanding of historic trauma.

Integration of traditional cultural practices into service provision can contribute to improved victim support. These practices could include:

- participation in ceremony;
- prayers/smudge ceremony;
- talking/healing circles;
- cultural events that honor victims;
- acceptance of dual belief systems, i.e. Christianity and traditional Indigenous beliefs; and
- referrals to traditional cultural helpers.

Participants noted it was critical to make sure that language did not create any barriers, both in conversation and in all written materials. They expressed the capacity to provide translation services

was important, however also noted the way language is used has the potential to create a culturally unsafe environment. It was suggested this could best be accomplished by having some Indigenous representation on VSU staff.

The need to integrate families as a whole into the victim services process emerged as an important consideration for participants. This requires recognition of the Indigenous system of kinship where families are inter-connected and broadly defined, and may involve "street family."[16] For many families, it was a challenge when police members expressed they only wanted one point of contact for a missing person or homicide investigation. Communities did not suggest how to address this but a role for the VSU to broker this issue may be possible.

> ***"I do not participate in cultural activities. I want the VSU to not approach me assuming I do, and instead come to me respectfully and talk with me about what kind of help and/or services could be offered."***
>
> *Community Participant*

One stakeholder remarked that VSUs need to develop their knowledge of the community and its kinship ties in order to best support impacted families as a whole. Participants made several suggestions regarding the role of the VSU in the involvement of "family." The words 'interacting', 'collaborating', 'bridging', and 'connecting' were used to describe a possible role for the VSU. Some examples of this recognition of family structure include:

- carrying out individual interviews with family and friends to better identify victims and their needs;
- establishing crisis support teams for families who are dealing with multiple issues/concerns;
- having the VSU liaise between families and police to share information; and
- bridging the gaps between families, agencies and media through a formal planning process.

At the community level, developing significant and consistent relationships with community leaders can assist in more effectively serving Indigenous communities. This includes building relationships at all levels, including leadership (Chief and Council), spiritual leaders and Elders. Participants note this can help overcome existing barriers around language, lack of trust and access to resources.

Some community members suggested the creation of a 'cultural broker' position (paid or volunteer) to ensure that cultural and community needs are reflected in VSU services. This individual can help identify at a cultural level who to get involved, providing a 'platform for Indigenous input' into

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[16] "Most homeless youth have limited contact with their parents and other family members; however, many establish street relationships in which they adopt familial names and identities… Like conventional families, these 'fictive' street families may generate social capital resources that provide greater access to an array of valued outcomes, including protection from physical harm." McCarthy B, Hagan J and Martin M., *In and out of harm's way: Violent victimization and the social capital of fictive street families*, Criminology 40 (2002) 831–866.

training and program development. Involving Elders in the VSU in some capacity emerged as a possible way to enable this 'broker' relationship.

4. An Enhanced VSU Role

Apart from the need for culturally safe VSU practices, participants talked about several other challenges faced by victims dealing with a loved one who has been murdered or has gone missing. There are a variety of issues around the complex nature of supports for these individuals. As reported previously, these include an understanding of historic and intergenerational trauma, PTSD, ambiguous loss and an understanding of Indigenous history and its impacts on communities. Also highlighted was the need to have access to specific information regarding the management of the family trauma for those children left behind, regardless of the age of that child. Additionally, there were other training ideas expressed that were more specific to the provision of support for families who have lost a loved one to being missing or to homicide:

- building missing and murdered support training into the core Victim Services Advocate Certification training (e-learning);
- training on how to approach families who are initially reluctant about accepting support. If an individual says no to the first approach for service, a plan for follow up needs to be identified;
- more training on the unique challenges that Indigenous women face in leaving their abusers and an understanding of the shift in mindset required to remove oneself from an abusive situation (particularly if there are children involved);
- extend the training to incorporate a 'train the trainers' approach, so there are community members on the ground who are aware of the issues and can help broker relationships between the VSU and the community. They also could potentially provide community education and information; and
- participants expressed that the victim's specific set of circumstances must be considered when developing a plan of care.

> ***"Ideally, some training would focus on 'train the trainers' to ensure there are grassroots people in rural areas who are subject-matter experts."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement*

Many participants noted there was a possible role for the VSU service provider to play in proactively helping the community address its concerns and vulnerability. Often this could take the form of increased awareness of VSU services within the community, but in many situations, the possibility of an enhanced role for the VSU was suggested.

5. Enhanced Justice System Navigation

Some engagement participants reported either challenges or a lack of awareness around the role of VSUs in helping victims navigate the court system. There was additionally some inconsistent service provision noted between various VSU's, particularly between rural and urban. Taking care of the victims' personal and emotional needs throughout the court process could involve the VSU more actively in some cases. Ensuring victims' families have transportation, access to food and hydration

during court days, appeal dates, parole hearings etc. would be helpful. The development of clear standards for service provision around victims and the court system is suggested.

6. Counselling/Mental Health Advocacy

VSUs typically make referrals to agencies by explaining to victims what they offer and then directing them to these resources through providing the address and/or contact information. Participants noted that providing 'step-by-step planning' throughout the process (a facilitated referral) would be of value. It was noted that intergenerational trauma often means a lack of personal agency so having someone make the initial contact with counselling agencies can be really important to the helping process. Further, following up with the victim to see how their experience was can help to moderate any concerns about the counselling process, including long wait times.

Providing resources like tool kits or online information about programs and services, as well as information or access to peer support groups, formal or informal, for victims of homicide, domestic violence and other specific crimes would also be useful for victims.

One service provider noted that she makes a point of meeting the counsellor or therapist to whom she is making referrals to ensure they will be a good fit. This shows an acknowledgement of cultural safety and a reduction of the possibility of re-victimization.

7. Promotion of Services

A number of participants noted that many community members lacked awareness about the VSU and what services it provides. Targeted promotional/awareness activities around the VSU and what services are offered could help address this.

Ideas for promotion included:

- a 1-800 number for information;
- utilizing text based updates;
- Creating a VSU application (App) for computers, smart phones, tablets;
- development of a facebook page for Alberta families;
- creation of awareness posters;
- implementation of a media relations strategy – print campaigns, paid ads in local media, internet based promotions; and
- developing a 'brand' or tag line like MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving).

Additional messaging could include addressing community concerns about the protection of their privacy. A community member in Wabasca noted they were aware the VSU takes an oath of confidentiality, but commented not everyone may be aware of this fact. Additionally, co-location of the VSU in a police detachment often leads to the perception that the VSU is under the direct supervision of the police, which is untrue.

8. The VSU as a Community Builder

Participants noted the VSU was in a good position to be a community builder, providing resources, information and inspiration to assist the community in making the necessary changes to better protect its vulnerable women. Suggestions for VSU involvement included:

- providing educational opportunities in schools regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women and related concerns like bullying, alcohol and drug use, domestic violence and lateral violence. This will have a side benefit in raising the profile of the VSU among youth, who are currently an underserved target group, yet are the fastest growing demographic and the most likely to take risks;
- facilitating sharing circles and support groups, or be involved with supporting interagency efforts to enable and empower families to share their experiences with each other (peer based initiatives);
- initiating and/or support community and interagency co-planning to develop community safety strategies;
- advocating for specialized resources and initiatives that address barriers and challenges;
- navigating between community and outside helping agencies;
- organizing community-building activities;
- ensuring VSU staff and volunteers have a thorough understanding of the community as a whole (including kinship ties, protocol, Elders) in order to clearly understand victims' needs;
- identifying existing and potential leaders who could spearhead education and other points of change (e.g. Elders, Esquao award recipients, First Nations and Métis Women's Economic Security Council members);
- engaging in targeted public relations activities in the community to promote the VSU; and
- recognizing and support the formal/informal helping systems that exist in every community.

> ***"Community capacity starts with individual capacity – start with those who are ready and work out from there. Find out what the community needs – not what you think they need.***
>
> *Service Provider Engagement*

9. Proactive Support

The "vulnerability of victims" was referenced several times in the engagement process. Victims at the start of their journey are at a loss: they often don't know the system, they don't know what they want or need, and they don't know what questions to ask. The victim services provider can play a role in providing proactive support to the victim at all stages of their process.

This can take a number of forms:

- follow-up with a client if they initially refuse victim services support. (The RCMP's KARE noted that a lack of awareness, witness intimidation and vulnerability can all lead to an initial refusal of service);
- refer to or arrange support groups and talking circles for families;
- engage male victims to increase their comfort level with being labeled a 'victim,' something that was noted by one of the survey respondents;

- follow up regularly and often; provide regular updates to families;
- assist with filling out forms and other bureaucratic red tape, reported to be obstacles for people trying to access services;
- look beyond a victim's referral needs to see if there are any gaps in self-care, resources, etc. for which the VSU could provide direction/information/referral (wrap around service provision); and
- address the issue in some communities regarding the co-location of the VSU with a police service. The first step would be to understand the nature of the concern (fear of seeing an offender? lack of trust of police in general? criminal record?) and the second would be to work with victims to mitigate those.

10. Continuity of Supports

Some participants reported that immediately after a crisis there was usually good support from the VSU, but in the long term, continuous support could be difficult to access. Many participants agreed that continuity of supports is essential to long term healing. Participants noted that victims are often very vulnerable and may not be able to properly advocate for themselves in getting access to the necessary information and support. There is a potential role for the VSU in ensuring victims get the long-term help they need.

> ***"You need people around after everyone leaves. You're all alone & people move on & forget about you."***
>
> *Written/Online Survey, Question 11, "Other" Responses*

A suggestion was made to establish an annual contact schedule for families of long-term missing persons, perhaps on the anniversary of the date missing or the homicide. Another suggestion was the need for enhanced and consistent court support as previously discussed.

Sometimes the client's needs do not fit into what may be considered a typical client support model. A few participants suggested the idea of a crisis support team. Whether it is coordinated through police, the VSU, or at the community level, this team could assist families with activities including organizing searches for missing persons, organizing practical support for families or ensuring the family is getting the help it needs. Other roles suggested by participants included helping victims fill the need for childcare resources while they receive counselling, assisting with meals and household maintenance, ensuring the victims health and self-care is not suffering, offering support for children (teddy bears was an example given), and simply organizing regular check-ins. These are all 'humanizing' activities from which some victims would benefit.

Participants agreed that the idea of cultural safety extends to all service providers they may come into contact with.

Community Safety Strategies

Community safety refers to strategies that bring about changes at a community level that reduce vulnerability and risk, introduce protective factors, and enhance the quality of life for Indigenous women and girls. These strategies do not necessarily relate to the VSU and its provision of culturally safe services, but were consistently and regularly noted by participants during the engagements.

Within these strategies, a unifying theme that emerged from the engagements was the need for 'empowerment' – communities and individuals taking control and rising above their current circumstances. Participants expressed the belief that it was only through communities taking ownership of the issue that meaningful change can be brought about. Increasing awareness of the issues was identified as key to beginning this process, as was the need for leadership to step up and champion the need for change.

Community respondents report there needs to be more discussion of this issue (missing and murdered Indigenous women) amongst its members. It was noted there can be a tendency in many communities to ignore the risk factors or to deny there is an issue altogether. One participant noted that an effective way to get the community engaged and involved was to mobilize after a crisis – get supports together using a crisis as a catalyst.

Figure 11: Agree or Disagree that Aboriginal Women are More Likely to be Murdered

When asked, 84% of surveyed respondents agreed that they felt Indigenous women are more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women. This left 16% of respondents who were either unsure or were in disagreement with this statement. This supports the need for increased community awareness regarding the issue of missing and murdered women.

Further to this, surveyed respondents indicated that the typical community response to cases of missing women involved individual responses (posting on social media, posters, news releases). Almost 20%[17] of respondents suggested there was "no response" at the community level at all. (See *Figure 12:* How does your community generally response to missing women).

[17] Note that this was an open-ended multiple-choice question allowing multiple responses.

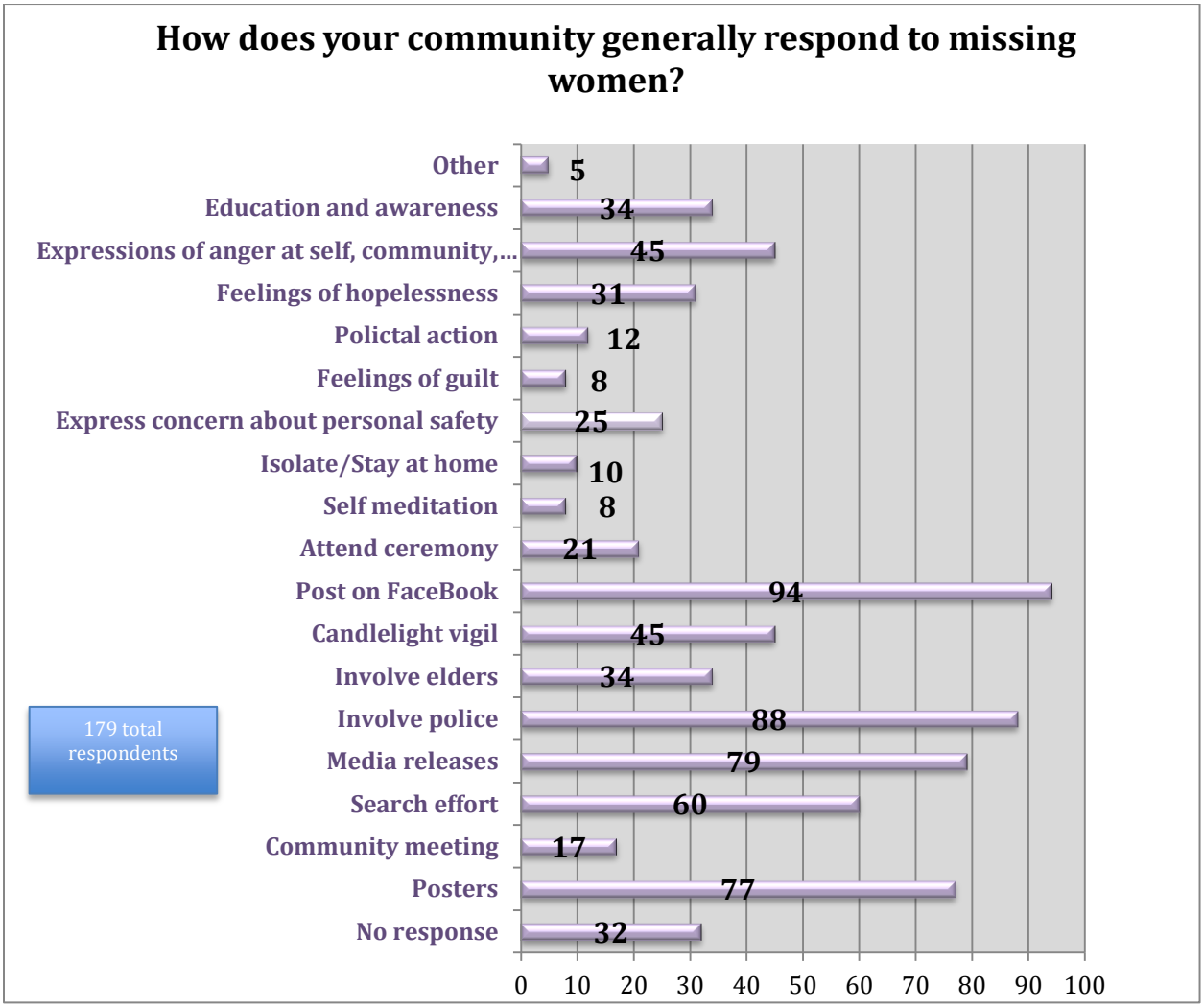

Figure 12: Community Response to Missing Women

To remedy this lack of awareness, participants reported the need for education around the issues of historic trauma and traditional Indigenous culture. A suggestion was made to start small – presenting to small groups, or 'kitchen table' meetings at people's homes to start the dialogue and build understanding. Developing community capacity to talk about this issue was also recognized as critical to getting the community to listen. Following this, participants endorsed the idea of engaging with stakeholders and service providers to host more presentations and workshops on issues around missing and murdered Indigenous women, including prevention activities (like self-defense) and education on healthy relationships.

Participants also flagged the need to identify existing community and provincial resources (e.g. police detachment missing persons websites, Indigenous support agencies) who provide prevention programs so the community is aware of what is available to them. If there are evident gaps in information, the communities discussed the need to develop additional, more targeted resources that deal directly with the risks facing Indigenous women. Suggestions for resource development included resource guides, cell phone apps, and a Facebook page for families. Hosting information sessions on a regular basis was seen as a promising practice.

Another priority area for participants was the need to provide education around the process for dealing with a missing person. This may include information about how to report a missing person, what to expect over time as one deals with the police, justice system and the media and coping with daily life without their loved one. Having an alert system in place in communities where there would be a central call out on phones and/or social media alerting residents that someone has gone missing was also suggested.

> ***"Even a random 'hi' on the street can go a long way. It felt like someone wanted to see me. It made my day. So I say "hi" to people now."***
>
> *Community Participant*

In communities where transience is an issue, the community has a role to play in keeping 'watch' over each other. Being on the alert for new/strange vehicles, reporting suspicious behavior, and checking in with friends, families and neighbors can help increase the perception of safety, build awareness of the issue and bring changes to the face of the community. There is also a reported need to work out 'stay-in-touch' strategies, educating the community about the importance of providing and gathering contact information and setting up a regular contact schedule when someone leaves the community for any length of time.

Many participants acknowledged that there is much individual and community healing to be done. The belief was expressed that in order for true community and individual empowerment to occur, this needs to happen first. There were a number of suggestions for community-led healing activities. In terms of culturally safe healing activities, ideas were offered around having the community or its members coordinate support groups and/or healing circles for individuals. The need to ensure people have opportunities to talk in a safe space was emphasized. Hosting community-based healing camps – a traditional gathering for healing – was also suggested.

> ***"It don't matter if they are alcoholics or drug users. Everybody needs a hand to hold on to sometime or another in their lives."***
>
> *Community Participant*

Moving beyond direct intervention, healing activities that allow communities to acknowledge the loss faced by victims were identified. This may include hosting 'honoring ceremonies', round dances, candle light vigils, or memorials for victims to acknowledge loss. A few stakeholders noted the need to note the special nature of ambiguous loss for families of missing women. Related to this, participants reported the value in public acknowledgment of key milestones for community members (with permission) – for example, talking about a person completing a recovery program, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) milestones, etc.

Finally, participants talked about engaging community leadership to take a strong role in developing and implementing strategies for safety in their communities. Getting leadership buy-in and active support may be a difficult journey in some communities but is a necessary component to bring about meaningful change.

Individual Safety Strategies

Individual safety strategies are those actions and activities that support Indigenous women in their personal journey towards the reduction of risk and vulnerability and the strengthening of positive supports in their lives.

The written/online survey asked about the specific support people felt they needed if a loved one should go missing or become a victim of homicide. The top three responses in both situations were around taking care of the spiritual and/or emotional needs of the victims' families: emotional support; prayers/spiritual support; and Elder support.

For homicide victims' families, emotional and spiritual assistance were selected more frequently in situations requiring long-term (as opposed to short-term) service. (See Figure 13: Supports a Family Needs when A Loved One is Murdered and Figure 14**:** Supports a Family Needs When a Loved One Goes Missing).

There was extensive discussion around the need for people to stay in touch with each other, or be made aware of how best to contact people and their circle of friends and family in case of emergency. This would be relevant regardless of how long the person is out of touch with key family members – from a night out to an extended trip away from the community. Community education regarding stay-in-contact strategies would include:

- ensuring people leaving know to check in once they reach their destination;
- establishing a regular contact schedule;
- using a GSP locator app on cell phones to help track people down if necessary;
- making a list of people the community member is regularly in contact with and where they regularly visit;
- using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram or texts to regularly update friends and family (many community members reported being regular social media users);
- providing phone cards and pay-as-you-go phones for people who are leaving the community; and
- for youth, ensuring there are contact schedules and that parents, caregivers or extended family know when and where the child/young adult will be at all times and with whom they are with.

> ***"Sometimes it's hard to keep in contact with loved ones who live high risk lives. When they choose to live this way there's only certain times when they contact family."***
>
> *Community Participant*

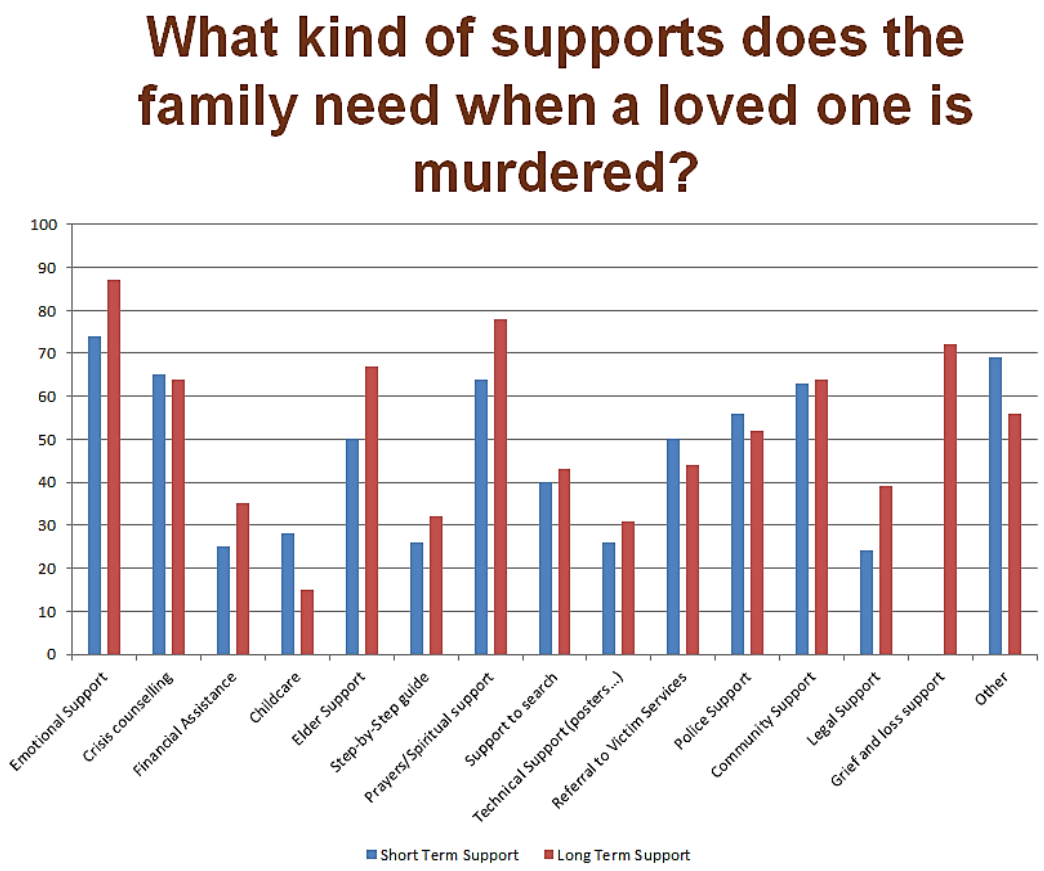

Figure 13: Supports a Family Needs when a Loved One is Murdered

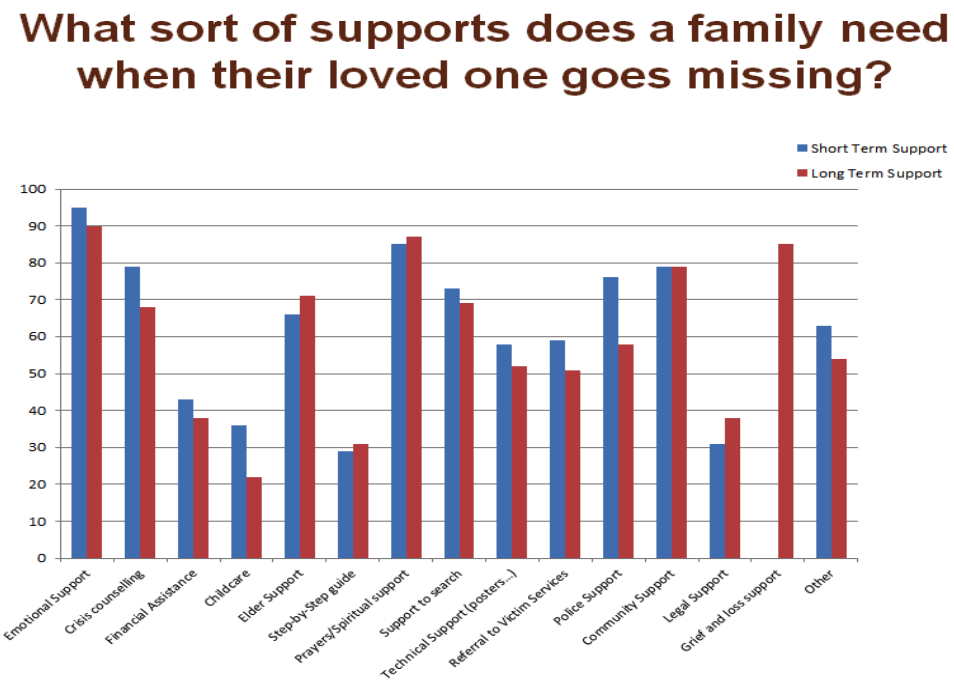

Figure 14: Supports a Family Needs When a Loved One Goes Missing

Further to this, the risks women face when they leave their communities to relocate in a larger urban center was of great concern to some participants. Strategies for reducing risk includes the information listed previously but may also involve ensuring the following safety strategies are in place before they leave:

- setting up meetings/referrals for housing and job agencies;
- becoming aware of important landmarks etc. close to where they will be staying;
- becoming familiar with resources (like Friendship Centers) in any new community visited;
- ensuring transportation needs can be met (e.g. knowing how to get a bus pass); and
- knowing where to turn if there is a crisis.

It was acknowledged that sometimes staying in contact can be difficult, but this is where knowing in advance with whom and where people socialize can help locate them later, should that prove necessary.

As mentioned in previous sections of this report, empowering individuals through activities like awareness, education building and personal safety training (like self-defense) are also critical components leading to empowerment.

Special consideration was given to the need to empower and educate youth in the communities. Participants noted the family needs to play a large role in risk prevention for youth. This could take several forms, including:

- Establishing a family contact schedule including rules and expectations for communication when the child is away from their parent(s), family or community;
- Taking youth on trips to the city through schools or community agencies, talking about city safety and street smarts in person;
- Establishing limits/expectations around the use of social media to ensure a child's online (and by extension, offline) activity is safe and free from predators, cyber bullies, etc.; and
- Knowing a child's peers, and to discuss what defines appropriate relationships, including high-risk behaviors like violence, bullying, or even human trafficking. By extension, parents need to be educated enough about these issues that they can effectively talk to their children about them.

System Supports for Safety

System supports refer to those agencies, organizations, policies, procedures and programs that that enhance safety for Indigenous women and girls.

These systems include:

- Leadership;
- Policing;
- Environmental/Physical Safety;
- Financial and Capital Resources;
- Youth Prevention Strategies; and

- Media Strategies.

By improving the system responses that impact missing and murdered Indigenous women, it can become easier to overcome barriers that create risk and vulnerability.

Leadership

Through the research process, participants identified it was important for leaders at all levels of governance – federal, provincial, municipal and First Nation - to take a stand towards improving the lives and safety of Indigenous women and girls. Engagement participants noted there must be a demonstrated readiness at the leadership table to acknowledge and examine this issue and to act on recommendations made. Further, it was noted that having conversations about this issue is important to implement and sustain the actions needed to address both the root causes and the symptoms.

Some participants suggested a direct role for leadership in organizing and hosting a regional forum for missing and murdered Indigenous women, which could lead to a provincial and national forum. Creating a national/provincial/local day of mourning or day of action for missing and murdered Indigenous women was also raised. A few participants spoke of the need for an "ombudsman" for Indigenous peoples to address complaints and help resolve conflicts between jurisdictions.

From a community perspective, participants expressed it was important to build knowledge with leaders to get leadership buy-in to bring about change. Further, it was recognized a critical step in the change process was the internal capacity to address challenges. Suggestions about building that internal capacity embraced education and training around the issues affecting the community, including awareness about helping resources and promising practices. It was further noted that internal capacity sometimes requires external capacity to be successful. Enough opportunities need to exist around education, employment, housing and service provision to encourage people to stay in the community and to provide the infrastructure necessary to carry out capacity-building activities.

Participants recognized that community agencies also have a leadership role to play. It was noted that agencies need to work together to maximize resources and build a solid foundation of support and prevention. Also they need to make sure they are working in equal partnership with community members, as opposed to imposing their strategies without engagement or consultation. Community agencies can also collaborate with each other to respond holistically to community issues, providing support along a continuum of service from early intervention to prevention to crisis response.

Finally, the need to build positive peer support into the daily fabric of community life was a recurring theme in the engagements. Research participants recognized there was value in gathering people together around common issues, recognizing there was commonality in experience and that a collective response was generally stronger than an individual one.

Overall, there was recognition that change coming from within the communities themselves was essential for success, but that leadership support is necessary for creating an environment where this is possible.

Policing

Community members, stakeholders and police offered possible strategies that could improve the role police play in both prevention and enhanced victim support relating to missing and murdered Indigenous women.

A number of engagement participants commented there is a long-standing mistrust of police in many Indigenous communities. As noted by LeBeuf (2011), this is due to many historic factors extending far before the residential school era. It was articulated this lack of trust is reinforced when individual police members are not educated about Indigenous history, family structures, cultural protocols, etc., often leading to miscommunication and unintended re-victimization. Participants expressed it was important to identify initiatives that build trust, such as relationship building opportunities where police could get to know more about the community and individual members. Also suggested was for police members to participate in some form of formal Indigenous awareness training. It was also noted that establishing relationships between the police and Elders/interpreters – cultural connectors – could also improve communication between the police and community members.

The engagements also highlighted a number of specific issues that communities find challenging when dealing with police. The crime report process came up a number of times as particularly confusing or upsetting for some participants. Participants noted that if they call to report a crime, they want to feel like they are being taken seriously and listened to. They shared examples of being 'put on hold' when calling to report an emergency or being interrogated for their personal information. Also significant in terms of issues regarding phone etiquette was too many transfers of their call to other staff members and curt or rude phone interactions. Several participants expressed they would likely report more crimes if the police would allow some degree of anonymity in reporting. Better communication from police around the reasons why the caller's personal information is being collected may go a long way to establishing trust, as would a more consistent and respectful phone response.

Challenges with the police and VSU referral process were additionally addressed in the engagements. Participants wanted both clarification and consistency around when and how referrals are made, especially regarding missing persons. Currently not all police services have dedicated missing persons units, nor do they automatically refer families reporting missing persons to their VSU. In the engagements with police services, only half of them identified they automatically refer missing persons cases to the VSU. For the other half, it was left to the discretion of the officer to initiate a referral. Police members noted that factors influencing whether or not to make a VSU referral involved taking into consideration the length of time the person was missing, whether it was a recurring event for the person to go missing, or whether there was a suspicion of criminal involvement. Also, as previously noted, being missing is not a criminal offence and thus a VSU referral was not an automatic response on behalf of the police service.

Likewise, participants noted the need to identify and address jurisdictional issues related to the VSU referral. This is particularly acute when family members who have lost a loved one to being missing or to homicide live in another jurisdiction serviced by a different police service. Clarification is needed around how information is shared across and between jurisdictions.

In one stakeholder engagement, it was noted that most people do not understand how victim services can support them and so may decline the police's initial referral because they do not know

what they are being offered. Unless the VSU is notified, there is little opportunity to follow up and offer again once the person is over their initial shock. While the RCMP have a policy regarding vulnerable and intimidated witnesses, the need for consistent practice across the province remains an issue according to engagement participants.

Other issues relating to policing include long response times, especially when police must respond to rural and remote communities. Participants report occasions where it has taken up to an hour for police to respond to an emergency call from a community. It was noted this further damages the trust between police and the community, increasing the danger of women becoming victims of injury or homicide. Participants expressed concern that slow response times can sometimes be interpreted as a form of 'racial profiling' in which Indigenous communities are not considered high-priority for response. Improving response times to emergency calls, especially those involving violence, will help build relationships and better protect communities. At the very least, participants noted that informing callers of the potential for long response times because of multiple service requests helps them to not personalize the delay.

Participants also suggested that police services maintain a higher profile in the community through providing community education in the form of workshops, printed materials and interventions to help communities stay safe. Whenever possible, demonstrating that police are there to help can be the first step to building positive, trusting relationships with the community.

Environmental/Physical Safety

Engagement participants noted there were environmental nuances in the community that could both help and hinder the physical safety of community members. The following physical or structural issues were identified:

- many communities lack payphones so contact is difficult if a person does not have a cell and is in crisis, personal danger, or simply needs transportation after hours. Putting a centrally located, 24-hour accessible payphone in the community was suggested as a safety measure by several participants;
- some families do not lock their doors at night and this could potentially create safety concerns;
- implementing a community Neighborhood Watch program would be helpful so the community can be empowered to watch out for each other;
- increasing staff awareness and vigilance in public facilities and businesses was discussed, including noticing strangers, strange vehicles or any unusual activity and reporting this to police; and
- utilizing physical assets to make community buildings and events like pow wows safer through initiatives like better lighting, more police, surveillance cameras and educational materials.

Financial and Capital Resources

Having access to affordable, accessible resources to support families is critical to an effective response after a traumatic event occurs. Stakeholders consistently noted the need to address resource gaps to families of missing and murdered persons. Specifically highlighted was the need for financial

and emotional support, access to counselling, and the development of aids or guides to support the families and service providers in their work. It was noted there were considerable resources that could be accessed when a child goes missing however there are very few resources available for families who have an adult member missing.

It was noted the VSU should be able to act as a resource hub for family members seeking about programs and benefits offered through other agencies. In terms of what specific financial benefits would be required, the following was provided by research participants:

- financial assistance to help with a search;
- funding to offset funeral costs;
- specialized counselling support (e.g. PTSD, trauma);
- funding for services not covered by Health Canada, Blue Cross or Alberta Health Care;
- funding to hosting vigils, memorial events and family gatherings for family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women;
- helping with income support for time taken off to mourn or search;
- travel assistance (including accommodation) for family and friends who have lost a loved one to homicide for attending court, funerals, etc., especially for those from out of province;
- daily stipends for food, etc. on court days;
- bus tickets or taxi chits for court related transportation and counselling; and
- funding assistance for ceremonies and cultural protocols.

Transportation was also flagged as an issue requiring resource investment. This would include 24-hour or emergency transport between close communities or small, remote communities and bigger urban centres as well as transport services to counselling appointments and court dates. Some stakeholders reported that a lack of adequate transportation increased vulnerability relating to missing and murdered Indigenous women, leading to risky behaviors like hitchhiking, accepting unsafe accommodation or temporary homelessness.

Stakeholders and community members consistently spoke about ideas for programming that would help address the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and work to reduce vulnerability overall. These require some investment of resources for materials, staff and hosting costs. Ideas generated by the participants include:

- safe rides;
- foot patrols;
- Block Parent/Neighborhood Watch;
- peacemaker programs;
- education on domestic violence and healthy relationships for all age groups;

"A province-wide missing persons' help line and resource centre for families in rural communities would be a good idea. The help line could provide crisis management support, referrals to other resources or services, tips and information on what to do, etc. It could also act as a registry/clearing house when people are traveling – individuals away from home could phone the number if they cannot reach their family and report where they are and that they are safe. Then if the family does not hear from them, they can call the same number to find out if the individual registered with the call centre. The help line could collaborate with police to make sure information was handled and shared appropriately."

Stakeholder Engagement

- self-defence courses;
- Community Welcome Wagon with resources;
- adult and youth drop-in centers;
- more women's shelters; second stage housing, homeless shelters and treatment centers in Indigenous communities;
- formal and informal support networks;
- trauma debriefing when a death occurs in the community; and
- access to culturally safe specialized services dealing with issues including historic trauma, PTSD and ambiguous loss.

Resource Guides/Toolkits

Participants noted the preference to have all resource information available in one central location and in various formats including online, print and in person. It was acknowledged that younger family members are typically more familiar with the computer and internet access whereas older family members were comfortable with more conventional ways of accessing information.

Many participants reported they have access to phone or computer with internet access. They strongly recommended using social media as a way to disseminate information. Further, that it could be used to provide support to families of missing and murdered Indigenous women when appropriate. Social media websites along with specially designed cell phone apps were specifically mentioned as resources likely to be accessed. A *Creating Safety* app was also suggested. It could potentially include emergency contact information, useful resources and safety strategies. One community member suggested having an online, searchable database that can run sophisticated queries about specific service providers, services, programs and other relevant resources.

Some participants, however, noted that not all people have internet access. Printed materials would be better in these cases. Respondents proposed a community focused resource guide, however they recommended not formatting it with small print or in any other way that decreases accessibility. Suggestions for inclusion in the resource guides included information about service providers, personal and community safety information and places to turn for specific information and assistance.

One suggestion was to develop a toolkit focusing on identification and safety. It would include information like:

- how to identify a *safe word* (one that can be used in a telephone conversation or text message to indicate unsafe situations);
- social media contact information;
- phone numbers for relatives and friends the person may be likely to contact;
- identifying information, addresses, and phone numbers for community agencies;
- counselling resources; and
- emergency contact information.

A 24-hour, 1-800 or 211 information line was also recommended for those without internet access or who may prefer to get information verbally due to literacy, language issues or personal preference. This line could provide information on available resources and strategies for safety as outlined above.

Youth Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Engagement participants repeatedly expressed concern for the youth (boys and girls and their diversity). Many respondents noted the need to better educate youth about the risks they face of becoming a victim of violence. It was expressed repeatedly that things have changed much in the past twenty years; the world is a different place and thus there is a need for more information and support:

- developing self-esteem workshops for younger children;
- special programs targeting both younger and teen aged girls (self-esteem, life skills, prevention);
- peer support programs;
- hosting trips to the city for older youth, educating them about risk and demonstrating what supports are available;
- partner with existing organizations that may have programs already developed for youth;
- host MMIW workshops for youth, either at schools or in the community, focusing on staying safe, the dangers of street life, how to get out of bad situations, standing up to peers, dealing with gangs in the community, respecting women and suicide prevention;
- ensure there are adequate alcohol and drug reduction strategies in place for younger children;
- self-defense workshops;
- parenting workshops on how and what to talk to your children about keeping safe;
- safe and healthy relationship workshops (targeting the risk of trafficking, involvement in the sex trade, domestic violence);
- traditional teachings about the cultural history of Indigenous communities and the historical role of women;
- targeted intervention for school dropouts including training and preparing them for the labor force;
- reallocate some band funding to youth leader/counsellor positions, who could take a role in developing opportunities for youth education around safety strategies; and
- involve Elders in traditional education opportunities and as mentors to youth.

This extensive list is not exclusive and initiatives may already be underway is some communities. Some participants suggested completing an environmental scan of existing programs and services for youth, both in Indigenous communities and in bigger centers, to help communities determine where their gaps are and what resources are available.

Some participants noted that school attendance is sporadic for many youth and the system can tend to 'push kids through' despite their not having developed adequate learning skills. Introducing a variety of skill-building opportunities in school would help better prepare youth for the job market and life after graduation. Further, these may increase a youth's engagement in school while they are

there, perhaps decreasing the drop-out rate, increasing employability and reducing risk factors for victimization.

The lack of high schools in some Alberta communities also leads to increased risk for youth who choose to leave their home community to pursue higher education. Moving from a small community to a larger urban center without family support can create significant safety challenges for youth if they are not connected to resources and supports. Many cities are now developing 'new in town' programs and resources that youth need to be aware of.

Finally, stakeholders were clear there is a strong need to improve the prospects for youth within their communities. Poverty and lack of employment opportunities can lead to both risk-taking behavior, and to youth leaving their home communities for bigger urban centers. Improving the amount and quality of opportunities for youth to make money and live healthy lives in the community will go a long way to improving safety. In a similar vein, participants expressed their belief that youth need a positive place where they can go to retreat, to meet up with peers, to access resources, food and service providers.

Media Strategies

As mentioned previously in this document, the engagement process highlighted the need to build awareness of the complexity and severity of the issue for the general public, service providers, police and Indigenous communities themselves. Participants reported that, as a rule, media reporting has tended to focus on racial and gender stereotypes concerning Indigenous women. Further, media often only seems interested in the sensational aspects of a homicide or missing person's case.

Participants reported that families need media support in the form of the tools and training to be able to talk to the media effectively. There is a need to guide the narrative of their loved ones story towards the personal and the human elements of the loss. Telling the 'story' from this perspective can dispel stereotypes and enhance the public's willingness to help with searches for missing persons.

Participants noted that access to a resource guide that addresses effective media relations would be helpful, as would having someone with media training assist communities when tragedy strikes. A number of resource guides currently exist around this issue but VSUs could add another level of support to those impacted.

SECTION THREE: Moving Forward

Moving Forward

The Alberta Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's research initiative was initiated to respond to the persistent issue of Indigenous women and girls being over-represented among those murdered and missing. Given that Indigenous people are already over-represented demographically as victims of crime in Canada and efforts have been underway to address the service needs of this underserved population, it was apparent that a more targeted approach was necessary. Such an approach must take into account the lived experience of Indigenous women and girls. This project has focused on lived experience, foregrounding the importance of recognizing the complex layers of vulnerability.

As outlined by research participants, the intergenerational trauma from the Indian Residential school experience is recognized as the primary root cause of Indigenous women and girls being over represented. This trauma is intensified by intersecting with addictions, lack of identity/culture/self-worth, sex trade or gang involvement, human trafficking, domestic violence, family breakdown, geographic isolation, lateral violence, gender inequality, racism and poverty. This combination of structural inequalities, vulnerabilities and life experiences that have been impacted by disruptive social norms have consistently marginalized Indigenous women and girls, effectively disempowering them by relegating them to a powerless and seemingly unimportant position within society.

A more consistent, empowerment-based approach with additional resources is part of the answer. However what appears to be missing is an understanding about why most Indigenous people are faced with so many layers of vulnerabilities. Culturally responsive services to Indigenous victims of crime have demonstrated a commitment to cultural sensitivity. Yet they continue to lack an essential element of any victim response – addressing personal safety needs from an Indigenous world view. Consequently, there is a need to enhance how services are being provided.

One of the conclusions of the research is that a clear distinction must be made between strategies for serving families of victims of homicide and families of missing persons. The root causes of both are the same, but there are elements within each experience that are significantly different. These include the nature of the loss, differences in specific short and long term supports required, the involvement of police in the ensuing investigation and the need for the involvement of the Justice System.

The following section summarizes the components of a plan for moving forward for JSG Victims Services that addresses the need for an enhanced service response to families who have lost loved ones to being missing or to homicide. These components include strategies and recommendations regarding:

- Cultural safety and the VSU;
- Cultural safety and missing persons victim services supports;
- Cultural safety and homicide victim services supports; and
- Cultural safety and other system responses:

These strategies will be embedded into the response frameworks currently being developed for both missing persons and homicide. Further, it is the expectation of Alberta Victims Services that all VSUs in the province will critically review both their current and future responses to victims of crime through a cultural safety lens.

CULTURAL SAFETY AND THE VSU

A culturally safe approach moves beyond the respectful recognition of difference to an acknowledgement of the inherent power imbalances that exist between cultural groups. It recognizes that client cultural values and norms may be different due to unique socio-political histories. Within a culturally safe response framework, the focus is on providing service that makes sense from the clients' perspective. Such an approach clearly reflects the lived reality of the client without any challenge or denial of identity. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and the experience of learning together with dignity. It is also about listening in a way that empowers and supports and engages the client in a dynamic relationship.

Through the Early Childhood Education Intercultural Partnerships (ECDIP) initiative at the University of Victoria, five principles were identified to guide initiatives that want to provide service within a culturally safe environment. Implementation of these principles will ensure that issues relating to marginalization are addressed. These include *partnerships*, *personal knowledge*, *protocols*, *process* and *positive purpose*. (See Figure 15**:** 5 Principles for Cultural Safety on the following page).

Partnerships involve engaging in relational practice based on authentic encounters. In a relational practice, service providers are proactive, not prescriptive; knowledge is respectfully shared. Problem solving is collaborative and builds on the strengths of the client and the community. Partnerships involve cross-training and interagency initiatives, including a recognition the client is also one of the partners. Innovation and creativity are important considerations in these dynamic partnerships.

The principle of *personal knowledge* addresses what Koptie (2009) notes is Irihapeti Ramsden's definition of cultural awareness – critical consciousness of inherent power imbalances. It also seeks to encourage an understanding of who the helping professional is in relation to the culture of the victims of crime being helped. Critical questions include: what has been the personal and collective history of the victim? How is their worldview and history context expressed through their present day vulnerabilities? What does this mean with the added intersection of being a victim of crime?

The *protocol* principle is about showing both respect and honest curiosity to learn more. It is about recognizing that learning should and can be a reciprocal process. Services that demonstrate a commitment to honoring protocol animate the resiliencies of those being helped, building on what clients identify is needed and valuable. It is also about finding those allies and mentors who can contribute and support an environment where cultural safety is addressed.

Positive purpose as a principle is a reminder that all good programs need to be built on strengths. Indigenous people and Indigenous communities have continued to demonstrate resilience even through targeted cultural genocide; identifying what these resiliencies are ensures there is a foundation for program continuity and growth. Establishing collaborative accountability mechanisms that focus on positive goals means that everyone has a sense of ownership about the service being provided.

Process was included as a principle because mutual learning is important in the helping process; recognition of the client's gifts and strengths and their need to be involved and empowered in determining the direction of their own future. It means frequent checking in to ensure that proposed action plans 'fit' with the recipients values, preferences and lifestyles. In many instances it is the subtle nuances expressed in the helping relationship that can derail the advocate role.

Figure 15: Cultural Safety 5 Principles (Reproduced with the permission of the University of Victoria's Early Childhood Education Intercultural Partnerships)

Applying these principles to the current service delivery framework will ensure a consistent, culturally safe victim services response to family members who have lost a loved one to being missing or to homicide. Through this enhanced approach, Indigenous women and girls will feel safe in accessing

services and ideally, will then claim the rights and entitlements due to them because they will be empowered to do so.

In the ideal state, every victim service unit in Alberta will have the opportunity, knowledge and skills to enable them to work with their management organizations and community members to address what is needed to ensure a culturally safe victim services response.

CULTURAL SAFETY AND THE MISSING PERSON RESPONSE

The following section outlines a path for a culturally safe victim services response for families dealing with a loved one who has gone missing. JSG's overarching goal is to provide a consistent response to victims of missing persons, ensuring a continuity of supports over time. In this JSG aims to streamline resources, build efficiencies within the system and provide informed resources essential to the health and well-being of all Albertans.

The flow chart on the next page (Figure 16: JSG Victims Services Missing Person Draft Response Protocol) illustrates JSG Victims Services new formalized VSU response to a missing person report. This protocol was developed as an outcome of the MMIW initiative, based on the results of the engagement process as well as current research. It acknowledges and addresses some of the challenges noted.

In this model the police make a referral to the local VSU as soon as possible after taking a missing person complaint. If the person making the report is not interested in victim services support, the police will provide a copy of the Alberta Missing Persons Family Resource Guide and establish a contact schedule for future contacts. Should the individual or family change their mind about accessing VSU support, they can ask for another referral from the police or can also access support themselves through calling or going to the VSU. All VSU contact numbers are in the back of the Alberta Missing Persons Family Resource Guide.

If the individual or family agrees to a VSU referral, their contact information will be provided to the local victim service unit. The VSU will then initiate contact with the individual and/or family who reported the person missing. VSU staff will offer practical information on what to expect over the course of the investigation. They will also provide ideas on handling the media, conducting searches, offering rewards, fund raising and more. Also provided will be emotional support and referrals to other resources the family needs or could benefit from. The Alberta Missing Persons Family Resource guide will be made available as a take home resource. The VSU will also ask the family who they think should be the primary contact(s) and when they would like to be contacted.

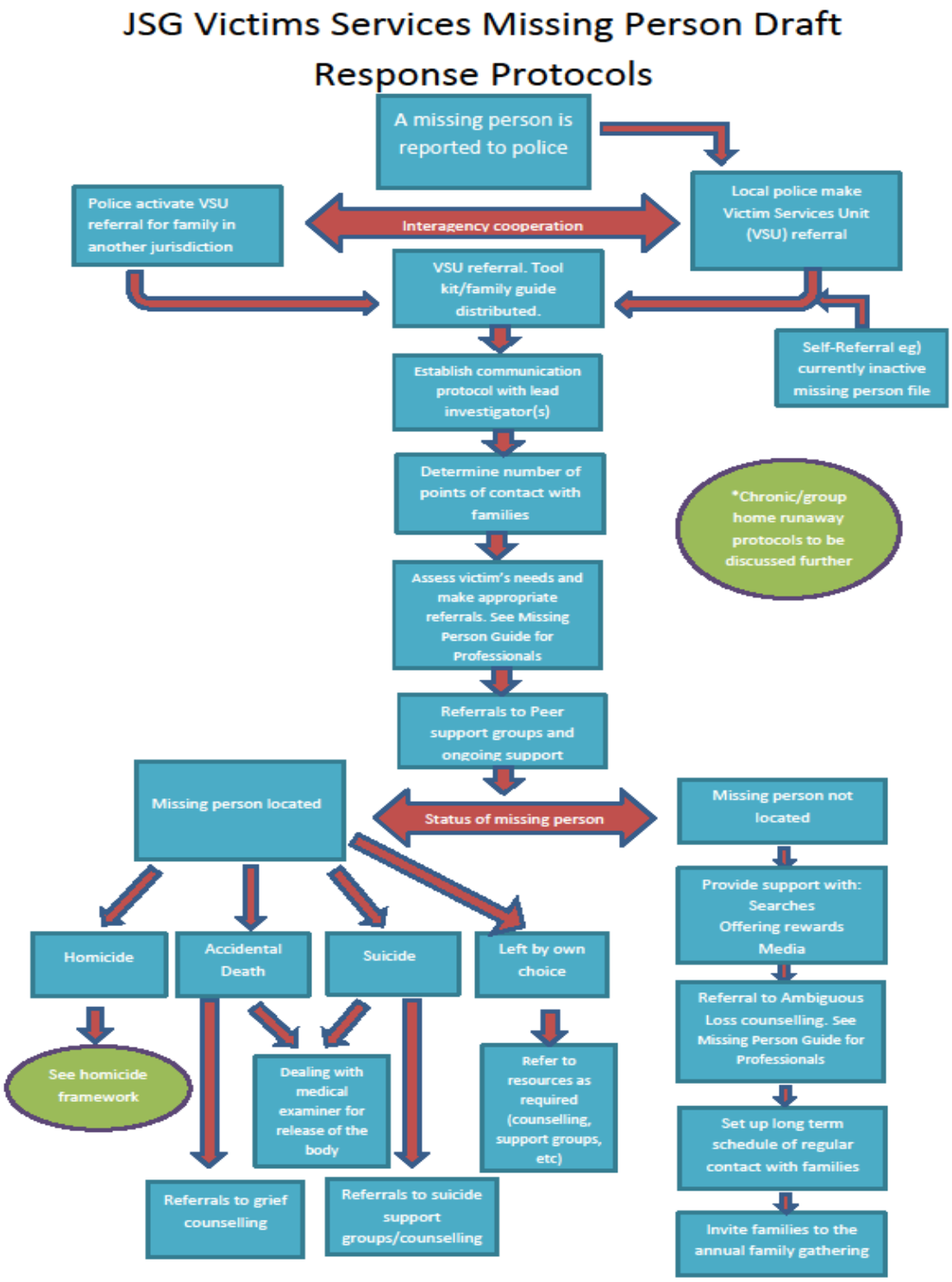

Figure 16: JSG Victim Services Missing Person Draft Response Protocol

Cultural Safety and Ambiguous Loss - Families dealing with a missing loved one find themselves facing a unique kind of loss called ambiguous loss because there are so many questions about what has happened and where their loved one is. This is differentiated from the loss felt by family members of homicide victims in which the details are often well known (who, where, what, why, when). Ambiguous loss requires a specialized response on the part of the mental health practitioner and unfortunately, specialists in this area are not common.

Within a culturally safe response, VSUs are aware of the complex nature of ambiguous loss and know what mental health resources are available for addressing this loss. They also have an awareness of how historic and intergenerational trauma can heighten the effects of the loss and impact a victim's ability to seek help. Ideally, if an individual or family turns down the VSU referral being provided by the police service, the VSU would then initiate another contact.

Cultural Safety and Mistrust of Police - As outlined in previous sections of this report, Indigenous peoples have an acknowledged mistrust of police due to negative experiences that included the residential school system, the sixties scoop, and unintended institutionalized racism. This can impact missing person cases in many different ways. This may include situations where the loved one of the missing person may not feel comfortable making a missing person report, resulting in valuable investigative time being lost. Occasionally, situations arise when the police member who the victim first contacts does not take the report seriously, or doesn't feel it's a true missing person case; the individual who is calling to report may be dealing with the impact of historic trauma and may not be equipped to advocate for their loved one in this situation. There can also be a hesitation of the part of the loved one to provide information to police that is considered to be overly personal or may put them or their loved ones at risk of unwanted police scrutiny and/or intervention.[18]

Within a culturally safe response, this lack of trust is acknowledged and 'put on the table' for discussion. VSUs are aware that Indigenous people may be challenged in dealing with the police and can liaise and advocate on their behalf. VSU staff will be present when family members who have lost loved ones are meeting with police to address any perceived power imbalances or safety needs. VSU staff will also address any language needs that can impact the police-victim relationship, such as translation services.

Cultural Safety and Missing Persons Reporting - Many inaccuracies exist in the public's mind regarding how and when to report a missing person. The most damaging of these myths is that one has to wait 24 hours before reporting. Other issues requiring public education include when to use 911 to report a missing person/youth, and whether or not one should report someone who has been missing for a long period of time. Given this context, it is quite plausible that reporting a person missing can be daunting task for marginalized individuals. Further, should a police officer appear unwilling to acknowledge or accept the missing persons report, the person making the report may be discouraged from trying again.

Within a culturally safe response, the VSU understands why an Indigenous person may find it challenging to report their loved one as missing. VSU staff members will thus be non-judgemental if there is a time lapse between someone going missing and this being reported to the police. The VSU will also be involved in public education campaigns

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[18] For a complete discussion of this, see the section on policing in Root Causes

within their service area to ensure people know that waiting 24 hours is a myth and that support services are available through victim services.

Cultural Safety and the Missing Person VSU Referral Procedure - Referral of missing person cases to the VSU currently can be a challenging process. First, not all police forces are consistent in referring missing persons to their VSU. Second, victims who initially refuse VSU support will sometimes have a change of heart if approached later in their process. To complicate the referral process further, it is likely there are family members who live in another jurisdiction that could benefit from VSU support as well. The potential is definitely there for family member to fall through the cracks in the system if communication and follow-up between police and VSUs is not consistent or does not occur.

Within a culturally safe response, there is an understanding that missing a loved one is a traumatic experience that requires support. Further, that historical trauma can impact how willing someone is to reach out and accept support. Thus, it is important for the VSU to proactively follow up a refusal of service to ensure family members are aware of what support can be provided to them. Part of this response means VSUs will actively promote how they can assist families who have a missing loved one given that being missing is not a crime and families may not understand this is part of the tragedy response VSUs can respond to. Also, within a culturally safe response the VSU will specifically inquire about and address the service needs of family members who may reside in another jurisdiction.

Cultural Safety and Media Support - The media can be an ally or an adversary in telling the story of a missing (or murdered) loved one. A proactive approach to the media - where the family takes control of the narrative about their missing loved one early on - involves anticipating questions, directing the messaging to focus on the positive qualities of the loved one and the provision of a family photo.

> ***"I think the Aboriginal people across Canada need to band together to make this a well-publicized issue, force it on mainstream society. Let them know this is no longer acceptable, we will no longer tolerate it being buried under other stories. We need to stand strong together and say 'no more!' Our men need to stand alongside us too."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement Session*

Loppie (2014) notes that historically, media relationships have not been favorable to Indigenous victims of crime as news reports often focus on the social and economic challenges facing Indigenous communities while ignoring stories of discrimination and/or exploitation. Further, the perceived racial profiling of Indigenous women and girls in the media is well recognized. The effects of intergenerational trauma can limit an individual's ability to self-advocate for a less biased story.

A culturally safe response requires the VSU to understand the reality of systemic racism and how it impacts media coverage related to Indigenous peoples and the criminal justice system. The VSU needs to support families with media training around how best to tell the story of their missing loved one. Part of a culturally safe response may also require the VSU to meet with local media to advocate for fair media coverage.

CULTURAL SAFETY AND HOMICIDE VICTIM SERVICES SUPPORT

The system for VSU support when dealing with the family of a victim of homicide is fairly well established. In fact, some municipalities have dedicated homicide support in which trained advocates provide specialized support to family member's right from the point of referral all the way through the court process. After referral, the VSU is generally involved with the victim at all stages of the criminal justice system. However, the following section highlights some areas where engagement participants and recent literature converge in recommending improvements to existing practice. The following schematic on the next page illustrates the process for VSU referral and support for victims after a homicide (Figure 17: JSG Victims Services Homicide Draft Response Protocol).

For family members dealing with the loss of a loved one to homicide, a culturally safe victim services response requires consideration of similar elements to the missing person response previously outlined. This includes:

- *knowledge of the historical mistrust/poor relationships with the police and the need for advocacy;*
- *a consistent and timely victims services referral from police and perhaps a proactive referral should the family refuse the initial offer of service;*
- *considerations in regards to reporting and/or the sharing of information about their loved one, particularly with media who may intentionally sensationalize or represent the homicide victim as something other than a loved one;*
- *acknowledgement of jurisdictional realities and the need to ensure there is a referral to VSU services in other jurisdictions if required. This is particularly true when the homicide has occurred in one jurisdiction and the family resides in another. It is also important for the VSU to proactively explore who needs support in consideration of the loss so no one is over looked;*
- *proactive questions regarding financial supports. For homicide this is particularly acute during the court process where families may be required to travel and be hosted in another jurisdiction. VSUs need to understand what the family requires to feel safe;*
- *a commitment to continuity of support. This includes the initial court process, any appeal process and also any process involving parole hearings; and*
- *referrals to peer based support processes, such as Victims of Homicide.*

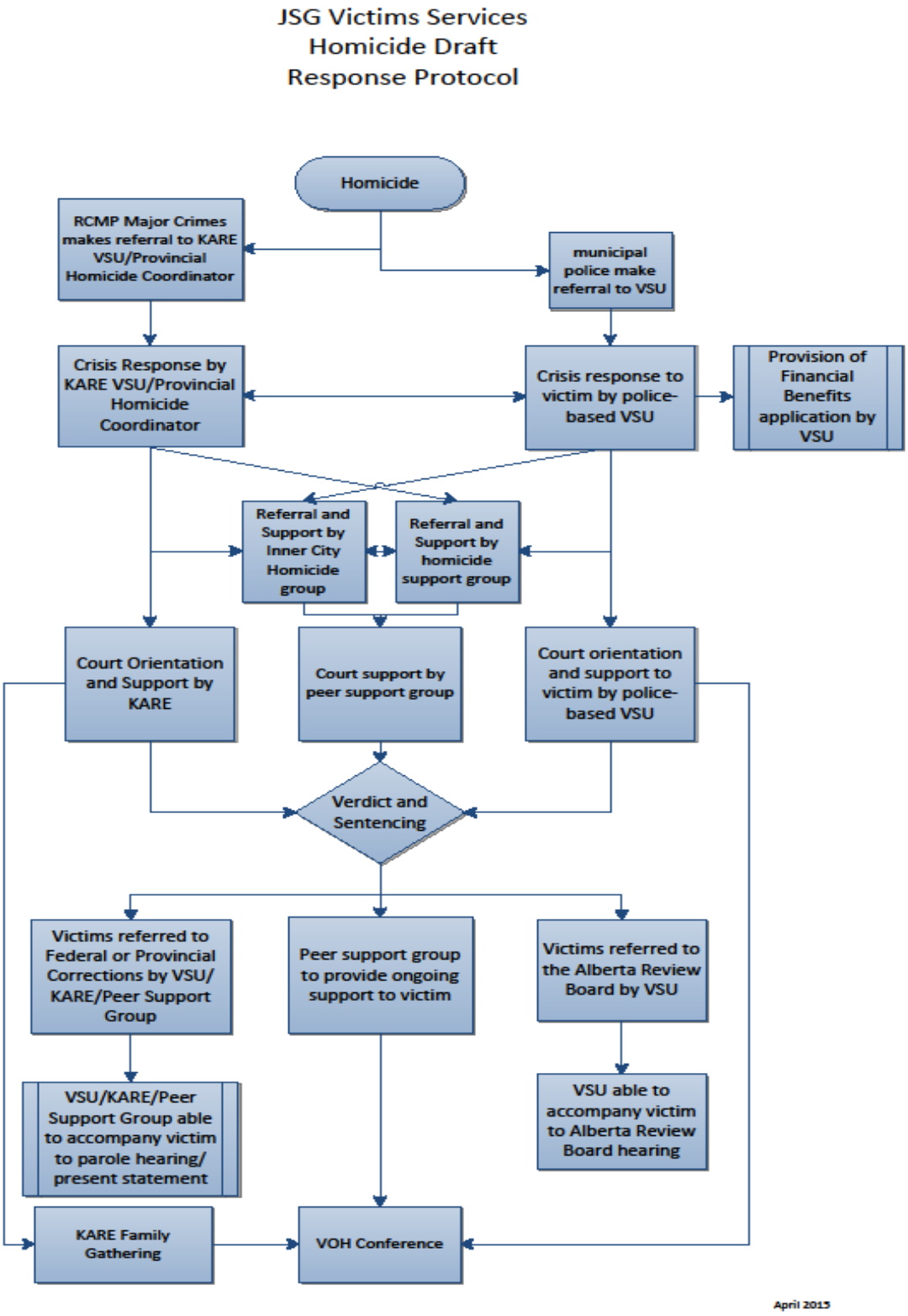

Figure 17: JSG Victims Services Homicide Draft Response Protocol

Other concerns around cultural safety were expressed. Participants noted that many Indigenous people perceive the police as having pre-conceived motivations and assumptions when dealing with them. This is in addition to the historical mistrust that commonly exists. Consequently, it is important to address this issue.

Within a culturally safe response, the VSU will explore with their Indigenous client(s) any perceptions they may have about the responding police service. They will then assist the family member(s) in proactively addressing these concerns. The VSU will also be present with the family member(s) when they are meeting with police services.

It was also expressed by research participants that receiving support from the same individual/advocate through the criminal justice process was important. Participants noted that it is challenging to have different people involved in this very personal experience which can extend over significant lengths of time. Further, it was acknowledged that an Indigenous advocate would likely share a common world view.

Within a culturally safe response, the VSU recognizes the need to recruit Indigenous advocates to provide service to Indigenous people. Also, that each VSU should have at least one advocate that specializes in homicide support so they can provide consistent support throughout the criminal justice process.

> ***"Victim Services could check on them once in a while just so they feel supported and that their loved one is not forgotten"***
>
> *Survey Response*

CULTURAL SAFETY AND OTHER SYSTEM SUPPORTS

From a victims services perspective, there are connecting issues related to supporting family members who have lost a loved one to being missing or to homicide that need to be addressed. These are outlined in section four of this report. However, there are a few of these that need to be addressed within a cultural safety framework because they are integral to the VSU having the ability to respond with a consistent, culturally safe response.

Police Referral to VSU - Currently, not all police forces across the province refer those who report a loved one missing to their VSU. "Missing Persons" technically falls outside of the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system; it is not a crime to be 'missing.' This fact has resulted in some inconsistencies in standards and practices throughout the province for dealing with VSU referrals in missing person cases. The need for standardization of this VSU referral is of critical importance in order to best serve all families dealing with a loved one going missing.

> ***"Most detachments refer at the discretion of reporting RCMP/Police member. Some do not refer at all. Some VSU's do active referrals if they have access to the incident report. Look at streamlining the referral process."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement Session*

Within a culturally safe response, it is implicitly understood that having a loved one be missing is a traumatic experience that requires support. Thus, it is necessary to explore the standardization of the referral process to the VSU in the case of missing persons so this is an automatic process.

Police Jurisdictional Challenges - Jurisdictional issues exist around reporting a person missing in cases where the missing persons' home community is different from where they went missing. Confusion around where to report can create issues and concerns. In addition, jurisdictional differences can make it challenging to know which VSU should be receiving the referral. Ultimately, jurisdictional issues can have a negative impact the nature and accessibility of victims support.

> ***"It would be good to think about a protocol or policy across the province that addresses the jurisdictional issue in victim services provision when a missing person's body is discovered outside the jurisdiction where they went missing."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement Session*

Within a culturally safe response, family members who require support will know that it does not matter where they report their loved one missing, only that it has been reported. They will receive the same professional response from any police service in Alberta. Part of this response will involve an immediate referral to the local victim service unit. Thus, it is necessary to explore standardization of practice around cross-jurisdictional missing persons issues.

Financial Supports - Families of missing persons have unique financial needs over the short and long term that are currently not provided for through any granting/governmental program (except in the case of missing children). These needs include income support while taking time off work to grieve or search, support for travel expenses related to carrying out a search, access to specialized counselling and transportation support. Of note is this connects to systemic issues of poverty which factor into families' ability to have their own funds for income replacement, searches, etc.

Within a culturally safe response, family members who have lost a loved one to being missing should have resources they can access for needed financial support. The unique nature of Indigenous communities' kinship/family support systems must be considered, as should additional barriers related to living in an isolated community. Thus, it is important to provide tangible resources the family can access. Should these resources not be available, it will be important to advocate for the development of them.

Data Collection - At least 40% of the police services involved in the engagements reported they did not collect information about the ethnicity of a missing person. Not collecting this information creates a challenge in understanding the scope of this issue, particularly in comparison to other demographics. Further, most of the data that does exist lumps the statistics for missing and murdered Indigenous women together. It can be argued that combining the numbers does a disservice to those who are missing because there are significantly more homicides than there are missing persons' cases. Given that Indigenous women are overrepresented among the missing, these numbers need to be separated and understood independently from each other so the specialized and differential response required is more clearly articulated. Furthermore, it is important that every community knows how pervasive this issue is and

> ***"There is a need to verify numbers with police services. Should we not collectively establish some criteria for missing persons? What about when a body is found? And when somebody is charged? We should agree on a protocol. Police services need to come together."***
>
> *Stakeholder Engagement Session*

how it is potentially impacting other community support needs. Lastly, families have repeatedly expressed the need to be able to access their loved ones information (as a missing person) on a public site.

A culturally safe response to missing persons requires access to public information about who is missing and from where. VSUs need to have an understanding of the number and circumstances of missing women in their communities. For family members, this includes the ability to view their loved one's profile in a publicly accessible data base such as NCMPUR (National Center for Missing Persons and Unidentified Human Remains).

SECTION FOUR: Next Steps

Next Steps

As part of its baseline data collection, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women initiative carried out a literature search reviewing the findings of 65 major studies, surveys, conference proceedings, inquiries and reports related to this issue published between 2003 and 2013. An annotated bibliography that is available on the Alberta's Open Government website (http://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460127674) summarizes the results.

The findings of this review very closely echoed what was expressed through the community engagements. The reports and the engagements were consistent in identifying that a large number of historical, socio-economic and legal realities have come together to generate the conditions that contribute to the persistence of violence against Indigenous peoples.

The research repeatedly discussed and highlighted:

- root causes;
- colonialism;
- residential schools;
- domestic violence;
- sex-trade involvement;
- lack of accountability and transparency in various levels of leadership;
- Intergenerational trauma;
- child welfare;
- poverty;
- racism;
- health and mental health issues;
- systemic challenges;
- policing;
- criminal justice system limitations;
- a lack of shelters and emergency housing;
- the historical and contemporary relationship between the child welfare system and missing and murdered Indigenous women;
- the gaps and strengths of policing policy and practices related to addressing cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, including data collection and an individuals' ability and perception around reporting crimes;
- preventative measures; and
- the need for education and awareness.

Calls for action have been repeatedly expressed, written, documented, and requested from international, national, provincial, jurisdictional, sector-based, and community stakeholders, and from Indigenous people themselves. The recommendations set out in each report share many of the same themes, findings and recommendations as were offered by engagement participants, despite the fact that they were produced by different organizations and individuals from varying perspectives:

- recognition of the need to address violence against Indigenous women and girls through layered levels of strategies, actions and plans substantiated by existing research and statistics;
- policy and legislative remedies and collaborative efforts involving all stakeholders;
- evaluations and descriptions of successful initiatives and data collection;
- descriptions of successful projects, best practices and policy development in the area of police investigations and calls for improved police investigation policy and practices; and
- a call for action from all levels of government, community, within and across sectors. While some action has been taken, research suggests that much more action is required.

INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER SECTORS

There were many other issues identified through the MMIW initiative that fall outside of what can be offered through an articulation of a consistent, culturally safe victim services response. As noted by Ramsden (in Koptiea, 2009), part of the role of being a knowledge recipient in a culturally safe environment is a collective call to advocacy. In that spirit, the following section is included to share some of the key research results shared by participants that lie outside of VSU service provision.

Policing Concerns Outside the VSU

- Support the police in standardizing and mandating Indigenous Awareness Training for all police officers
- use community-building initiatives and more targeted public engagement/educational activities to overcome Indigenous people's historic mistrust of police and the view that police treat Indigenous people's reports as lower priority
- Encourage police services to apply principles of cultural safety when receiving crime reports from Indigenous peoples (acknowledge historic mistrust of police, recognize kinship connections regarding who in the family is the main point of contact, some Indigenous peoples' desire for some degree of anonymity in the reporting process, etc.)
- Explore/address long police response times to some rural and/or remote communities
- Standardize missing persons referrals from police to VSU, taking into consideration cross jurisdictional challenges
- Identify a missing persons response for chronic runaways, including children in care

Prevention Programming

- Support the development and implementation of programs designed to educate communities about intergenerational trauma and its impacts
- Promote linking education efforts to related evidence-based program targeting behavior and system change
- Encourage the development of prevention and intervention activities targeting Indigenous youth that address intergenerational trauma and its impacts

Leadership

- Assist communities in facilitating the engagement of community leadership to effect change at the community level

- Share knowledge with federal counterparts

Information Needs

- Encourage the development of more accurate, comprehensive, and publically accessible data gathering around missing persons in Alberta, to include information about ethnicity and geographical information

Capital/Structural Safety Needs

- Support the implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) solutions to make communities safer (e.g. pay phones, streetlights)
- Work with stakeholders to explore the implementation of community-based crisis lines
- Improve public transportation options in rural and remote communities (busing, medical transport, etc.)
- Encourage and/or participate in carrying out an environmental scan of existing provincial programs and resources dealing with the issues affecting the safety of Indigenous women and girls
- Encourage stakeholders to incorporate cultural safety and GBA+ into their programs that serve Indigenous populations
- Fill in knowledge gaps with resource guides, a call-center or hotline, workshops, Apps, social media tools and toolkits

Youth Strategies

- Explore prevention initiatives for youth including educational interventions, programming, and the building of youth centers so youth have somewhere that to hang out is both healthy and safe
- Involve youth in targeted safety strategies or community safety planning initiatives

ISSUES AND POLICY CONSDERATIONS

A primary deliverable of the MMIW initiative was to conduct a review of existing policies and issues to identify those that could potentially impact the provision of victim services to families of missing or murdered Indigenous women. The following have been identified through conversation with provincial and federal government representatives and through research into other jurisdictions' policies and procedures. Whenever issues were flagged with the potential for policy implications, they were cross-referenced to existing policy and areas for improvement were noted.

These issue papers will be developed around these key issue and policy areas to add further context. When these are completed, consultations with various government ministries and stakeholder groups will then occur to continue moving these forward. Some of these have been mentioned in previous sections.

Public Information Regarding a Missing Person
• Implement a public awareness campaign to debunk this myth to improve timely reporting and assist with investigations; myths/misunderstandings persist around having to wait 24 hours or more before reporting a missing person. • Standardize public reporting of missing persons in terms of both process and timelines for submitting to the National Center for Missing Persons and Human Remains (NCMPUR); family members/friends want information about their missing loved one to be available and public posting of missing persons information on a shared website clearly says 'we are concerned and are looking for your loved one.' This includes other publication protocols and sites (e.g. Alberta Police Report). • Make the NCMPUR website user friendly for families; search instructions on the home page would be very useful (the capacity to search by Province is only available with the *advanced search function*).
Alberta Missing Persons Act
• Change the current practice of needing the Justice of the Peace (JP) to swear all emergency applications for personal information in person: initially police services were faxing the applications to a JP for review and the JP would fax the approved application back. At one point it was noted the form clearly says "Sworn before me….." and now JP's are taking this literally and insisting on this happening. This creates investigational delays for any police agency that does not have access to 24 hr Justice of the Peace services. The Protection Against Family Violence Regulation speaks to the process of applications in sections 4(1) 'in person' and 4(2) 'by telecommunication' which if added to the Missing Persons Act would alleviate this issue.
Medical Examiner Policy
• Identify what cultural protocols could be in place to mitigate any re-victimization that may occur due to cultural nuances or beliefs around dying, death and invasive procedures such as autopsies. • Establish a policy to inform the victim's family members when body parts may be used for exhibit purposes. • Better articulate the Medical Examiner policy in regards to providing autopsy reports if the victim is deceased due to homicide, informing families these reports are generally not released until after the trial at which time they can request and pay for a copy.
Police Policy and Procedures
• Have the missing person entered onto Canadian Police Information Center (CPIC) must be immediate. Several police jurisdictions wait up to 24 hours before entering the information. • Recognize the issue of jurisdiction as the last place the missing person was seen, not where they normally resided unless that is where they were last seen. That will determine the police jurisdiction that holds the main file. RCMP and other police jurisdictions outside of RCMP KARE's areas of responsibility should undertake the voluntary registering of high-risk persons in their area to ensure as many people as possible are registered, including the taking of voluntary DNA samples. • Identify a common standard in regards to ongoing contact with family. This ensures

consistency in response across jurisdictions, particularly in cases of long-term missing. While most agencies will only make one family member a point of contact, there needs to be flexibility in both the number of contacts as well as the definition of 'family'.

- Check media statements in consultation/co-ordination with family members; families need to know their missing or murdered loved one is being represented as a grandmother, mother, sister, daughter, etc. versus them being viewed through the role/activity they were involved with prior to their disappearance/homicide.
- Make efforts to access and use a personal picture of the missing person, using prisoner booking photos only as a last resort. The use of police booking photos is insensitive to family members.
- Enhance information sharing between police services through the identification of formal processes. One police member noted that 'some ironing out of the system is definitely required.' The creation of a Provincial Missing Persons Centre (similar to the one in B.C.) could be a solution to this issue.
- Establish one Provincial Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for all police services investigating missing person reports.
- Address the possible issue of police putting those missing persons with extensive criminal records at a lower priority for VSU referral than others without such records.
- Build and maintain an Alberta database of missing persons that is easily accessible to the public. Engage the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police to review this – important information should include the total number of missing persons, the total number of found unidentified human remains, the number of located persons, and totals numbers by gender, race, females, males and a map of where people have gone missing from (reference: Saskatchewan Missing Persons web page)

Chronic Missing Response

- Amend child welfare legislation to provide police members with the authority to pick up and detain chronic missing persons; being missing in itself is not a crime and thus limits the police authority to detain runaway children.

Victim Services Referral Process

- Establish a standardized policy among *and* between police services in Alberta in regards to missing persons support available by referral to victim services units (VSUs); a consistent response is easier to track and is appreciated by loved ones particularly if the missing person has disappeared from a jurisdiction that is different from where their family members reside.
- Refer victims of homicide to the VSU even if there is specialized support available through the police service; victim services can provide referrals to local supports the police service may not be aware of and may be more readily available and accessible than police investigators.

Victims of Crime Financial Benefits

- Explore enhancement of financial benefits program to include emergency funds for families of missing persons (travel, search efforts, specialized counselling - ambiguous loss - etc.)
- Explore expansion of financial benefits for additional expenses including:
    - Travel, food and accommodation costs for court attendance
    - Expanded funding for specialized counselling (PTSD, etc.)
- Review policy related to funeral benefits for victims of homicide who have an extensive criminal record (currently these individuals do not generally qualify for financial benefits; this, however, ends up impacting the family of the deceased and could lead to further victimization.

GOA Victims Services-Specific Policy/Procedure

- Create a Provincial Oversight position to oversee implementation of all recommendations and service delivery changes. Ensure this individual has the highest level of security clearance available so he/she can have access to police information from all jurisdictions. This person can directly liaise with family members to fine tune the victim services response.
- Ensure Indigenous Awareness training is mandatory for all VSU program managers within three years of employment. Address learning needs regarding racism and privilege through revisiting the training curriculum.
- Implement a healing option in Indigenous communities (enhanced service provision including outreach and mandatory Indigenous Awareness training for advocates). This may involve increasing capacity/human resources/ resource support/access to cultural protocol.
- Outline the role of VSU beyond the criminal justice system (CJS) as missing persons files fall outside of the CJS (tragedy response). Track missing persons response through quarterly reporting summaries.
- Expand referral services to include facilitated access to specialized counselling including PTSD, ambiguous loss, culturally appropriate services, etc.
- Fund counselling for families of missing/murdered persons, particularly children.
- Coordinate and host an annual family gathering for family members who have lost loved ones to being missing and/or being a victim of homicide.
- Provide logistical support to family members from outside of Alberta when their loved one is murdered/missing in Alberta. For example transportation, accommodation, meals and incidentals. Establish an emergency fund to assist with this.
- Explore the issue of transportation for domestic violence victims to shelters. Currently this is managed between the VSU and the police service but there is no formal protocol in place. Further, in the event that neither is able to transport alternate arrangements need to be identified.
- Implement a trauma-based approach in training volunteer advocates. This would require changes to the JSG training and resource materials.
- Assist Alberta Health Services to develop an ambiguous loss counselling resource for the Province in coordination with provincial partners.
- Identify a common VSU response protocol specific to families of missing person as well as families of homicide victim. This would involve specific training to deal with families of missing and murdered victims, the creation and distribution of missing person and homicide guides, ambiguous loss training, long-term support schedules for families of missing persons and coordination of VSU units when family is geographically diverse.

ISSUES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

The following issues have also been identified through our consultation and research process, but further work will be required in consultation with other Ministries, stakeholders and agencies.

Alberta Registries
• Explore the possibility of having next of kin (NOK) information put onto all vehicle/drivers' licence registrations, and/or any other identification provided by Registries.
Privacy Legislation (FOIP, PIPA)
• Examine how the current privacy legislation impacts families and the general public around victim support.
Employment Standards
• Explore possible inclusion of allowed time off (with compensation) for family members involved in search efforts for missing loved ones. • Review the Federal Government program of income support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children (PMMC). It is restrictive as it is only for parents of missing children under 18 and is a taxable amount of $350/week for a maximum of 35 weeks. Ideally, this could be extended to include immediate family of a missing person regardless of age.
Mackenzie County/Municipality and Dene Tha' Nation and High Level RCMP
• Initiate discussions regarding the provision of public transportation to/from High Level for Nation members residing in Chateh or Meander River.
Mackenzie County/Municipality and Little Red River Nation(s) and Fort Vermilion RCMP
• Initiate discussions regarding the provision of public transportation to/from Fort Vermilion/High Level/La Crete for community members residing in Little Red River Cree Nation communities or TallCree Communities.
Jurisdictional Concerns
• Proactively address the jurisdictional restraints that continue to exist between provincial programs and Indigenous (federal) communities in relation to family violence response. eg. People living in Indigenous communities fleeing from domestic violence are not eligible to receive any financial assistance from Service Alberta. http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/RRM-PUB_fs_supports_fleeing_abuse.pdf • Investigate and identify other jurisdictional funding and support barriers.
Data Gathering
• Explore the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous men. Indigenous men account for approximately 71 per cent of Indigenous homicide victims in Canada.

Resource Development
• Collaborate with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to develop provincial ambiguous loss resources. • Engage with Alberta Health Services to increase access to mental health supports, particularly in rural areas and more specifically, in the northern regions of the Province.
Provincial Media Campaign
• Address racism through a public media campaign. • Enhance public awareness of high-risk areas (e.g. municipalities) and focus on personal safety.
Safety Planning Initiatives
• Initiate community safety planning with Indigenous communities, including municipalities.

Conclusion

From early colonial efforts to repress Indigenous culture and Indigenous women to the Indian Residential School system and the 60's Scoop, Indigenous people are a demographic that is both defined and limited by trauma that has been passed down through generations. This intergenerational trauma has resulted in the perpetuation of systemic discrimination, through overt racism and sexism, poverty and the resulting lateral violence that occurs when a traumatized population turns on itself as a survival mechanism.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's initiative will be invaluable in helping JSG Victims Services implement a consistent and culturally safe response to victims of crime who have lost a loved to being missing or to homicide. Given that Indigenous people in Canada are over represented among those missing and murdered, it made sense to involve Indigenous people in developing a response framework. Their expressed perspectives, opinions and suggestions regarding the root causes connected to this issue, along with suggestions on how to enhance the overall response, are critical to ensure no further harm will be perpetuated by the systemic response required.

An exhaustive amount of research over the last several decades echoes the sentiments that were expressed in the community engagements carried out across the province. Overwhelmingly, engagement participants and current research identified that a nuanced, multi-faceted approach is necessary to properly address the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. The research clearly highlighted the many layers of vulnerabilities that exist in today's increasingly complex society, and reinforces the theory that many of the challenges Indigenous people face are closely connected to the long term consequences of sustained grief and loss over many generations. This unresolved trauma has resulted in the normalization of unhealthy behaviors, most of which did not exist prior to colonization. Violence, substance abuse, homelessness, transience, high unemployment, low educational attainment and family dysfunction are all symptoms of the disconnection that has occurred. When these intersect with geographical challenges related to isolation and a lack of resources, it is easy to understand why so many Indigenous women are among those who are missing and murdered.

Research participants offered several possible remedies, many of which are echoed in existing literature to address these concerns. These include cultural safety strategies, community safety strategies, individual safety strategies and system supports for safety. As a response, JSG Victims Services' framework for a culturally safe victim services response is currently being finalized. This document will provide a set of guidelines and recommendations for victim services providers to follow when dealing with clients who are culturally dissimilar to themselves. With its particular focus on Indigenous peoples, the framework will address the need for *partnerships*, *personal knowledge*, *protocols*, *process* and *positive purpose* when serving victims in a culturally safe environment.

The framework will also recognize the need for targeted training and support for families dealing with a homicide or missing person case. Particularly with missing persons, the ambiguous loss faced by families often compounds already existing trauma, making service provision more complicated and sensitive.

There are other issues identified through this research process that fall outside the purview of JSG Victims Services. These contributions are included because they need to be acknowledged and honored in the context they were shared. These expressions of concern provide additional perspectives beyond the scope of a culturally safe victim services response, that government, stakeholders, communities and the public at large may be interested in accessing.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's initiative has provided information that will be used to both inform and transform victim services service delivery over the next few years. This initiative was very timely given the current socio-political climate in Canada, including the repeated calls for a national inquiry on the subject as well as concurrent consultations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Canadian Victims' Bill of Rights serves to reinforce the need for a consistent, culturally safe victim services response for family members who have lost loved ones to homicide or to being missing. Every victim does matter.

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SECTION FIVE: Appendices

APPENDIX A – Focus-Group Facilitator Question Guide

Focus Group Questions for Community Engagement

1. How concerned are you that someone in your family would go missing? What contributes to this concern?

2. What do you see as the role of the VSU in supporting Indigenous families who have lost loved ones to homicide or have gone missing?

3. What are some things you can do to make sure your loved one is safe when they have left the community? How and how often do you have contact with them once they have left? Do you use social media?

4. According to statistics, Indigenous women are 2.5 times more likely to be victimized than the rest of the female population in Canada (GSS, 2009). This was the case for spousal violence, as well as violence perpetrated by other family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers. Do you think that domestic violence is an issue in your community? What are some of the factors that may prevent community members from doing something about this issue? Does the issue of domestic violence connect with Indigenous women going missed and/or becoming a victim of homicide?

5. Indigenous women who are victimized experience the most severe forms of violence, including being sexually assaulted, beaten, choked or threatened with a knife or gun. What are some of the things that community members can do in the immediate to ensure that women and children are out of danger? What resources do they need in the long term?

6. What resources would your community need right now to better help women and girls who are at risk of becoming missing or murdered?

APPENDIX B – Written and Online Survey Tool

Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women (MMAW) Initiative Community Engagement Questionnaire

Today's date: _____

1. Which community do you live in? _____
   _____

2. Have you lived in another province or another part of the region before? **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐

   If **YES**, please provide the location where you lived prior to where you live now.
   _____
   _____

3. Are you aware of your local Victim Services Unit (VSU) and the services they provide? (please check one)

   Not at All ☐ I know about the VSU ☐ Somewhat ☐ Yes, I do ☐

   I have used their services ☐

4. Are you are aware of any other VSU's in the province? YES ☐ NO ☐

   If **YES**, please provide the location(s).
   _____

5. In your opinion, how important is it to have services that are culturally sensitive and/or relevant available to Aboriginal victims of crime?

   Not at all ☐ Somewhat Important ☐ Yes, it is important ☐ Very Important ☐

   Unsure ☐ Non-applicable ☐

6. Please check all those that could apply to providing victim services which could be considered more culturally sensitive and/or relevant for Aboriginal victims of crime:

   Access smudging ceremony ☐ Elder support ☐ Opportunity to access other ceremonies ☐

   Understanding of ☐ Diversity training ☐ Understanding of Aboriginal ☐

Aboriginal histories

families & kinship

Understanding of Aboriginal historical trauma ☐

Provision of services in an Aboriginal language ☐

Other:

_____

_____

Missing Aboriginal Women

7. Are you aware about the issue of missing Aboriginal women? **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐

   If you answered **NO**, to question **7,** then please go to question **12**.

8. Are you personally aware of any missing women or girls from the community you live in? **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐

   If you answered **YES**, to question **8** please answer questions **9** to **11**.

9. Please describe how you personally know them: *(choose as many responses that apply)*

   Friend ☐ Mother ☐ Sister ☐ Daughter ☐ Cousin ☐ Aunt ☐

   Niece ☐ Granddaughter ☐ Other ☐

10. Could you provide some additional information about the person(s) you know that has gone missing?

First Name Only	Age	Gender	Year Missing	Where Person Went Missing From

Additional information:

_____

_____

To your knowledge, has the person(s) you listed on question **10**, been reported to police?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐ **Not Sure** ☐

11. How does your community generally respond to missing women? *(choose as many responses that may apply)*

No Response ☐ Posters ☐ Community Meeting ☐ Search Effort ☐

Media Releases ☐ Involve Police ☐ Involve Elders ☐ Candlelight vigil ☐

Post on Facebook ☐ Attend Ceremony ☐ Self meditation ☐ Isolate/stay at home ☐

Express Concern about personal safety ☐ Feelings of Guilt ☐ Political Action ☐ Feelings of hopelessness ☐

Expression of Anger at Self/Community/Police/ Government ☐ Education/ Awareness ☐

Other:

_____

_____

12. What sort of support do you think a family may need, **in the short term**, when their loved one goes missing? (check as many responses that may apply)

Emotional Support ☐ Crisis Counselling ☐ Financial Assistance ☐

Childcare ☐ Elder Support ☐ A Step by Step Guide ☐

Prayers/Spiritual Support ☐ Support to Look for Loved one ☐ Technical Support (posters, media release) ☐

Referral to Victim Services ☐ Police Support ☐ Community Support ☐

Legal Support ☐

Other:

_____

_____

13. What sort of supports do you think a family may need, **in the long term**, when their loved one goes missing? (check as many responses that may apply)

Emotional Support ☐ Crisis Counselling ☐ Financial Assistance ☐

Childcare ☐ Elder Support ☐ A Step by Step Guide ☐

Prayers/Spiritual Support ☐ Support to Look for Loved one ☐ Technical Support (posters, media release) ☐

Referral to Victim Services ☐ Police Support ☐ Community Support ☐

Legal Support ☐ Grief & Loss Support ☐

Other:

_____

_____

14. In your opinion, are there things that support services could provide that may assist families in need over time to move past the reporting of a missing loved one?

Please explain:

_____

_____

15. Why do you think Aboriginal women and girls go missing? Please share.

_____

_____

Please read the following definition for **human trafficking**:

Human Trafficking is the movement of people between cities, provinces or across international borders. People who are trafficked are often exploited sexually. Victims are often vulnerable and are trafficked by people known to them (such as boyfriends or "friends") through means of force (physical, mental, sexual, spiritual abuse), fraud (blackmailing), or deception (pretending to be someone who genuinely cares about the victim).

16. Do you personally know of a person who has been trafficked?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

If you answered **YES** to question **17**, please proceed to answer question **18**:

17. Please select from the list of possible answers provided as to why a person might become involved in human trafficking:

Homelessness ☐ Alcohol/ drug addiction ☐ mental health issues ☐

Being forced into trafficking by boyfriend/husband ☐ Lack of services/ support ☐ previous sexual abuse issues ☐

Involvement with gangs ☐ Poverty ☐ Loss of community and /or cultural connections ☐

Other:

_____

_____

Murdered Aboriginal women

1. Are you aware about the issue of murdered Aboriginal women and/or girls?
   YES ☐ NO ☐

   If you answered **NO** to question **1**, please go to question **6**.
   If you answered **YES** to question **1**, please answer questions **2** to **5**.

2. Are you personally aware of any murdered Aboriginal women or girls from the community you live in? **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐

3. Please describe how you personally know them: *(choose as many responses that apply)*

   Friend ☐ Mother ☐ Sister ☐ Daughter ☐ Cousin ☐ Aunt ☐

   Niece ☐ Granddaughter ☐ Other ☐

4. Could you provide some additional information about the person(s) you know that has been murdered?

First Name	age	gender	year murdered	where murder took place

   Additional information:
   _____
   _____

5. To your knowledge, has the person(s) you listed on question **4,** been reported to police?
   Yes ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure** ☐

6. How does your community generally respond to murdered Aboriginal women and girls?
   (choose as many responses that may apply)
   No Response ☐ Posters ☐ Community Meeting ☐ Search Effort ☐

   Media Releases ☐ Involve Police ☐ Involve Elders ☐ Candlelight Vigil ☐

   Post on Facebook ☐ Attend Ceremony ☐ Self meditation ☐ Isolate/stay at home ☐

   Express Concern about personal safety ☐ Feelings of Guilt ☐ Political Action ☐ Feelings of hopelessness ☐

   Expression of Anger at Self/Community/Police/Government ☐ Education/ Awareness ☐

Other:

_____

_____

7. What kind of support do you think a family need, **in the short term**, when a loved one is murdered? (check as many responses that may apply)

Emotional Support ☐ Crisis Counselling ☐ Financial Assistance ☐

Childcare ☐ Elder Support ☐ A Step by Step Guide ☐

Prayers/Spiritual Support ☐ Support to Look for Loved one ☐ Technical Support (posters, media release) ☐

Referral to Victim Services ☐ Police Support ☐ Community Support ☐

Legal Support ☐

Other:

_____

_____

8. What kind of supports do you think a family need, **in the long term**, when a loved one is murdered? (check as many responses that may apply)

Emotional Support ☐ Crisis Counselling ☐ Financial Assistance ☐

Childcare ☐ Elder Support ☐ A Step by Step Guide ☐

Prayers/Spiritual Support ☐ Support to Look for Loved one ☐ Technical Support (posters, media release) ☐

Referral to Victim Services ☐ Police Support ☐ Community Support ☐

Legal Support ☐ Grief & Loss Support ☐

Other:

_____

_____

9. In your opinion, are there things that support services could provide that may assist families in need over time to move past the murder of a loved one?

Please explain:

_____

_____

10. Please read the following statement:

    Aboriginal women are more likely to be murdered than non-Aboriginal women and girls.

    Do you Agree or Disagree with this statement? Please explain why or why not.
    _____
    _____

11. What supports or services do you think could help women in your community be safe?
    _____
    _____

12. What do you think would help encourage safe and healthy relationships between family members?
    _____
    _____

13. Is there anything else you would like to share about the issue of missing and/or murdered Aboriginal women?
    _____
    _____

APPENDIX C – Stakeholder/Service Provider Questionnaire

Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women (MMAW) Initiative Stakeholder/Service Provider Questionnaire

Questions for Organizational participants

Today's date: _____ Community:_____

Organization:_____ Name/Title: _____

1. What is the mandate of your organization? _____
_____
_____

2. What sector of the public does your organization provide service to?
_____
_____

3. In your opinion, how important is it to have services that are culturally sensitive and/or relevant available to Aboriginal victims of crime?
4.

Not at all ☐ Somewhat Important ☐ Yes, it is important ☐ Very Important ☐

Unsure ☐ Non-applicable ☐

5. Please check all those that could apply to providing victim services which could be considered more culturally sensitive and/or relevant for Aboriginal victims of crime:

Access to smudging ceremony ☐ Elder support ☐ Access to other ceremonies ☐

Understanding of Aboriginal histories ☐ Diversity training ☐ Understanding of Aboriginal families and kinship ☐

Understanding of Aboriginal historical trauma ☐ Provision of translation services in an Aboriginal language ☐

Other:
_____
_____

6. How does (or how can) your organization support families and communities of missing and/or murdered Aboriginal women?

_____

_____

7. Could you provide some success stories of how your organization helped a family or community that had reported a loved one missing and/or murdered? What things did your organization do or contribute?

_____

_____

8. Is there interest from the communities in your area to provide more support in the area of missing and/or murdered Aboriginal women?
   YES ☐ NO ☐ Not sure ☐

   If **YES**, please provide information as to what kind of support(s) has been identified:

_____

_____

9. Has your organization dealt with issues regarding human trafficking?
   YES ☐ NO ☐ Not sure ☐

   If **YES**, to what extent was your organization involved in addressing this issue?

_____

_____

10. What programs or resources are you aware of that could support families and communities of *missing persons*?

_____

_____

11. What programs or resources are you aware of that could support families of women who have been victims of homicide?

_____

_____

12. Is there anything else you would like to share, from an organizational perspective, about the issue of missing and/or murdered Aboriginal women?

_____

_____

APPENDIX D – Quantitative Data Analysis, Online and Written MMAW Survey

The following data is a summary of responses from respondents answering the survey both in hard copy and online (Opinio).

Community Engagement Questionnaire

Survey Question 1 – **Which Community do you live in?**

195 people out of 218 total respondents answered this question.

Community Summary	Number of Respondents from each community
Airdrie	1
Blood Tribe	19
Bonneville	1
Bushe	5
Calgary	6
Cardston	5
Chateh	6
Coaldale	1
Edmonton	13
Enoch Cree Nation	1
Ermineskin	14
Fort MacLeod	2
Goodfish Lake	1
High Level	3
Kehewin	2
Kikino	1
Lac La Biche	10
Lethbridge & Region	30
Maskwacis	31
Medicine Hat	1
NWT	1
Peigan	3
Piikani	11
Red Deer	1
Rural Southern Alberta	1
Saddle Lake	3
Samson Cree Nation	4
Sandy Lake	1
Siksika First Nation	2
St. Albert	2
Sturgeon Lake	6
Valleyview	3
Wabasca	8
Wetaskiwin	1

Survey Question 2 - Have you lived in another province or another part of the region before?

Question 2	Hard Copy Survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	91	19	110	55.3%
No	77	12	89	44.7%
Non responses	8	11	19	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	176	42	218	
"n" (Total excluding non-responses)			199	

Survey Question 3 - Are you aware of your local VSU and the services they provide?

Question 3	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Not at all	27	6	33	16.8%
I know about the VSU	20	6	26	13.2%
Somewhat	53	7	60	30.5%
Yes, I do	65	11	76	38.6%
I have used their services	1	1	2	1.0%
Non responses	7	11	18	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	173	42	215	
"n" (Total excluding non-responses)			197	

Survey Question 4 - Are you aware of other VSUs in the province?

Question 4	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	63	14	77	39.5%
No	102	16	118	60.5%
Non responses	10	12	22	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	175	42	217	
"n" (excluding non-responses)			195	

Survey Question 5 - How important is it to have services that are culturally sensitive/relevant available to Aboriginal victims of crime?

Question 5	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Not at all	3	0	3	1.5%
Somewhat important	4	1	5	2.5%
Yes, it is important	42	3	45	22.7%
Very important	111	26	137	69.2%
Unsure	7	0	7	3.5%
N/A	1	0	1	0.5%
Non responses	7	12	19	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	175	42	217	
"n" (Total excluding non-responses)			198	

Survey Question 6 - Please check all those that apply to providing victim services that are culturally sensitive and/or relevant for Aboriginal victims of crime.

Question 6	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Smudging ceremony	54	26	80	40.8%
Elder support	70	28	98	50.0%
Opportunity to access other ceremonies	61	23	84	42.9%
Understanding of aboriginal histories	59	27	86	43.9%
Diversity training	31	25	56	28.6%
Understanding of Aboriginal families and kinship	62	28	90	45.9%
Understanding of Aboriginal historical trauma	58	29	87	44.4%
Provision of services in an Aboriginal language	34	23	57	29.1%
Other	71	0	71	36.2%
Non responses (Nr)	9	13	22	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			196	

Survey Question 7 - Are you aware about the issue of missing Aboriginal women?

Question 7	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	145	29	174	88.8%
No	22	0	22	11.2%
Non responses (Nr)	9	13	22	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	176	42	218	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			196	

Survey Question 8 - Are you personally aware of any missing women or girls from the community you live in?

Question 8	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	48	17	65	37.8%
No	95	12	107	62.2%
Non responses (Nr)	33	13	46	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	176	42	218	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			172	

Survey Question 9 - Please describe how you personally know them (choose as many responses that apply)

Question 9	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Friend	13	8	21	26.9%
Mother	2		2	2.6%
Sister	1		1	1.3%
Daughter	1	0	1	1.3%
Cousin	5	3	8	10.3%
Aunt	5	0	5	6.4%
Niece	3	1	4	5.1%
Granddaughter	3	0	3	3.8%
Other	32	11	43	55.1%
Non responses (Nr)	122	25	147	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a (multiple responses)	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			78	

Survey Question 10 – Could you provide some additional information about the person(s) you know that that has gone missing? Has the person you listed been reported to police?

Question 11	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	39	15	54	70.1%
No	8	0	8	10.4%
Not sure	13	2	15	19.5%
Total responses - incl. non-responses	1	0	1	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)	61	17	78	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			77	

Survey Question 11 - How does your community generally respond to missing women?

Question 12	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
No response	27	5	32	17.9%
Posters	64	13	77	43.0%
Community meeting	13	4	17	9.5%
Search effort	51	9	60	33.5%
Media releases	65	14	79	44.1%
Involve police	72	16	88	49.2%
Involve elders	26	8	34	19.0%
Candlelight vigil	34	11	45	25.1%
Post on Facebook	75	19	94	52.5%
Attend ceremony	15	6	21	11.7%
Self meditation	5	3	8	4.5%
Isolate/Stay at home	7	3	10	5.6%
Express concern about personal safety	18	7	25	14.0%
Feelings of guilt	5	3	8	4.5%
Political action	7	5	12	6.7%
Feelings of hopelessness	22	9	31	17.3%
Expressions of anger at self, community, police, government	36	9	45	25.1%
Education and awareness	26	8	34	19.0%
Other	3	2	5	2.8%
Non responses (Nr)	25	14	39	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a	
"n" (Total excluding non-responses)			179	

Survey Question 12 – What kind of short term family support is needed when a loved one goes missing?

Question 13	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Emotional support	95	26	121	62.1%
Crisis counselling	79	25	104	53.3%
Financial assistance	43	21	64	32.8%
Childcare	36	21	57	29.2%
Elder Support	66	25	91	46.7%
A step-by-step guide	29	24	53	27.2%
Prayers/Spiritual support	85	24	109	50.0%
Support to look for loved one	73	25	98	50.3%
Technical support (posters, media release)	58	24	82	42.1%
Referral to Victim Services	59	24	83	42.6%
Police support	76	23	23	11.8%
Community support	79	26	26	13.3%
Legal support	31	19	19	9.7%
Other	63	6	6	31.6%
Non responses (Nr)	9	14	23	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)	218		195	

Survey Question 13 - What kind of long-term family support is needed when a loved one goes missing?

Question 14	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Emotional support	90	26	116	61.4%
Crisis counselling	68	16	84	44.4%
Financial assistance	38	15	53	28.0%
Childcare	22	12	34	18.0%
Elder Support	71	26	97	51.3%
A step-by-step guide	31	14	45	23.8%
Prayers/Spiritual support	87	24	111	58.7%
Support to look for loved one	69	20	89	47.1%
Technical support (posters, media release)	52	17	69	36.5%
Referral to Victim Services	51	18	69	36.5%
Police support	58	21	79	41.8%

Community support	79	25	104	55.0%
Legal support	38	20	58	30.7%
Grief and loss support	85	25	110	58.2%
Other	54	1	55	29.1%
Non response (Nr)	13	16	29	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a	
"n" (excluding non-responses)			189	

Survey Question 16 - Do you personally know of a person who has been trafficked?

Question 17	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	34	13	47	24.7%
No	130	13	143	75.3%
Non response (Nr)	12	16	28	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	176	42	218	
"N" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			190	

Survey Question 17 - Why might a person become involved in human trafficking?

Question 18	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Homelessness	36	23	59	44.4%
Alcohol/drug addiction	47	25	72	54.1%
Mental health issues	35	23	58	43.6%
Being forced by boyfriend/husband	21	25	46	34.6%
Lack of services/support	18	23	41	30.8%
Previous sexual abuse issues	34	24	58	43.6%
Involvement with gangs	29	23	52	39.1%
Poverty	28	22	50	37.6%
Loss of community and/or cultural connections	22	24	46	34.6%
Other	52	5	57	42.9%
Non response (Nr)	69	16	85	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a (multiple responses)	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			133	

Survey Question 1 (Murder) - Are you aware about the issue of murdered Aboriginal women and/or girls?

Question 1 (Murder)	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	126	26	152	81.3%
No	35	0	35	18.7%
Non response (Nr)	13	16	29	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	174	42	216	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			187	

Survey Question 2 (Murder) - Are you personally aware of murdered Aboriginal women or girls from your community?

Question 2 (Murder)	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	48	15	63	45.0%
No	64	11	75	53.6%
Non response (Nr)	62	16	78	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	174	42	216	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			140	

Survey Question 3 (Murder) - Please describe how you personally know them.

Question 3 (Murder)	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Friend	22	7	29	30.5%
Mother	5	1	6	6.3%
Sister	9	3	12	12.6%
Daughter	24	1	25	26.3%
Cousin	12	6	18	18.9%
Aunt	12	2	14	14.7%
Niece	4	1	5	5.3%
Granddaughter	1	1	2	2.1%
Other	33	15	48	50.5%
Non response (Nr)	107	16	123	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			95	

Survey Question 5 (Murder) - To your knowledge has the person been reported to police?

Question 5 (Murder)	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Yes	34	11	45	73.8%
No	1	3	4	6.6%
Not sure	12	0	12	19.7%
Non response (Nr)	129	28	157	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	176	42	218	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			61	

Survey Question 6 (Murder) - How does your community generally respond to murdered Aboriginal women and girls?

Question 6 (Murder)	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
No response	31	7	38	23.2%
Posters	43	9	52	31.7%
Community meeting	29	4	33	20.1%
Search effort	36	5	41	25.0%
Media releases	61	10	71	43.3%
Involve police	70	14	84	51.2%
Involve elders	33	7	40	24.4%
Candlelight vigil	46	11	57	34.8%
Post on Facebook	54	11	65	39.6%
Attend ceremony	25	7	32	19.5%
Self meditation	10	3	13	7.9%
Isolate/Stay at home	15	7	22	13.4%
Express concern about personal safety	25	7	32	19.5%
Feelings of guilt	8	9	17	10.4%
Political action	10	2	12	7.3%
Feelings of hopelessness	28	10	38	23.2%
Expressions of anger at self, community, police, government	32	14	46	28.0%
Education and awareness	29	2	31	18.9%
Other	4	2	6	3.7%
Non response (Nr)	36	18	54	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a (multiple responses)	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			164	

Survey Question 7 (Murder) – What short term supports are needed when a loved one is murdered?

Question 7 (Murder) -- "Other" applies to only hard copy survey	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Emotional support	74	24	98	55.3%
Crisis counselling	65	24	89	50.2%
Financial assistance	25	20	45	25.4%
Childcare	28	19	47	26.5%
Elder Support	50	23	73	41.2%
A step-by-step guide	26	21	47	26.5%
Prayers/Spiritual support	64	20	84	47.4%
Support to look for loved one	40	20	60	33.8%
Technical support (posters, media release)	26	21	47	26.5%
Referral to Victim Services	50	21	71	40.1%
Police support	56	22	78	44.1%
Community support	63	18	81	45.8%
Legal support	24	5	29	16.4%
Grief and loss support	69	23	92	52.0%
Other	1		1	0.0%
Non response (Nr)	23	18	98	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a (multiple responses)	
"n" (Total excluding non-responses)			177	

Survey Question 8 (Murder) - What long term supports are needed when a loved one is murdered?

Question 8 (Murder) – "Other" applies to only hard copy survey	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Emotional support	87	23	110	62.1%
Crisis counselling	64	18	82	46.3%
Financial assistance	35	16	51	28.8%
Childcare	15	14	29	16.4%
Elder Support	67	21	88	49.7%
A step-by-step guide	32	17	49	27.7%
Prayers/Spiritual support	78	21	99	55.9%
Support to look for loved one	43	16	59	33.3%
Technical support (posters, media release)	31	19	50	28.2%
Referral to Victim Services	44	19	63	35.6%
Police support	52	22	74	41.8%
Community support	64	20	84	47.5%

Legal support	39	23	62	35.0%
Grief and loss support	72	24	96	54.2%
Other	56	0	56	31.6%
Non response (Nr)	23	18	41	
Total responses - incl. non-responses			n/a (multiple responses)	
"n" (Total excluding non-responses)			177	

Survey Question 10 (Murder) - Aboriginal women are more likely to be murdered than non-Aboriginal women and girls – do you agree or disagree?

Question 10 (Murder) –	Hard copy survey	Opinio	Total	Adjusted Relative Frequency
Agree	104	24	128	83.7%
Disagree	25	0	25	16.3%
Non response (Nr)	36	18	54	
Total responses - incl. non-responses	165	42	207	
"n" (Total responses excluding non-responses)			153	

APPENDIX E –Engagement Sessions: Location

Engagements	Category
Chateh/Assumption	Stakeholder
Chateh/Assumption	Community
Bushe	Community
Maskwacis - Ermineskin	Community
Lethbridge	Community
Piikani	Community
Sturgeon Lake Session 1	Community
Sturgeon Lake Session 2	Stakeholder
Saddle Lake	Community
Fox Lake Session 1	Community
Lac La Biche	Community
Wabasca	Community
Blood Tribe	Community
Fort Chipewyan	Community, Other Stakeholder
Edmonton	Community/ Stakeholder
High Level	Community, Other Stakeholder
Maskwacis - Samson	Community, Service Provider, Other Stakeholder
Calgary Police Service	Police
Lethbridge Police Service	Police
Medicine Hat Police Service	Police
Edmonton Police Service	Police
Lacombe Police Service	Police
Camrose	Police
Blood Tribe Police Service	Police
Lakeland Police Service	Police
KARE - RCMP K Division	Police
Elder	Individual
Elder	Individual
Victims' family member	Individual
Victims' family member	Individual
Community/Cultural Leader	Individual
Service Provider	Individual
Victims' family member	Individual
CEASE	Other Stakeholder
National Association of Friendship Centers	Other Stakeholder
Human Services, GOA	Other Stakeholder

Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations	Other Stakeholder
Meeting - AFN/NWAC Conference	Other Stakeholder
Native Women's Association of Canada	Other Stakeholder
NWAC Forum	Other Stakeholder
Aboriginal Relations	Other Stakeholder
AFN/NWAC Follow-Up	Other Stakeholder
IAAW Meeting	Other Stakeholder
Creating Hope	Other Stakeholder
Creating Safety For Aboriginal Women	Other Stakeholder
IAAW Gathering, Edmonton	Other Stakeholder
Blue Quills First Nations College	Other Stakeholder
Lac La Biche	Other Stakeholder
Pigeon Lake - Alberta Women's Security Council	Other Stakeholder
ACT	Other Stakeholder
SNUG (Métis Child and Family Services	Other Stakeholder
VOC Support Society	Other Stakeholder
Bushe Child Welfare	Other Stakeholder, Individual
KARE	Service Provider
ACT Alberta	Service Provider
Stony Plain VSU Detachment	Service Provider
Inner City Victim Services	Service Provider
Chateh/Assumption	Service Provider
Valleyview	Service Provider
Sturgeon Lake	Service Provider
Program Managers Training JSG	Service Provider
APBVSA Conference	Service Provider
VSU Engagements - Ongoing	Service Provider
VSU Focus Group: Rocky Mountain House; Maskwacis; St. Albert	Service Provider
Blood Tribe	Service Provider, Other Stakeholder
Lethbridge VSU	Service Provider, Other Stakeholder
Valleyview Multi Stakeholder Meeting	Service Provider, Other Stakeholder, Police
Fort McMurray Multi-Stakeholder Meeting	Service Provider, Other Stakeholder, Police
Provincial Museum Multi-Stakeholder Meeting	Service Provider, Other Stakeholder, Police