

Carol Wortman, of the New Brunswick Indian Women's Council, emphasized that within Native communities, violence against women affects all aboriginal people directly and indirectly. She put forward an aboriginal view of violence against women which sees family violence in the aboriginal context of the community. Ms. Wortman told the Committee: "The family is the centre of native culture. Children and elders, clans and the extended family are all part of the circle. We must bring abusers into the circle... The treatment of members of the family is the beginning of the healing of the society and culture" (4:81).

Ms. Wortman also described the type of intervention favoured by Natives. "The preferred approach to dealing with violence is to establish aboriginal lodges in the community for individuals, offenders and victims and family members, to work toward healing through the renewal of their spiritualism and customs" (4:83).

The Native Women's Association of Canada, through the Committee, recommended that the federal government set up a task force on family violence in aboriginal communities. Its mandate should be to present solutions that will empower communities to respond to aboriginal family violence and that take into consideration "the uniqueness of aboriginal family lifestyles and the traditional holistic approach to healing, both on and off reserve" (4:83).

The Committee recognizes that many of the issues and concerns expressed by the Native Women's Association of Canada are shared by all women victims of violence in this country. At the same time, the Committee supports the Association in its pursuit of effective solutions that are relevant to their community life, culture and traditions.

RECOMMENDATION 24

The Committee recommends that the federal government, in consultation with the Native Women's Association of Canada and other aboriginal women's organizations, establish a task force on family violence in aboriginal communities.

R. ROYAL COMMISSION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

There was an overwhelming amount of support from witnesses for the establishment of a royal commission on violence against women. In common they spoke of the need to reverse the invisibility of this violence in Canadian society and to work toward developing a mutual understanding of why women are the target of men's anger.

The Committee heard that despite the considerable research, money and effort that have gone into government initiated programs, legislation and services to combat violence against women, serious concerns remain with respect to service availability and