



MMIWG2 *Organizing* *Toolkit* & *MMIP*

A publication by Sovereign Bodies Institute, in partnership with MMIWG2 families, Indigenous survivors of violence, and their allies




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Introduction



The movement for justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people is older than all of us. Indigenous peoples have resisted colonial violence against our women and girls since colonization began, and many of our peoples have stories that teach of the sacredness of our women and girls by telling stories about women who were stolen or hurt, such as Abalone Woman (Yurok, Wiyot) and Deer Woman (various Plains/Midwestern tribes). While this movement is guided by those ancestral teachings and traditions, it is also guided by decades of leadership and movement building beginning in Canada, now stretching throughout the Americas. We want to begin this toolkit with a thank you to our ancestors who fought for the honor and safety of Indigenous women, and to the grandmothers, mothers, and aunts who created the movement as we know it today. They gave their lives, their freedom, and their full hearts so that Indigenous women and girls could have a fighting chance at lives free from violence.

This movement has grown rapidly in the last 5 years, gaining more media attention, legislative efforts, awareness campaigns, and grassroots community work than ever before. We have written this

toolkit with the hope that it will continue to grow.

This toolkit is for anyone who has learned about MMIWG2 and asked, “How can I get involved? What can I do in my community?” There are entry points for people of all identities, locations, skill and education levels, occupations, and passions. We are sharing these entry points in this toolkit, with the aim of giving readers a comprehensive road map to getting started in the movement. This is not a how-to manual, it is a wayfinding guide. We can’t tell you what to do in your community, but we can help you navigate the options and give you the tools to decide for yourself what is needed.

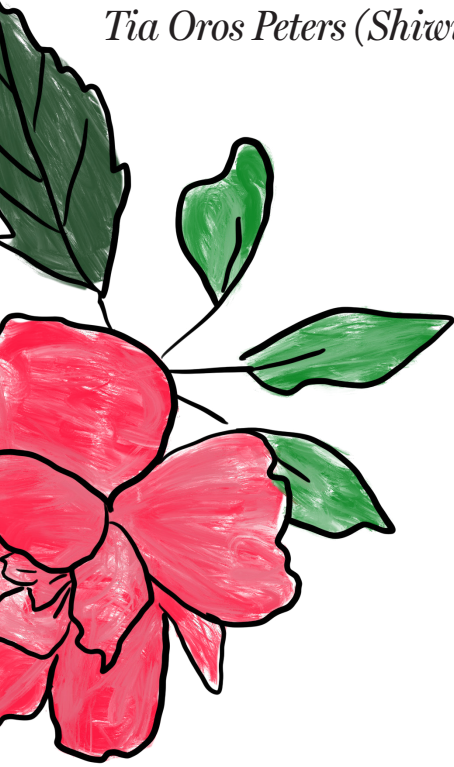
We are honored to have Tia Oros Peters, Chief Executive Officer of Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, open the toolkit with her wisdom and powerful words on the roots of violence against Indigenous women and girls and the need to participate in this movement as a Good Ancestor. As she reminds us, the power we carry to resist colonialism and uplift our women and girls is a responsibility that calls us to action and guides us in our work. Sovereign Bodies Institute is a proud Affiliate of Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, and honored to be in solidarity and sisterhood with an organization that empowers so many of us as Indigenous survivor-leaders.

In the subsequent chapters of the toolkit, you will see that we have organized a mix of essays, how to guides, worksheets, activity guides, discussion questions, quizzes, and fact sheets--we aimed for the toolkit to be an interactive, living document that can take on lives of its own through each of you. The toolkit is designed to have pages printed individually, ripped out of a bound copy, or reprinted--we encourage you to do all of that! We even designed the pages of the toolkit with extra margin space, so you can take notes and jot your ideas down as you go.

Everything in this toolkit is free for use, and we hope you will use it in your organizing. We would love to hear how our worksheets and activity guides are useful in facilitating group discussions and organizing, or see how you’re using data from our fact sheets in your awareness materials! Please take the collective knowledge held in this toolkit and run with it in service of your community.

To Be a Good Ancestor: Resisting Colonial Violence & Uplifting Native Women & Girls

Tia Oros Peters (Shiwi) of Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples



The Indigenous paradigm of Respect, Reciprocity, Responsibility, and Relationship to others, and to the Earth -- and for others and for the Earth – encompasses more than maintaining the integrity of our own lives, it includes the air, plants, water, and animals as much as our ancestors and those yet to be born. This framework for assuring a restored world in which all life is nurtured, flourishes and participates in its respective place within the cycle, lays an unwavering foundation for sustainable livelihoods and balanced world order and is a harmony based, holistic paradigm. It is completely distinct from Western or mainstream / settler thought. In its very collectivist nature – it is relationship based, it's about sharing and achieving balance, it differs significantly from the individual oriented, acquisition-based, oppositional nature of Euro-centric thinking and being. A paradigm of taking.

We know and see this type of thinking as found in the four markers of settler colonialism including ongoing invasion, oppression, dispossession, and coerced dependency. These operate together as ongoing Manifest Destiny. My Secwepemc brother, the late Arthur Manuel, outlined the latter three as the fundamentals of colonization. Learning from him, and over the years of my own experience, I have included the element of ongoing invasion because of the unrelenting pressure that incursion and occupation continue to have on the health and well being, and futurity of Indigenous Peoples. We are not post-colonial. And although many wish to believe that westward expansion is done, however in our experience and perspective, Manifest Destiny is not over. It is continuing, and like a shapeshifter takes on different forms.

It manifests through Genocide, Terracide, and Aquacide and identifies the compulsion to consume Mother Earth – and for the purposes of this discussion, the devouring of Indigenous women and girls' lives through our bodies. We understand it as a disease. It is understood in the Native world as a psychosis of the spirit - what many people, including the late Powhatan scholar, Jack Forbes outlined in his book, *Columbus and Other Cannibals*, as the wetiko. 7

At this very moment, Indigenous Peoples across the Americas, and across the globe, are engaged on the frontlines in a worldwide conflict stemming from this spiritual greed manifested in physical form to consume everything. It's a war between that which is life affirming, and relationship based, and another that is predatory and consuming, as they continue to clash. By force or by choice there will have to be change – transformation. This paradigm shift is key for the world to continue to survive, to revitalize, and to thrive.

The Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples was birthed as a response to this ongoing destruction of settler colonialism, of patriarchy, of violence against the Earth and her Peoples. We came into being as an organization, shaped by the sacrifices, intentions, and memories of our Ancestors. Seventh Generation Fund took form during the power movements of the 1960's and 70's when people of color and women's rights were very much on the forefront of the social and political arenas. Many dreamed and took action for their liberation.

Seventh Generation Fund was born from this time. It emerged from thousands of Indigenous Peoples' dreams put into action to reclaim our identities, our languages, our cultures, to again actualize our self-determination and has become a movement leader and a catalyst for change through identifying and directing much needed resources to leading edge grassroots organizing strategies that honor traditions, build leaders, sustain communities, and create positive change.

Our purpose is ReIndigenization, which is the active and dynamic process of recovering traditional relationships to land, community, culture, and spirit for self-determination, collective liberation, and to restore balance. Fundamental to this is a rejection of white supremacist colonial patriarchy as an assumed framework for thinking, being, or of action. We know this holds nothing for our liberation nor our futurity. We center our work and actions on an acknowledgement of the inherent power and value of Indigenous women, who birth, nurture and guide our nations beyond survival; who are the mothers of future generations of nations.

A core operating principle is the belief that the Earth is our common mother. We believe she has a right unto herself, to be free from exploitation, pollution, ecological violence and other assaults, which preclude or impede the Earth's ability to nurture and sustain life. And

that we, the hundreds of millions of Indigenous Peoples of the world, have a very intimate, reciprocal, and interconnected relationship with our Mother Earth.

What occurs in the land echoes in the bodies of Indigenous Peoples. Environmental devastation directly corresponds with the dehumanization and degradation of Indigenous Peoples, and more precisely, Native women and girls. We recognize violence against Indigenous women and girls as a worldwide assault of immeasurable brutality – a human made pandemic. And we know that it is an extension of ongoing settler colonialism and the associated trauma and exploitation taking place in the natural world. These are twined together.

While it is gender-based aggression – it is at its very core another expression of the 528-year war with ongoing colonization. Indigenous women are victimized first, as Indigenous persons. It is important to understand that is the initial thrust – the targeting and trigger, because Indigenous women’s very existence and resilience subverts the goal of Manifest Destiny and colonial supremacy. And then, we are targeted and violated – extracted and exploited as women – the very embodiment of the Earth herself.

Indigenous women and girls personify Mother Earth. As such we are more than the miner’s canary who are released into mountains to measure the shift from fresh air to poisoned gas. We are those mountains that are being desecrated, ripped open, raped, and exploited. Indigenous bodies are the casualties of war taking place over these many centuries against Mother Earth, and Earth-based Peoples.

The correlation between extreme resource consumption, particularly mega-extractive industries, and the consumption of Indigenous women and girls bodies, is witnessed in today’s “man camps” where high concentrations of non-Native men are brought in by mining companies to work in the oil fields.

Examples of these include the hydraulic-fracturing (fracking) in the Bakken fields on the Ft. Berthold Indian Reservation of North Dakota, and also the goldmining and oil extraction operations in rural and remote Alaska. The incursions of these camps mirror the ferocity of 1850’s goldmining and timber harvesting camps in Northern

California Indigenous territories and which resulted in a legacy of astronomical levels of sexualized violence, enslavement, and disappearances against Native women and girls.

Considering Indigenous Peoples are an indicator species of social well being or of social disruption, when the Earth is harmed, the hurt echoes in our families and communities; when there is social chaos it is mirrored by environmental degradation, and vice versa. This shows itself and ripples throughout the Indigenous world. For instance, in places that are culturally, and spiritually reliant on salmon, when the salmon is depleted such as through dams or diversion, the incidence of domestic and child abuse, and at times suicide, increases. This recognition is a critical component in social change and social justice work, how all things are linked together – and informs our work with Native Peoples, communities and nations as we seek to support holistically minded and long-range thinking projects, and it applies very directly the work we do through our Thriving Women Program.

Operationally we support community generated strategies to reclaim and renew a more peaceful, just, and sustainable world, and we do this through centering Indigenous Peoples' rights, our power, our issues, histories and perspectives, and our resilience and resistance through – an organizing model fundamentally coming from a place of strength, of our inherent rights, and our inherent responsibilities to heal, grow, evolve, to be our own leaders.

We know that Native women don't have to be saved or rescued – that what is needed is knowledge of our own power and how to access it – how to reclaim it, how to use it, express it in its full actualization. Power - not something to be used as a weapon or to advance an ego, but in Indigenous terms ... power as an expression of love, power as a tool of compassion, and of humanity, power in the process of decolonization, liberation, and ReIndigenization. Power as a responsibility.

To speak our truths, because that is our power. And to do so with the purpose of securing the sacred birthright of our future generations to a more just and livable world - free of oppression, violence and doubt. To be self-determined – to secure our individual and collective return to thriving so that we can actualize full selves, To Be a Good Ancestor.

Networks & Movement Building ---

Building Your Local Movement- Advice from Grassroots

MMIWG Organizers

Advice

From Charlene Aqqik Apok (Inupiaq)

Listen to your community. We can only be effective if we are guided by our relatives, our relations. Taking the time to 'listen hard'; a compassionate and gentle listener will take the work far. This can be done in many ways, informal and formal. Whether it's coming together with food, getting on the phone, having craft gatherings, walks etc., organizers can take the opportunity to listen to their community to drive the work. We are accountable to our relations, to our community. Being open to listening, as well as inviting feedback as the work is done is an iterative process.

Healing and Ceremony. Entering MMIWG organizing must include healing. There is an incredible amount of loss and grief from MMIWG in Indigenous communities. Taking the time to heal is necessary to carry the work forward. Hosting vigils, remembrance events, holding ceremony, allows us and our communities to heal and become stronger. When we heal, we heal each other. As we heal, we are able to move forward and take the actions necessary to create change. It can be harmful and unsustainable if we try to do the heavy work of addressing MMIWG without healing and being spiritually grounded.

Everyone has a place in making change for MMIWG. Our cultures teach us that everyone has their own skills, talents, and strengths. Everyone can contribute to organizing on MMIWG. Artists can create messages, images that speak to the issue. If someone has organizational skills they can support others who may be better at advocating and speaking. Everyone can and should use their skills to work together. With recognition that this is an Indigenous-led issue, there is also room for meaningful allyship from non-Indigenous people. Non-Indigenous people can also contribute their skills and resources to MMIWG campaigns. In doing so, they should be prepared to give space, take a step back unless asked otherwise by Indigenous peoples. If non-Indigenous people are unsure what

this means or looks like, ask how you can be helpful and support. Meaningful change for MMIWG includes recognition of long-standing inequality and power dynamics and willingness to change this.

Community Strategy. MMIWG is a complex issue requiring complex and compassionate solutions. Of course there is not one strategy that will 'solve' everything. In fact, having a multi-layered strategy that is rooted in community is almost inevitable for any MMIWG organizing. The systemic 'gaps' which contribute to the issue require justice on each of those fronts. Starting with local governance, organizations, and institutions allows scaffolding to be built from the grassroots level. Whether it is tribal governance, municipalities, bureaus etc. Look at the structure of that entity, examine its processes and identify the gaps. How is this structure able to, or supposed to, be ensuring safety for MMIWG and how can this structure be utilized to make change? Oftentimes, this means looking at gaps or outcomes then 'backwards building' to get to a solution. For example, if an entity has responsibility to uphold certain aspects but the community doesn't feel they are doing that, what questions will get you, as an organizer, to the process you can influence? Ask the entity about its processes so you can utilize them to ensure responsibility. What mechanisms within the entities are available to influence change? Are there public meetings, are there request forms, are there filing and reporting, are there resolutions? You may need to ask who is the point of contact for these processes. Identify these processes and use them to serve the community interests on MMIWG. It can be hard to find the 'right questions' but familiarity of the processes available help pinpoint where solutions can be made.

Report Back and Dissemination. As you organize, hold meetings, rallies, write letters, etc. Be sure to circle back to the community what you are doing and why. This way they know you have listened to and are working with and for them. Revisiting the community driven principles, the community should know what strategies are being implemented and be invited to give feedback. The awareness is also helpful in bringing more people in to take action. The reporting back increases awareness and demonstrates that we take this seriously and are working hard to address it. Be humble. Take feedback and suggestions from the community. Consider what format you are sharing back; is it accessible to everyone? Is it sensitive and not triggering? How is this issue being portrayed? These questions help shape the overarching narrative around MMIWG.

Networking and Sisterhood

From Shereena Baker (Southern Ute, Karuk)

While planning and helping with the Indigenous Empowerment Summit at Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU), I never imagined her future kids would be calling me "Aunty" in the future. Although there was no relation, our efforts to make a positive influence on Indian country bonded a sisterhood that would last forever. Whether it was in a school club meeting or socializing in class, we found ourselves at the same place consistently and soon I was a part of her family. Her sister and niece came to HINU as well and my family grew. Not long after, the "strength in numbers" saying was too good to be true. Before the publicity of MMIWG, we saw and knew the complexities of abuse upon our native sisters. Family dinners became unanticipated action plan meetings. We talked about how HINU represented over 200 different tribes at the time and how the students were going to be future leader in their communities one day. Understanding that HINU was a great way for positive efforts to potentially expand out. We shared haunting stories of known abuse happening on and off campus. Questioning resources and brainstorming how to help our fellow students became the drive to take action. Meeting with HINU counselors and other faculty to implement a plan to help keep our sisters safe was just the beginning of our work together. Creating fact sheets, hotline information sheets and empowering playlists was just a few ideas we came up with while brainstorming. Our plan was to tape the information inside the common area cabinets and create packets for incoming freshmen.

As students, we didn't have much money, nor did we understand the shortcomings that would imply working with a government funded institution. However, the learning process and experience would help us further our vision after graduation.

After graduation we all went in different directions but would often call on each other and each other's networks for help. Whether it was locating hard to find resources for a presentation or simply shooting ideas off each other for positive reinforcement, we stayed connected. Over 10 years later, we have created networks from around the world based on the work we did individually over time. Sometimes this work can be emotionally draining, yet, we know we can always count on each other to pick each other back up and keep going. Although **13**

I don't feel obligated to uphold a positive representation of myself, I do want to make sure my circle can count on me. With permission, I wanted to share this story because networking does not always have to be about "who you know" to get things done. It can simply be about "how you grow." When we surround ourselves with people who share a passion for the common good, there is little time to tear each other down. We don't get to choose the family we are born into, but we can create a family of friends that can last a lifetime.

Healing is Not a Solitary Journey

From Moroni Benally (Diné) of Restoring Ancestral Winds

I recently read an academic article about healing from some violent trauma; the author explained, the "mind does indeed extend beyond the individual."¹ That is, healing, reconciling, and making sense of the trauma requires social interaction and social embeddedness: in short, family and community is critical to healing from violence. Healing is not a solitary journey.

Healing is a family matter. In other words, healthy relations are central to the health of the individual and community. As Indigenous people, sense and meaning is derived from situating ourselves in relation to each other and the natural world, Mother Earth and Father Sky. Goodness, balance, harmony comes when those relationships are valued in a good way. That is, we act on the duties of reciprocity, compassion, kindness and empathy those relationships imply.

As we confront the crisis of violence in our communities, whether the source of that violence originates from within our community or comes from outside the community, the prescription of healing is the same: honoring our relations in a good way.

Across the US, Indigenous communities and nations have struggled with endemic violence targeting primarily women, girls, and Two-spirit people. This violence often ends with one going missing or being murdered. This crisis is compounded by lack of media attention, and when attention is given, Indigenous communities and victims are often misrepresented. Additionally, settler law and

¹ De Jaegher, H., & Froese, T. (2009) on the role of social interaction in the individual agency. *Adaptive Behavior*, 17(5), 444-460

policy formulation regarding violence against Indigenous people, in particular women and girls, is ignored and assigned low policy priority. Law and policy can be implicated in numerous cases of our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, aunties, uncles, and nieces and nephews going missing or being murdered. Loopholes in law and policy allow perpetrators to enact their evil acts on people with few being held accountable. The ripple effect of one lost sister or brother in our communities is carried forward seven generations.

What then can we do? If the prescription for healing is in relations, then relations include the source of strategy for disrupting these violent intrusions and disruptions in our capacity to thrive into the future.

In Utah, Restoring Ancestral Winds, Inc. (RAW), a tribal coalition whose mission is to end sexual and domestic violence in Indigenous communities and nations in the Great Basin, recently celebrated the passage of Utah House Bill 116, Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Task Force. This legislation is an example of honoring relations in a good way.

How did RAW, a three-person organization, make this happen? It's simple. We honor and believe the stories, experiences, pain, and joy of victims and survivors. We honor Indigenous voices by informing the public that personal experiences matter, as empirical research often contradicts reality and systems practice. We honor the living memories of those who have gone missing or murdered by raising awareness through rallies, protests, vigils, workshops, teach-ins, seminars, trainings, but most importantly through the strength of the prayers of our grandmothers.

RAW informed the public in Salt Lake City and throughout Indigenous communities in Utah. The effort and outcome is not solely RAW's. RAW leveraged the existing work of Indigenous allies who worked diligently to raise awareness through the media and through rallies. Additionally, RAW recognized the resource limitations of allies and considered its resources (people power) and found the greatest contribution in doing research and adopting a long-term advocacy strategy to change Utah law. RAW coordinated with allies and grassroots groups on workshops, rallies, and awareness strategies. These community relations were critical to spreading information quickly and for mobilizing people to attend legislative committee

meetings, rallies, and for reaching state and city law enforcement wary of our position that Indigenous women and girls were targets of violence.

RAW organized around three broad principles: 1) assessment or identifying the critical or important issues affecting the community; 2) research or critically examining the academic research on the issue, including core issues like data collection methodologies, law enforcement process and protocol, and more importantly, conducting a stakeholder analysis to identify potential and current allies and what they may be able to contribute; 3) action or mobilizing people, ideas, government organizations, and tribal leaders to prioritize ending this crisis; and, 4) reflection on our actions and efforts to determine if they can be improved to ensure healing is centered for all involved.

Assessment

Passage of the Utah Task Force took 23 months. RAW was intentional and committed to the long-term strategy for policy change. One of the first assessments RAW conducted, albeit informally, was assessing the political landscape to determine if there was or could be developed a political will to address the crisis. RAW assessed the law-making behavior focused on how legislators, agency directors, and service providers interacted and responded to domestic violence and sexual assault. Based on this assessment, RAW recognized that raising awareness was critical at this early stage. This informal assessment took the form of RAW staff meeting with legislators and others to introduce them to RAW and to understand their response to the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women crisis.

From these initial meetings, we not only started the process of building relationships with key stakeholders, but we also had insight into what was required to expand their knowledge and understanding of the crisis.

Research

RAW, while still coordinating with grassroots organizations, tribal leaders, and other coalitions, began a deep dive into understanding the issues underlying the crisis and focused specifically on the data collection and analysis infrastructure of law enforcement. We found little evidence in law enforcement databases, which caused them to push back publically. RAW responded with a series of teach-ins and rallies to raise awareness about the bias in data collection methods

in Law Enforcement. RAW worked with Sovereign Bodies Institute to respond to challenges from law enforcement. Additionally, RAW continued investigating personal stories and existing research literature on violent crime, but focused on explaining discrepancies between the stories of families and communities not reflected in formal databases. The focus on data collection and measurement error and bias provided a way to talk about imperfect and missing data on Indigenous people in a way that did not exacerbate the frustration both RAW and law enforcement were feeling with each other. This focus on the assumed benign strategies provided a means to engage law enforcement on their data as it related to Indigenous people. Additionally, RAW coordinated with the eight federally recognized tribes and urban Indigenous communities of Utah to sit with and question city law enforcement on their data or lack thereof. This meeting proved to be a means to talk with elected officials and other government agency heads about the imperfection in data and the policies, or lack of policies, related to Indigenous people developed with incomplete data. In other words, this phase of our strategy was about proving the crisis existed in the first place. Our work harnessed the power of media, relationships with law-makers, grassroots community, and research, helped to make the argument that this crisis, at least in theory, can exist. The work of this phase reinforced law-makers and law enforcement to seriously consider the merits of our argument. This was critical to the next stage.

Action

With this opening with law enforcement, RAW coordinated with direct service providers, government agencies, tribal leaders, and grassroots organizations to organize and lead an information session, laying out the missing and murdered Indigenous crisis--including history, risk factors, framing, bias, data, and community pain. This was highly publicized through the media and was an essential step developing relationships with law enforcement. Law enforcement was necessary for any movement to be considered by elected officials at the state level. We met with law enforcement after this information session and started working on language for proposing a task force for Utah. Law enforcement was indispensable during this process; RAW knew that, and continued to nurture that relationship. Within a matter of months after the Information session, Law enforcement and RAW were nearly in lockstep on how to proceed with a task force, and law enforcement did not shy away from criticism of its protocol and practice; this openness (fostered for about 16 months

at that time) led to other state agencies being open to how their policies and protocol might contribute to the crisis. RAW worked with researchers, community leaders, tribal leaders, victims, and survivors to develop a draft of the legislation for a task force.

Throughout this process, RAW had the full, unwavering support of State House Representative Angela Romero in ending the violence against Indigenous women. Rep. Romero championed our resolution and worked the legislature to ensure its passage. Additionally, RAW conducted an analysis of the legislators to determine how time would be allocated and what messages should be carefully crafted to maximize understanding. RAW met first with gatekeepers, the Majority Leader, and intentionally met with those who would be challenges to passing the resolution. This strategy paid off. This process took over a year and led to the passage of a resolution to establish May 5th as “Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls, and LGBTQ+ Awareness Day” in Utah. We revived this strategy with the task force legislation a year later. RAW met with all legislators starting with powerholders. Additionally, RAW activated its relationships with a wide array of partners to build a coalition to advocate for the passage of the task force bill. This coalition included faith groups, law enforcement associations, rural farmers, and public lands and conservation groups. Our message focused on healing and how the task force was a necessary step in the process of healing and how Utah would lead the way. This message was received well.

Reflection

RAW had worked nearly every day prepping its message, and fostering and nurturing its relationships with lawmakers, media, educators, elected officials, and community groups for about six months in preparation for the Utah Legislature. Our planning seemed to be working. The legislation was met with little to no challenges. However, within a matter of minutes our task force came close to dying in committee. Upon reflection, we did not carefully read our handouts. Our handout included how the crisis is deepened with activities surrounding natural resource extraction. We did not carefully word our handout and this was interpreted as a direct assault on the gas and oil industry in Utah. We lost support in the Republican legislature. Had we not fostered and developed the relationships with legislators, we would not have known the sudden shift in support, their directness with us was a sign of respect for the relationship. A new bill with new language was provided by the

Republican leadership for the task force, and a years' worth of work in developing language, structure, and objectives for the task force changed within a matter of minutes. With this action, RAW should have anticipated challenges and been prepared to compromise. The bill passed unanimously. RAW, law enforcement, and key stakeholders are now working within the language provided to ensure that the task force and its work can provide some healing for individuals and the community.

Conclusion

RAW did not do this alone. Lawmakers did not do this alone, even with changed language; MMIW became a policy priority because of the collective work of all involved. RAW found out clearly, that healing is a family matter. That honoring relations in a good way will lead to actions that can provide relief and justice to our communities.

Supporting Families Left Behind

From Roxanne White (Nez Perce, Yakama, Nooksack, & Aaniiih (Gros Ventre)) and Carolyn DeFord (Puyallup, Nisqually, Cowlitz)

We are two MMIW families turned advocates who have connected through shared experiences on our healing journey. Though everyone's experience is unique, these are our reflections. In thinking upon our personal journeys, when we lost our loved ones, we were consumed with a rollercoaster of emotions, fear, sadness, guilt, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, confusion, anger and shame. The trauma exists in the not knowing; the sense of being stuck in a dark space in between being hopeful and hopeless, and trying to make some sense of an experience that doesn't make sense. The trauma experience is in the unknown and consuming cycle of these emotions. The symptoms of historical trauma at play before the loss have been a trauma in and of itself. Families may carry a deep sense of guilt and shame over the factors leading up to the experience. Whether parenting the child of addiction, fearing for a sister experiencing domestic violence, or growing up with a parent who has mental health concerns; for many families this

moment has been our greatest fear.

Strong feelings associated with the loss can be debilitating.

Meaningful connections with other families left behind can provide a safe place to cope with intense emotions. The initial shock, sadness, anxiety, and guilt can be overwhelming. Understand that each day brings fluctuating emotions. Families may not be able to tackle the tasks and burdens of day to day life. Support services need to be able to be honest with expectations and meet them where they are at without judgement.

These feelings can make it hard to enjoy normal activities:

- Shock, denial, and disbelief that this is really happening
- Anxiety and anticipation waiting for answers and feeling that there is so much to do but no strength to do it
- Fear of the worst case scenario. Hope relative to the situation. Hope that the loved one will come home, hope that they will be found and finally, hope that there will be justice
- Helplessness and powerlessness over the outcome and quality of services.
- Sadness and despair due to extended grieving of the loved one, grieving who we once were, and enduring intense spiritual pain.
- Anger towards the perpetrator, law enforcement, systems, and other people who've moved on
- Confusion related to where to begin, what to do, how to be in this new identity, and how to move forward without appearing to give up
- Hopeless that anything will ever be okay again or that the pain will ever go away
- Guilt, shame, and self blame for not having prevented the loss, for not doing enough to respond, or feelings that they've somehow caused it

We found that advocating for yourself is hard but advocating while you're in crisis is especially challenging. These days the fast paced world keeps us on the verge of crisis mode responding to bills, health issues, family needs, car troubles, and outside circumstances. Coping with the immediate crisis and simply trying to breathe may prevent you from accessing needed services. An advocate can help with processing emotions and identifying needs. They can help you create strategies, organize events, facilitate conversation with law enforcement, engage media, and overcome barriers in garnering support and resources.

“Don’t ask because, I don’t know. How can I know when most days I don’t know how to help myself?”

As families process the initial shock, we might have good intentions in asking what we can do to help. Be aware of the overwhelming family experience; they may not know what they need or how someone can help, or fear becoming a burden on others. Sometimes the most help you can do is to simply listen, and to be present. Be prepared with offering what you CAN do, instead of asking what they need, whether it’s delivering a meal, making a poster, providing traditional medicine, picking up groceries, etc. By offering what you know will be useful, you relieve them of a little pressure of having to help you help them.

Families rarely see justice when their loved one is murdered. If there’s an investigation it is haphazard, there’s rarely a media presence, and the resources are simply not there to adequately respond. Families on the daunting search for their loved ones and justice are revictimized when the media sensationalizes the headline or takes the story out of context. When their loved ones are under the microscope, and dehumanized and villainized by exploitive agendas, some families put up a wall to protect themselves and their loved one. Victim blaming and stereotyping by media and law enforcement has a negative influence on support systems. This can make reaching out or accepting help more difficult.

Barriers to healing and finding support:

- Taking on new familial roles; Aunties and grandmothers thrust into motherly roles, fathers thrust into being single parents, and children left behind may be taken into foster care all while still searching and grieving the loss and unknown
- Adjusting to new roles and keeping up with new schedules, kids school, medical, daily tasks, etc.
- Lack of financial resources to conduct searches, hold healing ceremonies or memorials, or simply buy food
- Lack of adequate culturally relevant mental health care to address complicated grief and ambiguous loss
- Loss of identity; the crisis can start to redefine who you are
- Understanding their new identity; “Who am I if I’m not her daughter?”
- Transportation to access services, conduct or coordinate searches, and just get along with daily life

- Food and shelter to provide for potential increase in household, to compensate for time off work due to searching, taking on new roles and mental health
- How to maintain employment when life is in chaos
- Lack of understanding and relevant support
- Access and knowledge to utilize technology resources, computer skills, or printers
- Need for protection from scammers, and individuals with self promoting personal agendas

Triggers or significant events or times of remembering that can cause overwhelming emotional responses:

- Anniversaries, birthdays, holidays
- Life events that the loved one would have enjoyed
- Other missing or murdered reports on the news
- Found human remains
- Television shows
- Death, tragedy, sickness in everyday life (COVID-19, 9/11)
- Media or the lack of for other MMIWG
- Law enforcement apathy

We want to end this piece with a little bit of our own personal experiences as MMIWG2 family members, to give advocates and organizers a sense of what families go through, and to remind the other families that they are not alone--we are right here with you.

From Roxanne

Even though it's been more than a decade since my Auntie was murdered, I have carried the heavy burden of guilt and shame alone until I heard the acronym MMIWG being shared by First Nations sisters. Learning that the injustice in my Auntie's case is prevalent across Indian Country, and that my family isn't alone, has fueled my fire to help other families be heard. Today I know that what happened to my Auntie goes back to the point of first contact and the systemic genocide of Indigenous people. I have found great personal healing in the spiritual experience of walking alongside other families. Since then, I have found a sense of purpose and personal growth in using my voice to honor my Auntie's life and her memory. Sharing this common bond with other families has continuously helped bring healing to one of the most traumatic moments in my life. My hopes and prayers are that my family, her children, and her grandchildren find healing and peace. Tragedies

like these never leave us. I've been told that if we don't take care of ourselves we can't take care of others. While this journey has been healing, today I am at a place of quiet where I am focusing on my self care, my family, and finding balance.

From Carolyn

When I found out my mom had disappeared I didn't believe it. I made up every excuse for where she could be and why she wasn't calling. As the worry set in so did the anger. "Why isn't she calling me back? Where the hell is she? She can't just fall off the face of the earth." Her missing became who I was. The rest of the world went on like nothing happened but I had the wind knocked out of me. I was frozen, I was preoccupied with finding her, with memories, and visions of every gruesome possibility of what could have happened to her, in every detail. In a matter of days I had to figure out what to do with her home and all of her belongings. All of her things were all of a sudden sacred. I was afraid to do anything, but how was I going to keep it all? What does it mean if I move it all to storage? Will it look like I gave up? And still, I couldn't breathe.

Daily life seemed trivial and I felt guilty for experiencing any joy, for doing anything that didn't involve grief. It affected every aspect of who I've become, including relationships with friends and family. Her loss became my identity. I wore it like a badge. I needed to talk about her, to remember her. It was painful for my aunties and family to talk about her so I stopped. I felt like my friends were sick of hearing me and just wanted me to move on, so I stopped. I started sharing with random people, often strangers who weren't prepared for the burden and didn't know how to react. I attempted therapy and medication but nothing helped. I knew I wasn't sick, I was hurt. I needed to find a way to heal. Finding my voice and acknowledging her, finding community with other families and leaning on my culture has helped me exercise resiliency. Where I once struggled to grieve and have ceremony, I have found refuge in my community, our traditions, teachings and faith that this is just "bye for now."

Things to Know Before you Plan an MMIWG Event

From Jodi Voice (Muscogee (Creek), Oglala Lakota, Cherokee)

One MMIWG is not just about awareness.

Two If you are going to start local work in the community, you have to understand that once you put yourself out there, people will reach out to you for help. In some cases, it can be in a crisis situation and you may need to have rapid response protocol in place.

Three When people come to your event, they could be coming for help. Having resources available for them will be helpful.

Four When you do MMIWG work, you can find yourself being an advocate between law enforcement and government agencies.

Five Utilize your non-Indigenous allies. For example, a professor from Texas Christian University showed up to an event and offered services to help. The white, male, religion professor utilized his privilege to take action, utilize his networks and find funding. The professor from TCU connected folks from #MMIWTEXAS with the Women and Gender studies department to educate more broadly about MMIW. Each department from TCU is allocated website space and within the Women and Gender Studies Program on the university's website, they used a part of their web space to provide information and resources about MMIW.

<https://sis.tcu.edu/wgst/initiatives/mmiw/>

The Toll It Takes To Be An Advocate

From Lorelei Williams (Skatin Nation, Sts'Ailes Nation)

My name is Lorelei Williams and I am from Skatin and Sts'Ailes Nations in British Columbia, Canada. I do a lot of work around the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). I became an advocate after starting my dance group called Butterflies in Spirit. We are a dance group of family members of MMIWG raising awareness of this issue. I started this dance group to bring attention to my missing Aunt Belinda Williams, who has been missing since 1978, and honour my cousin Tanya Holyk, who was murdered by serial killer Robert Pickton. My dance group has performed all over Canada, the United States (places such as Alcatraz Island), Bogota, Colombia and Mexico. My dancing/ advocacy work got me to Graz, Austria as well for some dance training.

"The Toll It Takes to Be an Advocate"

From the beginning of colonization Indigenous people have stood up for their rights. If you look back historically, Indigenous people have tried to make changes for a very long time. Myself included. Families of MMIWG, survivors, and advocates have made sacrifices for our people for a very long time.

Over the years of my advocacy work I have made quite a few friends who are strong Indigenous advocates. One thing I'm noticing is some of them are burnt out, getting physical illnesses and/or even almost dying. Sometimes doctors don't even know how to diagnose these people because they have no idea what's wrong with them. These advocates have told me they believe it's because of the advocacy work they do.

Recently I was asked to speak down in the States. After the conference, I was sitting at a table of MMIWG advocates having a meal. A conversation started when the youngest advocate, who was eighteen at the time, said she had a doctor's appointment because of a physical illness she has that she believes she got from the advocacy work that she does. The other advocates had similar stories. I was the only one at the table who has never had a physical illness from the advocacy work that I do.

I truly believe that I haven't gotten a physical illness because of the trauma training I have received on Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy on Complex Trauma, by Shirley Turcotte. Through this training I have learned how to protect myself from other people's traumas, how not to bring it home to my kids, and how to take care of myself.

There are so many amazing advocates out there, but it takes a toll on them. It's good to find out what works and what doesn't work as an advocate. Oftentimes certain things are overlooked financially, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally when it comes to advocacy work. We put ourselves out there, the majority of the time for free. We don't ask for money. At least, I don't. I don't believe in making money off of MMIWG. I just want to help others and make sure families of MMIWG don't go through what my family had to go through.

Here are some tips and suggestions based on my experience:

- When dealing with the police, always have an advocate, or even better, a lawyer, with you at all times to be able to take notes.
- When speaking at events or dealing with the media, pray before, and have a rock, feather, or something from your culture to be able to ground you. Speaking at events and dealing with media is hard and takes a toll on your mind and body emotionally. It's physically draining and sometimes it can affect your body. There were moments when I have woken up the next day feeling like I got hit by a bus.
- I always take advantage of Indigenous ceremonies, especially from my cultural teachings. Any Indigenous ceremony is good. When it's offered to me I do it. It's so grounding.

Grassroots MMIWG Organizing Across Borders

Agnes Woodward (Kawacatoose First Nation)

I attended the Indigenous Peoples March in Washington, D.C, in January of 2019, I showed up not knowing if I would know anyone at this march. I immediately started to recognize MMIWG2S ribbon skirts that I have made and connected with women from Arizona to North Dakota, Washington state to New York state. Many of these women I had never met before but talked with via social media; it was an honor to hug them in person to share strength and healing.

I was pulled on stage immediately by grassroots organizers who are also MMIWG2S family members whom I had never met. Being recognized as a family member was a powerful, loving moment for me. It told me that my presence matters, that my family's story of pain and healing matters. It showed me that I belong to a sisterhood of incredible women who are survivors and that the borderline means nothing in this movement, the same way it meant nothing before colonization.

We are all related; we are connected in many ways, whether it be through our shared hardships or the unique values and cultures instilled in each of us as protectors of the land and water. While on stage, my sister Roxanne White who with her loving and strong presence, shouted so confidently to the crowd, "SAY HER NAME," and she turned around to us and asked us for our loved one's name.

I said my aunt's name, "Laney Ewenin," and when I heard her yell, "Laney Ewenin, SAY HER NAME," the crowd shouted my aunt's name back and I felt overwhelmed with emotion, I felt honored, loved, accepted and acknowledged. Afterward, when I told my mother, she just cried.

Many families come from communities that live in abject poverty, where it sometimes feels like the world doesn't give a damn about. Places where the struggles of daily life can be overwhelming, where people have survived generations of oppression, and discrimination that affects us differently because we are often dismissed or rejected from society while they prosper in our

homelands. Places where justice is a word that carries little to no meaning.

Teachings from the Creator encourage us to keep a grateful heart in all that we experience. We have strength so ingrained in us that even when things are falling apart, we know we will be ok, we know we will survive as we always have.

My family had reopened some wounds when they decided to talk about Laney Ewenin's circumstances, in pursuit of justice for her, remembering her life and all she had experienced.

My mother said she would never have imagined her sister Laney Ewenin's name being said in a place thousands of miles from her home. She said it was overwhelming to know that her name was having an impact and influence on making the world better.

Laney Ewenin's name, along with many other names, was said that day with such love and acknowledgment. I felt that this was such a comforting reminder that the work MMIWG2S family members do matters, their loved one's lives matter.

In the past year, I have connected with families all across Turtle Island through meaningful artwork, events, and gatherings. I have continued to work with sisters across those medicine lines, and I feel that continuing to move in this direction will have a substantial impact on the movement as well as healing for families who connect. May we all continue to work together and learn together as we serve our communities. Hiy Hiy.

It is essential to recognize that similar assimilation policies have deeply impacted Indigenous Peoples across borders. Indigenous Peoples are not just marginalized or vulnerable; all borders aside, we have been targeted by policy and legislation that was designed to eradicate us. Working together through our shared struggles and love for our people unites us. These shared struggles add layers to the healing that is needed on an individual, family, and community level. We can see these similarities in epidemics like the MMIWG movement, which affects Indigenous people all across Turtle Island. The approach to eliminating violence against Indigenous women should be done in a decolonized way that centers each community ceremony and beliefs.

Recognize, respect, and honor Indigenous diversity. Indigenous communities are diverse and may have unique needs that only they will have the solutions for; this must be taken into account for each Nation. Tribal Nations have tools and answers within, and while working across borders is vital to the movement, maintaining that respectful understanding that what works for us might not work for them is imperative.

Every movement starts somewhere, from some spark. In the early 90s, a small group of women stood on the corner of Hastings and Main in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia. They stood with signs that read, "Have you seen her?" with photos and names of a woman who disappeared from the Downtown Eastside. Indigenous Women were disappearing at alarming rates. These women knew it was time to take action, and the MMIWG Movement grew from their actions 30 years ago.

The MMIWG movement had been grassroots since its inception 30 years ago. In Canada alone, that means over 4000 cases, more than 30 decades of injustice. It is time to work together across borders as we Indigenize this safe space for MMIWG families and communities. Grassroots organizers have brought communities together for many generations and empowered individuals to stand up and demand justice and acknowledgment.

In Canada, First Nations families and grassroots organizers have set a precedent in all areas of the movement. Much can be learned from the families in Canada. The Canadian movement has brought the state of Canada to account in the international forum on the genocide of Indigenous women and girls and Two-Spirited. Family action brought a global focus on the violence endured by generations of Indigenous Women.

MMIWG2S families know what they need, and their voice is the voice of justice, their shared lived experiences have collectively created a map for justice. It is essential to echo that it has been the families who, with their courage, bear their grief, and have shared their stories of unspeakable violence. Their stories and strength have forced the world to wake up and acknowledge this genocide. Having a family-first focus is vital when organizing; this centers the families lived experiences and voice, further prevents

families from being harmed by well-intentioned actions.

In previous years family members have been left feeling used and exploited for the work and platform building of others; having family members at the table can be preventative in that Manner. Work within the MMIWG movement is centered on family involvement, family healing, and family protection. The love and courage of MMIWG families will continue to guide the work within each community.

There is strength in numbers. Uniting Nations across borders strengthens our relationships, our communities, and, most importantly, our message to influence each local, state/provincial, and national governments. With much information spreading via social media, we can connect and share strength through words, art, ribbon skirts, and live streams of virtual events. We also can share missing person flyers instantly across nations and borders, which is vital and, in many cases, can be lifesaving.

There is a lot of information and resources available to the general public that stems from previous work done by grassroots organizers, families, and organizations serving MMIWG Families. Sharing space with relatives across borders will amplify the voices of all Indigenous Peoples and bring attention to the needs of communities.

Sharing National days of awareness, remembrance, and action on an international level will unite all Nations and will amplify the awareness. Here is a list of days designated to march, remember and raise awareness; it is encouraged to take part and organize to honor these days across borders:

- February 14th, the annual MMIWG2s memorial march (Canada)
- May 5th, the National Day of Awareness for MMIWG (US)
- October 4th, Sisters in Spirit Vigil Day of Remembrance (Canada)

MMIWG2 in Latin America

Due to ongoing colonization of Indigenous territories of Latin America, there is a culture of violence against Indigenous women that remains deeply entrenched. Indigenous women suffer discrimination because of their gender, socio-economic class, and ethnicity. This discrimination and violence has become so common it is now a norm throughout Latin America, making Indigenous women acceptable targets for violence in the eyes of the public.

The disrespect for women and their bodies has created a lack of response to femicide investigation, prosecution, documentation, and news coverage of the topic. This is evident in Sovereign Bodies Institute's (SBI) Latin America database. Almost all of the murders we have documented never reached a conviction. This is because law enforcement and government agencies do little to prevent or punish acts of gender violence. This is why gathering data documenting acts of murder, abduction, and disappearances is vital to raising awareness of the problems that Indigenous women face in Latin America. Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas (CONAMI) has their own database consisting of femicides against Indigenous women across Mexico, Kilometro 0 has published data on femicides in Puerto Rico, and SBI will continue to care for data on cases across the Americas.

The cases of femicide that we have documented are brutal acts of violence, that show a clear disregard for the humanity of Indigenous women and girls. For example, 12-year-old Patricia Feliciano Miranda, from the Tzeltal people, was killed in Mexico. Patricia was walking home from work when three males sexually assaulted her. The attack was extremely violent and resulted in her death. Another example is the death of a 30-year-old mother of two, Irma Arce Garcete, from the Narandy people in Paraguay. Irma was found deceased with wounds on her chin and neck. She was suffocated to death.

Throughout the Americas, Indigenous women and girls have to wake up every day and face social violence and gender discrimination created by colonial patriarchy. The stories of Patricia and Irma are just two documented examples of misogynic acts towards Indigenous women in Latin America--there are thousands more that have been disregarded. It is for that reason that we must **31**

build relationships with our Indigenous sisters from Latin America to bridge our movements to protect Indigenous women and girls together.



MMIWG2 en América Latina

Debido a la continua colonización de los territorios indígenas de América Latina, existe una cultura de violencia contra las mujeres indígenas que sigue profundamente arraigada. Las mujeres indígenas son discriminadas por su género, clase socioeconómica y etnicidad. Esta discriminación y violencia se ha vuelto norma en toda América Latina, lo cual hace que las mujeres indígenas sean sujetos de violencia a los ojos del público.

La falta de respeto hacia las mujeres y sus cuerpos ha creado una falta de respuesta a la investigación, procesamiento, documentación y cubierto de noticias sobre el tema del femicidio. Esto es evidente en la base de datos del Sovereign Bodies Institute (SBI) de América Latina. La mayoría de los asesinatos que han sido documentados nunca llegaron a una condena. Esto se debe a que las fuerzas de la ley y los agencias de gobierno hacen poco por prevenir o castigar los actos de violencia de género. Y por esta razón el acopio de datos que documentan actos de asesinato, secuestros y desapariciones es vital para crear conciencia sobre los problemas que enfrentan las mujeres Indígenas en América Latina. Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas (CONAMI) tiene su propia base de datos que consiste en los feminicidios contra mujeres Indígenas en todo México, Kilómetro 0 y ha publicado datos sobre feminicidios en Puerto Rico, y SBI seguirá ocupándose de los datos sobre casos en toda América.

Los casos de femicidio que hemos documentado son actos de violencia brutal y muestran un desprecio claro por la humanidad de las mujeres y niñas Indígenas. En el caso de Patricia Feliciano Miranda, una niña del pueblo Tzeltal, solo tuvo 12 años cuando fue asesinada en México. Patricia volvía a casa del trabajo cuando tres hombres la agredieron sexualmente. El ataque fue extremadamente violento y resultó en su muerte. Otro ejemplo es la muerte de una mujer de 30 años, madre de dos hijos, Irma Arce

Garcete, del pueblo Narandy en el Paraguay. Irma fue encontrada muerta con heridas en su barbilla y cuello, fue asfixiada hasta la muerte.

En toda América, las mujeres y las niñas Indígenas tienen que levantarse cada día y enfrentarse a la violencia social y la discriminación de género creadas por el patriarcado colonial. Las historias de Patricia e Irma son sólo dos ejemplos documentados de actos misóginos hacia las mujeres indígenas en América Latina - hay miles más que han sido ignorados. Por eso es importante establecer relaciones con nuestras hermanas Indígenas de América Latina para construir un puente entre nuestros movimientos para proteger juntas a las mujeres y niñas Indígenas.

Amplifying the Voices of Families and Survivors



MMIWG2 families and survivors of violence must always be uplifted and given opportunities as leadership in the movement. As those most impacted by the violence, they know the issue in a way no one else will. We cannot achieve justice for MMIWG2 or Indigenous survivors of violence without dedicating ourselves to caring for them and their families, and giving them platforms to share their stories and speak for themselves. This worksheet is designed to help you think through how to support family and survivor leadership in your work, and the templates in this section are a suggested basic framework for tracking how you work with families and survivors, and how you can address any gaps that you become aware of after working through the questions in this section.

Q What MMIWG2 cases happened in my area, or happened to families living in my area? When and where did they happen? If I don't know of any, how can I find out?

Q Are any of the family members of these cases active in the local movement already? Are there any Indigenous survivor-leaders in my area? If so, how can I reach out to them to see how I can support their work and collaborate?

Q Are there any speaking, interviewing, or testifying opportunities I can pass to a family member or survivor? Is there space I take up that can be given to a family member or survivor?

Q Does my work align with the needs and priorities of families and survivors? How do I know?

Q Does my community or organization have an advisory board of families and survivors, or have families and survivors in leadership?

Q How can I create a welcoming and supportive or healing space for families and survivors in the work I do? Am I incorporating trauma-sensitive practices that recognize the emotional and mental health impacts of talking about this violence on families and survivors?

Q Do I have training or experience in how to provide emotional support to violence-impacted Indigenous people? If not, how can I learn how to do this, or bring people into our work who do?

Q How can I help take care of MMIWG2 families and Indigenous survivors? Should our organization have care packages or direct services available? Are there resources like that I can be prepared to refer them to?

Q Do we have a standard protocol for community response when a new incident occurs? If we don't, how can we build one? What needs to happen to support families and survivors when an act of violence occurs?

Q Children of MMIWG2 experience a high level of grief and trauma from their loss, and the elder grandparents and extended family members raising them have to carry the burden of the grief along with the stresses of caring for the children--are there things I can do to meet some of their needs?

Q What local resources are available for missing, runaway, and exploited Indigenous youth? How can I help create more resources or raise awareness of the existing resources? Do I include youth in my organizing, and if not, how can I empower youth family members and survivors to be involved?

CASE NOTES

<i>Name</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Where</i>	<i>Case Status</i>	<i>Family Point of Contact</i>
Jane Doe	Jan 1 2001	1234 A St, Town X	missing	Janet Doe (sister) - (123) 456-7890

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Gap to Address:

<i>Potential ways to assess the gap</i>	<i>How we are going to address the gap</i>	<i>Next steps</i>

Gap to Address:

<i>Potential ways to assess the gap</i>	<i>How we are going to address the gap</i>	<i>Next steps</i>

Addressing Trafficking & Survival Sex Work Through Survivor Leadership

Many people tie the high rates of trafficking, sexual exploitation, and survival sex work among Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people to the crisis of MMIWG2. While it is important to raise awareness on these issues, it is absolutely essential that survivors lead this work. There is a massive amount of misinformation, stereotypes, and offensive imagery and awareness materials--work addressing trafficking needs to be led by survivors because only they know what is truly representative of their experiences.

Sovereign Bodies Institute has created a Survivors' Leadership Council, entirely made up of Indigenous survivors of trafficking and survival sex work. This Council provides peer support to survivors in the movement, works to create a platform for survivor voices and leadership, and educates the public on the issue based on their expertise as survivors. We have included statements from a few of the Council members here, so they can share on the importance of survivor leadership in their own words.

From Raechel Ibarra (Chicana, Chiricahua Apache, Tohono O'odham)

As a survivor of exploitation, I never knew that I was a survivor. In fact, I had no idea what it was or what it meant until I began working in the field. My on ramp to exploitation was through my addiction to drugs and alcohol. I truly believe that education about one's family history, childhood experiences, and intergenerational trauma play a huge role in the vulnerability of survivors. My experience with the SBI Leadership Council has helped me in ways I never knew possible. It was a different form of healing that allowed me to stand taller, identify with other survivor leaders, and break the silence. For me, being on the leadership council offers a sense of freedom that cannot be provided through various forms of mental health interventions and modalities. I feel that it is important to lift up, believe, and compensate survivor leaders because of our crucial experience. Through this experience and education I have been blessed to work with victims and survivors of all ages. Our common experience creates a connection that happens without our permission. It has allowed me to speak to service providers that don't realize that our culture and traditional healing is a necessity,

not a luxury. It has allowed me to speak for commercially sexually exploited women and children who are often dismissed at every level. We do this work because we are called to it. We are not saviors, we are messengers who are guided with a divine purpose.
*Winyan Hanwi

From Jessica Smith (Gidagaakoons, Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe)

When I first got out of trafficking, I was in the darkest place I have ever been in, in my entire life. As any survivor knows, that pain is like a heavy cloud that hovers you. It is a darkness that is very hard to escape. If I hadn't made the decision to pull myself up and go back to school, I would still be struggling with that very deep depression. I am a Legal Studies student minoring in First Nations studies at The University of Wisconsin-Superior. I knew right away getting back to school that I wanted to research the MMIWG epidemic and that my voice needed to be heard. I have completely turned my life around tenfold! If it wasn't for the people who believe in me and my voice, I wouldn't be where I am today. I have received numerous awards and scholarships just within my first year back to school. When I was asked to be on the Survivors' Leadership Council, I had no idea that this sisterhood was exactly what my soul needed. The way that SBI lifts up survivors is just incredible. This is what healing looks like and it is not possible without the amazing support I have received. It is so important to support survivors, turning survivors into leaders, and allowing them to be the voice of change is crucial. No one has better expertise on these issues than someone who has lived through it. This is what needs to be implemented in programs across the country, survivor leadership. It is a powerful thing and a beautiful thing. I am beating all the odds because of the people who believe in me! My university and SBI took a broken girl who was lost for so many years and has helped turn me into the powerful leader that our ancestors are proud of. Imagine a world where everyone lifts up and supports survivors in this way. There are so many strong, resilient, Indigenous leaders out there and it is crucial to let their voices be heard. That support is what took me from merely surviving to ABSOLUTELY THRIVING! We all need to be supporting each other like this, it is OUR TIME to RISE above our traumas. It is up to us to break generational curses. When someone says "It runs in the family", you tell them "This is where it runs out!" Chi Miigwech, Jessica Smith

From Roxanne White (Nez Perce, Yakama, Nooksack, & Aaniiih (Gros Ventre))

My story as a survivor began at the innocent age of 4 years old. I was raised on one of reservations of the twenty-nine tribes within Washington state. The community I come from has been heavily impacted by poverty, drugs, alcohol, and violence.

My life has been a series of traumatic events; I feel like I never had a chance or a purpose; I didn't ask for this. I felt like I was born into it. As a little girl, I was groomed by my environment, which leads to drug and alcohol addiction and twenty years of sex trafficking and survival sex work.

As a survivor, I feel called to shed light on the women, children, and Two-Spirit/Trans people who are at most risk in my community. The system set in place has failed to step in and protect Indigenous People. By including survivor voices, we can make a difference that truly impacts our most vulnerable.

I'm incredibly grateful to have the knowledge I have today; I no longer believe I am the names people have called me. I know now that I was a victim of a crime; human trafficking exists in Indian Country, I am proof of that.

Historical Trauma isn't something I learned about, it was a lived experience for me, and through my healing journey, I have learned so much about the generations before me.

I hope to honor my ancestors, and empower and encourage other survivors to bring healing through education and awareness. I am honored to be a part of the Sovereign Bodies Institute Survivor Leadership Council. This has been a safe place to continue healing and connect with other Indigenous survivors as we honor each other's voices. ~ Que'ce'yaw'yaw

Including and Caring For Two Spirit Relatives in the MMIWG2 Movement

Lenny Hayes (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)

SBI initially asked Lenny Hayes to write a section for the toolkit on why including LGBTQ and Two Spirit people in the MMIWG2 movement is important. It was a difficult piece to write, because LGBTQ and Two Spirit people have been excluded, erased, and forgotten by so many in the movement for so long. Due to this difficulty, Lenny reached out to Two Spirit elders and community leaders to ask them what they would need in order to feel welcome and represented in the MMIWG2 movement. They had a hard time answering the question, because no one had ever asked them before. This is an important teaching in itself. It's not enough to simply add a 2 on the end of MMIWG, we have to actively invite and welcome our LGBTQ and Two Spirit relatives into the movement, offer them leadership opportunities, and reach out to families of missing and murdered Indigenous LGBTQ and Two Spirit people to let them know we are here to support them.

The LGBTQ and Two Spirit elders and community leaders Lenny consulted each felt that it is critical and most useful to educate the movement on who Two Spirit and Native LGBTQ people are, what roles they are meant to have in our cultures, and some of the ways they experience high rates of violence. We begin this section with that information, and conclude with a model for creating safe and welcoming spaces for Native LGBTQ and Two Spirit people developed by Lenny and his organization, Tate Topa Consulting, that has been modified to reflect the MMIWG2 movement.

Introduction

It is said that before colonization Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning) individuals were treated with honor and respect. What happened to that honor and respect? History tells us that because of the effects of Historical and Intergenerational Trauma this once honored and respected individual is now ostracized within our tribal communities.

In order to be a good relative to children, youth, adults, and elders who may identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ we must educate and bring awareness to ourselves.

In order for our tribal communities and other communities to be inclusive to this population we must understand that inclusiveness does not just mean adding a label. The term Two-Spirit goes much deeper than that, it is a connection to culture and spirituality.

Identity: What does Two-Spirit mean?

Two-Spirit is a direct translation of the Ojibwe term, Niizh manidoowag, "Two-spirited" or "Two-spirit," and is usually used to indicate a person whose body simultaneously houses a masculine spirit and a feminine spirit. Male Two-spirits were considered to be a "third gender," and female two-spirits were considered to be a "fourth gender." Where did the term Two-Spirit emerge from? The term "Two-Spirit" emerged in 1990 at the third annual inter-tribal Native American/First Nations Gay/Lesbian conference in Winnipeg. The term Two-Spirit was created for Native individuals who wanted to take a step back from the mainstream language of LGBTQ and connect specifically to culture and spirituality. It was also a way to claim their Native identity and their roles in community. The term Two-Spirit is a universal term used across Indigenous communities. It is important to remember that in some tribal communities they may not use or identify with the word Two-Spirit because of their own unique cultural beliefs embracing LGBT2 relatives.

History has also told us that in some tribes, before colonization, they often would have a celebration or ceremony when a child would come out. Our cultural values teach us that "Children are gifts from the Creator." This would include all of our children even the ones who may identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. What happened?

Colonization has changed our way of thinking in how we view Two-Spirit people today. It is said that before colonization, Two-Spirit people were honored and respected, and they were looked upon as "Spiritual beings" and not "Sexual beings."

Cultural Understandings

Two-Spirit Roles Before Colonization:

- Healers or medicine persons
- Parents of orphaned children
- Conveyors of oral traditions and songs (Yuki)
- Foretellers of the future (Winnebago, Oglala Lakota)
- Name givers of children or adults (Oglala Lakota, Tohono O'odham)
- Nurses during war expeditions
- Potters (Zuni, Navajo, Tohono O'odham)
- Matchmakers (Cheyenne, Omaha, Oglala Lakota)
- Makers of feather regalia for dances (Maidu)
- Special role players in the Sun Dance (Crow, Hidatsa, Oglala Lakota)

What does your specific culture teach about the term Two-Spirit?

Oftentimes we have to go to our trusted elders to gather knowledge and understanding of individuals who may identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ within our tribal communities. These teachings should be passed down to our young people who may identify.

Lakota Tribal Teaching

"In the old days the people that are now called "Winkte" were once called "Wahpetokeca." This word has several meanings but it generally means "One who is marked," in a good way. It is one who has signs, who is connected to miracles and wonders. The "Wapetokeca" were looked upon as people with special powers. They were considered to be persons who brought good luck. Many of the traditional Lakota leaders received their names from the "Wapetokeca." It is said that Crazy Horse and Black Elk got their names from them. In fact, it was said that Crazy Horse went into battle with "Wahpetokeca" riding at his side. Often they were called upon to give names to Lakota babies.

The "Wapetokeca" were men who lived in a woman's body or women who lived in a man's body. They were highly respected. They were some of the best quill workers and bead workers in the camps. The modern world has changed that view amongst many contemporary Lakota and the beliefs about the "Winkte" or "Wapetokeca." Modern society has made the LGBTQ community

out to bad and the stigma has passed on to the younger.

I believe this came from Indians who served in the military and learned that to be “Winkte” was to be ostracized, ridiculed, and eventually discharged from the military with a dishonorable or a medical discharge. They brought this brainwashing back to the reservations.” –Hmuya Mani (Richard Two Dogs)

Do you know of a specific teaching within your tribe about Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ people?

Do you know the word in your language that identifies someone who may identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ?

When colonization was forced upon our people and our tribal communities, many things were taken away from us. These losses include land, identity, culture, children, to name a few. What also was taken away in some of our tribes was language. Often within tribal communities there was a specific word that identified someone who we would call today as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. History tells us that tribes today did not have specific word for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer. Here are some examples:

Cultural Terms to Identify & Gender

<i>Tribe</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Crow	Bote’	Male
Navajo	Nádleehí	Male & Female
Lakota	Winkte	Male
Zuni	lhamana	Male

Historical and Intergenerational Trauma

The Impact of Historical and Intergenerational Trauma on this population: Do you know the issues that impacts the Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ individual?

- Loss of Native identity
- Loss of culture
- Being outside of our tribal circles/communities
- The coming out process
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Serious Mental Health Issues
- Depression
- Suicide

- Discrimination
- HIV Infection
- Alienation from family and friends
- Bullying
- Homophobia
- Transphobia
- Rejection
- Promiscuous Behavior
- Sex addiction
- Gambling
- Hate Crimes
- Unemployment
- Domestic violence
- Sexual assaults/unreported
- Sex and Human Trafficking
- Missing and Murdered

Tribal Policies and Law Enforcement

Do you have laws within your tribal community to protect individuals who may identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ?

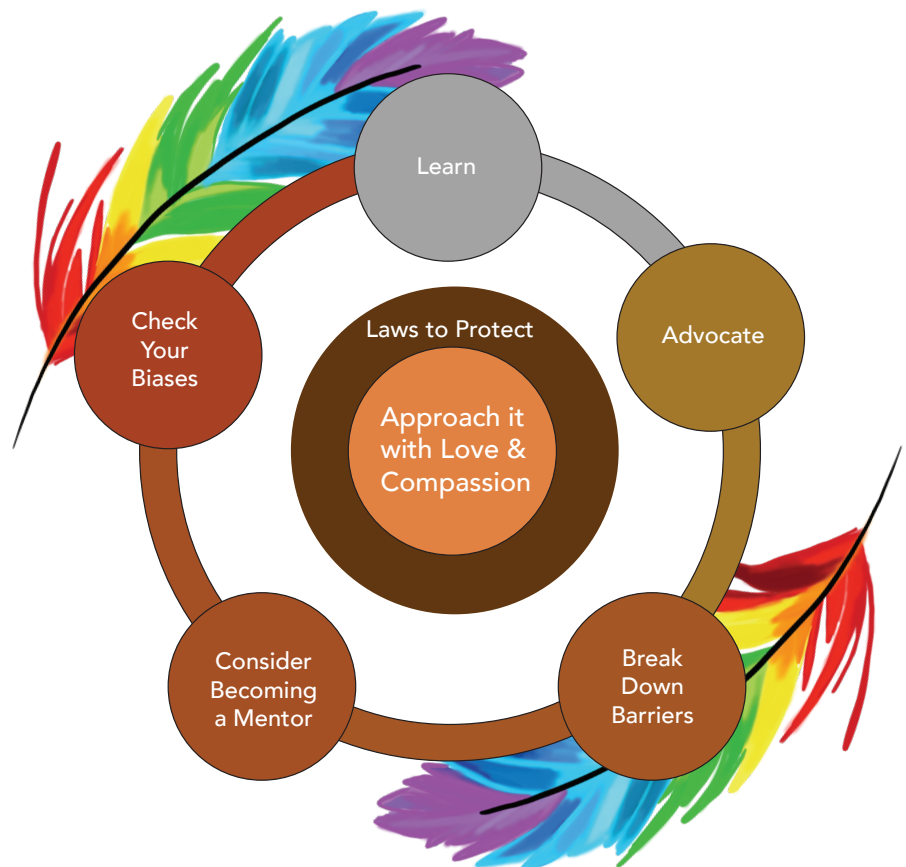
The Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ community is often a forgotten and underserved population in all areas including violence of all forms, missing and murdered individuals, and lack of research and data. There are very few tribes in the country that have specific laws to protect individuals who may identify as Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ. These laws can protect individuals in domestic violence situations, hate crimes, and address deaths and disappearances of Two Spirit people. The lack of these policies can also be a cause as to why individuals who identify as Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ and their family members don't come forward to report. While history tells us that this population played a huge part in ceremony, they are often shunned and denied ceremony in tribal communities.

Creating Welcoming and Safe Spaces for Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ people in the MMIWG2 Movement

This model was created to help the MMIWG2 movement to be inclusive to individuals who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ, bearing in mind that Indigenous communities have Two Spirit and LGBTQ relatives who are youth and adults and elders, cisgender and trans, nonbinary, and on a spectrum of gender and sexual identity. The model is designed to honor the circular movement

many Indigenous peoples value in their belief systems. In the center of the model, we honor the teaching that we as Native people are taught--to approach each situation with love and compassion. A Dakota Two-spirit Woman Spiritual Leader shared these words, "If you don't have compassion, you have nothing." This is one of our cultural teachings.

We acknowledge that each tribal community has their own specific cultural teachings and beliefs and that often we share similarities. This model attempts to respect diversity across cultures in all tribal communities.



The Circles

The model represents five key areas to advance inclusiveness of Two-Spirits in the MMIWG2 movement. We know there are different areas to be discussed and just wanted to touch on some of what we see as the most important. This information has been informed and gathered by elder teachings, lived experience, and observations of current efforts.

Biases

Personal unrecognized bias, also known as unconscious bias, can

be harmful in many ways against individuals who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. These biases can result in a lack of respect toward an individual and their gender identity. An example can be not acknowledging their preferred gender. This happens more within the Transgender community and with someone who may be male to female. Another example is not calling this individual by their preferred name.

Inappropriate Language NOT to Use:

- Fag (Do NOT use)
- Queer (for those who do not use the term)
- Tranny (Transgender is the appropriate word)
- He-She (Do NOT use)
- She-male (Do NOT use)
- Hermaphrodite (Intersex is the appropriate word)
- It (Do NOT use)

Be aware of your individual biases and work to lessen their impact on an individual who may identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. When we don't lessen our biases we begin to dehumanize all of this population and this can have detrimental impacts, such as not paying attention or accepting that there are Missing and Murdered individuals in this community, and not working to develop laws to protect this population in tribal communities, such as laws to protect them from domestic and sexual violence, hate crimes, and discrimination.

Learn

It is important to seek out and utilize resources or individuals who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. It is important to get the perspective of other individuals who identify because we come from many different tribal communities. This will help you to learn more about gender identity, the history of Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ individuals, historical roles Two-Spirit people played, and challenges this community faces today. While the word Two-Spirit is generally a universal term; it is important to remember that there are individuals in tribal communities that do not call themselves Two-Spirit. It is encouraged to simply ask, *"How do you identify?"*

Advocate

Advocate strongly for youth, adults, and elders who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. Before you advocate, ask them what their needs are. Advocate for them at all levels, including tribal,

local, state, and national arenas. Invite Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ individuals to the table and offer them a meaningful opportunity to participate. Encourage individuals to be a part of the MMIWG2 movement. Make sure that their voices are heard.

Break Down Barriers

Encourage the breaking down of the many different barriers, and open doors to encourage conversations about gender identity and sexual orientation. This can be as simple as remembering this quote: "Sexuality is who you go to bed with, and gender identity is who you go to bed as." - Brendan Jordan

Have healthy conversations with individuals in your community, family, and friends, while remembering the importance of conversations with individuals who may identify as Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ. The more we ask questions and have conversations, the better the outcomes can be for all of our relatives.

It is important to keep in mind that there may be individuals who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ who may not be "out" to their families or community. It is encouraged to ask permission to discuss an individual's identity as a Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. When we "out" a person we also put danger on that individual for all forms of violence, including murder.

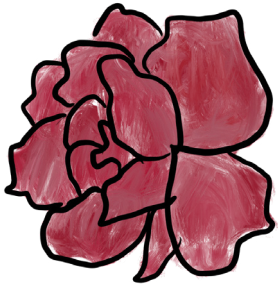
Law Enforcement

Encourage and demand that law enforcement be trained on how to specifically work with individuals who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. This population is often fearful to go to law enforcement because of the way they have been treated in the past. Encourage law enforcement to respect and use gender identification when working with individuals who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ community is individually and collectively trying to bring balance, beauty, and acceptance back into our tribal communities. We need your help. The author would like to acknowledge conversations and input from individuals who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ. Your voice is heard. The author would also like to dedicate this section of work to the Missing and Murdered Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ individuals across the country. You are not forgotten.

Creating Protocols for Relationship Building and Conflict Resolution



Any movement goes through a natural ebb and flow over time, as relationships, needs, priorities, and tactics shift. Because the MMIWG2 movement by its nature is led by people who are still grieving and healing, it is especially common for disagreements or miscommunications to occur. As Indigenous peoples, especially those that are still recovering from trauma, we are still relearning how to communicate with each other effectively and unpacking how our trauma impacts how we relate to one another. This is normal and to be expected given the circumstances. However it's up to us to figure out how to implement healthy ways of relating to each other, resolving conflict, and participating in the movement. It's not wrong or bad to join the movement while still carrying grief or trauma, but it is important to be mindful of it in ourselves and others. This worksheet is designed to help individuals and groups think through relationship building and conflict resolution in MMIWG2 organizing, bearing these legacies of trauma in mind.

Knowledge of Self

Q What are my motivations for joining the movement? Are they tied to any of my personal experiences?

Q What mental health or emotional wellbeing resources do I have, and what do I need?

Q Do I have any triggers or things that make me really sad, anxious, or upset? If yes, what are they and how can I comfortably tell others or create boundaries that help me avoid those triggers?

Q What are some healthy practices that help me process grief or anger?

Q What are my favorite self-care practices? Remember self-care can be fun things like face masks and outdoors activities, but it is also things that help us feel a sense of calm and keep our life and our bodies on track, like getting enough sleep or maintaining our home.

Q We all have different ways of showing people we care– sometimes this is called a love language. What is your love language, how do you show people you care about them? How can you channel that love language into what you give to the movement?

Q What do I need from the people I work with, and how can I communicate that?

Q Who are your trusted friends or mentors that can give you advice on a situation that you don't know how to navigate?

Q How do I usually communicate when I'm upset? Are there different things I can do to communicate more effectively?

Q What processes of conflict resolution or mediation do I prefer or feel comfortable with?

Q Are there things I'm not very knowledgeable about, that may offend or hurt others if I get them wrong? How can I learn more about those things?

Knowledge of Others

Q Have my friends, family members, or colleagues told me about things that trigger them or make them upset? If yes, how can I modify my practices to respect those boundaries, or if no, how can I create an environment that helps them feel comfortable to share these things with me?

Q Are there any practices or protocols organizers in my area have agreed on? If no, how can I help facilitate discussions on developing those protocols?

Q

Does my community or organization have a set path for conflict resolution? Is it functional, or are there things that could be different?

Q

What are some typical behaviors people show when they are stressed, angry, triggered, anxious, embarrassed, insecure, or ashamed? How can we recognize these behaviors for what they are, and respond appropriately?

Q Does my community or organization have protocols for how to draw boundaries with a person who needs healing and is not in a healthy enough place to work with others on this issue? Do you have personal ways you draw these boundaries for yourself?

Q How does lateral violence usually manifest in my community or organization? Where do you think those forms of lateral violence come from? How can they be addressed?

Q Does my community or organization have set protocols for dealing with allegations of sexual or domestic violence in the community? What policy should it have on working with organizations who keep abusers in leadership? What boundaries are appropriate for people who have perpetrated violence and are undergoing accountability measures or remediation responsibilities?

Q What does my community or organization do (or what should they be doing) to create an environment that makes it feel safe for victims of violence to come forward?

Q How does my community or organization vet people who want to join? Some wounded people and abusers seek out participation in the MMIWG2 movement for the wrong reasons--how do we protect ourselves and others from these people?



Funding

In this section:

- Seven Steps Beyond Survival
- A Code of Ethics Regarding Money & the MMIWG2 Movement
- Creating a Fundraising Plan

Seven Steps Beyond Survival: A Guide for Funders in Supporting MMIWG2 Work

Tia Oros Peters (Shiwi) and Chelsea Mirafior Trillo (Pangitaa) of Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples

As the first Indigenous-led grantmaking organization since 1977, for decades we have been a bridge to the philanthropic arena on how to best bolster Native grassroots projects and strategies on the frontlines. We see how the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Relatives (MMIWG2) is ongoing, ever-devouring, and intentionally invisibilized. We, as a grandmother of self-determined philanthropy, also recognize that this crisis is only effectively addressed when survivors and communities lead the work.

The following are seven recommendations for supporting Indigenous community-based projects and initiatives responding to MMIWG2:

- 1.** Recognize what happens to Mother Earth happens to Indigenous Women. Acknowledge the causality of ongoing invasion and settler colonialism -- including mega-extractive development and land exploitation -- on the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples, cultures and homelands.
- 2.** Continue to educate oneself about MMIWG2 and other connected issues impacting Indigenous communities. There are countless Native-led books, media, and resources available for reference and to gain a deeper understanding.
- 3.** Trust Indigenous-led philanthropic organizations to help bridge Indigenous communities with the philanthropic arena.
- 4.** Put into action, in coordination with those most impacted, initiatives that reinforce Indigenous Peoples and Women's rights to do more than survive -- To Thrive.
- 5.** Support strategies that are informed and led by survivors, emerge from community contexts, and center culturally-grounded methodologies, such as traditional medicines and coming-of-age ceremonies
- 6.** Advance projects which re-engage or strengthen the relationship between Indigenous Women, their homelands, and Mother Earth as a critical and effective strategy.
- 7.** Make a commitment to support MMIWG2 work. Actively participate in reclaiming a world without violence against Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Relatives.

A Code of Ethics Regarding Money & the MMIWG2 Movement

Getting funding into the right hands can be life-saving work. However, it does need to get to the right hands, and be spent in the right ways. There are many reasons the MMIWG2 movement needs funding--searches, direct services for families and survivors, funerals/memorials/vigils, counselors, attorneys, safe gathering spaces, even signs for marches. We've compiled a code of ethics for grassroots organizers who want to fundraise here, based on consultations with families and survivors.

- 1.** Do not raise any money for a MMIWG2 case without permission from the family. The family should have direct oversight of the fundraising initiative, and makes all decisions on how the money is spent.
- 2.** Do not name any fund, scholarship, or grant after a MMIWG2 case without permission from the family. It can be a beautiful thing to do, but you need permission.
- 3.** If you want to donate to an individual or organization that does work on MMIWG2 or trafficking, it should be work that is driven by families and survivors.
- 4.** The violence of MMIWG2 and trafficking will continue as long as Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people are treated as objects for sale rather than human beings--don't continue that violence in your fundraising efforts. That means no selling merchandise with MMIWG2 names or faces without explicit permission from their families. Sometimes families want t-shirts, bracelets, or other items with a name or photo on it because it helps them raise awareness on their loved one's case and keep their memory alive--it's okay to make these items, just don't do it unless the family asks you to.
- 5.** Do not ask MMIWG2 families or survivors to be ambassadors for your brand unless you are fundraising for initiatives they lead or giving them leadership in your project. Families and survivors are often tokenized and asked to give small speeches or endorsements without being given meaningful leadership--don't repeat that mistake in your fundraising!
- 6.** Trauma wreaks havoc on the body. Many survivors and family members have some combination of scars, tattoos, missing teeth,

thinning hair, weight gain, and physical or mental health issues. Because of this, we have repeatedly heard from family members and survivors that they have been made to feel like they don't meet the "Insta-famous" standards of Native beauty that they perceive some projects and funders prefer. This makes the trauma even more severe, by leading them to think they are damaged, dirty, or ugly and will not receive support because they won't look good on a brochure or social media post. This is simply unacceptable, and it is on us as organizers to change it. Be conscious of who you are supporting and uplifting, and make your best effort to support family members and survivors of all appearances and walks of life. Recognize that some of the people with the most resilient and strong spirits, with the most to offer the movement, sometimes don't match what settler society says a leader should look like.

7. Any organization receiving funding on MMIWG2 or trafficking should be meeting the needs and priorities of families and survivors, and providing some form of services. For example, even though Sovereign Bodies Institute is fundamentally a research center, we still provide direct services to families and survivors, including help organizing vigils and rallies, liaison work with law enforcement and the media, emotional support, art therapy groups, support groups, a support call line, and donation drives for holiday gifts for children of MMIWG2. We recognize that our ultimate mission of decolonized research requires us to serve our people, our research is strongest when our people are strongest, we learn valuable insights from providing direct services, and that it would be unethical to mine our communities for their stories without taking care of the people who gift us their stories as best we can.

8. Pay attention to who is doing the work. The MMIWG2 movement by its nature attracts people who are on healing journeys. That can be a beautiful thing, but it can also be a distraction or lead people to seek personal validation through the work. It's essential that funding goes to entities that are doing the work and actively supporting families or survivors. When deciding where to donate to or who to fundraise for, it's important to look at what that individual or organization does. Have they issued reports, webinars, toolkits, or resource guides? Have they hosted events? Do they provide direct services? Do they empower other survivor or family-led organizations or actions? They don't have to do all of that, but they should be doing some, and they should be able to show the public they are doing it.

Creating a Fundraising Plan

Fundraising can be trickier than it seems! Funding is a necessary part of meeting community needs and growing the movement, but comes with its own challenges. Use this quiz to figure out what kind of plan works best for your work. *Remember: all fundraising done on behalf of a specific case should be led by the family only!*

- Q One:** What level of infrastructure is your work housed within?
- A.** A tribal government, court, or agency
 - B.** A non-profit with a grant manager or admin staff with grants experience
 - C.** A non-profit with a small staff or a fiscally sponsored organization
 - D.** Grassroots community - no formal institutional structure
- Q Two:** How do you feel about working with government agencies?
- A.** I don't mind at all, and would like opportunities to share our work with those agencies
 - B.** I don't have a problem with taking their money but I don't want to work with them or share our information with them
 - C.** I would like to access free training materials and opportunities, but don't want to deal with the bureaucratic hassle of government grants
 - D.** Grassroots community - no formal institutional structure
- Q Three:** What is the amount of funding you estimate you need for your work?
- A.** Over \$500,000
 - B.** Between \$100,000 and \$500,000
 - C.** Between \$50,000 and \$100,000
 - D.** Under \$50,000

Q Four: What capacity do you have for grant management right now?

- A.* My community or organization has a grants manager
- B.* Our fiscal sponsor has a grants or finances manager who can help us keep track of our budget and spending
- C.* We have volunteers in leadership who have grant experience
- D.* We don't have anyone with capacity to manage a grant for us right now

Q Five: Does your community or organization have a governing structure or set accountability measures on how money can be spent?

- A.* Yes, because we are a non-profit, fiscally sponsored organization, or tribal agency
- B.* Yes, because we developed those items for ourselves
- C.* We are working on developing them now
- D.* No, that's something we need to create

Q Six: Are there any potential sources of funding that would clash with the values and principles of your community or organization?

- A.* No, we are focused on utilizing every resource we can
- B.* Maybe, but they aren't common in the types of funding we are looking for
- C.* Probably, and we should create a list of types of funding we will not take for this purpose
- D.* Definitely, and those values and principles are well-established and non-negotiable

Q Seven: How realistic is it for your community or organization to be able to fund its work through money already in your local community? In other words, what is your community's capacity to donate to your work?

- A.** Not a reliable source of funding, as we need a large amount of funding for our work
- B.** Could possibly be a good source of funding, if we were to host the right fundraising activities or tap into the right local donors
- C.** Likely to be a good source of funding, we are based in an area that has a lot of wealth or that is known for supporting causes like ours
- D.** It could be possible, and we could augment our funding through securing in-kind donations from local organizations and businesses

Q Eight: Are there contract services your organization or community can offer as a way of raising funds?

- A.** No, my organization or community does not allow for this
- B.** Possibly, but we don't have experience doing that or aren't sure what we would offer
- C.** Yes, we already do that regularly
- D.** Yes, but we need to brainstorm how to do it in a good way

Q Nine: Do you need funding for short, medium, or long-term projects?

- A.** Definitely long-term
- B.** A mix of long and medium term
- C.** A mix of all three
- D.** Mostly short-term

Q Ten: Are there other organizations or communities that already have funding that you can partner with on this work?

- A.** No, this is a project specific to our organization or community
- B.** Maybe, but we aren't sure who would be a good fit
- C.** Probably, and we are seeking out those relationships
- D.** Yes, and we already have those relationships in place

Fundraising Plan Results

A/B

Mostly A's & B's - Go for grants

You have most or all of the infrastructure you need to successfully manage most grants, and have the capacity to take on larger projects. It sounds like you are open to the possibility of government funding, and may benefit from searching for funding from federal or provincial/state sources.

C

Mostly C's - Be strategic about grants, and be creative

You have a need for grants that can sustain larger long-term projects and the staff capacity to manage them, but you also have shorter-term projects that are in need of quicker sources of funding. We recommend searching for private funding sources that align with your values and principles, seeking out rapid response grants, and pursuing the possibility of funding from local or regional agencies. We also recommend thinking creatively about services you could offer for a contract (speaking engagements, direct services, etc.).

D

Mostly D's - Build on community

You have deep community ties, do mostly localized or short-term projects, are strongly committed to your values and principles when it comes to money, and may not have capacity to handle large grants. Consider pursuing small local grants, and grassroots funding tactics like fundraising events, donation drives, and in-kind donations. If you don't already have 501c3 status, it may be worthwhile to consider seeking a fiscal sponsor. Remember that if you are fundraising and the funds go to you as an individual, those funds must be reported as taxable income.



Boots on the Ground

What to Do When Your Loved One Goes Missing

In this section:

- Your Legal Rights
- Steps to Take When Your Loved One Goes Missing or is Murdered
- Missing Persons Database Law Enforcement Reporting Protocols by Region
- Organizing & Conducting Searches
- Crime Tips & Information Sharing
- Holding Law Enforcement Accountable
- Ethical and Respectful Engagement between Medical Examiners/Coroners and Indigenous Families and Communities

Your Legal Rights

You have a right to file a missing persons report at any time.

Law enforcement are legally obligated to take the report at any time, and cannot tell you that you have to wait 24-48 hours. If law enforcement try to tell you to wait, remind them of your right to file immediately. If they still will not take the report, ask for a statement in writing that states they are advising you to wait, and ask to speak with the sergeant in duty.

You have a right to have law enforcement take your missing persons report seriously.

Statements such as "they are probably off partying" are too common and are dismissive and negligent. All missing persons reports must be taken seriously, whether there is evidence of a crime or not.

You have a right to timely and adequate searches for your loved one, and investigation into their case.

It is grossly negligent to wait weeks or even days to engage in search/investigation efforts, or to notify other appropriate agencies of the report.

You have a right to regular communication with law enforcement on your loved one's case.

You have a right to periodic updates, even if the only information is that there is no new progress on the case at that time.

If and when your loved one is found, you have a right to timely notification and accurate information.

In instances where a missing person is found deceased, next of kin must be notified immediately. If unidentified remains have been found, every effort must be taken to identify them promptly, and if you ask law enforcement if those remains could possibly be your loved one, law enforcement should be as transparent as possible- this could mean saying it is unclear at the time, or providing a statement on the status of efforts to identify the person. They cannot tell you it is not your loved one unless they have evidence proving it is not your loved one.



Steps to Take When Your Loved One Goes Missing or is Murdered

Step One: Connect with law enforcement

A. If missing: A report should be made to law enforcement as soon as possible. We understand that process comes with its own challenges, and that you may not trust or feel comfortable with the law enforcement in your area, but reporting as soon as possible is important for three reasons:

the more resources that can be dedicated to finding your loved one, the better

- it can help get the word out to other agencies that may have more to offer or be more helpful
- it provides a paper trail for you in case you need to advocate for your loved one's case over a longer period of time, and can help you hold law enforcement accountable if needed.

Make sure to file a report with the appropriate agency and then make follow-up calls to other relevant/neighborhood agencies and transportation hubs to make sure they know to look for the report. If you have information like what your loved one was wearing, if they have tattoos or scars, where they were last seen and what the circumstances were, what their phone number is (it's also helpful to have the serial number of their phone), and what the passcode for their phone or social media is, make sure to bring it when you file the report.

B. If murdered: Schedule a time to meet with the officer responsible for investigating your loved one's case as soon as you are able to (logistically and emotionally). It is important that you know who to call if you receive information or want to ask about the case, and it is important that they know that your loved one has a family and community that will continue to advocate for them. Before this meeting, have a family meeting and collectively document in writing as much as you can about your loved one's case and the circumstances around it, as well as a list of any questions you may have for law enforcement, and bring a copy of that document to the meeting with the investigating officer. We also recommend meeting with the coroner or medical examiner conducting your loved one's death investigation, so you can ask questions and state your preferences as early as possible.

Step Two: Notify your tribe or community

Your tribe or community may have additional resources to help you. For example, victims services, domestic violence programs, tribal courts, and community centers may have staff or programming that could help advocate for your loved one, and they may have discretionary funds they can donate towards costs of searches, a reward, or public bulletins. This is also the time to notify all friends and family of your loved one.

Step Three: Create awareness materials

Select a few photos of your loved one **that you are comfortable with sharing publicly.** You can create an awareness flyer, banner, etc. yourself, however there are also a number of groups on social media who will create those materials for you, once you send them photos and information.

Step Four: Post on social media

Social media can be a powerful tool in **raising awareness** and building a fight for justice for your loved one. There are many groups and organizations on social media that share information on missing and murdered Indigenous people--find them by checking the following hashtags:

#MMIP, #MMIW, #MMMIWG, #MMIWG2S.

Step Five: Send notice to local press

Law enforcement don't always send press releases to local press. We recommend putting together a one-page press release as soon as you are able to. It doesn't need to be fancy--just a short description of the basic facts (don't share detailed information that could compromise the investigation!), some quotes from family members and if possible a community leader of choice, and the photos you feel comfortable sharing. Send to all local/regional press (they usually have a general email address available on their website). If you don't feel comfortable doing this yourself, you can ask your tribe or a local non-profit that does related work to help.

Step Six: Document as much as possible

It's very important to **document everything** you can, and to be as detailed as possible. Write down dates and times you talk to law enforcement and organizations, and the name of the people you talked to, with a summary of what was said. Try to keep these notes together with the family write-up of information about your loved one's case- it's useful to create your own file or storage box you can refer to later.

Step Seven: Create a family plan

It's best to have your family members all on the same page (to the best of your ability). Designate 1-3 chosen family representatives to talk to media and the public about your loved one's case, and try to come to a family consensus on what is okay to share with the public. If your family plans to fundraise or take donations, decide who is responsible for those funds and what is appropriate for them to spend them on. Grief, confusion, fear, frustration, and pre-existing family dynamics can make those conversations hard, but if it's at all possible, it is best to have the family unified in efforts to advocate for your loved one.

Step Eight: Build a support network

You are embarking on a journey that can be draining in every way imaginable--it's important to have a strong support system. In addition to family, friends, and spiritual counsel, you may want to reach out to MMIWG/MMIP advocates, victims services, non-profits doing related work, and other families who have also lost someone in this way. Many of those people are relatively easy to find by searching social media.

Step Nine: Organize searches:

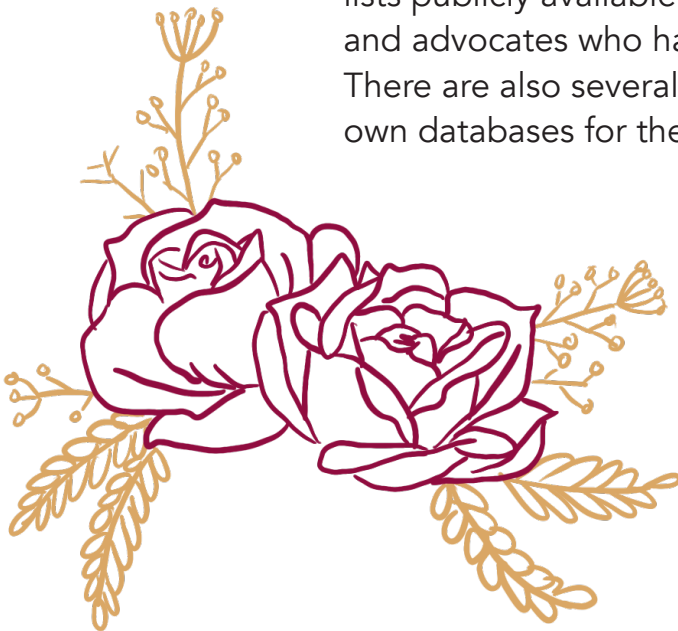
Unfortunately, at this time we can't depend on law enforcement to do timely and thorough searches in each case of a missing person. This toolkit has an introductory guide on how to organize your own searches, later in this chapter.

Missing Persons Database Law Enforcement Reporting Protocols by Region

In Canada, the national missing persons database is available online at canadasmising.ca. However, the cases posted in the online database are discretionary--the RCMP maintains the database, and the lead investigator on each case decides whether to post it in the public database. A large number of documented cases are never included. Families have organized to change that protocol so that all cases are included, however those are ongoing efforts.

In the United States, the national missing persons database is available online at NamUs.gov. However, it only includes cases verified by responding law enforcement. Families and community members can submit their loved ones cases directly, and database administrators will attempt to verify the case with responding law enforcement so that it can be posted. There are a number of cases in the system that are not accessible to the public, for investigatory reasons.

****NOTE:** This table is for official state/provincial law enforcement/ government databases only. Many city police have missing persons lists publicly available, and many areas have hardworking volunteers and advocates who have created their own grassroots databases. There are also several tribes that are in the process of building their own databases for their citizens and descendants.



<i>Area</i>	<i>Publicly Available Area Database</i>	<i>Reporting Missing Persons To Public Fed. Data</i>	<i>Reporting Uid's To Public Fed. Data</i>
Alberta	None	No Policy	No Policy
British Columbia	http://bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage .	Discretionary	Discretionary
Manitoba	None	Discretionary	Discretionary
New Brunswick	None	No Policy	No Policy
Newfoundland & Labrador	https://www.rnc.gov.nl.ca/media/missing-persons/	No Policy	No Policy
NW Territories	None	No Policy	No Policy
Nova Scotia	None	Discretionary	Discretionary
Nunavut	None	No Policy	No Policy
Ontario	https://www.opp.ca/index.php?id=127	No Policy	No Policy
Prince Edward Island	Limited--cold case info available here: http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/pe/cold-cases	No Policy	No Policy
Quebec	None	No Policy	No Policy
Saskatchewan	http://missing.sacp.ca/	No Policy	No Policy
Yukon	None	No Policy	No Policy

<i>Area</i>	<i>Publicly Available Area Database</i>	<i>Reporting Missing Persons To Public Fed. Data</i>	<i>Reporting Uid's To Public Fed. Data</i>
Alabama		No Policy	No Policy
Alaska	https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/SAR/MissingPerson/MPBulletin	No Policy	No Policy
Arizona	None	No Policy	No Policy
Arkansas	https://www.neverforgotten.ar.gov/	Mandatory	Mandatory
California	https://oag.ca.gov/missing	Discretionary	Discretionary
Colorado	None	No Policy	No Policy
Connecticut	Limited--cold case info available here: https://portal.ct.gov/DCJ/Programs/Programs/Cold-Case-Investigations	Mandatory	No Policy
Delaware	None	No Policy	No Policy
Florida	https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MCICSearch/Search.asp	No Policy	No Policy
Georgia	https://gbi.georgia.gov/cases/missing-persons	No Policy	No Policy
Hawai'i	Limited--missing child cases available here: http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/ssd/missing-children/	No Policy	No Policy

<i>Area</i>	<i>Publicly Available Area Database</i>	<i>Reporting Missing Persons To Public Fed. Data</i>	<i>Reporting Uid's To Public Fed. Data</i>
Idaho	https://isp.idaho.gov/bci/missing-persons/	No Policy	No Policy
Illinois	https://www.isp.state.il.us/crime/missing.cfm	No Policy	No Policy
Indiana	https://www.in.gov/isp/3187.htm	Mandatory	Mandatory
Iowa	https://www.iowaonline.state.ia.us/mpic/Controller.aspx?cmd=fullReportCommand	No Policy	No Policy
Kansas	https://www.kbi.ks.gov/MissingPersons/	No Policy	No Policy
Kentucky	none	No Policy	No Policy
Louisiana	http://identifyla.lsu.edu/	No Policy	No Policy
Maine	https://www.maine.gov/dps/msp/investigation-traffic/missing-persons	No Policy	No Policy
Maryland	none	No Policy	No Policy
Massachusetts	https://www.mass.gov/service-details/missing-persons	No Policy	No Policy
Michigan	None	Mandatory	Mandatory

<i>Area</i>	<i>Publicly Available Area Database</i>	<i>Reporting Missing Persons To Public Fed. Data</i>	<i>Reporting Uid's To Public Fed. Data</i>
Minnesota	https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/administrative/Pages/missing-unidentified-persons.aspx	Mandatory	Mandatory
Mississippi	none	No Policy	No Policy
Missouri	https://www.mshp.dps.missouri.gov/CJ51/searchMissing.jsp	No Policy	No Policy
Montana	https://app.doj.mt.gov/enforcement/missingpersons/	No Policy	No Policy
Nebraska	https://statepatrol.nebraska.gov/services/missing-persons	No Policy	No Policy
Nevada	none	No Policy	No Policy
New Hampshire	Limited--cold case info available here: https://www.doj.nh.gov/criminal/cold-case/victim-list/index.htm	No Policy	No Policy
New Jersey	https://www-lps.state.nj.us/NJSP_Amber/MissingPersonList.jsp	No Policy	No Policy
New Mexico	http://missingpersons.dps.state.nm.us/	Mandatory	Mandatory

<i>Area</i>	<i>Publicly Available Area Database</i>	<i>Reporting Missing Persons To Public Fed. Data</i>	<i>Reporting Uid's To Public Fed. Data</i>
North Carolina	none		
North Dakota	Limited--cold case info available here: https://attorneygeneral.nd.gov/public-safety/cold-cases	No Policy	No Policy
Ohio	https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Law-Enforcement/Local-Law-Enforcement/Ohio-Missing-Persons	No Policy	Discretionary
Oklahoma	none	Mandatory	Mandatory
Oregon	https://www.oregon.gov/osp/missing/pages/missingpersons.aspx	No Policy	No Policy
Pennsylvania	none	No Policy	No Policy
Rhode Island	none	No Policy	No Policy
South Carolina	none	No Policy	No Policy
South Dakota	Limited information available here: https://atg.sd.gov/LawEnforcement/missingpersons/default.aspx	No Policy	No Policy
Tennessee	Limited--children's cases available here: https://www.tn.gov/tbi/tennessees-missing-children.html	Mandatory	Mandatory

<i>Area</i>	<i>Publicly Available Area Database</i>	<i>Reporting Missing Persons To Public Fed. Data</i>	<i>Reporting Uid's To Public Fed. Data</i>
Texas	https://www.dps.texas.gov/mpch/MissingPerson/mpIndex	No Policy	No Policy
Utah	https://bci.utah.gov/missing-persons/	No Policy	No Policy
Vermont	https://vsp.vermont.gov/post-type/missing-person	No Policy	No Policy
Virginia	https://www.vsp.virginia.gov/MissingPersons.shtm	No Policy	No Policy
Washington	https://www.wsp.wa.gov/crime/alerts-missing-persons/missing-persons	No Policy	Mandatory
West Virginia	https://www.wvsp.gov/missing-persons/Pages/default.aspx	Mandatory	Mandatory
Wisconsin	https://www.missingpersons.doj.wi.gov/wisconsin-missing-persons	No Policy	No Policy
Wyoming	none	No Policy	No Policy

Organizing & Conducting Searches

Cheryl Horn (Fort Belknap Tribes), with thanks to assistance from Theresa Small (Northern Cheyenne)



Unfortunately, law enforcement don't always follow through on their mandate to search for missing persons in a timely manner. This means that many Indigenous families are left to search for their missing loved one themselves. While this section is no substitute for search and rescue training, or for the knowledge you would gain from volunteering directly on a search, we wanted to share some basics with you here. There are Indigenous organizations like Sahnish Scouts, Gitchigumi Scouts, and Bear Clan Patrol that do the boots on the ground work of searching for our missing relatives, that you may be able to volunteer with to gain more practical experience.

Doing Your Own Search

Gather information. It is important to pull together as much information as you have. This information can be used in flyers and in reporting to law enforcement, but can also give you some ideas of where to start searching. Here are some questions to ask yourself and others:

One: Basic info

A. What is their full name? Do they have any nicknames? When and where were they born? What is their gender?

B. Do they have any health concerns? Do they take any medications? Do they have any mental disabilities/concerns? Do they have any physical disabilities? Are they at risk or have a history of any form of memory loss?

C. What are their addresses of residence (previous/current)?

Two: Their appearance

A. What are their physical characteristics? Height, weight, hair color, eye color, facial features, accent, tattoos, scars, etc. Do you have any recent photos of them?

B. What articles of clothing was your person wearing? Do they have any favorite articles of clothing? How would you describe their style of dressing?



Three: When you last saw them

A. When and where was the last time you saw them, or the last time you had contact with them? What direction were they headed? What were they wearing?

B. Were they with anyone? Did you recognize who they were with? If not, what did they look like? What were the people accompanying them wearing?

C. What did they appear to be doing? Did they seem distraught or panicked in any way? What did their general mood appear to be?

Four: Their relationships

A. Were they in a current or recent romantic relationship? Have they expressed any concerns regarding these relationships?

B. Is there anyone they were in regular contact with? Is there anyone that they would contact to seek help or shelter? How would they typically contact these people?

C. Do you know any of their family members? Do you know any of their roommates? Do you know of any of their landlords? Where have they been employed? Who were their employers/bosses? Were they close to any of their coworkers?

Five: Their habits

A. What are their normal modes of transportation? Do they have access to a car/moped/motorcycle/etc.? What is the make, model, and license plate number? Do they use any forms of public transportation? Do they typically walk/bike/skateboard?

B. Do they have any regular activities? Do they have any hobbies, sports, or organizations they are involved with? Do they have any restaurants, stores, bars, clubs, cafes, or other places that they regularly visit?

C. Did they have any recent plans? Were there any destinations or people they intended to visit before going missing? Did they have any goals or planned activities?

Six: Case notes & timeline:

- A.** Set up a timeline of events, including law enforcement reporting and response, that you can continuously update as things unfold. Try to make as detailed notes as possible.
- B.** Add tips to the timeline, and make sure to label who received the tip, and if they did not share it anonymously, who they got the tip from, and how and when.
- C.** Keep this timeline and these notes in a comprehensive folder you can refer to.

Set up a hotline. One of the easiest ways to do this is to set up a free Gmail account (for example, findJaneDoe@gmail.com) and enable a Google Voice line associated with the account--it's an affordable option and it means multiple people can log into the app on their phone and take any calls or emails that come in with information. Make sure to advertise this email and phone number on missing person fliers, reach out to your loved one's network so their friends and other contacts, and set up a documentation system with every person answering the call line so that any information is documented as thoroughly as possible and shared with the team.

Using Social Media

One: If you have access to your missing person's login information you can access their accounts for any history regarding the user's location or activity.

Two: Search for social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.

Three: Use a third party's account to look at available information regarding their recent activity and people they may have been in contact with through these accounts.

Four: Locate their phone using a program such as the "Find My iPhone" app.

Five: Reach out to anyone they personally knew and encourage them to help in the search. These people could include:

- A.** Friends/family
- B.** Colleagues/coworkers
- C.** Tribal community members
- D.** Seeking volunteers through social media

Six: Share posters in public places with information and pictures regarding the identity of the person and information of where they were last seen. There are a number of Facebook and Instagram groups and pages for missing Indigenous people, and these spaces are great ways to spread the news fast.

Organize a ground search.

It is important to start your search as soon as possible once you have proof that your person has gone missing.

One: Before the search:

A. Contact all relevant law enforcement agencies to make sure they have the missing persons report, and invite them to join or support your ground search. Don't wait for them if you can search immediately.

B. If there are local organizations that can assist in air or water searches, reach out to them. Think creative--are there people with drones, boats with sonar, or other equipment that you can ask for help?

C. Mentally prepare yourself for any possible outcome. It can be easy to get your hopes up about finding your missing person right away, but unfortunately some searches are long, grueling, and emotionally, physically, and spiritually draining. Searching requires persistence, patience, and spiritual grounding.

D. Gather all the needed supplies before you search. Make a list of what you will need based on the terrain, weather, and other conditions, and plan with safety in mind.

E. Create a plan for which areas you are going to search, bearing in mind how many volunteers you have and what areas are most important. It's common to make a plan based on a grid search--draw a grid on a map of the area, and assign each volunteer to their own sections. If you are searching private property, you need approval from the property owner beforehand.

At the beginning of the search:

A. Create a sign-in sheet with names and contact information of all volunteers. Make sure everyone knows what area they are responsible for, and assign them to a buddy system or small groups. Searching alone can be very dangerous and is not recommended for any community volunteers.

B. Make sure all volunteers know what to look for. They should know what clothes or jewelry the person may be wearing, and know what to flag as potentially of interest. They should also know how to report back, and not to touch anything potentially of interest.

During the search:

- A.** Take your time and be attentive to your surroundings.
- B.** Make sure teams walk at the same pace and stay in communication with each other.
- C.** Utilize your map to mark locations you have already searched. You can also use Google Maps and drop pins to mark locations.
- D.** If you find something that could be evidence DO NOT TOUCH IT. Simply take a photo or video and share it with the officer involved in the case or use a stake flag till you are able to notify authorities. If you touch or move the item, even if it is important evidence, it is likely it will not be able to be used in the case because it has been tampered with.

Searches Checklist

— What to Wear:

- Durable boots
- Weather-smart outerwear
- Layers
- If in an area likely to have ticks, make sure to cover up

— What Everyone Should Bring:

- Cell phone with camera
- Bug repellent and sunblock as needed
- Refillable water bottle
- Backpack
- Hat and sunglasses if in the sun

— What to Provide for Volunteers:

- Food and water bottles/jugs
- Gas cards if driving a long distance to search
- Backup bug repellent and sunblock as needed
- Backup weather-smart outerwear (for example gloves or hand warmers) as needed
- A radio system or other form of communication
- An instrument that can be heard from a distance
- Maps of the area
- Flyers with photos and information regarding the missing person
- Stake flags or other markers
- Flashlights
- Notebooks and pens

Crime Tips & Information Sharing

For Community Members

It is an unfortunate reality that when a person goes missing or is killed, no matter how much time goes by, rumors circulate. Some of this information may be truthful, but much of it is not. Circulating unverified rumors on what happened to their loved ones is hurtful to families, and doesn't help cases move forward. As community members and advocates, it is important for us to remember to put the missing or murdered person and their family first: that means if we get information on their case, we share it with them and law enforcement, and that's it.

If you feel uncomfortable providing information to law enforcement directly, you have a right to provide a tip anonymously. However, know that it can be more difficult to act on an anonymous tip if there is no way to verify it. Whether you want to provide a tip anonymously or not, the best way to share information with law enforcement is to call the responding agency directly (do not dial 911 unless there is an emergency).

For MMIWG2 Families

If you are a member of a MMIWG2 family, you may be asked for information by media, policymakers, or community organizers. Remember that you have a right to share as little or as much as you want to. Media can be invasive and policymakers can be tokenizing--don't let them pressure you into sharing things you don't feel up to sharing. These things are hard to talk about and you don't have to until you're ready.

When you do feel ready to share, try to practice discretion and safeguard the more intimate details of your loved one's case, especially if there is an open investigation or the perpetrator has not been convicted. Sharing too much can compromise the investigation and lead to cases going cold or perpetrators walking free. It's best to consult with law enforcement, a trusted advocate, or an attorney before sharing any sensitive information or documents with the media or the public.

Holding Law Enforcement Accountable

All too often, we have seen law enforcement neglect MMIWG2 cases, give false or misleading information to families and the press, victim blame, and perpetrate violence against Indigenous people. These incidents span across the Americas, and include the stories of over 100 Indigenous women, children, and two spirit people who were murdered by police or who died in custody. For these reasons, we must fight to hold law enforcement accountable for their complicity in this violence.

That said, it can be intimidating to challenge law enforcement, especially if you or a loved one already have a history of arrest, or if you have already been victimized by police. Here are some tips and strategies we use when trying to hold law enforcement accountable.

One: Keep Thorough Case Records

One of the most important things you can do is keep thorough records of everything having to do with the case or incident. If you are a family member or survivor, that means keeping a detailed written log of everything you experienced or know about what happened. If you are a community member or ally, that means helping families and survivors keep records (it makes it much easier on them if they tell you what they know and you help type it up, but make sure this is done by someone the family deeply trusts and feels comfortable with). Try to have these records as detailed as possible, and review them before you go to meet with law enforcement. You may want to type up a summary document as well.

Two: Brush up on the Law

Law enforcement sometimes assume that as civilians, we don't fully know or understand the law. They may try to take advantage of that, by telling you things that aren't true. They may also try to take advantage of ideas of "jurisdictional mazes," and make things more complicated than they have to be to try to avoid accountability for not following through as they should have. The reality is that it is their job to know when and where they have jurisdiction of a crime--if they don't know or can't figure it out, they shouldn't be

<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/stopped-by-police/>

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DeadlyForceConversationToolkit.pdf>

law enforcement. The best way to protect yourself from false or misleading information from law enforcement is to stay informed on the law and your rights. You don't need to go to law school to understand the basics of how federal Indian law works or to know what your civil rights are. If you need to brush up on your Indian law in the United States, Walter Echo-Hawk's *In the Courts of the Conqueror: The 10 Worst Indian Law Cases Ever Decided* and Stephen Pevar's *The Rights of Indians and Tribes* are two well respected go-to texts. If you are looking for a starter book to learn about the legal landscape in Canada, you may want to start with *Aboriginal Peoples and the Law: A Critical Introduction* by Jim Reynolds. The ACLU also has a free online guide for understanding your rights when dealing with police, and Amnesty International has published a toolkit for addressing lethal use of force by police.

Three: Strategic Communication

It's normal to feel angry, frustrated, or hurt by poor behavior by law enforcement. And it is in the best interest of everyone to communicate these feelings and hold them accountable for this behavior. However, you have to decide for yourself what your strategy, tone, and style is going to be. What is most in line with your values and principles? Who is your target audience and what would be most effective for them? Are you willing to stretch or compromise your values if it means communicating in a way that's more effective? These are all important questions to think about, especially since police brutality and negligence can be a contentious issue in many spaces. Rage and grief are important and have a necessary time and place, but sometimes being a warrior for the people means putting our personal feelings in check in order to have our best chance at getting what our people need. In communicating with law enforcement directly, sometimes the best strategy is to give them the opportunity to fail. In other words--give them a chance, be helpful as best you can, be courteous. If they still fail to conduct a thorough investigation or work with people in a good way, then you can say you've given them the opportunity to succeed and have documentation of their poor behavior. In any event, try to find the sweet spot between what aligns with your values and your spirit, and what's going to be most effective.

Four: Document Everything

Document every phone call, email, meeting, voicemail, fax--all of it. Try to sit down to write out as detailed notes as possible within an hour or two of any phone conversation or meeting with law enforcement. Make sure these notes include the name of the officer you talked to, what day and time it was, what was discussed, and what the agreed upon next steps were. It may also be useful to help search for media coverage and news clippings with quotes from officers to document, keep a log of where people have searched and where posters have been hung, when press releases came out, etc.

Five: Build Alliances & Know Your Resources

It's not just Indigenous communities that experience high rates of police violence and negligence. Try to build alliances with other grassroots organizers and communities of color, or try to think creatively about who could be an ally to your work. Student groups, churches, non-profits, policymakers, and community collectives are all great potentials to explore. Even if they don't go to meetings with law enforcement with you or know all the in's and out's of your work, they could still help coordinate awareness events, fundraise, find and pay for legal representation, or reach out to the media. Correction of poor law enforcement behavior usually only happens after considerable public pressure--this is the time to build your relationships and find the resources in your area, you will need them for this fight!

Six: Engage the Media

Media has proven to be a powerful galvanizing force for holding law enforcement accountable. If you are not already working with media to raise awareness, it may be a good idea to write up a one-page press release and distribute it to local and regional media. If the press release does not get a response, you can continue trying to get in contact with the outlet, or think creatively about how to reframe the issue in a way that's appealing to a media outlet.

<http://www.toolsforchange.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/RuckusActionStratGuide9.pdf>

Seven: Direct Action

Direct action can include things like marches or walks, strikes, occupation of offices or other significant places, or boycotts. Direct action usually takes place when most other avenues have been exhaustively explored and justice still has not been served. When done well, direct action can be very effective. When planning direct actions on law enforcement violence or negligence, it is important to be detail-oriented and mindful of what will raise the most awareness. Negligent and violent law enforcement and their supporters will look for any excuse to delegitimize your work and perspective, so it's essential that you plan ahead. The Ruckus Society has published a free guide to planning a direct action that may be helpful

Eight: Legal Action

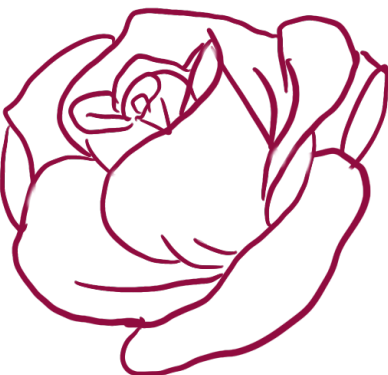
Legal action can be very effective, but takes time and resources that many families and communities don't have. If you are sure this is a path your work needs, you will need to strategize on funding and how to meet the immediate needs of impacted families and survivors while legal action is being pursued. You may want to look for strategic partnerships that can leverage funding--some non-profits or tribes may already have an attorney working on a similar project, this may be work that could be done free by law students at a legal clinic, or there may be an attorney in your area and or in an appropriate field that may be open to some pro bono work or a reduced rate. The most important thing, however, is to find an attorney that families and survivors can trust, who has the right qualifications to take on your case.

Reflection Questions

Are there any cases of police killings or deaths in custody of Indigenous women, girls, or two spirit people in my area? How can I make sure I have an accurate list?

What are MMIWG2 families' and Indigenous survivors' experiences with law enforcement in my area?

Based on those experiences, what are three tangible, concrete things that law enforcement in your area should change in order to better serve MMIWG2 families and Indigenous survivors? Are these items reflected in the needs and priorities of families and survivors? **89**



Ethical and Respectful Engagement between Medical Examiners/Coroners and Indigenous Families and Communities

Deondre Smiles (Ojibwe)



Overview

Autopsy is viewed as an important part of death investigations by the state, especially in cases of homicide and accidents. At the same time, autopsy is a practice that is viewed as invasive and potentially harmful by many communities, including some Indigenous communities (Kulick et al. 2016; Smiles 2018). This creates an obvious area of potential conflict, where Indigenous families' preferences and religious rites are placed in opposition to a practice that is enshrined and protected in the laws of every state and province in the United States and Canada. Placed within the context of the history of relations between the state and Indigenous communities, especially in regard to application of laws and statutes, the relationship between Indigenous communities and coroners/medical examiners has the potential to be one marked with mistrust, and has the potential to lead to protracted legal struggles over the disposition of Indigenous bodies. This is not ideal for coroners/medical examiners, but it also runs the risk of being a traumatic experience for the families of the deceased loved one; they not only must contend with the grief process, but they also must deal with their loved one undergoing a process that is invasive and may be disrespectful to their beliefs surrounding the treatment of their loved one's body. This is a situation that is good for no one. This chapter is intended to provide an opening to conversations surrounding these situations.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold:

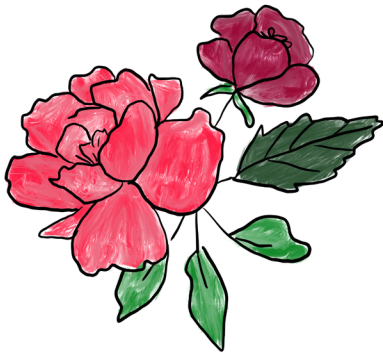
- 1.** To inform Indigenous peoples of the potential steps they should take in when an autopsy may be carried out, with or without their consent.
- 2.** To inform state/provincial coroners and medical examiners of ways to effectively and humanely communicate with Indigenous families/communities who may be curious about autopsy or might oppose a potential autopsy.

This chapter should not be taken as a one-size-fits-all guide for coroners in their dealings with Indigenous communities. There are 573 Federally-recognized tribes in the United States (NCAI 2009) with a number of state recognized and unrecognized tribes that coroners/medical examiners may interact with in their work. There are over 630 First Nations communities in Canada. Additionally, Indigenous people are not spatially bound—they also live in urban and rural areas in the United States and Canada that may not be located within the borders of a reservation/reserve that coroners/medical examiners may come into contact with. To be succinct, a coroner/medical examiner stands a good chance of encountering an Indigenous family in the course of their work; learning local specifics regarding burial/treatment of the deceased body is paramount.

This chapter is not meant to be prescriptive about autopsy and how it is viewed in Indigenous communities. There may be communities and families who consent to an autopsy, and there are communities and families who do not. This toolkit should also not be taken as a blueprint as to how to anticipate and evade potential Indigenous sensitivities to the practice of autopsy. Such actions do nothing to engender goodwill and trust among Indigenous families and communities. What is important is consent and communication.

Stats & Geography of Death Investigation

Indigenous Autopsies in the United States (1999-2017)



<i>US CENSUS REGION:</i>	<i>NATIVE AMERICAN DEATHS</i>	<i>NATIVE AMERICAN AUTOPSIES</i>	<i>PERCENTAGE OF AUTOPSY AMONG DEAD</i>
CENSUS REGION 1: NORTHEAST	10,426	1,088	10.4%
CENSUS REGION 2: MIDWEST	52,078	7,363	14.1%
CENSUS REGION 3: SOUTH	78,974	6,625	8.4%
CENSUS REGION 4: WEST	146,119	19,897	13.6%
OVERALL TOTALS	287,597	34,973	12.2%

The Geography of Autopsies & Death Investigations:

Out of **50 states** (and **Washington D.C.**) in the United States, and **13 provinces** and territories in Canada:

All **64 states/district/province/territories** have laws/acts relating to death investigations.

9 American states have some form of provision for religious objection in their death investigation statutes

Out of the other 55 political entities, virtually all of them had at least one agency (state/county/provincial) that made note of medical examiners/coroners being willing to listen to potential religious objections, although many agencies noted that religious objections would only be considered if it did not interfere with the death investigation

Medical examiners/coroners in 2 jurisdictions (Washington D.C. and the province of Manitoba) explicitly note that permission/consent is not needed to conduct an autopsy, religious objections are not considered in D.C.

3 Canadian territories (Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon) transport bodies to other provinces (British Columbia, Alberta)

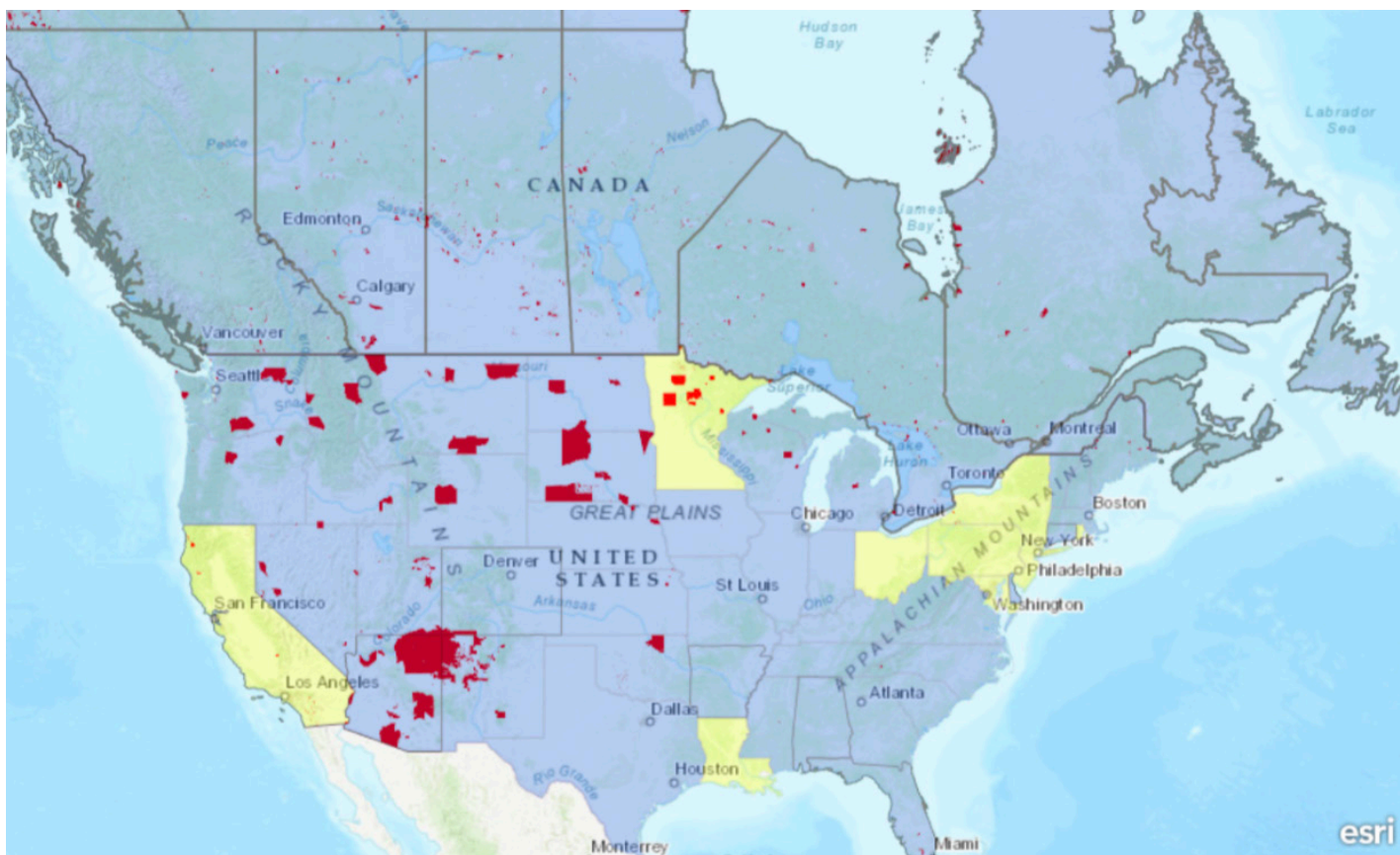


Figure 1—Map of religious objection clauses in autopsy/death investigation statutes by state/province.

Source: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA | Source: U.S. Census Bureau | The American Indian Reservations / Federally Recognized Tribal Entities dataset was compiled using USGS 7.5' quadrangle maps (1:24,000), Bureau of Census 1995 TIGER data sets (1:100,000), Bureau of Census 2000 TIGER data sets (1:100,000), Bureau of Census 2004 TIGER data sets (1:100,000), BIA Pacific and Alaska Regional Office coverages (1:24,000) and the GDSC-developed Land Title Mapper (LTM) (1:24,000)

States highlighted in yellow provide for religious objections to autopsy. States/provinces highlighted in blue do not provide for objections. Native American reservations and First Nation reserves are highlighted in red. Alaska, Hawaii, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon, which are not pictured, do not provide for religious objections.



Important Steps an Indigenous Family Should Consider Taking if an Autopsy is to Occur ---

Step One: Opening Communication With The Medical Examiner/Coroner Immediately

You may be curious about what an autopsy is, and what happens to your loved one's body during and after autopsy—what tests are carried out? Is the body suitable for viewing? Are there parts of their body/organs that may be removed as part of the investigation? It is important that the medical examiner/coroner respects your wishes for information. Some medical examiners may make contact with you, at any rate (state law may mandate that they do so). If you do not want an autopsy to be performed, it is also important to make your objection known immediately to the medical examiner/coroner as soon as possible when you learn that an autopsy is to be carried out.

Step Two: Seeking Legal Aid Immediately

If you feel it is necessary, seek legal aid, so that you can fully be informed of your family's rights in this situation. If you do not want an autopsy to be carried out and you live in a state that has provisions for religious objections to autopsy, it is important to start the process of seeking a court-order or other form of stopping the process.

Step Three: Soliciting Tribal/Community Aid

Keep the lines of communication open with your tribal community/nation, or even your regular 'community', whether it is friends or family. This is likely an extremely traumatic time for you and your family—support one another and be there for each other. Your tribe/community may also be able to provide you with legal and cultural resources to support you through this time. You need not go through this alone.

Important Steps a Medical Examiner/Coroner Should Consider When Engaging with Indigenous Communities/Families Surrounding Autopsy

Step One: Communicate, Communicate, Communicate:

Most likely, you are used to communicating with families in the case of a death investigation. This becomes even more vitally important when interacting with Indigenous families. Providing open lines of communication is of vital importance for any official who comes into contact with Indigenous communities and Indigenous families, especially when it comes to the potential to conduct death investigations/autopsies on Indigenous people. No matter if you are new, or if you have been in the job for years or decades, you should be familiar with the Indigenous nations or communities near you—keep in mind that not all Indigenous people live on reservations/reserves, especially in urban areas or areas that do not have reservations close by. Understand where and who these communities are, and provide an open dialogue with them. This can be done through many different ways, such as providing clear and concise information about the death investigation process (website, pamphlet/info sheets), or seeking out tribal agencies such as tribal clinics, hospitals, human service agencies, etc, to start this dialogue.

If an autopsy is mandated to be carried out under the laws of your jurisdiction, a very important first step is to open up a line of communication with the family of the deceased. They are likely upset, scared, and dealing with trauma—the very last thing you will want to do is to carry out a potentially traumatic act without communicating with them.

Step Two: Listen, Listen, Listen:

It is no secret that part of effective communication is listening to what people may have to say to you. In your communications with Indigenous communities and families, you may receive questions about death investigations. What do they entail? What happens to the body? What if a family doesn't want an autopsy? Even if you are empowered to do so without the family's consent or objection (which is the case in most of the United States and Canada), showing a willingness to listen to their questions and objections can help to create an environment where it is possible to come to solutions that benefit both sides.



Step Three: Respect Tribal Religious Beliefs; Find Common Ground

The passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1978 has made it in theory legal for Native Americans to openly practice tenets of their tribal religions in the United States; recent court cases have focused on Indigenous religious freedom in Canada. Much as you might with adherents of other religions, be sensitive and respectful towards tribal religious beliefs; do not mock them or accuse them of lying. Because of the long history of tribal religious beliefs being illegal, families and communities may be reluctant to share specific details of their beliefs surrounding death and burial practices; respecting this and validating their concerns for privacy and protections regarding their beliefs are important.

Although you may have a right or legal interest in conducting a potentially invasive death investigation, it is always a good idea to talk with families/tribes/legal representatives to see if a compromise can be made, in this way, you may be able to find a way to both respect tribal religious practice, as well as performing your legally-mandated duty.





Support Services

In this section:

- Rights of Survivors and Families
- Putting Families First
- Trauma-Informed Organizing Worksheet
- Crisis Support
- Creating Spaces for Healing - Activity Guide

Rights of Survivors and Families

Danielle Ewenin, Lillian Piapot, Mona Woodward, and Deborah Green (four sisters of Laney Ewenin; Kawacatoose First Nation)

You have a right to justice. Real justice means the violence has been meaningfully acknowledged, the person who perpetrated the violence has been held accountable, the roots of why they committed the act of violence have been addressed, appropriate and adequate healing opportunities have been made available to victims, and measures have been taken to prevent future acts of violence. You have a right to see all of those things happen in your case, and it is not just the legal justice system that has a responsibility to help make it happen. Justice is a community effort. This right to justice includes:

- The right to know the full legal steps a family or survivor can take
- The right to have immediate search efforts begin and to be part of the search or direct the search
- The right to information from law enforcement, and the right to be updated as new information is received
- The right to have the truth, all of the truth, even if it is harrowing—families and survivors have the right to know
- The right to ensure legal proceedings against the perpetrator occurs
- The right to be present during all legal proceedings both criminal and civil
- The right to trauma informed law enforcement and judicial process

You have a right to be believed. Whether you are reporting a loved one missing, reporting an act of violence you experienced, or sharing your story or your loved one's story, you have a right to be believed, and to have your experience validated. You and your stolen loved one have a right to not be victim-blamed or shamed.

You have a right to be heard. You have a right to have your concerns and grief taken seriously. You have a right to share your experiences and concerns with your elected representatives, community leaders and organizers, and service providers, and to be actively listened to. You have the right to have your emotions as a family member or survivor honored, even if it is anger (advocates—remember there are tears behind that anger).

You have a right to raise awareness on your case. You have a right to use your voice to raise awareness on your loved one's case or on violence that has happened to you, whether that is media coverage, billboards, posters, social media posts, or speaking engagements. Police may ask you to not share details of the investigation publicly, but they cannot ask you to not speak on the case entirely. This right to raise awareness includes:

- The right to tell the story of your loved one
- The right of families to have final say on all display pictures, information, etc. about their loved ones

You have a right to share your story in a way that feels good to you. You also have a right to hold your story and not share it if you don't want to. You are free to share as much or as little as you would like. You don't have to share your story on-demand, you don't have to answer invasive questions, and you don't have to publicly disclose any information on what happened to you or your loved one. If you decide you want to share, you can decide when and where feels right to you. When making a decision about how much to share, remember it is best to not publicly share details of an investigation, and there could be legal ramifications for naming a perpetrator publicly without evidence. This right to your story includes:

- The right to preserve the memory of your loved one and how the loved one should be remembered
- The right for families to speak on behalf of their loved ones— and no one else unless so designated by the family
- The right for families to give permission on their loved one in any scholarly research or articles written on behalf of their loved one

You have a right to confidential safe spaces to seek support. Victims' advocates, therapists and counselors, healthcare workers, and law enforcement all have a responsibility to keep what you share with them confidential and to only share with others when mandated. You also have a right to confide in trusted people like elders, medicine people, and other families and survivors, and trust that they will honor the privacy of what you share. In general, you this right to safe support includes:

- The right to be supported with love, compassion and understanding throughout your process
- The right to your process, there is no time limit on grief and healing

You have a right to victims' services. Victims' services can include support from an advocate, help navigating the justice system and working with law enforcement, and financial assistance covering costs like funeral arrangements and medical bills. These services are often more formalized and offered through city or state/provincial offices once a crime has been reported. If you are a victim of violence and don't feel comfortable reporting to law enforcement, many service providers will still provide you with support, but you will need to reach out to them directly to ask.

You have a right to have your needs and priorities reflected in this movement, and a right to step into leadership. As those most impacted by this violence, families and survivors must have their needs and priorities incorporated into all organizing on the issue, and should be consistently consulted. Families and survivors should also be actively given leadership opportunities, and if they are hurting too deep and are not emotionally or spiritually healthy enough to take that leadership on in the moment, they should be cared for and supported until they are. This right includes:

- The right of family and survivors to state their own wishes and have those wishes followed is paramount, and must be respected under all circumstances (even if as an advocate you think your idea may work better)
- Families and survivors have the right to see that every effort is being employed to determine what their desired wishes are
- As matriarchs, mothers of a missing or murdered loved one have the right to be prioritized if there is disunity in the family
- Families have a right to give all directions on what actions to take on their loved one's case, even if they do not want to search, or do not want to pursue criminal investigation
- Families and survivors have a right to determine who is and is not an advocate serving them--if they don't ask you to be an advocate for them, be a caring friend

Families First: Trauma Informed Organizing and Supporting MMIWG2S Families & Survivors in the Movement

Danielle Ewenin, Lillian Piapot, Mona Woodward, and Deborah Green (four sisters of Laney Ewenin; Kawacatoose First Nation)



Trauma informed organizing for families and survivors of MMIWG2S means going beyond the standard methods of counseling and grief. It means first that you are a caring compassionate relative, and you are aware that the family has now suffered a devastating loss, or facing something that is unendurable.

The family will have suffered other traumas in their lives, and it is essential that understanding the trauma they are facing in losing a loved one is another layer of trauma. Indigenous Peoples across the board have suffered trauma from their childhoods, including racism, family violence, and all have in various forms and degrees intergenerational trauma. This is described as the trauma of grandparents and parents that went to residential schools run by Christian churches, were children raised in foster care, or were adopted out to non-Indigenous families. It is important to understand that 'complex trauma' when working with families and survivors. We may not understand behaviour, nor do we know the family member or the survivor's full story, and do not know what 'triggers' there are for individuals. It is important to let the family member or the survivor express their emotions and feelings, and respond with love, compassion and understanding.

If and when the anger is expressed, it would be a disservice to family members if the organizer responds in kind or in a way that is not loving and kind. Even if you feel you are the target of the anger, it is important to remain loving and kind. The trauma from the horror of losing a family member to violence or experiencing violence as a survivor creates responses to trauma that will emerge in planning, events, vigils, marches, etc, and you may be the one that it is easier to vent the pent-up anger and horror to.

If this occurs, as it already has in grassroots organizing, it is important to recognize that this work is not for everyone. It is essential to keep unity in the work, and the circle be a loving, kind,

compassionate space for families and survivor's voices, who are the focal point of action and organizing.

You become a collaborator with families and survivors and they set the direction, pace and message. It is your role to assist with the technical tools that are required to make the event, march, vigil, etc to happen.

Never fundraise in a lost one's name, it must come from the family, and have full permission and direction from the family. There are established methods of fundraising to use and your skills as organizer can ensure the wishes of the families are met.

Trauma informed organizing must have a focus on healing, compassion, and empowerment. There are families that are passing the 10 or 20-year mark of a loved one missing. The family is the expert and the assistance you provide in organizing should always be done in a way that empowers the family. They can provide support and knowledge to families who have suffered a recent loss and who have loved one recently missing.

The healing and help work must come from the family, and it is important to be able to 'read' these cues, and lovingly suggest the avenues that can help the family, with the choice belonging to the family. It is important to respect the spiritual beliefs of the family; they may be Christian or traditional or follow another religion or form of spirituality/belief system.

Sometimes, family or survivors need to retreat and not deal with anything, and that is to be respected. An example would be at the yearly march that is held in your area, the family may not want to participate that year--respect that, but still be the support for the family as they may need during their time of retreat.

Essential Rules

- Family and survivor decisions are respected and upheld
- Families and survivors direct the progress of the actions, events, etc.; they are the experts
- Create and maintain space for the family voice to be heard and listened to and respected--they speak for their loved ones
- Fundraising must be the initiative of the family
- As an organizer you are a collaborator and not the leader
- Organizers will be loving, kind, compassionate and understanding at all times
- Healing work is the work of the family, as an organizer it is your role to facilitate the healing if and when asked by the family
- One must be sensitive and read the muted statements of families, such as saying, "Are you feeling you would like to talk to someone further on this?" or, "Would you like me to check if I can find a good resource for _____?"
- The empowerment of the family on healing, action, and organizing is essential and the experience of families involved in their search for justice will be empowering and healing
- As organizer it is imperative to keep the space safe for families and survivors
- As organizer is it important to facilitate the needs of families, with law enforcement, autopsies, and judicial procedures; ensure these and other resources are respectful, compassionate to the family
- There is no message to send but the message of the family

Trauma-Informed Organizing Worksheet ---

Trauma-informed organizing can be life-saving. That may sound dramatic, but it's the truth--the way we organize, the language we use, the spaces we build, it all matters. If we don't do trauma-informed organizing, we risk hurting one of our relatives in the movement, or making it very hard for them to participate. Here are some things to think through in your organizing.

Q Are there designs or images that might be hurtful or triggering to a family member or survivor? For example, though the red handprint is popular, it really bothers some families because it reminds them of a bloody handprint or silenced women, which is upsetting imagery. Likewise, posters and billboards of women with bruises or duct tape on their mouths are popular in campaigns on trafficking, but are perceived as inaccurate, sensationalizing, and offensive by many survivors. How can you make sure the designs you're using are something families and survivors feel good about?

Q What kind of language do you use to talk about MMIWG2 and survivors? Do you plan to discuss graphic violence, and if so, would that truly be helpful in the situation you are in? Is it worth potentially triggering someone's trauma?

Q Do you plan to go into detail about a particular story, and if so, do you have the family/survivor's permission?

Q Do you have emotional support available to families and survivors at your gatherings or events? Should it be an advocate, an elder, or a medicine person? What level of cultural competency and understanding of the issue should they have?

Q Do you make relevant resources available in your work? For example, are there support hotlines you should be sharing, referrals to certain programs you can make, or service providers you can invite in?

Crisis Support - Needs Assessment Dialogues 101



In our work on MMIWG2, we sometimes work with families or survivors who are in crisis--maybe the incident just happened, maybe new evidence came to light or their court case did not go well, maybe they are having trouble carrying the grief--there are all sorts of reasons why people may need some help. In those moments, the emotions can be overwhelming and it can be hard to communicate what is needed. This is a basic overview of a needs assessment dialogue that you can use in trying to determine how to be helpful in these moments of crisis.

Write a summary of the current situation and conditions that are causing distress. Take the time to sit and actively listen to the family/survivor, let them share uninterrupted for as long as they need to. The first step is to listen and create a supportive atmosphere so you can get a full sense of what's going on and what they need.



If they cry or hyperventilate it's important to comfort them through it, and provide tissue and something to drink. If they start to dissociate or get really overwhelmed, it's important to do things that help them to feel grounded in their body--when we go through heavy trauma, sometimes our spirit can leave our body because it feels safer. You might be able to help a person in this situation by trying a few of the following things:

1. if this person likes traditional medicines like sage or cedar you can light some
2. sensory changes can really help re-center our bodies when they are on overdrive due to stress--try giving them a really cold or really hot drink, something bitter to bite on (like a lemon wedge), or something good to smell (like a little sachet of lavender or medicines)
3. offer them an opportunity to get some fresh air and slowly walk around in a calm place that won't overwhelm their senses. If none of this works, you may need to ask to call a trusted friend or relative of theirs, or ask if they would like a referral to a mental health provider.

After they've shared, you can ask them what they need. If they don't know or if what they need is something you can't give them (don't over-promise or promise things you can't deliver on), then

say, "I don't know that I can get you that, but I can promise that I will support you in looking for it." For example, if someone says they need to have their perpetrator arrested--that's not something you as a friend or advocate can deliver. But you can tell them that you will go with them to the police station to report, help them practice their testimony, and attend court hearings with them. It's important to validate their need, and offer concrete, tangible things you can definitely do to help them reach that need.

If you have any ideas of things that can be done that didn't come up when they discussed their needs, you can ask them if you can share those ideas to see what they think. In crisis situations it's important for people impacted by violence to feel like they have power over what's happening to them and what's going to be done about it, but it's also important to not expect them to do all the thinking at a time when they're so stressed. That's why asking if you can share your ideas is a good middle ground--they are still in control, and it gives you an opportunity to feed them options to choose from.

Try not to overwhelm them with big ideas, or too many ideas. Try to run triage in your head--it will get easier the more times you do it. What are the most important things needed right away? The family/survivor's basic needs are most important--do they have secure housing, do they need help with costs associated with the violence, are there basic items that would help them to be safer from physical danger?

You can then move on to thinking about long-term goals and breaking them down into manageable steps. Again, do not overwhelm someone with giant goals or too many steps! Boil it down to 1-2 things they really need, ask if they think that would be important or helpful to them, and if it is, then you can say, "Okay great, I think that's something I can help you with by starting with _____." If you are not the best person to take on this project, that's okay--it's better that you recognize it! Be honest and tell them you don't have the skills or capacity for it, but you will help them find someone trustworthy who does.

If all those needs are met, then you can start thinking about whether there are things that may not be life or death, but would still help the family/survivor cope with the trauma and process the

grief. At this stage in the conversation, it's important to set aside all of your own assumptions and biases. People will always surprise you in what will make them feel better! We have worked with an elder survivor who just wanted a monthly visit with some onion rings from her favorite restaurant, and MMIW families who wanted help putting together holiday gifts for the kids. Everyone's healing journey is different and when you are carrying grief, anything having to do with holidays, loneliness, or day-to-day reminders is hard. This is compounded for elders or extended family raising children of someone who is missing or murdered--there is a financial and emotional burden that never goes away. Part of doing a thorough needs assessment as their helper is to do our best to meet these needs too.

Make sure to end the conversation with a clear list of attainable deliverables or next steps, recap that list with them, and explain how you are going to move forward and under what timeline. People who are grieving or traumatized need transparency and trust. The best way to do that is to set reasonable goals, only make promises you can keep, and check in with them throughout each step of the process.

Creating Spaces for Healing - Activity Guide

MMIWG2 families, survivors, and their communities need spaces to gather collectively and heal. Here's some tips on how to create healing spaces:

Plan in collaboration with families and survivors. As those most impacted, families and survivors know what forms of healing they would be comfortable with, and what will be useful. No healing space should be created without leadership from families or survivors. There is nothing healing about having other people waste time or money on creating something you didn't ask for and don't want, based on their assumptions about your trauma.

Keep it therapeutic. Be conscious of the medicine and energy you bring to the space. If you are moderating or facilitating, what tone and style of voice are you going to use? What should the ambience of the space be? Remember this space is meant to be a way of wrapping families and survivors in love. There should be minimal chaos or confusion, and every detail should be worked out with families and survivors in mind.

Include easy entry-points. Not everyone feels comfortable going to something that's labeled as a support group or healing space. Sometimes we have to make healing spaces that meet our communities where they are at. Are there things that would be meaningful for people to access that could bring healing? For example, classes or sessions with traditional skills like beading, quilling, carving, hide tanning, fishing, hunting, pottery, weaving, or dancing bring people together in a shared space of learning and reconnecting to culture, and have their own healing medicine that makes it easier for people to talk about heavy subjects and build kinship with each other.

Actively ensure the safety of the space. Whether your space is in person or virtual, ensuring the safety of the space to the best of your ability is crucial. This means thinking through logistics of maintaining confidentiality (and if you can't guarantee that, then tell people up front), asking participants to honor confidentiality and the safety of the space, expectations or ground rules for behavior, whether you share access to the space publicly or not, and who you invite and allow into the space.

Have emotional support resources available. This could be an advocate, therapist, elder, medicine person, or community leader. Depending on the size of your gathering, you should have at least two people available to provide this, in a separate private room that is not visible to the group as a whole. It's also a good idea to have a list of resources like call lines or advocacy centers that participants can call later if they need help.

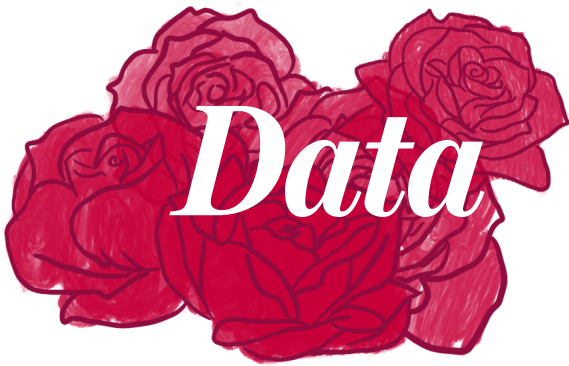
Be open to sharing and healing yourself. It's very hard to create a healing space if you're not willing to heal too. As the facilitator of the space, you have to build trust with the participants and help them feel comfortable with you and the intent of the space. The best way to do that is to be honest about your motivations for putting the space together, your ties to the movement, and as much of your story as you feel comfortable sharing (bearing time constraints in mind).

Give everyone chances to share, but don't pressure. Many people are intimidated to break the ice and be among the first to speak, but still have something they really want to say. Treat pauses like they are natural thinking and processing breaks, rather than awkward silences. No one should be required to speak, but make sure that everyone who wants to gets the chance.

Validate families and survivors who choose to share. It can be a big release to share, but it also takes a big emotional toll. For families and survivors who have been silently grieving for a long time, there is an added vulnerability in breaking their silence. It's important to always validate the families and survivors who choose to share, and honor their story and emotions.

Let things flow organically. Keep it open and flexible. You may have a set agenda, but be ready to let it go as group discussions take shape. Survivors and families know what they need to talk about to heal, let them guide the conversation.

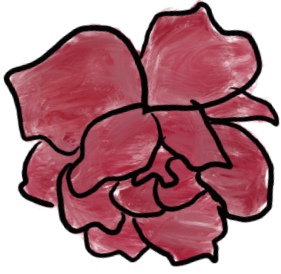
Plan for extra. Plan for the event going on longer than you anticipated, for more people to attend than you budgeted for, and for more support resources to be needed. As Indigenous peoples our communities have a long road of healing ahead, and once a healing space feels comfortable, it will be in high demand.



In this section:

- Determining What Data You Need - Worksheet
- Gathering Your Data, Tips and Strategies
- Caring for Your Data - Quiz
- Reading List
- Fact Sheets

Data



Sovereign Bodies Institute grew out of a need for a formal home for the MMIW Database, the largest database of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people of Canada and the United States. For that reason, our work has always been data-driven, and rooted in principles of Indigenous data sovereignty as integral to safety and sovereignty for Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous data sovereignty, at its core, means that Indigenous peoples not only have access to and control over data on themselves, but also means that they gather their own data for their own self-determination and sovereignty. Indigenous people have always been knowledge gatherers and knowledge keepers, we have always had culturally distinct teachings around access and responsibility to care for knowledge and stories, and we have always used this knowledge to make the right decisions about how to care for our peoples and homelands. This is Indigenous data sovereignty.

In the context of addressing MMIWG2, data sovereignty is a crucial need. Data helps us make effective decisions on how to better support families and survivors, how to address police bias and poor justice system response, and how to reduce and prevent violence. Put simply, we can't solve a problem we don't fully understand. However, it's not just that we need data--we need the right kinds of data, gathered in the right ways, cared for and analyzed by the right people, to be used in the right ways. It's not as simple as entering information into a spreadsheet or software; there are major ethical and logistics decisions to be made along the way.

This section of the toolkit includes a worksheet/activity guide on determining what data you need, some tips and a guide to gathering your data, and quiz to help you figure out how best to use and take care of your data. Try to complete these sections with an open mind and humble heart; it's important to remember that though the MMIWG2 movement has seen a loud call for data in the last two years and it can feel like there is a sense of urgency about diving right into data collection, remember--MMIWG2 data sovereignty means the data gatherers and caretakers should be MMIWG2 families and Indigenous survivors of violence.

Determining What Data You Need - Worksheet

1. What kind of change are you trying to effect using the data? What is your purpose for gathering it? It shouldn't be data just for data's sake; this issue is too sensitive to be gathering data on it without a plan for how you are going to use it. If you don't know, then you aren't ready to start gathering data.

2. If you are using this data to raise awareness, who is your audience, and what kind of data would be most impactful for them? If you are using the data to make decisions on programming and services, what would be helpful information to gather?

3. Do you need raw data (names, dates, individual case information), or would you benefit from access to aggregate numbers and statistics from an already existing data set?

4. What kind of data would be useful to your community? We recommend hosting community dialogues or workshops to answer this question.

5. Listen to the MMIWG2 families in your community--as they share their stories, are there things that stick out? What would gathering more data on those things look like? For example, when several of the families in the same area referenced allegations of sexual violence perpetrated by law enforcement, we started flagging any relevant case in our data, and making a plan for how to create safe spaces for people who may have experienced that violence to come forward.

6. Are you working within a specific region? It doesn't have to follow state or national borders--for example, you may be interested in all cases occurring within a tribe's traditional territories, in close proximity to a pipeline, or in a particular neighborhood.

7. Are you working on a particular issue? For example, are you trying to address domestic violence fatalities, police brutality, or missing and runaway youth in foster care? If your group or organization is concerned about specific issues or topics like this, it's important to know going in--it can totally change the methods you use to collect your data.

8. Are you gathering MMIWG2 data, or opening it up to all MMIP?

9. How far back in time do you want to go in your data?

10. How are you going to define missing and murdered? Will you include suspicious deaths, deaths in custody, cases incorrectly ruled as exposure or suicide, and missing persons cases that have not been reported to law enforcement?

Gathering Your Data - Tips & Strategies

Use a multi-prong approach. One of the things that makes SBI's MMIWG2 data as comprehensive as it is is our multi-prong data collection method. Because recordkeeping of MMIWG2 cases has been so incredibly poor in state and federal databases, as well as law enforcement records, we have to use every tool in our toolbox to gather data. That means augmenting law enforcement records and missing persons database searches with news articles, social media posts, and direct contact with families and Indigenous communities.

Think creative. We are always thinking of new ways to find data or patch holes in our datasets. This data exists in so many hidden pockets, it's important to be creative in finding them. For example, Canada doesn't have the death penalty anymore, but when they did, they kept a log of everyone who was sentenced to execution; SBI used that log, pulled all the cases where someone was executed for killing a woman, found the women's names, and worked backwards to identify which were Indigenous. It took some extra work and community volunteers, but it made a big difference--we added nearly 40 missing and murdered Indigenous women to our data through that process.

Build on relationships. Use your current network to help spread the word of your project, and tap into additional information. For example, when we did the execution data-based project listed above, we reached out to friends and colleagues from Indigenous communities throughout Canada to help us identify which women were Indigenous--they were able to look at the location of the incident and the surname of the victim, make an educated guess about which community they may be from, and help us confirm their identity. Indigenous communities are so rich with knowledge and relationships spanning across the continent and beyond--tapping into that network can be really helpful!

Use Indigenous archives. We already have so much knowledge of this issue in our communities, much more than we realize. Indigenous archives can be an incredibly useful source. For example, tribal newspapers have covered the MMIWG2 issue since the 1970s, tribal enrollment offices usually keep death certificates on file that would state the cause of death, and there are numerous

social media pages and groups that function as informal archives, with thousands of news articles and missing persons fliers.

Reach out. Reach out to families and your community to let them know you're doing this, and invite them to be part of the process. This could be done through awareness events, community workshops, tabling at community events like powwows, or even fliers or a billboard. It's important for families and survivors, and the community as a whole, to know who you are and what you are doing with the data, as trust and strong relationships are essential to this kind of work. It is not something to be done casually or in isolation. If you don't have the relationships already in place and are not comfortable doing sustained outreach efforts to build them, then you shouldn't be gathering data.

Proper Use & Care for Your Data - Quiz

- 1.** Do you have MMIWG2 families in leadership on your project?
 - A.** No
 - B.** We have an advisory board or consultation process with families
 - C.** Yes, we hired MMIWG2 family members and they are overseeing this project
 - D.** Yes, we are MMIWG2 family members ourselves

- 2.** Is the leadership in your project Indigenous? Would your data
 - A.** belong to Indigenous people or institutions?
 - B.** No, we are a non-Indigenous team at a mainstream institution
We have Indigenous people on our team but they are not in
 - C.** leadership and we are at a mainstream institution
We have Indigenous people leading our team, but we are at a
 - D.** mainstream institution
We are Indigenous-led and we are grassroots or based at an
Indigenous institution/organization

- 3.** If you are doing work at an academic institution, do you have IRB (ethics review board) approval?
 - A.** No, and we weren't planning on applying
 - B.** No, but we are working on our application
 - C.** Yes
 - D.** We are not at an academic institution

- 4.** Do you have data access and sharing protocols? How do they reflect the needs and priorities of families, or your communities cultural understanding of taking care of and sharing knowledge?
 - A.** No, we didn't think of creating something like that
 - B.** No, but we are planning on creating them
 - C.** Yes, but they are loosely defined and not codified in our group or organization
 - D.** Yes, and we have them written down and formalized

- 5** Do you have a system in place for safely storing your data?
- A.** We haven't put much thought into that yet, and don't really know where to start or what we need
 - B.** We are currently soliciting advice on which option would be best for our data
 - C.** Yes, but it uses a basic service like Dropbox or Google Drive and we don't have a fire-proof file cabinet for hard copies
 - D.** Yes, and we make sure to use a more secure system like Microsoft Sharepoint, or at least something with two-factor authentication, and we have a fire-proof file cabinet
- 6.** Are there cultural practices that you use or take inspiration from to care for the data?
- A.** No, that's outside our realm of knowledge
 - B.** We would consider it, but don't really know what that means
 - C.** We leave it to the individuals who work with the data to create their own spiritual practices relevant to the work
 - D.** Yes, and our team has discussed them and come to a consensus
- 7.** How do you determine if your proposed storage plan and use for the data matches the needs and priorities of MMIWG2 families?
- A.** We don't do any formal consultations, and mostly just use our best judgement
 - B.** We haven't created a process for that yet
 - C.** We are always open to suggestions and take all MMIWG2 family recommendations seriously
 - D.** We believe in a high level of transparency and make our best effort to continually share with families and the community what we are gathering, how we take care of it, and what we plan to do with it, and actively solicit their advice
- 8.** Are the people who are making meaning out of your data Indigenous? Are they MMIWG2 family members or Indigenous survivors of violence? Do they have experience working on issues like this?
- A.** No, our researchers came to this work out of general personal interest and have no personal ties to the subject
 - B.** We have Indigenous staff members analyzing the data, but they are not MMIWG2 family members or survivors of violence
 - C.** We hire family members and survivors as consultants and they help guide our work analyzing the data
 - D.** We are family members and/or Indigenous survivors

- 9.** Does your team have established self care protocols for those who work with and care for the data?
- A.** No, data is data--it's no big deal
 - B.** We encourage our team members to take breaks when they are overwhelmed
 - C.** We have established protocols for when the data gets too overwhelming or makes someone sick
 - D.** We have a system in place that acknowledges that each of our team members have different self care practices that work for them, and we have protocols that allow for flexibility when a team member needs a break so they can do the self care practice that works best for them
- 10.** Do you or your teammates get sick when working with data? For example, do you get headaches, stomach aches, nausea, chest pain, anxiety, or depression?
- A.** Yes and it's very common
 - B.** Sometimes, but we usually just take a break when that happens
 - C.** Sometimes, but we make spiritual and mental health care available to our team for situations like that
 - D.** Rarely, the data doesn't affect me in that way--it feels good to honor our stolen relatives by documenting their stories

A **Mostly A's:** You should not be gathering raw data on MMIWG2. Your team does not possess the cultural competency, self care protocols, or relationships with families to do this work. We recommend that if you still want to do work on MMIWG2, you take a step back and connect with families. Find out what's most important to them, and think creatively about how you could leverage your skills or institutional power to meet their needs and priorities.

B **Mostly B's:** You are not ready to gather or care for data yet. You have key items like an IRB that are still in flux, and haven't figured out enough of your practices and protocols to have a good sense of how you are going to work with the data and the families in a good way.

C **Mostly C's:** You have a lot of the infrastructure for care and use of data figured out. However, some things could use more attention or detail, like committing to more established team self care protocols. You also could probably include families and survivors in your work in a more meaningful way. For these reasons, proceed with your plan of use and care, but only after consulting with the families and survivors on your team and giving them more decision-making power in the process.

D **Mostly D's:** You have the right team and leadership in place, and you've given a great deal of thought to the important issues re: caring for and using this data. Proceed full steam ahead!



Reading List

There are lots of scholarly articles, books, and reports on MMIWG2 and violence against Indigenous women and girls. This is not a comprehensive list of every resource that's out there, but should give you some good places to start. If you don't have an academic subscription to access the articles for free, we recommend you try the library of the nearest college or university, or reach out to the authors directly via email to see if they can share it with you.

MMIWG2S

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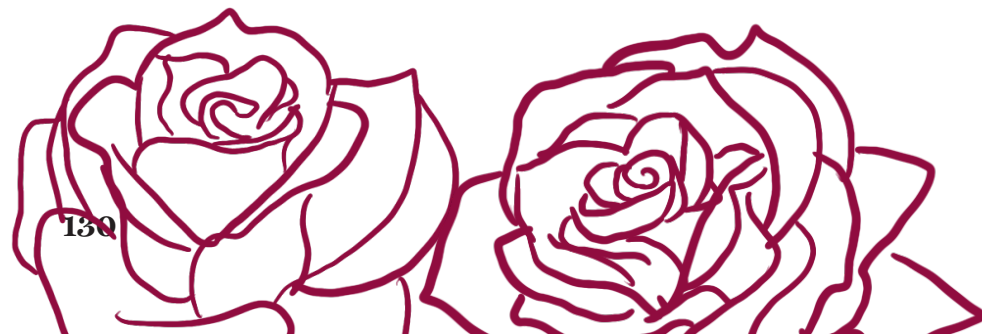
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WEST REGION



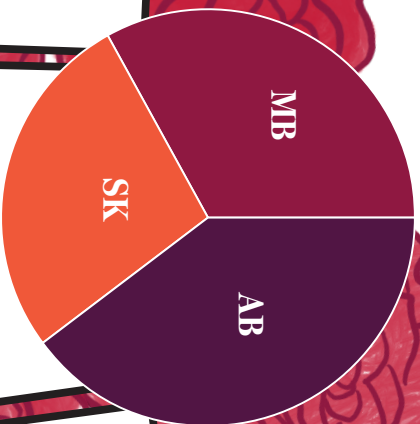
British Columbia

Since
1900-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 27
384 Women Murdered
100 Women Missing
22 Unknown Status

Total MMIWG2: 506

PRAIRIE REGION



Alberta
317

Since 1934-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 28
202 Women Murdered
96 Women Missing
11 Unknown Status

Saskatchewan
214

Since 1918-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 26
121 Women Murdered
78 Women Missing
15 Unknown Status

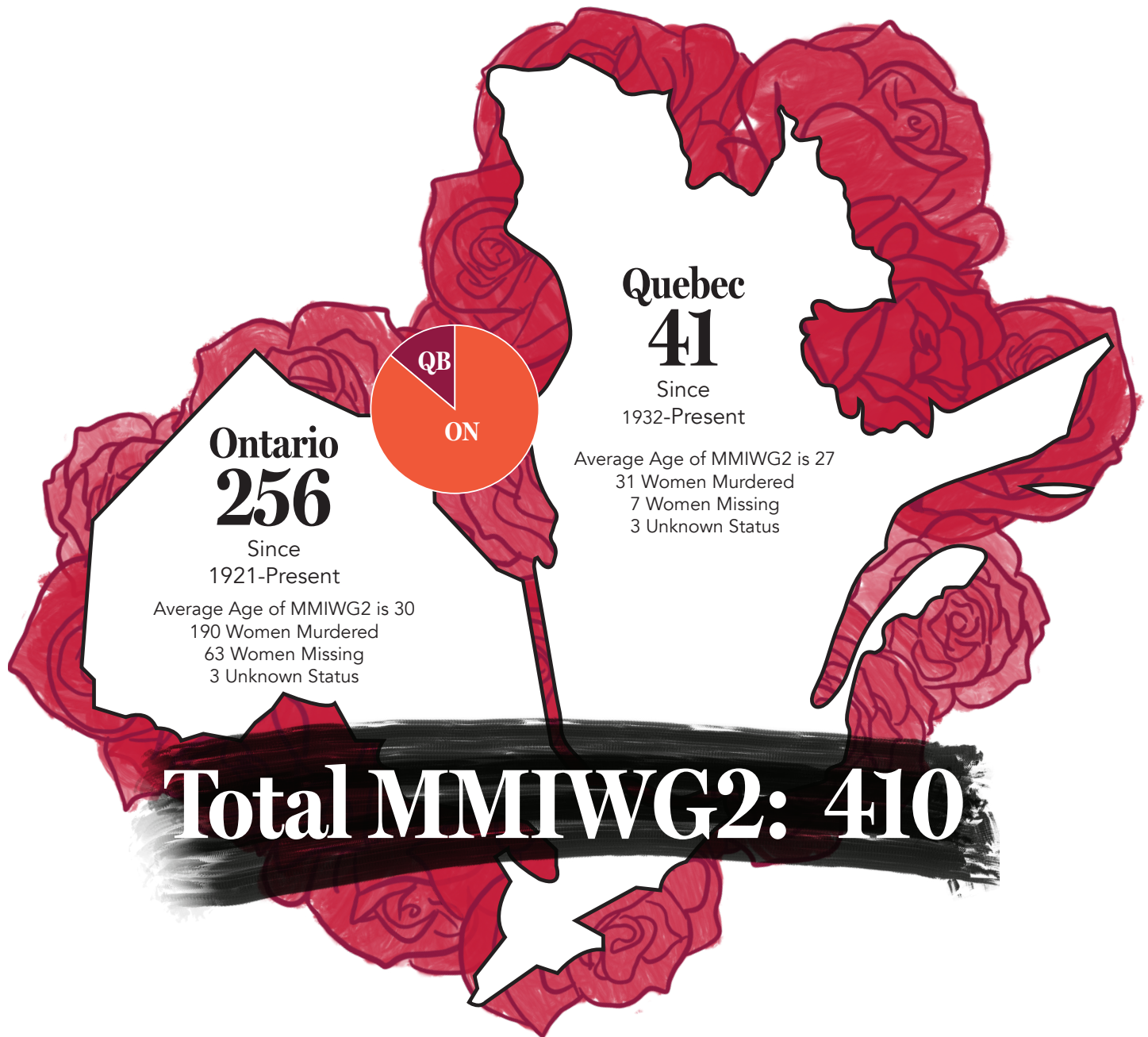
Manitoba
262

Since 1906-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 25
171 Women Murdered
77 Eomen Missing
14 Unknown Status

Total MIMIWG2: 793

CENTRAL REGION

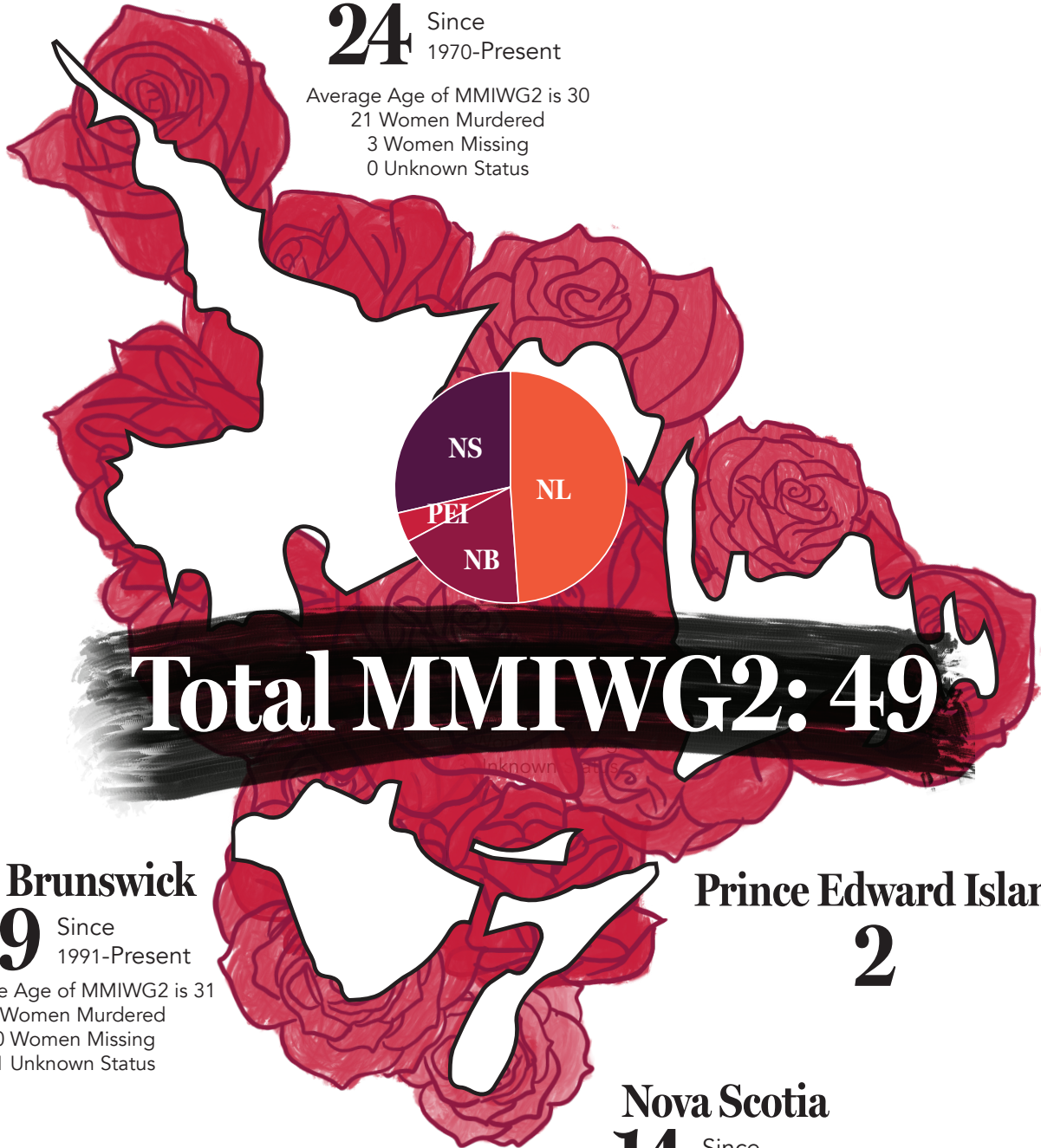


ATLANTIC REGION

Newfoundland & Labrador

24 Since 1970-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 30
21 Women Murdered
3 Women Missing
0 Unknown Status



Total MMIWG2: 49

New Brunswick

9 Since 1991-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 31
8 Women Murdered
0 Women Missing
1 Unknown Status

Prince Edward Island

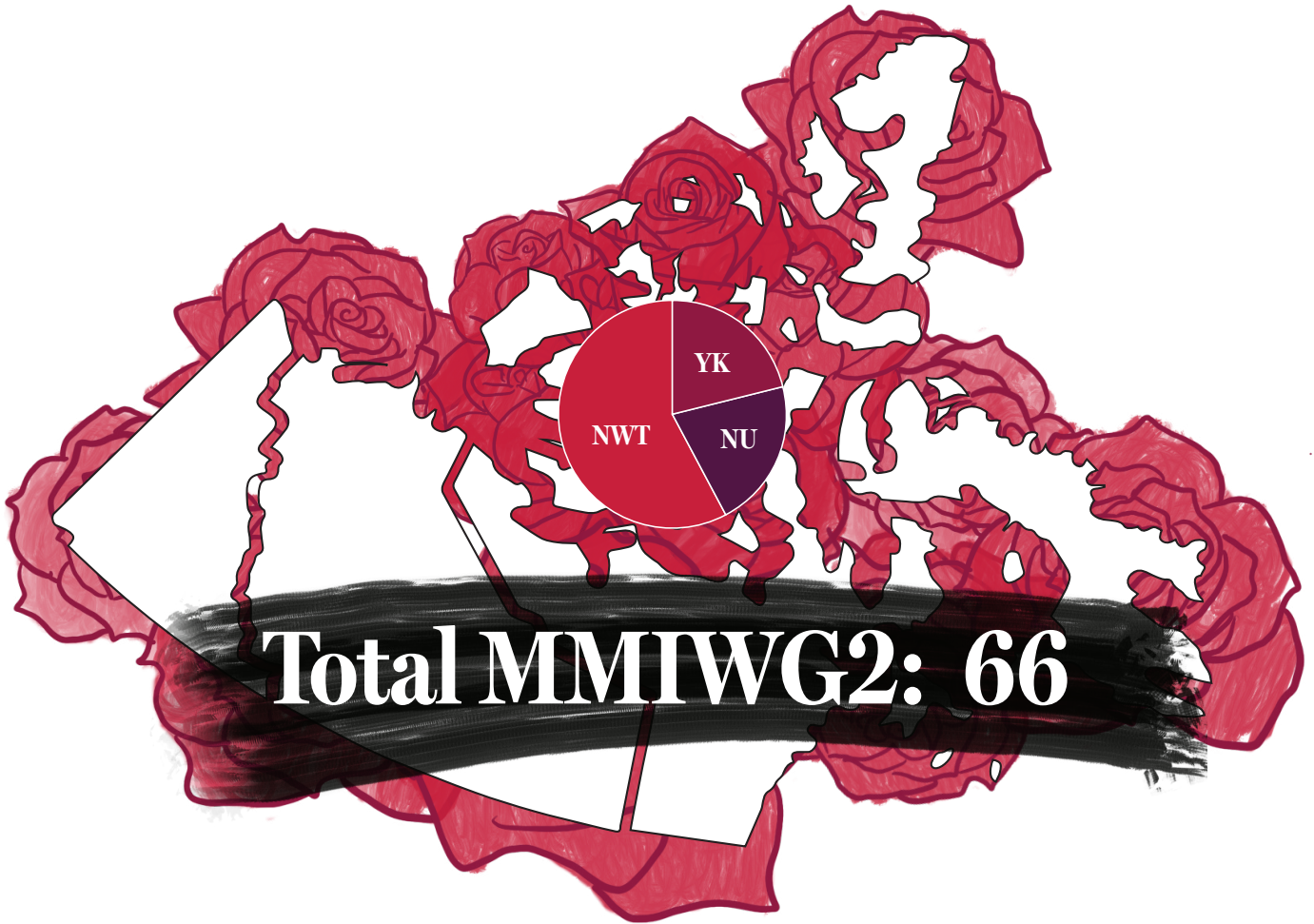
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Nova Scotia

14 Since 1977-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 30
13 Women Murdered
1 Women Missing
0 Unknown Status

NORTH REGION



Total MMIWG2: 66

Yukon

14 Since 1922-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 29
12 Women Murdered
1 Women Missing
1 Unknown Status

Nunavut

14 Since 1977-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 30
13 Women Murdered
1 Women Missing
0 Unknown Status

NWT

38 Since 1907-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 25
27 Women Murdered
8 Women Missing
3 Unknown Status

MIDWEST REGION

Total MMIWG2: 643

Indiana

1 Since
1974-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 12
1 Women Murdered
0 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Arkansas

6 Since
1910-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 338
1 Women Murdered
5 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Illinois

9 Since
1994-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 36
8 Women Murdered
1 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Ohio

5 Since
1987-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 24
3 Women Murdered
2 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

North Dakota

36 Since
1914-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 29
29 Women Murdered
8 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

South Dakota

132 Since
1900-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 26
117 Women Murdered
15 Women Missing
0 Unknown Status

Minnesota

123 Since
1932-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 24
63 Women Murdered
60 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Oklahoma

162 Since
1900-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 25
87 Women Murdered
73 Women Missing
2 Unknown Status

Wisconsin

29 Since
1908-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 36
24 Women Murdered
12 Women Missing

Michigan

19 Since
1902-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 33
8 Women Murdered
11 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Iowa

9 Since
1957-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 26
4 Women Murdered
5 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Missouri

5 Since
1923-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 22
5 Women Murdered
0 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Nebraska

97 Since
1908-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 20
19 Women Murdered
69 Women Missing
9 Unknown Status

Kansas

10 Since
1901-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 46
9 Women Murdered
1 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

Idaho

24 Since 1908-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 22
8 Women Murdered
16 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Montana

237 Since 1944-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 23
123 Women Murdered
71 Women Missing
40 Unknown Status

Wyoming

20 Since 2004-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 21
18 Women Murdered
2 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Colorado

24 Since 1983-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 32
16 Women Murdered
8 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Total MIMIWG2: 305



EAST COAST REGION



Maine
2 Since
 1984-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 26
 1 Women Murdered
 1 Women Missing
 N/A Unknown Status

Maryland
4 Since
 1934-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 31
 4 Women Murdered
 0 Women Missing
 N/A Unknown Status

Massachusetts
2 Since
 1977-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 15
 1 Women Murdered
 1 Women Missing
 N/A Unknown Status

New York
16 Since
 1900-Present

Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 34
 11 Women Murdered
 5 Women Missing
 N/A Unknown Status

New Hampshire
0

Rhode Island
0

New Jersey
0

South Carolina
0

Vermont
0

Pennsylvania
0

Virginia
2

West Virginia
0

Total MIMIWG2: 26

WEST COAST REGION



Total MMIWG2: 633

Washington

235 Since 1900-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 25

121 Women Murdered

112 Women Missing

N/A Unknown Status

Oregon

74 Since 1900-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 21

28 Women Murdered

46 Women Missing

N/A Unknown Status

California

169 Since 1906-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 29

81 Women Murdered

87 Women Missing

1 Unknown Status

Hawaii

6 Since 1993-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 22

1 Women Murdered

5 Women Missing

N/A Unknown Status

Alaska

149 Since 1917-Present

Average Age of MMIWG2 is 32

87 Women Murdered

38 Women Missing

24 Unknown Status

SOUTH REGION

Tennessee

2

Kentucky

3

Since 12016-Present
Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 22
2 Women Murdered
1 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Alabama

0

Florida

14

Since 1970-Present
Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 30
6 Women Murdered
8 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status

Georgia

3

Since 1993-Present
Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 18
2 Women Murdered
1 Women Missing
N/A Unknown Status



Total MIMIWG2: 22

SOUTH WEST REGION

Utah
 Since 1912-Present
 Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 37
 35 Women Murdered
 4 Women Missing
 N/A Unknown Status

Nevada
 Since 1912-Present
 Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 47
 16 Women Murdered
 2 Women Missing
 2 Unknown Status

Texas
 Since 1907-Present
 Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 21
 15 Women Murdered
 18 Women Missing
 N/A Unknown Status

Arizona
 Since 1930-Present
 Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 27
 119 Women Murdered
 57 Women Missing
 2 Unknown Status

New Mexico
 Since 1914-Present
 Average Age of MIMIWG2 is 29
 95 Women Murdered
 86 Women Missing
 7 Unknown Status

Total MIMIWG2: 458



Policy

In this section:

- MMIWG2 Policy in Canada
- Navigating Jurisdiction in the United States
- Writing & Assessing Policy
- Assessing an Existing Policy
- Questions Used to Evaluate Policy
- Writing Tribal Resolutions
- Lobbying 101
- Testifying



MMIW Policy 101

MMIWG2 Policy in Canada

Wally Oppal Inquiry

This inquiry, launched in 2010 by the British Columbia provincial government, was a response to the neglect and complicity of law enforcement in the mass deaths and disappearances of women from Vancouver's Downtown East Side (DTES), most of whom were Indigenous. It largely centered around the poor law enforcement and justice system response to the crimes of serial killer Robert Pickton, a white pig farmer who preyed on women of the DTES, especially those who were Indigenous and/or working in the sex trade. The remains of 33 women were found on his farm and he admitted to an undercover police officer that he killed 49 women, but he was only convicted for killing 6 women. His conviction occurred in 2007, 10 years after the RCMP was made aware of violent incidents occurring against women at his farm and 9 years after a charge was stayed for the incident. The inquiry found that pervasive law enforcement bias against women who were Indigenous, unsheltered, in the sex trade, and/or substance using led to a system failure to hold Pickton accountable earlier and prevent further deaths and disappearances.

Truth & Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was brought forth by the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement that took place from 2008 to 2015. The initiative enacted the documentation of the history and the impacts of Indian residential schools, where physical, sexual, and cultural abuse against Indigenous children was commonplace. The TRC created a space where former and current students, along with their families and communities, could gather and share their stories and experiences to promote awareness from the harms caused by Indian residential schools. When the TRC concluded in 2015, the Commission released a report with 94 calls to action to address the impacts and legacies of the residential school system, and take meaningful steps towards reconciliation. The report included a book-length chapter on missing Indigenous children and unidentified graves--many Indigenous children died or disappeared trying to run away from the abuse at the schools, and mass graves have been found at multiple sites. These children represent an earlier phase of the MMIWG2 crisis, and the violence

and trauma of the schools created the conditions for future generations to continue to experience violence, go missing, or be killed.

National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

MMIWG2 families and grassroots activists fought for a national inquiry for three decades. The idea behind the inquiry was to create a formal mechanism for truth-telling and investigation into the widespread neglect of MMIWG2 cases, violence against Indigenous women and two spirit people, and complicity of law enforcement across Canada. In 2015, the Canadian government announced an inquiry would take place.

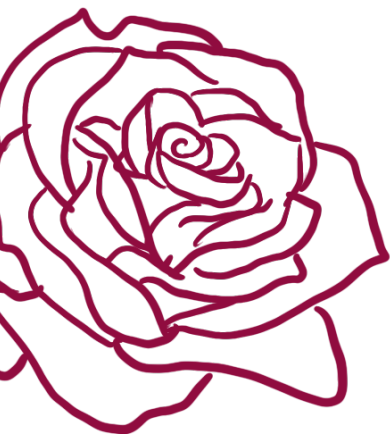
An independent Commission was created to lead the inquiry, and altogether, the Commission reported that they held 24 hearings, collected statements from 750 people, visited 8 correctional facilities, heard testimony from 468 family members and survivors of violence, did private interviews with 270 family members and survivors, archived artistic expressions from 819 people, and consulted 84 expert witnesses. Despite these numbers, the inquiry was subject to consistent questioning and criticism due to poor planning, high staff turnover, insensitivity to families and survivors, poor outreach, lack of leadership from families and survivors, lack of transparency, and lack of adequate support for families and survivors.

The Commission released a final report in June of 2019, summarizing the findings of the inquiry. In the report, the Commission stated that they found that the MMIWG2 crisis constitutes race and gender-based genocide. Though the inquiry released a report with a large number of recommendations and strong language, the day-to-day realities of many families remain the same. Now, staff at Family Information Liaison Units and family-led organizations and collectives work to meet the continued needs of families, and continue the fight for justice.

United States MMIWG2 Federal & State Legislation

Overview

Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) and Ashleigh Fixico (Muscogee (Creek) Nation), with support from Whitney Whitehorn (Osage Nation)



A resolution designating May 5, 2019, as the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls" - S. Res. 60, H. Res. 222, S. Res. 401, S. Res. 144:

Senate Resolutions 60, 401, and 144 established May 5 as National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls in 2017, 2018, and 2019, respectively. The date May 5 was selected in honor of Hanna Harris's birthday—Hanna was a Northern Cheyenne mother who was sexually assaulted and murdered in Lame Deer, Montana in 2013. All three resolutions were introduced by Senator Steve Daines (R-MT). House Resolution 222, introduced by Representative Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), supported S. Res. 60 in 2017.

Bridging Agency Data Gaps and Ensuring Safety (BADGES) for Native Communities Act – H.R. 4289 & S. 1853:

The Bridging Agency Data Gaps and Ensuring Safety (BADGES) for Native Communities Act, S. 1853, was introduced on June 13, 2019 by Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) and all members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. S. 1853 is a bipartisan bill that would address critical public safety needs in Indian Country by addressing federal inefficiencies that hinder Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement recruitment and retention, increasing the effectiveness of federal missing persons systems and data sharing with tribal nations, and enhancing coordination between federal, state, tribal, and local governments and their law enforcement responding to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) crisis. S.

S. 1853 was referred to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs who held a hearing on June 19, 2019. The Committee ordered the bill to be reported with a substitute amendment and no further action has been taken. On September 11, 2019, Congresswoman Deb Haaland (D-NM) introduced a companion bill, H.R. 4289. H.R. 4289 and S. 1853 are nearly identical in their approach to addressing the MMIW crisis. The only differences

between the bills are technical in nature. H.R. 4289 was referred to the House Committees on the Judiciary, Natural Resources, Energy and Commerce, and Oversight and Reform. The bill was then referred to the relevant subcommittees and no further action has been taken.

Not Invisible Act – H.R. 2438 & S. 982: The Not Invisible Act, H.R. 2438, was introduced on May 1, 2019 by Congresswoman Deb Haaland (D-NM) and 16 other congressional members. H.R. 2438 is a bipartisan bill that seeks to engage law enforcement, tribal leaders, federal partners, and service providers to better respond to the crisis of missing, murdered, and trafficked American Indian and Alaska Native people. H.R. 2438 would also create an advisory committee to the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice, comprised of tribal, local, and federal stakeholders. The committee would make best practices recommendations to combat

violent crimes and to fill gaps in services for victims of violent crimes. Importantly, H.R. 2438 would improve the response to missing and murdered Indians and violent crime by: directing the Department of the Interior to designate an official who will enhance cross-agency coordination efforts to address missing, trafficked, and murdered Indians and expressly requiring the Secretary of the Interior and Attorney General to respond to the advisory committee's recommendations. H.R. 2438 was referred to the House Committees on Natural Resources and the Judiciary. On March 11, 2020, the Committee on the Judiciary held a Consideration and Mark-up session and ordered the bill to be reported. On April 2, 2019, Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Jon Tester (D-MT) introduced a companion bill, S. 982. H.R. 2438 and S. 982 are identical in their approach to addressing the crisis of missing, murdered, and trafficked American Indians and Alaska Natives. S. 982 was referred to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs who held a hearing on June 19, 2019. On March 11, 2020, the Senate passed S. 982 and the bill is currently being held at the desk in the House.

Savanna's Act – H.R. 2733 & S. 227: Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) reintroduced Savanna's Act, S. 227, on January 25, 2019. S. 227 is named in

honor of Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, a young Native woman who was tragically murdered in North Dakota in 2017. The bill seeks to combat the Missing and Murdered Indian Women and Girls (MMIWG) epidemic by improving the federal government's response to addressing the crisis. Savanna's Act would increase coordination among federal, state, tribal, and local law enforcement, improve data collection and information sharing, and provide tribal governments with the resources they need to address MMIWG cases within their communities. S. 227 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and a hearing was held on the bill on June 19, 2019. On March 11, 2020, the Senate passed S. 227 and the bill is currently being held at the desk in the House. On May 14, 2019, Congresswoman Norma Torres (D-CA) and Congressman Dan Newhouse (R-WA) introduced H.R. 2733, a companion bill to S. 227. H.R. 2733 and S. 227 differ slightly as the House version builds on previous versions of Savanna's Act by expanding the requirement for the creation of law enforcement guidelines to all U.S. Attorneys, not just those with Indian Country jurisdiction. It also requires the Attorney General to publicly list the law enforcement agencies that comply with the legislation's provisions and includes a new implementation and incentive section that provides grant authority to law enforcement organizations to implement the provisions of the legislation. Despite their minute differences, both bills aim to improve federal response to MMIWG cases by: improving tribal access to federal criminal information databases; requiring data collection on missing and murdered Native people; and directing U.S. Attorneys to review, revise, and develop law enforcement and justice protocols to address missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. H.R. 2733 was referred to the House Natural Resources and Judiciary Committees. On March 11, 2020, the Committee on the Judiciary held a Consideration and Mark-up session and ordered the bill to be reported.

Studying the Missing and Murdered Indian Crisis Act of 2019 – H.R. 2029 & S. 336: On February 5, 2019, Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) introduced S. 336, the Studying the Missing and Murdered Indian Crisis Act of 2019. S. 336 would direct the Government Accountability Office to conduct a full review of how federal agencies respond to reports of missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives and recommend

solutions based on their findings. No further action has been taken since S. 336 was introduced. Congressman Ruben Gallego (D-AZ) introduced H.R. 2029, an identical companion bill to S. 336, on April 2, 2019. H.R. 2029 was referred to the House Committees on the Judiciary, Natural Resources, and their respective subcommittees of jurisdiction for consideration. No further action has been taken.

Tribal Reporting and Accountability to Congress (TRAC) Act

– **S. 1892:** The Tribal Reporting and Accountability to Congress (TRAC) Act, S. 1892, was introduced by Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) on June 19, 2019. S. 1892 would require Tribal Liaisons at the U.S. Attorney General’s office to provide data regarding the number of missing and murdered American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) cases that have been reported, investigated, resolved; the number of missing and murdered AI/AN cold cases; the number of individuals within the Department of Justice actively working on missing and murdered AI/AN cases; number of cases referred for prosecution from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal law enforcement agencies; and the number of cases that were declined for prosecution with an explanation for why the cases were not prosecuted. S. 1892 was referred to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs for consideration and no further action has been taken.

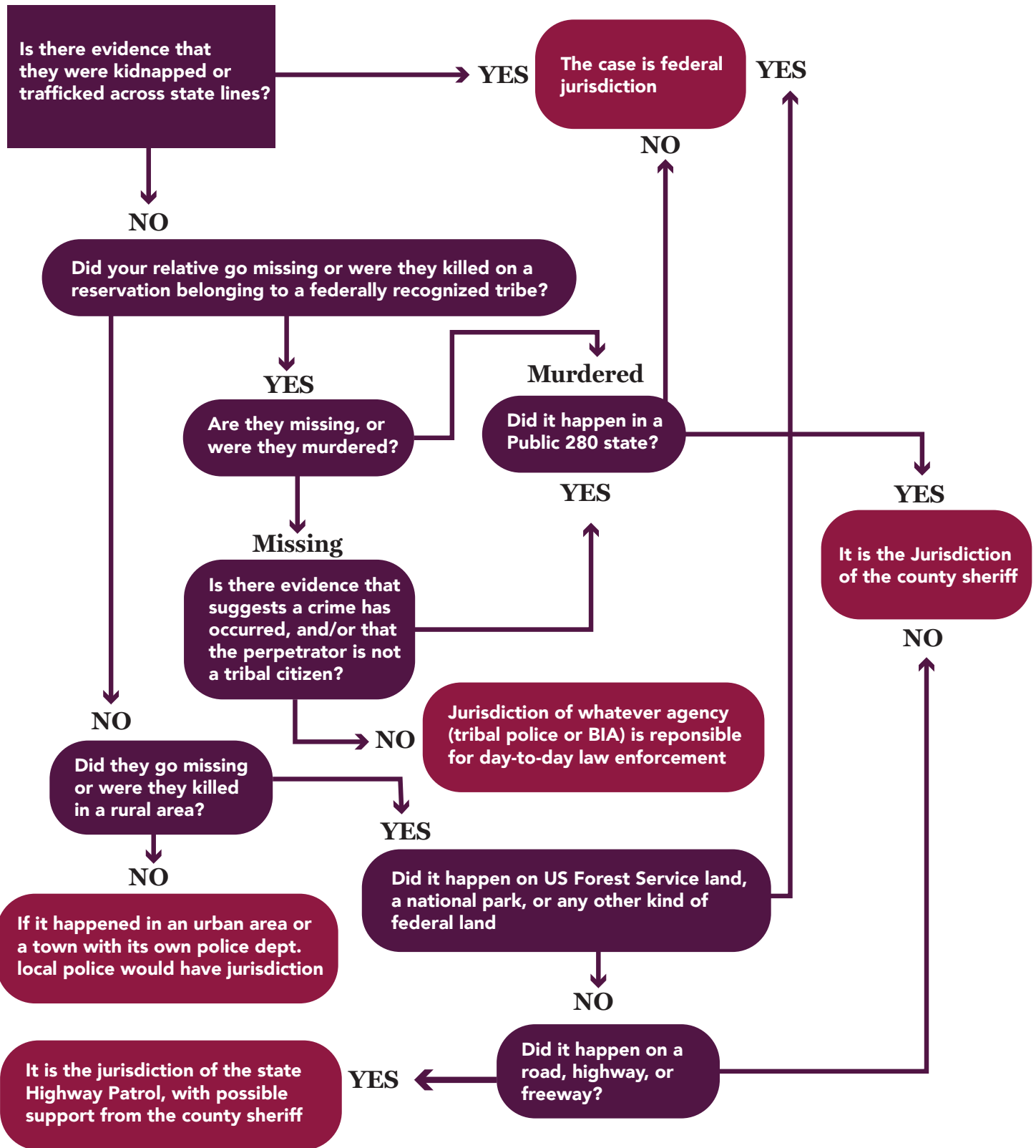
Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act – H.R. 1585 &

S. 2843/S. 2920: The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA), H.R. 1585, was introduced on March 7, 2019 by Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA). H.R. 1585 contains key provisions that would restore tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians for certain crimes involving children, sexual violence, stalking, sex trafficking, obstruction of justice, and assaults against law enforcement and corrections personnel. The bill also includes provisions aimed at improving the response to cases of missing and murdered Native women. Specifically, H.R. 1585 would require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit a comprehensive report that reviews each law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over missing or murdered Indians and their response procedures; each database and notification system; federal interagency cooperation and notification policies and procedures; and the requirements of each federal law enforcement agency notifying state, local, and tribal law

enforcement agencies and the public. The bill would also require the Comptroller General to make recommendations to improve how databases address missing and murdered women cases; better understand social, education, economic, or other factors that contribute to such cases; and direct future legislation to address the epidemic. H.R. 1585 was referred to the House Committees on Judiciary, Energy and Commerce, Financial Services, Ways and Means, Education and Labor, Natural Resources, and Veterans' Affairs.

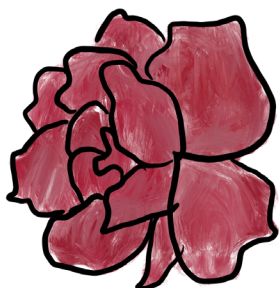
The bill was reported and amended by the Judiciary Committee and was passed by the House on April 4, 2019. The Senate has yet to take any action on H.R. 1585. The Senate has decided that it will not consider H.R. 1585. Instead, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) introduced S. 2843 on November 13, 2019. S. 2843 contains similar tribal provisions of H.R. 1585 and has broad support across Indian Country. Despite such broad support, Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) introduced S. 2920 on November 20, 2019. S. 2920 recognizes the need to expand tribal jurisdiction to cover additional crimes, but contains several provisions similar to those rejected during the VAWA 2013 debate that would undermine the independence of tribal courts, destabilize the protections offered in tribal courts under the Indian Civil Rights Act, and hold tribal courts to standards higher than any federal, state, or territorial court in the country while also subjecting them to oversight and review that no other courts experience. S. 2843 was referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary for consideration. The Committee has yet to hold a hearing on S. 2843. Additionally, S. 2920 was read twice and placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. No further action has been undertaken on S. 2920.

<i>STATE</i>	<i>MMIW LEGISLATION PASSED</i>	<i>LINK TO LEGISLATION TEXT</i>
Arizona	HB 2570	https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/54leg/1R/bills/HB2570P.pdf
California	Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 83	https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200ACR83
Hawaii	Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 70	https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2020/bills/SCR70_.HTM
Maine	HP1203	http://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/bills_129th/billtexts/HP120301.asp
Montana	Hanna's Act	https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2019/billhtml/HB0021.htm
Montana	HB 54	https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2019/billhtml/HB0054.htm
Montana	SB 40	https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2019/sesslaws/ch0250.pdf
Nebraska	LB 154	https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/106/PDF/Intro/LB154.pdf
New Mexico	HB 278	https://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/19%20Regular/final/HB0278.pdf
Oklahoma	HB 3345	https://legiscan.com/OK/text/HB3345/2020
Oregon	HB 2625	https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2625/Enrolled
South Dakota	SB 164	https://sdlegislature.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/Bill.aspx?File=SB164P.htm&Session=2019&Version=Printed&Bill=164
Utah	HB 116	https://le.utah.gov/~2020/bills/static/HB0116.html
Utah	HCR 6	https://le.utah.gov/~2020/bills/static/HB0116.html
Washington	HB 1713	http://lawfilesex.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/1713-S2.PL.pdf?q=20200413205514
Wyoming	SF008	https://www.wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2020/SF0008



Writing & Assessing Policy

Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) and Ashleigh Fixico (Muscogee (Creek) Nation), with support from Whitney Whitehorn (Osage Nation)



The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women crisis is a result of outdated, inadequate, and inefficient policies that hinder tribal governments' efforts to protect their women and girls from violence. Policy, however, is a critical tool in addressing the MMIW issue because tribal leaders, advocates, survivors, and families have the power to hold the federal government accountable and demand necessary changes to increase the safety of Native women and girls. Tribal nations have continuously advocated for the federal government's immediate action in creating policy that ensures tribal nations have the authority and resources necessary to prevent more Native women from going missing. The MMIW issue is complex and requires a response that spans policy sectors including healthcare, education, economic development, and housing. Tribal governments and tribal communities, however, are the best equipped to guide policies that strengthen sovereignty and provide tribal nations with the necessary resources to provide justice for Native women.

Assessing an Existing Policy

Tribal communities, victims and their families, and advocates across Indian Country are holding lawmakers accountable to their missing and murdered relatives by engaging and guiding Congress in their development of MMIW policy. While influencing policy is accomplished in various stages of the legislative process, assessing proposed policy before it is passed is crucial.

As lawmakers develop policy, providing feedback on legislative drafts and introduced bills provides advocates an opportunity to tell lawmakers how their policy, if enacted, would impact tribal communities. This advocacy tactic requires an understanding of the policy, its merits, and the impacts it would have if enacted. Assessing policies to determine their impact relies on two aspects: the key components of policymaking and questions used to evaluate policy generally and specific to addressing MMIW.

The components shared here may not appear in every policy because the structure and content of policy varies considerably according to its purpose. These key components, however, provide a framework from which specific questions should be asked to evaluate a policy's effort to achieve its intended purpose.

Key Components of Policy: To begin assessing an existing or proposed policy, the first step is understanding the key components of policy design. Considering the following key policy components provides a broad overview of the proposed policy that will be especially useful when analyzing the specific, more technical details of the policy.

Purpose of the Policy: Every policy must have a purpose, such as addressing a problem or raising awareness of an issue. Policy purposes can be very specific or very broad, and some policies state their purpose explicitly while others must be inferred or generalized. Determining the purpose of policy provides a guide to assessing that policy and information that may be required to effectively do so.

Specific Actions to be Taken: After lawmakers identify an issue and the purpose of policy, they must determine actions that will be undertaken if their policy is enacted. Actions to be taken can either be conditional, often signified by the word 'may', or definite, signified by the word 'shall.' Assessing proposed actions should consider the consequences such action would have if performed and its consequences it would have if it were not performed.

Entities Involved and Impacted by Policy: Identifying relevant stakeholders, regulatory agencies, and others impacted by the policy provides a glimpse into the implementation of the policy and any barriers that may arise given those who are involved with and impacted by the policy's implementation. Such insight allows a policy's effectiveness and impact to be assessed before it is enacted. MMIW advocates and families should ensure that the families of MMIW victims are involved in the drafting and creation of MMIW policies. Likewise, law enforcement (state, tribal, and federal) should be brought to the table—not to veto ideas or issues raised by MMIW family members—but instead to ensure that the policy takes into consideration the barriers law enforcement faces in investigating MMIW crimes. Advocates should search for the

individuals working inside and with law enforcement who understand what current laws and policies allow law enforcement to abdicate their duties to investigate MMIW crimes and seek to utilize those individuals' expertise in the crafting of any MMIW policy.

Implementation Guidance: The legislature crafts policy while the executive branch implements the policy. The legislature, however, may direct a policy's implementation by expressly including implementation requirements that the implementing entity would be required to abide by if the policy is enacted. The legislature may not provide enough implementation guidance or will provide too much, so evaluating this key component would provide an assessment of the policy's efficiency and effectiveness.

Appropriations and Funding Requirements (if applicable): Policy implementation requires funding, so it is important to assess a policy's appropriation requirements and funding requirements that may be used to disburse funds if applicable. Tribal governments are often an after-thought in federal appropriations and/or receive grants through an intermediary that keeps a portion of the appropriations. Evaluating a policy's appropriation provisions and/or funding requirements allows advocates to direct lawmakers' attention to the consequences that would diminish the policy's efforts before the policy is finalized and enacted.

Metrics and Accountability: Implementing policy without requiring any accountability would undermine its effectiveness because there is no way to measure whether the policy achieved its goal or to identify any unintended outcomes. Ensuring data collection and accountability requirements reflect and provide for Indian Country's diversity is important in assessing a policy's merits and impact.

Questions Used to Evaluate Policy

Evaluating existing and proposed policy requires reflection and understanding of the issue and the steps the policy will take to achieve its intended purpose. When assessing a policy, it is important to keep in mind things that are crucial to addressing the issue the policy intends to address. A way to do this is to develop a list of questions, like the ones provided below, that should be asked to determine the merits of the proposed policy. Questions can be broad or specific depending on expertise and knowledge of the issue area.

General Questions

- Q Was this policy created with input from MMIW/MMIP families?
- Q Does this policy support tribal sovereignty and self-determination?
- Q Does the policy require accountability to tribal nations during implementation?
- Q Does the policy mandate local, state, tribal, and federal coordination and cooperation?
- Q Does the policy rely on evidence from the community, academic studies, data, or other forms of evidence in developing their actions to addressing the issue?
- Q Is the policy culturally relevant?
- Q Does the policy provide funding directly to tribal nations and/or non-profit organizations run and administered by Native people?
- Q How does this policy affect current policies or programs focused on addressing the same issue?
- Q How have existing policies solved, exacerbated, or alleviated the issue?
- Q What are the current flaws and limitations of existing policy?
- Q Are there alternatives to the policy that would better address the issue?
- Q Is the policy feasible?
- Q Are there benefits or advantages to the policy? Are there negatives and disadvantages of the policy?
- Q What are the most critical obstacles that should be anticipated in implementing the policy?
- Q Does the policy require measurable outcomes?
- Q What protocols or mechanisms are embedded in the policy to ensure that MMIW/MMIP families have a voice and are able to advocate for change if the policy is not working?

Writing Tribal Resolutions

Resolutions, in their several forms, are expressions of a lawmaking body's sentiment and acknowledgement of an issue that warrants legislative action. Tribal resolutions function in the same way except they are oftentimes specific to the unique circumstances of the communities for which they were created. Tribal resolutions can be specific to a certain issue afflicting the tribal government or can be broad to express support for an organization's activities. Tribal nations can utilize broad or specific resolutions depending on the resolution's intended purpose. Tribal resolutions vary widely in their approaches to addressing a policy issue but understanding the purpose of a resolution and its intended outcomes is crucial in determining which approach would be most effective. Broad resolutions are more suited for situations in which someone else should take action and specific resolutions are better suited for situations in which action will be taken.

Regardless of any resolution's intended purpose, there are four keys steps to writing any resolution:

- 1.** Identify the Issue – State the issue clearly and concisely
- 2.** Research the Issue – Collect narratives, statistics, and supporting evidence of why the issue is important
- 3.** Support the Issue – Use whereas clauses to explain why the action should be taken using research collected
- 4.** Resolve the Issue – Resolved clauses should be the strongest part of the resolution and clearly state the action that should be taken to address the issue supported by the whereas clauses.

Resolutions urge a certain course of action, but they can be broad or specific depending on the purpose of the resolution. Broad tribal resolutions are often used to express support for policy recommendations or to urge lawmakers to take certain action. For example, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) passes broad resolutions addressing issues that affect all of Indian Country, not just a single tribal nation.



The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #PHX-16-077

TITLE: Addressing Crisis of Missing and Murdered Native Women

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Shawnee Tribe
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
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ROCKY MOUNTAIN
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Tsuap Tribe

WEST
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Redding Rancheria

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
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Crow Indian

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Yuchi Tribe

SOUTHWEST
Lana Orosin
Paiute Shoshone/Pitkin/Coconino Tribes

SOUTH
Joe Garcia
Gila/Chiricahua Pueblo

WESTERN
Brian Ignacio
Ute Indian Tribe

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Pala
Tsuap

NCAI HEADQUARTERS
1515 P Street, N.W.
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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, on some reservations American Indian and Alaska Native women face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average; and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide is the third leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women between 10 and 24 years of age and the fifth leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native women between 25 and 34 years of age; and

WHEREAS, Hanna Harris of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Tribe was 21 years old when she went missing on July 4, 2013 and, due to the inadequate response of the justice system, her family and friends searched for Hanna, led a march for justice for Hanna's murder and for other unresolved murders of American Indian women; and

WHEREAS, RoyLynn Rides Horse of the Crow Tribe was beaten, burned and left for dead, and walked several miles before collapsing and due to inadequate response of the justice system to investigate RoyLynn's case, the Crow Tribe also led a march for justice on June 16, 2016; and

WHEREAS, on the day RoyLynn Rides Horse passed over the Montana congressional delegation introduced a resolution to designate May 5, 2017 as National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls, which seeks to commemorate the lives of missing and murdered American Indian and Alaska Native women; and

WHEREAS, over 175 tribal, state, regional, and national organizations have joined with the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center in support of the resolution to create a National Day of Awareness for Missing Native Women and Girls; and

WHEREAS, the Violence Against Women Act of 2005, and 2013, directed the Attorney General, acting through the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), to conduct a program of research to develop a more comprehensive understanding of violence against Native women, specifically including murder of Native women.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians does hereby support the congressional resolution creating a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby resolve to call upon the Department of Justice to fully implement the VAWA 2005 program of research and specifically provide Indian tribes information regarding the disappearance and murder of Native women; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby resolve to advocate for changes to increase safety for Native women to address the crisis of missing and murdered Native women and girls by the federal government, with agencies including but not limited to the Departments of Justice, Interior, and Health and Human Services including actions, such as:

1. To review, revise, and create law enforcement and justice protocols appropriate to the disappearance of Native women and girls, including inter-jurisdictional issues; and
2. To provide increased victim services to the families and community members of the disappeared or murdered Native women such as counseling for the children of the disappeared, burial assistance and community walks and healing ceremonies; and
3. Coordination of efforts across federal departments to increase the response to the disappearance or murder of Native women and girls; and
4. Coordinate in consultation with Indian tribes efforts to increase the response of state governments, where appropriate, to cases of disappearance or murder of Native women or girls; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

Broad resolutions such as the one passed by NCAI allow tribal nations to reach a consensus regarding policy that lawmakers can use in drafting legislation that is reflective of and responsive to the priorities of a wider array of tribal nations. These broad resolutions are valuable tools for lawmakers because they express broad priorities, not specific actions that must be taken, that should be considered in policymaking. The drawback of broad resolutions is that they are easily overgeneralized, which can undermine the resolution's overall purpose. Such resolutions are helpful in expressing support and creating awareness of policy issues, but tribal nations wishing to implement change at the community-level should consider utilizing specific resolutions that require specific actions.

Examples of Broad Resolutions

- A resolution demanding coordination among local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies when a Native woman or girl is reported missing.
- A resolution declaring a state of emergency due to the pervasiveness of MMIW in tribal communities.
- A resolution urging Congress to enact legislation that protects and increases safety for Native women.

- A resolution advocating for the inclusion of certain legislative language that would enhance tribal response to MMIW cases.

Specific resolutions often affect change on a smaller scale, such as in a tribal community because they often advocate for specific actions that must be taken to address an issue. Specific resolutions provide tribal nations the opportunity to address problems, situations, or concerns that affect their communities through culturally relevant and appropriate actions. They provide tribal nations with a definite course of action to address an issue. For example, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) passed a resolution that created a workgroup to address MMIW issues and assist in the development of CSKT's MMIW action plan.

RESOLUTION 19-072

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A WORK GROUP TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES THAT:

WHEREAS, There are over 1662 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women in the U.S. In Montana, there are 72 missing cases and 22 of those are Native American. CSKT Law enforcement are currently investigating 2 cases in collaboration with Lake, Missoula, Flathead and Sanders County Sheriff's offices as well as Dunn and McKenzie counties in North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, Native American women are 2.5 times more likely to experience sexual assault and one in three Native women will be raped in her lifetime. Murder is the third leading cause of death among Native American women; and

WHEREAS, with the growing national attention of missing and murdered women and girls, there is pending legislation regarding MMIWG at the State and Federal level that needs support; and

WHEREAS, CSKT wants to promote education and awareness for young women regarding safety and sex trafficking; and

WHEREAS, CSKT wants to collaborate with Grassroots organizations and groups to promote a greater awareness of MMIWG and its correlation with domestic and sexual assault, runaways, drug activity and sex trafficking; NOW, THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, CSKT will create a workgroup to address these MMIW issues and assist in funding the workgroup operations to develop a CSKT action plan and provide outreach to other tribes and organizations.

Jami Pluff, Policy Analyst, informed council that she was just provided the donation request and requested direction on whether to bring it back next Tuesday. Jennifer Trahan requested direction on whether it would be a tribal council donation.

MOTION by Charnel Gillin to approve a \$1,000 donation for the CSKT families and organizations that are participating in the MMIW vigil as speakers and the Color Guard, per council limitation policy for organizations. Seconded by Anita Matt. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

Council met in executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Council reconvened into regular session.

MOTION by Len TwoTeeth to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Dennis Clairmont. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

The difference between general and specific resolutions is the force behind resolved clauses. For example, a general resolved clause often encourages action while a specific resolved clause requires such action. Tribal nations seeking to address issues in their communities through action should utilize specific resolutions that require certain actions and steps to be taken to address that issue.

Examples of Specific Resolutions

- A resolution that guides cooperation among local and tribal law enforcement through the authorization of a Memorandum of Understanding.
- A resolution that requires a tribal nation to partner with national or regional organizations working to address MMIW in Indian Country.
- A resolution that declares a state of emergency for a tribal community and specific actions that will be taken to address the issue afflicting tribal citizens.
- A resolution that provides for additional funding for tribal programs that provide services to MMIW victims and their families.

Most tribal nations utilize both broad and specific resolutions to address issues in their community and tribal communities across the country. Each type of resolution has its merits, but the key to writing an effective resolution is to understand the purpose and desired outcomes of the resolution. If a resolution's purpose is to raise awareness or express support, a broad resolution may be more effective than a specific resolution detailing the actions that will be taken to raise awareness and increase support. Resolutions, in any form, are a powerful advocacy tool that tribal nations and others can use to demonstrate the importance of an issue and the actions that will be taken to address said issue. Complex issues such as MMIW require complex solutions and resolutions provide evidence, recommendations, and actions that can be used to begin developing solutions to Indian Country's pervasive issues that undermine the safety and wellbeing of Native people.

Lobbying 101

Lacina Tangnaqudo Onco (Shinnecock Indian Nation of New York, Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma)



What is Lobbying?

When you think of lobbying, you probably imagine a hot-shot lawyer who represents big corporations and their interests. With that image in mind, it is not hard to see why lobbying has been associated with corruption and is considered a bad thing. A lobbyist is not just a lawyer. Lobbyists are advocates, and ANYONE can be an advocate.

Advocacy at its core is about representation of a common interest and ensuring that key decision makers act on behalf of these interests. Advocates make sure that policymakers understand a specific cause and can use this knowledge to make informed policy decisions. You have every right to inform your elected representatives on the issues that matter to you the most, and ask that they act in the best interests of your cause. We owe it to ourselves, our communities, and all Indigenous people to advocate for the end of the crisis of MMIW.

Why Lobby?

By now you are more than familiar with the statistics and facts. However, meeting with your policymaker is about more than just sharing numbers or the latest factsheets. We are here to advocate for our lost sisters, aunties, cousins and loved ones from our community. While the statistics highlight the severity of this crisis of violence, they need to learn about the faces behind the numbers. The stories of the missing Indigenous women, and the experiences of the families who have lost loved ones, deserve to be heard. Meeting with your elected representatives is one way to represent the voices of those we lost, and to make sure that they are never forgotten. Advocacy is how we can both honor the missing and demand government agencies take action and put a stop to this crisis.

Request your Meeting

You have committed to be an advocate for MMIW. What is next? The first step is to identify which policymaker you're going to visit. If you're in the United States and don't know who your

Congressmember or Representative is, you can search on <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members> to find them. There are several ways to speak to your elected representative as an advocate. You can call their office, you can email a letter detailing your ask, or you can request a meeting in person. The most effective way to inform your representatives is to request an in-person meeting. Sitting down, face-to-face, is the best way to have a conversation and to persuade your representatives to support your ask. You can email or call the office asking for a meeting to talk about MMIW. In your meeting request, provide specific dates and times of availability, and include the reason for the meeting or the ask.

For an in-person meeting you may not actually meet the policymaker themselves, but will be speaking to one of their staff. Please do not let that deter you as staffers are often informed on the issue and are obligated to share your story and recommendations with your representative.

The Ask

What do you specifically want from this meeting? Your representative is meeting with you to learn more about this issue, and they want to know specific actions to take. Always have an ask when meeting with policymakers.

Here are some examples of actions they could take:

- Introducing a bill or amendment related to MMIW
- Cosponsoring a bill already introduced
- Voting in favor of a bill
- Providing floor testimony on MMIW
- Working with their colleagues or caucus to write a letter to leadership asking for action

This list of examples is certainly not exhaustive, but hopefully it gives you a better idea of how to form your ask.

Passing policies through federal or state/provincial governments can be like a prolonged marathon, a sudden mad sprint for the finish line, or somewhere in-between. Given that things can move and change quickly, always check-in with your trusted advocacy resources, such as Sovereign Bodies Institute, to get a better understanding of the current legislative ask.

Keep your ask simple, specific, and relevant to the issue. There may be various concerns you have for your community, such as health or education, which are all valid concerns. However, it is easier for the member of Congress to leave with a better understanding of the overall issue, and to make a commitment, when there is only one ask on the table. If you end up meeting with a staffer, that staffer has a specific policy portfolio, and are prepared to speak on the specific issue in your meeting request. If you bring up a separate or additional issue, that staffer may not be prepared to answer questions or able to commit to action if that issue is not part of their portfolio. However, you can consider this meeting as a step forward in building a relationship with your representative, and through that relationship building you can continue to advocate on the many issues that matter to you.

Sharing Your Story

Why do you care about MMIW? What brought you to request a meeting with this policymaker? What do you want to happen after this meeting? What needs to be done? Answering these questions can help you figure out how to share your personal story and how it is related to this issue.

Storytelling can be complicated. It can be very hard to share a personal story whether you are a survivor, a MMIW family member, or whatever relationship you may have to MMIW. You do not have to share your personal story, share only what you are comfortable with. Maybe you do not have a personal connection to the issue to share, but something has driven you to commit to advocacy and to make this meeting. You are here in this meeting to humanize the statistics. You are here to honor the lives and spirits of those who have been lost, and to put an end to this violence. Our governments cannot continue to deny, neglect, or remain ignorant of this epidemic. As an advocate, you are meeting to ensure whatever actions your representative makes will keep the reality of what is happening in mind, and that they will act to bring an end to the violence.

Sharing a personal story matters. Connecting an issue or a legislative ask to a personal experience increases the likelihood of a policymaker making a commitment to act. The emotions that storytelling can evoke are hard to forget.

How a Meeting is Structured

You know the issue, you have your ask, and you know what kind of story you want to bring to the meeting. You want the meeting to be a conversation and not just a one-sided discussion. Here's how you can help the meeting flow like a conversation:

- **Thank the representative:** Thank them for past actions they may have taken. Have they already voted in favor or a bill that will address MMIW? Did they bring MMIW up in a floor speech? Have they posted on social media speaking in favor of the ask you want them to make? If the answer is no, and you can't find a favorable past action, you can always thank them for taking the time to meet with you. Giving thanks is a way to build a rapport with the office and shows that you are aware of past actions the representative has made. Gratitude can also help frame your mindset when it comes to having a difficult conversation.
- **State your ask:** Make it very clear what you want out of this meeting.
- **Determine what they know:** This will help you understand what the office already knows, and where to begin the conversation.
- **Share your story:** Explain what brought you here today and what you need your representative to do. Connect your story to the ask.
- **Ask if they have questions:** You are by no means expected to be an expert. Speak to what you know. If you are unsure of an answer, admit that you are not sure and promise to follow-up with an answer or connect them to any resources that may answer their question.
- **Ending the Meeting:** Thank them once again. Did the policymaker make a commitment during the meeting? This is the time to confirm that commitment and verify next steps or actions. Make sure you have their email and contact information, and that they have your contact information as well. If you brought any factsheets, reports, or informational material with you, make sure to leave it behind.
- **Follow Up:** Within the next few days write a follow-up email or letter thanking them for their time, reiterate your ask, and provide any additional resources or answers to questions brought up in the meeting. This is a great time to provide additional resources, factsheets, or toolkits.

After the Meeting

Congratulations, you just completed your first lobby visit!

Believe it or not, that one visit can have a long-lasting and wide-spread impact. It can be incredibly rewarding to see your elected representative take action and to know it was because of your time meeting with them. Whether or not the desired action occurs, you should continue working with your representatives. They are in office to represent you and to keep your best interests in mind. Build a relationship with the office and continue to reach out to them, hold them accountable for their commitments and actions.

Change can and does happen through advocacy. Contact your representatives and let them know that justice for our missing and murdered is long overdue.

Testifying

Providing testimony can be an incredibly powerful way to support legislation, resolutions, or even just to help people understand the dynamics of this crisis. Testimony from MMIWG2 families and survivors has inspired people to write new laws, conduct studies, march in the streets, donate to support impacted victims and their families, and demand justice for our peoples.

Providing testimony, whether written or oral, can be intimidating or overwhelming--even if you have done it before. There are families and survivors who have been sharing their stories for years, and while it does get easier, it's never easy. Our emotions run high in these situations, and it can lead us to experience a high level of stress, and not fully communicate everything we want to share. It can be helpful to take some notes and practice beforehand, and read and listen to testimonies other families and survivors have given, to get a sense of what you want to share. In this section, we have included a piece from MMIW family member and advocate Carolyn DeFord on the importance of sharing our stories, and both written testimony and transcribed oral testimony from MMIWG2 families as an example of the power of testimony and the freedom that families should have in sharing their stories however it feels right to them. We have also included some sample writing prompts, to get you started if you are struggling with writers' block.

Storytelling in Healing, Organizing and Meaningful Connections

Carolyn DeFord (Puyallup, Nisqually, Cowlitz)

Telling your story is healing to yourself, but also to others who may not be ready to open up yet. Giving voice to those stories that have long been whispers opens doors for others and creates a safe place to tell their story, provides healing, meaningful connection and support. We have to take risks and be strong enough to use our voice to tell these stories or things will never change.

When I started telling my mother's story, community members from nearly every intersection approached me to share their journey and their loved ones stories. Some families shared their story for the first

time in decades, some had buried their feelings and unprocessed grief, but through their story were able to enjoy beautiful memories, put words to the experience, and identify unhealed wounds. When we are able to acknowledge the injustice that happened to our loved one, storytelling helps us to “unpack” and start the healing process. Hearing other family’s experiences helps us build resilience, but also to see how other families have survived, and adopt coping mechanisms of our own. There is a powerful sense of unity and purpose in listening to and supporting other families on the same journey.

When a loved one is missing and the rest of the world has “moved on” connections with other families provides a little sanctuary where other people share your fears, frustrations, and ride the rollercoaster with you. Sometimes storytelling uncovers cherished memories that had been lost in the trauma. Remembering jokes, adventures, teachings, and intangible things reminds us that even though they are not physically present those things we cannot see are always with us.

When family members attend events, vigils, hearings, remembrance walks, etc. those are our ceremonies. They are often the ONLY ceremony families have to honor their loved one. Families may still be in shock during any initial vigils or searches (if they occurred) but without traditional funerals or memorials families of missing rarely have more opportunities to hold ceremonies to honor their loved one. Families may not have the skills or strength to organize vigils, marches, and searches but invitations to attend other community events and honor their loved ones, hand out fliers, or tell their stories can provide a blanket of support and strength to those left behind.

In my community, our movement was fueled by a few sisters who told their stories. As other family members came forward to share their stories a movement grew organically out of that sisterhood. It highlighted a gap that we know exists, but is difficult to access when the rest of the world moves on.

Sample Testimony from MMIWG2 Families

From Bernadine Bear Heels (Rosebud Sioux Tribe)

My daughter Britney went missing on February 11, 2018, from Ada, Oklahoma, and she was missing for almost three weeks. Her body was found on March 16, 2018, on a rancher's land near Kullihoma.

They found her body when they were out checking on their cattle. Her body was placed in the grass, surrounded by trees far off of a dirt road. Whoever placed her body out there had to cross a barbwire fence, walk through the grass, and up a little hill. They placed her body in an area where she couldn't be seen if you were driving by on the dirt road. Her autopsy report came back undetermined, like so many other MMIW stories.

It wasn't in Britney's character to stay gone for days at a time without contacting her sisters or me. She always stayed in contact through Facebook Messenger with us. She was definitely a momma's girl. Britney wanted things in life. She wanted to go to college and do something with her life. All she ever wanted is to have a good life and raise her three kids. Her love for her three children showed when she was with them. She was like a kid herself when she played with them. Britney always wanted the best for her three children.

When we buried her we had to have a closed casket funeral, so we never got to see her one last time. I think that is what made it harder, because we didn't get to see her when we buried her. My heart broke for her sisters Jessica and Josie, and for Britney's three kids. It was heartbreaking to bury my daughter with her three little children standing there watching, to see them so little and not totally understanding that they will never see their mom again. Losing a child in this way is devastating and it changed our lives forever. Having to live the rest of my life without one of my daughters is hard and it left a huge hole in my heart.

When I think of my daughter Britney it brings a smile to my face because she had such a bubbly personality and she was full of life. When she was a child she was always happy and she carried that beautiful smile throughout her short adult life. Some of her other qualities included being understanding, loving, stubborn and feisty at times. She was a little firecracker.

Britney had the biggest heart and she had a lot of compassion for others. If somebody needed help, she would help them if she could. If you needed someone to talk to, she was there for you. When talking to her, things didn't seem so bad by the end of your conversation. She most likely had you smiling or laughing when the conversation was over. Her soft, caring voice made you feel and know that she cared about what you were going through. She was a great friend to those close to her and she believed in standing up for those she loved.

After Britney's death our family was determined to keep her name out there so her case would not be forgotten or put in the cold case stack. Our family didn't know about MMIW until it happened to us. When it did we became involved in the MMIW movement and started attending their events. We took a trip to Denver, Colorado on May 5, 2018 to attend a MMIW walk. That is when we started on our journey to fight for justice for my daughter Britney. We started telling Britney's story at the MMIW events that were held in Oklahoma. Some of the things we did was a fundraiser to go towards a reward, candle light vigil, raffle, and a Memorial Walk. I also spoke at the Oklahoma Capitol last November. When I spoke at the Capitol it opened up a door to be able to tell Britney's story on another platform. It is very humbling to experience the opportunities that have come our way.

We love and miss Britney every day and we want to see justice served in her case. She deserves justice. We will continue to keep her name out there and share her story. Throughout all of this we have received tremendous support from our community, and the MMIW Oklahoma chapters and MMIW Texas chapter. Her South Dakota family also attends MMIW events to keep her name out there as well. The Todd County Tribune in South Dakota is also keeping her story alive by sharing her story in their paper.

I don't understand why someone would want to hurt her and put her body out in a field. She didn't deserve to be treated this way. She had three beautiful kids and a large family that loved her. Her life mattered and to be discarded like that is inconceivable. Britney was an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota and she was born in Dallas, Texas.

Britney was the granddaughter to Virginia Black Elk, who is an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and Solomon Bear Heels, who was an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Britney's father is Joseph Lee Tiger Jr. who is an enrolled member of the Seminole/Creek tribe, and I am an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. **You can follow Britney's story on her Justice for Britney Facebook page.**

From Tammy Big Day (Choctaw & Chippewa descent, married into Crow)

Winter in Spring

You were born in April.
They laid you in my arms.
I kissed your cheek. We shared breath.
Our souls connected forever.
I watched you grow.
You cried, I cried. You smiled, I smiled.
You took your first steps.
You called me Kaa'la (grandmother).
Your 3rd birthday in April.
You were blossoming, happy, full of life.
Winter started in May.
She came and took you away, not until July did I see you again.
You were quiet, subdued, scared.
No man could touch you.
OMG what has happened?
October came. My birthday.
You crawled into my lap.
I saw an oldness in your eyes.
You were quiet.
You pushed your small body into mine.
You must have known it would be the last time.
December 2nd came. I had been uneasy the night before.
6am they came. My soul died.
Before it happened, they say you were quiet, awake, sitting on your mother's lap.
Too much to comprehend. I wanted to take your place.
It was snowing, cold the day I laid you to rest.
Winter has stayed with me since!
You watch from the hill above. My angel, how do I make the winter go away?
I love you Tenielle! I will never stop saying your name!!!

My name is Tammy Big Day. I'm a white grandmother of a Native granddaughter that, at age 3, was murdered by her biological mother. Her mother, who was separated from my son, was drinking and at 4am on December 2, 2012, picked my granddaughter up off her lap and opened the truck door and threw her out. They were going 55 miles per hour. My granddaughter had been sitting quiet and awake when her beautiful life was taken away. Her name is Tenielle Big Day.

I've spent many years grieving for my grandbaby. My family is Crow so they do not speak about this, due to cultural reasons.

In October of 2019 I was asked to attend a vigil for MMIW in Billings, Montana. I felt compelled to attend because of what had happened to my granddaughter. Little did I know this would be the start of my advocacy. January 1, 2020, I was at home when I got a call from Niki Stewart (a Northern Cheyenne MMIWP advocate) telling me that a relative of my husband's, Selena S. Bell had been left at a rest stop and they were sending people to search for her. She was 16 years old. They did not find her for 20 days, and when they did she was deceased.

During these 20 days I made posts asking people for help in locating her. I went to the rest area several times, where her mother Jackie and aunt Cheryl held vigils. I took food and prayed with them. I cannot tell you how hard it was those 20 days, not knowing where she was.

Since burying Selena, I've made it my purpose to keep in touch with law enforcement on a weekly basis, as well as the Big Horn County Attorney. I will not give up until justice is served by the adults that left her there.

My purpose now is to help be a voice for those that can no longer speak, and work to get people held accountable for their actions. Not just for women, but men also.

These lives matter. Their journeys are not over.

I took my grief and turned it into a purpose that hopefully will be able to help others. We are in this together. Know that you are not alone. Don't ever give up. Keep saying your loved ones' names.

#TENIELLE #SELENA #TONY

From Tammy Carpenter (Hoopa Valley Tribe)

Hello, my name is Tammy Carpenter. I would to share my story about my daughter. Her name is Angela Lynne McConnell, and she was murdered on September 7th, 2018 in the city of Shasta Lake, California, in Northern California, near Redding, California. Angela Lynne was a Loving and caring, Beautiful daughter and the sister to Richie Carpenter. My heart is broken because Angela was my only daughter. I love and miss her every day, since the day she was taken from us.

Angela was a Hoopa Valley Tribal Member and she was always proud of it. She was a great talented writer of poems and, most of all, she loved and enjoyed reading books and drawing pictures for her family members. Angela's family and friends continue to seek Justice for her, with the help from Sovereign Bodies Institute Director Annita Lucchesi, who has been an advocate for Angela's case and has provided family support, meeting with the current detective on her case on different occasions for updates. SBI is truly dedicated to helping all of the MMIW cases.

Currently, I spoke with the detective last week and he stated that they were waiting on the DNA results from the lab and there were no leads on the case as of right now. He said that he is working on the case every day, but I call the detective on a weekly basis for any updates. I pray and hope my daughter Angela Lynne's case will be solved soon, that the individuals will be caught, and for ***justice for Angela and our family and friends.***

There is a \$30,000 reward for any information on Angela Lynne Mcconnell's case. You can call the anonymous hotline **(530) 243-2319.**

If anyone knows anything about this case, please call.
Justice for Angela Lynne Mcconnell.

Thank you for letting me share my story about my daughter Angela Lynne Mcconnell. Thanks again, Tammy Carpenter and Richie Carpenter.

From the Ewenin Family (Danielle Ewenin, Mona Woodward, Lillian Piapot, Deborah Green, Agnes Woodward; Kawacatoose First Nation)

On February 4th, 1982 Eleanor Laney Ewenin was found on the outskirts of Calgary, Alberta after she had been missing for several days. It was a bitterly cold winter night, and the snow told the story of her last moments on earth. It could be seen in the snow where a car pulled onto a lightly traveled road outside of the city limits. The struggle that occurred from the driver pulling Laney out of the back seat showed in the scuffle marks in the snow on the ground. The car backed up leaving Laney there. The snow shows her path across the field as she tried to make it to safety. There was a building with lights on at the edge of the field. It shows the spot where she cradled herself before falling asleep and beginning her journey with our ancestors.

No one was ever charged with her murder, and the police barely investigated her case. It has to come light that law enforcement had filed her case under a different name, it took years to find the autopsy report or police file because of this. It was especially alarming to us as Police had notified the family within hours of finding Laney, so there wasn't any confusion about her identity, they knew who she was. So why would her file be placed under a different name? The family learned that law enforcement destroyed the file and said there was nothing suspicious about her death. There is everything suspicious about an Indigenous woman who is found deceased on the outskirts of a city, on a road that leads to nowhere.

Laney was a mother of 2 sons, who had to grow up without a mother. Her family loved her and have sought and continue to seek justice on her behalf.

In 2010 our family decided to add Laney to Canada's MMIW list, and it was a difficult decision as our family never discussed her murder before then. It brought about too much pain, and the layers of trauma that are attached to the loss of a loved one sometimes can be unbearable.

Eleanor Laney Ewenin's name was added to the list with the full intent that THIS should never happen to another family. And that is part of the power in telling your truth; your shared experiences become a collective truth that society can't deny.

From Cheryl Horn (Ft Belknap)

Our family has been involved with MMIW since 2018, when my niece Tristen Gray was killed in Billings, MT. In 2017, the Billings PD killed her brother, Preston Bell. On Jan 1, 2020 their baby sister went missing. To keep focus on her case we camped at the interstate rest area she was reported to have been last seen. We had our own search and rescue as well as many numerous agencies and hundreds of volunteers. 20 days later, Selena Bell (Not Afraid) was returned to us. Her case still sits with the Department of Justice. We still want justice!

Since then, I have stayed involved with MMIP as much as I can. There are upcoming events, a Lifetime series, and a book in the works, as well as many other events and activities we have planned. Selena woke up a lot of people. She was only 16 years old and killed by 8 adults. Justice is the mission we are on now. For Selena and ALL the missing people.

When this happened to us we had no guidelines, no experience, and no fear! So we did what we had to, when we had to. We camped for 13 days straight, running our camp and search team. We put our lives on hold. Our only protection was my boyfriend and my uncle who was and still is a strong fearless Marine. We had no experience to lead us other than the NCSR. All volunteer. All appreciated. We had no law enforcement with us. We felt alone and that is what drove us to not give up. You will not always receive help so you must Do It Yourself. Help each other. Guide each other. Because those who get paid...they go home and sleep in warm beds. We are still searching, freezing, scared. But we don't quit until we find our loved ones.

My hope is to help make things easier for the families as they search for their loved ones. You are not alone. We are in this together.

I live in Ft Belknap, MT, which is 200 miles away from Selena. I am a fierce advocate for anyone who needs me. I am in this fight and will continue to Fight the Good Fight. This movement is crucial and needs all the support we can get. It's not something we enjoy, it's something we must do. We are Their Voices. I am Tristen, Preston and Selena's Voice. I will never let their story be silenced.

From Waynette Renville (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)

The day I seen my baby sister laying on a cold metal table almost unrecognizable, I held her hand & promised her, "I'll find those bastards who did this to you, even if it takes the rest of my life." It's going on 15 years and I think I will be looking till I die. And even then, my kids said they will continue doing what they can. We miss Lakota every day. Lakota was the best sister and auntie. She was so loving and kind, so trustworthy. She would play with my kids at the park and read to them. She would have made a great mom, my kids called her their other mommy. She loved animals, especially the ones that were abandoned and mistreated. She would buy them a gift for Christmas and their birthday.

It's important to tell what kind of a person she was, instead of saying what happened to her. I think it's important for the families to remember that their loved one is more than that statistic, murder case, missing case, etc. and it's important to honor their memory. That movie Legends of the Fall, how the older brothers thought about their baby brother--she was our precious and we did and tried to protect her.

From Pamela Smith (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma)

This passage is a transcription of testimony given at the Oklahoma State Capitol in a listening session on MMIWG in 2019.

First of all, I'm Pamela Smith of Tulsa, Oklahoma. This is my brother Christian. We're the auntie and uncle of Aubrey Dameron from Grove, Oklahoma. This is Aubrey. (Shows Picture)

She went missing in March, last seen March 9, 2019 from Grove, Oklahoma, Delaware County. She was reported missing on March 11th and we found out March 16th--not from family, but from a friend. However, when we found out, I contacted local law enforcement (Grove PD) and they advised they did not have a report and that I should check with Delaware County, so I did, and they confirmed that there was a report, a missing report on our niece Aubrey Dameron. And so throughout that weekend, I spoke to a deputy on duty and he said, "Well you know we think she just... you know...probably just left and [took] a cooling off period."

And so Monday morning I called the sheriff to find out any details, you know has there been any leads or anything at all? The sheriff

told me on that Monday morning that he was now being briefed and the report was done on March 11th, and this is March 18th when I spoke with him. He was now being briefed on the case a week later and that he would call me back. He did not call me back.

The next day I called again and I requested to speak to someone who was working my niece's case. I was referred to Captain Gayle Wells of the Delaware County Sheriff's office. Our conversation started as I introduced myself, told him who I was, and I wanted to know anything about my niece's case, you know, if there was any leads. And he said well, "We just don't believe she's a missing person." I said, "Well why did you say that?" He said, "Well why do you believe she's a missing person?" I said, "Well she's vulnerable, naive." And he laughed and he said, "Oh no, we believe that she knows very well what she's doing."

And I couldn't understand what he was saying at first. I was taken aback because I had worked in law enforcement and corrections and I still have numerous friends in law enforcement and so I...I just...sorry...so when he said, "We just don't believe she's a missing person," and I said, "Why?" And he said, "Her lifestyle." My niece Aubrey Dameron is transgender. So I said, "Is it because she's transgender?" And he says, "No just it's because of her lifestyle." I said, "So you're telling me that because of her lifestyle that her life isn't worth searching for?" He says, "No that's not what I'm saying." I said, "That's what you're saying." He said, "Well you know she has over 500 friends on Facebook who are men." And I said, "And?" And he said, "Well because of her lifestyle, we just don't believe she's a missing person."

I said, "So because of her lifestyle and because her 500 friends on Facebook that are male, her life isn't worth searching for?" He said, "No that's not what I'm saying." I said, "That's exactly what you're telling me." He said, no, he goes, "Well you know she's known to use illegal substances." I said, "So because of her lifestyle, and her 500 male Facebook friends and she's known to abuse an illegal substance, then her life isn't worth searching for?" And he raised his voice and said, "That's not what I'm saying." And I said, "That's exactly what you're telling me."

So then he asked, "So, I understand you guys are doing a search." I said, "Yes we are." He said, "Well where are you going to search?"

And I said, "Well where would you search?" And he says, "Oh no. No." He said, "We can't. We just, we can't do it. We don't have manpower. We don't have resources." I said, "I get it. You're not going to do it." I said, "I guarantee if it was one of your men, one of your family members, you would have God and everyone on creations out here searching. Really. Do you think if your family member, if yours was, do you think they would just stand aside? We've been dealing with this since day one." So he says, "Where do you want to search?" I said, "Common sense tells me where she was last seen, which was at her residence."

I contacted the BIA, and they put me in contact with a gentleman out of the Miami office and he said they didn't have the manpower, but they could offer resources. I don't know where that led to. I contacted our tribal police, the Marshals, they told me that they can't go in because it's a state case. They can't go in and take it over. They have to be invited in for assistance. In the past few months, they've tried to find a federal hook so that the feds could take over the case but they have not found anything.

Sunday, the day before Memorial Day, we did a search which led us away from Aubrey's home. I contacted Captain Wells and asked him to contact the Marshals to ask if they could be present for security due to the area we were going to be searching was tribal land. Wells stated the Marshals were busy and could not be there but he was cross deputized and he would go. He showed up and stayed at the command post majority of the day except to go find who had the sandwiches for lunch. He not once went out to be security for the volunteers and search teams. Later in the day, search teams found what appeared to be a shallow grave with a black jacket lying near it on a hill there in Kenwood. Search teams returned and informed Wells of their findings. He left to find reception for his cell phone to call the Sheriff and Medical Examiner. He returned about 20 mins later. He said the ME could not be out until Tuesday, the day after Memorial Day, and he spoke to the sheriff and they went through all the names of their men and had nobody to come sit and watch the site. He said he would ask the fire dept to place a trail cam to "keep an eye on it." Not once did he go to the area that day, he did not go to the site until the Tuesday OSBI and the ME arrived. He left that site unsecured for 2 days! 2 whole days!

Anyways, He did not go to that area until the following Tuesday after the holiday, when the medical examiner and the OSBI showed up. And myself and Lissa and one of the people that was with her, we were, you know, I would say a reasonable distance from the site. When the ME & OSBI arrived they walked on over to the site. Captain Wells arrives and as soon as he arrived, he gets out of the truck and verbally attacks me and tells me that I was compromising the integrity of the investigation by being present. My thought is, "You've already compromised it by leaving it unsecured for two days." So that was, you know, another thing that we dealt with. That was in May.

Another lead came in and it led to Irving, Texas. Someone had hacked into one of Aubrey's social media sites and the IP address was in Irving. I was given the detective's name there and I called...I spoke with him. He explained he invited Delaware County down to interview the people where the IP address led them to and, he said, "Ms. Smith, they're not coming." He said, "It took them a week to give me the report." I said, "I know. That's what we've been dealing with since she went missing. I said, "I know that the first week she was reported missing, they did nothing on the case." And he got quiet. And I said, "You don't have to tell me, I know." And he said, "You're right."

Recently, we did a search two weekends ago. Lissa came back and we had bridged a gap with Northeast Oklahoma Search and Rescue, and Crossroads K-9 from Louisiana and Arkansas came back. Leads have taken us to numerous places and now we're back at the house where the red flags were from the beginning. And that was one of the first conversations I had with the detective on duty that weekend. I told him when we first searched, there were so many red flags here. I said, "You guys need to bring dogs out here, you guys need to look at this household, everything." I was ignored.

So, two weekends ago, these dogs that we brought in, they are certified, have all their papers. They were certified human remains detection dogs and they had 8 dogs total, so they brought them to swap them out. They took 4 out onto the property of the home and there had been a shed that we had been waiting to get into, but without permission we could not get into. So on this weekend, the dogs hit on this shed and then there's an area just to the southwest

that the dogs hit on as well. All 4 dogs hit on the same areas. We called the county and it took the county an hour, an hour and a half or so, to get out there and they went over to the property. And they had to actually bring the supervisor out to see the dogs actually hit on the shed to do anything. Searchers got into the shed, there was a tarp in the shed and pulled it out. The dogs didn't have much interest in the shed, but they did hit hard on the tarp. After numerous unsuccessful attempts to contact Captain Wells by his fellow officers, the tarp was collected and later sent to the OSBI labs.

Officers were informed about another location not far from the home that the dogs hit on the same day they hit in the shed and tarp. That location is unsecured as I stand here in front of you. It has not been checked by the county because Olivia Gray, who is an advocate for Aubrey, called the sheriff on Friday last week. And he confirmed to her that it was unsecured and asked her if she'd like to go out and secure it. She said, "Well we can," and he hung up on her. So right now we still don't know if my niece is in this body of water or if her clothing might be there, or a weapon.

A friend offered to drain this body of water if the county wasn't going to do their job. I contacted Captain Wells to see if or what was going to be done with this pond. He tells me that he's going to get these other entities to help because they have special suits that have to be used to not disturb the acidity of the pond. That was early Tuesday of last week. I sent him a text Friday morning, asking if there was a plan in place yet. He replies to me Sunday morning stating the same thing he told me earlier in the week. But, Friday I woke up and I just had a feeling that we were probably being lied to again. So I called a couple connections I have and it was confirmed that he had not contacted the ME's office. He had not contacted the GRDA or the fire dept. He said that they had special suits that they needed for the dive. In their words, sorry for the language, "That he was blowing smoke up my ass." Because these suits were just suits that they used for the difference of various temperatures of the water they go in. That's the only kind of suits that they use. So this is what we continue to deal with.

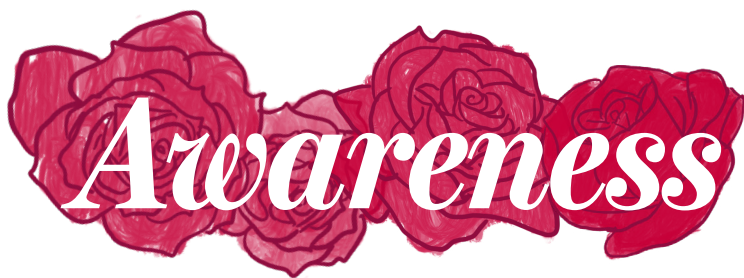
My niece is Native American and my niece is transgender. She has had to fight her entire life to be who she is. She was the most loving, and you know, it's a generational trauma. I don't know all

of my mother's life but I do know that my sister and Aubrey's father had a really rocky relationship and Aubrey saw a lot of that growing up.

I believe that every person deserves to be found, every human, it doesn't matter their status quo, it doesn't matter your color or nothing. Every person deserves to be found in a timely manner. Not when we, grassroots, have boots on the ground and have to do everything. We share our home and we live paycheck to paycheck. We have put aside bills so that we could go to these searches and so we can have enough money to feed these people who come to search and help, because a lot of these people, they don't ask for anything. But that's what we do for our niece because if it wasn't for us I firmly believe nobody would be out there searching for her. So I ask all of you guys, please consider helping us in Indian Country because we need it, we desperately need it. Thank you for your time.

Drafting Testimony - Writing Tips & Prompts

- 1. You may want to start by introducing yourself.** What's your name, do you have a name in your Indigenous language to share? Who are your people, what land do you come from? Do your people have a traditional way of introductions, like sharing your clans or who your grandparents are? If you are speaking on behalf of a missing or murdered loved one, what is their name and your relationship to them?
- 2. Talk about why you are testifying.** Are you there to raise awareness on your case, advocate for a particular piece of legislation, or ask for community support? What is your goal in speaking today?
- 3. Tell your story.** Remember, you have the right to share as little or as much as you want. Think about what would be meaningful for you to share, and what might impact your audience in a way that's important to you. What happened? Who has supported you through this? What was law enforcement and community response, and how could that have been improved? What kind of a toll has this taken on you or your family?
- 4. Tell us about who has been affected.** If you are testifying on a missing or murdered loved one, tell us about them--what kind of person were they? What are your favorite memories with them? What were their hopes and aspirations? What were they known for? What communities were they a part of? If you are testifying as a survivor, has this impacted you, your family, or your relationships?
- 5. Tell us what you want.** What does justice mean to you? It could be having the perpetrator held accountable, but it could also be better law enforcement response, policies that reduce violence or enhance response to it, more support services for victims and their families, a memorial for your loved one...think about what might help you or your family feel a sense of comfort and share that with your audience.
- 6. Close out.** What do you want your audience to walk away with?



Awareness

In this section:

- MMIWG & MMIP
- Sample Awareness Activities
- Planning an Awareness Activity
- Coordinating Media Coverage - How-To Guide
- Preparing for Press Interviews
- Talking Points and Frequently Asked Questions

MMIWG & MMIP

Why the distinction?

There are many different variations of the acronym MMIW. Here is a table with a few more common versions, and information about where they come from. We have also included some pros and cons for each version--this is meant to help you decide what term feels right for you to use.

At SBI and throughout this toolkit, we tend to use MMIWG2 because we want to center women, girls, and two spirit people, because they are targeted for violence due to both their race and their gender identity. However, we also use MMIWP when we are doing projects that include men and boys; we keep the W to remind people that this movement was born out of a need to protect our women, and include the P so that the term is inclusive to all involved in the project.

Families, survivors, and advocates each have their own perspectives on which term is most appropriate to use. We support you in making whatever choice feels right for you and your community, as long as that choice comes from a place of love and good medicine.

The Acronym

MMIW

What it Means

Missing & murdered Indigenous women

Where It Comes From

This is the original acronym used when the movement was born in Canada, and is still the most common version used.

Pros

Widely understood shorthand, less confusing to people unfamiliar with the issue, centers the women

Cons

Doesn't highlight girls, doesn't include men or boys, unclear to what level LGBTQ and two spirit people would be included

The Acronym

MMIWG

What it Means

Missing & murdered Indigenous women and girls

Where It Comes From

This version is also very common, and was created to acknowledge that Indigenous girls experience high rates of violence and go missing and are killed at disproportionate rates. It is also a reclamation of girlhood for Indigenous girls, who are often forced to take on adult responsibilities or treated by the system as adults.

Pros

Centers women and highlights girls

Cons

Doesn't include men or boys, unclear to what level LGBTQ and two spirit people would be included

The Acronym

MMIWG2 and MMIWG2S

What it Means

Missing & murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people

Where It Comes From

This version was designed to be inclusive of LGBTQ and two spirit people, and to call attention to the high rates of violence they experience. The Canadian National Inquiry created a much lengthier version of this--MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA, which stands for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual people.

Pros

Centers women, girls, and LGBTQ and two spirit people--much more inclusive of all people who are targeted for violence due to their gender and sexual identities, gives you the opportunity to educate others on who two spirit people are and why they experience violence

Cons

Doesn't include men or boys, unclear to what level LGBTQ and two spirit people would be included

The Acronym

MMIWG2 and MMIWG2S

What it Means

Missing & murdered Indigenous people/relatives

Where It Comes From

These versions were created to be inclusive of missing and murdered Indigenous men and boys, as well as two spirit and LGBTQ people. The spirit behind these versions is inclusion of and advocacy for all missing and murdered Indigenous people regardless of gender.

Pros

Inclusive of people of all genders, easy to use shorthand

Cons

Does not acknowledge that women, girls, and two spirit people experience higher rates than violence than men and boys, and experience that violence for different reasons than men



Sample Awareness Activities

Sometimes it can be overwhelming trying to decide how to raise awareness, because there are so many options! This list is meant to help winnow it down to types of events that we have seen to be successful, at a variety of funding and capacity levels.

March, rally, or vigil. These are definitely one of the most common forms of building awareness, but it's more work than it seems. There are logistics to consider (permits, sound equipment, sign making supplies, banners, food or drinks for attendees, media coordination, items like candles if needed, emotional support for families and survivors), and it's important to do a lot of outreach beforehand, to make sure there will be a strong turnout. When done right, they can be very healing for families and survivors, and very effective in raising awareness in the community and giving the media a strong story to report on.

Occupation or other form of direct action. Direct actions aren't usually just for awareness, but awareness is a welcome bonus. If you want awareness to grow from your direct action, make sure to issue a press release to relevant press agencies, with your contact information so they can follow up for an interview. It's also useful to have a team member who is not participating in the action directly but can be a media liaison and help with things like press releases, fielding interviews, issuing a public statement, and social media presence.

Conference or speakers' panel. This is a great way to invite families and survivors to share their stories with the community, and to highlight the leadership they take on in the movement. This is also ideal when your community needs education on the issue.

Work directly with media. Building good relationships with journalists is very important, and can make a big difference in a moment of crisis (like when a new case or a miscarriage of justice occurs). If you have an opportunity to network with your local or regional media, invest in those relationships if you can. When you need help raising awareness on a particular incident, you can reach back out to them and see if it's something their editor will let them cover.

Public campaign. This could be flyers or posters, billboards, murals, or street art. Some organizers have done temporary street art that has been very effective in gaining media coverage and raising awareness, like painting crosswalks or pouring red sand in the cracks of sidewalks, to symbolize how Indigenous women and girls are allowed to fall through the cracks of the justice system.

Social media campaign. This could include a photo challenge, custom hashtag, post prompt (for example, “why I care about justice for Jane Doe”), or short videos (building off viral videos--for example a MMIWG2 themed “pass the brush” video--is a great way to inspire people to participate).

Podcast. There are a growing number of podcasts on MMIWG2, and the true crime genre is very popular in general. Even though there are lots of podcasts and specialty episodes out there, there is always new content to do. For example, you could structure a podcast season around certain kinds of cases, cases in a certain area, specialty topics.

Webinars and social media presentations. This can be a great way to educate the public or raise awareness in a really accessible way, because people can join from their own homes or offices. If you do host a webinar or online presentation, make sure to record it! Many people don't have time to tune in live, but want to listen or watch on a later date. This recording also becomes a useful tool they can use in their organizing in other places, and you can use in future in-person presentations.

T-shirts and other apparel and accessories. Clothing and accessories can be a great way to raise awareness, especially if you are using them to raise awareness of a specific case. For example, we have seen families order custom bracelets, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and bumper stickers as a way to honor their loved one and raise awareness in their day to day lives. If you are not a family member, make sure to get the family's permission before creating any clothing or accessories with their loved one's name or photo on it. Also, if you do decide to make any clothing or accessories, make sure you are following appropriate recommendations--if you need ideas, see the Funding chapter of this toolkit

Coordinating Media Coverage - How-To Guide

1. Build your contacts. Start by creating a list of contact information for all press agencies relevant to your work. This might be local or regional outlets, and maybe even national or international. Make sure to include print, radio, and television if relevant. Most news outlets have their contact information available on their website, and have an email listed where you can send press releases.

2. Write up a press release. This shouldn't be more than 1-2 pages single spaced. It should have a brief compelling title, summarize the event or news you are hoping to get covered, include 2-3 quotes from relevant stakeholders, any logistical information they may need (like event details), and your contact information. Sovereign Bodies Institute has several press releases available on our website, if you need to look at samples to get ideas. This press release should be sent to all appropriate contacts on your list.

3. Plan logistics. As you get responses to your press release or outreach, it's important to keep your logistics organized. Keep a list of every outlet that has shown interest, and if they have confirmed coverage or attendance of your event. If they are planning to attend an event you're putting on, make sure they understand any ground rules in advance, and have any appropriate media permits if filming on tribal land.

4. Make connections. If you are planning on trying to connect the press with individual families or survivors for personal interviews, this is something you need to talk about with them in advance, and confirm they're up to doing and interested in doing. We recommend talking with the news outlet first, and getting a sense of what their angle might be, so you can brainstorm families or survivors who would match. Then contact the families and survivors to see if they want to do the interview, and if so, connect them with the journalist. This process minimizes the potential hurt for families and survivors, who will be hurt if their story is discarded as "not relevant" to the angle the journalist is taking.

5. Make a schedule. When is it appropriate for the press to arrive at your event? Do you need to schedule downtime when the press can do individual interviews with families or survivors in attendance?

6. Get help coordinating. If you are one of the primary organizers for the event, you may not have time or capacity to be the main liaison with the press as the event is happening. It's important to

have a designated person who can answer questions, check in, and assist the journalists that are there. This person should be someone the families or survivors feel comfortable with, as they may sit in on interviews or provide emotional support for those who are struggling with nerves or anxiety.

7. Check in afterwards. Once the event has ended, check in with the journalists who were there a few days later. Make sure they got what they needed, see if they have any questions, and ask about their timeline and the likelihood of an article coming out. This is a chance to share any important points with them that may have been missed before.

Preparing for Press Interviews

Doing press interviews can be intimidating, especially if you are a family member or survivor speaking on your own traumas. Here's a checklist of things you can make sure you do or have before an interview, to try to minimize the anxiety and be prepared.

1. Brainstorm your talking points. Think about what is most important for you to share, that you want to make sure make it into your interview answers. It's also a good idea to think about how you would work these talking points into your answers if they ask you questions that don't immediately relate. For example, if you really want to draw attention to law enforcement negligence on your loved one's case and the journalist keeps asking you questions about what you think of a new national policy, you can politely bring the conversation back to your point by saying, "I think one of the shortcomings of that policy is that it doesn't hold law enforcement accountable for negligence, which we have seen in my loved one's case in X, Y, and Z ways." Brainstorming these strategies to get back to your talking points can be really helpful, so you won't be on the spot or derailed during the interview.

2. Think about what you don't want to say. This may sound counterintuitive, but it's important to know ahead of time what you don't want the press to publish. Sometimes we get comfortable and start sharing more than we meant to, or over-share due to nerves. Knowing your own boundaries is the best way to make sure that nothing private gets included in your answers.

3. Practice, practice, practice. You don't want to sound too rehearsed so we don't recommend memorizing the things you want to say, but practicing can really help. Practice in the shower, with a loved one or friend, or we even know someone who practices by telling their pet dog everything! However you want to do it is fine. Practice your answers and your tone of voice and body language like hand gestures.

4. Set a self care regimen. Get a good night's sleep before if you can, think about healthy foods or comfort food that would make you feel good in the morning, set aside an outfit the night before if it's a video interview, and be gentle on yourself. The night before a video interview is not the time to try a new face mask, dye your hair, or go crazy redesigning your personal look--too many things can go wrong, and it could really be a blow to your confidence. Only do what feels good and makes you feel like things are organized.

5. Gather things that can help you feel strong and calm. You may have heard of speakers keeping a paperclip in their pocket for nerves--you can try that, or use whatever other practice feels right for you. Some people wear jewelry that's meaningful to them, put medicine inside their shoes or burn medicine before the interview, play their favorite energizing song before the interview, or carry something small in their pocket.

Talking Points and Frequently Asked Questions

While it's difficult to offer standardized talking points or answers to FAQ's, we want to offer a selection of options here, based on what SBI has used. You do not have to stick to our talking points or answers, this is just to give you an example of how to create your own and to get you started. These are generalized to be relevant to the movement in the US and Canada, so if you do decide to use them, you may want to personalize them a bit.

Talking Points

- MMIWG2 families and Indigenous survivors are resilient, and step up to take leadership in addressing this crisis daily
- MMIWG2 families and Indigenous survivors should be empowered to tell their own stories for themselves, and uplifted to leadership positions as experts on the dynamics of this violence
- Policymakers and law enforcement should be actively consulting with MMIWG2 families and Indigenous survivors to see what their needs and priorities are
- Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty has everything to do with gender violence against Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people--Indigenous people will not have full self-determination and sovereignty over their bodies while their peoples are subjugated and oppressed under colonial occupation
- Indigenous peoples must be respected as self-determining, sovereign peoples that have a right to protect each other and hold people accountable when one of our own has been hurt
- Colonial law enforcement has proven to have a systemic racial and gendered bias that leads to pervasive negligence and complicity in MMIWG2 cases
- Colonial justice systems have failed Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people, are not designed to give holistic justice for Indigenous people, and are also complicit in this crisis
- Violence against Indigenous lands leads to violence against Indigenous people, especially women, girls, and two spirit people--extractive industries on Indigenous lands actively endanger the lives of Indigenous women, children, and two spirit people

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are Indigenous women going missing or being killed?

The simple answer is colonialism. Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people are not safe while living in colonial systems that target them for violence and allow that violence to flourish with no response. Their peoples cannot enforce their natural laws and protect their vulnerable or targeted populations under settler colonial occupation, their bodies are treated as objects for the taking, and settler culture continues to teach generations of people that Indigenous women and girls are hypersexual beings easy to use and abuse.

What can be done about this crisis?

Uphold tribal sovereignty, honor treaties, listen to the families and survivors who have critical perspectives and expertise to share. There are more specific things that can be done, like passing certain policies, but ultimately, Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty must be upheld so that Indigenous peoples have the ability to protect their own.

Are there policies that would help?

Yes, _____ policy has been proposed. I believe this policy will improve the response to this crisis by doing X, Y, and Z. Please contact your elected representative and let them know you support this policy. In general, policies that promote the safety and sovereignty/self-determination of Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people are needed.

What can people do as individuals?

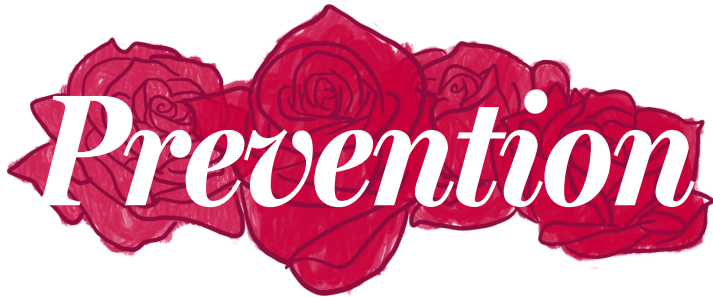
There are entry points for all people to get involved in this movement. Each of us has our own unique skills, gifts, and callings, and we can use those to support the movement. So in that sense, there is no one path to getting involved as an individual. If there is anyone out there who is wondering how to get started, you can start with the MMIWG2 Organizing Toolkit by Sovereign Bodies Institute, to get tips or ideas.

Are there any stories you can tell me about in more detail?

I can share our family's story, but cannot speak to any other cases without permission first. Families must have their needs, priorities, and boundaries respected, and that includes sharing their stories on their own terms.

What's one thing you want the general public to know about this issue?

There is no community that is not touched by this violence. This violence happens everywhere, and continues to spread. It is a public safety issue and an injustice that affects us all, whether we are Indigenous or not. You may drive past a spot where an Indigenous woman, girl, or two spirit person was hurt daily and not even realize it--the violence has become so everyday and erased as an invisible piece of settler social fabric. We all have a responsibility to step up and address it.

A graphic of several red roses in various stages of bloom, rendered in a sketchy, hand-drawn style. The word "Prevention" is written in a white, elegant, cursive font across the center of the roses.

Prevention

In this section:

- What Are the Root Causes of MMIWG2 in Your Community? - Activity Guide
- Imagining Futures Free from Violence - Activity Guide

Q What are some of the MMIWG2 cases you know of in your area or community? What were their stories? What are things their families feel contributed or led to their death or disappearance?

Q Map out the places in your community where it feels unsafe for Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people. Why do those places feel unsafe?

Q What are common attitudes towards Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people in your community? How do you see those attitudes influence people's behavior?

Q Is your community a safe place for Indigenous youth? If not, what are the dangers you worry about that could harm them?

Q Do people in your community advocate for missing and murdered two spirit people? Can you name any missing or murdered two spirit people? If not, why do you think that is?

Q If an Indigenous woman, girl, or two spirit person from your community called you for help because they had been attacked, are there resources or places you could refer them to? What would you do for them? If there aren't any resources, or not enough, why do you think that is?

Q What are some of the experiences or factors that lead Indigenous women, girls, or two spirit people from your community to be in dangerous situations? List the kind of situations you think happen most frequently, and what leads up to them.

Q Are Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people in your community treated equally to men and boys? If not, how are they treated differently, and why?

Q Does your community have protective factors that protect Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people from harm? Protective factors can be anything that reduces the likelihood that they will experience violence, trauma, or discrimination. If your community does not have protective factors, or they aren't working or enough, why is that?

Q What are your community's culture(s)' traditions around violence? What were the beliefs and attitudes about it, and what were the consequences when it happened? Why were things that way, and how can we translate those values into practices today?

Q How can your community mobilize or revitalize traditional ideas of kinship and taking care of one another to better protect Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people?

Q What are some things your tribal government, band council, or tribal court can do to reduce violence in your tribal community? Are there policies they could pass, programming they could invest in, or practices that need to improve?

About the Authors

Charlene Aqpik Apok (Inupiaq)

Charlene is Iñupiaq, her family is from White Mountain and Golovin, AK. She is mother to Evan Lukluan. Charlene has served in many spaces as an advocate for Indigenous womxn, Indigenous sovereignty, climate justice and Indigenous rights to health and wellbeing. Charlene is a lifelong learner in both her cultural traditions and decolonizing academia. She earned her B.A in American Ethnic Studies with a minor in Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies, an M.A in Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development, and is currently pursuing her PhD in Indigenous Studies. Charlene gratefully resides in Anchorage on the territories of the Dena'ina peoples. Here she has taught the Iñupiaq language and is part of Kingikmuit dance group with her son son.

Shereena Baker (Southern Ute & Karuk)

Shereena Baker is the Co-President of the Kiva Club at The University of New Mexico (UNM). The purpose of KIVA club is to encourage student and community involvement with Native American issues and events on the UNM campus and in the surrounding communities. She has also been selected to be a 2019-2020 graduate student intern for Sovereign Bodies Institute (SBI). Shereena is currently enrolled as a PhD student in the Language, Literacy and Sociocultural studies program in the Education department at UNM. Prior to continuing her education at UNM, Shereena received her Master's degree in Indigenous Studies from the University of Kansas and her Bachelor's degree in American Indian Studies from Haskell Indian Nations University.

Gabriella Balandran

Gabriella serves as a research assistant at Sovereign Bodies Institute. She will be graduating this spring from Humboldt State University with her BA in Sociology with a minor in Native American Studies. She will be returning to Humboldt State in the fall to pursue her Masters in Social Work with her main focus in tribal social services.

Bernadine Bear Heels (Rosebud Sioux Tribe)

Bernadine has been working with Chickasaw Nation for seven years and she is currently a Claims Specialist at Resource Management. She does registration trainings along with other duties with the

clinic aides. She really enjoys her job. She and her family plan on doing another Memorial Walk for Britney and other MMIW families, and will continue to go to MMIW events in Oklahoma. She feels this is an important topic, and since her daughter went missing her family has been involved and will continue to bring awareness to this issue.

Moroni Benally (Diné)

Moroni Benally is the Coordinator for Public Policy and Advocacy at Restoring Ancestral Winds, Inc. He also serves as a Board member of Western Resource Advocates, a conservation organization that seeks to protect the West's land, air, and water to ensure that vibrant communities exist in balance with nature. He co-founded the Utah League of Native American Voters, where he assisted and advocated on behalf of tribes on public lands, water, voting rights, and violence prevention. He also served as Director of the Navajo Nation's Division of Natural Resources, where he helped facilitate the Navajo Nation's involvement in the Bears Ears National Monument and worked extensively on natural resource policy at the tribal, state, and federal levels. Additionally, he served as Vice-President of Diné College. Prior to this, he taught at Evergreen State College in the Masters of Public Administration program. He is currently finishing a PhD in Public Policy at the University of Washington, focusing on collaborative governance around natural resources. He is Diné and currently lives in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Tammy Big Day (Choctaw & Chippewa descent, married into Crow) Tammy has been married to her husband Jace Big Day for 24 years. They have 4 children--one boy, and 3 girls. They are a traditional Crow family. Tammy's Indigenous heritage comes from her great, great grandparents on both sides. She is of Choctaw and Chippewa descent.

Tammy Carpenter (Hoopa Valley Tribe)

Tammy S. Carpenter is a Hoopa Valley Tribal Member from Hoopa, California. She is the mother of the late Angela Lynne McConnell and Richie Carpenter, who are both Hoopa Valley Tribal members. She will continue to seek justice for Angela Lynne, she is her daughter's voice now. She prays every day that the individuals responsible for her death will be apprehended and justice will prevail for Angela Lynne and their family.

Carolyn DeFord (Puyallup, Nisqually, Cowlitz)

Carolyn DeFord is Puyallup, Nisqually, Cowlitz and mixed Pasted (settler) descendance. She currently works for the Puyallup Tribe's Community Domestic Violence Advocacy Program, where she supports program goals to address violence and abuse impacting the community. These important issues partnered with personal experience and being the daughter of a long term missing person have inspired her to raise awareness for missing and murdered Indigenous people, prevention, and the healing power of culture. In 2016, in an effort to bridge gaps in media, services, and awareness, Carolyn created Missing and Murdered Native Americans; a grassroots volunteer organization focused on supporting families, awareness, prevention and advocacy.

Danielle Ewenin (Kawacatoose First Nation)

Danielle Ewenin is Nehiyaw/Cree and a member of Kawacatoose First Nation. She is mother to 5 children and 22 grandchildren. She is a graduate of Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC), now First Nations University. Danielle spent 30 years in community development, and has developed programs and services to strengthen organizations and provide services to women, children, youth and elders. She has worked since she was 19 on social justice issues for Indigenous Peoples, she calls this "Peace work." Danielle Ewenin was the community organizer on the Standing Rock Reservation for Amnesty International's report, "Maze of Injustice: Sexual Victimization of American Indian Women in the USA" (2004). She is a professional writer and has volunteered her skills to community groups for grants, etc. Danielle is the younger sister of Eleanor "Laney" Ewenin and has been an advocate for MMIWG2S families. She organized and coordinated the first Saskatchewan provincial gathering of families of MMIWG2S families (2019), is currently the Western Regional Coordinator of the project "Pimatisowin e mimitotaman -Dance for Life-Dancer Pour Le Vie" National Awareness Campaign on MMIWG2S, and is coordinating a gathering of families of Manitoba, British Columbia, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

Aryn Fisher (Northern Cheyenne)

Aryn serves as a Data Analyst at Sovereign Bodies Institute. She holds a BS in Community Health from Montana State University. She has served as a community-based tribal researcher and local evaluator on public health projects with Indigenous communities in

Montana. Aryn has recently returned from New Zealand where she worked as an Indigenous exchange teacher in a New Zealand Maori high school.

Ashleigh Fixico (Muscogee (Creek))

Ashleigh N. Fixico is a graduate of Dartmouth College with a B.A. in Government and a B.A. in Native American Studies modified with Hispanic Studies. Ashleigh is dedicated to empowering Native survivors, as well as serving tribal communities to advance and protect tribal self-determination to strengthen tribal responses to their citizens' needs. In 2017, Ashleigh interned with the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women through the Udall Native American Congressional Internship and was a recipient of the "25 under 25 Native Youth Leadership Award" from United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY) in 2018. Most recently, Ashleigh was the 2018-2019 Wilma Mankiller Policy Fellow for the National Congress of American Indians. Currently, Ashleigh is a Legal and Policy Assistant with Pipestem Law, P.C. and will be attending law school as a Sandra Day O'Connor Merit Scholar at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University.

Deborah Green (Gopher) (Kawacatoose First Nation)

Kakike manitohkan iskwew (Eternal Spirit Woman) -- "Without knowledge of who you are, and your culture...you are like a tree with no roots."

Deborah Green (Gopher) is a proud Nehiyaw Iskwew (Cree woman) from the Kawacatoose and Piapot First Nations in Saskatchewan. Her journey began many years ago with the history of her ancestors, and the intergenerational impacts of Canada's history with Indigenous Peoples, within her family. She experienced barriers to equal opportunities, and wanted to make her life's work dedicated to drive change for future generations. Deborah has 20 years' experience in Diversity and Indigenous employment solutions. Her expertise is in community and relationship building, HR Initiatives, Strategy Framework & Policy, and training. Deborah has developed and integrated workforce diversity strategies, sourcing and developing Indigenous talent, fostering an inclusive work environment, and ensuring management accountability within corporate, oil and gas, education, and private consulting industries. Deborah has an extensive network within Canada, and is established and recognized as an authentic, humble subject matter

expert, and role model in the Indigenous Community. She seeks no external validation for the work she does in the form of awards or accolades. Instead, her pride stems from seeing change with Indigenous youth, and equal opportunity Indigenous employment in Canada. Deborah is now with Suncor Energy as an Indigenous Workforce Development Advisor, where she is responsible for supporting the governance, advocacy, and thoughtful development of applicable Workforce Development projects, programs and practices for Suncor.

Lenny Hayes (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)

Lenny Hayes, MA, is an enrolled citizen of the Sisseton Wahpeton-Oyate of the northeast corner of South Dakota. Lenny is also owner and operator of Tate Topa Consulting, LLC. He has extensive training in mental and chemical health issues that impact the Two-Spirit/LGBTQ community. Lenny has always worked within the Native American community which includes the American Indian Family Center, St. Paul, MN, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, and was a consultant/therapist with the Little Earth of United Tribes, Minneapolis, MN. He is currently in private practice specializing in Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ issues with adults and youth. Lenny was most recently selected to be a technical assistant/consultant with the Office for Victims of Crime, Washington, D.C. He also recently accepted a position as a consultant with SAMSHA Tribal Training and Technical Assistance. His lived experience and training have made him a sought after workshop presenter on Native American Historical and Intergenerational Trauma and how it impacts the Native American community as well as the Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ individual and community. Lenny has traveled nationally training on Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ issues. Lenny also co-facilitated Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ Support Group with the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center in which participants are able to discuss mental health issues that impacts this population. Lenny is involved with several local LGBTQ organizations and is former Chairman of the Board of the MN Two-Spirit Society. As Chairman of the Board of the MN Two-Spirit Society he helped and assisted Native organizations in developing policies in the protection, safety, and non-discrimination of Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ people in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Lenny is a Board member to the First Nations Repatriation Institute, an Advisory Committee Member with the Capacity Building Center for Tribes, LGBTQ Advisory Co-

Chair Council Member for the Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition, Advisory Council Member for The National Quality Improvement Center on Tailored Services, Placement Stability, and Permanency for LGBTQ and Two-Spirit Children and Youth in Foster Care, committee member for ACE-DV Leadership Forum with the National Resource Center for Domestic Violence, and a former Council Member for the MN HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Council and Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ Advisory Committee Member for the Center for Native American Youth, Washington, D.C. Lenny was recently selected to be a recipient of the 2018 Bonnie Heavy Runner Advocacy Award at the 16th National Indian Nations Conference "Justice for Victims of Crime."

Cheryl Horn (Fort Belknap Tribes)

Cheryl has experience working with Tribal Social Services, Tribal Courts, and Tribal TANF, and was a Domestic Violence Advocate, which started her path of helping others. She has been active with MMIP since 2018. She is currently running a daycare, and working on a contract for the Ft Belknap Tribal Investment Board. Since Selena went missing on Jan 1, 2020 she has also been actively involved in rescuing sex trafficked women from Montana, as well as out of state women. Her hope is to continue to spread awareness and be the Voice for the voiceless.

Raechel Ibarra (Chicana, Chiricahua Apache, Tohono O'odham)

Raechel is Chicana, Chiricahua Apache and Tohono O'Odham descendent from Arizona and the border of Mexico. As a Case Manager supporting a specialized caseload of Commercially Sexually Exploited youth in foster care, Raechel currently works at a non-profit organization in Sacramento. Prior to working as a Case Manager, Raechel served as a Victim Advocate on the American Indian/Alaska Native team at a rape crisis center providing crisis intervention services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Raechel was introduced to SBI when organizing an event for MMIW in 2018, hosted by the Wilton Rancheria. Raechel has been in recovery for six years, which has allowed her to reclaim her history and bring awareness to the intersection of sexual trauma and addiction. She has a background in AOD as an RADT1, and has been a strong advocate in preventing violence against Native American women and girls. Most recently she hosted a webinar produced by Child and Family Policy Institute of California, as a Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking or P.A.C.T Consultant

on “Considerations in Serving Native Youth.” Some of Raechel’s speaking clients include:

The CSEC Action Team, Domestic Violence and Poverty: Family Safety and the Safety Net Joint Informational Hearing Assembly Committee on Human Services Assembly Select Committee on Domestic Violence

Assemblywoman Blanca E. Rubio, Chair, Child Welfare Policy Roundtable focused on “Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice”, Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking project through the Child Policy Institute of CA

2019: San Francisco Collaborative against human trafficking conference “Trafficking into the disappearance of Indigenous women Session of the SFCALT Conference 9/27/2019

PACT Convening 2019

Annita Hetoevehotohke’e Lucchesi (Cheyenne)

Annita serves as founding Executive Director of Sovereign Bodies Institute, and founding caretaker of the MMIW Database now housed at SBI. She earned her BA in Geography from UC Berkeley, and MA in American Studies from Washington State University. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Geography with a minor in Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Arizona. Her academic interests largely focus on intersections of cartography, Indigenous data sovereignty, and colonial gender and sexual violence. She is a survivor of domestic violence, rape, and trafficking.

Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma)

Mary Kathryn Nagle is an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation and playwright. Her play Sliver of a Full Moon has been performed at law schools across the United States, and she has received commissions from Arena Stage, the Rose Theater, Portland Center Stage, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Yale Repertory Theatre, Round House Theatre, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. In 2019, her play SOVEREIGNTY was produced at Marin Theatre Company, and the Yale Repertory Theatre will produce MANAHATTA in 2020. She served as the first Executive Director of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program from 2015 to 2019. Nagle is also a partner at Pipestem Law, P.C., where she works to protect tribal sovereignty and the inherent right of Indian Nations to protect their women and children from domestic violence and sexual assault. She has authored numerous briefs in federal appellate courts, including the United States Supreme Court.

Lacina Tangaqudo Onco (Shinnecock Indian Nation of New York, Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma)

Lacina Onco is a citizen of the Shinnecock Indian Nation of New York and the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma. She is a former Bill Gates Millennium Scholar and has received her Master of Social Work degree from the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work. Her experience as an advocate includes her time lobbying with the Friends Committee on National Legislation as the Congressional Advocate on Native American Policy. As a lobbyist, her portfolio focused on justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and on bringing awareness to the crisis of violence occurring in Indian Country. She now advocates for policies that will strengthen tribal economies as a Policy Specialist for the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA).

Tia Oros Peters (Zuni)

Tia Oros Peters (Zuni) is the Chief Executive Officer of Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, which is an identity-based Native philanthropic, advocacy, and leadership organization that supports community generated strategies for Native Peoples' cultural revitalization, movement building, self-determination, and Re-Indigenization. Co-founder of the Global Indigenous Women's Caucus, she is a board member of the Proteus Fund, and of Tools & Tiaras; President of Red Deer Center, and an advisor to Grantmakers for Girls of Color (G4GC). Tia has also served on the board of directors of Native Americans in Philanthropy; the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media; Resist Fund, and on the advisory boards of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum & Heritage Center, Pueblo of Zuni; the Women's Building of New York; and Youth United for Community Action. A mother and grandmother, writer, organizer, and cultural artist, Tia is also known as Méeškaatsəh'ě'e – a name she received from Chief Phillip Whiteman of the Northern Cheyenne Nation.

Lillian Piapot (Kawacatoose First Nation)

Lillian Piapot is a respected Elder from Piapot First Nation, in Saskatchewan, Canada. She was raised by her maternal grandmother, Rebecca Moneybird-Gopher, who only spoke Cree, and instilled the knowledge of Nehiyaw (Cree), which Lillian holds and provides to the community. Lillian provides support services to many organizations, institutions, and levels of government as an advisor from a traditional Cree perspective, which includes

insight from traditions, ceremonies, and prayer and is called upon to provide opening prayer at many events and meetings. She does not call herself an Elder but a 'helper' and thus fulfilling and meeting the fundamental law and obligation given in Cree/Nehiyaw teachings of love, sharing, honesty, service/giving, and humility. She is the eldest sister of Eleanor "Laney" Ewenin. She has 5 children, and as with traditional kinship, she raised siblings, grandchildren, and nieces and nephews. She is grandmother to 8 and 'chapon' (great grandmother) to 6, and traditionally to her sibling's children and grandchildren. The community she serves lovingly calls her 'Kokum' (grandmother) and due to colonization, she is the only grandmother many members of the community have.

Viridiana Preciado (Mexican-American)

Viridiana is a Research Assistant at Sovereign Bodies Institute, and helps to build and maintain the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls database for Latin America, and creates SBI's Spanish language materials. Viridiana identifies as Mexican-American, commonly referred to as a Chicana, and is currently pursuing her degree in International Studies at Humboldt State University. Viridiana has witnessed the institutionalized barriers placed specifically on Indigenous women and wants to be a part of the movement to not only recognize the violence against specific victims but to uplift and empower Indigenous women and to ultimately bring closure to victims and their families.

Waynette Renville (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)

Waynette Renville is enrolled & resides on the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation. She has been married for 22 years, and she and her partner have 3 children together. Waynette named her youngest after her sister, who was murdered. It's her passion to help other families of murdered & missing and sex trafficked people. She will continue to work to bring awareness and do whatever she needs to so we are not silenced.

Taylor Ruecker (Peepeekisis Cree Nation)

Taylor is a Research Assistant with Sovereign Bodies Institute. She holds a Bachelor's of Communication in Information Design and Recently came back from the UK studying for her Masters in Graphic Design.

Deondre Smiles (Ojibwe)

Deondre is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geography at The Ohio State University. His current research focuses on the ways that Indigenous nations protect deceased tribal members through effective and unique forms of resistance inspired by these same tribal members. He also is interested in questions surrounding tribal sovereignty, tribal protection of the environment and other-than-human kin, and research ethics in Indigenous communities. In the Fall of 2020, Deondre will take up a position as a postdoctoral fellow in the Geography and History departments at Ohio State. He holds a bachelor's degree in Geography from Saint Cloud State University and a master's degree in Global Indigenous Studies from the University of Minnesota Duluth.

Jessica Smith (Bois Forte Band of Chippewa)

Jessica Smith (Gidagaakoons) is an enrolled member of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. She grew up on the Fond du Lac Reservation in Cloquet, MN, where she currently resides. She has an Associate of Science degree in Law Enforcement and is currently working on her Bachelor's in Legal Studies, minoring in First Nations Studies at The University of Wisconsin-Superior. Jessica has a 12-year-old daughter and she is currently a personal care assistant for her mother. Jessica is a survivor of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and human trafficking. It is because of her traumas that she is very passionate about bringing awareness to human trafficking and to the epidemic of MMIWG2. Jessica has been researching the epidemic and it is what brought her to SBI. She has given presentations on her research to bring crucial awareness to people in and around her community. Most recently she gave a public presentation in Duluth, MN that was sponsored by Essentia Health during trafficking awareness month. She was also selected to represent The University of Wisconsin-Superior at the state's Research in the Rotunda event at the State Capitol in Madison, WI. She met with legislators and discussed her research and what needs to be done to help put an end to this violence against Indigenous people. Jessica is a McNair Scholar and is using the program to further her research on human trafficking and MMIWG2. The McNair Scholars Program is a federal TRIO program funded at 151 institutions across the United States and Puerto Rico by the U.S. Department of Education. It is designed to prepare undergraduate students for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other

scholarly activities. McNair participants are either first-generation college students with financial need, or members of a group that is traditionally underrepresented in graduate education and have demonstrated strong academic potential. The goal of the McNair Scholars Program is to increase graduate degree awards for students from underrepresented segments of society. Jessica is a dean's list student and her education has been her greatest support throughout her personal healing journey. As a survivor, she is using her voice in and out of academia to be supportive of other survivors throughout their healing journeys. Jessica is a proud member of SBI's Survivors Leadership Council.

Pamela Smith (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma)

Pamela is the mother of two and the aunt of missing Cherokee two-spirit woman Aubrey Dameron of Grove, Oklahoma. Pamela serves as Vice Chair/HR for Northeast Oklahoma Indigenous Safety & Education (NOISE), and is a self-employed non-emergency medical transport driver who also has a background in law enforcement and the medical field. Pamela attended Northeast State University and Oklahoma State University. She has led over a dozen searches for her missing niece and has become an advocate for missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. She has shared her niece's story to anyone who will listen at events across Oklahoma, including lawmakers at the Oklahoma State Capitol, in hopes that new laws will be passed to help our missing and murdered Indigenous families.

Chelsea Mirafior Trillo (Pangitaa)

Chelsea Mirafior Trillo (Pangitaa), MSW, has been dedicated to addressing gender violence for over six years. Her graduate work focused on decolonizing social work practices, with an emphasis on responding to the global violence against Indigenous Women and Girls, and that of Mother Earth. Such an emphasis continues in her work at Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, where Chelsea coordinates Thriving Women, a program that supports inspiring community projects led by Indigenous Women. She believes it is through the leadership, strategies, and empowerment of Indigenous Women that Mother Earth will finally begin to re-balance and heal.

Jodi Voice (Muscogee (Creek), Oglala Lakota, and Cherokee)
Jodi Voice Yellowfish is Muscogee Creek, Oglala Lakota, and

Cherokee. A product of the US government's Relocation Program, Jodi was born and raised in Dallas, Texas and has lived in Oak Cliff her entire life. She attended Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, where she received her Associate's degree in Social Work and studied for her bachelor's in Indigenous and American Indian Studies. Jodi is an ambassador for American Indian Heritage Day in Texas, Indian Citizens Against Racial Exploitation as well as Chair for MMIW Texas (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Womxn), and a member of the steering committee for Dallas TRHT (Truth Racial Healing Transformation).

Roxanne White (Nez Perce, Yakama, Nooksack, & Aaniiih (Gros Ventre))

Roxanne is a fearless and dedicated organizer and social justice advocate who has dedicated her work to Indian Country. She is Nez Perce, Yakama, Nooksack, and Aaniiih (Gros Ventre.) She is recognized nationally for her work on issues related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and for her work with MMIP families and communities seeking justice and healing. She is also known her work on human trafficking in Native communities. Roxanne is a grassroots organizer, standing on the front lines for Indigenous rights and environmental justice. She embodies vibrant Indigenous leadership through the resilience of culture and ceremony and a lens of historical trauma. Roxanne is a family member of MMIP, as well as a survivor of human trafficking, domestic violence, childhood abduction, and sexual abuse. She draws on her personal experience to empower and support MMIP families, survivors, and Native communities. Roxanne has been featured on HuffPost, the Canadian Broadcast Channel, CNN, Al Jazeera TV, Seattle Times, and a variety of local and national media.

Whitney L. Whitehorn (Osage Nation)

Whitney L. Whitehorn is a graduate of Oklahoma State University with a B.S. in Management with an emphasis in Sports Management. Whitney graduated with a minor in American Indian Studies. Whitney was a member of the Oklahoma State University softball team from 2013-2018. During her time at Oklahoma State she helped create the first ever Nike N7 softball game. Whitney also helped with the Nike N7 Field day. Whitney helped gather donors and other Native student athletes at Oklahoma State to participate in the Field Day. This Field Day brought young Natives to Oklahoma State where they engaged in a variety of physical

activities. Whitney is currently a 2L at Oklahoma City University School of Law. Whitney is passionate about protecting Natives and raising awareness for the missing and murdered. Whitney is currently a legal intern at Pipestem Law.

Lorelei Williams (Skatin Nation, Sts'Ailes Nation)

Lorelei is the founder of Butterflies in Spirit, a dance group of MMIWG families based in Vancouver, British Columbia. Beyond managing Butterflies in Spirit, she was the Women's Coordinator at the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre. This non-profit organization addresses Indigenous social justice issues and works to build stronger relationships between the Vancouver Police Department and Indigenous communities by promoting education, awareness and open dialogue. This was a very hard job for her considering the fraught history with the police. She also worked at WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre as an Indigenous Counsellor, and was a Coordinator at Golden Eagle Rising Society. Golden Eagle Rising Society is a not for profit provincial Indigenous organization that provides support, training and advocacy programs to initiatives and organizational efforts promoting and protecting Indigenous lives across the province of British Columbia. Lorelei also volunteers for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Collation in Vancouver, which is a diverse group of more than 25 urban community and political advocacy groups and family members of the missing and murdered. Lorelei is trained in Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy on Complex Trauma, which was started by Shirley Turcotte. This is a safe and effective method of working with clients who experience complex trauma. It's a body-centred and person-centred approach to healing and is trauma informed. She truly believes this is what has saved her from getting any physical illnesses from the advocacy work she does. Lorelei is also a Researcher at Sovereign Bodies Institute (SBI). SBI builds on Indigenous traditions of data gathering and knowledge transfer to create, disseminate, and put into action research on gender and sexual violence against Indigenous people.

Agnes Woodward (Kawacatoose First Nation)

Agnes Woodward is Nehiyaw (Cree) from Kawacatoose First Nation, Saskatchewan, Canada. Agnes is a wife, mother of five, full-time student, and owner/designer behind ReeCreations. She is also a family member of an MMIWG2S, as her aunt Eleanor "Laney" Ewenin was murdered in 1982, and her family has been active in

the movement since the '90s. Through her family's work in the MMIWG2S movement, she has developed a passion for advocating for those who have been silenced or have yet to find their voice. Agnes believes that family members of MMIWG2SP should be the ones to set the agenda and hold power on how their stories are told. With a focus on healing, Agnes has designed a ribbon skirt that has been said to be an iconic symbol in the MMIWG2S movement. She has done several fundraisers for organizations and families of MMIWG2S with the belief that love and support for families must always come from a place of compassion and understanding.

Mona Woodward (Kawacatoose First Nation)

Mona Woodward is a member of Kawacatoose First Nation and younger sister of Eleanor "Laney" Ewenin. Mona was one of the originators of the MMIWG2S movement; she organized the first demonstration in 1989 to draw attention to the women who were disappearing from the Downtown East Side (DTES) of Vancouver, Canada. There were 4 women raising signs on the infamous corner of 'Hastings and Main' and thus the spark that ignited a movement. Mona, as former director of the Open-Door Society, provided services for the community of the DTES, and was leader in the 30-year movement in Canada that led to the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (2016-2019). Mona had major roles in the reports produced on MMIWG by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International (Stolen Sisters; 2004), and the UN Rapporteurs' work on Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and Women, that have provided reports to committees of the UN. In 2013, she received an award in recognition of her leadership by the Canadian Police Chief's Association, for the Vancouver City Police policy and procedures on Missing People. She provided testimony to the British Columbia Commission of Missing Women Inquiry (Oppal Inquiry), National Inquiry into MMIWG, National Roundtables on Violence Against Women, etc. She has provided interviews, keynote speeches, and workshops on MMIWG2S, and speaks on providing support to families, organizing grassroots actions (as founder of the February 14 March), developing policy, and articles on MMIWG2S. She is mother of 4 children and 5 grandchildren, a traditional women's pow-wow dancer, and traditional singer.

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