

# **Raising Public Awareness on Domestic Violence in Indian Country**



**Developed by  
Cangleska, Inc., and  
South Dakota Coalition  
Against Domestic Violence  
and Sexual Assault**

**Published by  
National Resource Center  
on Domestic Violence**





# **Raising Public Awareness on Domestic Violence in Indian Country**

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A project of  
Cangleska, Inc., and  
South Dakota Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Published by  
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

Supported with funding from the National Center for Injury Prevention and  
Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## ABOUT THE PROJECT

In collaboration with the **South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**, its member organizations and Native American advocates throughout the state, **Cangleska, Inc.**, the violence against women intervention and shelter program on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, developed domestic violence public awareness materials focusing specifically on rural and Native American communities. Materials included posters, public service announcements used in radio talk shows and an updated version of a domestic violence handbook for Lakota communities. A resource directory for advocates was also developed that included contacts for media, courts and the criminal justice system. Additionally, project staff coordinated the development and display of a statewide exhibit of the Silent Witness National Initiative and organized South Dakota participation in the national March to End Silence.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Karen Artichoker:** Ms. Artichoker is a member of the management team for Cangleska, Inc. A graduate of the University of Colorado, Ms. Artichoker directs Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women. An Oglala Lakota/Ho-Chunk, Ms. Artichoker was the first Native woman to be qualified as an expert witness in federal court in South Dakota and is well known across the nation as a public speaker and advocate for ending violence against women.

**Verlaine Gullickson:** Ms. Gullickson is co-director of the South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. A graduate of North Dakota State University, Ms. Gullickson received her master's degree in Women's Studies from Mankato State University. Her previous work experience includes state government, legislative education and public education.

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# NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDV) was founded in 1993 as a key component in a national network of domestic violence resource centers established through the Violence Against Women Act and funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

As a source of comprehensive information, training and technical assistance on community response to and prevention of domestic violence, the NRCDV supports the capacity of organizations and individuals working to end violence in the lives of women and their children. The NRCDV's first priority is to proactively support the work of national, state and local domestic violence programs. It also places an emphasis on increasing organizational responsiveness to the needs identified by communities of color and other traditionally underserved populations. The NRCDV is a project of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, a pioneering leader in policy development, training and technical assistance in the movement to end domestic violence.

This paper is one of a series prepared for the Public Education Technical Assistance (PE) Project of the NRCDV. The PE Project was initiated with funding from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support the public education efforts of state coalitions, community programs and others working to end domestic violence. A major activity of the project includes coordination of a series of demonstration projects to develop new approaches for domestic violence public education. This material was prepared with assistance from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Grant # U1V/CCU312521.



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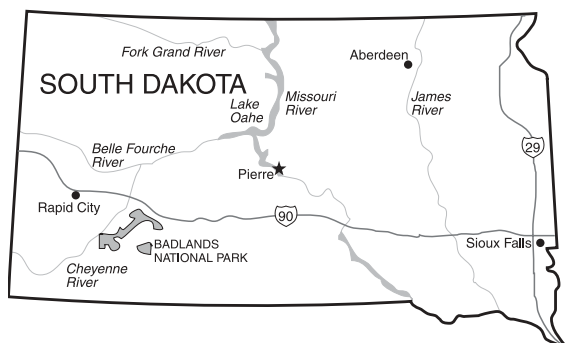
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# SOUTH DAKOTA: BACKDROP FOR THE CAMPAIGN



A large land mass, sparse population and limited economic resources are attributes that describe South Dakota. With an area of 75,952 square miles (380 miles in length and 245 miles in breadth), the state is the 16th largest in the nation, but has only nine persons per square mile and a total population of 690,000. Only 13 towns exceed populations of 5,000 and only 11 counties have populations greater than 15,000.

Nine American Indian reservations are located throughout the state and indigenous (Lakota) people comprise the only significant population of color in the state (eight percent of the total population). South Dakota ranks fourth in the nation in total Native American population. Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne River, located in South Dakota, are among the largest American Indian reservations in the U.S. Ninety-one percent of reservation land is classified as rural. It is also noteworthy that these reservation counties rank among the poorest counties in the nation.

South Dakota history reflects a mixing of culture and people through interracial marriages so that immigrant cultures\* and Lakota tradition intersect to create a distinct lifestyle. This is reflected in the values that many South Dakota families have in relation to the land, nature and family.

Historically, they have offered the means to an abundant life – good crops, plentiful fishing and hunting. The land and nature have commanded a deep respect from their inhabitants. They can also be punishing and cause death and injury through blizzards, floods, droughts, tornadoes and hailstorms. The Native people and the non-Native pioneers, who came to this state and stayed to experience both the bounty and hardships of nature, are pragmatic and hold fast to the values of common sense, enterprise, hard work, endurance, loyalty, friendship and a reliance on the extended family. The extended family for both Native and non-Native people in early years was vital because the family needed all members to survive. In isolated rural areas, the family provided child and elder care, education and moral and physical support. This tradition continues through current day.

Race relations in South Dakota reveal another facet of history: one of Manifest Destiny and the impact of colonization. The philosophy of Manifest Destiny asserted that the U.S. had the right to expand its territory throughout North America. The policy of the U.S. government during the 19th century held that Indian nations were to be assimilated or terminated. Lakota people were forced onto reservations and the cavalry guarded those reservations and surrounding areas. Children were educated in boarding schools and severely punished for speaking their language and following their traditions. The policies of colonization left a legacy of abject poverty and internalized oppression for the Lakota people. For non-Native people, Manifest Destiny undergirded the racism already present in the colonizing culture.

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\* Immigrant cultures refers to persons of any ethnicity or ancestry not indigenous (Native American) to this country.



Deep-seated prejudice between Native and non-Native people is reflected in the language, in social institutions and in state and local governments. Non-Native women are reluctant to use Native resources and Native women often have no choice but to use mainstream services. The inherent racism in these institutions and services sometimes endangers the safety of Native women and their children. Women experiencing racism will resist reporting violence and often will not seek needed services.

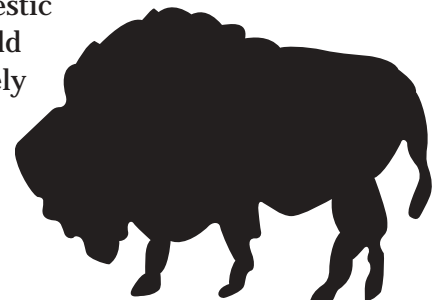
South Dakota is also a state of mixed jurisdiction. All of the reservations have some “checker boarding,” i.e., land owned by non-Natives and located on the reservation but not under the jurisdiction of tribal courts or law enforcement. Non-Natives living within the boundaries of the reservations are not subject to tribal jurisdiction. This erosion of tribal sovereignty has created a class of people subject to little law or consequences for criminal behavior.

Complicating the jurisdictional issue is the state circuit court system. Circuit court judges travel to various counties for court sessions. Each county has individual schedules – some weekly, some bi-weekly, some only once a month. Shelter advocates spend inordinate amounts of time calling court personnel for schedules and court calendar dates.

In South Dakota, the presence of nine treaty tribes (federal jurisdiction) surrounded by state lands (state jurisdiction) creates a unique dilemma in trying to develop culturally-appropriate services that effectively serve both Native and rural non-Native women alike. Staff of shelter programs need to know the workings and the politics of both the courts and law enforcement on the tribal, state and federal levels. Staff also need to understand that Native women are often frightened by the state legal system and non-Native persons are distrustful of the tribal legal system.

As part of their mission, South Dakota Coalition members strive to provide equitable and respectful services to both Native and non-Native women, so it was only natural that resources would be needed for the creation and development of appropriate public education materials supporting that mission. Staff of shelter programs cannot provide adequate services without the assistance of the communities where they are located. Developing materials that educate and appeal to community members, both Native and non-Native, is essential to rural shelter programs.

In addition, South Dakota crime statistics during the time this project was initiated revealed that crime was decreasing in all areas except violence against women. Sexual assault and domestic violence statistics had remained the same or increased in almost every region of South Dakota, while other offenses had fallen dramatically in some areas of the state. Raising public awareness was one way to affect these statistics. With increased public awareness that domestic violence is a crime and perpetrators would be held accountable by the local community, staff hoped that more women would report domestic violence and seek safety; recidivism among perpetrators would decrease; and community entities would respond appropriately to incidents of violence against women.



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# ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

This rural domestic violence public awareness campaign was a joint project between Cangleska, Inc., a domestic violence organization located on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, and the South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault during 1997. The Coalition is a 20-member state network of domestic violence programs that includes representation from all nine Indian reservations in South Dakota. The Coalition and Cangleska have a long history of joint projects, beginning with the formation of Cangleska.

## ***Cangleska***

In 1989, the Coalition developed and sponsored an initiative called **Project Medicine Wheel** on the Pine Ridge Reservation address the need for domestic violence and sexual assault services. **Project Medicine Wheel** evolved into a tribal agency and ultimately became known as Cangleska. (Cangleska is Lakota for Project Medicine Wheel and is the official name of the organization.) Cangleska, Inc., is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), tribally-chartered organization. Known nationally for culturally-specific work, Cangleska was named a demonstration project by the U.S. Department of Justice under the Violence Against Women Act. During the course of this public education project, the organization employed 18 staff and offered an array of direct services including shelter and related services, outreach advocacy, a domestic violence-specific probation department, and a systems monitoring and technology development department.

Cangleska also operates **Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women**, created in 1996. The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act authorized the creation of a network of national resource centers that would provide specialized training and information on domestic violence. Sacred Circle was the fifth of five resource centers created as a result of this Act and currently provides domestic violence and sexual assault training and information to 554 tribes located throughout the country.



## ***The South Dakota Coalition***

The South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault was formed to provide a network of support for organizations in the state working to end violence against women and to provide a voice for grassroots work on a state and national level. The Coalition was founded by a Lakota woman, Tillie Black Bear; the first organizational meeting was held on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in 1978.

Because the voices of Native women, present at the formation of the organization, had been lost in the succeeding years, the structure of the Coalition was challenged by Native women and has evolved into one that ensures equity for disenfranchised groups, especially women of color. The executive committee has two co-chairs – one selected by the entire body and one selected by the Women of Color Task Force. In addition, it includes representatives from the Women of Color Task Force, the Rural Women Task Force, a secretary, treasurer and one representative-at-large. Since the inception of this structure, the executive committee has been comprised of equal numbers of Native and non-Native women. Prior to this change in structure, no Native women had served on the executive committee for over ten years.



The Coalition operates by consensus decision-making to ensure equal representation for all. Task forces are able to caucus and have a collective voice in decision-making. The Coalition believes it is the only mixed racial organization in the state where Native women feel a real investment as valid, fully-participating members. The organizational structure and full participation of Native women make the Coalition a national model for other state coalitions seeking to build inclusive, participatory, democratic structures and multi-cultural organizations.

## **Staffing and Budget**

Cangleska received a \$35,000 grant award from the NRC DV to conduct this project. Most of this money supported staff salaries. The project was staffed by two members of Cangleska, a coordinator at 10% time and a media specialist at 10% time, in addition to a rural domestic violence outreach specialist from the Coalition at 20% time. The coordinator was responsible for administrative tasks related to funders, negotiating contracts with vendors, overseeing the development of materials and co-facilitating gatherings. The media specialist was responsible for actual development and production of printed materials, including data entry for the directory. The rural outreach specialist was responsible for maintaining contact with member organizations, coordinating the information for the directory, assisting with data input, developing and disseminating the survey and the Silent Witness National Initiative.



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# **RATIONALE AND GOALS OF THE PROJECT**

Public education outreach conducted by domestic violence programs in South Dakota varies according to staffing levels and available staff time. It is also dependent upon existing resources for materials development and production. Many rural South Dakota programs have only one or two staff members, and programs rely almost solely on the Coalition for materials. Some Native and rural communities utilize Coalition resources and materials effectively in their public education efforts; others are less consistent.

With that in mind, the overall goals of the project were to:

- increase the amount and type of public education resources and materials available to advocates
- develop universal symbols to be used in domestic violence prevention campaign materials that would have meaning and appeal to both Native and rural non-Native South Dakotans
- create a more unified and consistent approach to public education that was inclusive, reasonable and specific to the local region

In order to accomplish these goals, the project surveyed Coalition member programs and Native advocates regarding their public education activities and needs. That was accomplished by using written surveys and coordinating a gathering of advocates. Using the information obtained, a series of printed materials (brochures, posters and booklets) was developed and disseminated to the public through local domestic violence programs in the state. Another component of the project was to develop a statewide directory for domestic violence program advocates that would identify public education, media and legal/court resources.

Additionally, the project included coordinating a public awareness activity that would occur concurrently at several locations throughout Indian country. Staff also planned to hold a second gathering of advocates to assess the effectiveness of project materials and activities.



# GATHERING INFORMATION

The first phase of the project focused on gathering information from shelter advocates, Native allies and others about their domestic violence public awareness work and needs. This step was intended to:

- identify ongoing domestic violence efforts in South Dakota and develop appropriate materials
- discover the types of public awareness activities already implemented throughout the state that could be built upon
- collect ideas about possible themes and messages for new materials
- establish/maintain participation with state coalition members who would be primarily responsible for disseminating the materials that were developed


Information was collected in a number of ways, including a written survey, phone discussions with shelter programs, a gathering of rural domestic violence program advocates, and a meeting with tribal leaders.

## *Written Survey*

Project staff designed and disseminated a survey to Coalition member programs to collect information about public education efforts. The survey was designed to be a tool that would provide project staff with a detailed analysis of what was needed by member programs to support their efforts. The survey solicited information about the number of domestic violence organizations that had completed public education campaigns; the effectiveness of campaigns in creating public awareness; and campaign themes, strategies and goals.

Only four of the 20 surveys sent to member programs were returned, despite repeated efforts by staff to solicit information. This was likely due to the severity of the winter in South Dakota during this period (thought to be the worst in 100 years) and understaffing, coupled with the daily demands of crisis work. When it became evident that the surveys were not going to be completed, project staff brought the discussion to the Coalition's quarterly meetings. Considering travel restrictions throughout the state, these meetings seemed to be a logical forum and time for this discussion.

The topic was raised at two of the quarterly meetings where staff asked for information about successful public awareness campaigns. Because a number of other important issues took precedence, they were unable to obtain the information from either meeting. As a result, they returned to the original plan of hosting a separate meeting for advocates from member programs, including shelters serving rural non-Native women and those serving a majority of Native women.

 **NOTE:** In keeping with long-standing Coalition policy (and to facilitate participation), member programs were reimbursed for travel expenses associated with the meeting. This travel reimbursement policy is necessary in South Dakota to ensure participation of all shelter programs, including small, rural programs that rarely have funds for these activities.

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## ***Rural Meeting***

When the meeting was finally held in May 1997, the project had proceeded to a point where representatives were asked to comment on the work in progress, rather than participate in the project's initial stage as anticipated. Nine women from shelter programs in rural areas attended the day-long informal meeting and were asked to provide feedback on work done thus far on the redesign of Coalition publications, the resource directory and public service announcements. The meeting also included discussion on other public education issues including:

- projects that had worked in various communities and how those initiatives could be replicated and/or modified to fit other communities
- finding volunteers in small, isolated communities
- strategies for planning campaigns around or in conjunction with other community activities
- outreach to communities without shelter programs

Participants also discussed how public education programs could impact awareness in communities without local shelter programs – particularly those areas that are more than 70 miles from a program. For example, in the most isolated area (northern Meade County), a plan was formulated for staff from neighboring programs (a victim/witness coordinator and the assistant state's attorney) to participate in a public awareness booth at the local fair in Faith, SD. The exhibit was held in the high school gymnasium and the booth included Coalition publications, literature on domestic violence and sexual assault, and services offered by shelter programs and victim/witness programs. Staff members also made contact with local law enforcement and prosecution agencies and invited them to participate in the event.

## **Other Input**

Project staff had planned a series of meetings with public education representatives from shelter programs serving Native and rural non-Native women to provide input, participate in the planning of activities and articulate the needs of shelter programs. Because of the severe winter weather, the meeting had to be postponed several times and staff had to continue project activities and contacting programs by telephone for input and suggestions.



## RESERVATION GATHERING

A bilingual Cangleska staff member with connections to the tribal spiritual community personally invited a group of elder women and men to attend a meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to ask for their input and guidance in developing public education messages that might be effective in stopping domestic violence in tribal communities. Severe weather made meeting in-person impossible for all but one of those invited. (Staff subsequently interviewed, by phone, two additional medicine men who were invited but unable to attend.)

The medicine man who was able to come to the meeting, via four-wheel drive, was in his mid-forties. He spoke for an hour and agreed to be videotaped. The messages he suggested included, **“Do you think Crazy Horse was a woman beater?”** He also suggested that staff consider a poster about violence against Indian women using a popular poster slogan: **“Drinking doesn’t make you more Indian – it just makes you drunk.”**

The other two more elderly spiritual leaders supported the work to stop violence. They believed they were speaking publicly against physically harming others but felt the issue of alcohol was primary. All three men related stories of woman battering in the community that, in their minds, clearly illustrated cause and effect. They believed that alcohol use caused violence and that they were meeting their responsibilities because they consistently spoke out against alcohol use.

When given other information about the relationship between alcohol and violence, the medicine man who came to the meeting was able to admit that he probably needed further education on the subject. (It should be noted that he is married to the director of an alcohol treatment program and that he assisted his wife at the program, providing spiritual counseling and running sweat lodges for the clientele.)

He was asked how other medicine men, spiritual leaders and spiritual helpers could be educated or informed about the dynamics of domestic violence. He responded by saying that, at least for the older medicine men, “the spirits” would tell them about the nature of the problem. The medicine men would then have to be approached for a ceremony using the proper protocol.

When asked how to approach them as “ikce wicasa” or “common man” and not necessarily as medicine men, he thought for a long time and finally said that it would probably have to come from other medicine men. The conversation, particularly with the older men, would also have to be in the Lakota language.

Staff knew that this could be a difficult conversation given the prominent cultural value that is placed on listening to and learning from one’s elders. Challenging the elders would give the appearance of being ill-mannered. The medicine man suggested working with middle-aged or younger medicine men who might be more open to listening and less likely to view questions as being disrespectful. He also felt that a gathering of medicine men to discuss the issue would only provide a forum for competition among the medicine men that would negate any possible benefit.

When asked what cross-cultural/cross-racial avenues might be utilized in sending a message about domestic violence, the medicine man noted that elderly people of all cultures seem to

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be sending a similar message of concern about contemporary society and the state of the family. He cited statements such as: “What are these young people coming to!” and “In the old days....” His observations provided something else to think about: What would be a common message that elders of all nations share?

Three elder Lakota women were also interviewed subsequent to this meeting. The interviews were held in their homes and were conducted in the Lakota language. All three were very pleased that people were speaking out about the issue of domestic violence and cited personal experiences with violence and/or experiences of their daughters and granddaughters. They all believed that violence against women was learned from “white people” and that it was indeed a big problem in the Native community.

When asked if they would be willing to speak publicly on the issue, all felt that was best left to younger people because younger people could “really talk.” One of the women said simply that she was too old, too tired and had too many responsibilities at home (caring for grandchildren) and she couldn’t “be running up” to the radio station. She expressed her support for this project and encouraged the “younger” people (meaning middle-aged and younger) to continue the efforts.

One of the women suggested creating a memorial to women who had died or been hurt by domestic violence. She herself had been raped by three men and left in a field to die. The physical injuries from this assault still linger. She said that women needed to know that someone will listen to them and help them. A memorial would be a visible and constant reminder. If such a memorial were established, the elder woman offered to serve as an advisor on the spiritual care of the memorial.

While all of the women believed that alcohol plays a part in violence against women, they also believe the issue originated with colonization (“learned bad habits when they went out into the world because of military service”). They also see violence as an issue of male privilege. The women cited stories illustrating their grandparents’ relationships of respect and equality and expressed their belief that violence is not traditional among Lakota people.

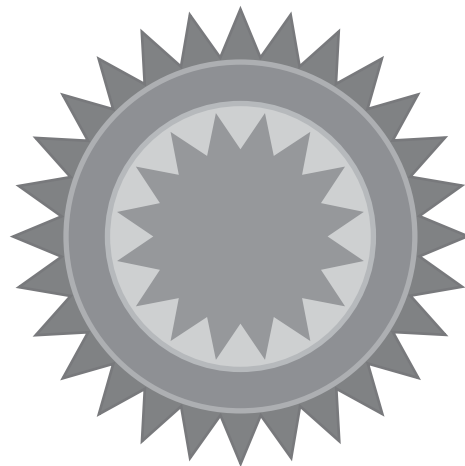
Both the elder men and women advised continual prayer. They adamantly believe that the solution to the problem of violence against women will be found in regaining spiritual balance and remembering culture and traditional values. Men need to understand the sacredness and power of the woman and their responsibilities in caring for her and the children. These elders felt that women have forgotten their sacredness and need to re-examine their responsibilities and refocus on their rights.





It is noteworthy that one of the two medicine men interviewed later by staff (after the in-person meeting became impossible), called again saying he had thought further about his interview. He related a story that ended with the following: “I told him (one of his followers) that I knew he had been convicted of spouse abuse and that I thought it would be better if he ‘helped out’ only and didn’t participate in the SunDance until he finished the classes (for court-ordered offenders). I told him it wasn’t right for him to SunDance and pray for all of the peoples’ well-being (meaning the people as a collective), when he didn’t know how to treat his wife.”

There is value in pursuing advice, guidance and direction from elders. All were pleased to be sought out and asked for their thoughts and experiences. That personal contact created an intimate environment that allowed for the sharing of personal thoughts and experiences, especially among the women. The elders must be approached in a respectful manner and through cultural protocol. The interviewers were Lakota speakers and were either related to the elder or had some connection to the elder.



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# DEVELOPING PRINTED MATERIALS

## *Tailoring Messages*

One of the major goals of this project was to develop materials that would be meaningful to both Native and rural non-Native communities. In order to achieve this, project staff searched for common themes and symbols that could be utilized in development of materials.

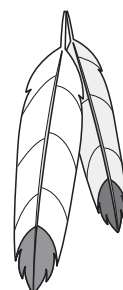
There are many commonalities between Native and rural non-Native families – universal symbols unique to the Midwest and South Dakota that have evolved as a result of social beliefs and family values forged by geographical isolation. For example, both Native and rural non-Native peoples place great value on the extended family, in part because of the climate and agrarian lifestyle. For Native peoples, the extended family was essential for the preservation of Lakota culture and the resistance of colonization.

Symbols that reflect the earth and life on the prairie are common throughout South Dakota as well. These include: sunflowers, buffalo, eagles, horses, wildlife, the Black Hills and the rolling plains. Lakota people may call them by different names – the four-legged, the winged, He Sapa, the Buffalo Nation – but the sentiment and passion reflect the same respect for land and nature.

Many traditional Native symbols – Eagle feathers, the dreamcatcher and the star quilt – have also been adopted by rural non-Native people who share similar feelings and values associated with them. Each of these three is honored and respected.

### **Eagle feathers**

Eagle feathers are considered sacred by the Lakota people. For example, if an eagle feather is dropped at a pow-wow, the dancing halts and ceremonies and prayers are offered before the feather is taken off the ground.



### **Dreamcatcher**

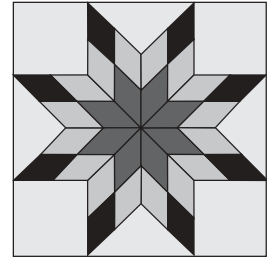


According to legend, when a dreamcatcher is hung above the bed of the sleeping person, all bad dreams will be caught in its web. Project staff conceptualized the phrase – **Catch the Dream to End Domestic Violence** – as a play on the words and symbolism of the dreamcatcher, a symbol common to both Native and non-Native women of South Dakota. A dreamcatcher is woven like the web of the spider and is held in place by twigs or a circle of metal, sometimes wrapped with leather or sinew. The dreamcatcher is a popular object and can be found in all the local tourist shops in the form of earrings, necklaces and household decorations. Most South Dakota homes have a dreamcatcher in the bedroom. A popular gift, the dreamcatcher is part of local Native culture that is accepted by rural non-Native South Dakotans.



## Star Quilt

The star quilt is another universal symbol for Native and rural non-Native women. The star quilt is now used for ceremonies in much the same way as the American flag – often draped over caskets or presented as a gift of honor to a newborn or a child during a naming ceremony. Native women learned quilting techniques from their non-Native neighbors in the early 1800s. The pattern for the star quilt evolved into a distinctly Lakota design and is often done in traditional Lakota colors of black, red, yellow and white. Presenting a person with a star quilt is a great honor.

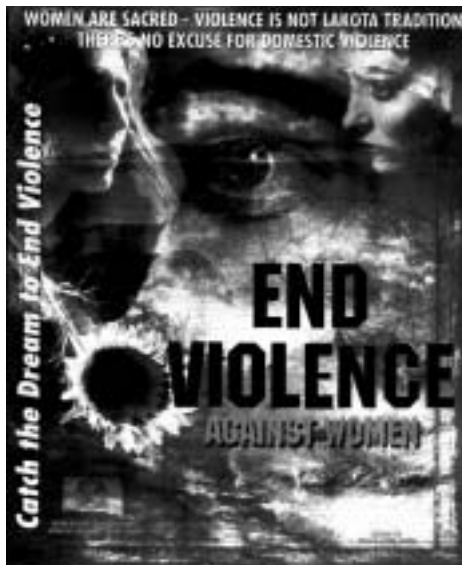


For rural non-Native women, quilting is still a popular pastime and the star quilt is also a favorite design. Among rural non-Native families, quilts are a favorite gift for welcoming new babies and celebrating marriages, birthdays and anniversaries. The quilt is honored because it is beautiful and practical. More importantly, recipients of a quilt know it is a labor-intensive gift that the maker spent time and effort creating for them. It signifies the love and respect the maker has for the recipient.

All of these symbols can be used in domestic violence prevention because they symbolize honor and respect – one honors and respects women as one honors and respects the symbol.

## *Original Poster Design*

The poster originally designed for this project consisted of a six-layered image that incorporated themes thought to appeal to both Native and rural non-Native women. The various images included a dreamcatcher, sunflowers, feathers, buffalo, prairie landscapes and Native and non-Native women. The poster, designed by a professional artist who donated his time, was created so that each of the images could be enhanced in different ways to reveal



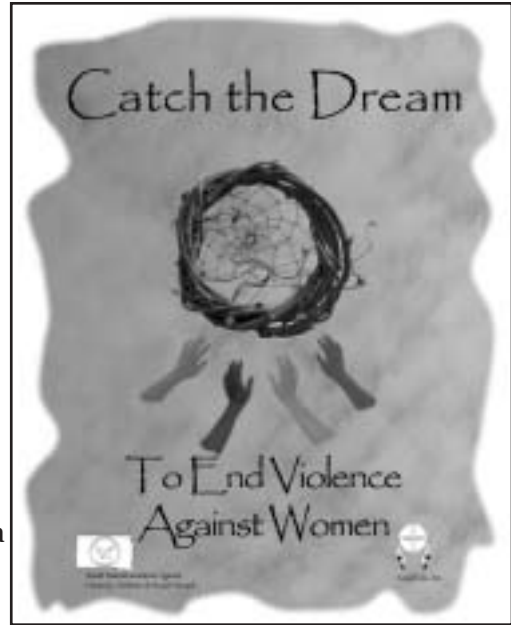
varying aspects of the poster. The intention was that over time the poster would become identified and associated with the prevention of domestic violence and this one design would allow for the flexibility to change and/or highlight a particular message. For example, in one poster the prairie landscape could be the focal point; in another, the images of Native and non-Native women; in a third, the caption of the poster, **Catch The Dream To End Domestic Violence**, could be highlighted.

The incorporation of so many symbols into this one design was not appealing to many Coalition members. Project staff presented the initial design to member programs during a Coalition meeting, asking for feedback.

It was a complicated design and many felt it was overstimulating, with the various elements appearing difficult to distinguish. While some felt the poster challenged the viewer, ultimately the concept was discarded. Artistic appreciation is very subjective and the creation of a design with universal appeal is not easily done.

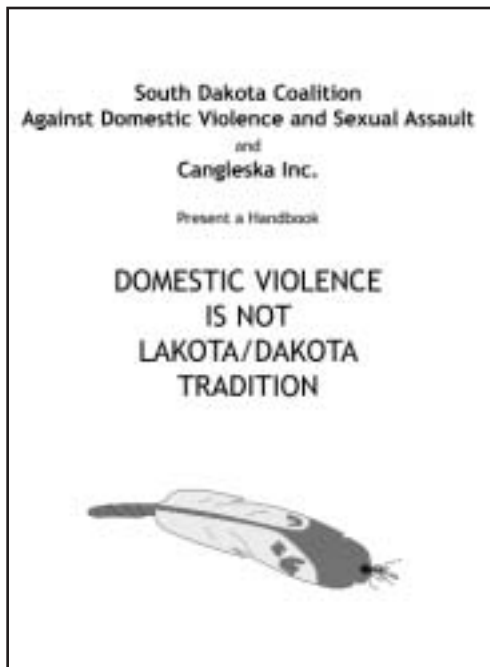
However, Coalition members were supportive of the particular themes that were presented and wanted to continue working with them. The alternative plan that subsequently was agreed to was the creation of separate posters, each emphasizing a single theme. Three posters were created.

- The first shows a pair of hands stitching a star quilt with the caption “**Threading a Herstory Without Violence.**”
- A second shows the hands of several women holding a dreamcatcher and reads “**Catch the Dream to End Violence Against Women.**”
- A third shows a line of women of various races, cultures and abilities with a caption that reads “**Stand Together to End Violence.**”



## ***Redesign of Coalition Publications***

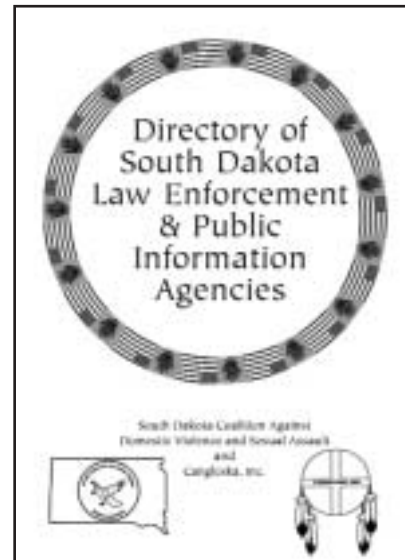
The Coalition previously had produced six booklets that were used in public education efforts. Based on the popularity and perceived usefulness by Coalition member programs, two of the booklets were updated and redesigned through this project. The first, **Violence Is Not A Lakota/Dakota Tradition**, is a handbook describing domestic violence in the context of Lakota/Dakota culture and history. The second, **A Handbook on Child Sexual Abuse**, also was updated. As with other materials generated through this project, the Coalition distributed the redesigned materials to member programs at no charge. (Contact information for requesting these publications in on page 26).





## Resource Directory

Since heightened public awareness about domestic violence would likely lead to an increased need for assistance, staff also sought to develop materials that would be helpful to advocates who were providing direct services to battered women. To offer respectful and effective services for both Native and non-Native women, domestic violence shelter advocates need to be both culturally-sensitive and understand complex cross-jurisdictional issues that can mean the difference between safety and injury or death, or the loss of custody of children. Many times advocates in off-reservation shelters had difficulty contacting tribal court systems and providing effective advocacy for tribal women seeking safety away from the reservation. As a way of alleviating these problems, a **Resource Directory** was developed that included all law enforcement agencies (both tribal and state), county sheriffs, state's attorneys, tribal, circuit and magistrate judges, clerks of court, other tribal, district and federal court personnel, victim/witness coordinators and domestic violence and sexual assault program information for the state of South Dakota.



To support the public education work of domestic violence organizations, the directory included a listing of all Native and non-Native newspapers and publications, radio and television stations throughout the state. When available, contact names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers were included. The directory included maps showing locations and jurisdictions of reservations, counties and courts. Additional maps showed broadcast areas for radio and TV stations and the location of shelter programs. Cross-referencing allows for ease of use and each entity is identified in several different sections of the directory. For example, the local sheriff's department can be found under the county listings and again under law enforcement.

The directory included 190 pages of information, all of which had to be entered manually into a computer database. This piece of the project took significantly more time and work than anticipated. Further, to be a useful tool in ongoing work, the directory needs to be updated regularly and the challenge will be to find an efficient mechanism for gathering and entering the information. It was anticipated that public education resources throughout the state would remain fairly constant with changes to governmental contacts occurring mostly during election years. It may also be reasonable to offer any updated information in separate booklets when needed.

✱ **NOTE:** To obtain further information on the directory, please refer to the contact information on page 24.

## Financial Considerations

Project staff were mindful of the difficulties that shelter programs face working in isolated environments with limited resources. The new materials were made available to member programs at no cost and distributed by the Coalition through meetings and mailings. Both the posters and the directory are available to other agencies for a minimal charge.

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## USING RADIO TO RAISE AWARENESS

In addition to developing print materials, project staff used radio as a means of educating the public about domestic violence. Cangleska contracted with the local Lakota radio station, KILI, to produce public service announcements (PSAs) and one 30-minute broadcast on the impact of domestic violence on Native women and their children. A variety of other spots was universal in nature and could be used by rural non-Native programs.

Radio was chosen as the medium for the PSAs because it is the source of local news, weather and community announcements. In rural areas, newspapers and printed materials are delivered by mail – often two days after publication. Television broadcasts come from larger cities, distant from the community. Pierre, the capital of South Dakota, does not have a local television station and neither do most of the rural communities where shelter programs are located. People use the radio to keep current with the affairs of the community. The announcers, disc jockeys and staff are neighbors and friends. Most importantly, the local radio station is accessible to everyone. One can walk into any office, store or community center in rural South Dakota and hear the local radio station playing.

KILI is the largest Native radio station in South Dakota and has broadcast towers in Rapid City, Rosebud, Dupree, Eagle Butte, White Horse, Bridger and Porcupine. The majority of people living in western South Dakota can receive broadcasts from this station. The actual number of listeners is unknown, but its broadcast capabilities reach over 350,000 persons, roughly one-half of the population (690,000) of South Dakota.

### ***Radio PSAs***

The PSAs developed for the 30-second spots used targeted and inclusive language. For example, one spot asked: “*If children are sacred, why is it we hurt them every day by letting them be witnesses to domestic violence?*” Spiritual mores for both Native and non-Native peoples of rural South Dakota include the concept of the sacredness of children.

In another 30-second spot, a father talks about his son not trusting him anymore and ends with the statement: “*...I think I’ve lost my kid.*” The message is based on the common family value that is inherent in the majority of Native and rural non-Native families. Keeping the family intact is paramount because survival in isolated areas depends on all family members, including the children. In Native families, children are also seen as integral to the preservation of Lakota culture and the resistance of further colonization.

The PSAs were distributed to shelter programs by the Coalition. Both written and tape forms were sent, so programs could choose to use local persons for recording, if desired.



## Public Service Announcements Written Scripts

### #1 *Read by a man...*

“It’s time for Lakota men to take responsibility. It’s time to walk our talk and remember that women are sacred and violence is not Lakota tradition. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Domestic violence means more than just hitting. If you are intimidating or threatening your partner, view her as your property, or try to use the children to give her a hard time, you may have a problem with domestic violence. You need to know that domestic violence is against the law on the Pine Ridge. For more information, contact Cangleska, Inc., at 867-1035 or 455-2244.”

### #2 *Read by a man...*

“Our ancestors understood that women are sacred. In the past, domestic violence was seen as a serious offense against all of the People. A man who was violent within the family was not seen as capable of any leadership responsibilities. He had demonstrated that he did not possess the self-discipline, respect, caring or spiritual understanding to effectively lead the People. Today, our People still understand that women and children are sacred. Domestic violence is against the law on the Pine Ridge. If you are abused or an abuser and want to learn more about domestic violence, contact Cangleska, Inc., at 867-1035 or 455-2244. Now is the time to begin our journey toward respect and non-violence.”

### #3 *Two men readers...*

Reader #1 “What about her? She’s the one. She’s got a problem, man. She can really act up. You know, a guy can only take so much. And then, well, what do you expect? Look at her; she’s a mess. I’m just trying to make her straighten up.”

Reader #2 “If you’ve said this or had these thoughts, you may have a problem with domestic violence. Men who are violent with women in their lives typically see themselves as victims instead of as victimizers. Domestic violence hurts you, your partner, your children, your tiospaye and the community. It’s time to stop the violence. Being a man means protecting and caring for your family. A man doesn’t hurt the people he loves and make them cry. If you think you might have a problem, get help. Remember, domestic violence is against the law on the Pine Ridge. Contact Cangleska, Inc., at 867-1035 or 455-2244 for more information.”

### #4 *Woman reader...*

“How is your relationship? Does your partner: Embarrass you with bad names or put downs? Look at you or act in ways that scare you? Control what you do, who you see or talk to, or where you go? Stop you from seeing or talking to friends or family? Prevent you from getting or keeping a job or going to or succeeding in school? Take your money, make you ask for money, or refuse to give you money? Make all the decisions? Tell you you’re a bad mother or threaten to take away your children? Act like the abuse is no big deal, it’s your fault, or even deny he did it? Destroy your property? Intimidate you with guns, knives or other weapons? Shove you, slap you or hit you? Force you, coerce you or sweet talk you into trying to get charges dropped? Threaten to hurt or kill your pets? Threaten to kill himself? Threaten to kill you? If you answered yes to even one, you may be a woman who is battered. For more information, contact Cangleska, Inc., at 867-1035 or 455-2244. Remember, women are sacred. Domestic violence is not Lakota tradition.”

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**#5 Woman or man reader...**

“October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Every nine seconds a woman is being beaten in the United States. We also have the problem here on the Pine Ridge. A big problem. Some of our people have forgotten that women and children are sacred. Violence against women takes away from all of our People. It’s time to stop it. It’s time to remember who we are. We are Lakota People and domestic violence is not part of our way of life. For more information, contact Cangleska, Inc., at 867-1035 or 455-2244.”

**#6 Two women readers...**

Reader #1: “Sometimes it really is my fault. I mean, I do all the things he says I do. It seems like I can never do anything right for him. Even the kids hit me sometimes. I was trying to go to school or work but he’d always call and check up on me because he thought I was with some other man. Then I’d get in trouble. One time he even pulled the wires out on the car so I couldn’t go anywhere. I don’t know what to do. I think I’m going crazy. I love him and don’t want to leave him. I just want him to stop.”

Reader #2: “Violence is never your fault. No matter what you say or do, no one has the right to abuse you. You might have some of your own issues that you need to deal with as a woman. And, maybe there are some issues in your relationship that need to be looked at. But – when your partner uses violence to try and control you – that’s just out and out wrong! It’s also against the law on the Pine Ridge. Until your partner understands that it’s his responsibility to not be violent, things won’t change.

Remember, there’s no excuse for domestic violence. If you think you are being abused and need assistance, call Cangleska, Inc., at 867-1035 or 455-2244.”

## **Radio Spot Topics**

“Baby Screaming Tape” followed by:

1. Elder speaks: “That’s my grandkid, my takoja. He saw his dad beat my daughter. Now he’s afraid of his father. Afraid of what he’s doing to his mom. Now he’s afraid of the dark, afraid to leave her alone, afraid whenever his father comes home drunk. Just afraid of everything.”

*or*

2. Mother speaks: “He was so scared, he cried for days. Now he won’t go anywhere without me, won’t let me go anywhere alone. Sometimes his eyes are just far away. Nothing can touch him. Like he doesn’t feel anything anymore. Now he hits back like he saw his dad do. He’s not a little kid anymore. He’s a little boy with a lot of anger in his heart.”

*or*

3. Father speaks: “My kid’s eyes follow me everywhere when I come home. He doesn’t play anymore – just tries to hide when I’m around. If I go near my wife, he stands close to her. He doesn’t trust me anymore, doesn’t like to come when I call, unless I yell at him to come... I think I’ve lost my kid.”

Tag lines:

- “When you’re only a kid, terror is something you never forget.”
- “The ‘boogie man’ is not always someone you don’t know.”
- “The ‘boogie man’ is often a member of the family.”
- “When mommy is getting beat up by daddy, a child’s scars stay forever.”
- “When mommy is getting beat up by daddy, who listens to the pain and cries of the children?”



- 
- “A child’s innocence is a terrible thing to lose.”
  - “Childhood should be a time of innocence – not of terror.”
  - “For a child, fear should never be the first experience in the home.”
  - “Why is it we never think of what violence is doing to our children?”
  - “If ‘Children are Sacred,’ why is it we hurt them every day by letting them be witnesses to domestic violence?”
  - “The world is full of silent witnesses. Too bad they’re all children.”

Length of time: 30-second spot

## ***Domestic Violence Radio Shows***

The 30-minute program included interviews with elders, advocates, prior offenders who have successfully completed the Men’s Program, law enforcement officials and staff members of Cangleska who explained the services that are available. The show’s format was designed to allow shelter programs flexibility based on whomever was available in their communities to participate as guests. Other shelter programs in rural non-Native areas could modify the format by substituting respected senior citizens and community and/or church leaders for Lakota elders.

Staff also coordinated a one-hour broadcast on Native America Calling, a call-in radio show of National Native Broadcasting. The presentation featured three Native advocates and illustrated the cross-cultural dynamics of domestic violence.

### **List of Topics for Radio Shows (1/2 hour)**

1. Impact of domestic violence on Indian women and the family (children)
  - Interview with elders, children, others
2. What is Cangleska, Inc.?
  - Interview with outreach advocates
    - What services do we provide?
    - What can women expect when they come here?
    - What about children, housing, assistance?
3. What is Public Safety, working together with Cangleska, Inc., doing about greater accountability by offenders and enforcement?
  - Interview with Public Safety officials: Chief of Police, Lieutenants, Sergeants
    - What does the law say?
    - How was it before? Now?
    - What is the process?
    - What can offenders expect?
4. What purpose does the Men’s Program serve?
  - Interview with Marlin Mousseau and Karen Artichoker
  - Interview with successfully completed prior offenders
5. What can the community do to help victims of domestic violence?

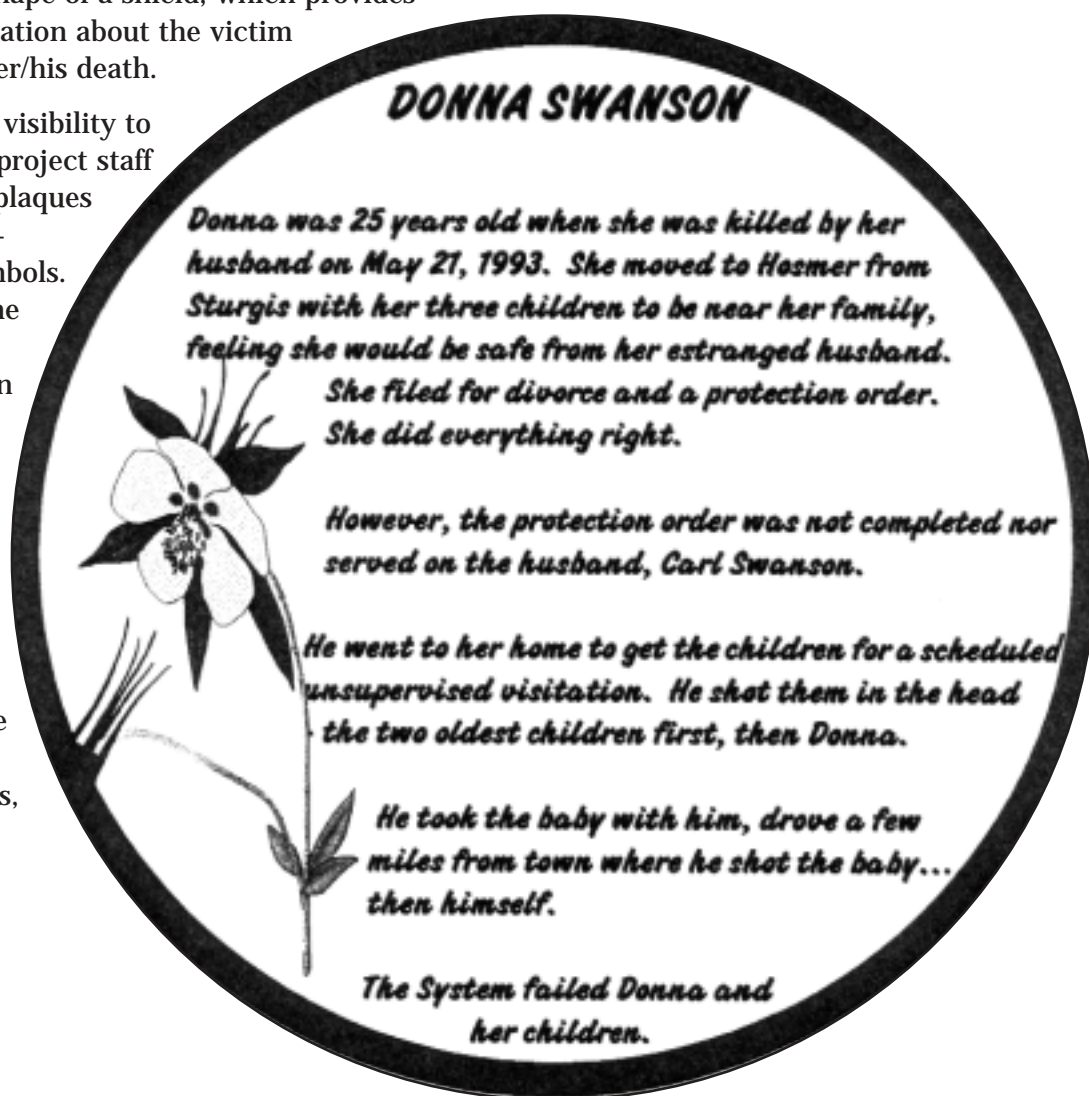
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# SILENT WITNESS EXHIBIT

Part of the original project plan was to conduct a series of awareness activities that would occur simultaneously throughout Indian country. Rather than creating a new approach, project staff and member programs of the Coalition chose to tie in their public education efforts to an existing national campaign – the Silent Witness National Initiative (SWNI).

The SWNI was originally conceived in 1990 to commemorate the growing number of women in Minnesota who had been murdered by their partners and acquaintances. Inspired by the impact of this exhibit, all 50 states have since established their own exhibits. Silent Witnesses are life-sized, red plywood figures representing the women, children and men murdered during acts of domestic violence in a given state in one year's time. They may be freestanding or they can be carried for marches. Each figure has a plaque on the front, usually in the shape of a shield, which provides personal information about the victim and details of her/his death.

In order to give visibility to Native women, project staff redesigned the plaques using culturally-appropriate symbols. The design of the Native womens' plaque is both in English and Lakota and has Native-specific symbols; a second plaque features flowers common to South Dakota. All plaques were changed from shields to circles, signifying everlasting life.

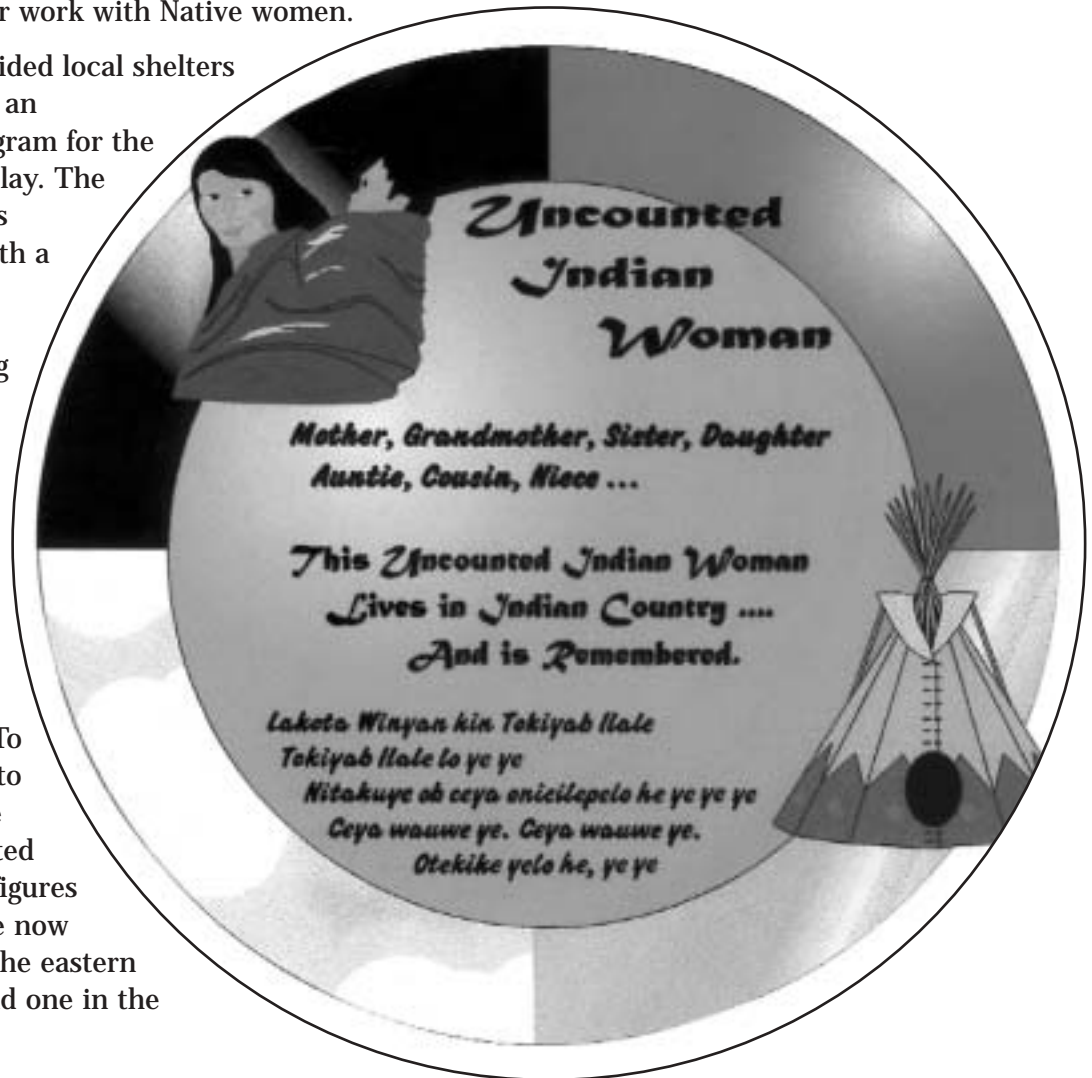




## ***The Statewide Initiative***

Throughout the duration of the project, member organizations of the Coalition used the Silent Witness exhibit as a fund-raising and public education project in their communities. Displays and programs were arranged in 25 different communities at a variety of events. For example, four programs featured a humanities scholar who led discussions on racism and presented a character interpretation of Matilda Joselyn Gage (an early leader in the women's rights movement) and her work with Native women.

The Coalition provided local shelters with literature and an accompanying program for the Silent Witness display. The majority of exhibits included a table with a display of products produced by the Coalition, including booklets for public education. The booklets include information on domestic violence and sexual assault for the general public; one is culturally-specific for Native people. To minimize the cost to local programs, the Coalition constructed additional exhibit figures so that two sets are now available – one in the eastern part of the state and one in the western.



Living in a rural state where people tend to know each other has many disadvantages when trying to ensure the safety and confidentiality of battered women. However, for the Silent Witness project, this familiarity is an advantage. Seeing the victim's name and reading the circumstances of the death leaves a significant impression on the viewer when she/he can make a direct connection through the local community, relative or friend. The SWNI has been an effective project and has drawn substantial media attention to domestic violence. The display is powerful, especially for a rural state like South Dakota. Program advocates frequently hear comments from the public that begin with: "I knew her family..." "My cousin's husband is related to her..." "She used to live in my community..." "My daughter went to school with her."

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## ***National March to End Silence***

The SWNI organized a series of national events in Washington, DC, for Domestic Violence Awareness Month during October 1997. Among them was a March to End Silence that brought together Silent Witness exhibits and organizers from every state to raise awareness about the devastating impact of domestic violence.

The Coalition sponsored a trip to Washington, DC, to participate in the march and 37 women were able to attend the event at minimal personal cost. It was an opportunity for advocates from across the state to spend time together, exchange ideas and develop relationships. For Coalition staff, the event was a way to honor advocates for their years of dedication and steadfastness in the face of crisis, and for their belief that by working together, we will end domestic violence in South Dakota and throughout the nation.

Several Native women participated in the South Dakota delegation, giving national voice to Native battered women. Cangleska singers opened the ceremony with memorial and honor songs in the Lakota language. Tillie Black Bear, founder of White Buffalo Calf Woman Society, Inc., the oldest existing Native women's shelter in this country, was at the microphone to recognize the work of indigenous women.

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***“Domestic Violence  
is not a  
Lakota Tradition”***

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# OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES

During the course of the project, several factors either enhanced or hindered the work of project staff. Both the opportunities and obstacles that were encountered over the course of this project are offered for consideration to those interested in replicating this or other public education campaigns.

## **Factors that facilitated the development and progress of the campaign included:**

- **Culturally-representative and bilingual staff.** This is an important element of working successfully within any cultural community. In this project, it allowed staff to develop culturally-appropriate materials that could be translated into the Lakota language and work with tribal elders to gather input and support for the effort.

Successful replication of projects for public education in Indian country requires participants who:

- know available cultural resources
  - can identify messages and themes that will appeal to various cultures in the target area
  - can develop resources that are relevant to the needs of programs serving both Native and rural non-Native women and children. For most organizations this means making a concentrated effort to employ a project staff that is diverse and representative of the communities to be served
- **Personal contacts within the radio station.** This enabled Cangleska staff to negotiate a contract at a lower cost and to ensure ample air time for PSAs. In many locations, domestic violence program advocates may not be this fortunate and should work, whenever possible, to develop positive relations with the media prior to implementing broadcast campaigns.
  - **Partnership building.** Working collaboratively with the statewide domestic violence coalition provided opportunities to gather input from non-Native and Native advocates across the state, and to enlist their assistance in the dissemination of materials. The statewide collaboration of member programs was integral to coordinating state and national participation in the Silent Witness Initiative.
  - **Pro-bono services.** For this project, the artist contracted to design the poster donated his time. Other organizations may not have access to free services, making developing local campaigns very costly.

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**Unanticipated issues that impacted this project included:**

- **Severe weather.** During the course of this project, the state experienced one of the longest and most difficult winters in its history. During a one-month period, 11 major snowstorms closed roads, shut down government and tribal offices, local businesses and schools. This made it extremely difficult to conduct the information gathering phase of the project as originally planned, thereby reducing the amount of input from advocates and allies. Weather also halted the delivery of mail and in some places caused phone service to be interrupted. The severity of the weather also delayed the project timeline by several months, since staff was not able to complete project activities as anticipated.

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**TIP:** Consider budgeting for the use of technologies, such as phone conferencing, to avoid weather-related delays.

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- **Using outside consultants.** The artist who worked on this project had no first-hand knowledge of Native or rural issues and therefore had difficulty reflecting relevant themes in his work. This ultimately required additional effort on the part of project staff and included some redesign of materials.

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**TIP:** Look for designers and other consultants with a sensitivity to cultural issues (ideally members of the same cultural community) for the most effective work.

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- **Getting PSA air time.** Although Cangleska was able to get air and production time with the local Lakota radio station, potential sponsors should be aware that many radio stations and broadcasters are not willing to carry PSAs for a shelter program that may be located 60 miles away.

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**TIP:** In these cases, it is probably better for state coalitions to assume leadership in disseminating PSAs throughout their respective states.

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- **Inadequate resources.** Given the unanticipated extent of labor needed to complete certain aspects of the project, particularly the directory, the funding for staffing was inadequate and had to be covered by other grant sources.

Substantial amounts of money were also used to develop and produce materials. These costs included computer design software, printing, contracting with the radio station to produce and broadcast PSAs, and the 30-minute domestic violence broadcast. Other expenses, such as operations costs, supplies and travel, were paid with other available monies

- **Other rural issues.** A number of other factors can impede public education work in rural locations. It may be more difficult to access necessary services, such as those related to design and production of artwork for posters. Printing costs in smaller rural communities are usually higher due to lack of volume. In addition, local businesses and community organizations often are reluctant to display posters and information about sexual assault and domestic violence.

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## POSITIVE LONG-TERM IMPACT

In summary, designing a useful public education campaign requires a strong commitment to collaboration. This was one of the first public education campaigns directly targeted to both Native Americans and rural non-Native persons. Identifying themes and incorporating symbols that have a shared and effective meaning for two different groups of people requires a real commitment to obtaining input and feedback. While it became painstaking over the course of this project to gather and coordinate information due to significant problems posed by the weather, staff believe that more effective and useful materials were produced as a result of it. Even though this project has ended, the experience has continued to inform and even provide the impetus for subsequent public awareness efforts and posters.

This project also laid groundwork for future collaborative work between Cangleska, the Coalition and its member programs. The process served to strengthen existing relationships as well as build new ones. The importance of strengthening the bonds between two groups of culturally-diverse people in rural areas should not be underestimated.

The ultimate outcomes of this project should serve as encouragement to other domestic violence coalitions and local programs to actively collaborate on projects that are designed to create a sense of unity for all women and their children victimized by domestic violence.





## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information about this project and/or the materials produced, please contact:

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(605) 455-2244

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to End Violence Against Native Women*  
720 Saint Joseph Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
877-733-7623 (red-road)  
(605) 341-2050  
Fax: (605) 341-2472  
Email: [scircle@sacred-circle.com](mailto:scircle@sacred-circle.com)

*South Dakota Coalition  
Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault*  
P.O. Box 141  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 945-0869  
Fax: (605) 945-0870

For information about the Silent Witness National Initiative, please contact:

*Silent Witness National Initiative*  
20 Second St. N.E. Suite 101  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
(612) 623-0999  
Fax: (612) 623-0999  
Email: [info@silentwitness.net](mailto:info@silentwitness.net)

For information on other domestic violence prevention initiatives, please contact:

*National Resource Center on Domestic Violence*  
6400 Flank Drive, Suite 1300  
Harrisburg, PA 17112-2791  
(800) 537-2238  
TTY: (800) 553-2508  
Fax: (717) 545-9456  
[www.nrcdv.org](http://www.nrcdv.org)





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