

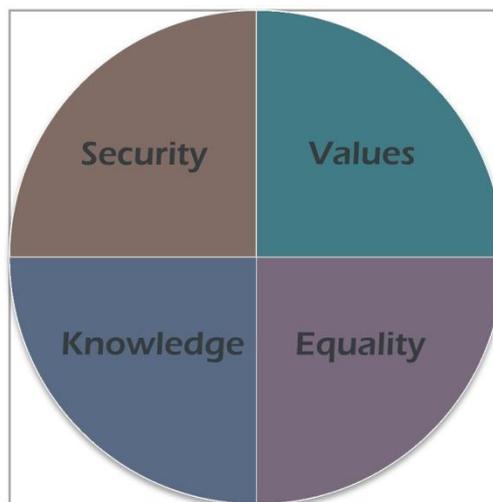
## **PATHS**

### **Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan**

#### **Origins of Violence/Strategies for Change – Summary\***

Violence is a global problem which we encounter at the interpersonal level, in group dynamics, and between communities and nations. Wherever it is situated it can cause physical harm and profound emotional damage. An ideal world is one in which there is no violence. The renowned philosopher Hannah Arendt said, “The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world.” If we are to create peaceful communities we must address the issue from a multi-disciplinary perspective that explores psychological, philosophical, and cultural components in addition to the sociological and feminist understandings of what causes violence. These aspects of the root causes of violence and the possible solutions can be viewed using a framework that encompasses security, knowledge, values, and equality.

#### **Requisites for Creating Non-Violent Communities**



#### **Security**

Children benefit from growing up in an environment where they experience love and care. This type of environment helps them to feel secure and safe. When children develop in a space where they are not fearful and are able to form strong, healthy and consistent attachments, they develop a physiology of the brain which results in healthy emotional development. We need to ensure that our children are forming these nurturing relationships from the moment they are born. Children raised in a secure environment where they are confident in the caregiving capacity of mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other friends and relations are then free to explore their environments without fear. They then become productive, creative and loving people themselves.

## Values

We require communities where people feel a sense of responsibility to act ethically. We need to follow principles of conduct which ensure that we are treating others in a way in which we ourselves would want to be treated. Many spiritual teachings and philosophies are based on values such as love, honesty, respect, compassion, and generosity. Having these values become a common groundwork to all our actions, and which is part of people's shared identity, will ensure that we develop non-violent responses to conflict and resort to communication and mediation rather than the authoritarian response implied by violence.

## Knowledge

Non-violent communities are ones where knowledge is valued. We need to reflect on the causes of violence and come to understand these causes in the most real way so that we can respond most effectively to address the issues. We must reflect on personal attitudes, examine research on the issue, and engage in dialogue with each other as we explore not only the causes of violence but also alternative solutions to resolve conflict. A violent response is often taken because we believe there is no other way to deal with our fears and working towards our goals.

## Equality

Research shows us that unequal societies have higher rates of violence. The creation of equal societies can only occur when we place more value on social cohesion and less on consumption. This focus on social cohesion will ensure that our economic policies will benefit all in a fair way without excluding those who are marginalized by way of ethnicity, race, disability, status, or gender. We require restored social spending which does not exploit the environment and changes to a market system that, by its nature, does not allow us to set as a priority care for one another and for the earth.

## Actions to Promote a Non-Violent Society

1. Pay attention to the child. Changing the world requires nurturing the next generation.
2. Encourage people to think and talk about what values are important to support non-violent solutions to conflict.
3. Explore alternative actions to violence.
4. Call for a fair and sustainable distribution of the earth's resources.
5. Advocate for policies that are grounded in regard for children, fairness, a valuing of education, and a respect for the environment.

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\* This summary is from an unpublished manuscript. Expected publication date December 2012.