

## Activity 5 – Lateral Kindness Workshop

\*Say no to LATERAL VIOLENCE and yes to LATERAL KINDNESS\*

What is lateral violence?

Although it is found everywhere, lateral violence in this case refers to its impacts in First Nation communities. Unlike workplace bullying, lateral violence differs in that First Nation people are now abusing their own people in similar ways that they have been abused. It is a cycle of abuse and its roots lie in factors such as: colonization, oppression, intergenerational trauma and the ongoing experiences of racism and discrimination.

Through these factors First Nation people now become the oppressor and within the workplace or community they now direct abuse to people of their own gender, culture, sexuality, and profession. In other words, instead of directing their anger at the oppressor, these workplace or community aggressors now direct their anger at their own peers or community members.

Behavioural signs of lateral violence

- nonverbal intimation (raising eyebrows, making faces, eye rolling)
- obvious name calling
- sarcasm
- bickering
- whining
- blaming
- belittling a person's opinions
- yelling or using profanity
- making up and/or exaggerating scenarios
- making snide comments and remarks
- making jokes that are offensive by spoken word or email
- using put downs
- gossiping
- rumour mongering
- ignoring, excluding or freezing out people
- handing over work assignments with unreasonable deadlines or duties that will ensure the person will fail
- being purposely unavailable to meet with staff
- undermining activities
- withholding information or giving the wrong information purposely
- constantly changing work guidelines
- blocking requests for a promotion, leave or training
- not giving enough work so the individual will feel useless
- refusing to work with someone
- backstabbing
- complaining to peers and not confronting the individual
- failing to respect privacy
- breaking the confidences of others
- mobbing or ganging up on others

(Information found on <https://nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2011-Aboriginal-Lateral-Violence.pdf>)

Turning lateral violence into lateral kindness

A new movement is afoot, taking a strength based perspective, to focus on lateral kindness instead of violence. Lateral kindness takes a different perspective –instead of focusing on the negative behaviours and issues, the positive things are celebrated. When someone does something positive, it is recognized, they are lifted up and supported. Lateral kindness involves giving power back to people.

Marilyn Jensen and Thomas Sheppard have been delivering workshops to First Nation staff on Lateral Kindness. They have also been working with Kwanlin Dun youth so that they can become the facilitators and teachers to other youth.

If you would like to learn more about Lateral Kindness, or would like to have a workshop delivered in your community, please contact:

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Some links to videos on Lateral violence-kindness

<http://aptn.ca/news/2016/06/06/what-is-lateral-violence-kwanlin-dun-fn-youth-say-education-key-in-prevention/>

A good video on how to begin to practice Lateral Kindness: <http://learningcircle.ubc.ca/2015/11/lateral-kindness-with-denise-findlay/>