

BAND FAMILY SERVICES

Visions, Realities, and Opportunities

**An Evaluation of Tikinagan's
Band Family Services Program**

Frank Maidman, Ph.D

In association with Greg Conchelos, Ph.D

May 1992

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments

Introduction	Page 1
Evaluation Objectives	Page 1
Evaluation Methods	Page 2
The Band Family Services Program	Page 3
Results and Recommendations: Overview	Page 5
Services and Service Appropriateness	Page 7
Client Access to Service	Page 14
Program Administration	Page 17
Human Resources and Hiring	Page 23
Office Space	Page 27
Staff Development	Page 29
Program Organizational Support	Page 32
Working with Other Service Providers	Page 42
Community Resource Development	Page 48
Conclusions	Page 52
Appendices	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several people were extremely valuable to this project. I wish to extend my sincerest thanks.

Greg Conchelos made several contributions to the project, including field work, data analysis and evaluation workshops. This report benefitted enormously from his participation, although I alone take responsibility for any weaknesses.

Thanks to Charles Morris for sharing his experience and guidance during the planning stage of the project, and for his support from beginning to end. From day one, Charles made us feel very welcome at Tikinagan.

A very special thanks to Barbara Polhill for her help as the principle liaison person between the project and Tikinagan. She was very helpful in orienting us to the agency and generally making sure everything went smoothly. Her positive support makes me personally appreciate the importance of teaming up with the right kind of person during an evaluation.

Thanks also to Diane Hoey who was very effective in organizing workshops and generally helping with the "nuts and bolts" of several other activities. Both she and Barbara took on extra duties during this project, and should be commended.

Thanks also to Audrey Trimble and Susan Chapman for completing the various travel arrangements. Without them, I am sure we would still be wandering around in the far North, wondering if we would ever reach our deadlines.

Ziggy Beardy was very helpful in the planning and delivery of the two workshops. He was my first interview in the communities and helped get the project off to a good start. Both Greg and I enjoyed working with Ziggy.

Last, but not least, thanks to all the Band Family Service Workers, community staff and Councils, Tikinagan Regional Workers and management. They contributed many hours to interviews, meetings, and workshops. Any improvements in the program will be due to their efforts.

**Frank Maidman
May 11, 1992**

INTRODUCTION

The recent organizational review of Tikinagan Child and Family Services strongly recommended an evaluation of the Band Family Services Program. Responding to this recommendation, in July of 1991 Tikinagan Child and Family Services commissioned an independent evaluation of the program. This document summarizes the findings and recommendations from that evaluation.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The general goal of the evaluation is to describe and assess the program in ways which could improve its functioning. Specific objectives are as follows:

1. To describe a "service model" for the Band Family Services Program, including (a) needs (b) goals and objectives (c) program activities, and (d) service principles
2. To describe service activities as they are currently provided
3. To determine the appropriateness of existing services
4. To assess whether families and children in need can access the needed services.
5. To describe and assess the working relationships between program staff and other local resource people and other Tikinagan staff.
6. To describe and assess the functions that the broader communities fulfil for the program, and the organizational arrangements for encouraging community participation.
7. To assess the cultural sensitivity and adherence to community standards of service delivery.
8. To describe and assess the community-based strategy for reducing the need for protection-intervention.
9. To describe and assess resource development in each community
10. To describe and assess the nature and quality of organizational support for the program: administration, accountability, reporting and communications, casework procedures, training, evaluation, policies and procedures.
11. To describe and assess the funding and coordinating mechanisms
12. To facilitate recommendations for change

EVALUATION METHODS

The information in this report is based on several sources of information:

- . Field visits to 10 communities: Bearskin Lake, Osnaburgh, Sandy Lake, Ogoki, Muskrat Dam, Kingfisher Lake, Pikangikum, Fort Hope and Cat Lake.
- . Individual and group interviews with: Band Family Service Workers (BFSWs), Chiefs and Council members, local service providers and other community members.
- . Consultation with a project Steering Committee
- . Review of documents concerning the program and other Native programs
- . Evaluation workshops with the Band Family Services Workers
- . Observation
- . Program learning circles (group discussions)

An important action research method was the involvement of the BFSWs and Council members in the analysis of issues and recommendations. A December workshop reviewed the preliminary findings and explored a variety of solutions to troublesome program issues. Another workshop in March reviewed a first draft report, intensively examined and modified the draft recommendations.

The organization of both workshops encouraged an intensive examination of issues and recommendations. As well, the participants corrected gaps or errors in observations resulting from sampling rather than visiting all ten communities.

We left the workshops with a strong sense of support for the issues and recommendations. We also gained insight into the potential community barriers to change.

The Structure of this Report

The Community Services Agreement is an important source of expectations for what should be happening in the program. Content of that document (combined with project terms of reference) will structure a large part of this report. In a sense, we are asking ourselves throughout the evaluation "Is the vision presented in the CSA being carried out in practice?"

For each section we present the vision or expectations for the program as reflected in the CSA. Follow this, we describe what is actually going on (particularly the strengths), and suggest "opportunities for improvement." Each section concludes with draft recommendations for change.

THE BAND FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM ... IN A NUTSHELL

The Band Family Services Program grew out of the former Native Prevention Program (NPP), a COMSOC program administered across the province by the various Children's Aid Societies. Program planners designed the NPP to reduce the number of Native children apprehended from their homes and removed from the community.

Tikinagan assumed administration of the program in 1986, and many original ideas characterize the newly-named BFSW program. Although it lacks specific goals, the program aims for prevention, community and family support, and protection liaison with Tikinagan Child and Family Services.

Tikinagan and each Band share administration of the program, with most of the administration and organizational support provided locally at the band level. The core front-line staff, Band Family Services Workers (BFSWs) are hired from within the community. They receive direction and supervision primarily through the Chief and Council. BFSWs have broad ties with other local service providers, and indeed in some communities are working towards a team model of service delivery.

Although the program allows for prevention, crisis intervention, and protection liaison, the workers spend most of their time in crisis and protection work. BFSWs make most serious case decisions with Council. They receive daily "how to do it" advice in regular consultation with Tikinagan Regional staff. Tikinagan also provides regular training events.

History of BFSW

Tikinagan assumed administration of the former Native Prevention Program from Kenora-Patricia Child and Family Services (C.A.S.) in January of 1986. Originally, seven communities had a total of nine workers. In April of the same year, seven more positions were created over a total of fourteen communities. By October, Tikinagan added seven more positions. By the end of the year, the program existed in twenty-one communities. From January to April, communities received funding on a month to month basis. Now, twenty-eight communities have workers.

At the time of the transfer, "Band Family Service Worker" became the new name for the position and the program. This name signified that Bands locally control and administer the program. Also, the functions of the position expanded to include family and community services, along with the former prevention duties. However, from the beginning, it was always assumed that specific duties were negotiable between the Band and Tikinagan.

Tikinagan's Supervisor of Community Services was central in the early transfer and implementation of the Band Family Services Program. He, along with the Executive Director, made several rounds of community visits. They talked about the program along with general child welfare matters and the functions of Tikinagan. Also, criteria for expanding the program into other communities were identified. Regional Workers made specific suggestions and a Selection Committee chose additional communities. Local development strategies were also established.

Training was recognized as a special need within the overall implementation strategy, as was the development of local Family Service Committees. The former Native Prevention Program Workers had received supervision from the C.A.S., and training through a special arrangement with Concordia College. Even so, an earlier review of the program revealed that the workers, Chief and council were unsure of what the prevention program should accomplish. Few communities had child welfare committees, and most workers expressed the need for more training.

Although training was seen as important, no long-term coherent training plan was established, although many workshops were provided over the years. Concerning the development of local Committees, the Supervisor of Community Services introduced the idea, and facilitated local discussions of roles and responsibilities. At first, a few communities had local committees, but these were a minority. Speculation is that local politics effected the development of local committees.

From the beginning, the Community Services Agreement (CSA) has been an important tool in carrying out the program. Ideally, the CSA would be the vehicle for negotiations between Bands and Tikinagan. Negotiations focused on job descriptions, procedures, and the choice of local or central management. The CSA's early style and format reflected this expectation for negotiation. It contained check lists for various choices concerning Band, Tikinagan and worker activities.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The reviewers were impressed by many supportive ideas in the Tikinagan\Band Community Services Agreement. In particular, the suggestion for a Family Services Committee is a useful idea. However, as we shall see, there were difficulties in applying the CSA ideas in all communities.

The evaluation results suggest that Band Family Service staff are primarily crisis workers. Prevention work receives less attention.

Although the work is delivered and managed locally, the quality of local community and organizational support for service activities could be improved. Workers have extensive contacts with local community resources, but still could benefit from more productive working relationships with local service providers and other BFSWs.

The impression is that careful preparatory work for the program was bypassed initially, and that "catchup" development is needed. Tikinagan clearly has important development and supportive roles to play in future program growth. Consequently, the agency should have a special position within its organization, concentrating entirely on BFSW support and development.

Recommendation #1

To help meet the development, coordinating, and ongoing support needs of the BFSW program, Tikinagan should incorporate a Band Family Services Coordinator into its central organization.

A draft job description for the BFSW Coordinator is in Appendix "B".

One BFSW Coordinator may be insufficient for the twenty-eight communities. For this reason, Tikinagan should carefully monitor the work load of a new Coordinator. If the job demands are excessive for one person, the feasibility of adding additional Coordinators to cover smaller regions should be considered.

Remaining Recommendations

The remaining recommendations in this report address what Tikinagan can do to strengthen its support of the program. As well, these recommendations should help Tikinagan enhance local community support. To accomplish these objectives, most recommendations address the following:

Training

Negotiating CSA agreements with Bands

Resource development

Ongoing consultation

Policy change

SERVICES AND SERVICE APPROPRIATENESS

This section describes family services and raises the question of service appropriateness. Our discussion begins by summarizing the community and family problems described by workers.

Following the section on problems, we review what service workers actually provide through the program. The service discussion also contains local perceptions concerning what BFSWs ought to be doing.

What community and family problems do BFSWs face in their work?

A consistently described scenario is the parental neglect of children brought on by alcohol abuse, poor parenting skills or marital conflict. Workers view alcohol abuse as a strong factor in marital emotional conflict, distance and violence against partners. In their explanations of these problems, workers emphasize access to alcohol (bars, bootleggers) and the breakdown of community controls.

Although workers did not highlight child physical or sexual abuse in their interviews, several nurses shared suspicions that these activities existed under the surface. Also, at an evaluation workshop the concerns over sexual abuse surfaced, leading to a clear recommendation. (See later section of report)

Workers also identified several community conditions as factors in alcohol abuse, violence and child neglect. These conditions included overcrowded housing, unemployment, lack of social and recreational activities, communication breakdowns between the generations, community divisions, and the decline of Christian values. Family breakup and abuse within the childhood homes of today's parents were also identified as important factors.

Historically and culturally, residential school experience and loss of traditional values were also identified as serious contributing patterns.

The Problems of Youth and Children

Summarizing over the ten communities, the problems of youth were identified as ...

- . alcohol abuse
- . drug abuse
- . suicides/attempts
- . school behavior problems
- . parent-child conflict and distance
- . gas-sniffing
- . keeping late hours
- . vandalism
- . running away

What services respond to these problems?

The Community Services Agreement (CSA) is a formal document, signed individually by Tikinagan and each Band. It summarizes the nature of the BFSW program, Tikinagan and community responsibilities, and a budget.

The CSA specifies that the Band Family Services Workers shall provide community-based services as follows:

Prevention

The workers are expected to collaborate with other community service providers to provide: recreation activities for families and children, alcohol education, parenting courses or groups, family and community needs assessments, and assistance in developing local child care resources. Local child care resources include co-parents to care for children on an emergency short and long term basis, and people who will help co-parents.

Family Support

According to the CSA, workers should respond and follow up on all referrals regarding families who require support and guidance. This would include: assessments of family situations, referrals to other community resources, and placement of a homemaker or other services in the home.

A second family support function requires BFSWs to consult with Tikinagan on all child welfare services requiring financial assistance not provided by other programs.

Protection and Emergency Services

Although Band Family Service Workers are not designated protection workers, they are expected to provide liaison roles for Tikinagan. They should be available twenty-four hours for emergency services, although the nature of such services is unclear. According to legislation, they are expected to notify Tikinagan who dispatches a worker for immediate response.

Finally, within their protection liaison function, BFSWs are expected to document and record all referrals or cases. Documentation and case notes should be sent to Tikinagan every month.

The remainder of this section provides a summary of what the workers actually do in fulfilling these expected functions and roles.

Community Control

All BFSWs provide direct service work to troubled families. Close analysis of recent cases suggests that workers often aim to make the client aware of the inappropriateness of their behavior within the community. The inappropriate behavior usually involves alcohol abuse, the neglect of children, or family violence.

Counselling

Counselling may accompany the community control function. In some cases it takes priority in the workers' family service approaches.

Protection Work

According to the job description in the Community Service Agreement, Band Family Services Workers are expected to "respond immediately to all reports that families may be jeopardizing the safety and well-being of

their children". "In cases of protection and alleged child abuse, (workers should) notify Tikinagan Child and Family Services within one hour".

Interviews with BFSWs concerning their work confirm that they do, indeed, contribute to the protection function. However, they may not always respond immediately. To a greater or lesser extent, workers ...

- . contact Tikinagan concerning serious high risk cases
- . arrange for temporary placements within the community until a Tikinagan Regional worker arrives in the community to conduct an investigation
- . provide information about families to Tikinagan
- . sometimes participate in the investigation
- . identify potential foster homes and assist with home studies
- . do follow-up after foster home placements

Tikinagan is rarely, if ever, called immediately when children's health or safety is at risk within the context of their immediate family. Instead, workers make efforts within the community to assure the child's well-being, and try to solve the family problems.

Tikinagan, as the Province's mandated child protection agency, is brought into the picture when the community-wide protection functions break down. As BFSWs said, Tikinagan is called when...

- . local efforts and resources are not working
- . the family refuses to cooperate or seek outside help
- . when the problem is getting worse or "out of hand"

Prevention Work

Prevention work is done considerably less than other services. Nevertheless, the following prevention activities were reported:

- . Organizing recreational and sports activities (two communities)
- . Community education: talks to children in school, radio talks about parenting, family life education workshops, distribution of pamphlets on social problems (six communities)
- . Organizing self-help groups of people with specific problems (one community)
- . Encouraging spiritual help (one community)
- . One-to-one encouragement of good parenting (four communities)
- . Organizing traditional hunting activities for children (two communities)
- . Alcohol/solvent abuse control: encouraging safekeeping of gas tanks, control of alcohol in dry

communities (one community)

- . Organizing parents' planning group (one community)
- . Outdoor education (one community)
- . Youth group: building communications, reducing isolation, planning youth activities, problem discussion sessions.
(one community)
- . Phone-in crisis service

Several reasons for the limited prevention activities surfaced during interviews and evaluation workshops. A lack of training was emphasized. As well, many workers are reluctant to become involved in recreational programming for fear that children will stay out late and parents will lose control.

Crisis Work

Eventually, most workers intervene directly in crises (eg. physical or verbal fighting between partners, suicide attempts, etc.). Unfortunately, many workers are uncomfortable with crisis situations, feeling ill-equipped to handle such circumstances.

Helping People Access Resources

If Family Service Workers cannot offer direct help, they can and do help families contact appropriate resources. Most BFSWs have working relationships with many community resource people. The quality of these working relationships will be discussed in a later section.

What Services Should be Provided? : Community Perceptions

All of those interviewed suggested services that should be provided, given the high priority problems and community issues. BFSWs were also asked to consider why the more appropriate or ideal services were not provided.

Prevention activities (examples: family life and parenting education, self-help groups), were the most consistently and frequently mentioned gaps in family services.

Respondents from five communities urge more community outreach, including "high visibility" activities, home visits, home-based counselling, and stronger efforts to reach those who do not seek help.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. Crisis-oriented and problem-focused work consumes most of the workers' time, leaving few opportunities for prevention services.
2. Given the community and family problems identified in the previous section, attention to the problems of youth is the most neglected area.
3. The interdependence of youth and family problems, and the abuse of alcohol speaks strongly in favour of a close working relationship between the BFSW and NNADAP programs.
4. The current development of Tikinagan's Family Counselling Unit provides an opportunity to create specialized counsellors and re-design the BFSW program for concentration in prevention, early crisis intervention, and protection liaison.

5. Interviews reveal no consistent approach to family work, either within or across communities. Family service methods are needed which are culturally appropriate, give direction and coherence to the services, and help organize training and staff evaluation.
6. Workers report difficulties and confusion in their protection liaison work.
7. Traditional cultural approaches to family service are used in a few communities; the value and usefulness of these have not been shared.
8. Some workers feel that Tikinagan service practices are directed to women, more so than men. They feel that men are not the cause of all family problems.

Recommendation #2

Tikinagan should support the further development of prevention activities in the BFSW program, through training, local community orientation, resource development, and follow-up support.

Recommendation #3

To meet the needs of all people, prevention services should be organized and targeted to the transitions and crises at various stages of the family life cycle.

Recommendation #4

To address the problems of Native youth, prevention activities should be immediately targeted for pre-teens and adolescents.

Recommendation #5

To minimize possible confusion between the two family service programs, clear boundaries should be established between the new Family Counselling Unit and the Band Family Services Program. Draft recommendations for these boundaries are included in the "BFSW Family Service Model". (See Appendices)

Recommendation #6

To give consistency to BFSW family services, clear and easily applied practice methods should be developed. These could be used in service guides and training. Four distinct models are recommended, one each for family support, crisis intervention, community support, and protection liaison.

Recommendation #7

Tikinagan should take steps to minimize the confusion and bitterness over the process of apprehensions in child protection cases, and generally help raise the level of trust in the local child protection processes.

Concerning Recommendation #5, the next year or so will likely be a transitional period as this report's recommendations are put into place, and as the Family Counselling Unit develops. For this reason, some overlap between the two programs is likely.

Tikinagan planners and program staff should approach this period as a positive opportunity for mutual sharing, common training and team work. If our recommendation is accepted, the end result of a more prevention-oriented BFSW program should be kept in mind, with the FCU gradually moving towards counselling and long term crisis work. There is clearly a need for two distinctive, but integrated programs.

CLIENT ACCESS TO SERVICES

An important issue for assessment in program evaluation concerns client accessibility to services. In the Band Family Services Program, an important principle is that of community-based programming. Because of geographical distance, many Native communities have been ill-served by mainstream agencies. Another part of the problem is the social and cultural distance between non-Native service providers and service recipients. For these reasons, it is assumed that local people should staff and deliver programs. But does this arrangement guarantee client access?

Local Program Advertisement

No single approach assuring community awareness of the Band Family Services Program was evident across all ten sample communities. The most prevalent vehicle for advertising the program was the local radio, followed by house-to-house visits, newsletters, and school talks.

Community Knowledge of the Program

Despite these efforts, most Band Family Service Workers report that significant parts of their communities do not know about the program.

One particular factor hampers community knowledge of the program. Some community members are confused by the association between the program and Tikinagan, a mandated child protection agency.

Patterns of Client Accessibility to Services

Problems surface easily in small communities. In the sample communities clients access services primarily through an initial contact with Chief and Council who then instruct the BFSWs. Referrals from other community service providers are also important channels for receiving family and children's services.

Reporting High Risk Situations

As local community members, BFSWs are in an ideal position to report situations where children's health or safety may be at risk. Responsive reporting depends on the community's willingness to draw attention to high risk situations. Most BFSWs report that indeed people seem willing to report high risk situations. Also, because of their membership in small communities, workers quickly and naturally become aware of risky family situations.

Although workers are usually aware of high risk situations, they do report some challenges:

- " Usually people do not want things out in the open because it gets passed on"
- " Some people are scared, and do not admit having a problem. They don't want to share their personal life in a small community. "
- " [Most are] willing, but sit on it awhile. Then when things really get bad, they report "
- " Most would report, but many change their position when the intake process begins. People see us as Tikinagan staff and are afraid to lose their children "
- " If not reported these situations would leak out and eventually get to us. We would know right away "

The lack of client confidentiality is another likely factor discouraging clients from seeking help in several communities. This issue will be addressed in the section on "Working with Local Service Providers..."

Opportunities for Improvement

1. In some communities there is a sense that referrals are not forthcoming from many resource people within the community.
2. Many clients are unwilling to come to the office for help because of limited privacy.
3. Some workers experience communication problems with clients during the early stage of contact, such that problems are not accurately understood.
4. Calls to the office are missed, due to the absence of a recording machine or support staff, or because workers are not in the office.
5. Clients who are related to workers may be missed.
6. Many clients are unwilling to talk about their problems, or do not admit to having problems.
7. Reports were made of community cover-ups of problems. "People are ordered not to do anything by people in power". When nothing is done, program and staff credibility may suffer. Families may be unwilling to seek help.

8. Three needy groups were reportedly hard to reach: youth and single parents, the elderly, and the socially isolated.

Recommendation #8

Tikinagan should take central responsibility for facilitating, participating in, and otherwise supporting efforts to make the BFSW a more credible and legitimate program within the communities.

Recommendation #9

Through special training, Tikinagan should help increase the accessibility to the BFSW program of youth, single parents, the elderly, the socially isolated, and BFSW relatives.

Recommendation #10

Tikinagan should encourage all Band offices to develop policies and practices for occasions when workers are out of the office. These should be communicated to the community at large, and should be supported by suitable resources such as answering machines.

Recommendations addressing referrals, child protection issues and confidentiality are provided in later sections.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Currently, the overall administration of the Band Family Services Program is fulfilled through a set of joint arrangements between Tikinagan and each Band.

Community Services Agreement

As indicated earlier, the CSA specifies financial and other administrative arrangements between Tikinagan and the Bands. It contains six major elements: philosophy, a statement of principles, roles and responsibilities, Band Family Service Worker job description and qualifications, Band Family Service Committee roles, and financial agreement.

The CSA is the sole document specifying the character of the program: philosophy, and operations. Suggested tasks of the family service workers are detailed as "Community Support and Prevention", "Family Support", and "Protection and Emergency Services".

On paper, the CSA is an important reference point for what the BFSW program is all about. For many workers it is the only written documentation for the program, and is an important source of job orientation.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. Many people are unaware of the details of the CSA. This means that some communities are not fully aware of administrative understandings, or the nature of the program.
2. Few attempts have been made locally to use the CSA as a tool for developing a detailed program and job responsibilities to suit local needs.

Recommendation #11

It is recommended that, every year, a senior Tikinagan staff member should review and negotiate the CSA in a meeting with Chief, Council, and the BFSW. Attention should be given to clarifying community needs, BFSW priorities, Tikinagan support, roles and responsibilities, and administration.

The appendices contain a first draft "Negotiation Model" for this process.

Financial Administration

Tikinagan secures an annual program budget from COMSOC and distributes the funds to each band. The agency retains a small amount for administration.

Guidelines for Band disbursement of funds are provided in the CSA. Budget categories include wages, benefits, travel, and administration. According to agreement, the Bands receive monthly amounts upon receipt of a monthly invoice. In reality, the receipts do not arrive regularly from all bands, and in some cases come late in the fiscal year.

In all communities the Band Administrator is responsible for managing the BFSW budget: payment of salaries, invoicing Tikinagan, processing expense claims, and financial reporting to Chief and Council, and to Tikinagan.

In all communities, Chief and Council are the ultimate decision-makers concerning spending. BFSWs submit requests for funds to the Band Administrator. Chief and Council authorize payment. This is usually done in writing, using expense request forms.

Early in the fiscal year, Tikinagan notifies the bands of the estimated budget for the upcoming year. Upon submission of the agency service plan to the Ministry, the funds begin to flow. Lateness in service plan submission causes delays in this process. Tikinagan is taking steps to solve this problem. Mild complaints were received from the Bands because they didn't know their exact budget for the upcoming year.

Funding Sufficiency

Many Band Family Service Workers and Band Administrators feel that funds are insufficient, particularly for travel and prevention work. Two communities reported underspending during the past fiscal year.

There is a clear lack of funds for prevention work. This omission plays down the importance of prevention in the program. The research shows clear differences in financial need across the communities. One wonders, though, how spending patterns might change if prevention work was better understood and appropriately supported locally from the budget. Many workers are not aware of the various potential community activities under the rubric of prevention, and except for travel, do not try to access the budget.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. Monthly invoicing and financial reporting from the Bands to Tikinagan do not encourage details of actual spending. Instead, Tikinagan receives summary statements within the general budget categories, without, for example, receiving original expense invoices. This removes an opportunity to identify line item changes which reflect difficulties with the current budget structure. It also removes the opportunity for Tikinagan's financial staff to provide advice concerning financial difficulties.
2. Tikinagan has no central funding to fulfil its training function for the program. It adapts by using general training funds, and combining Tikinagan staff training events with BFSW training. This is not useful in all cases.
3. Band Administrators seem satisfied with the financial arrangements and processes, although they expressed concerns over the late arrival of the budget from Tikinagan. They refer to the previous fiscal year's budget figures, and use band funds on faith.

Recommendation #12

To allow a detailed understanding of budget inadequacies for the program, a new financial reporting method should be introduced. Monthly invoicing and annual spending summaries should indicate the actual spending, and include original invoices.

Recommendation #13

Tikinagan should strive to expand its budget to (i) hire a BFSW Coordinator (ii) support prevention activities (ii) fund the planning and delivery of central workshops which are unique to the needs of BFSW staff, and (iii) fund service resource development (eg. service manual)

The Flow of Information

On-going program monitoring, evaluation, decision-making and planning require a steady flow of information concerning services and clients. The CSA clearly communicates the importance of such information for Tikinagan. Also, Tikinagan, through its training and advisory functions has assisted information collection and communication. Workshops have addressed the need and have circulated forms to aid the process locally.

Despite these efforts, a regular flow of information concerning clients and services is not forthcoming. Regular written reports, anticipated in the CSA, do not arrive consistently. The lack of a fully implemented communication system hampers Tikinagan's efforts to provide the best and most appropriate support to First Nation BFSWs.

Where reports are forthcoming, often the Supervisors are the only ones to see the reports. This deprives Regional Workers of up-to-date information on local activities and the needs of BFSWs.

During the communication of intake information, the information from the communities is so inadequate that the Tikinagan's intake worker calls several people in the community to gather detailed information. This is time-consuming and unnecessary.

The result of these information gaps is that the central Tikinagan office is not up-to-date on the kinds of problems experienced in the communities. Nor are they aware of client characteristics, or the nature of local services. As well, Regional workers who may need client information for protection and court purposes do not have ready access to such information. Reliance on telephone contacts for this information as needed is unwieldy and inefficient.

Another serious outcome is that justifications for program expansion requests are difficult to make without backup information.

Local filing systems

The research team reviewed BFSW files during every community visit. We verified that files existed, examined contents, and did a quick assessment of the file quality.

Only one of the ten sample communities lacked a file system. BFSW files were kept together in one drawer or filing cabinet, giving a general sense of orderliness.

File systems varied in completeness and quality. The quality of local files may depend on the skills and inclinations of the current worker.

The contents of existing files in all communities were "clinical" and "administrative". Clinical files included client case notes, service guidelines, and specific clinical tools (eg. interview techniques). However, the specific content varied widely across communities.

All nine communities with files attempted to keep case notes on clients, showing that workers were aware of the importance of this. However, case notes were often not well organized or complete. They were generally good at stating the client's problem and sketching preliminary efforts to help. They were less adequate at documenting the services, local resources used, and client response to service. No service planning framework was evident.

With training, BFSWs could improve the form and organization of their files. Files were unlabelled, dates of client contacts were missing, notes were illegible. Materials were loose or misfiled, and whole files, because of the disorderliness, were difficult to use.

Workers do their best, but their previous experience, training, and perhaps local office expectations have not prepared them for this part of their job. The forms circulated by Tikinagan were unused for the most part.

On the positive side, a few communities had good file systems. Others seemed on the verge of upgrading their

system. One had adapted a Tikinagan form to suit local needs. Several workers identified "administration" as a high priority training area. All of this suggests a positive and receptive climate for future training and development in this area.

If well planned, the organization of filing systems should contribute to client confidentiality in service agencies or programs. In this program, all filing systems were in the same office as the workers, or at least were close by. File cabinets were not used by other programs. This allowed easy access. On the other hand, file cabinets were rarely locked. Given the free movement of people through the offices, confidentiality may be at risk. Some workers assured privacy by keeping client files at home.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. It is unlikely that the clinical and administrative functions of an information system could be adequately fulfilled by Tikinagan. The agency is unable to develop a sense of the problems addressed by the program, and what specific services or local programs are in place. From written information, on-going program monitoring, evaluation, decision-making and planning would be difficult.
2. Locally, the organization and quality of file systems likely inhibit supervision, case reviews, and the orientation of new workers.

Recommendation #14

To assure broad awareness of the program within the communities, it is recommended that Tikinagan help assure that all key parties (eg. BFSWs, Counsellors, community service providers) are aware of the content of the Community Service Agreement.

Recommendation #15

To assure a steady flow of information from BFSWs to the agency, Tikinagan should introduce an appropriate information system.

Recommendation #16

To strengthen local office administration, file systems, and communications, it is recommended that Tikinagan take steps to provide the necessary administrative tools and skills to BFSWs.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND HIRING

The quality of services is partly effected by the people who occupy key positions. The hiring process is a key organizational arrangement for recruiting the best and most committed people.

Also, in small communities, the hiring process is a public event observed by people in the community. This contributes to the legitimacy of the program and public trust in its service providers.

Band Family Services Workers are hired locally, with little involvement from Tikinagan. The CSA specifies that "Chief and Council are responsible for the hiring of capable and appropriate Band Family Service Workers for their community needs".

To assist the hiring process, the CSA states that workers should:

- . have counselling background or proven ability
- . possess bilingual language skills in English and Oji-Cree
- . are able to provide written/oral reports and maintain statistical information
- . have background and experience in dealing with child-rearing and family matters
- . be willing to undergo and participate in training
- . be available to work flexible hours

Who are the Band Family Service Workers?

- . Band Family Service Workers are members of the communities in which they work.
- . Twenty-four of the thirty-four Band Family Service Workers in the program are men. Of the twenty-eight Tikinagan communities, eighteen do not have a female worker.

In the ten sample communities:

- . Educational background is mostly elementary or some secondary school. Two attended community colleges, but only one graduated.
- . Eight BFSWs interviewed speak two or three languages
- . Four people held jobs other than their BFSW job.
- . On average, BFSWs have held two to three previous jobs, mostly in their home community.
- . About one-half BFSWs have held human service positions, including police constable, alcohol service, etc.
- . Most of the relevant skills were acquired through on-the-job experiences in previous people-oriented jobs.

How are BFSWs hired?

Band Family Services Workers are hired through "advertising", "targeting", or "appointing". In some cases

communities will start with an advertising process but switch to targeting when they can't find suitable candidates.

In the advertising approach, written job advertisements are posted in several public places throughout the community. About half of the communities who advertise will require an interview. The others simply make the decision based on the applications.

Some communities directly target the desired individuals for the job, with or without initial advertising. Targeting involves designating particular persons as good candidates, then approaching and persuading them to apply. Persuasion is required because of certain undesirable qualities of the position which will be reviewed below.

Finally, some individuals may be appointed by virtue of holding a position on Band Council.

What criteria are used?

The hiring groups typically seek exemplary people within the community. They look for those with strong family life, an absence of personal problems, or a history of community involvement.

In some instances, personal problems do not rule out candidates, particularly if they had overcome past problems.

No interviewee mentioned previous job qualifications in social services as a hiring criterion. Yet, an examination of BFSW backgrounds shows that most held at least one human service position.

Some communities require interviews, and in some cases these are quite rigorous. Group interviews were not unusual, with Band Council, a Family Services Committee, or a Social Services Committee participating in interviews.

Who Decides?

Ultimately, Chief and Council make the final hiring decisions, sometimes aided by a recommendation from another committee.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. Existing hiring recommendations in the CSA are presently unrealistic. These should be replaced by criteria reflecting the "paraprofessional" nature of the job, and the importance of community trust in the person.
2. The large proportion of men may effect the general quality of service to women. Some men report difficulties working with female clients.
3. Having more than one job may also effect the quality of work, although not always; in some communities, it effects public perceptions.
4. Workers with previous or present personal problems struggle to attain trust and respect in their own communities.
5. The limited skills in counselling and other human activities emphasize the importance of in-service skill-building training.
6. The job may not attract a large pool of community candidates because of certain undesirable characteristics of the work, such as the extreme sensitivity of family services, crisis situations, and the after-hours requirements.

7. The association with Tikinagan and child protection work may inhibit potentially good candidates.
8. Hiring people who have not officially applied for the position gives a "double message" to those who applied.
9. Some people in the community criticized the practice of assigning people to positions, arguing that having two positions weakened the quality of work.
10. Others questioned the practice of hiring people with clear unstable backgrounds.

Recommendation #17

Tikinagan should encourage all First Nation communities to increase the responsiveness of BFSW services to women.

Recommendation #18

Tikinagan should support the local hiring processes to assure that future BFSWs are hired who command local respect and are best able to meet the needs of all people. To support the local hiring process, the recommended Band Family Services Coordinator should participate as an outside advisor in all future hirings.

Recommendation #19

Tikinagan should take steps to increase the local public's confidence in the BFSW program.

OFFICE SPACE

The provision of appropriate office space is an important part of community and organizational support of a program. For social services, offices provide a sense of privacy to clients, and contribute to orderliness in the flow of work.

The Community Services Agreement contains no specific written understandings or guidelines for the provision of office space or material resources for the Band Family Services Workers.

Office Location and Size

All BFSWs had some location for their office duties, although the quality, size and privacy are significantly different across communities.

Most offices are centrally located, allowing good physical accessibility to clients, Chief and Council, and other local service providers. However, high visibility makes clients feel uncomfortable about visiting the BFSW office.

The sizes of the offices ranged from approximately 10' x 10' for the smallest room, to the largest size of about 15' x 12'.

Phone access was possible in most cases.

Office Sharing

In two communities the BFSWs had their own offices. Otherwise, offices are shared with another BFSW and/or other service providers. Those with more than one position usually conducted their other duties in the same office.

A few offices contained insufficient desks for all parties, so that at times one person must find alternate space.

Office Use and Other Work Spaces

BFSW offices are primarily used for paper work, telephoning, meetings, and storing files. Most are located in busy, highly visible situations. Because of the reluctance of clients to come to the office, and the general problems of limited privacy and confidentiality, counselling is usually done in the client's home.

The BFSW office is one of several locations in the worker's overall work space. Workers do home visits and counselling. They also spend time in the offices of other service providers. Considerable time is spent in the offices of Chief and Council.

A few workers report working out of their homes, doing private filing and receiving the occasional troubled client. Some BFSWs spend their time out of the community (eg. liaising with Tikinagan, lawyers, BFSWs; training, supporting client treatment).

Opportunities for Improvement

1. Some workers are dissatisfied with their office arrangements, because of a lack of privacy and space. Others complained of noise, interruptions, the lack of desks, and inadequate arrangements for file privacy.
2. From health and safety considerations, one BFSW office was clearly unsafe and unhealthy due to gas

leakage.

3. Plans for expansion or new building development are underway in three communities which will correct some space problems.

Recommendation #20

The CSA should encourage private office space for BFSWs, enough desks, and at least one private office for interviewing, safety and health.

Recommendation #21

To promote team work between service providers, Bands should be encouraged to house as many service providers in the same building as possible.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Community Services Agreement specifies that Tikinagan will assume the responsibility for training all Band Family Service Workers. It is not clear whether this includes basic and initial job orientation. This section assesses the quality and appropriateness of job preparation and training.

Preparation for the job

Most workers received little initial job orientation. Job preparation took place on the job, from co-workers, previous BFSWs, or Band Council members.

In most communities, files and notes are unavailable as a source of on-the-job learning. In other cases, job preparation from previous workers was limited or nonexistent.

The Community Services Agreement was the most frequently cited source of job descriptions. In some cases Chief and Council were quite helpful. However, this did not include instructions on service or other techniques.

Many workers are not fully aware of their job responsibilities. At times they are unsure if they are working correctly. This may also be effected by the amount and nature of supervision. Those providing orientation and on-going supervision are often not fully knowledgeable about the program.

Training

Nearly all workers have received some training through Tikinagan. All BFSWs found the workshops helpful, citing the benefits of counselling skills, sharing, and written materials.

Where more than one BFSW works in a community, one may not attend training. This assumes that the other will share the knowledge. It also assumes that skill development can somehow be shared back home. This is questionable.

Several BFSWs expressed extreme dissatisfaction with colleagues who did not attend training events, and urged Tikinagan to arrange for full attendance.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. High staff turnover implies that on-going orientation and training is an important staff development function which must be well planned and carried out.
2. Several communities are ill-equipped to provide thorough job orientation to the BFSW program. Inadequate initial preparation leaves many workers confused and frustrated.
3. Except for information in the CSA, a thorough up-to-date description of the BFSW program, available in English and Oji-Cree is unavailable.
4. Training has undoubtedly addressed important topics. However, BFSWs would benefit from a more coherent training program, based on analysis of job skills and knowledge, and training needs.
5. Workshops have concentrated on sharing knowledge, and have given little attention to building service skills, such as how to do community workshops, referrals, crisis intervention, interviewing, writing and other organizational activities.
5. The principle of "cross-community learning" should be encouraged and supported, in which local service providers and those in other communities, achieve maximum benefit from sharing their own learning experiences. The cumulative knowledge would build on local wisdom and skills.
6. To assure that the BFSW program is known and supported within the community, centralized training could be accompanied by local training events. As well, workers would benefit from post-workshop follow-up support from the BFSW Coordinator, so that their knowledge and skills can be applied locally.

Recommendation #22

In-service training should be designed to maximize the application of new knowledge and skills at the local community level.

Recommendation #23

To achieve relevance and coherence to BFSW training, a training needs assessment and long range planning for in-service training should be completed.

Recommendation #24

Referring to the CHR and NNADAP training programs, Tikinagan should explore the possibilities of obtaining accreditation for training.

Recommendation #25

Tikinagan should promote the full attendance of all BFSWs at all training events.

Recommendation #26

The new BFSW Coordinator should be the principle Tikinagan support person for all orientation and training. This person should provide advice, resource development, assistance in contacting training resource people, and follow-up coaching within the community. Emphasis should be placed on supporting the development of cross-community learning, and local resource development.

Recommendation #27

Regional Workers should continue to provide support for specific cases and prevention programming. However, they should receive training to support their BFSW functions. They should learn such things as how to be service advisors, how to support the worker independence, how to help solve the workers' service problems, how to provide feedback, etc.

Appendix "F" summarizes several specific action recommendations, training principles, and training needs based on the research.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Organizational and service support for the BFSW program comes from Tikinagan and the Bands. This section describes the nature of this support, and assesses the quality. As before, recommendations are provided.

Tikinagan Organizational Support

The Agreement is quite clear concerning what the BFSW program can expect from Tikinagan:

- . Consultation: Where the Band is providing service, Tikinagan will provide backup support and advice
- . Repatriation: Tikinagan will assist the Band in locating and repatriating children, where possible.
- . Problem-solving: If the Band Family Services Committee is unable to resolve child/family issues, the Chief and Council will act to solve the problem, including asking for Tikinagan's assistance, if necessary.
- . Evaluation: A joint evaluation of the Band Family Services Program will be conducted by the Band and Tikinagan.
- . Training and resource development: Tikinagan will make available training opportunities and materials for Band Family Service Workers and members of the Band Family Services Committee.
- . Financial assistance: Band Family Services Workers are expected to consult with Tikinagan on all child welfare services requiring financial assistance not provided by other programs.
- . Financial liaison with the Province: Tikinagan funnels the funds from COMSOC, and provides central financial management of the program for all participating Bands.

The community visits, interviews, meetings and interviews with Regional staff reveal that Tikinagan is indeed fulfilling the above functions.

The evaluation function is being fulfilled through this project.

Also, there is clear evidence of on-going training. Consultation and problem-solving are also available from Tikinagan, primarily through the working contacts with Regional Workers.

The Executive Director is also involved in problem-solving, particularly around such issues as additional funding, identifying ways of developing specific new services, and clarification of the BFSW's role in Tikinagan's protection function.

There is not a substantial amount of repatriation work being done, so it is difficult to identify the specific Tikinagan roles and issues in this service area.

In the financial realm, Tikinagan has fulfilled its financial liaison functions between the Bands and the Province. As well, the BFSWs clearly consult with Tikinagan staff concerning the availabilities of funding for cases or for special projects.

Tikinagan Regional Workers and Supervisors are the main staff persons carrying out many of the above functions, supervised by the Coordinator of Direct Services.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. Because many years may go by before another program evaluation is possible, it may be useful to prepare BFSWs to evaluate their own local activities and programs.

2. Repatriation is a new service activity without many precedents for resource materials or training.
3. BFSWs are frustrated by their inability to access funds for special cases and projects. Some confusion exists over what Tikinagan can and cannot fund. BFSWs may not be aware of alternate funding sources and how to obtain them.
4. Tikinagan is seen as slow in responding to community inquiries and requests. Visits by regional workers are described as very short and infrequent. Staff is often out when BFSWs call the main office. Often there is no forwarding number. Decisions and feedback from the main office are seen as slow.
5. Tikinagan is not as well known and understood as it could be in the communities.
6. Workers require more training and training support from Tikinagan, particularly in skill development. As well, no systematic records have been kept on the various training workshops. Such records would be a valuable resource for subsequent training.
7. Workers sometimes must take immediate action (food, shelter, local placements) with some needy families, but find that resources and responses from Tikinagan are limited at times.
8. Workers confront the community's attitude that Tikinagan is "bad news". This reputation is due mainly to previous apprehensions. Some cannot work effectively because of this.
9. Some Tikinagan staff are seen as not fully knowledgeable about their communities, due mainly to infrequent and short visits, and perhaps staff turnovers.
10. Tikinagan sometimes does not give routine feedback, such as names of new staff, informing parents about new regional workers, etc.
11. There is confusion about the related roles of Tikinagan and the Band Councils.
12. The quality of BFSW work is sometimes hampered by personal problems or life situations. Workers need support and skills for dealing with their own stress.
13. Dissatisfaction was expressed concerning BFSW salary levels. This grew out of comparisons to other service workers, differences across communities, and the local use of salary funds for other purposes.

Recommendation #28

Tikinagan should support on-going local evaluation of the BFSW program.

Recommendation #29

Tikinagan should help strengthen the local Band capability for accessing special funds not available through the agency.

Recommendation #30

Tikinagan should take steps to improve the communication and responsiveness between the agency and BFSW staff.

Recommendation #31

Tikinagan should actively promote community awareness of Tikinagan policies, changes, and the distinctive nature of the BFSW program.

Recommendation #32

Tikinagan should provide support to help workers deal with personal stress.

Recommendation #33

To reduce the bitterness and dissatisfaction over current salary levels, it is recommended that Tikinagan take the initiative for a salary review. This would include gathering information on comparable service providers, providing this information to each Band, and providing information on other BFSW staff salaries.

Local Organizational Support

The Community Services Agreement clearly shows that the day-to-day organization and management of the BFSW program are the Band's responsibilities. This section examines the extent to which the program is locally managed and organizationally supported.

The Assignment of Roles and Tasks

In reviewing the actual work done by Band Family Services Workers, the Tikinagan/Band Community Services Agreement is clearly the main source of information concerning the content of the job. The bulk of the work falls into the three broad categories suggested in the CSA:

- . Community Support and Prevention
- . Family Support
- . Protection and Emergency Services

The CSA also encourages the development of local Family Services Committees in each community. These recommended Committees would provide a broad range of supportive and development services, ranging from advice to workers, coordination, and leadership to all community and health programs.

Community visits and interviews suggest that the specific tasks for responding to community or family needs are decided in four ways:

- (i) Specific directions from Chief and Council
- (ii) Deciding upon tasks in communication with other local service providers
- (iii) The BFSW's own initiative
- (iv) Consultation with the Tikinagan Regional Workers

In only one sample community is a Family Services Committee active in directing BFSW roles and tasks.

Authority

The CSA stipulates that as an employee of the Band the Family Service Worker is under the direction and management of the Chief and Council. "Band" in the job title is significant, symbolizing the community control of the program.

The community visits confirmed that in practice the authority of the program lies with the Chief and Council. Workers indeed take their direction and their supervision either from the Council as a whole or from the Council member with the Social Services Portfolio.

On paper and in practice, the control and management of Band Family Service are in the hands of the community through each Band Council. However, in some cases the community at large is confused about this matter. Some BFSWs are called "Tikinagan" workers. This confusion has negative repercussions for family support and crisis work.

An important part of authority is job autonomy or the amount of discretion that workers are permitted on the job. The community visits suggest that the workers are not given much leeway to control their own work. In some situations (eg. highly experienced worker, council unavailable during the day) workers are free to decide for themselves what or how certain tasks should be done. But generally, the Chief or Council provide specific direction on a case-by-case basis. This includes decisions to call Tikinagan in high risk cases. The problem is that those providing direction are often not experienced in family services.

Supervision

All BFSWs identified some source of local supervision. Most supervisors are Council members, usually the member with the Social Services Portfolio.

Interviews with supervisors and other Council members indicate a strong sense of Commitment to the program. Some were skilled people with backgrounds in social services. Most Supervisors, though, have several other Band portfolios to attend.

Standard Operating Procedures

Community interviews explored local procedures and written documentation of policy. This inquiry drew mixed responses, and generally suggested that informal expectations (not formalized procedures) guide the work at the community level.

The CSA is a consistent reference point for procedures in many communities. In two communities the worker knew of no policies or procedures, or was unsure of their content.

The expectation of keeping others informed, or writing monthly reports, was mentioned in three communities. Others talked about written service routines acquired through training workshops.

Work Co-ordination, Problem-Solving, and Case Management: the Functions of Chief and Council

The Community Services Agreement specifies that Chief and Council should assume broad responsibility for the management and quality of family services in each community. They are encouraged to delegate at least some of this responsibility to a Family Services Committee.

Chief and Council: the Main Mechanism for Community-based Problem Solving

In traditional Native communities, Chiefs and Councils were the main source of problem-solving. Today, it appears that this arrangement still exists in communities served by the Band Family Services Program. A fully functioning Family Services Committee exists in one community only.

Information from the ten communities reveals that in nearly all, Council is involved in intake, service planning, and referrals. Council also monitors service, receives reports, advises the BFSW, and provides direct service to troubled people. As well, Chief and Council mobilize community resources and liaise with Tikinagan. Chief and Council are a constant source of advice to the BFSW, concerning the work in general, or about high risk cases.

These activities are usually spearheaded by the Council member holding the Social Services Portfolio. The supervisory role of the portfolio member was discussed above.

Each of these functions will be described briefly.

Intake

"Intake" is used to describe the process by which the Band Family Service Worker first becomes aware of a troubled family. Also, the word refers to initial discussions of the problem, and what should be done.

Many requests for help or reports of problems go first to Chief and Council. After initial consideration, the Band Family Service Worker is asked to be involved. In instances where the worker learns of the problem first, he or she typically reports to Council for initial planning. Chief and Council, therefore, are major "gatekeepers" to service.

Referrals

Council members are the main source of referrals either to the BFSW or other local service staff. This flows from their first involvements with cases. In some communities, Council will ask for the involvement of more than one worker, or may become actively involved themselves.

Case Service Planning

Chief and Council are also heavily involved in case service planning. In meetings with the BFSW, Council decides what steps might be taken to help troubled families. A particular important decision, which all Councils wish to control, is whether children should be removed from the community, or whether families should seek outside treatment.

Councils may become involved in the detailed methods for trying to help the family change. This might simply mean conveying the Council's expectations for changed behavior. Occasionally, a Band Council Resolution (BCR) strengthens the Council's actions.

Direct Service

All Councils in the ten sample communities are directly involved in helping families. Council members may take full responsibility for some serious cases, such as sexual abuse.

Councillors are known to counsel some families, or simply assist in breaking down the resistance of troublesome people. Council members who are elders may provide direct help to families.

Often Council members will accompany workers in crisis situations. This is done to offer physical protection, moral support, or add authority to the worker's visit.

Finally, in many communities, family members will be asked to meet directly with Chief and Council to discuss their problems.

Mobilizing Community Resources

Almost all Chiefs and Councils help BFSWs mobilize community resources (eg. finding housing, emergency homes)

Councils also act as the central coordinating bodies for the various social service programs in each community. The mobilization and coordination of BFSWs, NNADAP workers, CHRs and others are usually done informally and, according to many, inefficiently.

In addition, some Councils or individual Council members are involved in creating and participating in special programs (eg. parents group), fund-raising, and authorizing funds for BSWs and clients. Generally, they are a source of support and feedback about the BSW position and the program.

Major Problems or Disagreements Concerning Families

Whether or not a Family Services Committee or any other problem-solving vehicle exists in the community, major disagreements or problems are taken to Chief and Council in all communities. This is true for individual case issues (eg. disagreement about a child placement) or community-wide issues.

Child Protection Cases

Serious cases of health or safety risk to children are brought to Chief and Council prior to contacting Tikinagan. The Council makes the decision concerning Tikinagan involvement, typically after all community-based solutions and resources have been tried.

In some communities, Chief and Council are criticized for not responding to sexual abuse disclosures and the needs of victims. This neglect was described as a "cover-up" in several interviews, and was the subject of a lengthy discussion among workers and Councilors in one evaluation workshop. Several BSWs complained of being bypassed in the process. (The workshop discussion led to the drafting of Recommendation #37)

Some local resource people are so concerned about the handling of serious abuse that they call Tikinagan directly when they suspect abuse. Following this route usually creates tensions with Chiefs and Councils who prefer to handle problems internally.

Despite these occurrences in some, other communities have well-developed arrangements for handling sexual abuse, involving elders' groups or other local committees.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. Those who have most influence in shaping the local direction of the program, and of directing the workers, are not fully informed about the program. Also, Tikinagan staff turnover and the sheer physical distance limit some Regional Workers' information about the community.
2. In many cases workers complain of inconsistent supervision, which does not yield practical tips or advice. As well, few received any regular feedback on the quality of their work or any staff evaluation. There is a strong sense that some workers do not have any idea how well they were doing on the job.
3. Given that workers receive direction or advice from both local sources and Tikinagan, there are sometimes conflicting expectations.
4. Comments during the community visits raise serious questions concerning the appropriateness of Council's extensive involvement in the program:
 - . Do Councils have the time for this involvement?
 - . Have Chiefs and Councils been adequately prepared for these functions?
 - . Chiefs and Council members are mainly men. To what extent are women's interests and issues considered in day-to-day planning, service delivery and crisis response?

- . Do local politics and other community pressures effect the process of planning for troubled families?
5. Band Council involvement in the BFS program is a crisis or problem-focused response. There were few reports of Council involvement in general service planning or program development, particularly around prevention.
6. The absence of Family Service Committees and systematic information collection about work performance, means that workers' knowledge of the local program's strengths and weaknesses is often gossipy, complaining, and rarely supportive.

Recommendation #34

Steps should be taken to assure that all local parties involved in family service activities are aware of the philosophy, principles and elements of the Band Family Service Program.

Recommendation #35

Tikinagan should reaffirm, and actively support, the development of local Family Service Committees. Tikinagan should provide the training, resources, and follow-up to assure that each Committee develops the capacity to undertake the roles and functions currently listed in the Community Services Agreement.

Recommendation #36

Chief and Council should be encouraged to delegate many of their current BFSW functions to the Family Services Committee. They should continue to be involved in executive responsibilities (eg, liaison with Tikinagan). The Social Services Portfolio member should continue to act as the key liaison member, thus assuring on-going Council education about the program.

Recommendation #37

Tikinagan should support the development of strong supervision at the local community level.

A Special Recommendation Concerning Sexual Abuse

The following recommendation should receive special attention. The horror of sexual abuse has plagued many

people's lives and is gradually coming to public attention across Canada. Many communities recognize this horror, and are taking special steps to curb further sexual abuse while reaching out to the victims of past abuse.

BFSWs recognize the need for such concerns and actions in their communities, and urge the support of their Chiefs. To achieve this support, the following recommendation was drafted by a small work group during the March evaluation workshop.

Recommendation #37

It is recommended that the Chiefs support each other in developing a process for responding to sexual abuse cases and assault within their communities. The process should respect the needs of victims, the perpetrators, and family members. Finally, such a process should be community-based, and involve the clergy, elders, women and community leaders.

WORKING WITH OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

The capacity to use local human resources increases the self-sufficiency of Native communities. The Community Service Agreement clearly conveys an expectation for local collaboration between service staff. This section examines the BFSWs working relationships with local community resource people, and with BFSWs in other communities.

Community Service Providers

Community visits surfaced several strengths in the local resource system. Service workers are highly visible and personally known to each other. All share a common, sometimes personal, knowledge of troubled families. Collaboration between some staff in the service network is often strong and effective.

In fulfilling their duties, BFSWs have contacts with many local resource people. On average, they reported contacts with nine other service staff members. The most consistently contacted service providers across all reserves are nurses, NNADAP workers, teachers and the police. Working contacts, through referrals, also exist with outside treatment facilities and agencies.

Network Activities

In the sample communities, all persons interviewed consistently report client contacts with more than one service program. Service providers described the following activities:

- . sharing information about clients
- . exchange of referrals (see below)
- . exchange of information about community problems, treatment facilities, helping techniques
- . common participation in direct services such as crises intervention and counselling
- . co-investigation of abuse or neglect
- . co-participation in prevention activities
- . sharing work problems (eg. stress management)
- . co-participation in local or off-reserve placements
- . facilitation of financial assistance for clients

Referrals

Referrals were most likely between the BFSW and nurses, teachers and the police. BFSWs also make referrals to agencies in other communities and towns.

Noteworthy isolated details on the referral processes are as follows:

- . Most Band Councils are aware of all referrals, and typically make the initial referrals to BFSWs or other service providers. They are often the first people contacted by the client.
- . Referrals are typically made to nurses before placements in emergency or foster care homes.

BFSWs frequently call Tikinagan staff for advice on the most appropriate referrals. This suggests that BFSW workers may not be fully aware of referral agencies and program criteria for client acceptance.

Steps are underway in some, but not all, communities to better organize the referral process. This will encourage greater efficiency and assure that clients receive appropriate services.

The Form of Network Relationships

The typical working contacts between community resource personnel are informal, case-specific verbal exchanges in person or on the telephone. With few exceptions, BFSWs meet and exchange ideas during one-on-one contacts, rather than larger group situations. Written materials are rarely exchanged.

In some communities, though, larger groups of local service providers meet regularly to share information. These meetings focus on specific cases, responding to mounting crises in particular families. However, the meetings are sometimes poorly attended or inefficient. Rarely are such meetings called regularly. Indications are that regular service provider meetings are gradually being tried in more communities.

Job Boundaries

Band Family Service Workers and other local staff often do each others work. These flexible arrangements for "who does what" are met with different reactions (eg.normal, "filling in, in each other's absence", "slacking off", confusion)

Decision-Making

Since most clients receive services from more than one community service provider, how are decisions made concerning who becomes involved, and how the work is done?

For some, the process is informal, much like community life in general. Also, Chief and Council play a dominant role in decisions concerning abuse, particularly where the participation of Tikinagan is a possibility.

The participation of Chief and Council in decision-making has annoyed some non-Native service providers, particularly when high risk cases do not lead to apprehension. In other instances, Council decisions were seen as favouring abusive men at the expense of women and children. There were negative attitudes towards outside crisis centres.

In still other communities, team decision-making is now underway or has been used in the past, particularly with difficult abuse cases. Otherwise, depending on their personal relationships or physical closeness, some service providers negotiate decisions concerning case involvement in pairs or in small groups. Decisions are made informally as cases come up.

Whatever past or current decision-making arrangements have prevailed, most BFSWs and other community resource providers are supportive of group-based decision-making for the future.

Quality of Working Relationships

How well do Band Family Service Workers draw upon other service providers in response to family and community needs? This varies from community to community.

- . in some communities, the BFSW is little involved with others
- . most workers genuinely believe that Band staff are willing to give each other the support that is needed to do a good job
- . however, over one-half of the BFSWs reported problems within their service network
- . problems or issues are not solved openly between local resource people, but are ignored or avoided; as well, some people have trouble communicating their ideas to others.
- . as many as one-half feel little informed about the goals and services of other Band service programs
- . in several communities, the best working relationships are between those in the same building

An analysis of the difficulties between local resource people suggests that communication difficulties are prevalent. Many are unwilling to share information about clients. Others were criticised for not carrying out job responsibilities and following up.

Community service providers were most likely critical of...

- . inadequate referral processes
- . being uninformed about the BFSW program goals, services and roles (see below)
- . inappropriate placement decisions in protection cases
- . the BFSW not following up in crisis cases or prevention work

Mutual Program Awareness

Some BFSWs feel poorly informed about the goals and services of other Band service programs. As well, most Band staff feels poorly informed about the Band Family Services program, and would like more details.

Confidentiality

All communities acknowledge the importance of confidentiality. Most refer to specific practices in support of confidentiality, including:

- . assurances of confidentiality to the client
- . asking permission to share information with other service providers
- . reference to professional or government guidelines
- . written Band policy
- . keeping separate files
- . avoiding note-keeping
- . having 1-1 meetings with clients
- . producing a local newsletter assuring confidentiality

Opportunities for Improvement

1. The working relationships between Family Service Workers and Community Health Representatives (CHRs) are quite limited. With more collaboration, there is vast potential for prevention activities in health and family life.
2. Interviews on community resource networking activities reveal very little collaboration in community planning, program development, or specific case planning.
3. Some workers experience difficulties with other people in their work network and a lack of mutual respect; these difficulties are personal or work-related.
4. Service delivery would benefit from local networking. Workers would gain from sharing their knowledge and experience. Team arrangements and networking would provide more opportunities for mutual on-the-job learning. The best solution is likely structural integration of services at the government level.
5. Service providers are also members of communities which generally lack cohesiveness and mutual trust. Having ties at the work level would potentially create positive effects for family and community life: a sense of community, mutual liking and respect, common purpose and values. As service leaders, community service providers could emerge as role models for other community members.
6. Networking with BFSWs in other communities could also be strengthened. Although geographical distance is a real problem, communication technology and cross-community visits hold enormous promise.

7. Referring clients is not always successful. Some receiving agencies refuse to take clients with a history of getting into trouble while in town. Often, clients refuse to go for treatment; others who do receive treatment quickly fall back into the old ways.
8. The referral process itself is hampered. In some communities, referrals are not forthcoming from community service providers. Information accompanying referrals may be missing or inadequate. Some community service providers choose not to refer because they do not trust the BFSW. Others may be confused about the involvement of Council in the ultimate decision-making process. There were reports of specific protection decisions which caused disagreements between service providers, BFSWs and Council. Some Nurses choose to call Tikinagan directly rather than risk local decisions which result in kids staying in the community.
Finally some community service providers are critical of the **lack of follow-up after referrals.**
9. In communities with two BFSWs, the teamwork between the partners could be improved.
10. Although they acknowledge the importance of confidentiality, resource people in most communities report that client confidentiality is broken. When this happens, the foundation of trust is weakened. Broken confidentiality introduces tensions between service providers, and enormous barriers to service. Common knowledge about private issues becomes part of the client's problem.

Recommendation #38

Tikinagan should support the integration and strengthening of local service networks, through processes of organizational skill training, follow-up consultation and community development.

Recommendation #39

Tikinagan should support a strengthening of the referral process at the community level and outside communities.

Recommendation #40

Tikinagan should stimulate a renewed commitment to client confidentiality in all communities.

Recommendation #41

Tikinagan should take special steps to improve the outcomes of client referrals to outside treatment.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Community Service Agreement says that Band Family Service Workers are expected to work with other local service providers to

"assist in developing local child care resources, including identifying co-parents who will care for children on an emergency short and long term basis, and identify people who will assist and support co-parents"

The word "co-parenting" conveys a particular ideal for alternate parenting of children from troubled families. Though the child may require alternate living arrangements, a strong relationship between the two sets of parents helps to reinforce the natural parents' roles.

This section examines whether co-parenting arrangements are made within the communities, and with what challenges and difficulties. Voluntarism will also be reviewed, and the use of local elders.

The Use of Co-parents

Interviews reveal that BFSWs may not fully understand the idea of "co-parents". The phrases "customary care" or "foster parents" are used often, but not "co-parent".

The interviews also reveal that no communities have a pool of families which BFSWs can use for child care. Rather, parents are recruited as needed.

When family difficulties place children at risk, the children are relocated to other Native families, either in the home community or nearby. Most often, children are placed with extended family members. Barring this, they are placed with other families in the community. Sometimes, the workers themselves or the workers' relatives will take children temporarily. The last resort is placement in another Tikinagan community, typically in serious situations.

Children are placed in other homes when the parenting function is weakened because of drinking, drinking-related difficulties, other emergencies, or family breakup. Children may also be temporarily placed when the natural parents seek outside treatment.

No strict criteria for defining risk situations assist the decision to remove a child temporarily. Perhaps "risk" is defined more holistically in the sense that many interacting factors are considered. For longer term placements, the process is negotiated with Chief and Council, making it a community decision.

Criteria for Selecting Co-parents

Apart from extended family members within the community, are there other criteria for choosing one set of co-parents over another?

No formal criteria exist across communities for selecting appropriate co-parents. Apart from the extended family, workers look for available, willing people who provide a risk-free environment.

BFSWs use various ways of describing their usual choices. Generally, they chose stable, problem-free families, with previous or current child-rearing experiences. Other words used are "good reputation", "caring", "willing" and "fit in with the family". Demographic characteristics like family size, age, family life cycle stage, or income are definitely not considered.

The Use of Local Elders and Volunteers

BFSWs use elders in seven of the ten sample communities. Two communities use elders quite extensively. Some local service providers are elders. They participate in the usual networking processes among service providers. Otherwise, elders advise the BFSWs, escorts, and counsellors. One elder sits on the Board of Tikinagan; another is on the local Family Services Committee. In one community an elder is used for traditional activities such as sweat lodges.

Other than elders, only three BFSWs in the ten communities successfully recruit volunteers for family service activities. Volunteers are used for counselling, escorting people to treatment, or watching over younger children with problems.

BFSWs will not use volunteers when they expect money, or when they will not respect private information. As one person said, the lack of volunteers may be due to an absence of community spirit.

Other Community Family Resources

Besides local service providers, co-parents, elders, and volunteers, other family resources exist in some communities. These include treatment centres, sweat lodges, and a family park. One community is trying to raise money for a day-care centre.

In terms of needed community resources, three BFSWs cite the need for treatment centres; three hope for the future development of emergency shelters for women and children. Two persons identified day-care as their most pressing concern.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. The idea of the "co-parenting relationship", with its implications for continuing natural parent involvement, parental learning and networking, is an attractive idea. This notion exists on paper, but has not been introduced and properly implemented in the communities.
2. Approximately one-half of the BFSWs admitted that finding suitable co-parents in their communities presents difficulties. Those claiming such difficulties cited...
 - . people's own family priorities
 - . financial needs
 - . fear of formalities and procedures
 - . inadequate knowledge of the process
 - . their own problems
 - . fear of retaliation from natural parents
 - . mistrust of worker and Tikinagan
 - . community fragmentation and isolation between families, and local "family politics"

Sometimes BFSWs resort to "twisting people's arms" or using their own relatives.

3. Asked to identify the main challenges in working with co-parents, BFSWs spoke of...
 - . dealing with financial matters: the desire for money, getting contributions from natural parents, and assuring that money is used appropriately by co-parents.
 - . training co-parents and assuring that they provide good care
 - . dealing with the appearance of angry natural parents wanting their children back
 - . unwillingness of natural parents to seek help for their problems
 - . dealing with pressures to have the child removed on a longer term basis

The difficulties of recruiting co-parents in some communities result in the removal of many Native children from their homes, and placement in other communities.

3. Some workers feel that they are being "used" by parents when they are asked to

look after children. This is a "babysitting" role which is not appropriate in the program.

4. Short-term emergency placement is an important need, especially in communities struggling to find healthy families for short-term placements.
5. Workers feel challenged in trying to follow the Band Council's policy of keeping the solution in the community, where resources are limited and where there is pending action from Tikinagan to remove the child.

Recommendation #42

It is recommended that the ideal of "co-parenting" be reaffirmed as an important principle for family service practice, particularly where children are in need of temporary changes in parenting arrangements.

Recommendation #43

Tikinagan should support the development of co-parenting in all communities.

Recommendation #44

To respond to the need for emergency placements, it is recommended that Tikinagan explore the possibility of having extensions built on one or more local houses. This would be done in exchange for the commitment to welcome emergency child placements. Council could establish and monitor this commitment.

Recommendation #45

Tikinagan should support the BFSWs greater use of local community resources, such as elders and volunteers.

CONCLUSIONS

In this section we draw some broad conclusions from our study. These conclusions do not

attempt to incorporate all issues and areas for growth. They do, however, highlight what are clearly central themes from the study.

Community Participation and Support

The Band Family Services Program is a community-based program in almost every sense of the word. Staff are hired locally, supervised primarily by Band Council, and respond to local needs. Although BFSWs seek and receive advice from Tikinagan staff, most of the decisions concerning their daily tasks are governed by Chief and Council.

BFSWs have contacts with many local service providers, but the quality of those contacts could be vastly improved. Cross-community ties and learning between other BFSWs will also vastly improve the program's effectiveness.

As well, although the local community involvement in the program is commendable, this involvement comes primarily through the contacts with Chief and Council, a body which already has enough on its plate in most communities. Our recommendation is to return to the idea of a volunteer Family Services Committee or some equivalent mechanism for broadening the base of community guidance.

Services

As is the case of many similar programs, both Native and non-Native, Band Family Service Workers spend much of their time responding to crises. In a sense, the strategy in most communities for avoiding protection intervention, is to contain problems after they have occurred.

The time and the energy for this work rules out planning and delivering prevention activities to attack the "root conditions" of family problems. Yet, the need for prevention work was emphasized again and again. We anticipate that the new Tikinagan Family Counselling Unit will be designed to give a better balance to prevention, crisis intervention and counselling. This should be accompanied by a corresponding BFSW program emphasis and training in prevention.

The involvement of BFSWs in Tikinagan's protection function is confusing for some, and sets up a program "identity crisis" in some communities. It was tempting to think of ways that the program could be totally separated from Tikinagan. However, this would not solve the problem of Tikinagan's reputation in the communities. Our approach is primarily to suggest a strategy of thorough community education and public relations. This hopefully would draw clear distinctions between Tikinagan and the Band Family Services Program, and would clarify Tikinagan's other services.

Planners of the BFSW program anticipated that it would stimulate communities as wholes to respond to serious family-related problems. It is clear that sexual abuse, one of the more serious problems, falls through the cracks of the community care system, at least in some communities. Many of the BFSWS expressed their powerlessness in this issue. A loud

collective voice from a program evaluation workshop urged all Chiefs to support each other towards a solution.

Tikinagan Organizational Support

To be effective, the Band Family Services Program will continue to need strong central support from Tikinagan. This support should center around training, consultation, service resource development, community development, and the promotion of cross-community learning.

Given Tikinagan's current staff structure and the general funding environment, we see this as a tall order. The highest priority is a new Band Family Services Coordinator. On-going training is another priority, with emphasis on skill development and follow-up support in relation to clearly identified family service roles and practices. Every effort should be made to help each First Nations community provide consistent supervisory support and co-operative local networking.

In closing, the foundation for a strong Band Family Services Program is in place. The challenges to further growth are clear.

The current staff are committed to the program and are looking to each other, their community, and Tikinagan, for ideas and support. What is needed are central initiatives to surface these ideas, help them stimulate action, and refine their efforts.