

**THE EXPERIENCE OF GROWTH**

**An Organizational Review  
Of Ojibway Tribal Family Services**

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**PART A. INTRODUCTION**

Ojibway Tribal Family Services has now reached its third year of operations. The time

is appropriate for the Board, management and staff to step back and assess its activities to Date. An organizational review is a way of gathering information to aid this assessment, and stimulate plans for future growth. This is a report on O.T.F.S.' first organizational review.

## 1. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The general goal of this review is to assist the Board, management and staff in a process of organizational self-examination, for the purpose of identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Specific review objectives are as follows:

- (i) To assess O.T.F.S.' progress in the achievement of its initial objectives.
- (ii) To assess how closely O.T.F.S. has provided services according to the family support model of service delivery.
- (iii) To assess the organizational and resource support for family support services.
- (iv) To assess the appropriateness of O.T.F.S. management structures and processes.
- (v) To assess O.T.F.S.' access to outside agencies and professionals.
- (vi) To assess training opportunities for staff, management and Board.
- (vii) To facilitate recommendations and plans for future development.

## 2. METHODS

Information to answer these review questions was obtained through several research methods, as follows:

- . telephone and face-to-face interviews with management, Senior Family Workers, Family Support Workers, and Chiefs
- . a two-day review workshop with the Board of Directors
- . participant observation by the reviewer in staff/management meetings and workshops, and Board meetings
- . mailed questionnaires to 25 service agencies in Kenora and Dryden
- . document analysis of Board minutes from the beginning of O.T.F.S. to the present
- . review of O.T.F.S. policy and procedures manual
- . data feedback workshops: review of findings with Board and staff

Preparation for the review began in July, 1988 with the drafting of questionnaires and meetings with O.T.F.S. Board and management. The collection of information began

officially in January, 1988 and ended in May, 1988.

The O.T.F.S. review process was accountable to the Board of Directors through an Organizational Review Sub-Committee, consisting of Linda Wasaykeesick, John Kooshet, and Josephine Sandy. Liaison with the Committee took place through three meetings and individual telephone conversations.

### 3. Organization of Report

The organization of this report follows closely the original terms of references for the review. Subsections of each major section of the report are titled with the original review topic. At the beginning of each major section, a brief statement will be presented, summarizing O.T.F.S. original planning concerning that particular aspect of the organization. Hopefully, this will encourage readers to assess the review findings in comparison to O.T.F.S.' original plans. Within each section, "areas for improvement" will be identified. These recommendations are summarized in the last section of the report.

## 4. **DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Ojibway Tribal Family Services is a Native social service organization, serving fourteen Treaty 3 bands in the Kenora - Dryden area. O.T.F.S. began as a community-based response to the needs of people in the areas of family life and childcare.

Also, the organization began as a reaction to what were perceived as unwarranted intrusions by provincial child welfare authorities. O.T.F.S.' general mission is to strengthen the quality of family and community life so that children have an opportunity for physical and mental growth in a supportive environment. As well, through early preventative intervention, O.T.F.S. aims to reduce the risk of family break-up, whether through marital separation or intervention by child welfare authorities.

Ojibway Tribal Family Services' goal is to provide support services to families and children who are members of their respective communities by:

- (i) Strengthening families rather than removing children from their families during times of crisis.
- (ii) Identifying children in care of other agencies, institutions and authorities and facilitating the return of these children to their families in their respective communities.
- (iii) Initiating community education and support programs to prevent the removal of children from their families and home communities.

- (iv) Providing outreach services to band members of the fourteen identified reserves.

O.T.F.S. pursues these objectives with services, a service philosophy and an organizational structure known as the "O.T.F.S. Family Support Model". This report will provide details of this model at the beginning of each section as comparative background to the information in each section. Briefly, O.T.F.S. provides a range of family support, primary prevention and repatriation services, using local band staff and volunteers. The services within each band aim to address the problems and needs of each community, while remaining compatible with local traditions, customs and customary care practices.

O.T.F.S. aims to mobilize local community resources to fulfill its service objectives. Those providing these services are Native band members of the fourteen communities, including O.T.F.S. locally hired staff (Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers), volunteers and other Band staff. In principle, O.T.F.S. aims for an integration of its family support services with other local services, including alcohol counselling (N.N.A.D.A.P.), health care (C.H.R.), school counselling and the like. Although O.T.F.S. prefers using local human resources in a "natural support network", non-community professional agencies and private practitioners are also used for special needs.

The organizational structure supporting these services is a blend of centralized and decentralized policy-making, decision-making and supervision. These functions are conducted in different ways by local Family Support Committees, a Board of Directors, Senior Family Workers and a management team. On paper, (but less active than other elements of the organizational structure), is a Board of Governors (Chiefs) and a Council of Elders.

A number of important values and principles provide direction to the structures and activities in the family support model; these will be described throughout the report in the appropriate sections. Perhaps the strongest value, though, is the ideal of self-government or self-determination. Ojibway Tribal Family Services, as a service system, is an example of self-government in the service sector. Hopefully, an understanding of the organizational strengths and weaknesses described in this report will contribute to the larger self-governing process.

O.T.F.S.' first two years has combined service and organizational development with actual service. Unfortunately, the tremendous need for immediate service combined with numerous personnel crises has prevented the kind of careful development work that was originally envisioned. Much of O.T.F.S.' work has responded to crises, at the expense of medium or long-range planning. This, of course, is not unusual for service organizations.

Despite constantly responding to crises, O.T.F.S. has not stood still. It has incorporated the local staff of two programs - The Native Prevention Program and The

National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (N.N.A.D.A.P.) - into its administration. It has added a suicide prevention mental health program, and has provided a sexual abuse workshop. To respond to the staff developmental needs of the organization, fifteen workshops were held during the two year period, followed by resource development (eg.service guides) to aid service and organizational practice.

## **PART B      PROGRESS IN ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS**

In this section, O.T.F.S.' progress towards goal achievement is reviewed. A distinction is made between "developmental goals" and "service goals". Developmental goals are short-run goals involving the creation of an appropriate organizational structure, staff capacity and community support. Service goals are those ultimate changes guiding the organization as a whole, and for which the organization came into being. Service goals are listed in Section A.

### **1.      Developmental goals**

During its first two years of operation O.T.F.S. pursued a number of activities, designed to help create a viable organization. These developmental goals were not written explicitly in a planning document, although they were implicit in early proposals. Such goals were also mentioned frequently by management in everyday conversation and staff meetings. The developmental goals are as follows:

- promotion: the introduction of O.T.F.S. to the general public, the local communities, and other community agencies
- organizational development: the establishment of the appropriate organizational support structures for O.T.F.S. services, including: staff positions, management positions and structures, Family Support Communities, a Board of Directors, a Board of Governors, a Council of Elders, etc.
- the establishment of resource teams within each local community: following the principle of local integrated services, resource teams would include coordination of service effort by all Band personnel, including O.T.F.S. staff, and Family Support Committees
- the establishment of working relationships with non-reserve community agencies and private practitioners
- staffing: the hiring of native staff, primarily from the fourteen communities and/or the Kenora/Dryden area
- training: orientation, job training, networking, skills and knowledge development for the management, staff Family Support Committees and Board of Directors
- resource development: the development of all material and

administrative resources necessary for the support of service and organizational activities (eg. office space, administrative and service forms, service guides, computer facilities, etc.)

- management information system: the organizational mechanisms and arrangements to aid management's information gathering, monitoring and control of the human and financial resources
- the development of policies and procedures: the creation of central and band guidelines and regulations for the enactment of service and organizational activities
- the elaboration of the service philosophy and practice statements

Because this review is primarily an assessment of O.T.F.S.' development to date, these "development goals" receive particular attention throughout this report. In essence, the report describes how far O.T.F.S. has come in realizing its developmental goals, and makes recommendations for further work. Before that, however, a few summary remarks are warranted. First: generally, O.T.F.S. has made a reasonably good start towards realizing its development goals. For example, O.T.F.S. has been well promoted during the first two years, such that most band members and service agencies in Kenora and Dryden are aware of the organization. However, in some developmental aspects - eg. the development of policies and procedures, the implementation of a workable management information system, and supervisory mechanisms - the organization still has considerable room for development.

Secondly, in this reviewer's opinion, O.T.F.S. has suffered from the lack of a clear development plan in which development goals, priorities, implementation strategies, a time framework, and development resources were clearly identified. In general, O.T.F.S.' long range planning functions could be greatly improved. Thirdly, O.T.F.S. became quickly involved in service delivery, perhaps at the expense of careful planning and development work. This is understandable, given the pressing problems facing parents and children, and the strong commitment and drive by all O.T.F.S. leaders to begin the change process. Finally, after two years of growth, the staff, management and Board are in an excellent position to review how far they have come, and where they now need to go. The growing pains have been experienced, the difficulties are clear. In some cases, dilemmas and choices for the future must be faced. The time has come for halting program expansion, reflecting on all learnings, and carefully planning the future.

## 2. SERVICE GOALS

In its pre-operational phase, O.T.F.S. identified four general goals. These are stated in

section "A". The aim of this section is to summarize O.T.F.S.' activities within each goal category. The title of each section states the service goal. Sub-section (r) makes recommendations for converting each goal into more concrete "statements of objectives", so that future evaluations can assess O.T.F.S.' actual impact on families and communities. can be planned.

**(1) Strengthening families and avoiding the removal of children from their families during times of crises (Goal 1)**

In some sense, O.T.F.S. came into being in response to the practice of apprehending children, and placing them in off-reserve foster or adoption homes. O.T.F.S. believes that removing children from their families and communities is an inappropriate response to family problems, and is contrary to the Indian way. Further, placement in non-Native homes denies children their Native culture, and is seen as a form of "cultural genocide." For O.T.F.S., a better solution is to find help before children are at risk, mobilize the extended family or other parts of the community, and give service priority to strengthening the family and its parental functions.

Because this organizational review purposely concentrates on "development" rather than "impact", no information was gathered on whether or not families have been strengthened as a result of O.T.F.S.' services. However, information was gathered on whether or not kids with problem families are being handled differently. Conclusions were drawn from legal information on the number of children in care, the number of new apprehensions and the number of new Society and Crown Wardships. This information, based on O.T.F.S. in-house statistics, and key informant impressions, suggests that:

- . the number of children in care has steadily decreased since O.T.F.S. came into being
- . the number of new apprehensions has decreased
- . the number of new Society and Crown Wardships has decreased

This information is used to suggest trends, and is not offered as statistical evidence for the impact of O.T.F.S. Even if "before and after" O.T.F.S. statistics were available, there is always a possibility that other factors explain the trends (eg. changes in C.A.S. policies and practice). Nevertheless, when combined with other information on O.T.F.S. practice this information suggests that "something is happening" which is consistent with one O.T.F.S. goal. Thus: information from legal informants and O.T.F.S. record-keeping suggests that children are not being taken away from their families in the same absolute numbers as before O.T.F.S. came into existence. We now turn to the question of what is happening to kids with family problems.

### **Customary care placements**

In cases where family problems weaken the parenting function, O.T.F.S. service policy

is to seek alternative living arrangements for the child while parents receive help. Following the native ideal of "customary care", staff are expected to make such arrangements primarily with members of the child's extended family. According to O.T.F.S. policy, such arrangements should be made on a volunteer basis, with full parental agreement. The extent to which this actually happens in practice is another indirect measure of steps towards O.T.F.S.' goal achievement.

Interviews with Family Support Workers and Senior Family Workers indicates that the practice of involving relatives in the lives of troubled families, although not without its practical difficulties is well entrenched in service practice.

- . at the time of interviews, staff conservatively identified approximately 150 cases in which children were helped to find temporary living arrangements at times of parental crisis; this involved 257 children
- . in most cases, members of the extended family agreed to participate in these arrangements
- . O.T.F.S. staff have been quite successful in making temporary arrangements in the child's home community; an estimated 85% of the temporary placement cases involved on-reserve families

Additional information on customary care practices is provided later. Once again, this information suggests that practices are in place which are consistent with the O.T.F.S. goal of strengthening parents while keeping families together.

**(II) The identification of children in care of other agencies, institutions and authorities and facilitating the return of these children to their families in their respective communities (goal ii)**

This goal is primarily a statement guiding O.T.F.S. efforts to repatriate children placed in off-reserve families. Considerable development work was needed to support these activities; this was accomplished in the form of training workshops and practice guidelines.

What has O.T.F.S. accomplished in its repatriation efforts? Interviews with staff reveal that repatriation has not happened on all reserves. Some staff (eg. the former Senior Family Workers at Lac Seul Reserve) have been heavily involved; others have completed no repatriation work and know very little about it. To summarize:

- . only three reserves are heavily involved in repatriation processes; the others report no cases in progress.
- . Family Support Workers report 16 repatriation cases in progress; these are at various stages (eg. inquiry, home-finding, information-gathering, completion)



Senior Family Workers (particularly Lac Seul) are most heavily involved.

Repatriation work is a long, tedious, time-consuming process, involving considerable travel and meetings. Within the first year, O.T.F.S. quickly learned how costly repatriation could be (eg. one particular case was estimated at \$20,000!). As well, negative publicity in other Native communities has cautioned the staff about repatriation difficulties, particularly in re-integrating the child in his/her new community. For these reasons, O.T.F.S. has given lower priority to this service during the second and third years, and has not encouraged repatriation out-reach work.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. O.T.F.S. Board and management should re-assess the place of repatriation in its over-all service objectives and practices. Careful consideration should be given to the previous costs of repatriation, and whether such costs could be considerably reduced in future work.
2. Should O.T.F.S. consider curtailing its involvement in repatriation work, close consultation should be done with Lac Seul, and any other reserves where repatriation may be a high priority.
3. Should some bands desire to continue their repatriation process, O.T.F.S. could help them access repatriation funds on a case-by-case planning basis, much the same as Awasis. In addition, O.T.F.S. could assist such bands by providing existing resource materials and local training.

For additional information on the difficulties associated with repatriation practice, see Section C. For a detailed practice statement on repatriation, see Family Support Service Guide, pg.SR/1.

### **(III) Provision of support services to strengthen families (goal iii)**

As indicated earlier, O.T.F.S.' service philosophy specifies the provision of a range of supportive services to needy families after problems have already surfaced. In addition, O.T.F.S. aims to provide a range of primary prevention services to strengthen communities, parents and children in order to keep problems from occurring. The extent to which these services has begun during the first two years is the subject of this sub-section. Again, we have no data which measures the results of these activities in terms of producing stronger communities and families. The aim is to document which practices have started.

### **Direct services to families**

Interviews with family support staff indicate that all staff have some direct service contacts with troubled families, providing either individual or marital counselling. Counselling is either professional (i.e. conducted by Senior Family Workers with several years of training and experience working with families) or lay counselling (counselling provided by Family Support Workers with minimal training or experience). O.T.F.S.' efforts to strengthen families often requires that staff act as "resource brokers" in which parents are helped to obtain the appropriate kind of help for their problems. Interviews revealed that in most cases families are helped to find...

- . specialized counselling
- . alcohol treatment
- . medical help
- . educational advice
- . transportation
- . employment counselling
- . legal assistance

Resources to help families are usually found within the reserve communities (see Section C), but also are located in off-reserve agencies. Thus, making referrals is an important function for O.T.F.S. staff in their efforts to strengthen families.

- . A conservatively estimated eighty-three children and parents have been referred to non-reserve agencies and professionals from staff across the fourteen reserves; this estimate does not include referrals made by Senior Family Workers.
- . Referrals are made primarily to alcohol treatment centres or the Infant Development Centre. Referrals are also made to hospitals, educational programs, and private professionals.

An expanded description and analysis of O.T.F.S.' involvement with outside agencies is contained in Section F.

### **Material assistance**

Strengthening of families often requires more than services designed to improve family functioning and parenting. Basic family needs, such as housing, clothing and food are frequently intermeshed with other difficulties. O.T.F.S. has allocated many thousands of dollars since its beginning to meet these basic needs, an allocation requiring funds from other budget categories. The material needs associated with family support were envisioned in early O.T.F.S. planning, but not nearly to the level of spending that has occurred.

In assessing O.T.F.S.' progress towards its goals, two important implications of the large expenditures for meeting material needs need to be clearly identified:

- . First, much of the finances ear-marked for O.T.F.S.' early development were re-allocated to service costs. The training of management, Board, and Family Support Committees suffered badly as a result of these decisions,

leading directly to difficulties described later in this report.

- Second, the spending of money on food, clothing and housing has led many people within the organization to see O.T.F.S. as moving towards a "welfare agency" model, and away from the "family support model" originally envisioned.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Board of Directors and management should re-affirm O.T.F.S.' commitment to training and development activities as originally planned.
2. The Board and management should assess whether O.T.F.S. should continue its emphasis on material support as part of the family support models.
3. Since some form and level of material support will likely be needed, it is recommended that a clear financial policy on this matter be established, and detailed monitoring be carried out for a six month period. Such monitoring would help the Board "fine-tune" and confirm the new policy.

### 3. Community education and other preventative measures (goal iii)

The goal statements on page 4 also identifies community education and other primary prevention activities as important ways of strengthening families. Although primary prevention has not received high priority attention in staff orientation and training, O.T.F.S. has made a surprisingly good start in mounting preventative activities of the community level. In this section, a listing of these activities will be provided; in Section C we look more closely at the process and difficulties of doing primary prevention work. Thus far, primary prevention activities have involved:

- cultural programs: eg., young people's pow wow groups, fund-raising for cultural awareness activities, girls clubs, etc.
- social and recreational activities: sports, children's socials and outings, adult socials, etc.
- special needs programs and activities: adolescent peer counselling, alcohol and drug abuse workshops, single parents groups, general parenting skills, etc.

Primary prevention activities have not been developed on all reserves, and more emphasis has been given to social and recreational activities than cultural programs or special needs activities.

Centrally, O.T.F.S. management has consistently emphasized the development of pride and identity through Native cultural awareness as one of many prevention activities. Cultural awareness has been encouraged in a number of ways, but perhaps most dramatically during an Elders' workshop and the hiring of an elder as a part-time

resource person. Additional details on these and other events are provided in Section C.

**(IV) The provision of outreach services to band members (Goal iv)**

O.T.F.S.' fourth service goal statement implies that delivery of services should be done within the reserve communities. Unlike more centralized institutions, those in need have better access to sources of help, and presumably the help is suitable to the need. As well, the outreach principle implies that the nature and organization of the services meet the high priority needs and are compatible with the community as a whole. Finally, outreach suggests that staff do not passively wait for "clients" to seek services, but in fact alertly identify potential problem areas or cases and intervene before problems become more serious.

**To what extent has O.T.F.S. as an organization organized itself to provide outreach services?** Several pieces of information indicate that O.T.F.S. is indeed providing outreach services and will continue to do so.

- O.T.F.S.' personnel, including staff, Board and volunteers are predominantly community members:
  - each community delegates a member to the Board
  - all Family Support Workers are hired at the community level, and are Band members living on reserve
  - Family Support Committees are local volunteers
- service delivery and service decisions are carried out locally; service is monitored through the supervision by the local Family Support Committees and the Coordinator of Social Services
- the outreach services approach is for the most part supported by management practice: management consistently encourages staff and volunteers to look to themselves and their own local resources for decision-making, problem-solving and resource support

In addition to O.T.F.S.' organizational support for outreach, other evidence indicates that community members as O.T.F.S. staff have been accepted and legitimized by other community members.

- when asked whether community members would turn to O.T.F.S. for help, well over two-thirds of staff replied that "almost all" or "many" people would do so
- when asked how people usually receive services from O.T.F.S. (self-referral, referral from other Band staff or O.T.F.S.) staff-initiated contacts were most frequently mentioned

Such information strongly suggests that O.T.F.S. is well on its way to having a real presence and legitimacy in most communities. Without this legitimacy, staff would be hard-pressed to provide successful outreach services. Although there are difficulties

(see Section C), local Band members as O.T.F.S. staff seem to have community support for further outreach work.

### **Reformation of Service Goals**

The O.T.F.S. operational goals listed in section A have served O.T.F.S. well. They have provided direction to the organization during its formative years, and have helped O.T.F.S. establish its "identity" in the community at large. However these goals do not specify the anticipated changes in the client population, something which service goals should do. Therefore it is recommended that O.T.F.S. Board and management collaborate to re-state its goals and objectives. This re-statement should follow these guidelines:

1. What are you trying to do with your clients and communities?
2. If you are successful, how will your clients and communities be different after having received services from O.T.F.S.?
3. What kinds of changes do you want to see in your clients and communities?
4. What would be seen in the clients and communities to let you know that changes have occurred?

Note that service goals following these guidelines would emphasize anticipated changes in clients and communities, rather than how these changes will be produced. O.T.F.S.' existing goals tend to emphasize "how?" rather than "what?" Finally, by reformulating goals and objectives in this way, O.T.F.S. will be in a better position to study its actual impact on its target population.

### **PART C IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY SUPPORT MODEL**

The last section concentrated on identifying and assessing progress on O.T.F.S.' service goals. The last part of that section identified service activities in pursuit of service goals, as these were specified in O.T.F.S. goal statements. The section concluded with a recommendation that O.T.F.S., to assist its planning and service evaluation process, reformulate it's goals to include anticipated community changes.

In this section we take a closer, more detailed look at O.T.F.S. services, including the manner in which staff provides these services. The aim is to assess how closely services are conducted according to the ideas specified in the "Family Support Model". More importantly, we identify some of the difficulties experienced in providing family support, and how these difficulties might be overcome.

The recommendations for improving the service delivery process come from both staff and the reviewer. Three specific review questions guide the analysis in Part C:

1. Has O.T.F.S. begun to provide or facilitate the kinds of family support

services specified in the "family support model?"(Section 1)

2. Are the family support services being carried out according to the principles identified in initial planning?(Section 2)
3. How could O.T.F.S. improve upon its service delivery?(throughout)

### 1. **The delivery of family support services**

Family support, according to O.T.F.S.' mandate, is a prevention service function. Although this terminology was not used in the initial planning, prevention can be divided into three categories: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

- primary prevention aims to help families avoid high risk, child placement or harmful behavior by increasing family resources and coping capacity and by reducing stress on the family.
- secondary prevention aims to uncover cases of child maltreatment and family dysfunctioning in order to provide the social supports, direct assistance and treatment required to end the dysfunction and prevent a long-term break-down in the family.
- tertiary treatment aims at temporarily separating the child from the troubled parents for the child's safety, and providing support and resources to strengthen the family for eventual return of the child.

To fulfill its prevention mandate, the O.T.F.S. family support model specifies eight service activities:

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| · community education   | · family counselling |
| · repatriation          | · short-term care    |
| · extra-parental care   | · repatriation       |
| · special needs support | · advocacy           |

In some cases staff provide direct service to clients; in other instances workers are resource brokers in the sense of helping families access either informal community help or professional service. In the case of community education, staff are educators, program developers and mobilizers of other educational resources.

We now turn to the question of whether O.T.F.S. actually provides the kinds of services that are specified "on paper".

(a) **Community education and other primary prevention activities**

In the O.T.F.S. family support model community education is a primary prevention activity designed to strengthen communities and families so that children have opportunities for safe and healthy development. Beyond some brief references, the specific objectives and nature of community education are not spelled out in detail. However, community education, as discussed in training workshops resource materials, and as practiced so far, indicates some very clear patterns.

Interviews with staff and observations indicate that community education has so far consisted of three identifiable activities: cultural awareness, special needs learning, and community awareness of O.T.F.S.

**Cultural awareness activities** are designed to make Indian people aware of their cultural heritage and instill in them a sense of pride in "who they are" and "where they have come from". An important assumption is that this knowledge and ethnic pride will strengthen self-esteem in order to help individuals live a better life and avoid many of the problems facing Native people. Elders consistently emphasize the positives of culture as a substitution for dwelling on "problems."

Interviews indicate that slightly over one-half of staff have helped with or organized cultural activities on their reserves, or have helped others (eg. seniors) access off-reserve cultural events, such as pow wows or cultural centre activities. Asked to describe such events, staff included a broad range of activities, including:

- . the use of elders in workshops and meetings
- . ladies nights and girls clubs
- . pow wow organizing and activities
- . recreational organizing
- . fund raising for cultural activities
- . children's social and recreational activities
- . sports activities

Interviews also indicate that although cultural awareness initiatives have been on-going on most reserves in the O.T.F.S. jurisdiction, three communities do not report many cultural activities. It is interesting that "sports and recreation" has been included by some as a cultural activity. Future planning on this topic might address the meaning of cultural awareness, what are the anticipated results, and what specific activities are needed.

**Elders'** involvement in cultural activities during the first two years deserves special

mention. Their contribution to cultural awareness has been consistent, and generally appreciated. To encourage cultural awareness they have been involved in individualized spiritual guidance, local and central workshops, and staff or Board meetings. Always, their message expresses the details and values of traditional practices and the implication for modern living. Further details on elders' special roles in O.T.F.S. are provided later.

**Special needs prevention programs** and activities aim to develop knowledge and skills among specific groups, such as teenagers, single parents or those abusing alcohol. The aim of such activities is to create the necessary strengths for people to be better parents, handle their problems or avoid the serious problems affecting Native people.

Interviews reveal that planning or conducting special needs educational activities have not received as much attention from staff as has cultural awareness activities. Under one-half of Family Support Workers report organizing a special needs program or group. One-half of reserves have not provided any special needs programs involving current O.T.F.S. staff. One word of caution: previous staff on those reserves may have conducted such activities.

Specific special needs activities reported include:

- . special problem workshops: alcohol, drugs, sexual abuse, sniffing
- . programs for adolescents: early relationships, youth awareness, recreation
- . single parents group
- . parenting skills workshops
- . others: senior citizens craft groups, home care for fetal alcohol syndrome babies

The lack of special needs programs on many reserves cannot be explained by a perceived lack of need. Twenty of twenty-five workers interviewed believed that the following special needs activities are needed in their communities:

- . young people's groups (eg. drop-in centres, peer counselling, young offenders' programs)
- . alcohol and drug abuse programs
- . single parent groups
- . others: literacy program, kids activities, teenage pregnancy groups, suicide prevention, programs for the handicapped, programs for young married people, native language training and special education programs



Other primary prevention activities: the development of social and recreational activities as a special focus

Many of the difficulties facing people on the fourteen reserves (eg. alcohol abuse, gas and glue sniffing and other teenage problems) are attributed to boredom. In response, O.T.F.S. locally and centrally has identified social and recreational programming as a major service initiative. To date, twenty of twenty-five Family Support Workers have organized or helped with a recreational activity as part of their job. Only two reserves reported no recreational activities. Specific kinds of social or recreational activities include:

- . sports (eg. baseball, swimming, hockey)
- . children's social and outings
- . organizing special holiday parties
- . winter carnivals
- . fund raising for social and recreational activities
- . ladies clubs and women's groups
- . adult socials
- . dances
- . other activities: homemakers' club, pow wows, pool hall, sewing club, fitness program, survival club, community field day and social committees

What have been the greatest challenges or difficulties in planning and conducting community education activities? Interviews with Senior Family Workers, Family Support Workers and management indicate a strong commitment to the continuation of community education and other primary prevention activities. However, staff and management have faced some clear barriers in their efforts so far including...

- . a lack of facilities and equipment for prevention equipment
- . a lack of financial resources
- . the difficulty of encouraging community involvement in volunteer organizing and general participation
- . inadequate leadership and organizational skills
- . differences of opinion within some communities concerning the importance of native cultural awareness and spirituality
- . the pressures, particularly among Senior Family Workers, to respond to family crises at the expense of coaching and participation in primary prevention activities

It is not surprising that these challenges and barriers have been experienced. First, O.T.F.S.' original budget emphasized family support in the service sense, and made little allowance for primary prevention facilities and resources. Secondly, although developments are occurring, Bands lack resources to support primary prevention activities for strengthening families. Thirdly, the O.T.F.S. training program has not used its resources to train staff in those knowledge and skills needed for primary prevention. Tremendous pressures existed to prepare staff for responding to immediate family problems and crises. At best, staff and Family Support Committees were given a brief introduction to O.T.F.S. community education goals and program development. The concept of "prevention" has not yet been elaborated; nor have the activities associated with each category of prevention been reviewed. Finally, the internal community attitude differences toward traditional native culture is also understandable. Among Band members, there are diverse religious backgrounds, acculturation experiences (eg. urban backgrounds, migratory experiences) and an inclination towards professional social work and clinical (rather than traditional) practice by some formally educated individuals. There are other reason of course, but the main point is that some indifference towards renewing the cultural heritage should be seen as a normal rather than "unhealthy" response in modern native communities. The energy and "debate" created from these differences could be a solid basis for healthy participation and community-building. Such processes, themselves, will likely emerge as important primary prevention activities.

### **(b) Counselling**

In the O.T.F.S. family support model, counselling represents an important direct service to families, marital pairs and individuals. Counselling is done either by trained experienced counsellors (eg. some Senior Family Workers), professionals in non-community settings, or by "lay" members of the community (eg. most Family Support Workers, elders or other Board members). Although many people doing counselling through O.T.F.S. do not possess formal training, some workshops have trained in such basic skills as "effective listening." Also, the O.T.F.S. model assumes that the natural communication of a concerned community member speaking Ojibway is a valuable source of help.

Interviews with staff indicate that counselling is well entrenched in the O.T.F.S. service system.

- most Family Support Workers and Seniors spend the largest percentage of their time (between 50-60%) doing direct counselling work with clients

Many family work staff report tremendous difficulties counselling, particularly with very difficulty hard-core families. Such difficulties are the kinds normally faced by professional counsellors. Struggling with resistant clients is one of the most troublesome sources of job stress reported by staff. Counselling difficulties come from...

- . the client's lack of understanding of his/her problem and/or refusal to acknowledge problems as problems
- . an acknowledgement of their troublesome behavior (eg. excessive drinking), but a refusal to change
- . the client's inability to recognize how their behavior affects his/her family
- . blaming others for problems
- . a reluctance to talk or listen
- . manipulation of the worker

These are standard problems, often requiring advanced skills and experience in counselling. O.T.F.S. is preparing to provide more in-service family work training, and is arranging a certificate course in family counselling (See Section G). However, it is also necessary that O.T.F.S. make a clearer distinction between the roles of the professional counsellor and what we have called the "natural lay helper". Problems and counselling needs are different for families, and the appropriate staff must be assigned at the appropriate times. And, the time for referrals to clinical counsellors must also be clear. All of these steps, plus good in-service training will avoid instances of untrained staff thinking they must do professional counselling.

### **In-home care**

The O.T.F.S. family support model recognizes that families often benefit from assistance to parents within the home. This can be done without the necessity of arranging for temporary living arrangements for children. Such "in-home care" can be at a time of illness or crisis, but also can be done for single mothers needing assistance or skill training. Whatever the particular need, O.T.F.S. planners envisioned the use of natural community helpers or even paid workers in this capacity.

Interviews indicate that providing for in-home community support has often been used as a service option, and has occupied a comparatively large percentage of staff time.

- . On average, staff spend about 9% of their time doing such work; after counselling and office administration this represents one of the more frequent staff activities

Limited resources has not permitted the community-based training of in-home helpers, as originally envisioned by O.T.F.S. planners. As in other service activities, the "common sense" of natural community care-givers has been encouraged. Future planning, however, should give some consideration to the preparation of in-home care providers, even if such preparation is quite basic. Future training should also address the specific roles of staff in selecting, supporting and following-up on in-home help.

### **Short-term care**

"Short-term care" for families in need is another important component of the O.T.F.S. family support service model. In these instances, children are given temporary living arrangements at times of crises or parental absence. Although no specific time limit has been specified, short-term care is deemed useful in those family situations of more prolonged illness, parental absence for treatment, employment-seeking, training, etc. Again, short-term placements draw upon relatives, friends or other natural community help.

Interviews indicate that staff frequently seek alternative living arrangements for children on a short term basis. An estimated 60% of O.T.F.S.' temporary placements are overnight or for a few days. Interviews also indicate, however, that certain difficulties exist with this particular service option:

- some community residents abuse the system, often using O.T.F.S. to find free baby-sitting while parents party or leave the community
- short term placements may not be used in conjunction with a proper service plan in which the root cause of the need is assessed and follow-up services are provided
- short-term placements are often last minutes demands by difficult people, leaving workers scrambling for suitable arrangements

The dependency on O.T.F.S. by some seriously troubled families must be avoided. This is particularly true if evidence indicates that manipulation of staff prolongs or sustains the problem behavior. As well, short term living arrangements should be an integral part of a service plan. In those instances where persistent problems create the need for placements, these problems should be understood. Parents should be aware that short-term placements are not a child care or baby-sitting service, but are part of a longer term program for change.

### **Long term care**

Temporary care arrangements may also last for a much longer period of time than those described above. Parents may be sick on a longer term basis or involved in an extensive treatment or rehabilitation process. On, by necessity, they may have secured work which takes them from the reserve indefinitely. Whatever the case...

- staff estimate that children are placed for a week or more in about 42% of placements

In the cases of both short-and long-term temporary placements, Family Support Workers are expected to do follow-up with the children and both families. Interviews confirmed that this happens on an average of one or two times per placement. These follow-up visits, true to the concept of "natural care", are quite informal - involving

mainly chatting, arranging for food and clothing, and inquiring after the children. In some cases staff look for specific problems in the arrangements and offer counselling.

All in all, a conservatively estimated 122 homes have been used in short - and long-term placements. The criteria for selecting these homes, and general difficulties in arranging temporary placements will be discussed in the section on "customary care".

### **Making arrangements for special needs services**

As indicated, the spirit of O.T.F.S.' family support service model is one of energizing the natural sources of community care in aid of troubled families. To supplement this, O.T.F.S. recognizes that some families need specialized professional services that are unavailable on reserve or at central O.T.F.S. office. Such services might involve clinical therapy, speech therapy, medical attention, financial consultation and the like. To what extent do O.T.F.S. staff make such referrals?

- . Referrals are made primarily to alcohol treatment centres, or the Infant Development Centre for counselling. Referrals are also made to hospitals, educational programs, and private professionals.
- . Approximately three-quarters of Family Support Workers report having received advice from other professionals, particularly school authorities, police, social workers, Infant Development Centre staff, and alcohol treatment agency staff.
- . Slightly under one-half of staff have worked with a Consulting Psychologist, concerning approximately 35 different cases.
- . Over three-quarters of the staff have used the services of the O.T.F.S. legal advisor, concerning an estimated seventy-one different cases.

The results of interviews with O.T.F.S. staff, and community agency questionnaires, suggest that the referral process and liaison between agencies is going reasonably well, with some definite areas for improvement. For example:

- . Most (almost 90%) Family Support Workers expressed satisfaction with the services provided by off-reserve referral agencies, although several identified areas for improvement with some agencies.
- . Although one-third of the community agency staff indicated that O.T.F.S. were "effective" in their tasks in relation to the agency, the remainder viewed the staff as ineffective in certain areas.
- . Two-thirds of Family Support Workers are satisfied with the services of O.T.F.S.' legal advisor and consulting psychologist.

Depending on whose view-point is taken, O.T.F.S.' or community agency staff, the referral and follow-up processes are either "good" or "could be improved!" The details

concerning the quality of these arrangements, and recommendations, are included in Section F. At this point, it is enough to say that O.T.F.S. and many community agencies may have different expectations and standards concerning working relations. Since O.T.F.S. does depend on non-reserve agencies and professionals, improving these relationships will benefit parents and children.

### **Advocacy**

O.T.F.S. staff do more than simply refer clients to outside agents and institutions. As communicated during orientation workshops and the service guide...

"O.T.F.S. family support staff [are expected to] advocate on behalf of families and individuals in their contacts with courts, social agencies and other institutions (eg. hospitals, police, schools). Advocacy involves making sure that clients receive the best and most appropriate service or attention, and that they are treated fairly. It involves making sure that clients interests are well represented to other agencies. O.T.F.S. advocacy service will also help client families become their own best advocates"  
(O.T.F.S. Family Support Service Guides, pg. ss/2)

By their own estimation, staff average slightly over a day a month acting as advocates for families. If preparing for and attending court, meetings with C.A.S. staff, and arranging for and meeting professionals, were added - this estimation would increase to about four days a month.

Court participation with clients is a good example of advocacy, and O.T.F.S. staff spend on average slightly over one day per month preparing for and attending court. Some staff, representing the larger, more troubled reserves, spend much longer. As well, O.T.F.S. hired their own Family Court Worker to facilitate the necessary organizational arrangements, planning and record-keeping. This position is contractual and, pending budget availability, is subject to review.

As will be evident in Section F, staff experience some difficulties doing advocacy work. The work often requires translation and interpretation abilities, and the time and patience to transport clients long distances. As well, advocacy work requires a certain tough-minded style which some staff lack when dealing with the white establishment. On the other hand, some advocacy work, particularly by Senior Family Workers has created respect in the minds of community agency staff.

Court work presents the most serious challenges for staff advocacy. Interviews indicated that staff have the most difficulty ...

- preparing families
- interpreting
- writing up a Family
- explaining decisions that go against their clients
- supporting the client after court

### Support Plan

Some staff feel intimidated by court, experiencing particular nervousness around C.A.S. staff. Others feel limited in their knowledge of the Child Welfare Act, and specific court procedures. Finally, there were expressions of frustration at the time wasted in travel to court, constant adjournments and lawyers not showing up.

Court-related stress for Native people is not surprising, particularly in relation to the child protection legal process. Most staff have been personally affected by some legal decision. **In the case of O.T.F.S. the preparation for court work has been inadequate so far. Future planning should build in training opportunities for learning and practice in court environments.**  
in Part C.

O.T.F.S. direct service to families is reflected in the amount of time Family Support Workers spend in one-to-one or marital counselling.

- . On average, staff report a total of nearly 56 hours per month, or about one-third of their time in direct counselling and follow-up with families

Senior Family Workers also carry a heavy case load, often involving the more difficult cases. One Senior Worker, for example, formerly with the Addiction Research Foundation, takes on the more difficult alcohol abuse cases on his reserve. Another Senior Family Worker reports serious sexual abuse cases in her caseload, problems associated with grievance, as well as other difficult marital difficulties.

O.T.F.S. staff become involved with families largely as a result of crises or long standing difficulties which pose a threat to the parenting relationships. Staff largely attribute parenting problems to alcohol abuse which in turn are linked consistently to unemployment, financial difficulties, marital stress and boredom. A lack of parenting skills is viewed by many workers to act independently or in conjunction with alcohol abuse. These factors were identified repeatedly in interviews, training sessions and in private conversations with staff. Efforts to strengthen the family largely focus on establishing ties with the extended family and other community members, improving marital and parent-child communications, and finding alternative activities to alcohol consumption.

### Repatriation

O.T.F.S. repatriation services aim to re-establish ties between children, their families and the community. Of particular concern in the repatriation process are the children who were placed off-reserve as a result of previous child protection decisions. As indicated in Part B, O.T.F.S. engaged in several repatriation processes during the first two operational years, although few resulted in actual relocation of children to the reserve. Also, only three reserves were heavily involved in repatriation, although most were aware of this particular aspect of O.T.F.S. service.  
One of O.T.F.S.' most important accomplishments in this service area was the

development of a "practice statement" or repatriation service guidelines (O.T.F.S. Family Support Service Guide, pgs. SR/1 - SR/25). This practice statement resulted from a workshop in which Senior Family Workers and the O.T.F.S. legal advisor intensively examined the repatriation process as it had unfolded in two cases. The results of the workshop were documented by the O.T.F.S. Training Advisor and were written as a training and service resource.

The repatriation practice statement defines repatriation and indicates its importance for Native people. For practical purposes, a first draft statement of the repatriation tasks are identified, including: establishing community awareness, communicating with other agencies, identifying families and children, assessing the adoption circumstances, locating the child, first contacts, arranging for community visits, clarifying the child's legal status, gathering information on the child, facilitating child/family adjustments, identifying possible services for child and family, and the welcome home celebration. Following these tasks, the guideline identifies the human resources involved in the repatriation process and lists the various skills associated with repatriation work. The repatriation service guide is one of the few written descriptions of repatriation work and is a good example of what service staff can produce when they reflect upon their practice.

The repatriation work conducted by O.T.F.S. to date has faced some several challenges, making repatriation work a long, tedious and costly process. Staff interviews uncovered difficulties in ...

- obtaining information: from other agencies, locating the child
- dealing with the adjustment problems: culture shock, helping the child adjust to reserve life, dealing with the emotional problems of parents and children, helping parents and children adjust to one another
- finding appropriate resources: lack of funding for repatriation, lack of homes, lack of special needs services
- waiting time: for child to come to reserve; long legal process

The complexity and unpredictability of the repatriation process makes it quite costly. Because O.T.F.S.' budget would not support repatriation at the same level as in year one, the service received a lower priority in the second year. This policy change caused distress among staff whose reserves were interested in repatriation. **It is important that the repatriation service not remain in limbo. Efforts should be made to identify clear future policy, acceptable to all bands.**

## **2. Has O.T.F.S. provided service according to the principles of the family support model?**

O.T.F.S.' family support model does more than identify specific services for achieving its ends. Early planning and training identified specific principles for providing and



supporting families. These are as follows:

1. all services should mobilize or energize the community in the support of families and the care of children; the communities' informal "natural" sources of support should be used.
2. service decisions and practices should utilize the customary care traditions of family support and child-rearing, particularly as regards the important roles of the extended family.
3. services should be compatible with, and supported by Ojibway cultural traditions and local community practices; services should not be artificially imposed upon existing communities; in other words, family support should be an integral part of community life.
4. related to this, elders were identified as important human resources for family support, both at higher levels of guidance (eg. Council of Elders) and in specific support roles.
5. family support services should be integrated with other band services in a community-based resource network.
6. training and development is an important on-going requirement of family support in two ways:
  - keeping all human resources knowledgeable and skilled in all facets of family support work, and
  - doing the necessary community development work to keep each community aware of, cooperatives and supportive of O.T.F.S.

These six principles, along with the eight services discussed in the previous section form the service core of the O.T.F.S. family support model. We now turn to the question of the extent to which these principles have been reflected in O.T.F.S.' accomplishments to date.

### **The mobilization of local community support**

There is no doubt that O.T.F.S. has fostered a broad and deep involvement of each local community in family support work. Countless numbers of locally-hired O.T.F.S. staff, volunteers, band administration and service personnel have been involved. Staff interviews estimate that...

- . approximately fifty local people have worked or now work as front line Family Support Workers or Senior Family Workers
- . all but three reserves have mobilized Family Support Committees to make community-based decisions affecting families and children, and monitor the work of staff; those without official Committees have used other local people to fulfill similar functions; these local groups comprise well over 70 volunteers

- over two hundred people across the fourteen reserves have been used in other non-paid family support activities, including: taking children into their homes, direct emotional support and counselling, workshops, fund-raising and program participation

Through hiring, volunteerism, involving other band staff -OTFS has been highly successful in recruiting over three hundred people during its first two years. The real front line family supportive work has been done by paid and unpaid community members, assisted by small groups of central management, administrative staff and advisors.

Recruitment of human resources, however, does not tell the whole story of community mobilization for family support. Other mobilization processes are equally important: (a) training and orientation, (b) supervision and (c) maintenance. We will deal with the difficulties associated with these aspects of mobilization in later sections.

### **Customary care and the use of extended families**

The native principle of customary care specifies that the community at large shares responsibility with biological parents for the care and up-bringing of children. The spirit of this principle is reflected in the following quotations from O.T.F.S. literature:

"The development of our Indian family and child care system must be based on the following values

- To recognize and respect each reserve communities' responsibility for its own
- To recognize and respect each reserve communities' ability to determine the best interests of their children
- To recognize that traditional child-rearing is communal in nature
- To recognize the reality that the parents and relatives are responsible for their own children
- To recognize and reinforce the natural extended family support systems which every child is a part of...

It is the reserve communities' responsibility to ensure a healthy, supportive and stable living environment for all band families, including children and the elderly. Each reserve community has a responsibility with respect to...child care...child development...Indian identity"

(A Model of Family Support and Integrated Service Delivery, pgs. 13-16)

The main service implication of the customary care principle is that Indian people, particularly the extended family and other community members, should look after Indian children when their immediate parents are no longer able to do so. Accordingly, when children need to be placed outside of the home, O.T.F.S. policy specifies the following order of priority:

- . the immediate family, including adult siblings;
- . extended family, regardless of residence;
- . Indian home on- or off- reserve in the Treaty area which meets the child's needs with respect to his/her culture, language and identity;
- . if above resources are exhausted, other resources as approved by management may be used

(A Model of Family Support and Integrated Service Delivery, pg.20)

To assess the utilization of the customary care principle, Family Support Workers were asked who they turned to for help when children needed temporary placement. Interviews revealed that staff are usually able to find homes on the reserve, although not without some difficulty:

- . In most cases, children are temporarily placed with members of the extended family. Otherwise children are taken in by friends, O.T.F.S. staff, Family Support Committee members, Council members or elders.
- . In the few instances where children were placed outside of their home communities, homes on other O.T.F.S. or Treaty 3 reserves were found.

The end result of seeking alternative home arrangements is that O.T.F.S. has been quite successful in following the customary care principle and O.T.F.S. placement policy. But what about the process of finding such homes? Is it difficult or fairly easy to find support in these circumstances? Are any criteria used for selection, other than the policy guidelines?

Interviews with staff suggest that...

- . a majority of Family Support Workers (nearly 60%) do not find it easy to locate temporary homes on reserve
- . the reasons for this difficulty are:
  - partly because the money is inadequate
  - partly because of the fear of the children's natural parents
  - partly because there is not enough homes on the reserve with the necessary space, with available adults
  - partly because many families are not prepared to take babies or children with special needs

A few other important issues were raised concerning customary care placements, issues which strongly suggest the need for careful family work and possibly the addition of extra community resources.

- . Some parents, after temporarily taking children, expect to keep them permanently.

- . Giving excessive money to parents of temporary homes is believed to take responsibility away from the natural parents
- . Adequate family work is missing in some instances; this weakens the quality of long-term planning, an essential part of customary care placements
- . After the initial crisis and temporary placement, the original parents often do not want to talk about the problem further or develop a family support plan

The difficulties associated with customary care placements can be attributed to many possible factors:

- the lingering expectation to receive top payments for child care
- the lack of "customary care attitudes" in the potential population of care-givers
- insufficient training on the subject of temporary placements.

**Until some of these problems are sorted out, at least one facility on every reserve is needed to accommodate children when no community homes are available on a natural basis.** Such resources could be additions to existing homes, or else a separate building which could also house the O.T.F.S. staff.

The financial difficulties associated with customary care placement will be difficult to solve. **Part of the difficulty is that the Children-Out-Of-Parental-Home Program is insufficiently used**, even though it is a legitimate source of funds for voluntary placements. O.T.F.S. management and Board should examine their financial policy in this area and develop clear guidelines and assumptions concerning the level of payments to temporary placements. Also, Family Support Workers should once again be trained to utilize the C.O.P.H. program. Welfare Administrators should also receive the necessary training.

**Perhaps the most serious problem associated with customary care is that many parents are not agreeable to such placements -an estimated 50% on one reserve.** The problem often arises a day or so after a child has been placed and the parents want their children returned. The consensual basis of temporary care breaks down in these instances, leaving staff with the task of influencing the parents (eg. invoking the possibility of C.A.S. intervention) or mobilizing community pressures, sometimes through Chief and Council. Such options have been difficult for staff to do, particularly on reserves where Family Support Committees are weak, or where Chiefs are not actively supportive of O.T.F.S. staff. The closeness of relationships on O.T.F.S. reserves combined with community politics also may complicate the attempts of staff to maintain customary placements with resistive parents. In these difficult situations the efforts of staff must be supported by the community, through the active involvements of respected and influential community members.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **O.T.F.S. Board members should encourage their individual Bands to develop local policies for dealing specifically with resistive families. Such policies should identify the kinds of back-up support that Family Support Staff can expect in such cases.**
2. **Family Support staff should receive specific training in the skills necessary for conducting customary care placements. Such training should include the skills and available community resources for assuring temporary placements when the voluntary process breaks down.**

### **The use of elders and respect of cultural traditions**

Another important principle in the O.T.F.S. service philosophy encourages the respect of Ojibway cultural values and traditions, and the use of elders in various support roles. The O.T.F.S. service system was originally designed to reflect the following fundamental values:

- . Each band family is recognized as the best context for the personal and cultural development of its children
- . Culture is passed on through the oral tradition of teaching by elders
- . Traditionally, Indian communities are cooperative and sharing in nature, resulting in families being inter-connected with one another
- . Traditional child-rearing is communal in nature
- . A child is a gift from the Great Spirit and must be treated with respect
- . The family is the natural source of love, support and strength
- . The recognition and reinforcement of the natural extended family support system is part of every child's life.

Many of these values are the foundation of customary care, reviewed in the previous section. Others form the very foundation of O.T.F.S. as a whole, and are reflected in such ideas as: strengthening rather than breaking up families, community-based decision-making concerning children, and the tremendous respect for the biological family unit in the child's life, despite possible problems.

With emphasis on cultural sensitivity in the development and enactment of O.T.F.S. services, this review probed staff's experience of the suitability of O.T.F.S. to Ojibway culture. The overall impression is that Family Support Workers believe that O.T.F.S. services are compatible with Ojibway culture. Specific references were made to...

- the use of extended families

- the placement of children with Native families on reserve
- customary care
- keeping families together; never removing the child
- involving elders
- emphasis on traditional culture
- community involvement

However, when asked to identify aspects of the O.T.F.S. approach which were unsuitable to Ojibway culture, certain issues and dilemmas surfaced:

- the question of whether Family Support Workers should or should not be expected to act as role models for the community (eg. abstain from alcohol)
- the emphasis on Ojibway spirituality and tradition makes some Christians uncomfortable
- whether or not children should ever be removed from their homes for any reason
- that O.T.F.S. is creating a dependency, and is not "tough enough" with some families
- case treatment emphasizes incidents, not the whole family history

Except for the "role model" and the "dependency issues", these issues bother a few individuals only. The overwhelming impression is that O.T.F.S.' philosophy and family support practices are compatible with Ojibway culture.

The involvement of elders has been widely encouraged by O.T.F.S., thus far producing encouraging results:

- . a conservative estimate of seventy elders (40 males, 30 females) have been involved in O.T.F.S. activities across the fourteen reserves
- . elders' activities so far are cultural teachings and spiritual leadership, direct support to clients (eg. home visits), staff and Family Support Committee membership, and looking after children

Centrally, elders have been used extensively in training workshops, Board and management meetings. In all workshops, elders have provided opening and closing ceremonies, with emphasis on spiritual teaching and cultural awareness. As well, they frequently participate in workshop discussions, reporting on their own past problems and personal changes. For example, during the alcohol abuse workshop, a prominent elder shared his own previous problems with alcohol, and his rehabilitation through Alcoholics Anonymous, cultural teaching and helping others. At Board or management

meetings elders participate in agenda discussions, sometimes linking issues to cultural matters or other Indian issues.

In some instances, elders have made contributions normally rendered by Employee Assistance specialists, advising staff on personal problems or commenting on personnel policy. In two instances, an elder held special sweat lodges for employees experiencing work-related stress.

A very important event in June, 1987 was a four day elder's workshop on Pow Wow island, near Kenora. The workshop was well attended by staff, elders and other community members. The subject matter was customary care and adoption, although some of the speeches covered other topics as well.

Recently, Alex Skede has been used as a "resident" O.T.F.S. elder, holding daily spiritual and cultural meetings, and travelling to communities with the Training Co-ordinator. In this capacity elder Skede helps strengthen the Family Support Committees. As well, he speaks with local elders and encourages their participation in a Council of Elders.

Finally, the importance of cultural sensitivity and using elders in O.T.F.S. services is reflected in the recent program decision to hire a Native Healer for the new O.T.F.S. suicide prevention program. The program aims to combine modern therapeutic and prevention practices with traditional native healing, to help reduce suicides by adolescents and young adults. The progress of this program will help O.T.F.S. assess the potential of combining traditional and modern mental health practices.

### **Cultural awareness as a prevention activity**

As indicated in Section B, cultural awareness activities have increasingly been viewed within O.T.F.S. as prevention. When elders are asked to talk about such problems as sexual abuse, neglect or spouse assault, they rarely address these matters directly. Instead, they urge people to find strength, happiness and health through a return to traditional culture. Many native people have accepted the benefits of traditional cultural awareness, without question. In truth, the outside observer of pow wows, traditional ceremonies and elders' talks, finds it very difficult to question the importance of these activities. This is particularly true when one observes the pride, enjoyment and obvious community vitality. However, there are two important questions about cultural awareness that the O.T.F.S. Board and management must face:

1. How does one respond to the few negative results of cultural awareness so strongly embedded in an organization? For example, how does one assure that Christian believers do not become so confused or turned off that their work is weakened?
2. What does one do in a tight money situation where choices may have to be made between supporting cultural awareness programs versus supporting child care or parent skill training? Is one prepared to state what cultural awareness is expected to do for families and children, and examine

whether these things are in fact happening?

In other words, can the same questioning attitude applied to other program activities (repatriation is a good example) be applied to cultural awareness activities? Should one specify the goals of cultural awareness and later determine whether these goals have been met? Would the Board and management scrap the support of cultural awareness activities if they appear to have no effect on the quality of family life and child care? These are important questions, particularly if financial decision-making is considered to be an important management function.

### **Integrated services**

The importance of "integrated services" for O.T.F.S. is reflected in the title of its service description: A Model of Family Support and Integrated Service Delivery. What an integrated service model actually means, and how it should be encouraged is indicated in various staff job descriptions:

- The Co-ordinator of Services is responsible for ensuring that all regional employees and community personnel, Committees, Band Councils and other community resource personnel, understand O.T.F.S. objectives, roles and responsibilities within the O.T.F.S. Family Support Model and integrated service delivery system. The Coordinator is also responsible for conducting necessary research and development activities in order that services at the community level may be better integrated.
- The Training Coordinator is responsible for mobilizing community resource personnel, such as Elders, C.H.R.'s, Alcohol Workers, Band constable workers, Teachers' Aides and other Band staff.
- The Family Support Worker is responsible for working with other community resources such as Alcohol Workers, Teacher's Aids, Elders, C.H.R.'s, Band Constables, etc. to maintain on-going support to families.

Also, the O.T.F.S. training plan (see Part E) identified the training of Family Support Committees and Service teams as a high priority for the first two operational years. Specifically, plans called for local teams to receive training in service delivery, organizational arrangements, team work and group process. A draft curriculum was included in the training program. Service team training in each community was planned.

Unfortunately, the early plans for developing and supporting community level integrated services have resulted in few concrete activities to make this a reality. The training activities with the service personnel will be reviewed in Part E. At this point, it should be noted that the plans for local training and development, particularly team-building, have not been carried through.

What is the extent of integrated services at the band level? This question can not be answered in detail except to note that most Senior Family Members and Family Support Workers have some working relationships with other Band personnel.



Interviews revealed that...

- . most Family Support Workers have working contacts with NNADAP workers, Welfare Administrators, and Community Health Resources (C.H.R.'s)
- . nearly one-third have regular working relationships with school staff, Special Constables, and Education Counsellors

On many reserves, though, the working relationships are strained. Many Family Support Workers report that "relationships could be improved" with other Band staff, particularly C.H.R.'s and N.N.A.D.A.P. workers. The difficulties emerge from...

- . poor communication between the various parties
- . unavailability of the other person
- . disagreements over viewpoints, policies, or priorities

On a positive note, such strains have encouraged one reserve to take concrete steps to clarify the mutual roles and responsibilities of various service staff. Workshops have been held, involving O.T.F.S. staff, to establish a "social services authority". Such initiatives will likely produce better understandings among staff, and can potentially stand as models of integrated services for other reserves.

Another positive step towards service integration is that O.T.F.S. has incorporated the local N.N.A.D.A.P. workers into its administrative structure. This development should provide an excellent opportunity to resolve uncertainties in responsibilities between alcohol and family support workers. This is particularly encouraging, given the high priority problems associated with alcohol abuse and family stress.

To conclude this sub-section: Concrete steps to organize locally integrated service delivery has only now begun. The time is now ripe for fine-tuning a cooperative and clear approach. The integrated service ideal should remain a attainable goal.

## **PART D ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

### **1. Introduction**

A service organization supports its delivery of services to the extent that it...

- provides appropriate staff positions and job descriptions
- is able to recruit and maintain suitable staff
- provides an appropriate organizational structure: division of responsibilities, coordination and acceptance of structured relationships
- offers thorough orientation and training
- provides direction and control through appropriate policies, procedures, and management structures
- collects sufficient and adequate information to (a) understand its community's problems and needs (b) guide the service practices of staff (c) provide access to supplementary services and resources, and (d) monitor and assess service delivery and staff performance
- creates community acceptance and professional legitimation
- has access to funding
- provides physical facilities and other material resources
- establishes the mechanisms and/or informal relationships for maintaining morale, commitment and a general philosophy

Parts D, E and F assess O.T.F.S.' developmental progress in terms of these functions. This section deals with (a) staff positions and job descriptions (b) staff hiring and maintenance (c) local community direction and control (d) policies and procedures (e) facilities and other material resources (f) promotion and community acceptance.

### **2. Symptoms of Organizational Health and Growing Pains: An Overview**

At this stage of its development, it is not surprising that O.T.F.S. shows signs of both health and struggle. Some very positive signs are:

- O.T.F.S. is well known and viewed as legitimate in Kenora, Dryden and the reserve communities
- O.T.F.S. has successfully secured additional funds for special projects
- Not one band has openly expressed serious dissatisfaction
- Monthly Board of Directors' meetings are well attended
- O.T.F.S. has expanded its physical facilities to support the community, staff and organizational needs
- O.T.F.S. has expanded its programming and has administratively integrated important community-based services

- . Many staff members speak Ojibway and know cultural

However, in the background of these very positive signs, a number of major unfinished tasks and growing pains should also be noted. These include:

- . A work pattern in which O.T.F.S. is continually responding to crises, to the neglect of important organizational functions and long range planning
- . morale problems
- . high staff turnover
- . the hiring of inexperienced staff without immediate arrangements for training
- . nearly one-half of service staff expressing confusion over their job responsibilities and the quality of their work
- . over 80% of front line service workers experience so much stress and discouragement that they feel their work is affected
- . some senior staff and management have serious questions about financial decision-making as regards material support to families

### **3. Staff positions**

One of the main sources of organizational support in any service organization is its cluster of staff positions and the various work expectations indicated by job definitions. O.T.F.S. consists of a centralized management and office staff distributed over two central offices in Dryden and Kenora, plus a contingent of service staff working on the fourteen reserves.

The Kenora central office staff consist of an Executive Director, a Coordinator of Services, a Coordinator of Finances and a Coordinator of Training. This management team is supported by a secretarial and clerical team. In Dryden, the office staff is primarily a Senior Family Worker and a Secretary. Both offices have also used students as field placements from time to time.

The first observation is that the original planners of the O.T.F.S. organizational structure, with a few exceptions, did a good job of anticipating the needed functions and tasks within the organization and allocating these tasks to various positions. A review of the various job descriptions indicates that each position has a rich job description which, if executed as planned, would result in more than adequate organizational functioning.

The review process identified a number of problem areas having to do with job descriptions and the demands placed on staff at this stage of organizational growth.

(a) **The Coordinator of Services has become heavily involved in "personnel problems" and the organizational problems associated with introducing a standardized organizational model into fourteen different communities.** It is understandable that this process will require a "give and take" between what was anticipated on paper (eg. functioning Family Support Committees, integrated services, etc.) and the "realities" of reserve life (including the presence of a Children's Aid Society). And because there are fourteen different reserves, there are fourteen different realities! These realities include such things as differences in understanding the O.T.F.S. organization and service approach, organizational capacity, skills, interpersonal and political dynamics, community leadership involvement, severity of family problems, etc. The Coordinator of Services has been heavily involved in the inevitable problem-solving associated with fitting an organizational structure to realities. The absence of community-level training and team-building (see Part H) makes this a particularly time-consuming job. From all accounts, the Coordinator has done a fine job. However, these personnel and community "trouble-shooting" roles have taken time away from other important tasks (eg. development of supervision and monitoring systems, family support planning, attending to community service resource needs, etc.). It is recommended that O.T.F.S. consider building a "community development" capability within the organization. This could be done in at least three ways:

- creating a new position: "Community and Personnel officer"
- expanding the position of "Training Coordinator" to "Training and Development Coordinator"
- incorporating the community development positions fully into the Executive Director's position

Whatever organizational change is selected, other existing arrangements could be strengthened:

- Senior Family Workers should be responsible for the administrative details associated with personnel matters, including liaison with central office
- Local training and team building of Family Support Committees and service resource teams should be given high priority

(b) **A Second major structural modification is that O.T.F.S. desperately needs some clinical expertise in the organization.** Such expertise would help service staff assess the particularly serious family problems and emotional disturbances, and establish appropriate service plans. This need could be made by...

- having the new mental health coordinator (suicide prevention program) allocate a portion of time as a case consultant for staff
- developing a clinical consulting team of non-O.T.F.S. resource people (eg. Psychiatrist, Social Worker, etc.) and experienced O.T.F.S. Senior Family Workers to be available as staff and case consultants
- having these same experienced Senior Family Workers allocate some of their time to particularly needy reserves, other than their own

(c) Finally the **office staff structure needs to be modified so that a permanent Statistics Clerk be a regular part of the organization.** These staff should be well-trained for the respective responsibilities, and should not be used for other duties except under exceptional circumstances. At the present time these functions are conducted on a temporary contractual basis. Persons fulfilling these contracts are used in other capacities as well, and are not fully trained for the statistics and filing functions. Also, some are paid at higher levels than permanent office staff, thus introducing tension into the office group. By making these positions permanent, salaries can be regularized, job security can be established, and the statistical and filing functions will be performed regularly. The Statistics Clerk should have responsibility for collecting, recording and summarizing all necessary statistical information, including court statistics, case statistics and family support plans. Senior Family Workers, not statistical clerks or the Family Court Worker, should have the responsibility of assuring the flow of such information from Family Support Workers.

#### 4. **O.T.F.S. is constantly responding to crises**

The first two years were originally envisioned as a time of development: staff training and orientation, the development and consolidation of local Family Support Committees and service resource networks, policy and procedures development, management information systems, Board and management development, etc. In truth, some solid beginnings have begun - in each of the above areas. In general though, many of O.T.F.S.' day-to-day decisions and activities are in reaction to crises. These crises are associated with...

- . family problems
- . staff turnover
- . personnel and morale problems
- . episodes of drinking, suicides and other violent deaths
- . community-level difficulties, such as problems in Family Support Committees
- . difficulties with the local Children's Aid Society

To say that O.T.F.S. is crisis-driven is not to deny that these are very real problems. However the constant reaction to crises is, in many instances, producing the following consequences:

- . several management functions over the first two years have either been neglected or done in ways that are not seen as satisfactory by the players themselves; this is particularly true of long range planning, the development of management information systems, supervision/support of Senior Family Workers, coaching Family Support Workers, and maintaining good communications with chiefs

#### 5. **Staff Turnover**

One possible result of the low morale among Family Support Workers is the high turnover in recent months. Although interviews were not conducted with former staff, Senior Family Workers identified the following possible reasons:

- . the difficulty of doing family work with problem families, relatives and other members of the community
- . personal problems, some of which result from the work itself
- . the attraction to higher salaried jobs
- . conflict with other community staff, Chief and Band Council
- . staff may not have a life-long career commitment to family support; some, for example, may be drawn to traditional economic activities at different times of the year

Interviews with current Family Support Workers confirmed many of these impressions. As well, the turnover may be affected by other reasons associated with the work:

- . 40% of Family Support Workers were unclear about their job responsibilities
- . one-half of staff were unsure whether they were doing their job appropriately

Other service agencies (eg. Kenora-Patricia Child and Family Services) also suffer from excessive staff turnover. Whatever the specific reasons in O.T.F.S., the organization, at least in the short-run, must be prepared to respond to staff turnover as a fact of life.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- . O.T.F.S.' staff orientation should be strengthened; all new staff must be thoroughly acquainted with the philosophy, organization, services, policies, procedures, and job requirements of O.T.F.S. Before starting the job, each new staff member should be exposed to the videos of past workshops, have an opportunity to read O.T.F.S. resource materials. Finally, new staff members should, as part of their orientation, observe a skilled family worker for a two day period and have an opportunity to raise practical questions. The new staff orientation program should be designed, monitored and evaluated by the Training Coordinator.
- . The "coaching" and direct supervision function by Senior Family Workers should be strengthened. Given the difficulty of doing family work in one's own community, Family Support Workers should have weekly opportunities to raise problems and seek solutions with Seniors. As much as possible, staff work problems should be solved at the community level, utilizing Senior staff and Family Support Committees.

## **6. Hiring and Firing**

Because of the excessive staff turnover in recent months, hiring new staff has been an

on-going process within O.T.F.S. In some cases, new staff have been hired quickly and sometimes from members of family. It is doubtful that in all instances hiring resulted from recruiting the appropriately skilled and experienced people for the job.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- . The Board of Directors should review O.T.F.S.' hiring policy and reaffirm the principle of hiring staff according to specific criteria (eg. knowledge, skills, experience) associated with potential job performance.
- . It is recognized that O.T.F.S. supports the principle of Band autonomy in such important decisions as hiring and firing. However, the Board should consider how O.T.F.S. management can lend their support to assuring that local hiring decisions reflect organizational policy. One consideration, for example, is that the Coordinator of Services sit on all local hiring committees, assisting them to understand hiring criteria, gather relevant information from prospective staff, and make suitable decisions. The final decision would rest with local people, with strong support from management.

Concerning termination of employment, it is the view-point of many senior staff that some individuals have been retained long after their usefulness to the organization ceased. As a total organization, both centrally and locally, O.T.F.S. has not successfully dealt with incompetence and/or inappropriate staff behavior. This is partly due to the confusion between central office and band authority, and partly due to the hesitancy in making difficult decisions. O.T.F.S. management and Board should realize that retaining a sub-par staff member will ultimately have serious negative effects on families, other staff and members of the community at large. The Coordinator of Services and the Executive Director have spent countless hours trouble-shooting and handling disciplinary problems. O.T.F.S. cannot afford to retain individuals who weaken service, lower staff morale and undermine the organization's credibility. For these reasons, the following recommendations are made.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- . Board and management are advised to review those aspects of personnel policy addressing staff terminations. As needed, the policy should be changed to support quicker and more decisive probationary and termination actions against staff incompetence and misbehavior. Such a policy should combine decisiveness with a humane approach to the personal problems of staff.
- . Management should try to foresee difficulties with staff as early as possible, and negotiate time-related change goals. In cases where such decisive actions may be resisted by other community members, cases should be reviewed by the Board's Personnel Committee, thus demonstrating the scope of the organization's concern with particular staff problems.
- . In the case of staff incompetence, an individual assessment should be made of the person's strengths and weaknesses. This can be followed by an individually-tailored up-grading course in family work skills, including suitable learning opportunities. The Training Coordinator should conduct the assessment, locate appropriate resources and monitor the learning process.

The issues and recommendations relevant to the confusion between Band and O.T.F.S. authority will be presented in Part E.

## **7. Family Support Committees: Local Direction, Support and Planning**

O.T.F.S.' organizational model is characterized by a decentralized approach to service delivery, monitoring staff performance, support to Family Support Workers and family support planning. The heart of this decentralized approach is the local Family Support Committee, a group of community volunteers who work regularly with the Senior Family Worker and Family Support Workers. Each Band Council delegates its authority over child and family service matters to the Family Support Committee, which (according to early planning), would be composed of human service personnel, Elders, a Council representative, and interested Band members. Early O.T.F.S. literature and training identified a number of possible functions and activities for Family Support Committees, including:

- development and promotion of cultural programs and training in traditional family life and child-rearing
- development of local prevention programs, including recreational and activity programs, special needs self-help groups
- direct service work, such as formal and informal counselling
- individual and family assessments
- advocacy
- helping families acquire local community support (eg. in-home support), special services (eg. educational counselling) and special funding
- dispute resolution (eg. disagreements over custody)
- repatriation

Orientation of Family Support Committees described the functions as: local decision-making, policy development (eg. service policy at the band level), funding and resource development, program development, support of family workers, problem solving, local training, and coordinating community resource teams. (See "Family Support Committees: Functions and Roles," in O.T.F.S. Family Support Guide)

The essential idea is that Family Support Committees will "act on behalf of whole communities" to assure the well-being of parents and children. Local O.T.F.S. staff do the "leg work" in carrying out the specific tasks associated with the Committees' program and specific family support decisions. We now turn to the question of the Family Support Committees' actual functioning, as reported through interviews with Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers.

Tremendous variation exists across the fourteen reserves in Family Support Committee composition and functioning. Although Committees exist "on paper" on all but three reserves, there is some question as to whether they function according to original design. Committee size ranges from three to twelve people, averaging about



seven. About one-half of Committees draw their membership from a combination of Band service staff and volunteers. The remainder are mostly comprised of service staff.

Family Support Committees came into being in a number of different ways. Some were appointed by Chief and Council; others volunteered. Still others evolved from a pre-O.T.F.S. existing groups or committee. The majority meet about once a month, although five meet every two months or less.

The actual activities of Family Support Committees also vary across reserves, although about one-half are involved in family support decision-making, the development of family support plans, and generally supporting the Family Support Workers with ideas and direction. In addition to these major contributions, about four Family Support Committees are involved in direct service work, including counselling, providing temporary homes for children, or transportation. In a more limited way, Committees are involved in policy and program development, fund-raising, sharing community concerns, hiring and on-call duties. Liaison with Chief and Council is strong only in a few cases.

Perhaps the most troublesome matter is that on only one-half of the reserves is the Family Support Committee directly involved in the development of family support plans for troubled families. Family support plans involve the assessment of difficulties, establishing service objectives and arranging for resources. By having full Committee participation, O.T.F.S. planners envisioned community support and legitimacy of difficult decisions, as well as the mobilization of appropriate resources.

The reality of the situation is that family support staff carry the burden of developing specific assessments and support plans, sometimes with the assistance of other band members. Although over one hundred plans have been done, many cases have started without the appropriate planning process. Although most Family Support Workers find the O.T.F.S. form for planning a useful tool, about one-quarter find it difficult to use. Part of the problem, probably a large part, is that many current staff are new, and did not benefit from early training on the support planning process. Also, it is only recently that central office has begun to develop a procedure for monitoring the case planning process. The net result is that many family support plans are left undone, or are done poorly. The O.T.F.S. Family Court Workers spends considerable time encouraging the completion of plans, particularly for the court situation. Training, supervision and monitoring in relation to family support planning should be a high priority area for improvement.

One of the principles of the local family support planning process is that the individual families themselves should participate with the Committee in developing change goals and establishing an appropriate service plan. The rationale is that such participation would (1) reinforce the family's responsibility for its own well-being (2) help assure its cooperation in the service plans and (3) demonstrate the community's concern and expectation for change. The family's involvement in, and commitment to, the process is symbolized by its signature on the written family support plan.

This principle has been difficult to implement in practice. A number of reasons for this difficulty have been identified:

- central policy of allocating money to families for material support has weakened the process of families seeking solutions to their problems
- the family's problem: eg. while they are drinking, families cannot contribute to planning
- confidentiality: families resist going to committees for service planning purposes
- family dynamics: the stresses among extended family members sometimes weakens participation

As a result of these difficulties many family support plans have been completed without the family's participation. O.T.F.S. has responded well to the policy issue, by requiring that no financial aid to families will be provided without a full family support plan. This is a useful step which should be closely monitored and well entrenched.

To assure family participating despite drunkenness or resistance, perhaps Committees and staff can be trained to use different methods such as temporary "proxy" participation from relatives or the Chief.

Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers assess Family Support Committees as useful and effective support groups, in those instances where they are active. Those speaking positively about their local Committees stressed the quality of ideas and guidance, the important contributions of other community members, resources and group process. Those critical of their local Committees identified inadequate numbers, difficult group process (eg. dealing with relatives, inactivity during meetings, poor attendance, interpersonal conflict, and a lack of knowledge.

A number of factors can be cited as factors influencing the functioning of Family Support Committees:

- different levels of band development: bands with already existing committee structures and administrative procedures seem to have better functioning Family Support Committees
- size of reserve: small reserves find it easier to mobilize Committees, particularly for crises
- the presence of elders on Committees helps to control interpersonal difficulties between members
- Committee members holding other jobs
- support from Chief and Council (eg. willingness to delegate authority)
- community conflict
- lack of community knowledge concerning the place of Family Support Committees in the O.T.F.S. model, and the possible functions and roles in the family support process
- the lack of local training for Family Support Committees and local resource

teams

Despite a slow start on some reserves, the idea of a Family Support Committee should remain the "heart" of the O.T.F.S. model. Earlier community meetings and local training would likely have avoided many of the difficulties and unevenness in functioning. The evolution of these Committees and other aspects of local O.T.F.S. functioning will happen slowly, unless O.T.F.S. strengthens its central support of local development. This support can best happen through community development, local training, and the utilization of successful models from other reserves.

## **8. Policies and Procedures**

### **(a) Introduction**

The policies and procedures of a service organization are an extremely important source of guidance and control for management and staff. Policy-making can be divided into four broad categories (1) the formulation of goals and objectives (2) the formulation of procedures for achieving goals and evaluating performance (3) routine administration or the application of existing policies to ongoing operations and (4) every day decisions, often done on-the-spot. In most organizations policies may be either officially documented in written form, or unwritten behind-the-scenes ideas. Whatever the case, policies and procedures are important because they define priorities and help guide decisions and choices in difficult circumstances.

### **(b) O.T.F.S.' Statement of Goals, Objectives and Service Priorities**

From the beginning O.T.F.S. has had at least a general statement of its goals, objectives and service priorities. That is, it knows generally why it exists, what it wants to do, and how it works to accomplish its goals. The objectives are identified in Part B.

With over two years of experience, O.T.F.S. now has some important tasks as regards reviewing its goals and objectives. The first task relates to the matter of clarification. What is the meaning of "family support"? What activities contribute to family support? Given the endless number of activities that could potentially contribute to family support, what activities should O.T.F.S. realistically attempt to do? Without this clarification, O.T.F.S. will continue to be bombarded with requests for funds and staff time, that anybody can say contributes to family support.

The second task concerns priorities. The first two years of experience shows that repatriation has gradually taken a lower priority, largely due to expense. Is this a new policy or might careful analysis of previous expenses reveal that repatriation could continue on a less costly basis? Also, O.T.F.S. has not supported primary prevention activities (eg. special needs community education) nearly as much as financial aid to families in crises situations. Does this mean that O.T.F.S. is primarily oriented to crises, and less to the development of programs to prevent problems and crises from happening in the first place? These are two examples suggesting that the Board and management needs to re-examine its goals and objectives, compare them to actual expenditures of money and staff time, and re-assess its priorities.

The third task relating to goals and objectives is one of identifying the kind of information which would confirm or disconfirm that O.T.F.S. service activities indeed

has some impact on families and communities. This should flow easily from the detailed clarification of its main objectives. Knowing in detail what specific changes it would like to bring about will help to define needed monitoring information for management and a possible impact education study.

**(c) Existing Policies and Procedures**

Throughout its first two years O.T.F.S. has developed a number of policies and procedures, covering a broad range of organizational, service, administrative and personnel matters. Recently, a draft Policy and Procedures Manual was compiled, summarizing policies in the following areas: Board of Directors, Family Support, Court Procedures, Confidentiality, Repatriation, Advocacy, Administration, and Finance. The manual has sections, but no policy statements, in Community Education, Public and Media Relations, Participation of Elders, Protocols, Lines of Communication and Transportation. Together, there are over fifty policy items, twenty-five of which are in the "Personnel" category.

It is very commendable that O.T.F.S. is showing signs of moving forward with its policy-making process. With over two years of experience they are now in a good position to finalize their policies and make them available in written form to all staff. The policy-making process has been quite difficult for O.T.F.S., for a number of possible reasons:

- the difficulty of certain policy areas (eg. confidentiality)
- the need for band collaboration on certain matters
- on-going service and personnel crises which have absorbed management's time
- a lack of follow-through on assigned policy-making tasks, and a lack of follow-up on draft policies - possibly a result of skill deficiency in the policy-making area
- the lack of a long term development plan with specified deadlines for policy development

Staff interviews point to a number of service difficulties which could be rectified by completing, or filling gaps in policies. Policies and procedures should be quickly formulated or completed in the following areas:

- the draft policy on identifying and managing child abuse cases (Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 2) should be reviewed, revised and circulated to staff
- policies and procedures on temporary home placements should be drafted
- protocols for liaising with outside agencies should be developed
- a family support planning and case review process should be finalized; a first draft is contained in Section 2 of the manual
- a policy for integration of services at the community level is needed; this policy will need considerable community input

- a formulation of a staff discipline policy should be done

One extremely important area needing a policy directive concerns the role of planning in the organization. So far, O.T.F.S. has not undertaken any systematic long-range planning activities, at any level. Planning would help O.T.F.S. to identify and complete major activities, and would help resist unwarranted demands on financial and human resources.

Finally, a clear policy is needed to define mutual responsibilities between central O.T.F.S. (Board and management) and the local Bands. Several difficulties have occurred, particularly in the areas of hiring and personnel matters, because management assumed that the Band had responsibility to make decisions in these areas. Yet many people feel that the Band is unaware of their various responsibilities! This ambiguity concerning who has the responsibility to do what should not continue. The Board and management should clarify their perceptions concerning mutual responsibilities, and discuss these perceptions with the Chiefs at the next Board of Governors' meeting.

Policy-making is not an easy process for any organization. This is particularly true for O.T.F.S. where several communities are affected. Because of this diversity, it is recommended that Board members as community delegates actively participate, either by drafting policies within their sub-committees or thoroughly reviewing drafts written by management. Sub-committees should also review policies on an annual basis to develop the appropriate skills for these important activities, a policy-making training workshop is recommended for Board and management.

As a final comment on O.T.F.S.' policies and policy-making processes, policies and procedures are not much good unless they actually affect the roles of organizational members. O.T.F.S. staff should be thoroughly acquainted with all policies, through training or written materials. Service policies (eg. repatriation, family support, referrals, etc.) should be communicated and practical in training workshops. Thorough discussion should go far in assuring understanding and commitment to O.T.F.S. policies.

## **9. Physical Facilities and Access to Resources**

A service organization supports its work through the provision of appropriate rooms or office space for service delivery and the completion of administrative tasks. Also, service staff must easily access the necessary material supplies as well as such support services as secretarial, clerical or supervisory help. In the case of human services, the physical arrangements are particularly important for their contribution to client physical comfort and mental well-being. In a very real sense the physical setting contributes to the level of client trust in the helper. Physical settings, then, create the practical conditions for work as well as appropriate emotional atmosphere.

**(a) Description of O.T.F.S. Physical Facilities**

In the case of O.T.F.S. the physical setting comprises two central offices (Kenora, Dryden), one human resource centre", and the band offices occupied by Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers. The Kenora central office houses all management, secretarial and clerical staff - except for the Coordinator of Finances and his staff. As well, this office houses (a) one Senior Family Worker (Dalles, Rat Portage, Washagamis Bay) (b) on occasion, the Dalles Family Support Worker, (c) the Family Court Worker (d) the Elder and recently (3) the Alcohol and Health Coordinator. The Dryden central office has a secretary, one Senior Family Worker (Wabigoon, Eagle Lake, Waubaskang) and a part-time Family Support Worker. Both central offices are used for a variety of activities including "paper work", meetings, administration, supervision, clerical activities, daily traditional ceremonies, etc. Parents and children are often in the office, as well.

The O.T.F.S. human resources centre, located on Rat Portage Reserve is rented from the Rat Portage land. The lower portion houses the Finance Coordinator and his three staff. The centre's upper portion is a large room, used primarily for training, Board meetings, Senior Family Worker meetings, resource materials, and other meetings as needed. Adjacent to this room is a restaurant which is currently uninhabited. O.T.F.S. is entertaining the possibility of expanding into the restaurant area, for a total monthly rental of \$4,000.

The O.T.F.S. service staff, including the remaining six Senior Family Workers and the Family Support Workers, occupy band office space of separate O.T.F.S. offices. Some of these offices are shared with other staff. From time to time, O.T.F.S. service staff work in other locations including: their own or clients' homes, other available band office space, the lawyer's office, other service personnel's offices, schools, medical trailers, etc.

**(b) Assessment of Physical Facilities**

This assessment of O.T.F.S. physical facilities is based on staff interviews and observations in both central offices and the human resources centre.

The Kenora central office is usually a very busy place, sometimes to the detriment of efficient work. There are occasions when employees literally have no place to work. To quote one employee:

"Lack of space for me is a problem...the cramped conditions...I am exhausted at the end of the day, not with what I had done, but with the number of people around. Many times they don't have a place to sit down. - had someone in my office, the door was shut; \_\_\_'s door was shut and every chair was occupied. I was just standing there; I found that really trying. I am not sure of the solution to that, because the organization is growing and obviously it is going to gain some more. They cannot operate out of that space in its present form. There will have to be some solution."

If O.T.F.S. decides to continue renting the human resources centre, an opportunity for a better over-all use of space will present itself. For example, the O.T.F.S. Trainees Coordinator, Alcohol and Health Coordinator, and the Statistics Clerk could occupy

space in the upper portion of that building - without necessarily sacrificing the available space for training and meetings. Such a move would free up one large office for the Executive Secretary, close to the clerical staff. The close working proximity of the Training Coordinator and the Alcohol Coordinator also makes sense, given their respective close involvements with the reserve communities. Another computer terminal would be needed for the Statistics Clerk, one which is linked to the Financial Department's computer system. In general, given the high rental charges, the Rat Portage building should be used to its fullest.

The main space problem at the Dryden office is the lack of privacy for doing direct counselling with clients. However, plans are underway for some internal re-arrangements which would create an interview room at the rear of the office.

Turning now to the suitability of office space in the fourteen communities, the service staff are in a much better situation now than during O.T.F.S.' first year of operation. Whether through band office internal arrangements or expansion, many staff members now have larger more private offices. The efforts to secure such space, and the good accompanying feelings, is a real plus for O.T.F.S.' development stage. A visible physical presence on the reserve strongly contributes to public acceptance and integration within the community.

Notwithstanding this growth, about 50% of current service staff describe their office space as unsuitable. Offices are either too small or do not afford sufficient privacy for client interviews. In small communities, where most people are friends, relatives or acquaintances, trust and confidentiality are important matters in the human service process. Given limited O.T.F.S. and band budgets, the limited space problem is not easily or quickly solved. As an interim measure, O.T.F.S. "community outreach" philosophy should be reinforced, particularly the importance of home visits and counselling, in which families are seen in their natural environment. A longer term solution to the office space problem would involve the creation of staff offices in emergency placement homes, recommended in another section. The proximity of staff to these placement locations would make sense, given their involvement in the placement process. Budget limitations, of course, are the largest impediments to this solution.

### (c) Staff access to resources

To do their job well human service staff must have easy access to both human (eg. health specialists, legal advice) and material resources. O.T.F.S. access to professional resource people and specialized agencies, is reviewed in Part F. Other resources needed by family support staff include: office secretarial and clerical help (eg. typing, photocopying, filing), office supplies, purchase orders, office machines, and expense funds (eg. travel, accommodation during visits to treatment centres).

Interviews revealed that the majority of staff experience no serious difficulties accessing the above kinds of resources. Staff work through their own band offices or central offices to acquire resources, and for the most part this works satisfactorily. Earlier, there were some difficulties experienced by both service and financial administrative staff in relation to purchase orders and expense claims. However, the

appropriate policies and procedures smoothed out this process, although a few staff still complain about having to travel for purchase orders or wait for expenses.

The efficiency and comfort of work would be enhanced by more office furniture in some cases, and by office machines - particularly telephone answering machines. Again, budget limitations will prevent immediate solutions. However, O.T.F.S. might consider local private sector donations for these types of capital expansions. Such requests would be particularly strong if accompanied by detailed descriptions of the organization and its office needs.

## **10. Promotion and Community Acceptance**

To be successful, social service agencies must take steps to make their services known to potential target clients and other service agencies. This contributes to the organization's credibility within the community, and makes it easier for clients to access available services through self-referral or referral from others. Detailed knowledge by other community agencies helps the referral process and later working relationships between agencies.

### **(a) O.T.F.S. Promotion**

O.T.F.S. has quite successfully promoted itself during its developmental years. Historically, a series of fourteen open community meetings prior to the operational beginning, started the process of awareness - even though the purpose of those meetings was to define O.T.F.S.' philosophy and services. Following that stage, a core group of "Community Resource Workers" (later renamed Senior Family Workers) worked closely with the communities, educating them about the various organizational elements (eg. Family Support Committees) and beginning the process of establishing organizational structures. This pre-operational stage of establishing community awareness, was primarily directed at the fourteen communities.

When O.T.F.S. began operations. another phase of community awareness began, that of reaching the general band membership. During a general orientation workshop, Family Support Workers were trained to expand awareness within their communities, using such methods as: door-to-door visits, community meetings, brochures, local newsletters and community meetings. During the summer of 1986, community visits by the O.T.F.S. Training Coordinator and Advisor revealed that extensive local promotion had been done, with each reserve using combinations of the above methods. By early 1987, all but two reserves were circulating stemlocal community newsletters with extensive commentaries about O.T.F.S. Unfortunately, the frequency of these newsletters has tailed off in recent months.

The O.T.F.S. central offices have also made substantial contributions to promotion and public awareness since O.T.F.S.' operational beginnings. This task is a high priority with the Executive Director who has particular strengths in that area. A summary of promotional activities and resources is as follows:

- the development of O.T.F.S. pins, t-shirts, caps, coats and sweaters, and the distribution of these to staff, Board members, and Chiefs
- the distribution of O.T.F.S. brief-cases, clip-boards and planning diaries to



staff, Board and Chiefs

- a central O.T.F.S. newsletter, called "Pathfinder" is now being published bi-weekly
- the development of five sets of large O.T.F.S. presentation packages as resources for public presentations on O.T.F.S.; the package summarizes O.T.F.S. organizational structure, philosophy and services
- public presentations to community groups in Kenora and Dryden (eg. medical staff, lawyers, Kenora Child Abuse Council, etc.) by management and Senior Family Workers
- newspaper articles covering the occasion of signing the O.T.F.S./Canada agreement, and outlining the "family support model"
- development and circulation of brochures summarizing O.T.F.S.' organization and services
- sponsorship and participation in major public events such as guest lectures, hockey teams, league, O.T.F.S./C.A.S. social, Kenora area Pow Wow, etc.
- management participation at numerous Kenora/Dryden community committees and working groups

Through these and other activities, O.T.F.S. has attempted to maintain a highly visible profile in Kenora, Dryden and the fourteen reserve communities. The O.T.F.S. logo has appeared in many items, in many locations. O.T.F.S. is also known beyond its service area - through Board, management and staff's participation at Indian inter-agency meetings, special conferences and workshops in larger urban centres, such as Toronto, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay.

**(b) Community Acceptance**

Have all these efforts to promote O.T.F.S. had any impact in the urban and reserve communities? This review has not collected the necessary data to be certain that promotion in itself has had any direct results, apart from the normal service operations of the agency. What is known is that community members use O.T.F.S., and do so willingly:

- almost 3/4 of Family Support Workers believe that in their communities most or many people with difficulties would turn to O.T.F.S. for help

O.T.F.S. clients access the services in many ways, but primarily through self-referral and referrals from off-reserve agencies. According to staff these potential clients who choose not to seek help from O.T.F.S. do so largely for concerns about confidentiality. Other perceived reasons cited for not seeking O.T.F.S. services are:

- confusion over the respective mandates of O.T.F.S. and C.A.S.
- preference for handling problems on their own
- attitudes to seeking help (eg. don't want to admit problems)

O.T.F.S. appears to have established a strong presence on the fourteen reserves. This presence, and the access to O.T.F.S., can be strengthened if efforts to assure confidentiality are made, as well as a clarification of O.T.F.S.' differences from C.A.S.

### **Recommendations**

- The O.T.F.S. newsletter should consider including an article describing the different staff mandates of C.A.S. and O.T.F.S. A draft of this article should be reviewed by C.A.S. authorities. The same article could be reproduced in local community newsletters.
- The next staff training workshop should include a section on "confidentiality" in which (a) the draft policy on confidentiality is thoroughly reviewed, and (b) local practices for assuring confidentiality are shared. Following this workshop, the policy should be revised and circulated.

### **(c) Community Leadership Support**

The Chiefs of the fourteen O.T.F.S. communities were heavily involved in early O.T.F.S. development, and continue to participate through their membership in the Board of Governors. Two current Chiefs have been heavily involved through past and present membership on the Board of Directors. Also, at the community level a few have been directly involved in O.T.F.S. operations, primarily through communication with Family Support Committees and local staff. The Chiefs appointed a former Chief as "The Chief's Negotiator" for O.T.F.S., for negotiations with government on such matters as the original agreement and program expansion. In addition to these involvements, the main organizational mechanism for sustaining the Chiefs' involvement and commitment to O.T.F.S. is through the delegated members to the Board of Directors.

Despite these various organizational arrangements for maintaining community leadership support, three factors potentially weaken that support:

- heavy turnover of Chiefs across the fourteen reserves
- moderate attendance at the 1987 Board of Governors' meeting
- an apparent struggle by some Board members to keep Chiefs fully informed

For these reasons, the organizational review included telephone interviews with a sample of eight Chiefs, four of whom were relatively new. These interviews verified that chiefs are not fully aware of the details of O.T.F.S., most relying on their Board members presence to monitor the organization's progress. Nevertheless, among this sample, every Chief conveyed a strong commitment and support of O.T.F.S. Although several recommendations (See Part H) were made no serious concerns were expressed concerning the organization's services or development. Based on information from this sample, a conclusion of continued leadership support is warranted.

Despite this support, O.T.F.S. should assure the active involvement of Chiefs, particularly in view of the recent turnover and the importance of some emerging policy

issues.

### **Recommendations**

- Chiefs should be invited to attend the Board workshop in which results of the O.T.F.S. organizational review will be discussed.
- Two Board of Governors' meetings should be held annually. These workshops should focus on important issues and matters of substance, pertaining to O.T.F.S.' future. Special efforts should be made by management and Board to assure full attendance.

The introduction to this sub-section emphasized how community awareness should include other social service agencies. The awareness and support of such agencies is reviewed in the next section.

## **PART E MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES**

The management system within a service organization is the main source of its over-all direction, control of service activities and resources, and coordination of the organizations various parts. Without good management, service organizations can flounder helplessly, constantly struggling with inefficiency and ineffective service practices.

The main organizational units in the O.T.F.S. management system are: the Board of Directors; the management team: Executive Director, Coordinator of Services, Training Coordinator, Coordinator of Finances, the Executive Secretary; and the eight Senior Family Workers. To work effectively as a system, these management units depend on an accurate flow of information concerning what is expected and what is actually going on at the service level.

### **(a) The Main Challenges of O.T.F.S. Management**

O.T.F.S. management faces ten major challenges in its efforts to provide good direction to the organization:

1. The need to manage the growth and development of an organization, versus the need to respond to immediate needs.
2. To find a balance between central direction from O.T.F.S. management and the desire for band decision-making autonomy.
3. Scarce resources across fourteen reserves for meeting tremendous needs in the areas of employment, housing, recreation, etc. Many of these needs are seen as related to "family support".
4. A variation in the organizational capacity or organizational "readiness" of the reserves to support local O.T.F.S. services.
5. Pressures affecting the quality of work by service personnel, including a lack of skills, personal problems and competing community expectations concerning appropriate work.
6. Differences among reserves in their level of crisis; high need communities make tremendous demands on O.T.F.S. financial and human resources.
7. The Provincial Child Welfare environment; local C.A.S. has a child protection mandate which results in the presence of two "competing" organizations in (a) hiring staff from O.T.F.S. reserves (b) payment to foster care-providers and (c) services.
8. The cultural environment; management must strive to build an effective and efficient organization, while accommodating "the Indian Way."
9. The funding environment: limited funds, the funders' need to balance fiscal responsibility with the desire to support learning and growths within O.T.F.S.; the funders' need for documented resource needs.

These are the difficult issues regularly facing the players in the management system. Most of the following comments on management structures and practices touch on these issues, one way or another.

**(b) The Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is an important source of direction and control in the O.T.F.S. management system. Each Board member is appointed by the Chief and band Council to represent reserve interests in the operation of O.T.F.S.. At the same time, the Board must try to balance individual community needs with the needs of O.T.F.S. as a whole. Potentially, the O.T.F.S. Board of Directors is an arena for developing policies, negotiating decisions and solving problems so that this balance is achieved. Otherwise the high priority functions of the O.T.F.S. Board of Directors are summarized in various O.T.F.S. documents as follows:

- to establish policy guidelines with regard to personnel, allocation of resources, programs and services
- to ensure that O.T.F.S. is accountable to the people it services through financial and program monitoring
- to recruit all Regional (i.e. central) staff positions and Senior Family Support Workers, and to participate, with management, in personnel administration
- to contribute to liaison between O.T.F.S. and its important environments, and share in public relations

The Board fulfills its duties through regular monthly meetings, and the operation of an Executive Committee, and (more recently) the activities of Board Sub-Committees (Financial, Programs, Policy and Planning, and Personnel).

In the course of the organizational review, a three day workshop was held to review Board activities and group functioning. The reviewer analyzed Board minutes from April, 1986 to February, 1988, and has attended several Board meetings.

The strength of O.T.F.S.' Board of Directors lies in the regularity of its meetings and its capacity to cover most items, despite usual heavy agendas. The meetings are usually well attended and are well organized. The administrative staff provide tremendous support to these meetings, often working long hours to prepare reports and packages. Although hectic at times, O.T.F.S. has established a good routine for preparing for and conducting Board meetings.

Despite many strengths there are a number of areas in which the Board could improve in the following months:

- The Board has been relatively inactive so far in policy making and long range planning; these functions, along with financial monitoring, are extremely important.
- The financial monitoring process needs to be strengthened so that Board members have an opportunity to be more aware of detailed spending, and discuss the implications of spending for O.T.F.S. goals.

- The roles of Board members at the community level need to be clarified, particularly as regards improved liaison with Chief and Band Council, and their appropriate participation in staff supervision.
- Group process within Board meetings could be improved so that more members feel comfortable to participate in discussion, and (if necessary) challenge important issues and decisions.

Some of these changes will likely occur as the Board Sub-Committees become more active. So far, the Executive and Personnel Committees have been most active, with good results.

### **Recommendations**

- The Board's Policy and Planning, and Programs Committees should become more active, giving particular attention to (a) the planning process within O.T.F.S. (b) establishing service priorities and (c) the identification and finalization of high priority policies.
- The Finance Committee should develop a quarterly financial auditing process in which the details of spending within all budget categories is examined.
- A Board training workshop should be held in which priority is given to (a) the Board's roles on their member reserves (b) group process and (c) financial monitoring skills; generally, the Board should have opportunities for on-going training.
- Financial items should be earlier on the Board meeting agenda.
- Board meeting packages should be distributed prior to each meeting.
- To allow for financial support and sufficient time for Sub-Committee meetings, Board meetings should be reduced in number.

### **(c) The Management Team**

O.T.F.S.' management team consists of the Executive Director, Coordinator of Services, Financial Coordinator, Training Coordinator and the Executive Secretary. The team meets every Monday for the purpose of mutual up-dating, and sharing plans for the coming week. This meeting also presents a potential opportunity for highlighting positive progress and identifying problems for solutions. Members of the team also have several discussions outside of the regularly scheduled meetings.

The routine of regular meetings is a definite strength of the management team, given that managers are often away from the office and/or solving problems. Opportunities to stand back and reflect is an important function in hectic human service organizations, and is a useful way to maintain coordination between the key financial, training, service and administrative functions.

Another strength of the management team is that there is opportunity and respect for individual initiative and "experimentation", a quality that is particularly important in a developing organization. This attitude seems to be communicated and reinforced

through the ranks of Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers.

These strengths provide the basis for a solid management team. A few areas for improvement are as follows:

- The team could be strengthened as a problem-solving unit. Problems in a developing organization are normal; efforts toward solution provide opportunities for growth.
- Fundamental differences of opinion exist within the management team and other senior members of the organization, concerning what is perceived as a shift towards a "welfare approach" (i.e. material financial support) rather than the family support model as originally conceived; these differences should be fully discussed within the management team, the Board of Directors, and the Board of Governors.
- The Executive Director should be freed from intensive involvement in day-to-day service and program problems and decisions.
- Management team members should be encouraged to share their ideas concerning issues and needed tasks in areas other than their own direct responsibilities (eg. the Financial Coordinator can contribute to improving organizational efficiency; the Coordinator of Services is a potential source of knowledge for the training function).
- The management team needs to improve its capacity to help each other set realistic goals, plan specific activities and provide direct feedback to each other on a regular basis. This process may be helped by training and the adoption of a team management by objectives approach (see "Recommendations").

### Recommendations

- The management team members should decide whether or not they should hold each other accountable for the fulfillment of their respective duties. Consideration should be given to a team management by objectives approach in which (a) agreement is reached on areas of organizational improvement (b) the team sets goals for the organization as a whole and for each other (c) the team initiates regular discussion and corrective feedback on each member's progress (d) overall progress is assessed and new or modified goals are established.
- The management team should have a training workshop in which this, and other management approaches, are reviewed.
- The management team should view itself as the centre of problem-solving for the organization as a whole. In some cases the members will act as resources to facilitate problem-solving at the reserve level. To prepare for this, a training workshop on problem solving should be held, followed by similar workshops for service staff.
- Management, Board of Directors, and Board of Governors should hold a service policy workshop. Attention should be given to establishing which type of family support is appropriately provided by O.T.F.S., and what is the place of material support in O.T.F.S.' service policy.

- The scope of the Coordinator of Services decision-making role should be clarified so that he is fully responsible for making and/or monitoring service decisions. This would include assuring the quality of local community decisions concerning service plans, financial or social support, the use of O.T.F.S. staff, using outside resources, etc.

Three areas for improvement require special considerations. First, one of the most serious organizational difficulties affecting the management process is the ambiguity concerning the division of authority or responsibility between O.T.F.S. central management and the Band. In principle, O.T.F.S. stands for Band self-government, and has always supported the local development of services. In practice though, O.T.F.S. through the representative Board of Directors must assume some responsibility for policies and decisions affecting local activities, or for helping bands develop the capacities and resources for fulfilling certain functions. In a number of instances, action has not been taken on some issues because the Band and central O.T.F.S. assumed that the other had the responsibility.

### **Recommendations**

- Board and management should establish or clarify policies concerning mutual responsibilities and authority in (a) staff hiring, discipline and dismissal (b) service decisions (c) financial decisions (d) training, and any other matters. Such policies should be very clear concerning what positions or committees have such responsibilities. Steps should be taken to communicate these policies to the appropriate people.

Another major issue concerns an apparent lack of long range planning within the organization. An obvious example is that no specific plan was put in place for developing and implementing the O.T.F.S. organizational structure. Such a plan would have included specific objectives (eg. policy and procedures development, management information system development, protocols, etc.), a time framework, staff responsibilities, etc. Instead, such planning was done on a piecemeal basis, often in response to crisis. The result is that many important aspects of organizational development are just now beginning.

### **Recommendations**

- O.T.F.S. Board and management should consider the importance of long range planning for a human service organization, and the mechanisms for developing this capability within the organization. Consideration should be given to the planning process at the Board, management and local Committee level, and how the integration between the three levels of planning can be accomplished.
- Assuming that the lack of planning may be due to a lack of relevant knowledge and skills, a training workshop on the planning process is recommended.

A final management issue relates to an apparent difficulty in the financial management process. This will be reviewed in the next section.



## **Financial Management and Administration**

During 1987, and up to this point in 1988, O.T.F.S. has had a very difficult time functioning within its budget. In the summer of 1987, the organization responded well to the growing deficit by controlling travel costs, the use of consultants, and the like. However, the deficit financial picture still plagues management, and is beginning to cause serious concerns among a core group of managers, Senior Family Workers, some Board members, and at least one Chief. Perhaps the unfortunate thing about this from an "organizational health" perspective is that the concerns and dissatisfaction were expressed privately in the course of an organizational review and not through the existing mechanisms for financial accountability.

We first began by identifying the issues and concerns raised by people in the review process:

- certain spending decisions have been questioned, particularly those where money is excessively allocated for...
  - food, clothing, housing and other material family support costs
  - cultural activities not clearly related to family support
  - staff personal problems
  - off-reserve social, recreational and cultural activities
  - consultant fees
- certain spending patterns and perceived by some as inconsistent with the family support philosophy; for example: -
  - excessive spending on material needs ("the welfare model") weakens family responsibility and independence
  - direct decision-making by the Executive Director for material support for specific families weakens the local decision-making process
- some spending decisions are perceived as favouring larger lands over others
- using training funds has weakened the O.T.F.S. developmental process
- the rationale and details of spending in certain areas is simply not understood
- the questioning of some staff expense claims by the Finance department (eg. travel with families to treatment centres) is perceived as based, and insufficient understanding of the family support process

These financial management issues, if allowed to grow, will threaten the existence of O.T.F.S. Fortunately, in recent months, initial steps have been taken to rectify the situation, including...

- a policy of not allowing material aid to families without a support plan from the local committee and staff
- a policy of allocating funds to local Senior Family Workers to support local decision-making
- an "attitude" within the Board to monitor the spending patterns more closely
- a spending limit of \$2,000 on management, above which Board consultation is required

This recognition of potential problems in financial management, and the initial steps to respond to the issues, are healthy signs. Board and management are also advised to consider how the following conditions might also contribute to growing difficulties:

- O.T.F.S. lacks specific policies specifying and prioritizing appropriate family support activities and a framework for financial decision-making; without such organizational guidelines, almost any spending pattern can be defended as providing "family support"
- many families in the fourteen communities legitimately have many basic material needs, such as housing, food and clothing; such basic needs must be met before other social support programs can work
- one available program option for meeting basic needs in situations of temporary child placement is the Children-out-of-Parental-Home Program (C.O.P.H.); this resource has been vastly under-utilized by O.T.F.S.
- to achieve public recognition and legitimacy, O.T.F.S. management and staff are under constant pressure to respond to community requests for financial assistance; by responding to such requests in the past, O.T.F.S. management has likely established a perception that the organization "has money" and is a "legitimate source" of financial aid; this perception is reinforced by the relative ease with which money can flow from O.T.F.S. in comparison to other government assistance programs
- rightly or wrongly, a belief has been fostered within O.T.F.S. that, with the appropriate documentation of "home support costs" (the highest category of over-spending), I.N.A.C., will eventually provide additional funds; this belief has contributed to a flexible rather than a controlled spending strategy
- the continuing presence of the C.A.S. on O.T.F.S. reserves contributes to the pressures for increased spending for home support; customary care parents expect to receive the same high per diem rate - an expectation which is financially draining as well as contradictory to customary care incentives

At the heart of financial management is the Executive Director. Some organizational and community members are beginning to trace the financial state of O.T.F.S. to his decision-making practices and choices. Interpretations and labels are beginning to surface ("too soft," "can't say no," "lacks financial management skills," a compassionate man, etc. some of which are derogatory. More seriously, the early

signs of a weakened trust in O.T.F.S.' leadership are beginning to appear.

O.T.F.S. Board and management must continue to respond to these financial issues. The issues, and the accompanying personal tensions and anger, can be very healthy for O.T.F.S. as a growing organization. An open expression of disagreement, within the appropriate decision-making and problem-solving contacts can be very creative in fully understanding the issues, clarifying policies and creating new expectations for the management team. Dealing with these issues can be particularly creative if people avoid blaming individuals and settle instead for creating new conditions for better management practice. Hopefully, the following recommendations will assist this process:

### **Recommendations**

- To assure a clearer understanding of financial realities, the Board Financial Committee should review the details of spending on a quarterly basis.
- To assure adequate time for review, the financial report should be placed earlier in the Board meeting agenda
- To control spending on non-operational activities, policy guidelines should be created governing the allocation of funds to staff personal crises, community crises and contributions. To help meet such needs, a special fund might be created, financed from special events, volunteer contributions and interest earnings.
- To help reduce spending on material support, while still meeting needs, alternative sources of financial aid, such as the Children-Out-of-Parental Home Program, (C.O.P.H.) must be used to O.T.F.S.' advantage. A catalogue of assistance programs should be circulated to all service staff, with guidelines on how to access these programs. A training workshop should reinforce the idea and practice of accessing such programs. Improving access to existing Federal and Provincial programs is an interim measure until such time as decisions are reached concerning (a) an expanded self-government authority for O.T.F.S. (b) leading to O.T.F.S.' incorporation of co-ordinating and functional responsibility for other family-related services.
- To help reduce the community requests for financial aid, Board members should educate their Councils about O.T.F.S.' financial situation and emerging financial policies. Such efforts should aim to change the perception that O.T.F.S. has an endless supply of financial assistance.
- To provide guidance and support to management in its financial decision-making function, policy guidelines should be established concerning appropriate material aid for family support. Such policy should reflect O.T.F.S.' unique family support philosophy, including any changes that may occur as a result of this review.
- To increase the skills within the organization, and to create a workable "financial philosophy", a financial management workshop should be provided for Board members, management and Senior Family Workers. This workshop should cover (a) financial policies (b) financial management principles, practices, and mutual expectations.

## **Financial Administration**

The Coordinator of Finances and his staff hold the responsibility for administering finances for O.T.F.S. This team is hard-working and committed, and has managed to fulfil its obligations despite occasional difficult circumstances. For example, in the past the Coordinator's clerical assistants have not been highly experienced individuals, thus requiring close monitoring and supervision. Nevertheless, the monthly reports to the Board have flowed regularly, and the accounting practices have consistently met professional standards. The functioning of the finance unit should improve even more, with the recent addition of a qualified financial assistant.

A few difficulties and concerns were uncovered by the organizational review:

- the Coordinator has not been sufficiently involved in the development of budgets for special projects (eg. sexual abuse workshop, training), thus, ignoring a valuable source of experience and expertise
- the documentation required for appropriate financial administration (eg. new staff information, training workshop attendance, etc.) has been quite inconsistent; this has caused difficulties for the financial unit, and in some instances has slowed the flow of funds from government funders
- service staff and the Financial Coordinator have often misunderstood each others needs and requests, as regards expense claims
- the financial unit is physically separated from the central office in Kenora; this has resulted in communication difficulties, and could potentially lower the visibility and importance of financial management and administration within the organization (out of sight, out of mind!)

## **Recommendations**

- To strengthen the mutual understanding and communications between financial administration and services, it is recommended that (a) a service/financial administration workshop be held to clarify mutual needs, and that (b) a member of the financial unit attend all workshops on service delivery.
- To increase the contribution of the Financial Coordinator to the process of budgeting for special projects, it is recommended that the Coordinator review all draft budgets before proposals are submitted.
- To assure that the finance unit receive full documentation of all relevant activities, it is recommended that a set of procedures be developed by the Finance Coordinator. All staff having the responsibility for providing such information should be acquainted with these procedures in the aforementioned workshop.

## **Supervision**

Supervision is a very important part of managing a human service organization. It is particularly important for O.T.F.S. because:

- the front line Family Support Workers are not professionally educated in

### family work

- the personal stresses of doing family work in one's own community are great
- the problems facing families are difficult, and not easily solved

According to the planned organizational structure, the main organization players in supervision are the Senior Family Workers, who oversee the work of Family Support Workers at the local community level. In turn, the Seniors receive their guidance from the Coordinator of Services. Also, although the exact arrangements are left up to the band, Family Support Workers also are expected to receive direction from the local Family Support Committee. Also there are no fixed guidelines within the organization concerning how often, and in what manner, supervision should be conducted within the community. Again, such arrangements are the responsibility of the band.

Given the looseness of organizational arrangements for supervision with the O.T.F.S. system, it is important to review exactly how supervision actually takes place, and how it is experienced. Interviews with Family Support Workers revealed that...

- 80% see themselves as supervised by Senior Family Workers, but about one-half also see themselves as supervised by other personnel, such as the Band Manager, Chief, or Family Support Committee
- supervision is done quite differently on different reserves, including some combination of regular meetings, meetings as needed, telephone contacts, and (in some cases) written reports; within some reserves, it appears that the supervisory arrangements are different for each family worker; only four reserves have regular supervisory meetings
- although there is variability in what is actually viewed as supervision, a large percentage of Family Support Workers report regular interaction with Senior Family Workers
- staff identified Senior Families or Chief and Council or the total staff team as the ones ultimately responsible for making sure the work gets done; however, on five of fourteen reserves, staff had differing perceptions as to who was ultimately responsible

Senior Family Workers were identified as the main sources of advice about work, followed by other Family Support Workers, Family Support Committees, Elders and the Band manager. Taking all things into account (i.e. the need for work advice, emotional support, other sources of help) Senior Family Workers were seen as the most helpful source of help by about one-third of the staff.

Nearly all Family Support Staff described the work advice received from their various sources as "helpful" - nevertheless, many staff believe that the supervisory process could be improved:

- approximately one-half of Family Support Workers reported the need for more frequent supervision
- many others desire a qualitatively better type of supervision - such things as positive rather than negative feedback, talking about problems, and

stronger direction

- still others felt responsible to too many supervisors

Perhaps the strongest indication that the supervisory process at the local level could be improved is that approximately one-half of front line service staff were confused about their job responsibilities and were unsure about the appropriateness of their family support work. Moreover...

- those staff receiving regular face-to-face supervision were clearer about their job responsibilities

Interviews with Senior Family Workers confirmed that a substantial block of time is spent supervising and monitoring the Family Support Workers' activities. For those with little or not staff turnover, workers have gradually become confident, skilled and independent. For those where staff turnover is a problem, close on-going monitoring is a greater need. Although Senior Family Workers are committed to their supervisory and coaching roles, a number of factors make this difficult to do regularly:

- staff turnover, without adequate initial orientation, requires heavy involvement by Seniors in basic job orientation and training
- the distance of some reserves limits sustained supervision and skill coaching
- the turnover of Senior Family Workers, themselves combined with the hiring of Seniors unskilled in family work - also is a limiting factor
- heavy caseload, on - and off-reserve, keeps some Seniors from a sustained supervisory and monitoring routine
- for some, there is an expressed need to develop their supervisory skills; there is also a need for regular supervision of Senior Family Workers
- some are caught in a web of conflicting expectations within the community concerning appropriate family support work

The over-all impression gained by organizational review interviews is that the desire, commitment, and opportunities for close supervision is present. And, on many reserves, the basic routines and expectations for supervision are established. But, the general impression is also that the structures and skills for supervision need to be clarified and strengthened. On some reserves, many people are involved in the actual supervisory process - people who do not have the actual skills and knowledge for supervising. O.T.F.S. family support work. A strong supervisory process is needed in O.T.F.S. because of its "newness". Front line workers must be trained in the principles of family work, and must have ample opportunity to have feedback on their everyday practice. Finally, a stronger supervisory process will help reduce the high staff turnover rate.

### **Recommendations**

- Senior Family Workers must be thoroughly trained in the principles of family work as these have evolved during the first two years of O.T.F.S. development. Also they must be thoroughly trained and supervised in the

application of supervisory principles.

- Although each band has the right to work out the details of supervision, O.T.F.S. central management must help the bands learn appropriate supervisory principles and practices.
- O.T.F.S. Board and Management should establish a general set of policy guidelines for the supervision of Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers. Such guidelines should provide the framework from within the bands so they can develop their own detailed procedures. Guidelines should indicate (a) the purposes of supervision (b) supervisory roles (c) an appropriate range of supervisory arrangements (d) appropriate types of supervisory personnel (e) useful resources.
- respecting each Band's rights to establish the details, supervision should follow at least three core principles: (1) supervision should have some regularity (2) should involve face-to face communication between supervisor and supervisee, and (3) those supervising should be thoroughly acquainted with the O.T.F.S. family support philosophy and principles
- Senior Family Workers should themselves have regular supervision. Such supervision should include both a (a) "clinical" content (i.e. dealing with problems and solutions) and (b) a "middle management" content (eg. dealing with matters of supervision and coaching). It is recommended that the source of Seniors' (b) the Coordinator of Mental Health Services and (c) peers, i.e. other Senior Family Workers. The Coordinator of Services should ultimately be responsible for co-ordinating and, managing the supervisory team process.

In all human service organizations, direction and control is aided by the flow of information throughout an organization. Information flows through the every day informed contacts of people, and through the organizational procedures specifically established for conveying information. This structure - the management information system - is the subject of the next section.

### **Management Information System**

The orderly flow of documented information within a service organization has many useful functions. When that organization is at the developmental stage, like O.T.F.S., information is even more useful. In technical terms, management information systems contributes to (1) evaluation (2) planning (3) program development (4) resource allocation and (5) implementation. In common sense terms, a good flow of information helps management:

- assess whether appropriate kind of services are being provided, and therefor whether the organization is "on track"
- determine whether staff, financial and other resources are being used appropriately and effectively
- assess the quality of staff work performance

- identify problems and resource needs within the communities being served, and whether the organization and its services are addressing these problems
- establish revised or new policies and procedures for guiding service delivery and increasing organizational efficiency and effectiveness
- determine whether the organization's over-all philosophy, organization and services are appropriate for the communities served
- future planning and program development
- determine whether the organization and services are operating as planned

Ultimately, the fulfillment of these functions, aided by good information, helps an organization respond to the needs of families and children.

**How far has O.T.F.S. evolved in the development of a workable management information system?** O.T.F.S. has established a broad structure for management information, and has been striving diligently to make them workable. To summarize:

- the attitudes and expectations for useful information have been created from the service workers to the Board of Directors
- as indicated earlier, reporting procedures to the Board are well established, such that Board members are regularly receiving information on finances, administration, services and programs, and training
- the management team has regular weekly meetings in which each manager keeps each other up-to-date on the previous weeks activities and anticipated plans
- the expectation and the mechanisms for weekly service reports from service staff to central office are in place
- staff evaluations are conducted regularly
- a major organizational review is in progress, to provide information on a range of service and organizational matters; during the first summer a community, implementation study was completed to identify problems in implementing O.T.F.S. at the community level

Furthermore, each of these activities are supported by:

- a computer system in both central offices
- central and band level administration and filing systems
- central administrative positions at the Kenora office whose job functions include the collection, analysis and storage of information; these positions are...
  - a Family Court Worker whose responsibilities include collecting,



analyzing, and sharing court-related data on O.T.F.S. families

- a statistics clerk with responsibility for gathering information on service staff activities and client progress
- an office clerk who is now developing a system for obtaining and centrally storing information on family support plans

Clearly O.T.F.S.' has made substantial progress towards developing a sound management information system. But, like other parts of the organization, staff and management must now embark on the next stage of development - that of consolidating and fine-tuning these early accomplishments. The organizational review identified the following areas for improvement.

- much of the information flowing through the management information system is not yet being used, neither for the daily work nor long-range planning
- three different office staff are involved in information collection; they work separately and without coordination, even though their information could potentially be integrated
- at least one staff person expected to do statistical work is insufficiently trained for the job; no one in the organization, except perhaps the Financial Coordinator, has the skills and knowledge to establish a properly functioning information system with the capacity to produce statistics for management and planning; the computer has so far been insufficiently used
- the quality and consistency of information sent by the front line service staff (eg. family support plans, case statistics, etc.) needs considerable time trying to encourage staff to send their information
- no arrangements are yet in place for receiving reports from Senior Family Workers on their supervisory and other community activities
- organizational arrangements for easily obtaining, recording and maintaining personnel information have not yet fully developed; this need is complicated by central offices' reliance on the fourteen band offices
- the flow of information from other agencies to O.T.F.S. seems to be slow at times or non-existent, for example, the courts resisted sharing information for this review even though that information would have been extremely valuable in assessing O.T.F.S.' accomplishments
- a concern over confidentiality hampers the recording and sharing of information, particularly at the band level; the draft policy on confidentiality clearly states the desirability of confidentiality, and conveys procedures for enacting this principle in matters of obtaining, accessing or releasing information; however, policy guidelines in themselves may not quickly alleviate concerns by staff and clients

## **Recommendations**

- Steps should be taken to consolidate an over-all management information system. This would involve identifying the main planning and

monitoring questions for which information is needed, the specific information needed, and the appropriate instruments for collecting information. As best as possible this system should incorporate all types of information currently being collected. The information system should complement the earlier recommended organization-wide planning process.

- A full time permanent Statistical Clerk position should be created whose sole responsibility is to implement all aspects of this new information system, including the role of assisting local O.T.F.S. staff and administration.
- All persons with any information-providing functions (eg. Statistical clerk, Senior Family Worker, Family Support Workers, etc.) should be thoroughly trained for their distinctive roles in the process. The Statistical Clerk will likely require individualized tutoring and on-going specialized support. The training for service staff should (a) help them appreciate how case information will actually help families, and (b) help them develop the specific skills for providing the information.
- Senior Family Workers should assume the responsibility for assuring that case records, staff activity logs, and family support plans are appropriately kept and forwarded to central office.
- Staff evaluation information has tremendous potential for identifying training needs for the service staff as a whole. To contribute to a training needs assessment process the evaluation instrument should be designed to allow detailed assessment of staff family work skills. This idea should be considered by the Coordinator of Services and the Training Coordinator. To assist this process, the current training project (Ministry of Skills Development) should produce and inventory of family work skills as the basic for training and staff evaluation.

## **PART F      RELATIONS WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES AND PROFESSIONALS**

### **1.      INTRODUCTION**

The O.T.F.S. service philosophy emphasizes the use of local community resources (eg. extended family, elders, Family Support Committees) in its family support services. However, the philosophy also recognizes that under some circumstances, and for special needs, non-community agencies and professionals should be used. As well, in its initial planning and development to date, O.T.F.S. has made extensive use of professional advisors, including a lawyer, training advisor, psychologist, guest trainers, and others. Finally, the Children's Aid Society presence in child protection matters has necessitated contacts between both organizations, both inside and outside the court. In this section the mutual attitudes and working relations between O.T.F.S. and other agencies and professionals is examined.

### **2.      INITIAL PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

Initial O.T.F.S. planning gave particular emphasis to the process of "energizing the extended family" at times of difficulties. However, it was recognized that Family Support Workers and Family Support Committees were expected to fill in gaps when there were weaknesses within the natural extended family system.

"The Family Support Model requires that we have available the best of professional advice when the local committees, family support workers and families in trouble feel that their involvement or intervention would be of assistance."

(A Model of Family Support and Integrated Service Delivery, pg.9)

Professional resources should be used, according to the model, in a consultative, advisory fashion. Final decisions and problem resolutions should be left with families, communities and the roles of staff which enact this special liaison with outside agencies and professionals include the "advocacy roles", "referral" and "participation in the court system". For example, Family Support Staff are expected...

"To advocate on behalf of families and individuals in their contact with courts, social agencies, etc...advocate on behalf of individuals with respect to their needs for special services with regard to their educational, medical, psychological and other needs."

(op cit, pg.19)

As well, it was anticipated that O.T.F.S. would seek special funding to provide those services to families requiring intensive support.

O.T.F.S. staff were prepared for liaison roles with other agencies in their initial training and orientation, and in subsequent training workshops. For example, in a workshop on alcohol abuse, O.T.F.S. staff were exposed to a panel of community agency representatives from the alcohol field. The expectation to use community resources is also communicated in a staff resource guide, in discussions of "advocacy" (Family Support Guides, ss/2), "the use of professional services" (op cit, ss/3), "contacts with other agencies during repatriation" (op cit, SR/23).

To what extent has the expected use of professional resources taken place? And have any difficulties been encountered in the liaison with agencies. We now turn

to these and other questions in the following sections.

### 3. DOES O.T.F.S. MAKE APPROPRIATE USE OF AGENCIES AND PROFESSIONALS?

Interviews with Family Support Workers and Senior Family Workers indicate that O.T.F.S. staff make extensive use of professional agencies and other off-reserve services. For example:

- . Across O.T.F.S. reserves, a conservative estimate of eighty-three children and parents have been referred for off-reserve services by Family Support Workers in the last two years.
- . The majority of community agency staff viewed O.T.F.S.' cooperation, attitude and manner in a favourable light.

#### What are the areas for improvement in O.T.F.S.' liaisons with other agencies and professionals?

O.T.F.S. staff interviews and community agency questionnaires identified a number of problem areas in the efforts to utilize professional resources. These are as follows:

- . Mutual awareness: although this is not a serious problem, many people reported the need for greater mutual awareness of agency philosophy, goals and available services.
- . Communication and co-ordination: from the perspective of the majority of community agencies, the level of communication and coordination between the respective agencies is only "fair"; similar comments about community agencies were voiced by many O.T.F.S. staff.
- . Follow-up: the most consistently critical comment by community agency staff concerns a lack of follow-up by O.T.F.S. staff after initial contacts or referrals.
- . Access: a sizeable proportion of Family Support Workers (1/3) report difficulties in gaining access to the legal advisor and the consulting psychologist.
- . Awareness of available services: over 60% of Family Support Workers said they were unsure of what services were available for clients with special needs, particularly marital difficulties, alcohol/substance abuse and financial difficulties.
- . Gaps in service: 50% of the staff identified gaps in service, particularly for young offenders.
- . Fees: consulting fees have taken a considerable portion of O.T.F.S. operational budget; this is somewhat understandable during developmental years, but (given the need for spending in other areas - eg. family support) the use of consultants should not be considered a "fact of life."

In some instances, incompatible policies and procedures between O.T.F.S. and off-reserve agencies appear to affect working relationships. Examples of this are

- that O.T.F.S. is not mandated to service young offenders
- that O.T.F.S.' emphasis on keeping the family together conflicts with one agency's belief in separating the perpetrators and victims of family violence
- that O.T.F.S.' support of customary care practice conflicts with one agency's practice of only servicing legal guardians

## **5. IS O.T.F.S. PERCEIVED AS A LEGITIMATE ORGANIZATION?**

The success of any service organization is very much affected by its broad public acceptance. This is usually affected by that organization's reflection of widely-shared social values and the perception that important social needs are being fulfilled.

In the case of O.T.F.S., research results from community agencies revealed overwhelming support of O.T.F.S.! Almost all agencies representatives agreed that O.T.F.S. is an important organization for Native people in the area. The following quotations illustrate the nature of their support and their reasoning:

"O.T.F.S. is a 'fledgling' organization. As they develop and consolidate they will become an invaluable service and resource to the native people of our area."

"The agency is needed to provide the framework within which strategies to achieve cultural and social self-determination can be implemented."

"Self-determination is critical to attaining responsibility our own actions and directions of life."

"By representing the Bands in court, O.T.F.S. has forced the other parties to recognize that the Boards have a unique role."

"I believe that O.T.F.S. has a great potential to be effective in their community."

Community agency support is qualified, however, a strong expectation is that O.T.F.S. will learn from its first years of experience. Specific suggestions will be provided in a later section.

## **6. CHILD PROTECTION AND THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY**

Ojibway Tribal Family Services is a prevention organization and, by its own choice, does not have a child protection mandate from the Province of Ontario. Nevertheless, O.T.F.S. has gotten drawn into child protection matters through its involvement with the local C.A.S. (Kenora Patricia Child and Family Services).

The working relations with C.A.S. has been quite uneven to say the least. Those interviewed professed strong support for two of O.T.F.S.' most important ideals - "self-government" and "community-based service" delivery. Also, they expressed a liking and respect for many O.T.F.S. management and staff personnel, and indeed an indication of many good working contacts. Despite this, interviews with C.A.S. staff, other community agency representatives, and O.T.F.S. staff reveal several problems.

These problems, if left unresolved, will continue to hamper working relationships between the agencies, and possibly jeopardize the services to families and children. In summary, these problems are as follows:

- role confusion: C.A.S.' perception that O.T.F.S. has become inappropriately involved in child protection matters when it opposes C.A.S. recommendations in court, and proposes alternative plans
- ambiguity over the respective authority of O.T.F.S. central management and the Bands concerning child welfare matters; this has led to confusion with C.A.S. concerning who to deal with on various matters
- a perception by some C.A.S. and other agency staff that children's services in the area has become somewhat politicized; three "political" patterns were identified:
  - depending on who they are, some families in the community do not receive full O.T.F.S. support
  - relatives are hired by O.T.F.S. at the expense of qualified people
  - an effort to keep C.A.S. off the reserves in the name of self-government
- direct requests by families and Band personnel for C.A.S. services have been interfered with by O.T.F.S.' staff and legal advisor
- court proceedings are seen as reduced to a messy adversarial process, resulting in longer court involvement and children placed in temporary care without service
- the perception by O.T.F.S. that C.A.S. is inappropriately planning prevention programs and preparing to use Native staff to deliver such programs on reserve; doing this with Band agreement is believed to contravene articles in the General Welfare Act
- Some out-of-province agencies mistakenly believe that O.T.F.S. has a legal mandate for prevention
- the problems around C.A.S. access to the fourteen reserves, with C.A.S. wanting to fulfill its protection mandate (particularly as regards child abuse investigations) and O.T.F.S. personnel and most Bands wanting C.A.S. either to stay off the reserves or at least to enter under tight control; as well, some O.T.F.S. staff believe that C.A.S. broke verbal agreements concerning access.
- the perception by C.A.S. that O.T.F.S. personnel and other Band staff are purposely not reporting child abuse incidents:

These issues, and others, are causing considerable bitterness between O.T.F.S. and C.A.S. staff. However, all is not negative. As indicated earlier, interviews with C.A.S. staff suggest a basic respect for what O.T.F.S. is attempting to do. Like other community agencies, those interviewed support the idea of Native self-government and community-based services, and voiced their respect for many O.T.F.S. staff. The

main challenge for C.A.S. is one of fulfilling their own protection mandate, clarifying the boundaries between C.A.S. and O.T.F.S. responsibilities, and possibly working together to provide needed services.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Although many community agencies are generally knowledgeable about O.T.F.S., O.T.F.S. must continue to educate the public in an on-going systematic way. As well, such efforts should include opportunities for staff and management to learn about other agencies. Efforts to educate other agencies should include the following information:

- . a description of O.T.F.S.' goals, philosophy and services
- . a clear distinction between protection and prevention services, and how O.T.F.S. services fulfills its prevention mandate
- . up-to-date practical information such as a staff list, phone numbers, office hours and any other useful information that would help community agencies access O.T.F.S. services
- . a summary of those O.T.F.S. policies and procedures, including those of individual bands, which are relevant to referral and liaison between O.T.F.S. and other agencies; similar policies and procedures should be obtained from other agencies, and summarized in manuals available to all staff
- . cultural awareness, particularly as regards those Ojibway cultural characteristics related to problems, help-seeking and service utilization. (eg. the role of extended families in assisting people to seek and make use of community services)

2. O.T.F.S. should continue to have one staff position, the Coordinator of Services, whose responsibility is to assure effective and efficient liaison with other service agencies. As well as dealing with particular problems, the Coordinator should monitor these liaisons regularly to identify problems before they happen. "Liaison with community agencies" should be a regular agenda item for one in four team management meetings.

3. To improve the quality of follow-up between O.T.F.S. and all referral agencies, it is recommended that O.T.F.S....

- . establish a follow-up policy to define expectations for its staff, and to assure the necessary follow-up from other agencies
- . conduct a training workshop for all management and staff on the policies, skills and knowledge associated with making appropriate referrals; this workshop would highlight the importance of assuring good follow-up in family support work

4. To increase the O.T.F.S. staff awareness of available services for referral purposes, it is recommended that...

- . one copy of the Kenora Patricia Community Services Directory be situated in every O.T.F.S. office, centrally and locally
- . a supplementary directory of other (eg. outside of province treatment

centres) relevant services be developed and distributed in every O.T.F.S. office

- . staff be trained to use these resources during the above-mentioned referral workshop, and be exposed to people representing O.T.F.S.' main referral agencies

5. To work towards the development of needed local and off-reserve community resources for Native people, it is recommended that O.T.F.S....

- . take the initiative in encouraging a holistic needs assessment in which resource needs are identified and prioritized, and a long term resource development plan is drafted; the involvement of other Native and non-Native agencies would be important for an integrated plan

6. To improve the accessibility and appropriateness of legal advice, it is recommended that O.T.F.S. management and senior staff...

- . hold a problem-solving and planning meeting in which the organizational problems affecting access to legal consultation should be identified and solved
- . consider the benefits and limitations of hiring a temporary in-house lawyer
- . include a training section on "using legal services" in future O.T.F.S. training workshops
- . involve the Board of Directors in developing a set of expectations concerning the roles of O.T.F.S. legal advisors; such expectations should clarify such matters as the distinction between legal advisory roles and other roles such as community and organizational development, political animation, negotiation with government, etc. (see also Recommendation)

7. To increase O.T.F.S. staff access to on-going clinical consultation, it is recommended that...

- . part of the new Mental Health Service Coordinator's time be devoted to clinical consultation with staff, in which the nature of family and individual problems be discussed, as well as appropriate counselling approaches
- . the Mental Health Coordinator establish a clinical consulting team of local specialists (eg. spouse assault, depression, child abuse), including Native healers, to provide on-going clinical advice; this should be done at little or no expense to O.T.F.S., but should be encouraged as part of a community prevention program

8. To control the high costs of professional consultation, and to reduce the dependency on outside consultants, it is suggested that...

- . annual planning time be devoted to identifying consultation needs for the following year, and identifying the most appropriate expertise, including both paid and volunteer assistance
- . consultation fees be drawn from special "non-operational budget" funds, and linked to special projects



- . consultants chosen should be committed to the idea of fostering Native organizational independence from the excessive use of consultants; such consultants should be required to identify for helping O.T.F.S. because less rather than more dependent on their services (eg. team projects with O.T.F.S. staff members so that staff learn skills provided by consultants)
- . contracts should be established for all consultants; such contracts should include goals, tasks, time-lines, and products. To assist organizational learning, consultants and advisors should be expected to include a work log with their invoices
- . where more than one consultant or advisor is being utilized, monthly meetings should take place with Senior management to assure consistency, coordination and feedback in consulting and special project work

9. To help reduce the mistrust, anger, confusion and perceived overlapping of services between O.T.F.S. and C.A.S., it is recommended that...

- . the process of developing protocols between the O.T.F.S. Bands and the C.A.S. be moved along more quickly; this process could be facilitated by a prototype (i.e. sample) protocol prepared by O.T.F.S. and endorsed in a joint C.A.S./O.T.F.S. Board meeting; the prototype could then be distributed to each Board for acceptance and/or modification
- . a policy concerning the meaning and practices associated with "prevention" be developed; such a policy should (a) clearly differentiate between "primary", "secondary" and "tertiary" prevention activities, and (b) clarify O.T.F.S. service priorities in relation to its prevention policy
- . the new prevention policy should be used (a) as a basis for staff training and as (b) a focus for a mutual awareness workshop between O.T.F.S. and C.A.S. management and senior staff for clarification of services, responsibilities, tasks, etc.
- . since problems or misunderstandings are likely to emerge from time to time as O.T.F.S. continues to grow, a dispute resolution mechanism should be established between O.T.F.S. and C.A.S.; this mechanism would encourage the healthy expression of disagreement at the appropriate organizational levels, but hopefully would minimize conflicts where families and children might be hurt; such a mechanism might be a monitoring committee of O.T.F.S. and C.A.S. management, senior staff, and Board representatives to identify areas for discussion and problem resolution

## **PART G: STAFF, MANAGEMENT AND BOARD TRAINING**

### **Introduction**

This section addresses the topic of training and development within O.T.F.S. We begin with a statement of the importance of this process during the early years, and a description of initial training and development plans. Next, we examine which part of the plans we actually completed during the two year period, and what areas were not completed. An assessment of why the omissions occurred and an indication of positive and negative consequences follows. This section ends with a number of recommendations concerning the organization and content of future training.

From the outset, training and development was regarded as an important part of O.T.F.S.' early development phase. This importance was reflected in a substantial training budget, the allocation of considerable time in early planning for training, the hiring of a professional training advisor and full-time Training Coordinator, and the incorporation of "training" as an important part of the O.T.F.S. Family Support Model. In fact, it could be accurately stated that, along with promotion, community development and resource development, training was one of the important emphases in O.T.F.S.' implementation strategy".

### **Initial planning**

The initial group of O.T.F.S. planners and advisors spent many hours developing a training program for O.T.F.S. first two developmental years. This training program grew in conjunction with writing three training proposals to three different funding sources: C.E.I.C.'s "Job Developmental Program" and "Skills Investment Program" and I.N.A.C.'s "I.C.H.R.S. Program". The result of these early planning sessions and proposals was an integrated training program, described in a document entitled Ojibway Tribal Family Services Training Program (August, 1986).

The above document provides an overview of O.T.F.S. training plans, including such items as goals and objectives, training principles, design, time-table and curriculum development. Further, the training plan identifies specific areas of training for the Board, management, Family Support Committees, community resource teams, Family Support Workers and Senior Family Workers. Finally, implicit in the training plan is a description of the process, including curriculum development, central workshops, local community coaching and training, and evaluation. A specific training time-table was drafted identifying fourteen training activities, to be conducted during O.T.F.S.' first year. The details of this training program cannot be repeated in this review; they can be read in the above mentioned document.

## **2. What training opportunities were actually provided during O.T.F.S.' developmental years?**

This section summarizes the actual training process since O.T.F.S. began. As we shall see, a number of valuable and interesting opportunities were provided. But we shall also see that several areas of training and developmental activities were not provided, and this gap likely resulted in some of the difficulties facing O.T.F.S. today.

### **(a) Central workshops**

Thirteen major workshops were held for O.T.F.S. personnel during the first two years. These were as follows:

- . O.T.F.S. Orientation Workshop for Family Support Workers and Senior

Family Workers covering history, goals, service philosophy and roles, and organizational structure.

- . Family Work Workshop for Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers covering family structure (family geography), dynamics, problems, and guidelines for family work.
- . Child Welfare Conference (Minaki Lodge) for Senior Family Workers, Family Workers covering the history and development of Indian Child Welfare Organizations, B77 customary care.
- . Orientation Workshop for Family Support Committees, covering O.T.F.S. history, philosophy and objectives, program development, services; functions and roles of Family Support Committees; organizational structure.
- . Writing Skills Workshop for Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers, covering: C.O.P.H. program, writing skills, family support planning and documentation.
- . Senior Family Workers Training covering the functions and roles of Senior Family Workers, work routines, O.T.F.S. growth experiences and community development.
- . Board of Directors' Training Workshop, covering general Board functions and roles, and the identification of training needs.
- . Alcohol Abuse Workshop for Senior Family Workers, covering alcohol abuse, services and programs; communicational skills for working with families.
- . Taking O.T.F.S. Services into 1987 for Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers, covering review of philosophy and services, C.A.S. and O.T.F.S., Indian organizations, Family Support Worker roles, family work policies and procedures.
- . Family Support Committee Workshop covering O.T.F.S. services during 1986, Family Support Committee Roles and Tasks, effective team work.
- . An Elders' Workshop for elders, O.T.F.S. staff and other community members, covering cultural awareness issues, problems in Native communities, and values.
- . Family Counselling Workshop covering family systems theory, family dynamics and the alcoholic, communication styles, interviewing and other interventions in the family.
- . Sexual Abuse Workshop for Senior Family Workers, Family Support Workers and community volunteers, covering the facts of sexual abuse, family dynamics, impact on the victim, identification, community knowledge, causes, reporting and prevention.

All of these workshops were held centrally, requiring staff travel to such locations as Inn of the Woods (Kenora), Eagle Lake Reserve Training Centre (Ojibway Paradise Lodge), Sioux Lookout, and Pow Wow Island (Kenora). Evaluations completed at the conclusion of most workshops were compiled in a document entitled Training

Workshop Evaluation Reports.

**(b) Non-O.T.F.S. Workshops**

A number of opportunities for attending workshops not organized by O.T.F.S. were made available to some staff. These resulted from specific requests from individual staff members or externally sponsored conferences or workshops. Also, several workshops were available to the Band staff (including O.T.F.S. staff) on individual local reserves. A list of external workshops, conferences or courses attended by selected O.T.F.S. staff follows. Travel and accommodation

- . North American Adoption Association Conference (Toronto)
- . Family Violence Conference (Niagara Falls)
- . Community Development Training (Certificate Program, University of Manitoba)
- . Interpersonal Skills Training (University of Manitoba)
- . Computer Skills Training (private trainer to office staff)
- . Native people and the court system

Staff interviews revealed that Family Support Workers attended individual workshops on the following topics:

- . the most frequently attended workshops on reserve focused on the subjects of drug and alcohol abuse, cultural awareness, and sexual abuse.
- . other local training events included: communication, aboriginal child welfare, alternative schooling, first aid, native counselling, family violence, stress management, child care, multiproblem families, decision-making and outdoor education.

**(c) Other in-service training**

As well as holding central workshops and supporting attendance at outside training events, O.T.F.S. provided other training opportunities. Kathy McIvor, an experienced Senior Family Worker, held a number of regional training sessions for her own staff on Eagle Lake, Wabauskang and Wabigoon Reserves. The same idea was adopted by Janice Spence for the staff at Washagamis Bay, Rat Portage and Dallas. Although these sessions seemed quite popular with those involved, the idea of regional training workshops did not catch on at other reserves.

In addition, at least two informal training sessions were held with Senior Family Workers on the subjects of Native counselling and creative thinking. These sessions involved two different guest speakers, one of whom (Laura Johnson) is a Guidance Counsellor at Kenora's high school.

**(d) Community Development**

An important part of the O.T.F.S. training program addressed the learning needs of local volunteers (Family Support Committees) and band service personnel.

Community-based workshops were initially planned to develop the Family Support Committees and service personnel to function as "resource networks" and support groups for the local Family Support Workers. Unfortunately, this community level training did not begin as early as planned. However, since November, 1987, O.T.F.S.' Training Coordinator has travelled to all reserves, helping the local Family Support Committee develop in their capacity.

The general purpose of the community training is to help Family Support Committees become more effective groups. As well, the visits are used to up-date on new O.T.F.S. policies and procedures. The Training Coordinator estimates that about sixty-five percent of Committees are functioning effectively. The general function and roles of Committees are shared and specific ideas from Committees are conveyed from visits to other reserves. Also, future training needs are identified and arrangements made for future visits.

The Whitefish Bay reserve has taken concrete steps to increase the integration and efficiency of all social services, including O.T.F.S. Community development meetings, attended by O.T.F.S.' Executive Director, Training Coordinator and Coordinator of Social Services, have been held to restructure the bands services into a Social Service Authority. All existing services are being reviewed, job descriptions examined, and areas of overlap removed. The anticipated result will be an integrated social service model which possibly can be used to stimulate growth on other O.T.F.S. reserves. Consideration is being given to a flexible use of O.T.F.S. staffing salaries to support this integration.

Although these efforts occurred late in O.T.F.S. growth, they are extremely positive signs, and should be strongly encouraged by O.T.F.S. management and Board. The effectiveness and efficiency of local Family Support Committees working in harmony with all Band service personnel is the foundation of successful family support services.

O.T.F.S. undoubtedly will have a large part to play in other efforts to integrate services on the fourteen reserves. Management experience with the various communities puts them in an excellent position to encourage "cross-community learning" in which the experiences of one reserve are used as aids in the growth of others. There is one risk, however. There may be an excessive demand on the human and financial resources of O.T.F.S. to support general band development. Without firm guidelines, O.T.F.S. could be seen as a "bottomless" resource for staff and financial aid. If this happens, O.T.F.S. may find itself spending money and sharing staff time such that support of its own activities are weakened. This is a word of caution only, intended to stimulate planning before such problems arise.

### **Future training**

Training will continue to be an important part of O.T.F.S. development during the next two years. Priority training needs have been developed, and financial resources have been secured. Three main components have been identified:

1. Family counselling: a certificate program with the University of Manitoba; tuition fees provided by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
2. Advanced training in the O.T.F.S. family support model; funding secured by the Provincial Ministry of Skills Development.

3. Continuation of community-based training and consultation to strengthen Family Support Communities and service resource teams.

### 3. **Assessment of Training**

The assessment of training in this section is based on several sources of information:

- . the writer's observation of the training process in his role as Training Advisor.
- . interviews with staff
- . workshop evaluations

#### (a) **Strengths**

There are many strengths of O.T.F.S.' training program. To examine the outcomes and responses to training in detail would require many pages. Those interested in detailed documentations of workshop content, trainee responses and learnings should read Training Workshop Evaluation Reports. This section will make some general positive and critical observations.

First, training has been well integrated into the normal functioning of O.T.F.S. as an organization. The value of learning, and the expectation of on-going learning opportunities is well-entrenched in the minds of staff. Many people identified "opportunities for learning" as one of the most enjoyable aspects of working for O.T.F.S. O.T.F.S. is a virtual "learning community" in the sense that

- learning is valued and supported by the O.T.F.S. central and band leadership
- the Training Coordinator's management position symbolizes the importance of training within the organization
- staff anticipate future learning events, and participate freely in the identification of learning needs and assessment of training events
- staff and communities look to each other, and not just outside "experts", as important sources of learning
- elders, through their participation in training workshops and other learning events, give a strong spiritual support to the learning process
- considerable human and financial resources are allocated to training
- the O.T.F.S. training centre is a visible reminder of the importance of on-going training

A second strength of the O.T.F.S. training process is that, for the most part, training events followed the training principles identified during initial planning. Thus:

#### (1) Training has recognized and taken into consideration Indian traditions and customs

- workshops have encouraged participants to share their knowledge of Ojibway community and family tradition

- Indian family work principles and practices have emerged (see O.T.F.S. Family Support Service Guide, pgs. SC, SW)
- (2) Training has recognized and built upon the natural sources of support within each reserve community
- . Family Support Workers have been trained according to the O.T.F.S. family support model in which the family's "natural community supports" (eg. relatives, friends, elders, etc.) are used
- (3) Training has recognized the importance of Family Support Workers' vested interests as community members
- . Training has encouraged staff to utilize their own common sense knowledge of their community and how to make it stronger
  - . Training has supported the use of staff time in a variety of local community activities (eg. Pow Wows, committees, recreational activities) in the interest of promoting community and family strength
- (4) Training has recognized and reinforced the traditional roles of elders as teachers in the community
- . All workshops have used elders to open the workshop and participate throughout
  - . The "elders workshop" brought together many elders for a large cultural awareness workshop
  - . Elders took a particularly active teaching role in the "alcohol abuse workshop" and the "sexual abuse conference"
  - . Elders have also provided cultural awareness training in many community and central staff meetings
- (5) Training has been practical and relevant
- . Training has been based on on-going needs assessments in which staff have identified learning needs related to their specific jobs; workshops on alcohol abuse, writing skills, sexual abuse, family counselling - all have directly responded to community problems and the necessary skills to fulfill job requirements
- (6) Training used a "training the trainers" approach
- . A Training Advisor worked closely with the O.T.F.S. Training Coordinator in conducting training needs assessments, planning and conducting workshops; the Training Coordinator gradually took more responsibility for each workshop
  - . Other O.T.F.S. staff members were used in a variety of training and workshop roles (eg. lecturers, group facilitators, planners, etc.)
  - . Training resource materials (eg. Family Support Service Guide, video tapes from all workshops)

(7) Training has been on-going and responsive to local community needs

- . Thirteen workshops held since the beginning of O.T.F.S.
- . On-going evaluations and community-based interviews conducted to identify high priority learning needs based on early on-the-job experiences

(8) Training methods have reflected the Indian ways of teaching and learning

- . Training has used adult education methods which emphasize the oral tradition, story-telling, group sharing; excessive reading and long lectures were minimized
- . Considerable emphasis on structuring opportunities for staff to share and learn from each others experiences
- . Workshops have been organized to create and maintain a "fun atmosphere" in which learning is an enjoyable, rather than stressful, experience
- . Where external resource people were needed, every effort was made to obtain native people, or those experienced in working with natives

**(b) Areas for improvement**

Despite the many successes associated with O.T.F.S.' training function, there are a few serious issues needing immediate resolution by Board and management. As well, there are several less serious difficulties which can be easily modified with organizational "fine-tuning".

**(i) The lack of training for Family Support Committees, Board and Management**

The original training plan specified that local Family Support Committees, community resource teams, Board members and management would have considerable opportunities for training. A total of \$179,000 was secured from Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Indian Community Human Resource Strategy) for this purpose. Yet, few training events have actually occurred for these target groups during O.T.F.S.' development years.

Although steps have now been taken to provide community-based development of Family Support Committees and service resource teams, this gap in training is the most deficient in O.T.F.S.' training activities to date. A lack of training for these management staff and volunteers has partially contributed to...

- . weak Family Support Committees on some reserves
- . inconsistent or inadequate supervision of Family Support Workers in some cases



- . a lack of "team work" among Family Support Workers and other Band staff, on some reserves

A strong umbrella structure of Board, managers, supervision and local communities is essential to the delivery of family support services in the O.T.F.S. model. For this reason, Board and management should immediately review the original training plans and establish a training schedule for these groups.

**(ii) The vulnerability of the training budget**

Despite the recognition of the importance of training, the O.T.F.S. training budget has been quite vulnerable. Many thousands of dollars have been shifted from training to family support and other costs. The area which has suffered most from such financial decisions has been the training of Board, Family Support Committees, community resource teams, and management. (see previous section)

The implications of financial decisions for training and O.T.F.S. development have not been adequately discussed within the management team. The Training Coordinator has had no major involvement in discussions of financial decisions which ultimately have weakened the training process.

Training and development must remain a high priority activity in the next year, and must be suitably supported. O.T.F.S. must establish a policy for protecting certain budget items, and closely monitor the demands placed on the training budget.

**(iii) Training has not developed the necessary family work skills**

Staff interviews revealed that about one-half of the existing Family Support Workers were unsure about the quality of their work. Forty percent were unsure of their job responsibilities. Some Senior Family Workers expressed some doubt about the family work skills of Family Support Workers. Interviews also revealed substantial difficulties in completing the family support plan. The unmistakable conclusion from these results is that existing Family Support Workers do not uniformly possess the skills for family work. This situation must be corrected.

This inadequate skill level is likely due to many factors, including...

- . insufficient skill development in training workshops
- . high staff turnover without the necessary attention to pre-service orientation of new staff
- . insufficient attention to the "coaching" function of Senior Family Workers

The planning and execution of future workshops must give more attention to the specific skills required from Family Support Workers, and how these skills will be developed in workshops. "Skill development" must be a high priority goal for training in the coming year.

To supplement skill development training, Senior Family Workers should be trained to assist the staff in using and developing these skills in their communities. The art and skill of "coaching" shall be a high priority training goal for all Senior Family Workers. As well, Seniors should be trained to recognize major skill deficiencies in their staff and

arrange for supplementary training.

**(iv) Staff turnover and staff orientation**

O.T.F.S. has experienced heavy staff turnover, particularly during the last year. New staff are certainly knowledgeable about their communities, but lack the specific skills necessary for family work. The result is that a very large percentage of staff are more or less functioning at the level of "lay case aides" - much like teachers aides in the school system. Two end results of this should be noted:

- . Senior Family Workers are heavily involved in family work; this cuts substantially into "coaching" and "supervision time" with the Family Support Workers.
- . Some unskilled Family Support Workers are involved in difficult family problems; the inability to provide immediate help leaves them frustrated and stressed, thus contributing to staff turnover.

The orientation of new staff has not been done systematically within O.T.F.S. Sometimes it is done centrally, sometimes at the Band level, primarily by the Senior Family Worker. Also, new Family Support Workers usually start working immediately, with the expectation of learning, on-the-job.

For the future, it is recommended that new service staff should be exposed to a structured orientation and introduction to family work skills, and that this requirement becomes part of hiring policy. The orientation should be a combined central office and Band effort, following clear orientation goals for each new worker. A minimum two week period should be given to orientation; no person should be expected to work with families before completing this orientation. The O.T.F.S. Training Coordinator should plan and coordinate all new orientations. Further details on this orientation recommendation are provided in section \_\_\_\_.

**(v) Training opportunities for office staff**

Office staff have more than occasional contact with clients, and are required to make decisions or responses to meet client needs. This is not unusual for a service organization, where service staff are sometimes unavailable. To assist them in their occasional service activities, secretarial and clerical staff should have basic training in the O.T.F.S. family support model, and be clearly shown how to respond to typical office staff-client contacts. Full time office staff should have the opportunity to attend selected O.T.F.S. skill development workshops, particularly those which relate to their own work (eg. crises management).

**(vi) Workshop administration**

Generally, the organization and delivery of workshops has gone quite well. Two areas for improvement should be noted, however. First, workshop administration (eg. expense cheques, hotel liaison, registration, etc.) has occupied the time and attention of the Training Coordinator, causing him to miss the substance of the workshop. The Training Coordinator should be fully involved as a learner in all workshops, thus acquiring all the skills and knowledge associated with service roles. This will prepare him to conduct the other roles of his position, namely...

- . advisor to the planning process on the management team

- . consultant to staff and Family Support Committees at the community level
- . liaison with non-O.T.F.S. training institutions and resource people who require specific information about previous training
- . co-ordinator of the orientation of new staff

The second administrative difficulty during workshops is that the recording to attendance in a useful form for funders has been somewhat inconsistent. This has resulted in delays in the accounting process with funders, extra work for the Financial Coordinator, and a slow transmission of funds to O.T.F.S. Although the funders are often blamed for this difficulty, O.T.F.S. must take some responsibility for (a) learning what information is required (b) collecting the information and (c) conveying the information when needed. It is the Training Coordinator's responsibility to make sure this is done. However, it is recommended that the O.T.F.S. Statistical Clerk be responsible for all administrative tasks of training workshops, reporting to the Coordinator. Additional details are provided in a later section.

**(vii) The use of outside training resources**

Generally, O.T.F.S.' selection and use of outside training resource people has gone quite well. Outsiders have either been Native people themselves or have had relevant experience. In most cases, efforts were made to communicate with trainers before workshops in order to assure that training content and techniques were relevant and appropriate.

In some cases the pre-workshop planning sessions with trainers were not done in enough detail. This resulted in some workshop sessions being far too advanced for the target audience. To correct this problem, and estimated one-half day or entire evening must be spent with each trainer for a detailed agenda review. This pre-workshop phase should be supplemented with meetings during the workshop. In this way, O.T.F.S. can control its training process, and optimize the Training Coordinator's own learning opportunities.

**(viii) Attendance at non-O.T.F.S. training events**

As indicated, O.T.F.S. staff have considerable opportunities to attend conferences, workshops or courses in small groups or ad individuals. However, the criteria for selecting workshops and selecting people to attend has not been established in policy and communicated to staff. Also, decision-making about such attendance seems to come from the Executive Director, rarely from the Training Coordinator. In some cases, attendance at outside training events has caused some difficulty among staff. Decisions are viewed as "at the whim" of one person, involving favouritism. Although not a serious problem, corrective action is warranted.

Solution to these problems is fairly straight forward. A "training event" policy should be established, one which is flexible enough to respond to training needs and training events as they arise. Also, the Training Coordinator should be confirmed in this aspect of the training function, and receive the necessary training, supervision and support.

Above all, because training opportunities are such a valued part of being an O.T.F.S. employee, training decisions must be seen as equitable and fair.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Program Committee of the Board have as its mandate (a) the development of training policy (b) long range planning for O.T.F.S. training and development (c) review of all training event evaluations.
2. The Program Committee, Training Coordinator, Executive Director and Coordinator of Services should review the original training plan for the purpose of establishing a long range training plan for O.T.F.S. The Training Coordinator should be expected to carry out this plan, and to develop a specific schedule to do so.
3. The Coordinator of Services should be closely involved in the implementation of the training plan, thus assuring that training meets the specific needs of service delivery. In addition to his participation on the Program Committee, this Coordinator should receive detailed training event proposals, plans and evaluations, within the context of the Management Committee.
4. O.T.F.S. Board and Management should review the nature of its commitment to training and community development for the coming years. As part of this review, some guidelines should be established concerning the use of training funds for other purposes.
5. The Training Coordinator should be strengthened in the financial, administrative and proposal writing aspects of his position. He should have in-put to all financial decisions affecting the training function. Financial management and administration should be an important part of his future training. The strengthening of this role will likely result in less involvement by an already busy Executive Director.
6. An analysis of the responsibilities of Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers should be done prior to future training, particularly as regards their involvement in family work. Distinctions should be made between low level support activities and more skilled family counselling. A policy should be established specifying the necessary skills and background for family counselling.
7. Future O.T.F.S. training programs should ensure that all staff are aware of the elements of the family support model. In-service and outside training should give priority to skill-development, so that Family Support Workers can actually do what is expected.
8. Close pre-workshop and during workshop liaison should be maintained between the Training Co-ordinator and outside resource people.
9. Future training should address those staff needs which would reduce staff turnover. On the basis of interviews, such training would include family work skills, stress management, problem solving and working in teams.
10. The Training Coordinator should produce a catalogue of all training resource materials developed to date. This catalogue should list all resources and describe their content in detail. This catalogue should be made available to the communities to assist in review and skill up-grading. Also the catalogue and all

resources should be used extensively in orientation of new staff.

11. O.T.F.S. should assure that the Training Coordinator acquire the skills needed for emerging responsibilities. Such training would give priority to community development, financial management and administration.
12. Office staff should have the opportunity of acquiring simple family work skills (eg. active listening, crises management, etc.) to assist their occasional involvements with clients.
13. The above recommendations will make more rather than fewer demands on the Trainer Coordinator. The recommendations should strengthen his position, and give him opportunities for skill development. As a final recommendation, it is recommended that the Training Coordinator review his job description with the Personnel Committee to assure a mutual understanding of his roles. The Coordinator should assess his own personal commitment to the position, and develop personal plans to fulfill this commitment.

## **PART H      TOWARDS FUTURE GROWTH**

### **1.      Introduction**

The aim of this organization review is to suggest areas where O.T.F.S. can grow in future months. This chapter will summarize recommendations made throughout the report. Many of these recommendations are known already to both staff and management, and have in fact been recommended through the interview process. The important thing is that management, Board and staff have an opportunity to review the report, particularly those areas having relevance to them. A series of workshops would be appropriate, out of which a time-table for changes could be established.

### **2.      Areas for growth**

#### **(A)      The O.T.F.S. Mission**

The philosophy and goals of O.T.F.S. should be reviewed by the Board of Directors, Board of Governors and management. The main purpose of this review is to establish

a concrete understanding of the meaning of "family support". Also this review should agree upon the specific practices which make up family support. Most importantly, these meetings should establish the priority of financial or material support to families, thus reducing the disagreement and dissatisfaction with extensive spending on families requesting financial aid.

**(B) A revised statement of operational goals and objectives:**

The goals and objectives for O.T.F.S. should be revised to reflect the above discussion. The wording of such objectives should be sufficiently detailed and clear such that the anticipated family or community changes are known. Such clarity of anticipated changes should lend itself to future measurement, i.e. the collection of information to determine O.T.F.S.' specific impact on its communities. Knowing such impact will help management decide whether or not O.T.F.S. services are appropriate.

**(C) Developmental Objectives**

O.T.F.S. should strive to complete the developmental process started in the first three years. In particular:

- Policies and procedures should be finalized, and a policies and procedures manual should be distributed to all staff and Board members; a training workshop should assure that all policies and procedures are known and understood.
- the management information system should be quickly finalized, beginning with the development of core planning and monitoring questions for which information is needed, the design of appropriate and workable forms, and the training of staff to fulfill the necessary duties of recording and communicating information. Finally, the management information system should be linked with O.T.F.S.' planning and evaluation, and training functions.

**(D) Planning and Evaluation**

(1) To help avoid the disorganization by crisis management and inappropriate use of resources, a systematic practice of long-range planning should be introduced into the organization. Such planning can be done for different levels of the organization by the Board, Family Support Committees and management.

(2) The development of sound family support plans should be a high priority goal for staff development and supervision. Family support planning should be presented to staff as a problem-solving plan in which (a) the family's problem is identified and understood (b) a target for change and goals are isolated (c) a service strategy and resources are identified, including strengths within the family itself (d) specific time-table for change and review is identified.

(3) Staff evaluation should be a subject of training at the community level. The positive aspects of evaluation as feed-back for growth should be emphasized. Those responsible for staff evaluation locally should be trained in the evaluation process, particularly in the use of evaluation tools. Evaluation tools should be designed to assess specific skills, knowledge and attitudes related to family support

work. The summarized findings from staff evaluation should be used for training needs assessments.

(4) The management information system should be coordinated with the over-all planning and evaluation system. Information provided from staff to management can keep the latter informed on progress towards planning goals, on a monthly basis. For example, planning goals might specify a certain number of new prevention initiatives (eg. drug abuse education). Monthly reports would identify initiatives on a band-by-band basis, thus providing management and Board members with clear data on progress on that particular goal.

### **(E) The Enhancement of Services**

O.T.F.S. should become more active in the development of primary prevention programs on each reserve. At least one staff member per reserve should assume the responsibility for such work. To support prevention initiatives, training should provide at least an introduction to primary prevention, including an exposure to such general skills as program development and mobilizing community participation. As well, certain high priority community education program topics could be provided, such as "parenting skills groups", "alcohol and drug abuse" and "sexuality for teens".

Social and recreational activities should be analyzed more thoroughly as ways of preventing community and family problems. What specific objectives are implicit in such activities? How could they be designed to better assure specific prevention goals?

In general, prevention programs, whatever their nature, should directly tackle the identified "root causes" of community and family problems.

A number of steps could be taken to improve the quality of existing family support services:

1. Staff skills should be improved through a "skills development" priority in the O.T.F.S. training program. This should begin with the development of an inventory of skills needed for successful family support work. Training should be systematically and thoroughly help all staff acquire these skills.
2. A clarification of the appropriate counselling roles of (a) Family Support Workers (b) Senior Family Workers and (c) Professional therapists should be made.
3. O.T.F.S., working in conjunction with each band, should continue to move towards the ideal of integrated services. This ideal can be partly realized through the development of effective service resource teams on each reserve. The concept of "team work" should be introduced, accompanied by local training ("team-building") in: shared responsibility, group assessment, team based family support plans and review.
4. O.T.F.S. should attempt to acquire the resources for one temporary placement home on each reserve, beginning with the most needy reserves. These homes should not replace the concept of customary care, but should be used for particularly difficult cases. The parents in

temporary placement homes should be well trained and supervised in their work.

5. The new Coordinator of Mental Health Services should allocate a portion of his/her time advising service staff on clinical matters. Such advice could be provided in the context of regular case consultations which eventually might be accessible to all reserves through distance education technology. Such technology increases the accessibility of learning events to distant locations through telephone hook-up facilities. With such technology a case consultation on one reserve could be simultaneously available to all other O.T.F.S. reserves.
6. Senior Family Workers should be encouraged to develop their own individualized areas of expertise within the family support model. For O.T.F.S. staff to benefit fully from these specializations, Senior Family Workers should periodically be available to other reserves to share their expertise through case consultation or training.
7. Should repatriation continue as a core O.T.F.S. service, the steps should be stream-lined considerably. To assist with this (a) previous costs should be analyzed in detail (b) repatriation policies and procedures should be finalized (c) training in repatriation should be provided.
8. O.T.F.S. short term care should not be used as a baby-sitting service. O.T.F.S. policy of requiring family support plans with each service is a step in the right direction. The Board of Directors and management should establish additional steps for discouraging abuse of the O.T.F.S. system, steps which likely will require close collaboration with each Chief and band council.
9. O.T.F.S. staff should make more and consistent use of the C.O.P.H. program as a source of assistance to customary care families. If the program does not meet O.T.F.S.' needs, the reasons should be documented and presented to I.N.A.C.
10. The Board of Directors and the O.T.F.S. legal advisor should immediately discuss the legal implications of making temporary placements without the concept of parents.
11. O.T.F.S. Board and management should adopt the same open critical attitude towards cultural awareness activities as any other prevention activities. For example, what are the objectives? How does one deal with unanticipated negative consequences from non-traditional staff or band members? What is O.T.F.S. policy concerning the priority of cultural awareness?

#### **(F) Organizational Development**

O.T.F.S. should consider taking the following steps to improve its organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

1. The Executive Director and the Coordinator of Services should restructure their responsibilities so that (a) the Executive Director concentrates on external liaison (eg. securing funding, government liaison, promotion, liaison with other community agencies, band relationships and support, relations with other Native agencies and



political structures (b) the Coordinator assumes responsibilities for internal operations (eg. service delivery, management of human and financial resources, supervision, etc.) This suggested division of responsibility reflects the individual strengths of both individuals and assures that important liaison functions receive the same attention as internal matters.

2. O.T.F.S. should strongly endorse a principle of hiring based on skill, experience and reliability. Hiring on the basis of friendship or close family relationships without the above criteria should be discouraged. The Board of Directors should consider how this principle can be supported at the band levels.
3. Board and management should review O.T.F.S.' policy for dismissing ineffectives and/or unreliable employees. If necessary, a revised policy should (a) assure individual work assessment, feedback and help for struggling staff, and (b) decisive terminations, if necessary. The effective application of such policy requires close collaboration and communications between O.T.F.S. management and band officials, such that policy is supported and carried out locally.
4. Two specialized functions need to emerge within O.T.F.S. (a) a personnel function, and (b) community development. Depending on the possibility of budget modification, and existing workload, three options are possible:
  - establishing a new Human Resources Officer position, encompassing both functions
  - expanding the Training Coordinator position to include community development; this would require individualized training for the current incumbent
  - incorporating the administrative aspects of the personnel function (eg. signing up new employees, U.I.C. benefits, etc.) into the Finance Department, and train Family Support Committees to solve local employee problems.
5. Family Support Committees should be considerably strengthened through the training process. In particular, Committees should develop the capacity (a) to handle local crises which have occupied too much of management's time, and (b) to participate in the family support planning and review process.

### **Strengthening the Management System**

Most of the following recommendations for strengthening the management system are matters of clarification or improving structures already in place. Recommendations 1, 2 and 4 should take top priority.

1. Immediate steps should be taken to clarify the differences in authority and responsibilities of Band Administration, O.T.F.S. central management, and the local Board member. Such clarification will require joint discussion between management and Board of Directors. For

starters, the following questions should be addressed:

- Who is the Family Support Worker responsible to on a daily basis?
  - Who does the Senior Family Worker report to?
  - Who establishes policies and procedures for staff at the band level, and who makes sure that this gets done?
  - What is the role of the Board member in relation to the daily work?
2. The central management team should undergo a team-building process in which (a) a team management by objectives approach is considered (see Appendix A), and (b) a stronger problem solving capability is established.
  3. The Board of Directors should develop a firm policy concerning the place of material aid in the O.T.F.S. family support service philosophy. This policy should clarify the proportion of the budget for material support, and should indicate the alternative sources, such as the C.O.P.H. program. The result of this exercise should be a clear set of guidelines for management decision-making.
  4. To help the Board feel more comfortable concerning spending decisions, the Board Finance Committee should conduct quarterly audits in which a detailed break-down of spending is examined.
  5. To strengthen the process of supervision in the organization: (a) the supervisory aspects of each position should be clarified (b) supervisory skills identified, followed by (c) training in supervision.
  6. To strengthen the management information system,
    - (a) a full time permanent Statistical Clerk position should be created to handle the processing of all family support, case statistics and legal information; this is a specialized position requiring training and full time attention.
    - (b) statistical information forms should be redesigned to provide specific information to guide management decision-making and organizational planning; the redesign of forms should be preceded by a discussion of (i) what management and planning decisions can be aided by systematic information? (ii) what is the best type of information? (iii) from what sources? (iv) using what procedures for gathering information?
    - (c) the information system should be analyzed into a series of roles and tasks (eg. Family Support Workers need to document their visits with families), and all staff providing and processing information need to be thoroughly trained for these tasks.
    - (d) Senior Family Workers should be thoroughly trained to monitor the collection, recording and transmission of information at the local level.

### **Strengthening access to Community Agencies and Professional Resource People**

1. To assure the continuance of good liaison with community agencies and public acceptance, O.T.F.S. should educate the public in a systematic way. Because of his personal strengths in this area and local reputation, the Executive Director should assume full responsibility for public relations and liaison.
2. To improve the quality of follow-up between O.T.F.S. and all agencies, (a) referral policy and procedures should be developed (b) followed by training in referral and follow-up skills. Also, (c) inter-agency staff meetings on an annual basis should be considered.
3. To increase staff awareness of community resources, a service resource directory should be made available to all service staff. A supplementary directory of Native service organizations should be developed. The use of such resources should be reinforced in the workshop on referrals.
4. To assure adequate access and use of alcohol services, O.T.F.S. should build a strong liaison with the proposed Native alcohol treatment agency. This could be accomplished in a number of ways, including (a) Board involvement (b) donation of a portion of staff time during planning and implementation phase (c) collaboration on research projects (d) collaborative training workshops (e) sharing clinical information on alcohol abuse cases.
5. To enhance the quality of its clinical expertise, O.T.F.S. should consider establishing a voluntary community clinical team for periodic case consultations, general discussions of serious case issues across the reserves, and training. Such a team could be comprised of specialists in the Kenora-Dryden area, and should be coordinated by O.T.F.S.' new Coordinator of Mental Health Services.
6. To control the high costs of consultation, O.T.F.S. should establish (a) long range planning for the use of consultants (b) "ex officio" volunteer Board members with needed specializations (c) guidelines for consultants to organize their work to foster O.T.F.S. independence (d) consultant contracts (e) periodic consultant team meetings.
7. To help reduce the mistrust, anger and confusion concerning C.A.S. and O.T.F.S., (a) a joint Board meeting should be held to clarify mutual rights and responsibilities, and discuss troublesome issues (b) the process of developing protocols and B.C.R.'s governing C.A.S.' access to reserves (c) a policy should be developed identifying the various types of prevention and appropriate bodies to fulfill prevention activities (d) a dispute resolution mechanism should be developed to handle disagreements with other agencies.

### **Improving the Training Process**

Several recommendations have already been made concerning the training process. Generally, training and development should continue as an important priority for

O.T.F.S. during the next year at least. This is true because (a) several training activities are still unfinished (b) O.T.F.S. has experienced a 75% turnover in staff, and (c) the first two years of experience have produced a more detailed understanding of the necessary skills and knowledge for family support work.

To improve upon the training process, the following recommendations are made:

1. To assure the necessary funding for training, Board and management must examine its current commitment to training. If such commitment is positive, arrangements should be made to protect the training budget, and define the appropriate range of activities for which training dollars can be allocated. A yearly training plan and budget should be established for Board acceptance.
2. To help contribute to a strong management infrastructure, future planning should give high priority to the training of Board, management, Family Support Committees and local resource teams.
3. To assure an adequate level of skills among new staff, the Training Coordinator should (a) develop an orientation package (b) assure that new staff do not begin work without two weeks of orientation, job training and introductory skill development, and (c) develop a modification of this package for all O.T.F.S. relief staff.
4. To supplement staff training, the Training Coordinator should assure that all service staff receive copies of resource materials developed in conjunction with training workshops.
5. To help office staff handle client contacts and crises, all office staff should receive basic training in the skills for client contact.
6. To assure that the Training Coordinator fully participates and benefits from training workshops, a training administrative assistant should be assigned to all workshops.
7. To guarantee O.T.F.S.' control of training content and methods, one-half day planning sessions should be held with all outside resource people.