GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING NATIVE ADULTS

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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are the culmination of four years of training Native Family Support Workers for Ojibway Tribal Family Services. The guidelines began as a set of training principles carefully developed with the management and senior staff soon after the agency became operational. They were applied in the design and delivery of several training workshops over a four year period.
Each workshop afforded the opportunity to work with the principles and experiment with different applications. As well, most workshops were documented and evaluated, thus allowing a fairly systematic refinement of the original ideas.

At this stage,we cannot say for sure how generalizable these principles are to Native people in other parts of Ontario and Canada. However, a review of literature in the field suggest that the principles are at least consistent with the experiences of others. Because of the early stages of documentation and sharing of principles for training Native adults, we urge an on-going evaluation and documentation of other training efforts. Moreover, we urge that the evaluation be "participatory" in nature in which Native people themseves are involved in the evaluation process. Such participation will assist the development of a training and evaluation capacity within Native organizations and communities, thus contributing directly to Native management and control of their own development.

These training principles are particularly relevant to the training of Native adults. In many instances they represent the application of sound adult education principles, with a strong sensitivity to the sociological (eg. community) and cultural context of Native adult learners.

Lastly, the following principles reflect an important assumption, namely that learners are both the trainees and facilitators. This obvious adult educational principle needs to be highlighted in the case of training Native people. The interactions within the learning environment must provide an opportunity for non-Native educators to learn appropriate learning styles and training techniques. The training atmosphere must encourage innovativeness and fun as regards learning and teaching.

Twelve general principles follow,many of which have sub-principles. Most principles are followed by suggestions for application.

1.0 TRAINING SHOULD BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF A BROADER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Many training initiatives with Native adult learners, particularly in rural/reserve settings,do not take place in a vacuum. What likely will be the case is that many other training and development initiatives will be happening at the same time. For example, other service programs may be under development,including the role and job clarifications of staff who are not directly involved in the training program under consideration. Another example is that, because of the stage of local community development, those being trained may not have the support of an organizational or community infrastructure (eg. supervision, resources, reasonably clear work role expectations, etc.). Planning for training should somehow take into account that trainees are not returning to a known or predictable work environment

1.1 The unit of training should be organizational or community systems

If at all feasible, the ideal unit of training should be organizational or larger community systems, rather than individuals in similar work roles isolated for specialized training. For example, rather than having the service staff of a particular Native organization receive special training, efforts would also be made to identify the training needs of those whose work directly or indirectly complements or supports that of the service worker, including such people as other service workers, supervisors, Band Administrators,volunteers,Band members,and the like. Thus training would develop local networks, rather than isolated individuals.In other words, an integrated approach to training is probably most desirable in developing Native communities.

Integrated, community-focused training designs are quite consistent

with the "holistic" values of Native people, in which patterns and events are seen in their interdependence rather in isolation.

1.2 Training should be appropriate to community traditions, respecting local ways of teaching and learning, utilizing or developing community training or work resources.

Ideally, this principle helps avoid training events where alien training techniques from the dominant society are imposed in culturally and developmentally different learning communities. Again, where local human or material resources are used, the local community becomes much better equipped to undertake future training, and support the workers new skills annd knowledge with appropriate resources (eg. service guidelines for customary care). The integrated development of resources with training helps build a better fit between trained staff and the real demands of work.

The use of local resource people has several consequences for Native training, community development, and self-sufficiency:

.it helps the non-Native adult facilitator learn more about local teaching and learning

.it provides valuable training opportunities for Native people, thereby contributing to self-sufficiency through the development of a broad-based learning community

.it helps assure culturally appropriate training

.it builds confidence within local resource peoples and learners, an important component of empowerment

.it helps build a "natural" source of support within the community; such resource people can be used for training, ad hoc consultation, or as regular volunteers (eg. Ojibway Tribal Family Services' "Family Support Committees")

.it helps develop an understanding of the " big community picture" typically associated with training needs.

A related principle is #7, "training the trainers". See below.

One important implication of this principle is that training events must be planned, conducted and evaluated in close collaboration with members of the learning community. This process must be viewed as <u>part of</u>, rather than separate from,the training.

1.3 <u>**Training should facilitate the development of practice principles**</u>

Whatever the content area, training should encourage the development of general practice principles guiding the application of specific knowlege and skills. Practice principles are ideals for one's work behavior or interactions with others, and therfore have implications far beyond the immediate work task or episode. An example of a practice principle from the human service field is that all support activities or programs should encourage the independent problem-solving of the family or family members. Two important implications flow from this example:

.practice principles should be linked to more general Native ideals and values, such as self-reliance.
.such principles are not simply the ideals for the <u>trainee</u>; they are <u>shared</u> principles governing interactions between the trainee and other "role partners" in the community (including the client).

.such training principles are likely to "emerge" from the training as an unplanned learning for all.

The important point is that without the recognition and commitment to such principles, the application of specific skills and work-related knowledge will be difficult.

2.0 <u>**THE SETTING AND TRAINING CLIMATE IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR NATIVE ADULT LEARNERS**</u>

Native people have a history of unfortunate alienating experiences with learning. Much of this can be attributed to the location of learning and the damaging impact of participating in settings where the controlling parties are ignorant or disrespectful of the learners culture and social background. Experience suggests that Native

learners are particularly sensitive to the atmosphere for learning. Succesful training planning should give give considerable attention to this matter.

2.1 <u>If possible, choose a natural training setting which is compatible with Native culture and life style</u>

Training experience suggests that on-reserve, rural, and informal training settings were better liked and more conducive to concentration and learning than those in urban "institutional" settings. Many people appreciate isolated settings where they are free of the demands of ordinary life. The most successful training sessions with Ojibway Tribal Family Services were held at an on-reserve training centre surrounded by Native art, traditionally designed architecture, and serviced by Native people.
This contrasts sharply with formal school settings which are designed according non-Native values.

2.2 <u>Climate-setting activities should promote considerable interaction among participants</u>

Depending on who is sponsoring the event, Native training frequently involves unacqainted participants from other reserves. Encouraging people to meet each other in warm-up exercises is a useful way to establish a good learning environment, particularly if such warm-ups encourage humour. The interaction among strangers can be continued in training designs. For example, small groups can be organized with persons from different communities. One of the most useful things that can be done in training is to build relationships between people from different communities.

Humorous warm-ups are particularly successful when led by a Native person, ideally one who is known for his/her abilities as an "entertainer". This comes across as more natural than an "ice-breaking

exercise",designed and conducted by a non-Native training technician.

2.3 <u>The interpersonal styles and roles of the training instructor are particularly important with Native learners</u>

Research and training experience with Native adult learners indicate that <u>successful trainers are</u> ...

.warm (smiling, physical closeness, and touching),open and personal in their teaching style; good rapport is established at the beginning of the training encounters

.sensitive to the cultural and social backgounds of trainees, and flexibly responsive to their life conditions

.seen as learners as well as instructors

.able to establish an appropriate pace in the learning activities, as opposed to hurrying to complete an agenda

.willing to share leadership and control,through negotiating the rules and exopectations of the training setting

.smooth and slow in pace

.less likely to single out individual students but are able to influence the class as a whole; indirect versus direct criticism is preferred.

.accepting of silence in the class-room, and are willing to tolerate long pauses after asking questions

.able to combine personal qualities with strong demands for excellence in their work.

.able to persist in drawing out the shy, withdrawn learner.

.able to tolerate ambiguity concerning how training events might actually unfold; trainers of Native adults, particularly non-Natives, should be prepared to revise the training event based on the emergence of new assumptions and knowledge as the event proceeds; see also **Section 9.0** below.

3.0 THE CONTENT OF TRAINING SHOULD INCLUDE RELEVANT MATERIAL ON TRADITIONAL NATIVE CULTURE

Most Native communities, whether reserve or urban, express a serious interest in learning Native culture. One might say that cultural revitalization is one of the most important Native goals, along with self-government. Including material on traditional culture has a number of positive functions for adult Native training:

.it makes the training <u>interesting</u> for all participants, touching the core of trainee <u>motivation</u>; for the non-Native trainer,it provides another opportunity to learn the culture and make <u>training culture-based</u>.

.if training material is adequately linked to basic cultural values, the resulting skills and knowledge may be more <u>valued</u> by the trainee, hence better applied in work roles; this assumes that Native people want to work in ways that are compatible with fundamental Native values.

.assuming that the interest in recovering Native culture is a <u>shared</u> value,the Native community may view the applied skills as both legitimate and desirable (eg. efforts to promote customary care will be supported by the community at large)

To incorporate cultural awareness in training programs requires more than teaching Native culture by Elders or cultural teachers, although this is likely the most important element. It requires training designs which encourage the learners' reflection, shared discussion of themes and practical applications. For an example of the use of Elders talks, learning diaries, and buzz groups in this process, see Maidman,F., <u>Native Family Support:Training Guidelines</u>,1989.

Of equal importance is that learning the implications of fundamental Native values for any given kind of work (whether service, industrial, managerial) is not a straightforward process which can be accomplished in one training event. This is an on-going process which should be made a regular part of the work, planning, supervision,etc. Thus, the workshop should help trainees learn <u>how</u> to do this (ie. they "learn how to learn"), so that it can be carried over into the workplace.

4.0 TRAINING DESIGN AND PROCESS SHOULD BE CULTURE-BASED.

The above principle refers to the <u>content</u> of training. This principle refers to the structure and process of training, i.e. <u>how</u> training is done. Training/learning activities and interactions should reflect the Native values and ideals. A tentative listing of selected values, along with training program implications, is listed below:

. <u>Decision-making by consensus</u>

. training event or program planning based on thorough consultation with user groups; avoidance of pre-packaged fixed training curriculum; curriculum packages should be used as "prototypes" for adaptation to the training event

. learning through <u>group-based</u> problem-solving and discussion

. evaluation of training events through <u>dialogue</u>; questionnaire-based information should be shared with trainees and planners, for discussion and implications.

. <u>Oral traditions</u>

. the use of talks, group discussion, verbal reporting to larger group by small groups.

. talks by Elders, cultural teachers, local leaders and other resource people.

. short written resource materials.

. <u>Importance of group-based knowledge</u>

.minimize role of "expert", particularly outside expert

.buzz group discussions

.group-based problem-solving

.lecture material reflects and summarizes the knowledge created in group exercises

.<u>The importance of visual culture</u>

.the use of modern technology to share ideas (eg. video, over-head, computer-assisted graphics, etc.)

.accompany spoken ideas with visual notes, diagrams, graphics, etc.

.encourage amateur artists in the training group to summarize ideas in artistic forms

.use of flip chart notes in group discussion sessions for sharing with larger training group.

.role play demonstrations of skills and principles

.avoid use of lengthy written materials with dense text; written material with brief notes, phrases, and symbolic rendering of ideas may be more effective.

.<u>The importance of family relationships</u>

.involvement of family members in training workshops, particularly when applications of training involves restructuring of family attitudes,trust,and responsibilities (eg. family support worker roles may require long after-hours work and/or intensive counselling relationships with opposite sex clients)

.<u>Holistic perspective</u>

To promote holistic understanding of problems, and multi-levelled solutions, training events should ...

.use <u>many resource people</u> with a <u>variety of perspectives</u>.

.incorporate <u>panel presentations</u> around specific topics, drawing on multiple perspectives;and provide opportunities to integrate perspectives into work activities.

.<u>avoid</u> training based on <u>specialized ("narrow") theoretical perspectives</u>.

.encourage use of <u>group- or team-based idea building</u> methods in which individual points of view are encouraged and respected (eg. traditional talking circle)

.<u>kindness</u>

.efforts should be made to create a <u>relaxed learning atmosphere</u>, balancing fun,enjoyment and learning tasks.

.<u>use positive incentives</u> rather than punishment-oriented training.

.effective trainers will likely (a) have <u>warm</u> <u>styles</u> (b) show an <u>authentic understanding</u> of the usual difficulties associated with learning, and (c) <u>appreciate</u> the tendency of many Native groups to <u>joke</u> during serious tasks.

5.0 <u>TRAINING SHOULD RECOGNIZE AND REINFORCE THE TRADITIONAL TEACHING ROLES OF ELDERS</u>

Depending on the desires of the community, Native Elders can be used in a number of useful ways in adult training. Open discussions about

the possibilities is advised, perhaps with consultations with cultural teachers or Elders from other communities. Experience so far suggests the following roles:

.<u>Ceremonial/spiritual</u>, in which Elders conduct opening and closing
                ceremonies for training events.

.<u>Cultural teaching</u> in which Elders give talks on traditional cultural
                values and practices.

.<u>Elders workshops</u> in which groups of Elders lead workshops on specific
                topics or issues, such as customary care.

.<u>Planning</u> in which Elders offer advise to instructors in the early
                design of workshops, and on-going evaluation.

Elders' impact in the adult training process may far exceed their cultural and spiritual contributions. As respected community spokespersons, they give credibility to the training process, and strive to emphasize the value of learning for trainees. Elders often make what adult educators call "climate-building" remarks to workshop audiences, in which specific training events are associated with the positive development of Native people generally. Often, their closing remarks celebrate the success of training events, and are congratulatory in tone. Elders' participation creates a positive, motivating atmosphere, particularly in communities where cultural revitalization is an important part of life.

6.0<u>TRAINING SHOULD BE PRACTICAL AND RELEVANT</u>

Great pains should be taken to make training events directly relevant to the community, work or quality of life needs of Native learners. Previous evaluation studies strongly suggest that alienation from the learning process resulted from an inability to see how they could actually use what they had learned. This widely appreciated adult education principle seems particularly applicable to Natives. Suggested planning and design procedures to contribute to practical relevance are:

.A careful,thorough,<u>needs analysis</u> in which training planners become
            fully aware of the situation in which new knowledge or skills
            will be applied. Needs analyses should delve beyond the
            originally communicated training need, to a deep level
            understanding of work roles, community conditions,

organizational situations, available resources, etc.

.A <u>training committee</u> of participants who will help <u>monitor</u> the training event,and provide corrective feed-back to instructors. Because Native people may not have experienced monitoring functions,the <u>preparation</u> of this committee should be included in the over-all training design.

.Training <u>exercises and resource materials could be designed by Native people</u> who are familiar with the local situation. At the very least, prototype materials should be thoroughly reviewed and modified by a resource group.For example,role plays or other experiential learning exercises, should be designed to simulate easily recognized situations.

.The <u>training of practice principles</u> should always be accompanied by exercises in which learners can "apply" the principles in appropriate simulated situations.The "how to" behaviors associated with principles should be practiced during the training event.

7.0 NATIVE PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING TRAINING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Native people across Canada are striving for self-sufficiency and self-government. Non-Native training institutions and private consultants can assist this process by organizing their development work in ways which provide opportunities for Native skill and knowledge development. Private consultants can organize their work so that each project leaves an organization or community with better technical capacities to undertake their own future training and development. At the very least, Native people should, after each experience with non-Native consultants, be in a better position to assess and choose among technicians in the future.

Several methods exist for contributing to the development of this capability. These methods tend to represent various positions on a continuum of Native participation and control of the training process:

.A full " participatory training" design in which the the Native community is invoved in designing, delivering, and evaluating the training program; the role of the outside trainer is one of consultant, support person, and co-trainer to those assuming key training roles. For partricipatory training principles and case studies, see Shrivastava and Tandon, Participatory Training For Rural Development, 1982.

.A "training the trainers" model in which Native people, ideally those currently or potentially in training and development positions, receive training in training skills. Such people can, with strong support and coaching from a more experienced trainer, conduct a training event. On-going feed-back, dialogue and evaluation is an important ingredient in this process.

.A limited training skills approach for Native people who are not necessarily preparing for training and development positions, but whose work would benefit from training experience. For example, social service supervisors could learn and assume limited training roles (eg. short lecturettes, small group facilitation, case study presentations, etc.) in workshops for front-line social service staff.

.A <u>training resource development group</u> working closely with the trainer,developing resource materials before, during and after a training event.

.A <u>training advisory group</u> which helps the trainer plan, monitor, and evaluate training events.

8.0 TRAINING SHOULD USE EXPERIENTIAL AND GROUP-BASED LEARNING METHODS

Traditionally, the Native learning style is one of learning by observing and doing. This preference continues today, as has been confirmed by several workshop evaluations. Role plays have been extremely successful, particularly when exercises are relevant and local in their content. As indicated,the most useful role plays are those designed collaboratively with Native people.

8.1 Role play instructions should be general rather than highly structured

For Native people, general instructions rather detailed scripts appear to work more successfully. As well, in social service training at least, they are more functional to the developmental process. In many situations, the specific task behaviors are not known in advance, but can be identified and tried out in flexible role play situations. Also, the sense of personal success and self-esteem that derives from risk-taking in role plays is particularly appropriate for the Native learner with a history of negative experiences in previous learning environments.

8.2 Case study training approaches are particularly useful for Native learners

Training evaluations strongly indicate that learning through problem-solving with case studies is both well received and effective with Native learners. This is particularly so when great pains are taken to design case studies embodying current issues or problems.

Focus on "problems" should be balanced with cases and other experiential material which highlight <u>positive</u> aspects of Native life. Many Native people express frustration with negative images. Training which reinforces this may continue to perpetuate a negative identity. The idea of "balance" is important though, because Native people can gain from achieving self-reliance as "problem-solvers".

Efforts should be directed to producing knowledge, and identifying skills, <u>inductively</u> from problem-solving exercises, rather than working deductively from theory. In this way,trainees <u>participate</u> in naming the skills from their own experiences, rather than relying on others to identify necessary skills. Non-Native instructors may find that Native ways of categorizing and naming skills differ from familiar ways.

9.0 <u>**THE CATEGORIES OF TRAINING AND LEARNING SHOULD REFLECT THE EXPERIENCES OF NATIVE LEARNERS**</u>

The ways people describe, categorize and perceive their world is much affected by their culture. For meaningful training,knowledge must use and build upon the Native ways of expressing concerns. That is, the words, phrases, idioms of learning, should reflect <u>their</u> ways of naming and talking about their world.

Training should be <u>rooted in the community's experience</u>. Efforts should be made before and during training events to learn and document that experience, and integrate it into the content, organization,and resources of training.

This principle may be difficult for the non-Native instructor. The specific guide-lines should come from sharing training experiences and Native/non-Native discussions <u>about</u> the training experience. Some tips are as follows:

.<u>Avoid detailed pre-packaged curricula</u> which have not been thoroughly worked through with Native advisors.

.<u>Organize training events around the categories used by Native people</u>, if possible. If this is not possible,use simple "common sense" expressions rather than technical jargon. (eg. "how to understand a troubled person" rather than "assessment"). Even so, common sense expressions should be identified by Native advisors.

.<u>Use training events as occasions for discovering the ways in which learners understand and talk about their world</u>; be prepared to adopt such expressions as you go.

.Adopt a <u>flexible approach to organizing</u> a training event; be

prepared,for example,to introduce modifications or new modules to reflect the ways learners think about tasks, knowledge or skills.

.Use or develop <u>learning materials using the words of Native learners</u>. Depending on their preference, this may require translation into a Native language.

.Familiarize yourself with products from other training events, particularly those (eg. <u>Taking Control Project</u>, University of Regina) with verbatim transcripts of workshop discussions.

.<u>Collect or develop original local information for</u> later re-organizing into <u>training materials</u>. For example, important meetings could be documented and circulated as case materials.

10. <u>BUILD GENERIC SKILL TRAINING INTO ALL TRAINING EVENTS AND CAPITALIZE ON THE NATURAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</u>

Many Native adults need and ask for opportunities for generic and life skill training. Their high mobility between different kinds of jobs means that transportable skills are valued and useful. Examples of such skills include:

.writing.planning

.problem-solving.communication

.group work.public speaking

.self-esteem building.learning how to learn

.empowering skills.organizing

Opportunities for building these and other skills can easily be designed in and around training events, even though such events may focus on other skills. Examples are:

.training diaries or logs

.small group structured learning experiences

.individuals taking turns reporting to larger groups after small group
                work

.exercises in which individuals relect on their knowledge before and
                after each training module

.participatory evaluations of training events in which trainees
                discuss   the   various   training   and   learning
                approaches

.opportunities for trainees to participate in the planning, monitoring
                and evaluation of training events

It is important to remember that learning happens at a number of
different levels. For example, individuals obviously learn the <u>content</u>
of what they see,hear,and do in specific training exercises or events.
In addition, learners acquire the <u>principles,skills and attitudes</u>
associated with training climate and organization.How they are
required to conduct themselves from arrival to departure (eg.
organizing for transportation, arranging for expense cheques,
managing their time and involvement in training events, etc.) all
constitute part of a <u>"natural learning" environment</u> during training
events. Adult educators of Native people must consider these natural
opportunities in their over-all design, and how such opportunities
reinforce life skill learning. As well, the natural learning
environment must reinforce the skills, attitudes and knowledge
acquired during training designs. For example, adult learners exected
to learn the attitudes and skills associated with <u>independence</u>, should
not be forced into situations of <u>dependency</u> in the natural learning
environment.

12. <u>**ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN ALL NATIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR APPLICATION AND FOLLOW-UP IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS**</u>

The transference of skills and knowledge from training events to the community work situation may be particularly challenging for Native people. Instructors should be cautious about making assumptions about the quality of support, resources, supervision, and general organizational support in the work settings. Experience in some training sessions found that Native trainees anticipated great difficulties in applying their new skills and knowledge.

The following suggestions may help with the transference problem:

.the <u>incorporation of problem-posing and problem-solving skill training</u> as a component of each training workshop; such exercises would help trainees identify and do something about difficulties in the back-home situation.

.be sure that the <u>trainees' supervisors are fully aware of the new</u>

skills and knowledge, so that they can provide appropriate follow-up coaching.

.be sure that other trainee work "role partners" are also aware of the newly learned skills and knowledge;this may require their participation in the training process.

.follow-up evaluation in which specific analysis is done concerning the application of skills in the work setting;this may require follow-up training, organizational or community development;ideally, Native people could be trained to conduct such evaluation studies, thus contributing to organizational learning and development.