

**Ojibway Tribal Family Services**

**"EXPANDING THE CIRCLE OF SUPPORT"**

**Organizational Review, Phase Two**

**Frank Maidman, Ph.D  
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## **1.INTRODUCTION**

This report summarizes the results of the second phase of OTFS' organizational review. The first phase, completed in Feb. 1988, identified the organization's strengths and areas for improvement, and made suggestions for further growth. Phase two follows on the original study, giving particular attention to the high priority issues identified in Phase One.

This phase of the organizational review addresses five broad questions:

- 1.What is OTFS' progress on its main service goals?
- 2.Has OTFS made progress in the areas of improvement identified in the earlier report?
- 3.What current service and organizational issues or challenges does OTFS face?
- 4.What steps can be taken within the organization to assure that these issues are addressed?

## **2.ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW METHODS**

The methods used to conduct this phase of the organizational review can be described as "action research". Action research aims to gather and share information with the members of an organization in order to identify and understand problems or issues, and to stimulate discussion and growth.

The specific steps were as follows:

- (i)Two organizational review workshops with the OTFS Board of Directors and management, in which problems and issues from Phase one were reviewed. These workshops were used to assess the changes, and to gather additional information for solutions.
  
- (ii)One organizational review workshop with OTFS Family Support Staff, NNADAP workers, Sacred Circle staff, and management.
  
- (iii)Review of service statistics compiled internally by the OTFS Statistician and the OTFS Home Placement/Court Worker.
  
- (iv)Extensive telephone, face-to-face, and field interviews with OTFS staff, management, selected Board members, and the Director of Social Development, Ontario Region, INAC.
  
- (v)Information feedback with OTFS Board, management, and Legal Advisor.

### **3.PROGRESS TOWARDS OTFS GOALS**

Ojibway Tribal Family Services' aim 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)Providing support services to strengthen families
- (iv)Initiating community education and support programs to prevent the removal of children from their families and home communities
- (v) Providing outreach services to band members of the fourteen reserves.

Progress on each of these goals will now be reviewed.

#### **Goal (i). To strengthen families and avoid the removal of children from their families during times of crises**

In 1991, OTFS continues to provide an alternative to the Provincial child welfare system. Through OTFS efforts, children from families in crisis are being cared for within their own communities, rather than the Provincial child welfare system. Between 1988 and 1990 there was an increase in the number of child care hours facilitated by OTFS.

The presence of CAS in OTFS First Nations is still being felt, however. As of December, 1990 approximately 128 children were reported in the care of CAS. Internal statistics show that approximately 2 families per month have children apprehended.

The apprehension of families is primarily happening in two First Nations, Grassy Narrows and Islington. Interviews reveal that many cases in these two communities are "hard core" families who are particularly difficult to change.

## Issues

Four issues must be addressed:

1. What does the increase in child care hours mean? Four options are possible.

.The number of child care hours has not changed, but the accuracy of OTFS record-keeping has improved, thus yielding more accurate statistics.

.Problems and crises are on the increase in OTFS First Nations, requiring OTFS help.

.OTFS resources are responding to the problems that have existed over time, but have not surfaced. OTFS is becoming aware of these through its outreach efforts, and is taking steps to help.

.The increase in the number of child care days reflects an abuse of OTFS services, that OTFS is used as a "baby-sitting" service. Parents wanting freedom from parenting responsibilities for whatever reason, will somehow make arrangements for children to be temporarily placed in other community homes.

2. What are the reasons that serious problems continue to hamper the two communities of Islington and Grassy Narrows, challenge the efforts of OTFS staff, and continue to require the intervention of the CAS?

3. Could OTFS resources in other communities be used to help Islington and Grassy Narrows?

4. The amount of time required for court work is frustrating and discouraging for many staff, and is stressful for families. Countless hours of court time responding to CAS interventions is taking away from the prevention work that OTFS was set up to provide.

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**Goal (ii). The identification of children in care of other agencies, institutions and authorities and return of these children to their families in their respective communities.**

This service goal was originally pursued under service activities known as "repatriation". In 1988 the organizational review noted that although good development work was done in designing repatriation methods, activities had been minimized due to enormous service costs.

This state of affairs exists today. Repatriation, as a core OTFS service activity, does not occurring at a level which would respond to need. A Crown Ward Review identified 44 cases of children living in other communities, yet contacts with these children have not taken place.

Time, skills and financial support are needed to complete the necessary steps for successful repatriation. For example, repatriated children must be properly reintegrated into their communities.

**Issues**

1. What is the place of repatriation in OTFS' future? Could the Board raise this at a planning session?
2. Could Family Support staff be asked to record instances of requests for repatriation, so OTFS planners could assess the need?
3. Have other Native agencies maintained their efforts in the repatriation area, and if so how have they coped with the prohibitive costs?

**Goal (iii). The provision of support service to strengthen families.**

This is an extremely important goal for the OTFS service system. The concept of the "family support model" is the foundation for prevention services directed particularly to the family unit.

The staff organizational review workshop revealed that service activities supporting families continue to dominate staff attention. Family and individual counselling still are the most frequent activities. Also, with some exceptions, staff are far more confident in the quality of their counselling work.

Other family support services reported by staff include:

.home visits.helping clients access and use other agencies and treatment facilities

.crisis intervention.working directly with children

.material assistance

Concerning material assistance, we will see in a later section that many customary care arrangements are done, with little or no financial support from OTFS to the community care-givers. This is an encouraging development, given the OTFS' principle of energizing the natural supports within their communities. Obviously, much of OTFS' work has successfully encouraged the kind of help which was typical of traditional community life.

For many alternative care-givers, though, financial support for clothing, food and other necessities continues. Financial costs have steadily increased over the years, reaching a high during 1990 of approximately \$130,000. This amount represents an increase of 73% over the previous fiscal year. Finances will be discussed in a later section.





**Goal (iv) Community education and support programs to prevent the removal of children from their families and home communities**

In the OTFS model, community education is designed to strengthen community and family life so that problems do not occur in the first place. In the 1988 report, many educational activities were noted, but by and large family support and crisis work tended to occupy the largest proportion of the Family Support Workers' time.

This same picture, with some exceptions, continues today. Workers report a broad range of prevention activities, including:

- .school-related activities (eg. visits to talk about family problems)
- .self-help groups
- .craft activities
- .food-oriented socials (feasts)
- .cultural activities and teachings
- .life skills teachings
- .sports and recreation
- .traditional economic activities
- .community socials at Xmas, New Year, etc.
- .home visits to high risk community members
- .involvement of elders (eg. teaching, counselling)
- .traditional healing activities, such as sweat lodges and healing circles

Cultural activities, sports and recreational activities are the most frequently reported prevention activities. This report cannot comment on the frequency and quality of these activities.

The Sacred Circle Program has introduced a number of important community education activities into OTFS services, and plans to provide more in the coming year. Many other Sacred Circle activities fall into the category of prevention. These are:

.A major Elder/youth workshop at Pow Wow Island to acquaint youth with traditional culture and enhance self-respect as Native people

.Local community educational workshops and consultations to help staff and other Band members recognize depression and potential suicides. These opportunities aim to share the basic skills for preventing suicide, including (i) the signs of potential suicide (ii) basic helping skills during a crisis, and (iii) skills and knowledge for contacting additional helping people.

.The "Flying on Your Own Program", which has been provided to staff, management and Board members, and is about to be offered to communities. This program encourages participants to share painful issues in their life, provides training for self-awareness, and teaches interpersonal skills for healthy living.

The Sacred Circle Program is making an outstanding contribution to OTFS services.

### **Issues**

1.The increasing number of child care hours, the on-going apprehension of children by CAS, and the sky rocketing financial support budget, all give evidence to continuing family problems. Obviously the root causes of such problems have not been addressed. OTFS should consider giving more attention to its community education goal.

2.For OTFS to achieve further success in community education, staff should be helped to think through exactly what communities should be educated about. Also, do specific community groups need special attention? Activities so far suggest a wide range of needed knowledge and skills, including traditional culture, self-awareness, signs of suicide, effects of alcohol abuse and many others.

3.The "Flying On Your Own" program is an emotionally powerful program which seems to provide enormous benefit to many people. On the other hand, some have expressed concern over the painful feelings surfaced by the program, and the behaviors which may not be acceptable to all community members. Dr. Connors, and other senior OTFS staff, recognize

the need for appropriate follow-up and local support, subsequent to program delivery. This program has tremendous community healing potential, provided that sufficient attention is given to community-by-community planning and on-going evaluation.

**Goal (v) The Provision of Outreach Services to Band Members**

OTFS continues to provide outreach services to members of the fourteen First Nation communities. This is reflected and supported by the following:

- .Local community members are hired as Family Support Workers. They know their communities, are aware of existing problems, and are familiar with ways of accessing people and resources.
- .Staff are expected to reach out to people with problems, people whose behavior is damaging to themselves or their children. Such people may not know what to do, or indeed may not be aware of their problems.
- .OTFS offices and staff have high visibility in each of the 14 First Nation communities.
- .Staff reach out to local institutions, particularly the schools
- .Staff help organize, and participate in, local community activities and are generally highly involved in the on-going life of the community.
- .Staff provide community education and other prevention activities.
- .Local Family Support Committees, where they are operational, make key decisions and help monitor and support outreach activities.

**Issues**

1.Undoubtedly, OTFS is well organized to continue its outreach approach to services. However, interviews and workshops with Family Support Workers clearly reveal that staff experience stress because they live in communities which they serve. Knowing people personally, serving relatives, being caught up in local politics, having to make tough decisions concerning financial support to clients--- all of these issues heighten the stress, lower the effectiveness, and may explain the high staff turnover. OTFS planners may well be advised to consider what can be done to address this issue.

The previous sections commented on OTFS' movement towards its major service goals.The next section more closely examines delivery of services.

## 4.SERVICE DELIVERY

### Providing Services: Successes and Challenges

This section summarizes some of the strengths and areas for improvement in OTFS delivery of services. Comments will be organized according to the main services and principles of the OTFS support model. First, important aspects of the model are summarized.

The OTFS model specifies eight services for achieving the organization's goals. These are as follows:

- .community education
- . family counselling
- . repatriation
- . short-term care
- . extra-parental care
- . repatriation
- . special needs support
- . advocacy (including court work and legal support)

### A.Community Education

In the section on OTFS' progress on goals, reference was made to the prevalence of community education and other activities, and to the recent contributions of The Sacred Circle Program. Although OTFS provides many problem-solving services, most staff still manage to find some time for basic prevention work, particularly in the areas of cultural awareness, sports, recreation and suicide prevention.

**Issues**

The following issues identify possible blocks or impediments to prevention work, particularly among Family Support Workers.

1. Because of the demands for taking action against serious family problems, some communities are unable to devote many hours to community education or other preventative activities. This is one service area where staff from other communities, less involved with crisis work, could develop and help deliver appropriate programs for their fellow workers. OTFS management, at various times, has encouraged cross-community sharing of resources. In the prevention area this has not yet gotten off the ground. Human resource sharing and networking could also take place with staff of other Treaty #3 First Nations.
2. OTFS staff have not yet received training in prevention programming. Lacking confidence in their abilities, several staff are reluctant to venture into prevention work. Knowledge and skills related to substance abuse, culture, self-help group programming, and sexual abuse are much in demand.
3. Many staff feel bogged down in administrative work, something which may take time away from community education and other prevention work.
4. Effective community education, because it reaches many if not all community members, requires strong support from the local leadership. Yet in many communities, support from Chiefs and Councils is reportedly weak, as is co-operation with other Band services.

## **B.Counselling**

Individual and family counselling is clearly one of OTFS' most important services. Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers spend the largest percentage of their time counselling clients. As well, the Co-ordinator of Services and the Sacred Circle Director estimate spending about 30% and 5% of their respective time doing counselling.

It is likely that the quality of counselling has improved over the last two years, largely the result of training at the University of Manitoba. As well, Dr. Connors coaches family support staff in their work with problem families. Whatever the reason, most family support staff report that counselling is among their three best activities.

Despite the probable improvement in the quality of counselling by OTFS staff, several service issues should be highlighted.

### **Issues**

1. Family Support Workers still report difficulties in working with relatives. This is an on-going issue, first identified in the Organizational Review, Phase 1.
2. Family support and NNADAP staff report difficulties in blending Native traditional healing with dominant society professional methods. What are the differences? How and when should each be used?
3. Many staff report difficulties in counselling special needs clients, such as the mentally ill.
4. Counselling the unemployed is also challenging, particularly when jobs are not available.
5. Counselling the victims of sexual abuse, and others with equally sensitive problems is awkward and troublesome.
6. A group of very troubled, multi-problem families resist help of any kind. Most of these families abuse alcohol, neglect each others' needs, and place their children at risk.

### **C. Advocacy**

Quoting the OTFS Family Services 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 client interests are well represented to other agencies. O.T.F.S. advocacy service will also help client families become their own best advocates"

**Court work** is a good example of OTFS' advocacy service. It is likely to consume considerable staff time, particularly in communities with serious family problems requiring child apprehension.

The last organizational review identified a number of court work issues. Most of these related to difficulties experienced by staff when preparing and accompanying clients to court. OTFS has responded to these challenges in a number of ways:

- .One-half of a staff position is devoted to the court work needs of OTFS, including such duties as assuring band representation, preparing staff for court, following up with court disposition reports, and supporting staff follow-up activities with the client. The Court Worker works closely with the OTFS Legal Advisor.
- .The development of a resource video for training in band representation was started, but was discontinued for financial reasons. The proposed video would use OTFS staff to illustrate important preparatory activities for court, such as family support planning, preparing clients for court, and participation in the court process.

With these developments, plus the educational role of the Native staff at the Kenora legal clinic, it appears that staff have adequate organizational support for their court advocacy work.

However, although some Senior Family Workers are doing a good job preparing their staff and families for court, there is considerable discouragement. The court process is a non-Indian system, requiring facts, records, and confrontations which take the problem-solving process out of the communities. There is no respect for it.



#### **D.Arranging Services for Special Needs**

OTFS recognizes that, on occasion, referrals to other agencies and professionals is necessary. Over the years, staff have referred to alcohol treatment centres, the Infant Development Centre, the local hospitals and many other specialized services.

In the last few years, several resource developments are noteworthy for their likely contributions to the OTFS service environment.

.Dr. Ed Connors, of the Sacred Circle Program, has visited a number of local non-Native agencies, educating mental health service providers about appropriate services to Native people and the value of traditional healing.

.The Migisi Treatment Centre, located on Rat Portage reserve, is now in full operation.

#### **Issue**

1.At first, some clients from OTFS communities were reluctant to use the Migisi Treatment Centre, preferring the anonymity of more distant centres. This has gradually changed as Migisi became better known and trusted. However, there are now several centres which are potentially available for referrals. Staff need training on the various programs and criteria for selecting one program over another.

## **E. Alternative living arrangements for children: short and long-term care**

As indicated earlier, the number of child care days and the financial support of care has substantially increased in recent years. This indicates that OTFS is clearly responding to the needs of children and families, and that temporary placements of children continues as an important tool for family support. Ideally, the temporary relief provided to so many families gives them time to solve their problems.

### **Issues**

Several issues should be highlighted in relation to this service.

1. Concern has been expressed by Provincial and Federal government officials that OTFS is "apprehending" children, and therefore is functioning outside of its prevention role. OTFS does not see itself as apprehending children, but as facilitating community care arrangements according to local custom. This confusion has been on-going almost since the beginning of OTFS.
2. Broad policy guidelines assist placement of children in temporary homes. These guidelines give priority to extended family members and other community homes. Despite this, confusion or disagreement exists in some instances concerning the appropriateness of some homes. Workers sometimes find themselves in difficult decision situations, when specific families seem inappropriate or when local influences enter into the decision-making process. Fully functioning Family Support Committees would be enormously helpful in such situations.
3. The option of temporarily placing children was originally conceived as a tool for providing help to troubled parents. Placement would take place while parents got help, either through OTFS or on their own. It is not clear that this is how placements are being used. The most serious possibility is that the service is being abused by some parents who seek temporary freedom from parental responsibilities. OTFS was not designed as a "baby-sitting" service. Family support plans are needed.
4. A related issue is whether or not Family Support staff are doing appropriate follow-up to families or care-givers. According to original OTFS planning, the important work begins after children are temporarily placed. Troubled families and temporary care-givers need support, such that the natural parenting process can resume quickly.

## **OTFS Service Principles: Vision and Realities**

In addition to specific service activities, the OTFS model specifies six guiding ideas for service delivery and program development. These guiding ideas or principles ideally should help service providers and program planners as they face the realities of serving their families and communities.

Sometimes in the real world, ideals and principles are difficult to follow. One of the purposes of organizational reviews is to focus on these service principles and identify the challenges in making them work.

**The service principles are as follows:**

- 1.All services should mobilize or energize the community in 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 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 are identified as important human resources for family support, guidance (eg. Council of Elders) and other 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 work, and skilled in all facets of family support**
  
  - .doing the necessary community development work to cooperative and keep each community aware of, supportive of O.T.F.S.**

**Customary care and the use of extended families is a special principle in the OTFS model.** The Native principle of customary care suggests that the community at large, particularly the extended family, shares responsibility with biological parents for the care and up-bringing of children.

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 the immediate parents are no longer able to do so.

### **Principle 1: The Mobilization of Community Support**

OTFS has experienced considerable success in mobilizing local community resources to respond to family difficulties, and help build a strong quality of life. Throughout the life of the organization, OTFS staff have been hired from the community, even though more "qualified" people may have been available from elsewhere. Training and experience have strengthened the staff and generally have empowered the community. A positive observation is that the staff turnover in OTFS, mentioned in the last organizational review, has decreased over the last two years.

Staff are trained and supervised to look to their own communities for help and support, both for troubled families and for themselves as helpers. This clearly has been successful; staff consistently report how their main sources of support comes from fellow workers, other Band service personnel, Chief and Council in some instances, Elders, and Family Support Committees.

The Sacred Circle Program is fully involved in mobilizing community support, particularly in the area of suicide prevention.

Staff equip local OTFS staff and other Band staff with the skills and knowledge for responding to the needs of depressed and stressed teens.

The use of extended family members and other local families for temporary child placements has already been mentioned, and will be discussed again under the principle of "customary care".

These developments contrast sharply with earlier years when outside non-Native agencies were highly involved, and rarely responded in ways which strengthened communities and kept families together.

**Issues**

Despite these very positive developments, there are some indications that the decentralized community-based approach may have its struggles and frustrations.

1. Family Support Committees, often called the "heart" of the OTFS model, have not consistently taken hold in all communities. Where they are established, they are helpful and supportive of local OTFS activities. In their absence, workers experience frustration and isolation.

To its credit, OTFS has responded well to the needs for stronger local committees: (i) Training dollars were distributed to First Nations for strengthening local committees. (ii) As well, the OTFS Training Co-ordinator is undertaking local team-building, although there is some question how quickly and effectively this is being done (iii) A training video is underway, giving considerable attention to local committee functioning and the involvement of other Band staff. As indicated, the video project has been delayed for financial reasons.

## **Principle 2. Customary Care and the Use of Extended Family Members**

An important approach in the OTFS service model is the support of relatives and other community members in child care and family support. This helping process happened naturally in traditional Native communities, but has been eroded by the intervention of non-Native family agencies.

OTFS has formalized the customary care process in a policy guideline. When children require temporary alternative living arrangements, 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

An OTFS Home Placement Co-ordinator is available to help arrange home placements in other First Nation communities.

The 1988 organizational review reported extensive use of relatives and other community members at times of family pain. These customary care arrangements continue to be used to-day. In fact, OTFS records show that the number of unpaid customary care days provided by OTFS has increased markedly since 1986.

As well, the 1988 organizational review reported staff difficulties in facilitating customary care arrangements. This was understandable, given that the role of family support worker was new in each community, particularly tasks required for bringing together needy families and potential supports.

OTFS responded well to these challenges by organizing a customary care workshop. In this, Elders and staff worked together to address the topic of customary care. A pre-workshop process involving two elders, a Senior Family Worker, Family Support Worker and Consultant defined customary care and identified a number of practical tasks for Family Support Workers. These were discussed in small group and practice sessions with the remaining staff in a workshop format.

**Issues**

1. OTFS efforts to arrange customary care alternatives with minimal financial assistance, comes into direct competition with CAS foster care rates. CAS can offer \$17/day, compared to OTFS' \$10. The financial temptation is more than many families, with limited incomes, can resist. The principle of customary care has been very difficult to follow.

Other issues related to the application of the customary principle have been raised during the discussions of previous topics. They are (i) **unclear criteria** for appropriate customary care homes (ii) the importance of **service staff follow-up** with both families.

### **Principle 3. Service Compatibility with Ojibway Cultural Traditions and Local Community Practices**

Non-Native services are criticized for not respecting the distinctive cultures of Native people and local communities, and for imposing an alien system of thinking and behaving. OTFS was established to provide services which were compatible with Native values, beliefs and local community practices.

To support this (i) staff are hired locally within the community (ii) job descriptions and work expectations are established locally to fit with other Band services (iii) much of the decision-making and implementation of services is done locally (iv) OTFS management respects and supports local initiatives (v) each First Nation is represented on the Board of Directors, and each member is encouraged to maintain close communications with the Chief and Council.

The bulk of OTFS in-service training attempts to encourage the identification and sharing of local ways of working, rather than imposing "outside" methods for family support. The principles of "participatory training" are used.

Organizational review research indicates that OTFS staff work is tightly interwoven with other community activities, close to what was envisioned by initial planners. For example, staff is involved with schools, community events, cultural activities and the like. In a very real sense, their skills and attitudes are introduced into community life through normal day-to-day participation and membership.

### **Issues**

1. Local First Nation members continue to form the core of OTFS staff. However, as members of their communities they are plagued by the same conditions, and experience similar pain as their fellow community members. Unresolved pain affects their functioning as helpers, more so when their clients' difficulties evoke painful memories and feelings.

As an organization, OTFS has responded well to this situation:

.The leadership has shown extreme sensitivity to the pain and personal problems of staff. In a way, the mark of successful Native organizations in an age of self-government, may be the kind of balance achieved between human sensitivity and effective work. The dilemma for management, though, is how far to go in supporting staff who consistently do not live up to expectations?



1. OTFS staff are directly helped to deal with their pain. The new "Flying on your Own" program attends to staff self awareness, healing, life skills, and the like. Many staff and Board members have responded well to these opportunities.
  2. Some financial decision-making was decentralized by giving Senior Family Workers increased autonomy in deciding the types and levels of financial support for children in care. This process has evolved to one where all Purchase Orders are now carefully monitored by the Executive Director or the Co-ordinator of Services. The goal is that the First Nations would gradually assume autonomy in financial decision-making.
  3. In some communities, Family Support Committees continue to act as important decision-makers. As well, they monitor and participate in local services and programs. In other communities, Committees are almost non-existent. Since the Family Support Committee was originally envisioned as the key structure for assuring the mesh of OTFS services with local communities, this inconsistency should be addressed.
  4. In the opinions of many staff, OTFS work is neither understood nor supported by local leadership, particularly Chief and Council. It is worth asking whether sufficient or appropriate efforts have been made to assure the support of OTFS local leaders, particularly in the daily work. The potential turn-over of Chiefs and Councils every two years, suggests that special efforts must be made to keep the leaders up-dated. Board member communication to Chiefs and Councils is inconsistent.
  5. It is generally accepted that many of the existing family problems facing Native people are directly or indirectly associated with unemployment. Economic life is certainly a dominant part of any community, and is an important part of the environment for family support activities.
- Some Family Support Workers express frustration in their work with unemployed people and their families, particularly under conditions of limited job opportunities. This raises the more general issue of whether OTFS should be more closely involved with economic development initiatives. In general, counselling or family support services have good potential for offering assistance in coping with employment and/or preparing people for employment.

The use of Elders as resource people is one of the most important ways that OTFS encourages cultural revitalization, and assures that support and advice is compatible with Native culture. The successes and challenges of working with Elders is discussed in the next section.

#### **Principle 4. Respecting Traditional Culture and Using Elders as Supportive Resource People**

The importance of cultural traditions and healing is sustained within OTFS in many ways. To name a few: Elders teach cultural traditions in central and local workshops. The Ojibway language is spoken by most staff, and is used frequently. Traditional helping methods and healing are emphasized, as in customary care methods, sweat lodges and healing circles. The Sacred Circle Program is committed to the integration of traditional Native healing with professional methods, and includes a Native Elder on staff.

Traditionally, Native cultures have placed tremendous emphasis on the respect for Elders in community life. Unlike many other non-Native cultures, Elders were given special roles for teaching, family support, guidance and healing.

From the beginning, OTFS has incorporated this attitude into its planning and organization, and has used Elders in special ways.

Over the years, Elders have sat on the Board of Directors, helped plan and participate in training, provided employee assistance, participated in major Elder workshops, sat on Family Support Committees, and have contributed direct counselling to troubled community members.

Elder Alex Skede is a prominent participant in OTFS development and daily work. At present, he is a staff member of the Sacred Circle Program, providing direct help and workshops to First Nation communities. Elder Skede contributes cultural teachings and practical wisdom to most OTFS training events.

#### **Issues**

1. Most staff speak Ojibway and seem committed to the principle of traditional cultural sensitivity. However, some are unsure of what specific cultural knowledge is appropriate to their family and community support tasks. As well, they feel lacking in specific cultural skills for helping.
2. Questions were raised about the compatibility of Christian and traditional beliefs, and their implications for helping and support.
3. Concerning efforts to adopt traditional Native healing, some staff are struggling with the appropriate ways to blend traditional and non-Native professional methods.
4. Still others are unsure about how to involve Elders in OTFS support processes. What kinds of activities? How should Elders be approached? How can one work with Elders on certain "touchy" subjects like sexual abuse? How does one bridge the gap between youth, their values, and traditional perspectives?



### **Principle 5. The Integration of Support Services with Other Services in a Community-Based Resource Network.**

Service integration as a service principle can mean many things. It can refer to an informal commitment for co-operation between service providers, such that clients benefit from an organized and minimally intrusive involvement from helpers. Or, service integration can refer to a highly formalized approach where different specialists work together as a team, doing assessment, service planning, appropriately dividing responsibilities, and collectively reviewing progress.

OTFS is firmly committed to service integration in principle. Yet it lacks a policy concerning what this might mean in everyday work. Nevertheless, several things have been done over the years which encourage some level of integrated services. First, the administration of the federal NNADAP program in the OTFS First Nations was assumed by the agency, and a NNADAP Co-Ordinator works out of an OTFS office. As well, NNADAP staff are involved in a number of OTFS planning and development activities, particularly training.

The participation of other Band service personnel on local Family Support Committees likely contributes to service integration. All perspectives are likely shared in Committee meetings.

Finally, future planning from the Sacred Circle Program indicates that their community outreach efforts in suicide prevention will be directed to Band service providers.

It is clear, then, that several organizational and service features of OTFS have made some inroads towards service integration. However, despite these efforts, many staff still report difficulties in the area of working relationships with other staff. This troublesome growing pain was also reported in the 1988 review.

#### **Issues**

1. The seriousness of staff relationships with other band personnel is highlighted by a single fact: **staff believe that changes in the co-operation and co-ordination with other local services would be one of the three most significant changes that would help them improve their effectiveness.**
2. **Strained working relationships** within local services was attributed by Board and staff to (a) **poor communication skills** (b) the lack of staff persons whose responsibility is to help **co-ordinate** services locally (c) insufficient **support** from Chief and Council (d) staff **turnover**, (e) local family **conflicts**, (f) program **funding criteria** (g) client **confidentiality** (h) insufficient **participation** by Committees

## **5.ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

The essential work accomplished in service agencies is done through face-to-face contacts between people. Such contacts occur between worker and client, colleagues, and Board members. The ultimate success of such contacts depends on the organizational environment in which they occur. This section reviews several organizational features of OTFS, and links these to the quality of service.

In this section, several features of the organization are examined: staff positions, Family Support Committees, policies and procedures, management structures and practices, local authority and supervision, organizational communications, mandate, and training. Particular attention is given to the recommended changes in the 1988 organizational review.

### **A.Staff Positions**

The types of staff positions in a service organization, their roles and job descriptions are important sources of organizational support for service delivery. The 1988 review noted that original OTFS planners had done an exceptional job in designing an organizational structure. However, given the early service demands and the realities of delivering services to 14 different First Nations, a number of recommendations were made:

- .additional clinical expertise was needed for staff support
- .many administrative, personnel and financial support decisions had become centralized, such that the Co-Ordinator of Services had insufficient time to support communities and Family Support Workers
- .a community development capability was advised, in order to respond to the many community-level issues (eg. team work, leadership support, etc.) affecting a family support service
- .a full time Statistical Clerk was recommended to establish and operate a sound management information system

### **Over the last two years OTFS has responded well to these issues:**

- .The Sacred Circle Program, although explicitly for suicide prevention, provides valuable clinical expertise to the organization through the program Director and a Clinical Consultant.

.A full-time Statistics Clerk was hired, and the management information system is in much better shape (see later section on "Organizational Communications".)

.The Trainer Co-Ordinator is spending more time in the communities, attending to the development of Family Support Committees.

Despite these good efforts, several important issues still exist.

### **Issues**

1.Senior Family Workers and Family Support Workers may be overly tied to certain communities. The expertise of specific individuals would be valuable in other communities facing particularly tough challenges (eg. hard core families, prevention). A more flexible use of human resources within the organization may be needed.

2.The Co-Ordinator of Services is still office-bound. Although personnel and other administrative matters are obviously important, the Co-Ordinator's community experience and cultural skills are needed at the service delivery level.

3.Despite the Training Co-Ordinator's efforts with First Nation communities, OTFS still lacks a strong community and organizational development capability. OTFS must either hire, or train, someone to understand the development needs of each community, and the methods to assure that the people, relationships and local organization are supportive of OTFS.

Senior Family Workers should share this capability. Community development expertise would also involve knowing how to set up and support local community education programs.

4.The personnel administration function needs improvement. One indication is that staff leave without informing the finance office, resulting in duplicate payments. The personnel function should be attached to one position. The person in that position should assure that the administration of hiring, orientation, staff evaluation, grievances, personnel information, and departure, is functioning smoothly. It is unlikely that OTFS is large enough to warrant a full-time personnel specialist.

## **B. Family Support Committees**

Early OTFS planning recognized the need for a group of band members, appointed by each Council, to assume responsibility for child welfare and family matters. By design, Family Support Committees would assure that band issues and concerns were reflected in planning, development and delivery of child and family services. An early workshop brought together over one hundred Committee members and developed a detailed design for Family Support Committee structures and activities.

Two years into the operations of OTFS, the 1988 organizational review found that many Family Support Committees were either non-existent or were not well organized. Recommendations were made for OTFS to allocate more resources for building and supporting Family Support Committees.

As indicated earlier, OTFS adopted these recommendations by allocating funds for local development, directing the Training Co-ordinator's consultation to Committees, and commissioning a training video. Recently, the Board made a strong recommendation that the community consultations be increased in frequency and scheduling.

### **Issue**

1. As more becomes known about the challenges of supporting families and children in one's own community, the role of Family Support Committees seems to grow in importance.

In addition to those activities initially identified, the committee can make valuable contributions to resolving work problems. So many of these problems relate to getting along with other staff, local politics, leadership support, and other matters which are part of living in the community.

Developing the internal capability for problem-solving, and not relying on outsiders, goes a long way towards self-sufficiency. OTFS should continue to make special efforts to strengthen Family Support Committees.

### **C.Policies and Procedures**

In 1988, a number of policy recommendations were made concerning specific policy areas needing completion, and a process which would speed up the policy-making process.

Recommendations were made to complete policies and procedures for:

- .identifying and managing child abuse cases
- .temporary home placements
- .liaising with outside agencies
- .family support planning and review
- .integrating services at the community level
- .staff discipline
- .local and central planning
- .mutual responsibilities between OTFS and local Bands

Since 1988, the Policy Manual was completed and accepted by the Board. Further, the Policy and Planning Committee has been quite active, meeting on a monthly basis. Policies are continuously reviewed and up-dated.

### **Issues**

- 1.A number of these policies are complete. Others are incomplete.
- 2.Some staff are not sufficiently aware of policies. A thorough policy orientation should take place when new staff are hired.
- 3.Local communities should also be aware of OTFS policies. This would help to integrate local services.

## **D. Management**

The management team has changed in composition during the last two years, and appears to be working with higher morale. Also the staff are very satisfied with the management's support, respect, information sharing, and encouragement for ideas.

Since the last organizational review, the Board of Directors' Financial Sub-Committee has met regularly to review all expenditures over \$2,000. Two thousand dollar limits on spending decisions are adhered to by management.

Despite this positive picture a number of on-going issues should be addressed.

### **Issues**

1. The authority which First Nation Bands have over the local staff is still not being exercised in a way that supports the work and development of OTFS. OTFS as an organization has always respected the autonomy of the Bands, and has hoped that local policies and band practices would somehow reinforce OTFS goals. This has not quite happened, however, with the result that the quality of performance of some staff is not up to par. As well, the development opportunities (eg. training) offered by OTFS are not being taken by some staff.

Cultural differences may explain the difficulties experienced in evolving appropriate management procedures and accountability in First Nations. Native people prefer not to place power in one authoritative position. Rather, their preference is that decisions are reached through consensus, and implementing these decisions rests with all persons acting on the basis of trust, caring and mutual support. How to apply and reinforce these principles is a challenge for OTFS.

2. The Co-Ordinator of Services' office work does not allow him sufficient time to visit the communities and the local OTFS staff. The visits have enormous potential for influencing appropriate work and events at the community level. Such visits would influence staff directly through the Co-Ordinator's sharing of expectations, advice, policy explanations, and coaching. As well, these visits would strengthen the community supports which all staff need to do their work well. Clearly, the Co-Ordinator must receive more freedom to reach out to the communities on a regular basis.

3. Local planning is one local community activity which would clearly benefit from support and coaching from the Service and Training Co-ordinators. The service work at the community level is understandably problem-driven. Local staff need to be helped to stand back, review their efforts, and plan for the future.

4. Several Senior Family Workers want to improve the staff management and supervision part of their work.

5. There is evidence that OTFS is taking its management role seriously. A "management by objectives" approach has been partially introduced for the purpose of assisting some staff to reflect about their activities. The adoption of non-Native techniques in management should be monitored carefully. Native values and principles for organizing work (eg. consensus, co-operation, group process) could be introduced to make the management approach culturally appropriate.

6. Although all Co-ordinators are setting goals and objectives for themselves, regular planning and problem-solving activities sometimes take lower priority within the management team. These functions, particularly planning, are difficult to keep on the agenda in small service organizations which constantly respond to crisis. Nevertheless, planning must be done in some way, or else an organization will lose sight of where its going and where it has been. OTFS management should resist becoming totally preoccupied with reacting to current problems, at the expense of longer range vision-making.



7. Two parts of the financial system should be closely reviewed and evaluated by the Financial Sub-Committee...

.decentralized financial decision-making, giving Senior Family Workers greater financial freedom. What steps can be taken to prepare Seniors for this new responsibility? What criteria and expectations have been established to guide decision-making? What skills are needed?

.the signing authority system for Purchase Orders; inconsistencies have happened in the past.

8. At the local Band level, confusion over lines of authority and responsibilities still exist. This was reported in the last organizational review. Local Band policies are expected to supersede OTFS policies, but perhaps this has not been made sufficiently clear, particularly to new staff.

## **E. The Board of Directors**

Since the last organizational review The Board of Directors has made substantial progress in Board Sub-Committees. A number of very important and tough issues have been addressed and handled. For example, many hours were spent solving a major leadership crisis, hours which hopefully helped to further clarify expectations for management, and establish a more solid foundation for leadership support.

At one workshop during 1990, the Board tackled several issues which were identified during the last organizational review. This process took place outside of the regular monthly meeting, a format which holds promise for future problem-solving efforts. The regular monthly meetings, because of their usual heavy agendas, may not be the best times to tackle the major issues.

An analysis of 1990 resolutions reveals that the Board of Directors is very active in monitoring and giving direction to the financial and personnel activities of OTFS.

### **Issues**

1. Analysis of Board resolutions indicates that The Board has been minimally involved in planning, programming and generally reviewing the over-all direction of the agency. These functions are very important, and should be given more attention.
2. Some Board members are still not comfortable in monitoring the finances. One of the largest tasks is making the best use of financial reporting, particularly in finding indications of problem areas in financial reports. Financial reports certainly seem well done, and satisfy the professional standards. Board skill development in financial monitoring will help enormously.

## **F.Administration**

Morale among the central office staff appears much stronger than two years ago. This is quite commendable given the level of staff turnover over the years, the lack of uniformity in office skills, and (for some) limited knowledge of Native culture. There is an apparent good level of mutual support among office staff, and for the most part, sound team work.

### **Issues**

- 1.Last minute pressures often happen. These may be due to insufficient long range planning within the organization, such that administrative staff can establish realistic work schedules.
- 2.Confusion over job descriptions and work expectations.
- 3.Inconsistent dealings with clients by office staff.
- 4.Inconsistent use of established policies and procedures.

Many of these same issues were identified in the first phase organizational review.

In the realm of financial administration, unfortunately this report has not been able to delve deeply into the office organization within the finance department. However, some administrative issue are apparent.

### **Issues**

- 1.The inconsistent flow of information from family support staff to the finance office hampers the administration of financial and personnel policies. Accurate and speedy expense statements and personnel change forms will improve effectiveness and efficiency within the organization. Staff are not adhering to established procedures for providing information. No training manual is available. Attention should be given to correcting these problem.
- 2.Several staff have expressed the need to improve their administrative abilities, particularly in the area of report writing, statistics keeping, and forms. Others have expressed frustration at these administrative requirements.

## **G.Organizational Communications**

An organization committed to providing and supporting services over fourteen different communities requires sound communication to monitor and meet the needs of geographically dispersed people. Misinterpretations and gaps in knowledge can weaken organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and morale.

Communication skills are an important part of family support work, and communication skill-building was a central part of major training from the University of Manitoba. Although we have no way of knowing, hopefully this training has contributed to communications throughout the organization.

The OTFS newsletter, Pathfinder, has been resurrected as a major vehicle for communications within the organization. In the past, the Pathfinder kept staff up-to-date on major OTFS and community happenings, and (with its humour) appeared to contributed to staff morale. The re-birth of the Pathfinder is an important event.

Public speaking opportunities are regularly available to staff during training workshops. In some instances, staff spoke publically for the first time. Colleague support for this is very evident, and should be continued as a regular training practice.

### **Issues**

- (i)The staff report a need to improve on a variety of communication skills, both oral and writing. This includes public speaking, direct communications between colleagues for problem-solving, and cross-community communications. The Executive Director reports how his work has been hampered by communication breakdowns within the organization.

## **Management Information System**

Information systems in human service agencies typically gather, record and share information on clients, personnel and case management, resources (donors, volunteers, referrals), administration and finances.

The organizational review in 1988 found that, after two years, only a very rudimentary system on clients and staff activities was in place. Recommendations were made for improvement.

This year, the client and staff information system has improved enormously. A full-time statistics staff person was hired. Statistical information is flowing more consistently, and regular reports are provided to the Board. The Statistician has reached out and provided a sensitive approach in supporting staff in their duties. For some, a "tough" approach of withholding cheques was needed to encourage staff statistical reports.

### **Issues**

1. Information on staff activities, clients, and client progress should support OTFS broad goals, evaluation and planning. Key management and Board decisions should be informed by available information. Both the content and presentation should aid these organizational activities. If the information is not seen as be useful, collection and presentation becomes tedious and without value.

All OTFS staff and Board members should be clear on the contributions this information makes to their work, and the quality of life of children and families.

2. It is not clear that the Board has the technical expertise to appreciate the meaning of statistical reports. Without this expertise, reviewing statistics may be boring and meaningless.

3. To make the information more useful, the key questions for which information will be used should be identified. Technical expertise should be gotten to assure that information answers the questions.

4. The format used to gather information on client problems should be refined. At present, the form combines both problems and services. "Family support problems" should be separated out as piece of information which is distinguished from the services provided.

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5. The information currently being obtained is directed towards OTFS family support work, and not community education or other prevention work. Efforts should be made to obtain systematic information on community activities, information such as the target group, number of participants, community needs or problems being addressed, methods (eg. workshop? film? discussion group?), resource people, etc.
  6. "Termination data" may be useful. This would be recorded as the client leaves service, and would include such information as the length of time in service and the clients condition upon leaving. This is important evaluation data.

## **Evaluation: staff performance evaluation**

Two types of evaluation have been conducted by OTFS so far: staff evaluation and organizational reviews.

Staff evaluation tools (i.e. check lists of performance categories) have been developed and used. Both regular staff and management are evaluated regularly by a group, using general categories such as: "quality of work", "quantity of work", and "effectiveness". After assessments are done, feed-back is provided to the individual.

This group process is quite commendable, and helps avoid the errors of individual judgement. As well, the feedback process provides an opportunity for growth. However, there are some areas for improvement.

### **Issues**

1. The staff evaluation process is very important for any developing organization. It allows the Board and management to clarify their criteria and expectations concerning job performance. Also, staff evaluation allows feedback to staff concerning their strengths and weaknesses, and provides directions for improvement. For these reasons, OTFS is well advised to take staff evaluation very seriously.
2. The OTFS staff evaluation process currently in place is difficult to carry out, for four reasons. First, the categories may not be precise enough to use. Secondly, members of the evaluating groups may lack sufficient information about certain areas of the employee's performance. Thirdly, Native people (perhaps for cultural reasons) are uncomfortable about expressing public judgements about other people. This problem came up when family support staff expressed reluctance to document their clients' problems for statistical purposes. Finally, because the nature of the work is gradually being defined (eg. how does one recognize excellent customary care work?), the specific work standards may not be all that clear.
3. For the above reasons, the performance evaluation tools and process should be fine-tuned. See "Recommendations".

## **H. Self-Government Initiative**

The OTFS self-government initiative is an experimental project involving the development of a Native tribal family court. This is an exciting project which seems to have won the initial support of Federal government officials. If successful, a tribal court will give control over family disputes to Native First Nations. Native people will judge when parenting has been inappropriate, when children are at risk, and what actions should be taken.

OTFS staff are in an excellent position to contribute to this important development, while at the same time increasing their own knowledge for family support work. Having been close to family and community life, they are in a good position to identify culturally-based standards for family life. As well, they are in a position to stimulate clear guidelines for defining inappropriate family living and parenting, including those which are important enough to require Native community external control.

An important illustrative question for example would be "Is there a concept for child abuse and neglect in traditional or current Native culture, and if so what parental actions might indicate these?"

Properly done, a community "education" process could be stimulated which would lay the foundations for some components of Native family law. Because it would be accomplished in interaction with community members, this process would also develop standards for community living and family support work.



## **I. Training and Development**

Training continues as an important in-service activity within OTFS. Training has provided numerous learning opportunities for staff, Board members, and the numerous volunteers (eg. Family Support Committees) on whom the organization relies. From the beginning, training has been an important part of the OTFS support model.

Three major training initiatives were completed since the last review, or are currently underway. Each of these is responding to an important need within the organization:

- .The University of Manitoba's certificate program in family counselling responded to the expressed needs for improved counselling skills

- .The "Flying on Your Own Program" offers training in self-awareness, while helping staff and others develop the skills for personal growth

- .Community-level team-building for Family Support Committees began in 1990, and is on-going. This training activity is designed to strengthen the community resources which are needed for successful family support work. This was a high priority issue identified in the last organizational review.

In addition, a number of other training events occurred: organizational training (Thunder Bay), facilitating customary care, family support planning, and Board training on the family support model.

Regional training was introduced in which Senior Family Workers held training and coaching sessions for small groups of First Nation staff (eg. four reserves at a time). Unfortunately, these initiatives were gradually discontinued in response to work pressures, or because key individuals left the organization.

A major training resource development project was also completed in 1989. This project, funded by the Ministry of Skills Development, involved the development of family support training materials for OTFS and other Native child and family agencies. Three materials were developed: (i) "Guidelines for Training Native Adults" (ii) "Family Support Training Guidelines", and (iii) "Family Support Training Resources". These resources, along with other training resources developed by OTFS over the years, were designed to assist OTFS in its in-service training.

In the area of program development, one OTFS initiative deserves mentioning. During 1990, the Senior Family Workers and others held a development workshop for the purpose of developing a sexual abuse healing and prevention program. This initiative responded to the increasing number of sexual abuse cases in OTFS caseloads, and the

need for sex education in the First Nation communities. The practical result of the workshop was a comprehensive model, summarized in a proposal entitled "The OTFS Sexual Abuse Program" (May 3, 1990). This proposal was submitted to several potential funders.

### **Issues**

1. Training continues as an important need for OTFS. Staff turnover, although stabilized, means that several family support staff now on staff are working without the benefit of previous training. Most do not have the educational and work experience for human service work. **In a recent organizational review workshop, training was identified as one of the top three activities that would improve the quality of services.**
2. Since OTFS' beginnings, numerous training and service resources have been developed in conjunction with in-service training. These include: training videos, service guidelines, manuals, and written training materials. This body of information has been produced in close interaction with OTFS service providers, and represents the accumulated wisdom from local OTFS service experience.

**These materials are not being used to their fullest! Strong efforts are needed to assemble these and make them available for new and veteran staff members.**

3. Local Family Support Committees are still desperately in need of help. The Board of Directors began the very valuable step of discussing how training efforts can reach OTFS communities. This should be continued.
4. New staff are still without a systematic orientation program and orientation manual or package. General orientation plans should be established, including guidelines for further orientation by Senior Family Workers at the community level.
5. Sexual abuse continues as a serious problem in OTFS communities, and OTFS still lacks the human resources to respond to the problem. Efforts to secure funds must continue.
6. OTFS staff benefit enormously from regular central workshops in which ideas are exchanged and morale is boosted. Many have asked for three workshops a year.

**For specific recommendations concerning training and development priorities, see the section containing recommendations.**

## **6.RECOMMENDATIONS**

Perhaps the most important suggestion is that the issues raised in this report should be thoroughly reviewed by Board and Management. If desired the Reviewer can facilitate this process.

Also, it is suggested that existing groups or committees take responsibility for planning and monitoring the changes. Each group would give attention to certain recommendations.

Each group would take responsibility for prioritizing, setting schedules, and allocating resources for making changes. Also, it may be worthwhile for each Board member to initiate discussions of issues and recommendations at the community level, thus assuring that local communities assumed control of the growth process.

To make this process easier, the following recommendations are grouped according to OTFS committees or groups.

### **Finance Committee**

- 1.OTFS should identify why the number of child care hours and costs has increased dramatically in the last years. Concerning costs, what are the reasons why so much alternative care can be provided free, and so much is costly? Can costs be reduced by learning from this exercise?
- 2.The efficiency and effectiveness of decentralized spending by Senior Family Workers should receive closer attention than has been possible in this review.

### **Personnel Committee**

- 3.Efforts should be made to use resources to assist Grassy Narrows and Whitedog, the main locations for child apprehension.

Suggested efforts are:

- .workshops focusing on these two communities in which all staff focus their efforts on finding solutions
- .follow-up consulting to the two communities from experts in other parts of the organization
- .seeking funds for pilot projects in one or both communities which will result in direct help, and development of resources for other OTFS communities

4. The Christian staff and Board members must be helped to realize that their beliefs and practices are respected, and that no one is required to support traditional cultural ways. OTFS' support and acceptance of all spiritual beliefs should be clearly communicated.

5. To assure that needy communities receive the best possible support, OTFS should consider a principle of flexible use of its human resources. In particular: (i) specialized Senior Family Workers should be available to other First Nations (ii) Family Support Workers should share initiatives developed in their communities, (iii) First Nations with high rates of apprehensions should draw upon the resources of other communities.

6. To allow more time for community consultation, and to stream-line the personnel function, all Personnel duties should be shifted from the Services Co-ordinator to one of the other managers or Executive Director. If the Training Co-ordinator assumes this responsibility, he should receive extensive training in Personnel Management.

7. To improve the staff evaluation process, the evaluation form should be re-designed to reflect a functional evaluation approach. The form should allow staff to be evaluated on specific aspects of their work (eg. administration, working with families, facilitating meetings, etc.). This would allow more specific and meaningful feed-back, thus allowing for correction.

The evaluation process should continue in a group process, such that performance criteria and expectations are constantly being clarified. The evaluating group should take steps to have accurate information for evaluation.

8. To assure that the self-government initiative ( Tribal Family Court) does not disturb current OTFS functioning, a Project Co-ordinator should be hired. This person would work closely with OTFS staff and Board, but would be free of other OTFS duties.

### **Policy and Planning Committee**

9. To improve the planning process within OTFS, (i) the policy and planning committee should develop a culturally appropriate planning model for use throughout the organization  
(ii) using this planning model, a planning workshop should be conducted with Board, management, and Senior Family Workers.  
(iii) the model should specify the appropriate kinds of information for planning
  
10. Board and management should re-assess the need and importance of repatriation in OTFS communities. Decide whether repatriation should continue as a major service goal, and consider the feasibility of a specialized repatriation program within OTFS.
  
11. OTFS should develop policy guidelines for integrating local services.
  
12. To further integrate services into community life and growth, OTFS should consider the feasibility of blending services with local economic development.
  
13. Board guidelines for communicating with Chiefs and Councils should be established. This should be done with Board members in a workshop setting.
  
14. To help assure that OTFS policies are understood and followed by all staff (i) each First Nation Council should be encouraged to establish an OTFS policy review process (ii) a Senior Family Worker policy workshop should be held, followed by (iii) community consultations by the CO-Ordinator of Services (iv) policy training should be included in orientation of all new employees.
  
15. To improve the management information process, OTFS should assure that (i) all planning and monitoring information requirements are met by the information system (ii) more detailed information should be collected on client problems and community education/prevention activities (iii) Board and management are comfortable in using statistical information

## Program Committee

16. OTFS should resist becoming solely a crisis response agency. A staff, Board, management workshop should be held to define, illustrate, and plan for preventative work for the purpose of improving the quality of family life and parenting. Community education for this purpose should be discussed.
17. The Sacred Circle Program should put together a plan concerning the kind of follow-up and support needed for contributing success to the "Flying on Your Own Program". Such a plan should address (1) what clinical or supportive arrangements should be in place for persons who have surfaced serious personal problems during the program (2) what long range community impact is anticipated from the program (3) what special help can be offered to staff whose participation has surfaced special needs?
18. Family Support Workers in communities which are less demanding in terms of crises and apprehension should develop prevention programs. These programs would be used across OTFS communities. Such programs might include "Positive Parenting for Native Parents", "Sexuality for Teens", "The Dangers of Gas Sniffing" and the like. Small grants from the health promotion program of the Ministry of Health could support such initiatives.
19. To build strong working relationships between local service providers, a community development initiative should be started. This initiative would (a) clarify service staff responsibilities (b) promote supervision and accountability at the local level (c) stimulate team-building, particularly communications and co-ordination
20. To counteract the potential abuse of OTFS services (the baby-sitting problem) Family Support plans should be required for all temporary care arrangements.

## **Training and Development Committee**

21. Internal training and development should continue within OTFS as an important staff and community function. To support and guide this function, a special "Training and Development Committee" should be established. It should consist of the Training Co-ordinator, Co-ordinator of Services, a Senior Family Worker, and a Board member. This committee should be vigorously involved in planning, monitoring, supporting and evaluating the training process.
22. To make all learning resources available to new and on-going staff members, all previous OTFS training resources should be reviewed and organized into a useable package. These resources include: materials produced in workshops, manuals, videos, and reports. These materials represent an OTFS "body of knowledge", created out of experience. They should not be lost.
23. High priority future OTFS training should include:
- .A primary prevention workshop: types, methods, case studies, skill-building.
  - .Cultural awareness training, particularly on the topics of family life, parenting, helping, and healing. The implications of such training should be directly related to the roles and tasks of family support work. Special attention should be given to the ways of working with Elders. Administrative staff should have the option of attending.
  - .Administrative and work efficiency skills: writing, filing, time management, etc.
  - .Special challenges in counselling: working with relatives, mental illness, sexual abuse, counselling the unemployed.
  - .Working with hard-core troubled families.
  - .Positive family life and parenting. This workshop would stimulate the identification of ideals for family life and parenting. Such information could be used for: (i) community training programs (ii) direct service to troubled families (iii) the development of criteria for child placement (iv) foundation ideas for the tribal family court
  - .Family support follow-up to customary care and home placements: roles and skills for Family Support Workers
  - .Culturally appropriate supervision workshop for Management and Senior Family Workers.

.Board skill-building training on financial monitoring

.Organizational communications, addressing (a) the importance of good communication in a service organization (b) face-to-face communication skills (c) important tasks for maintaining accurate information on clients and services  
(d) writing and speaking skills

24.In addition, the community-level training of Family Support Committees should continue and be repeated, and should include other Band staff. Attention should be given to (i) reviewing OTFS goals, philosophy and services (ii) suggesting and illustrating Family Support Committees' functions, (iii) clarifying Band staff areas of responsibility, and (iv) identifying ways of co-ordinating local services.

This process should develop strong connections to the Training Video Project. Important ideas which are currently being discussed locally should form the substance of the video.

25.To maintain the knowledge and support of OTFS by leaders, new staff, and community agencies, an orientation package should be developed. This would be a modularized package in which certain sections could be deleted for **certain audiences** (eg. Chiefs and Councils). The Training Co-Ordinator should be heavily involved in this development, and should know how to use it for training and orientation events.

The package should include: (a) introduction to OTFS history, philosophy and service principles (b) the family support model (c) description of all OTFS programs and activities (d) Family Support Worker roles and responsibilities (e) OTFS policies and procedures



