



Violence in the Lives of Girls in the Kainai First Nation

June 2008

This publication was produced under the direction of Helen McPhaden, Executive Director, Stardale Women's Group Inc. The report was written by Janet Sarson, researcher and Associate of Blue Sky Planners & Consultants, and the literature review by Leslie Roach.

Founded in 1997, the Stardale Women's Group Inc. is a nonprofit registered charity. Stardale seeks to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal women and girls through community action, research, and education, social development, and social justice programming. Through its work, Stardale aims to stimulate discussion and provide insight that will spark debate which leads to the strengthening of public policy and creation of positive change for Aboriginal Canadians. Stardale is grateful for the contributions made by the girls and women who shared their ideas and experiences in the project.

As the researchers, we have an obligation to understand and observe communication protocols within Aboriginal communities. We also have an obligation to observe ethical and professional practices relevant to their respective disciplines. Stardale practices a holistic philosophy. This includes the mental, physical, emotional and social well being of each person or group involved in research. There shall be fair treatment of all persons participating in the research.

Citation for this document: McPhaden, Helen, and Sarson, Janet, 2008. "Violence in the lives of Girls in the Kainai First Nation".

To order, or request permission to reproduce, contact:



Stardale Women's Group Inc.
Sun Life Plaza – West Tower
Suite 2600, 144 - 4 Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 3N4
Telephone: 403-243-6615
Fax: 403-206-7075
Email: stardale@gmail.com

Copyright © belongs to *Stardale Women's Group Inc.*

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the girls of the Kainai First Nations of Alberta, Canada who came forward to participate in this project. Thank you for your courage and for sharing your wisdom, experience, ideas and time with us. We wish you well as you travel whatever path you might choose in your life purpose.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to the girls of the Kainai First Nations of Alberta, Canada, we would like to acknowledge others who participated in, supported and encouraged our research team:

Helen Many Fingers, Elder, Kainai First Nations

Leslie Roach, attorney at law, Montreal, Quebec

Helen McPhaden, executive director, Stardale Women's Group Inc.

Avery Calhoun, PhD, Associate Professor,
Director, Office of Field Education, University of Calgary

Wendy Standing Alone, teacher, Kainai High school

Janet Sarson, research consultant, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Malcolm King, PhD, Pulmonary Research Group,
Heritage Medical Research Centre, Edmonton Alberta

Cash Rowe, PhD, candidate, Indigenous Studies program,
University of Calgary, Alberta

Alexandria Wilson, PhD, Department of Educational Foundations,
College of Education, University of Saskatchewan

Marilyn Halton and Jean Tallow, Blood Tribe Police, Victims Services Unit

This project made possible by funding and other support from:

Alberta ACADRE

(Aboriginal Capacity and Developmental Research Environments)

Anonymous Donor

Community Initiatives

Prairie Action Foundation

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CONNECTING WITH THE GIRLS OF KAINAI	2
LEARNING FROM THE GIRLS OF KAINAI.....	4
FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION	10
Appendix I: Consent Form	App. p. 1
Appendix II: Collated Responses from Questionnaire	App. p. 3
Appendix III: Literature Review.....	App. p. 9
Appendix IV: References.....	App. p. 14

INTRODUCTION

This project started because the school principal at Kainai First Nation was looking for ways to do something about the recent escalation of violence involving girls in the community. He approached Helen McPhaden, Executive Director of the Stardale Women's Group, an organization whose activities focus on filling the gaps in services to women living in poverty. Helen had worked before with girls, women and others in Kainai and had also worked with a community in Saskatchewan to address concerns similar to the ones the principal described.

Kainai First Nation is not alone in the changes it has seen in its community. Over the last decade or so, many other communities across Canada (including some First Nations) have had to deal with increased violence and gang activity.¹ This includes violence, aggression and gang involvement by Aboriginal girls.² There are many different ideas about why this is happening, but most people agree that, to some extent, violence in Aboriginal communities is linked to people's personal and collective experiences of racism and discrimination. 'Historic' experiences like the residential school system and the Sixties scoop and government policies such as the *Indian Act* have left many Aboriginal people, families and communities struggling today with poverty, family and community breakdown, substance use problems and violence. Children and youth who are exposed to these kinds of things are more likely to become aggressive, violent or gang-involved.

¹ Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). 2003. *Alter-Natives to Non-Violence Report: Aboriginal Youth Gangs Exploration: A Community Development Process*. Friesen, J. and K. O'Neill. Armed posses spreading violence across Prairie communities. *Globe and Mail* (May 9, 2008). Accessed on-line at www.theglobeandmail.com, Public Safety Canada. (2007). *Youth Gangs in Canada: What do we know?* Available online: retrieved on February 10, 2008 from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/bldngevd/2007-yg-1-en.asp>.

² Correctional Services Canada. (2003). *A Profile of Women Gang Members in Canada*. Available online: retrieved February 8, 2008 from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rsrch/reports/r138/r138-eng.shtml>.

Moore, Chelsea (2006). Rethinking Aboriginal Stereotypes. *Manitoba* 93(25).
Native Women's Association of Canada. (2007). *Aboriginal Women and Gangs: An Issue Paper*. Prepared for the National Aboriginal Women's Summit, June 20-22, 2007, in Corner Brook, NL.
Nimmo, M. (2001). *The "Invisible" Gang Members: A Report on Female Gang Affiliation in Winnipeg*. Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
Health Canada. (2008). *Aggressive Girls: Overview Paper*. Available online: retrieved February 15, 2008 from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/html/nfntsaggsr_e.html,
Van der Woerd, K. A., and Cox, D.N. (2006). A Preliminary Look at Aggressive and Violent Behaviour in Aboriginal Adolescent Girls. *Pimatisiwin* 4 (1): 120-134,

The Kainai leadership, however, wanted to know more than just why the girls and young women in their Nation seemed to be more violent or at risk of gang-involvement. They also wanted to know what could be done to change what was happening. They recognized that the best way to learn about that was to talk to girls and young women in the community.

CONNECTING WITH THE GIRLS OF KAINAI

Every one of us is the expert on our own lives. No one else can know better what goes on in our day-to-day lives, what kinds of things we do or why we do them. When designing this project, the project team wanted to acknowledge, respect and make the most of the expertise of the girls and young women of Kainai. Some of the questions the team members hoped the girls could answer were:

- What occurs in the lives of Aboriginal girls who experience violence?
- What are some of the root causes that lead girls into gang activities?
- What are the girls' home lives like? Does this relate to violence they might be involved in?
- Is there an intergenerational cycle of violence within the girls' lives?
- Are girls in the community being charged on a regular basis? If so, are the charges getting stiffer?

The project team believed that the value of the girls' knowledge and time should be acknowledged, so they offered participants a small honorarium. They also hoped that the girls might gain other less tangible benefits from being part of the group discussion. In sharing their stories, the girls might discover that other girls in their community share similar problems or feelings and then be able to offer each other support. The girls also might find it empowering to voice and share their feelings, thoughts, knowledge and information. The group itself could become a starting point for change for some of the girls, a place where they might try out new ideas, behaviours and interactions, be honest and accountable with their peers and encourage and support each other to change.

The project team included Wendy Standing Alone. As a community member, school counsellor and advocate for youth in Kainai, Wendy personally knew girls who might want to participate in the project. The research team hoped that, for at some of the girls who might participate, this would make them feel comfortable to ask questions about the project before getting involved. Ms. Standing Alone recruited participants for the project,

some directly and some through girls she already knew.³ She made sure that each potential participant was well informed before she consented to be part of the project (consent form attached as Appendix I). Once a girl had provided appropriate written consent to participate, Wendy asked her to complete a brief questionnaire (and was available to assist with this as needed). The questionnaires asked each participant about her past and present behaviour and factors that may have influenced her behaviour (the collated findings from the questionnaire are attached as Appendix II).

Originally, the team had planned to hold 2 group discussions with about 10 girls (between the age of 11 and 17 years) participating in each. Girls under 15 years old could participate only with consent from their legal guardians. This became a significant constraint on girls' ability to participate in the discussion. Many of the girls who initially indicated interest in participating were unable to because their parents or guardians had not provided signed consent forms in advance of the scheduled group discussions. In the end, rather than two groups, a single guided group discussion was organized, with 14 girls participating.

Information provided on the questionnaires completed by the girls who participated in the discussion indicates that all the girls are Aboriginal and were born in Alberta. Most of the girls were 15 to 17 years old, except four girls who were 11 to 13 years old. Correspondingly, the level of education that the girls had completed ranged from Grade 6 to Grade 10. Slightly more than one-third of the girls lived in two-parent homes, one third in single-parent homes and the rest lived with other relatives. All but one of the girls was in school and none of the girls had a job.

While roughly half of the girls reported that they had tried using tobacco, only three indicated that they currently smoked. Two-thirds of the girls reported that they had tried alcohol, but less than one-half of participants had had a drink in the last six months. Similarly, slightly more than two-thirds reported that they had tried marijuana and only slightly more than one-half indicated that they had used it in the last six months. None of the girls reported that they had tried other illicit drugs.

The group discussion was facilitated by Helen McPhaden. As noted earlier, Helen has worked with the community of Kainai on a number of projects. Because of this, she is in

³ This approach is called "snowball recruiting". It's a good way to get people who might otherwise be shy or reluctant to take part in a research project.

the community regularly, is familiar to many community members and has a good understanding of how the community works. Ms. McPhaden began the group discussion by inviting group members to set ground rules for the discussion. These referred to confidentiality and trust (what's talked about in the group stays with the group; no gossiping about what's said in the group), respect (don't start talking when someone else is still speaking) and sharing (speak openly). After a brief overview of the project, the group began their discussion.

LEARNING FROM THE GIRLS OF KAINAI

The first questions posed by the facilitator were about an experience that all the girls shared – being at school. When asked **what they like about school**, individual participants singled out **learning, mathematics, activities, sports and seeing their friends**. When asked directly if they liked school, only one girl responded with “yes” and another indicated that she liked it “sometimes”.

Participants had quite a bit more to say when they were asked **what they dislike about school**. The first response to this question was “**teachers**”. When asked for more detail, the girls described teachers who seem to pick on students for no reason or have falsely accused students (“When they suspect that you're doing something and you're not... They get mad at you for stuff like talking and you're not even talking”). The girls were careful to point out that this was true of only some – not all – teachers and that “some kids don't listen.”

Later in the discussion, three girls talked about one particular teacher they disliked. One of the girls began by explaining why she sometimes skipped that teacher's class:

P1: I lost my textbook... Someone stole it from my friend's locker. And [the teacher] expects me to be there every day and just sit there. I'll be tired because it's early in the morning. I'll just put my head down because I don't know what to do for my class and then [the teacher will] tell me to sit up. We'll be sitting up and I'm very tired. I have nothing to do and I'll pull out my other work. I'll try to do my work and [the teacher will] get mad at me for doing that. And [the teacher will] make me put it away...

P2: I had problems with that same teacher.

P3: The same teacher too – everybody has problems with [that teacher].

The girls also quickly identified **gossip** as something they didn't like about school:⁴

P1: If something happened and somebody hears it, they say it all wrong. It sounds like a different story...

P2: They'll start adding things.

P1: Yeah, adding on stupid stuff that [isn't] true.

When asked for examples of the kinds of gossip that goes around Kainai, the girls described one inaccurate story about sexual violence that led to a girl being picked on and another that speculated about whether or not an STD had spread through a trio of teens ("We're just thinking, like, if he was making out with her, then she would have got that too. We don't know if it's true or not.").

The girls had some ideas about why they and their peers gossip. It could be simply that, as one girl suggested, people have "nothing better to do than to gossip." Sometimes gossip starts because someone gets jealous: "It's like [they're] not happy and if they see somebody else happy, then they'll try to break them up to make them miserable." As one girl related, it can be very hard to be the subject of that kind of gossip:

Well, they just lie. I dunno. I don't know who to believe because my boyfriend is hopefully not with other girls, but they say that they talk to him and all that. It's getting me kind of frustrated. It kind of hurt me. I don't know who to believe.

Participants seemed to agree that girls are "worse gossipers than guys."

One girl related what it had been like for her to be **the victim of gossip, unfounded accusations and verbal harassment** at school. When a few of her peers accused her of talking about them, she explained that she had not and walked away. Later, she was in the bathroom and the girls came in:

They were like starting to talk about me... The stuff that they were saying... was really dirty. And I was standing in the stall just listening to them. All the stuff they were saying was really crazy... They walked out and then I just started crying in the bathroom.

When the girl left the bathroom, the other girls came after her. She turned to school staff for help:

⁴ To protect the girls' confidentiality and safety, we have not included their names or any other information that might identify them in this report. For this reason, when we present an exchange between participants in this paper, we've assigned numbers (P1, P2, etc.) to distinguish between girls in that particular exchange.

I went to the office... [The administrator] called them to her office... I was asking them like why there were doing that to me. And they were saying that I was saying that they were taking crack... but I didn't even say any of that stuff. I don't know where they got the information from. They must have misunderstood me.

When asked if the girls had left her alone since then, the participant acknowledged that they had:

When they're in the hallway, when I see them, it's like they're not even there... If they come and talk to me, I'll talk to them. I'll say hi and talk, but when I see them, I don't go out of my way to talk to them. I do what I have to do. But yeah they leave me alone.

Gossip can escalate into physical violence, one participant noted: "If a girl says something or she did something outside of school... they don't even try to talk to her about it, they just like go and attack and start big trouble and get them suspended from school."

Given that several of the girls had acknowledged that there were things they don't like about school, the facilitator asked whether or not any of the participants **skipped school**. Only a few of the girls acknowledged that they did and one was careful to distinguish that it wasn't really school that she skipped, "it's just classes" – in particular, a class she does not understand and is failing. This same girl then related the story above that mentions a teacher's unsympathetic response to the loss of her text book. When asked if there were **ways to get help when they were having trouble in school**, the girls offered a few ideas, including teachers, attending classes or transferring out of a class where they were having problems. One girl noted that when she attempted to transfer out of a class she found difficult, she was not allowed to. With that option not available to her, the girl coped with the problem by skipping out of that class.

Several girls in the group indicated that, when they have problems **at school, there's some one they can go to** or some place where they feel safe. The girls identified two different staff people at the school that they have turned to. When the group was asked if they feel safe in the school, several students indicated that they do. Some, however, do not feel that they have a support person or safe place at the school. One girl noted that when an administrator at the school learned that she had been assaulted by another girl, the administrator "just said to avoid her and not to get in her way – and that girl didn't get suspended or anything... I was scared because she was really taller. She's

bigger than me.” When the group was asked later how teachers deal with difficult students, one student replied:

They just give them warnings. They just let people off so easy. They should be like really strict about these things but they’re not... They have cameras in the school eh, what use are they? They don’t even look at them. They don’t even watch them.

These comments suggest that some students do not feel like their safety is protected at school.

When asked **what violence and abuse mean**, the girls referred to the experiences of being both the victim (“pain”, “getting hurt”) and the aggressor (“beating up somebody”). Several girls indicated that they have heard about (“[T]his girl in Standoff, she got really intoxicated and this guy, he tried to choke her... [She was] younger than me, fifteen”) and/or seen violence (people being “beaten up” and “getting hurt”) in Standoff and throughout the reserve. The violence they’ve witnessed or heard about involves both youth and adults and frequently occurs in public. They think it happens most often at night when, the girls pointed out, it’s dark and people are more likely to have been drinking.

Another girl suggested that **harassment** such as name-calling is part of “just everyday abuse [that] everyone experiences.” She offered one of her peers as an example: “She was always picking on this girl that she doesn’t like. She just goes up to her and starts calling her... She likes to beat up everybody... but she got expelled.” The girls have heard that some children (boys in particular) carry weapons like screwdrivers and knives. They report that relatively young children claim that they are gang-involved and at least one participant knows a girl who is gang-involved. To the best of her knowledge, this gang’s activities are restricted to gang fights and she has not heard anything about the gang members being involved in drugs or prostitution.

Fights at school, the girls noted, are not unusual. On that day, two girls at the school had been fighting (“pulling hair,... punching in the face and grabbing”) and in the previous week and a half, at least two other fights had occurred at the school. The girls are also aware of ongoing disputes between families.

Some of the girls’ **experiences of violence have been very personal**. One participant described being assaulted at a party:

We were drinking. I was sitting on the washer and dryer and I was talking to my friend. The next thing, I turned my head and this girl comes running up to me and she was swearing at me... There was these two girls and this one girl's mother and they were beating me up. That's all I remember. When I woke up, I was in the hospital and I couldn't get out of bed for two days.

The group also heard a participant's story of being attacked as she sat with her boyfriend on a bench in a city off the reserve:

All of a sudden I hear footsteps behind me. That big girl attacked me and I went flying off the benches... I hit my head on the cement and I got knocked out. They said I was out for maybe five minutes and when I opened my eyes, she was standing over me and they were all yelling at me... Every time I tried to get up, she'd kick my face.

The girl did finally get up and tried to run away. After being grabbed once more and then breaking free again, she looked for help:

I got to the store. I was trying to ask him if they could help me. But that guy was just telling me to get out, get out of his store. So I just started running again and I got over to my friends house and we were sitting on the stairs. I was trying to call my mum, but there is no answer. I was trying to call like everybody I knew and those girls were just standing there threatening us. So I called a cab and then the cab came and I ran just as fast as I could to that cab, right? And then they were hitting the windows. They smashed the back of the window of the cab as we drove away.

Later in the discussion, after describing an assault, a participant stated that "the cops aren't going to do anything." It is particularly striking in these stories that even as the girls did the things children are told to do when they are in physical danger (run; head for a place where you know other people will be; call for help; get in touch with the police), some **people refused or were not available to help** and, for at least one girl, it took several tries before she was able to safely get away from her attackers.

One of the girls in the group was obviously upset as she described being stuck "right in the middle" of a **fight between family members**, in which one sibling grabbed another, a child attacked their parent and someone's leg was broken. The conflict was rooted in a dispute over child support and erupted when one parent arrived at the home of the other parent to pick up two young children. The fallout from the fight continues for the family. Rumors and accusations have spread about various family members. One of the parents has since been suspended from work, another family member has been accused of theft, family members are arguing about who does and who does not belong

in the community and the youngest children, the girl reports, don't understand what is going on. A participant also told of **domestic violence and associated emotional abuse and substance use within her family**, including accusations of infidelity, physical confinement and beatings. Later, a girl spoke of being beaten up by her parent's partner, who is also a student at the school: "I couldn't get over it. I didn't want to go to school for a long time. I just kept crying and couldn't stop. I told the teacher what happened to me."

When asked **whether or not they feel safe in the community**, only a few of the girls stated that they did. Some indicated that they felt safe some of the time, but not, for example, when they were in certain places or when they were alone.

The final question presented to the girls asked them to identify **one thing they would like people to do for the girls of Kainai**. The girls envisioned:

- **A place that supports girls' safety and strength**, where girls can go; where girls will be able to do things with other people or simply hang out; where girls can talk about things with other people; where girls can make friends; a place like a friendship centre.
- **Services and supports for girls**, more help for girls (mentioned by several participants), such as more counselling (in schools), people with good hearts that care and more resources that girls can access.
- **Improvements in the ways that people treat each other**, such as more friendliness and more goodness; people talk things through; people not being so mean to each other if people don't have anything nice to say, they shouldn't say anything at all.
- **Keep the girls safe.**

FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION

In this project, we spoke to 15 girls who live in Kainai First Nation. Statistically speaking, this is a very small sample and it should not be assumed that the girls who spoke with us are representative of all the girls in Kainai.

What we did learn about from these girls, however, is some part of the experiences girls who live in Kainai are having. We should be grateful for the courage and honesty the girls who participated brought to the group discussion. In a relatively short time, they let us know about many of the difficulties they face (some on a daily basis) in Kainai. While many of the girls enjoy school, others described their challenges with classes, teachers and peers. From the girls' comments, it is clear that gossip is very much part of the school culture and that it can – and does - have devastating effects on the girls. Gossip can isolate people and often escalates into violence.

Violence also seems to be an everyday part of the girls' lives. At the very least, each girl has heard stories of physical violence and virtually all the girls have seen it. Some have been directly involved in violence, most often as a victim. Physical violence (including domestic abuse and other forms of family violence), intimidation and emotional abuse occur at school, on the street, inside homes and inside families and are frequently associated with alcohol use. Unsurprisingly, when asked whether or not they feel safe in the community, only a few of the girls indicated that they did.

A theme that appeared over and over in the stories the girls shared is that when they have felt that they are in danger and then looked or asked for help, they have not been given what they needed to feel safe. Whether as a student whose teacher does not believe she lost her textbook; as a student who is in conflict with or victimized by one of their peers; as a youth on the street looking for protection from physical violence; or as a child watching violence between her parents and siblings, when these girls have done what we teach children to do to get safe, they have not got the help they wanted. We hear the girls' sense of frustration and injustice in their stories. This is troublesome because it suggests that there is a disconnect between the girls' sense of right and wrong or their set of ideas about the right or wrong way to do things and those of the institutions they are a part of or depend upon, like school, the police or their families. We need to watch that this conceptual "disconnect" does not, in fact, lead to the girls

disconnecting in more practical ways, like dropping out of school or leaving the community or their families.

What can we do to change this? This project, we hope, is part of creating that change. The key activity of this project has been to listen to the girls. Our original group discussion was designed to create an opportunity for the girls to speak, to tell us whatever they wanted to about their lives and their dreams and to be listened to. We have continued to move forward with that same commitment. Since holding our first discussion with the girls in November, we have twice planned return visits to Kainai to meet with the girls. On both occasions we were unable to connect with enough girls to set up another discussion. In large part, this is because, of the 14 girls from the original group who were at school in November, only 5 have remained at school.

In spite of this, we do not think our conversation with the girls is over. The girls' vision for the future offers us guidance for working towards creating a safer, happier future for them. They have asked for a place that will support their safety and strength; more services and supports for girls; improvements in the ways that people treat each other; and, more generally, our commitment to actions that will keep the girls safe. These are things that we, as individuals, can think about as we go about our day-to-day business at work, in our communities and with our families and other loved ones.

The girls' vision can also offer us guidance at a community level. **Recommendations** that follow from this are:

1. Continued conversation with the girls of Kainai, that is, an ongoing dialogue where the girls can speak, be heard and have influence over decisions and actions that may affect their wellbeing:
 - Invite the girls of Kainai to meet with community leaders to discuss the findings of this report and work with leadership to develop meaningful and do-able recommendations for actions that will enhance their safety.
 - Undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the safety and wellness needs of the girls of Kainai. To ensure that information is gathered from a truly representative group of girls, the evaluation should collect information

through a range of modalities, such as open-space meetings⁵, focus group discussions, individual interviews, print and web-based surveys, drop boxes and call-in lines.

- Establish and invest in an empowered and gender-balanced (i.e., with equal male/female representation) Youth Council and Advisory Committee that is mandated to provide guidance, direction, advice and information to community leadership, including Chief and Council, the school board and other educational authorities, social services, police services, medical services and others.
- Create other formal opportunities for the girls to communicate and engage with the leadership of Kainai, through mechanisms such as advocacy or advisory groups; or through gatherings where the girls can discuss and strategize around issues that are important to them.
- Offer more in-community activities that will appeal to and engage a broad range of girls. This might include leadership and other skills-development activities; spiritual and cultural activities; “fun nights” and other activities.
- Create ways to engage with the girls who may not participate in the formal opportunities described above – that is, if the girls won’t come to you, look for ways to come to the girls. This may mean holding gatherings or setting up outreach and programming at places and in neighbourhoods where the girls are already getting together.

2. Beginning planning how we can help to create a better future:

- Come together as leaders and as organizations and ask ourselves what we can do to help the girls create their vision of a safer and happier future. How can we work together to achieve this? Can we combine

⁵ Open-space meetings are designed so that participants develop and define the meeting agenda on site. This meeting style work well for groups that are looking at complex issues that they really care about and that they want to take action on quickly. More information on open-space is available at www.openspaceworld.org.

resources to leverage better outcomes for the girls of our communities?
What will we contribute?

- Come together as leaders and organizations and assess how we can enhance safety for the girls of our community. This includes identifying practical principles and doable actions that will support and enhance girls' safety as individuals, as family members and as community members.
- Hold community leadership and organizations accountable for the safety and wellbeing of the girls in our community, that is, for measurable outcomes that indicate that our community is a safer place for girls.
- Invite girls to be an active and empowered part of our own planning processes, by, for example, inviting representation or soliciting input from the Youth Council described above at planning meetings.
- Incorporate consideration of the needs of girls into program and service evaluation, i.e., when we assess the effectiveness of our own programs and services, we should also assess (wherever appropriate) the extent to which we support and nurture the well-being and safety of the girls of Kainai.
- As individuals, offer ourselves as mentors and friends to the girls of Kainai. This may be done through a formal mentoring program, such as the "Empowering Our Little Sisters" program in Winnipeg, Manitoba (www.empoweringsisters.com) or simply by each of us reaching out to the girls we know.

Appendix I: Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study entitled 'The experiences of Aboriginal girls who are exposed to violence and female gangs.' Please read this form carefully. Ask as many questions as you have.

Researcher(s): Helen McPhaden, Stardale Women's Group Inc., (403) 243-6615

Resource Contact (in addition to the researchers): Wendy Standing Alone, Kainai High School (403) 737-3963

Purpose and Procedure: You are invited to participate in a research project. The goal of the research is:

- To help us understand the needs of girls in Kainai
- To help us figure out what the girls want in Kainai

You have a choice to participate in the project or not. When we begin the project you can stop at any time. Stardale has done lots of work with girls. This project is not a part of the Stardale program. It is a research project. If you do not want to participate, it is okay.

If you decide that you would like to take part in this project, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and to take part in a discussion group. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes. Ms. Standing Alone will go over the questions with you to instruct on how to complete it. Ms. Standing Alone will also answer any questions you have at the time. After the questionnaire is completed, Ms. Standing Alone will take the form and give it to the researcher.

At another time, Ms. Standing Alone will contact you to come to a discussion group. The researcher will lead a discussion group where you will be asked to contribute your thoughts and feelings. It will be about what it is like to live at Kainai. What types of things could be improved upon? You can say as much or as little to the discussion as you wish. You are free to not answer any question at any time.

If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you do not have to stay in the discussion. You do not have to explain why. Should you decide to withdraw your participation in this project, there will be no consequence to you. If there is anything related to the questionnaire or the discussion that you would like to talk about further, both researchers will be available for you to talk with after the discussion group has ended. Participation in this project should take approximately 2 hours.

Potential Risks: There are no known risks associated with the present study. Contact information for the researchers is available, and additional resources can be accessed through Wendy Standing Alone. A counsellor Marilyn Halton will be available for the girls.

Potential Benefits:

The information collected from this research will be used to inform stakeholders at Kainai about your needs as young girls. The information will be used by the community helping people at Kainai to develop programs and projects.

Confidentiality: This is important. Please do not write your name or give any info on yourselves. The questionnaires are to be filled out by you. The information collected from the questionnaires will be written into a report. The information will be discussed as a group. Your names will be not referred to.

Some items on the questionnaire talk about illegal or potentially incriminating behaviour. It is very important that you do not write your name or any other identifying information on the questionnaire. If it were possible at any point to trace the identities of any participants under these circumstances, then we would supply the information. The information may be subpoenaed by a court of law.

The discussion group will be audiotape recorded. You do not have to say your name. You will not be identified at when spoke. If you talk about something in the discussion group that you do *not* want the researcher to use in the final report, ask for it to be removed the data set. When the discussion group ends, there will be forms for feedback given. You may write on this form anything that you are uncomfortable with. The researcher will understand what you are writing.

The researcher will undertake to protect the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group. Please do not disclose the contents of this discussion outside the group. Please be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality.

Right to Withdraw: You may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the study at any time, the data from the questionnaire that you filled in will be destroyed. The researcher can strike out the transcribed words that you have contributed to the group, but the audiotapes will not be destroyed until five years after the completion of the study.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point. You are free to contact the researchers at the numbers provided above if you have any questions at a later time.

This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the Community Research Ethics Board of Alberta on (date).

Any questions regarding your rights, as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (780-423-5727). If you are interested in the results of the study, you may contact the researchers at the phone number above, and a copy of the results will be mailed to you.

Consent to Participate: I have read these pages. I understand my rights as a participant for this study. I consent participating.

(Name, please sign)

(Date)

Approved by Community Research Ethics Board of Alberta, University of Alberta, September 07, 2007

Appendix II: Collated Responses from Questionnaire

The girls who participated in the guided group discussion were also asked to complete a questionnaire that gathered demographic and other information. Their responses are collated and summarized below.

Section A: Demographic Information:

1. Age of participant:

- One participant was 11 years old
- Two participants were 12 years old
- One participant was 13 years old
- Five participants were 15 years old
- Four participants were 16 years old
- Two participants were 17 years old.

2. Place of birth:

- Six participants were born in Lethbridge
- Five participants were born in Cardston
- Three participants were born in other Alberta communities
- One participant did not respond.

3. Ethnicity:

- Fourteen participants identified as Aboriginal
- One participant did not respond.

4. Last level of education completed:

- Two participants had completed Grade 6
- Two participants had completed Grade 7
- One participant had completed Grade 8
- One participant had completed Grade 9
- Nine participants had completed Grade 10.

Section B: The girls were asked to indicate the extent to which each statement below represented their feelings, using a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Their responses are reported below, along with the mathematical average of their responses and the mode (i.e., the most frequent response):

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
0	3	10	2	0
Average = 3 (Agree)			Mode = 3 (Agree)	

2. All in all, I am inclined to think I am a failure

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
3	9	3	0	0
Average = 2 (Disagree)			Mode = 2 (Disagree)	

3. I feel I have a number of good qualities.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
0	4	8	3	0
Average = 3 (Agree)			Mode = 3 (Agree)	

4. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
0	8	1	0	0
Average = 2 (Disagree)			Mode = 2 (Disagree)	

5. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
1	3	9	2	0
Average = 3 (Agree)			Mode = 3 (Agree)	

6. At times, I think I am no good at all.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
1	8	6	0	0
Average = 2 (Disagree)			Mode = 2 (Disagree)	

7. I certainly feel useless at times.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
1	6	8	0	0
Average = 2 (Disagree)			Mode = 3 (Agree)	

8. I feel that I am a person of worth, or at least on an equal plane with others.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
1	5	6	3	0
Average = 3 (Agree)			Mode = 3 (Agree)	

9. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
0	2	8	5	0
Average = 3 (Agree)			Mode = 3 (Agree)	

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	No Response
0	4	7	4	0
Average = 3 (Agree)			Mode = 3 (Agree)	

Section C: Tobacco Use**1. Do you use tobacco?**

Yes	3
No	12

2. Have you ever used tobacco?

Yes	8
No	7

3. What kind of tobacco do you use?

Cigarettes	7
Smokeless	2

4. How many cigarettes PER DAY do you smoke?

None	12
2 cigarettes	1
3 cigarettes	1
6 cigarettes	1

5. For how many years have you (or did you) smoked?

1 month	1
3 months	1
1 year	2
2 years	1

3 years 1
5 years 1

Comment: *Haven't smoked in more than two months.*

Section D: Alcohol History

1. Have you ever taken a drink of beer, wine, liquor or another alcoholic beverage?

Yes 10
No 5

Comments: *Haven't drank in a month*

2. In the past 6 months, have you taken a drink of beer, wine, liquor or another alcoholic beverage?

Yes 7
No 5

3. In the past 6 months, how often did you drink alcoholic beverages?

Once a week 1
Once or twice a month 1
Less than once a month 6

Comments: *Never drank*

4. When you do drink alcoholic beverages, how many drinks do you usually have (one drink of alcohol would be 1 bottle of beer or one small glass of wine or 1 oz. of hard liquor)?

0 drinks 3
1/2 drink 1
1 drink 2
1-2 drinks 1
3 drinks 2
4 drinks 1
4 or 5 drinks 1
7 drinks 1
8 drinks 1

5. On average, how many alcoholic drinks do you consume per WEEK?

0 drinks 12
4 or 5 drinks 1
7 drinks 1

Section E: Drug Use

1. Have you ever smoked marijuana?

Yes 11
No 4

2. In the past 6 months, how often have you smoked marijuana?

Every day	0
4-6 days per week	2
2-3 days per week	2
Once per week	1
Once or twice per month	0
Less than once a month	3
Never	7

3. On average how many joints do you smoke per week?

None	7
1 joint	1
2 joints	2
3 joints	1
4 or 5 joints	1
7 joints	1

Comment: *But I've stopped.*

4. Have you ever used any other types of drugs?

Yes	1
No	12

If so, what types of drugs have you used?

Marijuana	1
Coffee	1

How often do you use any of these drugs?

Once per week (coffee)	1
Less than once a month (marijuana)	1
Never	1

Comments:

- *I don't*
- *Don't smoke drugs*

Section F: Additional Questions**1. Please indicate your present living situation:**

With one parent	5
With both parents	6
With a grandparent	1
With another relative (grandparents & aunt)	1
In a foster home	0
Other (mother and stepfather)	1

2. Do you have a curfew at your house?

Yes	8
No	6

What time is your curfew (usually)?

8:30 pm	1
10:00 pm	1
10:30 or 11:00 pm	1
11:00 pm	1

11 to 12:00 pm	1
12:00 pm	1

Comments:

- Whenever my mom says to be home
- Not too late.

Do you usually follow this curfew?

Yes	9
No	3

Comments: Sometimes**3. Are you presently attending school?**

Yes	13
No	1

If yes, have you skipped school this year?

Yes	5
No	8

On average, how often do you skip school?

Every day	0
2-3 days per week	0
Once per week	1
Once or twice per month	2
Less than once a month	2
Never	2

What is the main reason(s) you have skipped school?

- Just too tired (2)
- Slept in
- Don't feel like going to that class (2)
- Class was too boring
- Sick
- Doctor visits
- No textbook
- I don't know

4. Do you currently have a job?

Yes	1
No	14

If yes, how long have you been working at this job?

- Well, I babysit for my mom.

Do you like your job?

Yes	1
No	1

What do you like or dislike about your job?

- Diapers

Appendix III: Literature Review

There is a lack of research on the reasons which motivate Aboriginal girls to become violent and join gangs. Consequently, this literature review includes the literature pertaining to aggression, violence, delinquency, and gang involvement specific to Aboriginal girls and women, and to girls and women in general (irrespective of the Aboriginal ethnicity component). Research material on such issues (although also limited), is thought to contribute to an understanding of the motivations for Aboriginal girls to become violent and join gangs. It should be noted that literature pertaining to gangs (irrespective of the female gender and Aboriginal ethnicity components) and Aboriginal gangs (irrespective of the female gender component) was also included when it was deemed relevant.

It is understood that the historical context is a fundamental issue to be examined when conducting research concerning Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The negative historical events and oppressive administrative policies have contributed to high rates of emotional distress, substance abuse and imprisonment, and lower levels of education and socioeconomic status for the Aboriginal peoples (Van der Woerd and Cox, 2006). As concerns the problem of Aboriginal youth gangs, it has been suggested that the racism and assimilation efforts of the Residential School system has left residual effects on Aboriginal youth, thereby acting as an underlying cause for social unrest, and leading to the gang involvement we witness today (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 2003). It has also been suggested that the personal experiences of youth who join gangs are commonly rooted in “personal experiences of colonialism, poverty, and discrimination“(Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2007).

Conscious of the lack of research, the Native Women’s Association of Canada (2007) recommended, *inter alia*, that research be carried out on the issues specific to Aboriginal gangs, and particularly concerning the experience of women and girls in Aboriginal gangs. Grekul (2007) also noted that there is a lack of Canadian research on Aboriginal gangs. Correctional Services Canada (2003) indicated that there is a lack of research on female gang members in Canada and that little is known about their characteristics or profiles.

There is also little research on the topic of violence and aggression among Aboriginal girls. One study did however explore the factors which correlate with violence and aggression among Aboriginal girls, and concluded that these correlates should be subject to analysis in future studies due to the lack of research on the topic (Van der Woerd and Cox, 2006). This study looked at data from the *Raven’s Children* report, which was based on data from the McCreary Centre Society’s Adolescent Health Survey (AHS II). The AHS II was administered in 1998 to over 26,000 young people attending school in British Columbia, of whom 1,707 participants (45 % male, 55 % female) identified themselves as Aboriginal. The AHS II surveyed, *inter alia*, experiences of aggressive behaviour, verbal harassment, discrimination, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and involvement in physical fights. However, such experiences were

examined from the perspective of the victim, rather than that of the perpetrator. For instance, 60 % of the Aboriginal girls reported that they had experienced verbal harassment at least once in the past year, 31 % reported to have been victims of physical abuse, and 29 % had been in a physical fight in the past year. As acknowledged by Van der Woerd and Cox (2006), the fact that the AHS II did not collect data from the perspective of the perpetrator was the fundamental limitation of the said survey for evaluating factors related to aggressive behaviour among Aboriginal girls. Nevertheless, the authors included a comprehensive review of the literature on the topic of aggressive or violent behaviours among adolescent girls, including available literature on Aboriginal girls, and extracted the common risk factors for aggressive behaviours as proposed by the literature. Such risk factors have included aspects of the individual herself, the social network, prior victimization, experiences of racism, factors related to school, adolescence in general, family cohesion or lack thereof, and the community environment (see Van der Woerd and Cox, 2006). In extracting the factors which may lead to violent and aggressive behaviour on the part of Aboriginal adolescent girls from the available research, and paralleling them with the findings of the AHS II (which collected data from the perspective of the victim), the authors concluded that efforts to address violent and aggressive behaviour among adolescent Aboriginal girls should include individual, school, family, and community elements.

The literature on female gang involvement suggests that some of the common social and economic characteristics of female gang members may also provide motivating factors for their gang involvement. A dysfunctional family life has been such a characteristic. In summarizing the family and neighbourhood life of the young female gang members in his study, Molidor (1996) noted that respondents related stories of their parents' marital situation by referring to incidences of divorce, remarriage, and domestic violence. Moreover, they had stories of extensive alcohol and drug abuse by parents, stepparents, and live-in boyfriends. The young female gang members also explained that severe physical or sexual abuse began at an early age. Nimmo (2001) researched female gang members in Winnipeg through interviews with representatives from different agencies which intervene in the lives of gang women. All of the respondents said that most of the female gang members endured terrible family lives. They also noted that gang girls typically grew up with parents and extended family members with severe alcohol and drug abuse problems. Moreover, these girls also had histories of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. A lack of love, attention and childhood supervision are other common characteristics of the family environment in which female gang members would have grown up. It should be noted that this study indicated that the vast majority of female gang members in Winnipeg were Aboriginal. The representatives from the different agencies estimated that anywhere between 60 % and 98 % of the female gang members in Winnipeg are Aboriginal.

Research also suggests that young female gang members have disproportionate histories of victimization prior to their gang involvement when compared to non-gang females (Miller, 1996). Artz (1998) puts forward that young girls who have

been abused or victimized are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour (Van der Woerd and Cox, 2006). The lack of family cohesion has been found to result in higher incidences of aggression in adolescent girls (Leschied et al., 2000). Loeber and Stouhamer (1986) noted that juvenile aggression and delinquency could be determined by various aspects of family functioning, or rather family dysfunction. In testing models on social control theory to explain gender differences in self-reported delinquency, Deschenes et al. (1990) found that a strong bond to family was more of an insulator against delinquency for females than males (Deschenes and Esbensen 1999).

It has been suggested that young females become involved in gangs partly as a means of protecting themselves from violence and other problems in their families, including mistreatment by the men in their lives (Joe Chesney-Lind, 1995; Lauderback et al., 1992). It has also been suggested that the sense of family derived from gang affiliation may serve to explain gang involvement by youth from dysfunctional homes. The gang thus acts as a sort of surrogate family, fulfilling needs not being met by the family of origin (Campbell, 1990; Chesney-Lind, Sheldon and Joe, 1996; Nimmo, 2001). Aboriginal youth who are involved in gangs report that they feel disconnected from their family, community, and school environment (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 2003).

Another social and economic characteristic of female gang members is that they tend to come from poor, disadvantaged communities (Miller, 1998). Researchers have suggested that lower class youth may seek to escape difficult social and economic conditions through gang involvement (Chang 1996, Felkenes and Becker, 1995; Laflin 1996; Laidler and Hunt, 1997; Rosenbaum, 1996; Correctional Services Canada, 2003). Female gang members often live in urban communities where violence is both rampant and an accepted response to oppressive conditions associated with inequality, segregation, and isolation (Miller, 1998; see also: Simpson, 1991; Sampson and Wilson, 1995; Wilson, 1996). With reference to aggressive behaviours among Aboriginal youth, Van der Woerd and Cox (2006) noted that there are many factors affecting youth at the community level. They observed that Aboriginal youth continue to face additional challenges including geographic isolation, high unemployment rates, restrictive policies concerning the use of natural resources, and poor attitudes on the part of teachers and administrators towards at-risk youths (Kortering and Braziel, 1999; Van der Woerd, 2002). In their review of the literature, Deschenes and Esbensen (1999) noted that Sommers and Baskin (1994) found that juvenile females who engage in violent street crime were likely to live in “distressed communities”, in that their childhood neighbourhoods had high concentrations of poverty and stranger victimization. Interestingly, they cite Thornberry (1998), who found that community and environment, as assessed on the basis of neighbourhood disorganization and violence, are more significant risk factors contributing to gang involvement for females than males (Deschenes and Esbensen (1999). Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995) found that girls are more attracted to violence or gang participation when they are from disadvantaged families or neighbourhoods, are affected by poor self-esteem, or are seeking revenge.

The glamorization of gangs in the media (Nimmo, 2001) and the instant sense of protection and power offered by gang affiliation also serve to explain the “buy-in” of gang membership for socially and economically disadvantaged young girls and women (Nimmo, 2001). Molidor (1996) also found that the power and protection obtained from the gang made the female gang members in his study feel respected by others.

In systematically reviewing gender differences in gang involvement, Bjerregaard and Smith (1993) found that the major difference explaining male and female gang participation was that failure in school was a more important variable for females than males (see also Curry, 1998). Nimmo (2001) observed that girls who are involved in gangs are typically two or three years behind their age mates in school. Molidor (1996) also found that the female gang members in his study were at least two years behind in school. Gang involvement correlates with lower school attendance and lower levels of completed education. This negatively affects future employment and income levels (Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2007). Poor academic achievement is thus suggested as an indicator for gang participation in much of the literature (e.g. Chang, 1996; Molidor, 1996; Curry, 1998; Lurigio et al., 1998; Nimmo, 2001).

Peer delinquency was found to be the most significant factor explaining delinquent behaviour among both males and females (Deschenes et al, 1990). Fraternizing with delinquent peers increases the likelihood that girls will manifest aggressive or violent behaviour merely because the opportunity will present itself more frequently (Van der Woerd and Cox, 2006; Health Canada, 2008). As concerns the relationship between gang involvement and delinquency, the research on gangs has consistently found that gang involvement correlates with higher rates of delinquency (Curry, 1998). Moreover, it has also been found that gang participation is associated with higher levels of involvement in criminal activity for both girls and boys (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Esbensen and Winfree, 1998; Thornberry et al., 1993; Miller, 1998). Gang activity was reported to cause an increase in violent offending on the part of young females (see Deschenes and Esbensen, 1999).

In looking at the issue of whether female gang participation is increasing, it is important to note that the majority of the literature is American, which may or may not reflect the Canadian reality. In terms of Canadian sources, Health Canada (2008) reported that the rate of violent crime perpetrated by girls in Canada tripled during the late 1980s and 1990s (see also Van der Woerd and Cox, 2006). Correctional Services Canada (2003) stated that street gangs are a growing concern for the Canadian law enforcement system and that there has been an increasing fear of violent crimes committed by young women. The Native Women’s Association of Canada (2007) noted that gang activity is expected to increase with the growing Aboriginal population, particularly if the systemic discrimination, as well as the social and economic problems experienced by urban Aboriginal youth and adults, are not addressed. Public Safety Canada (2007) found that Aboriginal youth are more at risk for gang recruitment (and organized crime) than non-Aboriginal youth, and that Aboriginal

gangs are increasing in numbers and influence in Western Canada. It was also reported that police forces and Aboriginal organizations “indicate that there is a growing percentage of female gang membership in Western Canadian provinces, including British Columbia (12 %), Manitoba (10 %) and Saskatchewan (9%)” (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 2003). More generally, Van der Woerd and Cox (2006) reported that rates of aggression in adolescent girls are increasing and Aboriginal girls are especially at risk. The American literature has suggested that female gang involvement may be on the rise (Campbell, 1984, Chesney-Lind, 1993; Deschenes et al., 1999). It has been observed that serious criminal acts perpetrated by female gang members has gradually increased and is becoming more commonplace (see Molidor, 1996). Moreover, it was found that in certain urban neighbourhoods, more than 20 % of girls report gang affiliations (Bjerregaard and Smith; Winfree et al., 1992).

According to the research, personality and emotional aspects of the individual herself may also provide indicators for gang participation. Indeed, certain personality traits have been found to be more prevalent in female gang members than non-gang members. Results of a Correctional Services Canada (2003) study comparing federally incarcerated female gang members and non-gang members found that female gang members were more “socially unaware” than non-gang members (at a rate of 33 % versus 3%). Impulsivity, disregard for others, aggression and hostility were other anti-social personality indicators found to be more prevalent in the female gang members in this study. These findings lead the researchers to conclude that “gang members are consistently anti-social in their attitudes and behaviour”. Research indeed suggests that gang members are more likely to be socially inept (Lurigio et al., 1998). Such personality or emotional traits as impulsivity, risk-seeking conduct, self-centeredness, and anger make an individual more prone to engage in criminal activity (Deschenes and Esbensen, 1999). Aggressive or violent girls are also more likely to suffer with major depression, anxiety and attachment disorders (defined as problems creating and maintaining social and personal bonds) (Health Canada, 2008).

In conclusion, it can be said that the body of literature reviewed suggests that the dynamic interplay of such factors as: history, family, prior victimization, community, socio-economic status, peer group, performance in school, and the individual herself, should be examined to explain and address the current problem of violence and gang involvement among Aboriginal girls. It is however apparent that more research is needed on the reasons which motivate Aboriginal girls to become violent and join gangs.

Appendix IV: References

- Artz, S. (1998). *Sex, Power, and the Violent School Girl*, Trifolium Books, Toronto, ON.
- Bjerregaard, B., and Smith, C. (1993). Gender Differences in Gang Participation, Delinquency, and Substance Abuse. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 4: 329-355.
- Campbell, A. (1984). *The Girls in the Gang*, Basil Blackwell Inc., New York, NY.
- Campbell, A. (1990). On the Invisibility of the Female Delinquent Peer Group. *Women and Criminal Justice* 2 (1): 41-63.
- Chang, J. (1996). A Comparative Study of Female Gang and Non-Gang Members in Chicago. *Journal of Gang Research* 4 (1): 9-17.
- Chesney-Lind, M. (1993). Girls, Gangs and Violence: Anatomy of a Backlash. *Human Soc.* 17: 321-344.
- Chesney-Lind, M., Shelden, R.G., and Joe, K.A. (1996). Girls, Delinquency and Gang Membership. In Huff, C.R. (ed.), *Gangs in America*, 2nd ed., Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, p.185-204.
- Correctional Services Canada. (2003). A Profile of Women Gang Members in Canada. Available online: retrieved February 8, 2008 from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rsrch/reports/r138/r138-eng.shtml>
- Curry, C.D. (1998.) Female Gang Involvement. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 35 (1): 100-118.
- Deschenes, E.P., Rosenbaum, J., and Fagan, J. (1990). Gender Differences in Delinquency and Drug Use: A Social Development Perspective. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology.
- Deschenes, E.P., and Esbensen, F.A., (1999). Violence and Gangs: Gender Differences in Perceptions and Behavior. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 15 (1): 63-96.
- Esbensen, F.A., Winfree, L.T., (1998). Race and Gender Differences Between Gang and Non-Gang Youth: Results from a Multi-Site Survey. *Justice Quarterly* 15 (3): 505-525.
- Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). 2003. Alter-Natives to Non-Violence Report: Aboriginal Youth Gangs Exploration: A Community Development Process.
- Felkenes, G.K., and Becker, H.K. (1995). Female Gang Members: A Growing Issue for Policy Makers. *Journal of Gang Research* 2 (4): 1-10.
- Grekul, J. (2007). An Investigation into the Formation and Recruitment Process of Aboriginal Gangs in Western Canada. Available Online: retrieved February 15, 2008 from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cor/apc/apc-eng.aspx>

- Health Canada. (2008). Aggressive Girls: Overview Paper. Available online: retrieved February 15, 2008 from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/html/nfntsaggsr_e.html
- Joe, K.A., and Chesney-Lind, M. (1995). Just Every Mother's Angel: An Analysis of Gender and Ethnic Variations in Youth Gang Membership. *Gender & Society* 9 (4):408-30.
- Kortering, L.J and Braziel, P.M. (1999). Staying in School: The Perspective of Ninth-Grade Students. *Remedial and Special Education* 20: 106-113.
- Laidler, K.A.J., and Hunt, G. (1997). Violence and Social Organization in Female Gangs. *Social Justice* 24(4): 148-169.
- Laiflin, M. (1996). Girl Gangs. *Law and Order* 44 (3): 87-89.
- Lauderback, D., Hansen, J., and Waldorf, D. (1992). Sisters are Doin' it for Themselves: A Black Female Gang in San Francisco. *The Gang Journal* 1 (1): 57-70.
- Leschild, A.W., Van Brunschot, M., Cummings, A., and Saunders, A. (2000). Female Adolescent Aggression: A Review of the Literature and the Correlates of Aggression. Ottawa: Solicitor General of Canada, User Report No. 2000-04.
- Loeber, R., and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986). Family Factors as Correlates and Predictors of Juvenile Conduct Problems and Delinquency. In Tonry, M., and Morris, N. (eds.) *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 7, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Lurigio, A.J., Swartz, J.A., and Chang, J. (1998). A Descriptive and Comparative Analysis of Female Gang Members. *Journal of Gang Research* 5 (4):23-33.
- Miller, J. (1996). The Dynamics of Female Gang Involvement in Columbus, Ohio. Paper presented at the National Youth Gang Symposium, June, Dallas, TX.
- Miller, J. (1998). Gender and Victimization Risk among Young Women in Gangs. *Journal of Crime and Delinquency* 35 (4): 429-453.
- Molidor, C.E. (1996). Female Gang Members: A Profile of Aggression and Victimization. *Social Work* 41 (3): 251-257.
- Native Women's Association of Canada. (2007). Aboriginal Women and Gangs: An Issue Paper. Prepared for the National Aboriginal Women's Summit, June 20-22, 2007, in Corner Brook, NL.
- Nimmo, M. (2001). The "Invisible" Gang Members: A Report on Female Gang Affiliation in Winnipeg. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Winnipeg, MB.

- Public Safety Canada. (2007). Youth Gangs in Canada: What do we know? Available online: retrieved on February 10, 2008 from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/bldngevd/2007-yg-1-en.asp>
- Rosenbaum, J.L. (1996). A Violent Few: Gang Girls in the California Youth Authority. *Journal of Gang Research* 3 (3): 17-23.
- Sampson, R. J., and Wilson, W.J. (1995). Toward a Theory of Race, Crime and Urban Inequality. In *Crime and Inequality*, ed. John Hagan and Ruth D. Peterson. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.
- Simpson, Sally. (1991). Caste, Class and Violent Crime: Explaining Differences in Female Offending. *Criminology* 29 (1): 115-135.
- Sommers, I., and Baskin, D.R. (1994). Factors related to Female Adolescent Initiation into Violent Street Crime. *Youth Soc.* 25: 468-489.
- Thornberry, T.P, Krohn, M.D., and Lizotte, A.J., and Chard-Wierschem, D. (1993). The Role of Juvenile Gangs in Facilitating Delinquent Behavior. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 30 (1): 75-85.
- Thornberry, T. (1998.) Membership in Youth Gangs and Involvement in Serious and Violent Offending. In Loeber, R., and Farrington, D.P. (eds.) *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks p. 147-166.
- Van der Woerd, K. A. (2002). Making Informed Choices: How do First Nations Youth Make Decisions About School and Health? *The B.C. Counsellor* 24: 81-90.
- Van der Woerd, K. A., and Cox, D.N. (2006). A Preliminary Look at Aggressive and Violent Behaviour in Aboriginal Adolescent Girls. *Pimatisiwin* 4 (1): 120-134.
- Wilson, W.J. (1996). *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*, Knopf, New York, NY.
- Winfree, L. T., Fuller, K., Vigil T., and Mays, G.L. (1992). The Definition and Measurement of "Gang Status": Policy Implications for Juvenile Justice. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 43: 29-37.