

Culturally Appropriate Mediation

By Lois Caron, Talking Together Facilitator, North Eastern Region
2008

Wahcheeyay!

My name is Lois M. Caron and I was hired in December of 2006 as a Talking Together Facilitator with Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services (“NALSC”) for the Northeastern region and the James Bay coast. Sue Chokomolin, Talking Together Facilitator is also based in the Northeastern Region. I am pleased to be a part of the NALSC Family and it is a pleasure to work with such dedicated individuals who focus on Restorative Justice.

The Talking Together Program is a child welfare alternative dispute resolution process that is modeled in a traditional frame work of “Circle Sharing”. The process works by bringing family, children, child protection workers and community together into a safe, healthy and confidential environment to support and offer services to those for whom an agreement of care will be established. This unique process is done with the interests and safety of the child(ren) to provide a working agreement between all parties concerned.

In the circle there is no right or left, nor is there a beginning or an end. Every person seated in the circle looks to the same centre as the focus. The circle is the symbol of justice because it is perfect, unbroken, and a simile of unity and oneness. It conveys the image of people gathering together for discussion.

In my time as a Talking Together Facilitator, I have had opportunities to witness the courage and strength that families have endured. Families are becoming more and more focused on the well being of their children as their circle of life.

Thank you for this opportunity and may the Creator watch over you as life moves forward.