Critical New Service Launched for Aboriginal Women in Northern Ontario

Talk4Healing: A Help Line for Aboriginal Women

Today, Beendigen and the Ontario Native Women’s Association (ONWA) announced the launch of a critical new service for Aboriginal women. A first of its kind in Ontario - Talk4Healing, A Help Line for Aboriginal Women - will provide a culturally safe and appropriate resource for Aboriginal women and their families living in Northern Ontario.

Operated by Beendigen in partnership with the Ontario Native Women’s Association, this new service will provide: culturally sensitive crisis counselling, advice and support, personalized information and referrals, acceptance of Aboriginal women’s issues in a non-judgmental way, scheduled telephone counselling sessions and help to find the path to personal healing. Available 24 hours a day; 7 days a week, Talk4Healing will offer services in English, Ojibway, Oji-Cree, and Cree.

“We know that Aboriginal women are one of the most vulnerable populations in Canada,” says Betty Kennedy, ONWA Executive Director. “Talk4Healing was developed because Aboriginal communities, organizations, and stakeholders collectively recognized the need for more culturally appropriate services, supports and counselling for our women who may have experienced violence or abuse, or those who just need help with getting through the day to day burdens that sometimes plague us all.”

Talk4Healing will offer support and counselling services to Aboriginal women living in urban, rural, and remote communities, both on and off reserve all across Northern Ontario. “Geographical isolation and the lack of services that go along with it is a reality for many Aboriginal women living in Northern communities, but that should not be a barrier to healing,” says Patricia Jurivee, Beendigen Executive Director. “A safe and easily accessible help line where our women can turn to for help has been something desperately needed in Ontario for a long time now. It’s great to have finally achieved this goal through the development and launch of Talk4Healing.”

Talk4Healing would not have been possible without the support and funding provided by Government of Ontario’s Ministry of Community and Social Services. “This helpline provides culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal women experiencing violence. I am proud that this service was developed in partnership with my ministry with input from Aboriginal Elders, survivors of violence, community leaders and policing organizations. It is designed,
developed and delivered by and for Aboriginal women,” said John Milloy, Minister of Community and Social Services.

Bill Mauro, Member of Provincial Parliament for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, states that “Talk4Healing will be critical in providing Aboriginal women across Northern Ontario the support that they need, when they need it. All women, regardless of geographical location, should have access to this sort of healing network, and I’m pleased that this barrier will now be broken down through the launch of Talk4Healing.”

Accessing Talk4Healing is simple. Women can call the toll-free number, 1-855-554-HEAL, where they will be greeted by a caring person to talk to in complete confidence. “At Talk4Healing, we have trained, Aboriginal counsellors who are ready and eager to help address the unique needs of Aboriginal women and their families,” says Robin Haliuk, Talk4Healing Coordinator. “I am so excited that our lines are officially open. This is where the journey to healing begins.”

Interested parties may also visit the website at www.Talk4Healing.com for more information.

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