

# Social Development IS Crime Prevention: Lasting Solutions for Safer Communities | March 12-14, 2008

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## Thematic Session Summary

Session Title: Community Sensitivity to Aboriginal and Other Cultural Issues      Session #: C4

### **1. *Re-Cap the Main Challenges***

Identifying the appropriate jurisdictions for supporting the well being of aboriginal people; instead of passing the buck between federal and provincial agencies;  
Lack of awareness of the history of aboriginal peoples by Canadians  
Getting Funding and resources to the right people  
Need for viewpoints that are open to change.  
Homelessness  
Youth Employment is high  
Disharmony in the community  
Sensitivity training for our elders and native service practitioners  
Clarity of issues  
Moving beyond a culture of victimization  
Developing self accountability  
Recognizing biases and systematic wrongs  
Appreciating diversity of world views  
Finding ways of asset building  
Understanding the impact of residential schools on each generation  
Culture shock

### **2. *What are the Unique Challenges in Your Community?***

Keeping the spirit of cultural inclusiveness alive while still upholding peace and order/"the law"  
Looking after those seriously intoxicated/high – a place/resources/treatment  
Diversifying our "force" (police?) culturally so it accurately represents the cultural make-up of our community  
Engage people in cultural learning and awareness  
Spousal abuse; family violence  
High rents  
High alcohol and drug use; drunk driving  
Lack of local education and awareness of the local issues  
Youth boredom  
Acceptability of unemployment  
Abuse of power by community leaders  
High crime  
Diversity of cultures in Alberta  
Integration of immigrants into Canada – do not lump with Aboriginal issues

Acknowledgement of values and shared perspectives  
Balancing local requirements with sensitive enforcement  
Gangs  
Poverty  
Poor education

**3. *What outcomes would you like to see in your Community?***

Increased number of aboriginals on our force  
More cultural sensitivity and patience by our current members(through training)  
Choosing our “battles” (for change?) more carefully  
More accessible funding  
More resources for youth  
Construct a safe house for abused spouses and others  
More involvement in cultural issues  
More police involvement in programs – e.g. speaking in schools  
Have local mentors enrich our understanding of ourselves, our language and our culture  
Open and honest discussions as to our identity  
Increased system and community accountability  
Better awareness of the service providers in the communities – who they are and what they can offer

**4. *Who are the stakeholders involved in realizing these outcomes***

Our people  
Training coordinators in our department  
Each individual member of our force  
Aboriginal groups on campus  
All those who live and/work/visit the community  
Senior levels of government  
Judges  
Sentencing circles  
Media  
Schools and Educators  
Government departments  
Elected officials  
Community agencies  
Community businesses  
Community leaders

**5. *What strategies would you develop to achieve these outcomes and what resources do you need***

Need shelters in south end of city (Edmonton)  
Introduce members to different resources available  
Introduce community specific policing practices (engaging with the community positively)

Increase availability of printed material/other resources/interpreters so that aboriginal languages can be learned

Media to commit to covering the positives

Assistance to local groups in housing

Numerous volunteers in fundraising

Local MLA's assist in funding identification

Workshops and forums in our communities re our issues and resolutions

Documentation and resources available to our people re our history, stories, cultural values, etc.

Think and act in terms of "WITH" the people

Undertake needs assessments and evaluation processes

Better interaction between RCMP and community members – awareness building

Encourage mediation processes

#### **6. *How is government involved in the success of these strategies?***

Consistent and appropriate funding

Open more shelters

Government reps deal with issues directly in the community

Government assistance in grant application preparation

"Hollow Water Project (Manitoba)

- once you have the information, commit to it and do it

Less outside government interference; more external acceptance of our local ways and practices

Stop re-inventing the wheel! – Learn from things already initiated or practiced elsewhere

No government! –encourage aboriginal communities to work things out with local agencies first