



**Anishinabek Nation
Circle Process to Support Child
Well-Being**

**Presentation for Indigenous Services
Canada**

Ontario Joint Gathering May 14, 2019

by Leanna Farr, Legal Counsel, Anishinabek Nation



Background of the Project

A Matter of (Mis)Trust

Mainstream systems would not allow Anishinabek to care for their families; they did not trust that Anishinabek had legitimate processes and systems.

Anishinabek Ways Are Better

Leaders and families have made this statement for as long as the child welfare system has been imposed on the Anishinabek.



Background of the Project

Not Our Way

Anishinabek did not write down our methods.

Anishinabek methods were taught through stories, ceremonies and teachings. Values and principles were entrenched in Anishinabek every day living.

Understanding and Relationship

To build trust, Indigenous peoples have started to document customs and practices to accommodate mainstream understanding.



Background of the Project

ADR Under the former CFSA & Policy Directive CW 005-06 – Limited to one of the following:

- Child Protection Mediation – Agency workers and the family work with a qualified mediator
- Family Group Conferencing – Family, child (where approp.), extended family and community, agency workers, service providers develop plan to address the concerns via qualified coordinator assisting.
- Aboriginal Approaches – Traditional methods established by FNs via Facilitators skilled in FN traditional methods (This is where the Anishinabek Nation process fits in)
- Other approach as approved by Exec. Director & meeting the requirements of the policy



Background of the Project

- ADR under new CYFSA – No Policy Directive yet, but in development
- AN CWBWG - We need an Anishinabek process to meet the needs of our Anishinabek children, families and communities!
- Provincial Indigenous Dispute Resolution Curriculum (Ontario; Six Nations Justice Dept.)
- Anishinabek Nation designed process needed!




Overview of the Project

- DR specifically for child well-being matters
- Anishinaabe developed – culture & customs
- Support our 40 First Nations in child well-being
- AN Child Well-Being Law (CWBL) & Ontario *CYFSA* processes
- Available at any time (prevention or protection)
- Promoting access to justice for Anishinabek children, families & communities



Overview of the Work Plan

Fall 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background Research• Elder & Ceremony• Engagement w CWBWG (meetings and online survey) & Online Survey• Updates to GCA	Implementation planning & secure ongoing implementation funding 
Winter 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze feedback from CWBWG• Develop Circle Process Toolkit & Facilitator Training Manual• Ongoing engagement w CWBWG	
Spring/Summer 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue develop Circle Process Toolkit & Facilitator Training Manual• Ongoing engagement w CWBWG• Grand Council Assembly• Initial training for facilitators & implementation	



Background Research – Overview

- Anishinabek appeals & redress process
- Aboriginal Legal Service of Toronto
“Giiwedin Anang”
- Six Nations Indigenous Dispute
Resolution
- Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services “Talking
Together”
- Other examples



Background Research – Important Themes

- This is for the child(ren)!
- Circle process important
- Facilitator & Elder & initial steps are key!
- Facilitators trained as per Anishinabek qualifications & standards
- Flexibility & adaptability to meet diversity (ex. culture, religion, difficult situations)
- Child-minding, Mental Health & Location



Feedback from CWB Working Group is crucial for success!



Next Steps

- Completing Circle Process Toolkit & Training Manual
- Grand Council Assembly June, 2019
- Continue Implementation Planning & Implementation (i.e. funding, training, ongoing implementation)







Contact info:

Leanna Farr - Legal Counsel,
Anishinabek Nation

leanna.farr@anishinabek.ca

Stan Cloud - Child Welfare Operations
Coordinator/ Policy Analyst

Stan.cloud@anishinabek.ca



Chi Miigwetch!
Questions or Comments?