

## APPENDIX C

### WHAT IS A TRIBAL ADVOCATE?

One of the most important roles of a tribal advocate is to assist the person seeking a protection order. As tribal advocates, we have a responsibility to form a trusting relationship, to welcome those who seek our services, and to stand ready to help. Advocacy services range from 24 hour crisis line, emergency shelter placement, providing basic essentials (for example, food, clothing, transportation), restraining order assistance, accompaniment to court, social services, medical assistance, peer counseling, group counseling (talking or healing circles), information, and referrals. As tribal advocates, we do all that we can to provide information so that Indian people can make informed decisions and act on their right to make choices without interference.

- As a tribal advocate, you will become that trusted person -- friendly, listening with an open mind and heart, giving support, validating, and hearing with understanding and patience.
- As a tribal advocate, you will be open and honest never promising anything you cannot do. If you are not sure about something, you can say, "I don't know, but I will find out."
- As a tribal advocate, you will believe the person's story without being critical or judgmental. Once trust is established, you may be the first person ever to hear parts of the story.
- As a tribal advocate, you will look for the person's strengths and acknowledge them.
- As a tribal advocate you will focus on needs related to the person's safety and that of any children the couple may have.
- As a tribal advocate, you help the person identify choices, explain the ramifications of choosing each option, and then it is up to the person to decide what he or she thinks is the best course of action. It is your job to support those decisions, even if you do not agree with them (for example, even in situations where the victim chooses to return to her abusive partner).
- As a tribal advocate, you know that many whom you will be helping are impacted by substance abuse.
- As a tribal advocate, you give the person accurate information about the court process, the range of services (listed above), and help connect the person to all available and appropriate services and resources, as needed.
- As a tribal advocate, you are an educator with all whom you encounter, both tribal and non-tribal, working at a grass roots level to promote effective responses to domestic violence and sexual assault.