

In June 2008, Minwaashin Lodge was awarded funding from the National Crime Prevention Strategy through its Crime Prevention Action Fund, for a three year youth focused violence prevention initiative called *Wahbung Youth Diversion*. *Wahbung* means “our tomorrows” in the Cree language; thus using this word to describe our initiative illustrates the belief that our children and youth are our future leaders.

Our objective is to provide male and female First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth aged 12 to 18 with a safe and supportive environment where they can learn and experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, and build positive and healthy relationships with their selves, family and community.

Our foundation for the program is based on:

- § Educating male and female Aboriginal youth about the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women;
- § Providing information on the impacts violence against Aboriginal women have on the victim, the perpetrator, and their families;
- § Teaching alternatives to violence; and
- § Encouraging youth to create healthy relationships.

Programming is delivered by way of workshops, training, traditional teachings, talking and healing circles, cultural activities and monthly outings. Workshops include a holistic model with intergenerational support from both Elders and youth, in order to successfully incorporate both traditional teachings and the more contemporary interpretations of these teachings.

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Youth Diversion Initiative