

# What Is Lateral Violence?

## **Lateral Violence:**

- behaviour includes gossip/shaming/blaming, putting down others, family feuds
- when oppressed people act out rage, anger, and frustration
- when violence is directed at one's own people
- when oppressed groups turn on each other
- outward jealousy and envy of others

We can see lateral violence at the First Nation community levels. It is a 'cloud' that has loomed over us for years. Lateral violence has become a destructive way of life for families and communities.

## **Oppression:**

- the unjust or cruel exercise of power or authority from one group of people over another group
- a dominant group of people keeping another group of people contained or controlled

We have learned many negative ways to live with one another. We have learned that whoever drives the best car or lives in the best house, is more better off than we are. This is not true.

We have learned to want and desire material objects and forget to be thankful for what we have, even if it is very little. We forget to be thankful for another day, for all of creation, for our lives, for our 'gifts'(our children), the real important things in our lives.

## What Is Lateral Violence? continued

This way of thinking has brought on feelings of jealousy and envy. We have learned to think individual-based rather than our traditional, community-based ways of thinking.

**Move from** 🖱️ greed, power, control, money, authority, jealousy, envy

**Move towards** 🖱️ harmony, equality, sharing, balance, respect, happiness

We must not get 'stuck' in a place that is constantly 'blaming' one another, including the non-Native society. We are all responsible for the choices we make and the actions we carry out.

We do not 'need' to get caught up in lateral violence. We can choose to walk away, let go of past 'grudges', and move on with our lives. We want to discourage our children from using lateral violence and model healthy living for them.

**Lateral violence among Native people is about our anti-colonial rage working itself out in an expression of hate for one another.**

Source: I Am Woman, Lee Maracle. Page 11

The best way to deal with lateral violence is with kindness. We should try not to react to those people that spend their time and energy in a negative way. It is the reaction that they are waiting to see.

# What Is Lateral Violence? continued

## Why Do People Use Lateral Violence?

- low self esteem and self worth
- cannot accept others
- confused and unhappy with themselves
- 'stuck' in the cycle of oppression
- lack of knowledge and awareness
- unresolved anger, pain, shame

**Someone somewhere in time loved me enough to hope that I could have a good life, so now I must at least try to do the same in a way that benefits others and not just myself.**

Source: <http://www.indigenousconcepts.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=22>