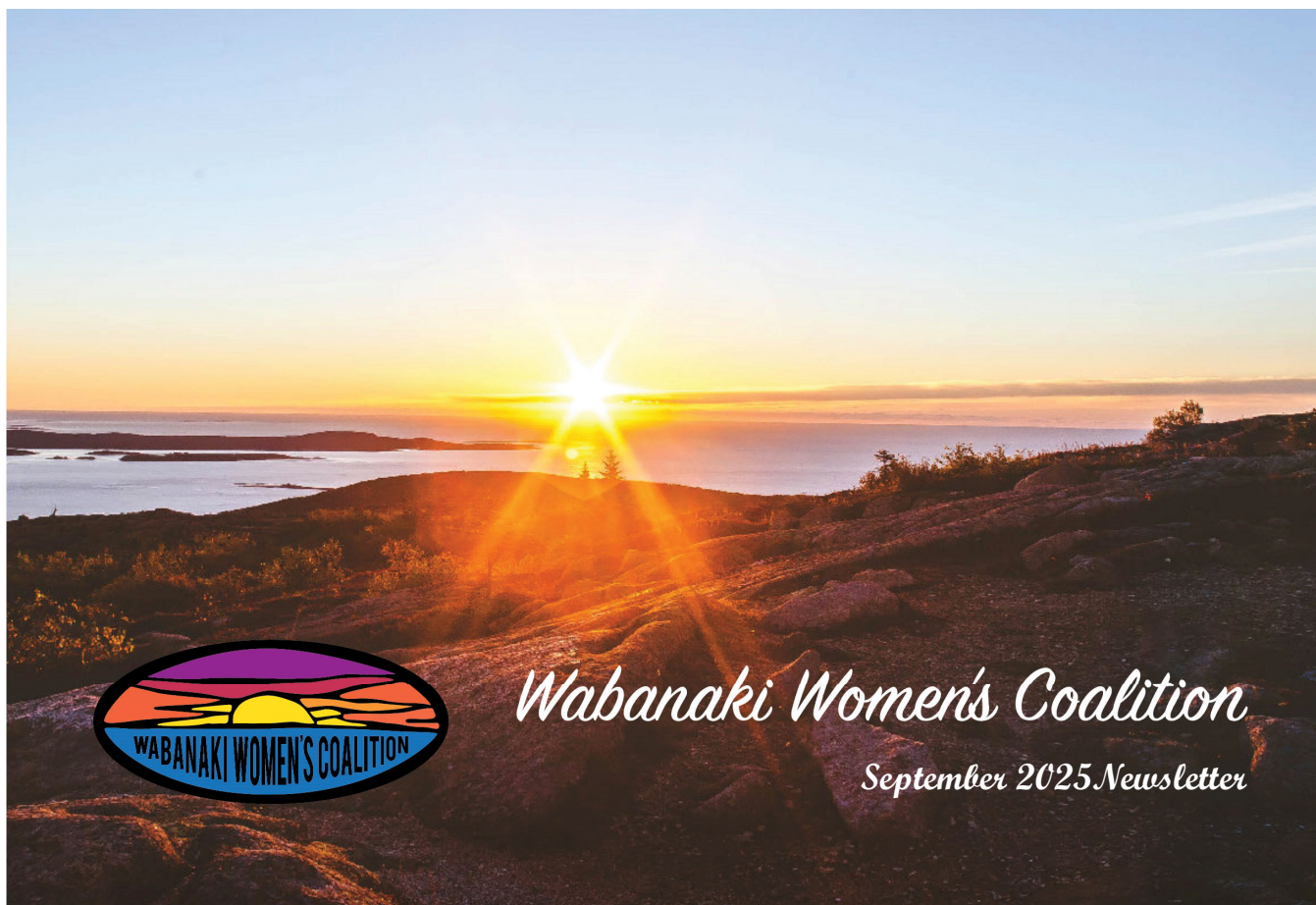




Kwey Relatives...

May Is National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Month

On May 5th, we recognized National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives' Day. Several of the Wabanaki Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Advocacy Centers held events to honor those lost, support surviving families and ask community to have strong protections in an effort for prevention. In the State of Maine, Wabanaki Tribes have all been touched by the MMIW movement. There have been several

tribal members who have been murdered or are missing with cases going cold due to a lack of evidence and gaps in support. We ask allies and community partners to keep in mind that on some reservations the murder rate for native women is more than 10x the national average ("Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and the Criminal Justice Response: What is Known," Bachman, Zaykowski, Kallymer, Poteyeva, & Lanier, 2008).



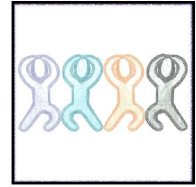
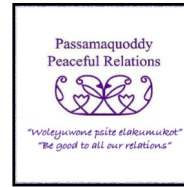
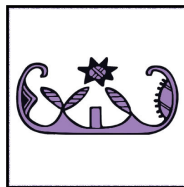
Recognizing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives

In the study, “Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men,” (National Institute of Justice: Dr. Rosay, 2016), 4 in 5 Native women will experience violence in their lifetime.

According to the study, “Homicides of American Indians/Alaska Natives – National Violent Death Reporting System, United States, 2003-2018,” (CDC, 2021), “Homicide is a leading cause of death for American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs). Intimate partner violence (IPV) contributes to many homicides, particularly among AI/AN females... The results of this study provide further evidence that violence against AI/AN women is an issue of urgent concern. IPV was a contributing factor in nearly half of the homicides of AI/AN women. Rape or sexual assault occurred in nearly one third of IPV-related homicides precipitated by another serious crime. Data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey and National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that AI/AN women experience higher rates of rape and sexual assault, physical assault, and stalking than women of other racial/ethnic groups.”



Serving Our Partners



Maliseet Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center	Indian Township Passamaquoddy Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center	Penobscot Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center	Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center	Mi'kmaq Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center
Office: 207-532-3000	Office: 207-214-1917	Office: 207-817-7446	Office: 207-853-0092	Office: 207-760-0570
24 Hour Hotline: 207-532-6401	24 Hour Hotline: 207-214-1917	24 Hour Hotline: 207-631-4886	24 Hour Toll Free Hotline: 1-877-853-2613	24 Hour Hotline: 207-551-3639

Recognizing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives

These are only a few statistics of several more that all have an immense impact on our tribes in Wabanaki Territory. When thinking of what we can do to combat these statistics, we ask others to consider the Action Plan carefully and intentionally created by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC). Some of those steps include:

- * Restore the full authority of American Indian and Alaska Native Nations to protect Indigenous women;
- * Ensure adequate resources for advocacy and services for indigenous women;
- * Remove barriers facing families of MMIW;
- * Implement a thorough federal response to MMIW by requiring every federal department to develop action plans with meaningful consultations with American Indian Nations to address MMIW;
- * Recognize that both land and indigenous women are sacred and connected and must be protected by both legislative and policy actions.



June - Elder Abuse Awareness Month

In the month of June we took reflection and made strides to bring awareness about abuse against some of our most sacred loved ones our Elders.

Below are some of the kinds of abuse Elders may experience, and various examples shared from the Elder Abuse Summit of Maine.

Financial Abuse:

Inappropriate use or exploitation of funds, property assets;

Misuse of debit or credit cards or bank accounts;

Coercion to deprive older adult of assets;

Denied medications, medical procedures, assistive devices or appropriate care by a domestic partner or caregiver because it is “too expensive.”

Neglect:

Failure to fulfill obligations as a caregiver;

Failure to provide adequate food, water, or shelter;

Limit or deny access to medical care;

Failure to provide adequate hygiene or clothing;

Lack of social stimulation;

Left in unsafe situations such as purposefully leaving a walker out of reach.

Sexual Abuse:

Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind;

Unwanted care/bathing;

Unwanted exposure to pornography;

Non-consensual pornographic photo taking;

Unwanted sexual talk;

Sex trafficking.

*Misconceptions about sexual assault can make elders more vulnerable!

Psychological Abuse:

Infliction of mental anguish, distress, or fear;

Verbal aggression or threat;

Social isolation;

Threats of institutionalization;

Humiliating or degrading comments;

Gaslighting;

Taking away, breaking, or not purchasing assistive devices;

Intimidation by displaying weapons.

June - Elder Abuse Awareness Month Continued

Physical Abuse:

Infliction of pain or injury;

Using physical force;

Hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling;

Strangulation and/or suffocation;

Striking with an object;

Giving too much medication or not enough medication;

Restrain - this can include “bear hugs”, using straps to tie someone down, or leaving someone strapped into a chair or device and refusing to get them out;

Force-feeding;

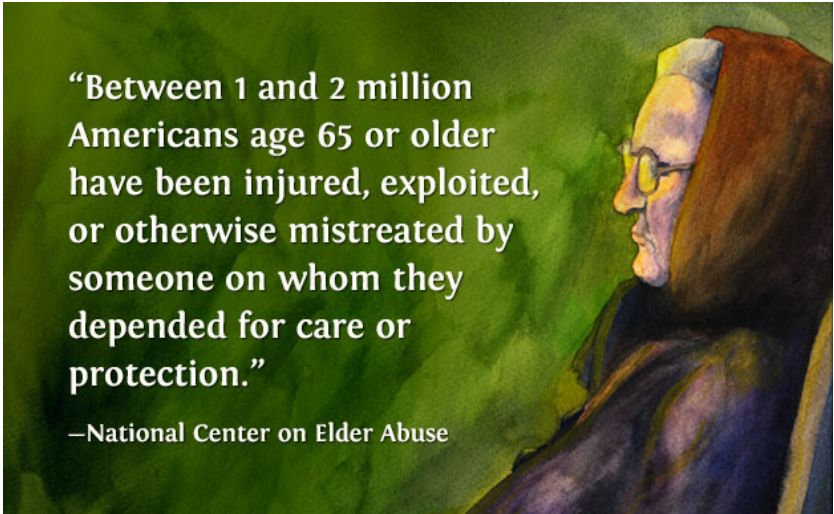
Aggressive care.

According to the Elder Abuse Summit of Maine these are common risk factors for abuse can include social isolation, female gender, shared living space, physical frailty, substance abuse, cognitive impairment, having a caregiver and conditions that increase dependence on others.

We encourage you to look out and take care of our elders. Keep in mind the barriers that might affect elders from leaving such as being unaware that help is available, fear or shame, historic social norms, chronic health conditions, lack of social support, deteriorating health, survivor dependent on abuser financially or vice versa, and vulnerability to homelessness.

If you or someone you know is experiencing Elder Abuse by an intimate partner, who has been sexually assaulted, is being sex trafficked or stalked we encourage you to reach out to one of the Wabanaki DV/SA Advocacy Centers.

If you are worried about an Elder who may be experiencing abuse from a caretaker, please reach out to the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine at 207-805-3708 or Maine Adult Protective Services at 1-800-624-8404 to file a report of abuse.



“Between 1 and 2 million Americans age 65 or older have been injured, exploited, or otherwise mistreated by someone on whom they depended for care or protection.”

—National Center on Elder Abuse

June - WWC Survivors' Retreat

We took time to heal, learn, share culture and make connections at our spring survivors' retreat. We were able to share ceremonies, good food, elder teachings and drumming with those who attended.

As a community we have known for a long time the power that can come from sharing space and raising the healing energies by drumming, singing and talking. We have included from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health's website (www.nccih.nih.gov) some evidence-based studies on the science behind music and healing.

A 2020 study by Witte et al. titled "Effects of Music Interventions on Stress-related Outcomes" analyzed 104 studies (9,617 participants) and the effects of a variety of music-based interventions on measures associated with stress, including both physiological measures (heart rate, blood pressure, and levels of stress-related hormones) and psychological measures (anxiety, nervousness, restlessness, and feelings of worry). The music-based interventions had a small-to-medium sized beneficial effect on the physiological measures and a medium-to-large beneficial effect on the psychological measures.

A 2022 study by Witte et al. titled "Music Therapy for Stress Reduction" analyzed 47 studies (2,747 participants) of music therapy (excluding other music-based interventions) found an overall medium-to-large beneficial effect on stress-related outcomes. The effects were greater than those seen in the larger review. The investigators who performed the review suggested that the opportunity for music therapists to tailor interventions to the needs of individual patients might account for the difference.

We share this as a reminder of how important it is to provide safe spaces for our people to heal.

When we can create these spaces with people who have shared similar experiences, it helps them to feel more supported and connected to one another. Being able to heal together offers a chance to empower each other and look forward to the future without violence.



July - WWC Annual Board/Staff Retreat

The Wabanaki Women's Coalition hosted all five tribal domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy centers and staff! We came together to share space near the Wabanaki sacred mountain Katahdin.

We refreshed and revisited the importance of communication, provided Advocacy Center updates and WWC updates which covered allowable grant expenditures, budgets, grant application writing and the upcoming OVW Government to Government Tribal Consultation to be held in October in Minnesota.

We also shared space with new Maine Intimate Partner Violence Prosecutor Paul Cavanaugh and discussed best practices and what could be expected when Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault cases are prosecuted. We were also able to share resources and concerns about prosecuting such cases. We had great conversation on working together in hopes of providing the best support for survivors.

We welcomed new Director (Kristy Brooker) for the Mi'kmaq Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center and new Shelter Coordinator (Kaitlyn Groh) for the Penobscot Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center.



Mindfulness was a key theme throughout our stay together. Exercises and breathing techniques were shared and lead by trained yoga instructor/advocate Kaitlyn Groh.

We discussed the importance of maintaining boundaries, mental health, secondary trauma and the importance of taking time to refresh so that we can continue to provide trauma informed care.

Women Are Sacred Conference

Left to Right: Kaitlyn Groh (Shelter Coordinator/Advocate for the Penobscot Nation Advocacy Center), Brooke Mitchell (Advocate for the Penobscot Nation Advocacy Center), Cathy St. John (Director/Advocate for the Maliseet Advocacy Center), Allison Sabattis (Shelter Coordinator/Advocate for the Maliseet Advocacy Center) and Donna Brown (Executive Director for the WWC) attended the Women are Sacred Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Organized by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC), this gathering brings together advocates, survivors, Tribal domestic violence and sexual violence programs, Tribal leaders, law enforcement, and court personnel in a shared mission to create safer and stronger Tribal communities. With more than 60 sessions, cultural offerings, and opportunities for connection and healing, the agenda reflects the strength of our movement.



Wabanaki Women's Coalition

Donna Brown, Executive Director

Aline Pardilla, Assistant Director

20 Godfrey Drive, Unit 14

Orono, Maine 04473

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