

ESTABLISHING THE ABORIGINAL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATIONS: SHARING THE MANITOBA EXPERIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

The impetus for this article arose out of a dialogue with several like-minded people while attending an Aboriginal social work conference in Sudbury in January of 2003. Our discussion revolved around the establishment of a national Aboriginal social work association. During the discussion the people were informed of the ongoing process in Manitoba to establish an Aboriginal social work association, namely the Aboriginal Professional Helpers Society, Inc. What follows is a description of that process beginning with background/history of our association, the identification of a number of challenges we experienced or could potentially experience, the benefits and potentials we see for Aboriginal social work associations, and a number of recommendations to support the development of these associations.

BACKGROUND

The Aboriginal Professional Helpers Society Inc. has its roots in a vision that started in northern Manitoba in the mid 1990s. It was envisioned that Aboriginal social workers would be brought together to discuss and establish an association. This association would not only provide peer support, but establish a voice on matters pertinent to the association specifically and Aboriginal Peoples generally. To bring about this vision, a meeting was held between a few interested Aboriginal social workers on February 3, 2000 at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. At this meeting the vision was described to those in attendance. It was agreed that the establishment of an Aboriginal social work association could be discussed and moved from a vision to reality through holding a conference.

More than twenty conference planning meetings followed this initial meeting with the regular participation of a core group of volunteers and many individuals who participated over shorter terms. During this time, a proposal for funding was approved by the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work Endowment Fund. Other important forms of support were provided by several organizations such as the Inner City Social Work Program, the Office of the Children's Advocate, Anishinaabe Mino-Ayaawin, Probation Services, Family Violence Unit - Notre Dame Office and New Directions for Children, Youth and Families.

The First Annual Conference on Aboriginal Social Work, Sharing our Perspectives, Developing our Path occurred on June 2 and 3, 2000. The first day of the conference focused on presentations by community members; these presentations were attended by more than 100 individuals. The second day of the conference focused on developing an Aboriginal social work association and had approximately 40 participants. Individuals attending the second day of the conference agreed that a planning committee be formed to draft options in the development of an association. It was further decided that the planning committee for this association would be those members who organized the conference as well as other interested individuals.

After several meetings in the fall of 2000, the planning committee held two information sessions on January 24 and 25, 2001. Information on the association, regulatory bodies, incorporation, and feedback on the June conference were presented. Ideas related to the creation of an association were presented and an open discussion took place. The committee was encouraged to continue working on establishing the association.

Further meetings were held in April and based on the discussions during these meetings, the planning committee decided on a name for the association, the Aboriginal Professional Helpers Society. A search of the name was conducted and finding the name not taken by another organization, we were granted legitimate use of the name by the Province of Manitoba. The Aboriginal Professional Helpers Society was incorporated on April 24, 2001.

In July, the planning committee mailed out an invitation to the conference participants and Aboriginal service organizations to attend strategic planning sessions. The sessions, beginning on July 27, 2001 and ending on August 1, 2001, resulted in a draft document outlining the Society's vision, values and philosophy (see appendix). On October 2, 2001 a mail out of the draft vision, philosophy statement and values as well as a historical outline of the Society was sent to organizations and conference participants. They were asked to review the documents and participate in a meeting on November 6, 2001 in Winnipeg to discuss the draft documents and the ongoing development of the society. The turn-out for this meeting was very low with primarily the core group of volunteers attending along with a few new, interested individuals. Still, we were encouraged to continue our work.

Since the fall of 2001 the organization committee of the Society has met a few times, but a combination of factors pulled committee members to other matters outside of the society for a period of time. The committee members have recently returned with new energy to commit to the society's development. We have come to recognize that throughout this beginning stage of our development, we have discussed, lived through, and learned from many experiences that continue to offer us guidance. Some of these experiences were significant challenges. Other experiences have helped us to clearly see the benefits and potentials of establishing an Aboriginal association.

CHALLENGES

To be challenged is a normal expectation that comes with the territory of establishing a new association. Many of the challenges that we experienced and expect to face on an ongoing basis are identified in the following list. This list is not an exhaustive listing; but, they seem to be the most common.

They include:

Community participation	Purpose of the association
Vision, Philosophy, Principles	Cultural orientation
Membership criteria	Organizational structure
Connection to communities	Geographic considerations
Environmental factors	Physical space, equipment
Financial issues	Ongoing issues

These issues are discussed to varying degree. Interestingly, the challenges we faced were not unlike those we experience when volunteering our time in other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations.

Community participation

We took great effort to invite social workers and other providers of social services in the community to meetings requesting their input into the direction we could take this most vital association. We hosted several meetings at different times during the day and evening and in different locations throughout the community to accommodate as many people as possible. Despite the relatively low turnout to some of these meetings, we persisted. We, individually and collectively, accepted that members of our communities are already overextended in their commitments to work, family and community. Each of us has specific priorities in terms of what and how we give back to our communities; and, we realize that we can't be all things to all people all the time. Given this reality, we have faith that our association will grow and become an integral part of our community over time. Therefore, we must be patient with ourselves and with the community and address issues as they arise and at times, our decisions may be arrived at without community input.

Purpose of the organization

Guided by our collective experience with organizations at various levels, we deliberated over the purposes that our organization would serve. Some of these purposes included: strategic planning, networking, lobbying, training, advocacy,

social action, peer support, education, and professional, systemic and/or policy issues. At this point we have focused on support and education as our primary purposes as identified in our Values Statement. Through the conference, we also had an opportunity to begin networking as well as creating some awareness through the formation of this association.

Vision, Philosophy, Values

One of our first tasks was to formulate our values, philosophy, and vision statements. As stated previously, while we sent out notices to the community requesting their participation in the developmental processes, attendance was limited. Although it was not our desire, the smaller group was probably more conducive to arriving at a consensus in these three areas. It was crucial to all participants that our values, philosophy and vision statements ground our organization in a way that reflects Aboriginal world views.

Orientation

Given our strong commitment to our various Aboriginal cultures, we have made a concerted effort to operate our organization in a manner that maintains and strengthens our cultural foundations. In part, this decision was reinforced by commentary on the conference evaluations which reflected an appreciation for the insight many participants received in relation to their traditional cultural heritage. Recognizing that we live in two worlds and for the most part, have been socialized in both or either world, it is important to keep our cultural orientation in mind as we move forward in our decision-making and developmental processes.

Membership requirements

In anticipation of membership criteria/credentials being an issue for discussion, the conference evaluation forms requested voluntary disclosure of specific information such as the level of education, formal and otherwise, acquired by conference participants. The range within formal academic credentials included: Social Work Degrees (Indian Social Work, BSW, MSW), other Bachelor degrees (Arts, Education), diplomas (two year programs), and certificates (short-term training programs)

in social service areas, 6 months-1 year).

The informal/non-academic credentials included a vast range of positions such as elder, protection worker, community development worker, peacemaker, counsellor, natural helper, bookkeeper, and volunteer. Many of these workers were employed in social work related positions for up to twenty years. The individuals in the non-academic range possessed tremendous knowledge, skill, and experience in a variety of positions. Cultural background and indigenous knowledge were primary credentials, while cultural competencies included language, knowledge, values, beliefs, practices, and customs.

An historical issue that continues to exist in contemporary contexts is the debate between academic credentials (i.e, having a university social work degree) and equivalencies (i.e., the combination of some aspects of formal education and life experience) as criteria for membership. Some individuals place high value upon the time, energy, and commitment to receiving the BSW credential; while others place less value on the academic credential and more value on being able to do-the-job effectively without formal education. We decided to be as inclusive as possible and to accommodate other professionals who provide social work related services. In our attempt to be inclusive, there were implications. A source of tension was created by this issue between those who value professional education and relevant training and those who value cultural knowledge and competencies/qualifications. For example, at least one individual had stated that if an Aboriginal association was established without a minimal educational level, such as a Bachelor degree, then she would not consider becoming a member. While we have not come to a conclusion on this matter, at some point, the question of where to set the bar is likely to rise again. Hence, we have come to see that being very inclusive can influence who actually participates.

Organizational structure

The governing structure of the organization was also deliberated briefly but has not been formalized. We discussed a hierarchical organizational structure appointing or electing an Executive with President, Vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer and Board members or a Council (circle) format

consisting of equal participation by all members taking responsibility on a rotating schedule. We will have to come to some resolution of this matter in the near future. In the interim, some members however agreed to take on specific executive and administrative roles until we have a larger membership.

Connections to the communities. As a newly formed organization, it is important to introduce ourselves to the community and to develop partnerships. There are many levels at which partnerships can be developed including those within urban centres as well as reserve, rural and northern communities.

We also recognize the need to establish linkages with service organizations, particularly during times of great change. For example, First Nation Child and Family Service Agencies (mandated), Metis Child and Family Service Agency (mandated), and Ma-mawi-chi-itata (non-mandated) provide services to the Aboriginal communities. The recent extension of jurisdiction to First Nation CFS agencies to provide services to off-reserve band members may have implications for our organization. Many social workers and social service workers are hired by these agencies; therefore, it is important to establish and maintain a productive relationship with these organizations.

Other significant linkages would include educational institutions providing instruction in the area of social work and human services. In Manitoba, there are programs offered in institutions such as the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Social Work and its Inner City, Thompson and Distance Education Social Work Programs, and the University's Continuing Education Division diploma programs, some of whose credentials can be transferred directly into a social work degree.

We believe it is important to maintain connection with organizations which have a direct influence over the general social work profession. For example, the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers (MASW/MIRSW) as well as the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) have corresponded with us. They have congratulated us on our efforts, and offered

support and encouragement in the development of our organization.

It is also important to establish relationships with the Aboriginal political organizations in the province as well as the national organizations. National and regional organizations may be especially important if an Aboriginal social work national organization arises out of, or with, the development of regional/provincial organizations. As regional and national Aboriginal social work associations emerge, there will be times when we will have to correspond, join, and challenge our political representatives. Ideally and hopefully, we will share a vision that moves all of us forward.

There are many relevant departments within Provincial governments which may have an interest in the development of our organizations. As stated previously, in Manitoba, there has been restructuring of Child and Family Services by the Province of Manitoba into four Authorities: the Southern First Nations Authority, the Northern First Nations Authority, the Metis Authority and the General Authority. Being aware of the ongoing within provincial governments is always a good strategy. It is through awareness that we will be positioned to influence such restructuring in ways that benefit our peoples.

We believe it is important that any Aboriginal association maintain and support its roots in its community(ies) of origin. In our situation in Manitoba, we may have little connection to First Nation communities as an organization, but many individuals members have deep roots and interest in their communities. We also recognize that many Aboriginal students pursuing a degree in social work hold this link and to be viable to them, we need to support these ties.

Creating alliances with communities, organizations, institutions, and governments such those identified above may net positive outcomes if and when the time comes to deal with contentious professional issues. Their influence could assist us if we wanted to influence changes to curriculum, community development, influence policy and institute the importance of cultural relevance. On the other hand, we could potentially serve as an ally to them as well.

GEOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

An issue that often arises within organizational development and practices in a province as large as Manitoba is the differences of experience between urban/rural, inner city/suburbs, and north/south geographies.

Although in part a result of geography, there are also the natural differences and the created differences within the Aboriginal community. Our natural differences are associated with our cultural/tribal affiliations and the created differences are based primarily on legislation and the Constitution. In the Canadian context, we have been divided into several categories such as Indian/First Nation (Treaty, Status, and Non-status Indian), Metis, and Inuit.

Another issue that warrants some discussion is where on the continuum we choose to situate ourselves between culturally traditional and culturally non-traditional. There are many individuals who practice their Nations traditional cultural customs and ceremonies as a regular aspect of their daily living. There are also individuals who choose to be non-traditional or do not know how to express their culture. And of course, there are degrees of difference between these two. Recognizing the tension that has arisen out of our natural and created differences, as an organization, our decision is to be status-blind and to focus on providing relevant service to our members regardless their status and geographic location.

Environmental factors

As stated briefly before, it is important that as an organization we are always cognizant of the changes happening within our communities. For example, we reflected on what relevance the governments restructuring of Manitoba Child and Family Services would have to our organization. Another example is a priority of the Manitoba Association of Social Workers/Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers (MASW/MIRSW): The licensing and regulating of social work practice. Historically, the licencing and regulation of social workers has been a contentious issue between the Association and Aboriginal peoples working in the social work field.

Among other issues, Aboriginal people have great concern that licensing and regulation would mean the loss of many excellent helpers of our people. Although Aboriginal social workers are encouraged to apply for membership with MASW/MIRSW, the differences in world view, philosophies, values, beliefs, customs, practices between mainstream social work and the practice of social work from an Aboriginal perspective continue to be a barrier. A related issue is that many organizations have instituted a policy whereby their employees must be registered with MIRSW in order to be employable and under those circumstances, many Aboriginal social workers have applied for membership in that organization. An Aboriginal association should be prepared to address issues such as those noted above.

Space and Equipment

At this point in time, our organization does not have a physical space to house itself. One of our members has agreed to use her home address as the mailing address for the organization until such time a permanent place can be established.

In terms of equipment, current organizers have requested from their respective places of employment monetary contributions in the form of such things as postage and photocopying or use of a meeting space. However, it is essential to find a suitable location out of which the organization can begin to operate effectively.

Financial Issues

At this point, we have no operating funds. We are currently in the process of setting another conference date and during this time, we will discuss membership fees and other financial matters relevant to the organization. We are in the process of looking for start-up funds and will look into fund-raising ventures so that we have financial stability to continue our work.

Human Resource Issues

In terms of human resources, we recognize that most interested individuals within our communities are already over-

extended in terms of their responsibilities to family, community, and employment. Nevertheless, we maintain our optimism and patience and are confident that those individuals who have a keen interest in the organization will commit themselves once we are more established. It is important for us to keep our energy levels up and to stay motivated about this large task that we have taken on. The diversity of interest, experience, and skills across the core group of members serves to bolster our energy. Of course there are also those times that this task of organizational development is a strain on the committed core of individuals. Nevertheless, our commitment to our profession and to the people we work with is a strengthening force.

These challenges can seem overwhelming to any initiating group. However, while we continue be aware of these challenges and address them when possible, we are maintaining our focus on the benefits and potentials of establishing an association of Aboriginal social workers.

BENEFITS AND POTENTIALS

There are many benefits and potentials for an Aboriginal association of social workers. Those benefits and potentials discussed in Manitoba include the following.

Strength in numbers

As social workers, our peoples have been divided and forced sometimes overtly, but often covertly to partake in practices which do not reflect our understandings of the world. We have been limited as social workers in how we can respond. One of the means to addressing the oppression our nations have faced is through overcoming the divide and conquer reality we have faced. By joining together, Aboriginal people practicing social work could present a significant and influential voice on issues ranging from healing and growth to policy critiques and alternatives.

Autonomy and self-direction

Another benefit of an association would be the ability to self-govern. A strong association could create direction for Aboriginal education and practice. As a collective body we

could set our own agenda and determine our own path as opposed to relying upon the already present association and institutions that are determining where social workers are headed as a collective.

The ability to effect regional and national legislation

Manitoba is one of the remaining provinces yet to develop a mandatory regulatory association for social workers. While our initial efforts to establish a regional association were partially based upon a desire to affect the Manitoba Associations of Social Workers/Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers focus on developing mandatory registration, the potential of our association to affect policy extends beyond those policies which are directly related to the social work profession. An Aboriginal association could develop positions regarding issues pertaining to Aboriginal peoples, advocate on behalf of Aboriginal and other peoples facing oppression, and lobby for changes to present or forthcoming legislation. Such activities of an association could extend beyond provincial and federal governments and include organizations and agencies serving Aboriginal peoples.

Addressing ethics and standards

An Aboriginal association could address issues of ethics and standards of social work. Presently, the social work code of ethics and standards are developed by the Canadian Association of Social Workers. There have been questions in Manitoba on whether these guidelines adequately reflect Aboriginal world views and/or practical realities. An Aboriginal association could review and monitor the present code of ethics and standards to answer such questions. Ideal would be an Aboriginal association developing ethics and standards that reflect their own peoples views, realities and diversities. Hence, an Aboriginal association could establish professional parameters over practices within Aboriginal communities and/or in the context of working directly with Aboriginal people. Through such developments an Aboriginal association could work to ensure that practitioners within Aboriginal communities and contexts are prepared to deliver services that are not only culturally sensitive, but are based upon our cultures and worldviews.

Addressing Issues of liability

Ideally, an association should be monitoring its own membership through ensuring the association's ethics and standards are being met. Such assurances will require monitoring of social workers practices with Aboriginal peoples. An established Aboriginal association could monitor and self-regulate the practices of its own members. It could also act as a resource to parallel associations in monitoring their members practices with Aboriginal peoples.

Curriculum development and education

A long standing concern for Aboriginal social workers is the need for social work curriculum and education programs to include more and appropriate material regarding practice and policies affecting Aboriginal peoples. An Aboriginal association can partake in and/or support the development of social work practices, models, theories, policy frameworks, and philosophical foundations that are direct extensions of our world views. An association could also support the development of such material through: creating alliances with organizations such as Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), regional social work associations, and other related organizations to influence educational institutions; lobbying the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) for closer monitoring of this issue during its accreditation reviews of educational institutions; highlighting and advocating for this need to be addressed by educational institutions; offering support to educational institutions for development of curriculum related to Aboriginal peoples; and participating in the organization of conferences on social work practices and social welfare policies.

Respectful Research

As we become more settled, we may also have opportunities to apply for research funds to conduct research. It has been said by many people in Aboriginal communities that we have been researched to death without results that have benefitted the community. Aboriginal associations could not only set out codes for proper research conduct in Aboriginal communities

and involving Aboriginal peoples, but we can partake in and support respectful research conducted by Aboriginal social workers.

Highlighting issues of concern for Aboriginal peoples

An Aboriginal association could increase awareness of events and practices affecting Aboriginal people. While such efforts of increasing awareness could be focused on educating the general public on matters directly affecting Aboriginal peoples, they could also relate to expressing our concerns about issues affecting larger populations, such as world violence and oppression.

Source of support

In light of the pressures faced by Aboriginal social workers, an Aboriginal association could act as a source of support for its members. This may take the form of establishing a peer support program for Aboriginal social workers, providing links to other counselling and helping resources, and providing culturally based educational information on self-care. An association may also work to establish such services as a culturally appropriate employee s assistance program.

We believe that these benefits and potentials far outweigh the challenges of establishing Aboriginal associations of social work. However, to get to the point of realizing these benefits and potentials requires a wide variety of contributions and abilities. We have come to recognize some of these requirements and are certain others will come to light as we move forward. With these requirements in mind, we have developed a list of recommendations for others who may be considering the establishment of an association.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABORIGINAL ASSOCIATIONS OF SOCIAL WORK

As our actions and comments indicate, we believe that the establishment of Aboriginal associations of social work would be a positive step towards our peoples self-determination in the field of social work. Hence, we support the idea of establishing

associations across our territories. Such associations could be established regionally as well as nationally.

The second recommendation relates to the first: We need to be patient in the development of such associations to ensure the work done moves all our peoples forward. The time, energy, and resources required for establishing these associations are significantly great. Yet, Aboriginal social workers are already facing great strains on what they can offer. The amount of time, energy, or resources that they have left to offer towards the development of these associations will be significant, but limited. Hence, individuals involved directly and indirectly will need to be patient with the pace of the development since movement will likely match the amount of resources available.

A third recommendation is to seek out people who are strongly interested in developing associations and who can demonstrate their commitment beyond verbal support. There may be some individuals who become highly significant volunteers with the donation of great amounts of time and energy. However, just as significant is what can be offered by individuals with greater limitations on their time and energy. To support the best use of their time and energy is the fourth recommendation: Try to develop a list of specific and time limited tasks that need to be done. This will allow individuals to participate in ways that match their available resources with the tasks they are to complete.

A fifth recommendation is to start small. By focusing on achievable, yet important objectives and tasks, a firm foundation can be set. We had a desire to establish an annual conference. While we believe this goal is desirable, it was beyond what we could achieve in the short term. As a result, it did not help to establish our foundation. An example of an important objective is the establishment of a unifying focus that will come to represent the association for future interactions. For us, this has meant the establishment of our philosophy, vision, and mission statement. For others it may mean the development of a logo, name, or an annual gathering.

A sixth recommendation is directly related to the fifth: Be realistic of what an association can do in the short term. We have listed some very grand potentials for Aboriginal

associations of social workers. While these potentials can act as goals for the development of our associations, if they remain permanently out of reach due to the amount of energy and resources available to us, they will act more as a reminder of our limitations. We need to focus on goals that will be achieved. Our bigger goals will come in time.

During the development of these associations, we need to be willing to utilize resources that are supportive of our endeavors. Therefore, our seventh recommendation is to link to existing infrastructure for support and accessing resources. This support may come from a number of organizations including non-Aboriginal ones. They may also include individuals with other professional skills, such as accounting and legal analysis. However, it is important to remember that support from others can come at a cost. Usually this cost is the compromise of our values, particularly our indigenous values, ways we see the world, and the ways we interact. We need to be diligent in our reflections of what we are willing to compromise, if at all. We need to be aware of what we are giving up in order to move further on the path. If we do not practice diligence, we run the risk of walking off our own road and continuing our own oppression without realizing it.

Perhaps the most significant support is Elders who can offer guidance through this process. Ideally, the Elders would be strongly based in their own cultural traditions, and have wisdom related to social work. With such gifts, Elders can support our development to be proactive, positive, and firmly based in our indigenous world views. One way in which Elders could guide the development of Aboriginal social work associations is through Elder councils. These councils could inform us, as well as confirm that our organizations roots remain in our cultures.

Another recommendation is to inform the public and potential members of the developmental processes that unfold. While we have relied upon mailing information letters to interested individuals and organizations, there are others means of relating to the public. These include establishing a web-site, press releases, advertizing in newspapers, and distributing

information pamphlets. The better we are able to inform people, the greater the chances are that developing associations will attract new members.

Finally, we encourage all people involved in the development of Aboriginal associations of social work not to forget self-care. The developmental process requires tremendous commitment, motivation, energy and time. In light of the stressors, it will be easy for individuals to forget to maintain a sense of balance, wellness, and harmony within themselves and with the life around them. Such actions will counter the reasons for establishing our associations. Volunteers have to look out for one another, support one another, and watch out for blockages, such as jealousy, envy, resentment, negative attitudes, and apathy. We need to rely on the teachings of our nations to guide us through the challenges and support us to join together respectfully. In other words, we need to practice what we are reaching for: Working together in ways based upon our cultures and teachings.

SUMMARY

Through this paper, we have reflected on our own experiences in the development of our Aboriginal social work association, the Aboriginal Professional Helpers Society, Inc. We have highlighted the challenges in our development as well as the benefits and potentials we envisioned through our association. Emphasizing the importance of this type of an association, we have provided several recommendations to support others in their endeavors to create associations relevant to Aboriginal peoples in other areas of Canada.

Appendix

DRAFT

ABORIGINAL PROFESSIONAL HELPERS SOCIETY INC.

The Aboriginal Professional Helpers Society Inc. is made up of Aboriginal peoples who have demonstrated their commitment to helping themselves and others to achieve wellness. We are a society comprised of individuals who have developed our helping abilities through various processes including education, mentorship, and on-the-job-training. In addition, we recognize natural helpers who have used their life experiences to develop their abilities to help others and who are recognized as such by the Aboriginal community.

Values

Our Aboriginal cultures are the foundation upon which our values are based:

Our cultures teachings include, but are not limited to: faith, honesty, kindness, respect, courage, humility, sharing, harmony, balance, knowledge, wisdom, patience, humor, integrity, compassion.

Support: We believe in supporting our Society's membership through emotional support, advocacy and networking. We believe in supporting Aboriginal peoples through education and advocacy.

Education: We believe in educating our society's membership, the Aboriginal community, and the general population through cultural teachings, information sharing, seminars, workshops, and conferences.

Life and People: We believe in the sacredness and goodness of life. We are all part of Creation with unique gifts, abilities, and contributions.

Philosophy Statement

As Aboriginal helpers we believe in the sacredness and goodness of life and are guided by our cultural teachings. In following our holistic way of life, we honor the strengths of the individuals, families, communities, and nations, and believe in our peoples gifts, abilities, and life experiences. We strive to contribute to the wellness of all through the excellence in service that stems from and is consistent with our cultural values, beliefs, and practices.

Vision

The Aboriginal Professional Helpers Society Inc. is an inspirational, self-sustaining organization determining and supporting our own cultural ways of conduct and practice in the helping professions. All of our activities are directed to the wellness of Aboriginal peoples.

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