



Focus Groups – General Information

Community: REACH – Board Members

Date: November 14, 2014

Moderator: Rachel George

Commissioner: Carol Wishcamper

Topic: ICWA Work Group – Coalition – Convening Group

Participants

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Connie Smith (CS) | 4. Penthea Burns (PB) |
| 2. Esther Attean (EA) | 5. Sharon Tomah (ST) |
| 3. Martha Proulx (MP) | 6. Luke Joseph (LJ) |

Recording

MS. GEORGE (RG): All right, it is November 14, 2014. We're here at Indian Island, Maine. My name is Rachel George and I'm here today with:

MS. BURNS (PB): Penthea Burns.

MS. ATTEAN (EA): Esther Attean.

MS. WISHCAMPER (CW): Carol Wishcamper.

MS. PROULX (MP): Martha Proulx.

MS. SMITH (CS): Connie Smith.

RG: Fantastic, and the file number is FG-R-201411-0011. Penthea, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

PB: I have, and I do.

RG: Esther, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

AT: Yes, all three.

RG: Martha, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

MP: Yes.

RG: And Connie, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

CS: Yes.

RG: Great. I have to let all of you know that if at any point during this recording you indicate that there's a child or an elder currently in need of protection or that there's imminent risk of serious bodily harm or death to an identifiable person or group including yourself, that information may not be protected as confidential. Do you all understand?

COLLECTIVE: Yes.

RG: So to start off, can you all tell me about the early days of the ICWA workgroup and how that group became formed and what the goals were?

PB: Let me, this is Penthea, let me start. In August of 1999 I started my employment at the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. One of the three pieces of work that I was asked to work on was to engage the Wabanaki tribes in Maine and the State Department of Health and Human Services Child Welfare to design and deliver training on the Indian Child Welfare Act to all of the caseworkers in the State. It would be a mandatory training, and for the purpose of improving their knowledge of and compliance with the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act. I understood that the federal government had, the Administration for Children and Families, had told the department that they really needed to do something like this because they were not in compliance with ICWA.

So, in the weeks that followed I sent letters to the Tribal Chiefs in each of the communities asking if they would make someone available from their Child Welfare Division to participate in this workgroup. I engaged with the ICWA liaison from the Office of Child or I think it was then the Bureau of Child and Family Services, a woman by the name of Sandi Hodge and developed a design for that initial meeting, which was held in November of that year at the Bangor Public Library. And really in the first meeting we had attendance from Penobscot Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribe in Sipayik, the Micmac community and the Maliseet community, all their child welfare representatives, their ICWA staff, as well as someone from OCFS. It was Paul Martin I think attended because Sandi was on medical leave.

MP: I think so because his name is on the video, so he was involved.

PB: Yeah.

EA: And then somebody, and there was foster parents too, right, Burkes or --

PB: I forgot about them.



EA: And you know I just thought Rachel, this is Esther, I just thought that I have a binder full of all of our minutes not in, from that, from the beginning until I don't know how, you know a few years anyway. I think up until we started doing the TRC, so I can get that to you (*RG: That would be excellent*) if you want it.

PB: I forgot about those foster parents.

RG: Yes. Absolutely.

CS: And I do believe at the time in '99 that Sue Deveau, maybe have attended the meeting there.

EA: Yep, the Sue Deveau was there, from the Maliseet.

PB: Yep, she was and Carolyn --

EA: From Micmac.

MP: Maple.

PB: Maple then, right.

EA: From Micmac.

PB: From Micmac and Erlene and you and Esther.

EA: John Silvernail.

PB: John Silvernail, was Betsy there then?

EA: Betsy was an intern, yeah.

PB: And Molly.

EA: Molly Newell.

PB: And then Molly Newell and Marylou Barnes from Sipayik.

MP: And wasn't Fred there?

EA: And Fred.

PB: And Fred Francis.

EA: Oh, Fred has passed away since, oh I forgot all about Fred.

PB: So the first meeting, what I remember was being so very nervous because I guess I would say, one thing I would say is my only knowledge of the Indian Child Welfare Act was really limited and even though I had been at the Department of Health and Human Services for nine years prior to this and had worked in child welfare, I had probably, at best, knowledge that the law existed, but not really solid knowledge of what that meant and it became clear that my job was not to be a content expert, but to help engage people in the design of what needed to happen, and the first meeting was very tense, and we talked about what were the problems that were happening in relation to children, tribal children and families being involved in State foster care and the consequences of those problems. What would it look like if those problems were fixed, and what were the barriers to those things being, like those solutions being realized and that part of the discussion went on for a really long time. There was a lot of energy around that and to me the telling moment was after people identified all these barriers, you know, we simply asked is it worth it then to try and do this, to design this training or should we just not try and everybody leaned in and said we have to and made a commitment to doing it. The tension didn't subside any, I mean that still was there and remained as part of the group for the beginning part of the work even though folks really worked together in good faith. So that's what I remember about the very first meeting. I don't know if there's anything else Esther that you want to add.

EA: I remember I was working for Penobscot Nation at the time. I had been there for two years doing, you know, prior to this I had been there for two years doing prevention and early intervention with families who, you know to prevent them from getting their children removed, so I was working with families. And I would, I didn't do direct child welfare work, but I was part of the team with the child protective person, John Silvernail, the Director Erlene Paul, you know the child protective team would look at cases and so I remember the day that we got the letter and Erlene called us into her office and she was 'like look at this.' And we read it and were like 'oh yeah, now they want our help.' You know it was real, we were, I don't even know the adjective to describe it, but we were feeling real, what is it, like you know all the trouble that we had with them and now they want our help because I remember at the time there were, there was at least one instance, which I talked about in my statement too. There was a young girl here at Indian Island that I was working with who was pregnant and she was a teenager and although she was living here and her, you know, under this jurisdiction we got a call from the folks at Eastern Maine Medical Center to come down and meet with them about the plan and after she has her baby. And so John, I went with John Silvernail and we go to this meeting and we met with the two social workers there. It was Pat Phillips I think was her name, maybe not, anyway her and this other guy. And the first thing they said was okay this is what we'll think, as soon as she has the baby we'll come in and, they were talking about how they were going to take the baby and we were like 'whoa, wait a minute.' And John's like 'first of all you don't have jurisdiction over this child and second of all there's no plan or no need or no jeopardy for us to take this baby.' So there was a lot of things like that happening at the time and you know real contentious cases with the State and I know the year before in '98, it was summer of '98 because I remember I was big and pregnant. There was a Maine Indian Tribal State Commission meeting that I attended. Erlene sent me to you know find out what was going on and have ears there and I don't know what the meeting was about, but it was at the university and there was a lot of tribal people there and a lot of State people and that's the



first time I ever met Sandi Hodge because she, I remember she was standing up and she was, she was upset, details are hard for me, but the feeling of things I always retain. And I remember I was thinking sitting there, oh my god, you got to say something, you got to say something. So I stood up and I, because I had all this experiences with my niece Danielle in State care and I knew about all these things that were happening so I stood up and I talked about racism. And I remember Sandi Hodge standing there and her face got beet red and I was like okay, I said, I was thinking oh, I hit a nerve, you know.

So that's like the, that could describe like the tensions between the tribes and the State, not just around child welfare, but around other things. So that, when we got that letter it was like oh yeah, now they need our help, you know and we were going to go and kind of be, oh we'll go and see what they have to say, you know. Not really putting together that the Muskie School was going to be facilitating this. So we went to the meeting and I remember being also kind of really not trusting. We didn't have any trust in the State, didn't know who this person from Muskie was, didn't have any trust in her, poor Pen. And also feeling that I, feeling kind of ashamed of myself that I didn't even know what the other tribes were doing, who their staff people were and their child welfare and what they were doing. I was like oh my god we didn't even know there are other you know, what's going on here.

So there was a lot of layers, just a lot of layers of stuff to try to get through and, but you know I reiterate what Pen says that feeling of all right are we going to do this or not and everybody saying yes of course we have to. We can't, that feeling of did we want to, no. I don't think anybody really wanted to, but we have to. And also, you know I think there was for me anyway a little bit of yeah it'll be fun to have that kind of authority and power over those caseworkers and make them listen to us. I think that, you know being able to have that voice was definitely playing into that. It wasn't all oh altruistic, this is all for the children. I mean when it come down to it, it was for the children, but there was those power dynamics that were playing and I remember thinking you know yeah exactly, rubbing my little sinister hands together, but that didn't really last too long. Once we started working together and you know I really, there's a lot of credit goes to Betsy Tanian for really shining the light on we have to talk about history. We have to talk about the boarding schools. That really was her that brought that into, no we have to because we were thinking it. I, we, one of our meetings we said okay let's do an assessment, what are the caseworkers getting now for training? And I was like okay so why aren't they following it and then we all, collectively I think we all went to the, to thinking about ourselves and what brought us to this work and what makes us want to do the right thing and we wanted to connect with those caseworkers on that same level, connect to what makes them want to do the right thing. And part of that was the history, why the ICWA was necessary and that's really what, that was the title I think of our training.

PB: You know the other thing that I will say, you're making me think, that first meeting, this maybe is going to sound funny, but I almost could see ghosts in the room and like for especially at the beginning part of the meeting when there was a lot of defensiveness between people. I just, I remember that sensation of like, like feeling the presence of other beings there

and it feels funny to say it aloud, but it was palpable and for me I felt from experiencing that and seeing that, I had the sense of not wanting to create another treaty to violate, not creating another agreement that was going to be held out as this potential and to really not have it live up to that and, yeah I guess I would say that...

And I also appreciated that Paul Martin from the department was there for that first meeting on two levels. I guess on one level he didn't have that responsibility to be the ICWA liaison, so it was sort of an awkward fit, but he, my experience with him, he has the personal capacity to hold being in a room where something really difficult is happening and not trying to gloss it over or make it better, but really letting that be there and play out and has that kind of respect for people to be able to talk about difficult things so that the reaction that you were describing with Sandi getting red-faced when you talked about racism, I think it takes her, it would have taken her a different kind of process to hold that tension and anger in the room where Paul, it was something that he was just really good at and so in some ways that was fortuitous, even though he didn't stick around for the whole length of the process.

EA: I remember thinking of people in terms of sides.

PB: Sides?

EA: Because I remember he was there and those foster parents, I was trying to figure out whose side are they on. You know, are they here because they have issues with DHS too. You know, and I was, I always like they're on the side and they're on that side, that polarization. And I remember having to go to the bathroom a lot because I was so, it was very, very tense. It was hard. I had to go escape in the bathroom just to relax and say what the hell am I doing here.

PB: Yeah.

EA: You know, what's my role because the other layer is you know I'm Passamaquoddy working for the Penobscots so it was hard to navigate that and keep my work hat on and be able to have my Passamaquoddy hat on and feel camaraderie with the Passamaquoddy people, but I was Penobscot, working for Penobscot, so just a lot of, a lot of stuff going on. It was a really difficult first meeting. Thank god for Frank's Bakery because we all love that food. I mean really food became a big focus of our work because that was the one time that we could just be ourselves when we were eating and people could chitchat with each other and kind of be friendly and -- it really was important, I don't think we, I mean it was just you know we have to eat, but it became everybody talking about the food and who's going to get in line first and that was always a joke because I was always first in line.

PB: Yeah, that was--

EA: Because I was always starving, but yeah I should've brought those notes to help us to jog our memory.

PB: I have to (*inaudible*), one thing that is, would be really invisible, my supervisor at the time for this piece of work was a woman named Tricia Mosher and she helped me plan the agenda



for the first meeting. So it really, because of her guidance, talking about getting all the barriers out on the table and then having the group grapple with the question of do we want to do this or is it too hard, that, she deserves credit for just getting that out there and not having it be underneath the table pulling us, pulling at us and so I personally felt really grateful because I think it would've been easy to get lost in the tension and anger and the discord and not figure out how to mobilize, but there was no question going forward after that.

MP: It's interesting from the other perspective because I've been the ICWA liaison since 2004 so I've heard a lot of the stories and how it began in '99 and what the training was like for the trainers and how they were received in certain areas and stuff. But from the other perspective, because I had just left casework in 1999 and just gone to central office, so was a participant in the training and it was a mandatory training.

EA: You were?

MP: Oh yeah.

EA: Which part? Augusta.

MP: I went to the one at the Augusta Civic Center and I remember being outside in the, seeing the film and everything in the beginning and then we all went outside for the --

PB: Smudging.

MP: Smudging and got the little pouch of tobacco and it was in red. I remember it was wrapped in red with a ribbon tying it together. And I remember the trepidation that caseworkers felt going to that training because trainings were always kind of a time to relax, kick back and people were really scared about this one because it was such a specific training and you wanted to like behave so perfectly because there was a real fear that if you didn't people would think that you were racist. So from the other perspective, it was scary too.

PB: Yeah, I remember one caseworker at that training complaining on the break about the smudging ceremony and that you know we shouldn't have to participate in a religious thing at work and one of the other staff at Muskie said well if you went to a training on Catholicism there might be a thing about (*inaudible 20:45.0*) there, but anyway it was funny. It was like hearing you say that makes me appreciate a little bit more that probably that comes out of fear.

MP: Yeah.

PB: Rather than --

MP: And I think it's State employees too, it's so ingrained in us, not to talk about religion and not to do anything religious because we're not supposed to be, you know projecting any of our

beliefs onto the families and children that we work with, so I think it's even heightened for people in our profession when something religious happens --

PB: I would go further.

MP: And people get really squirrely about that kind of stuff.

PB: I would go even further. I was thinking about this on the way up here that we're really taught to keep ourselves as people --

MP: Absolutely.

PB: Out of the work and --

EA: This is opposite.

PB: Yeah, and this is, I mean I think over the course of these fifteen years that has been a rub that we've had to, as white people, have had to figure out how do we be ourselves and I found myself thinking about like the privilege that we have that we can, like we can choose when to put ourselves out there and when not to put ourselves out there and then there's the sort of the bigger privilege of the system, the power within that system that has instilled fear in people about when do you say your own opinion and what kind of consequences would there be you know for people doing that. You and Dan and there were different points I remember hitting some crossroads when, I can't say that, you know I might believe that personally and how --

MP: Right, because we're still State employees.

PB: Right, right and how for me, this is a note to the Commission, you know in thinking about how this system makes that kind of shift, people, staff people being able to push up against the power structure. Like it just is a complicated thing and there needs to be something to help figure that out. When that structure is not, has not moved out ahead of, and for staff people to be out ahead of the structure feels riskier for those staff people and may in fact actually --

MP: Or it just feels, is --

PB: I was going to say may in fact be, I mean sometimes it is and sometimes it just feels that way being in a week where two days ago their Director of the Office of Child and Family Services was terminated, you know that's a reminder that that could, that kind of stuff is part of your experience.

EA: This is such a different group to work with though because when I took over this position in 2004 when Sandi Hodge retired, and this is Martha, it was, you know it was an assignment that I asked for as opposed to just got assigned it and I'm not really sure, I haven't really thought about why I asked for it. Part of it was you know anything new, I'm just interested in as a person about getting involved in new things and expanding my own horizons and learnings and stuff. But you know when Pen was talking about the pieces of, you know the how you usually act in meetings and how this group is different. You know this was the first



professional group that I had joined like as a representative of the Office of Child and Family Services that I really got a lot of push back from people like, I remember Becky's first question to me was, so we heard you asked to be on this group, why?

PB: I remember that.

MP: You know and it was just, you know it was a really good, valid question, but not one that I had ever really thought about that concretely because it's not what usually happens.

PB: Yeah.

MP: And it was, you know those first meeting were really almost felt like a test.

PB: Yep.

MP: And so you know, you know people want to get to know the real you, but that's not how you're trained to work and you know we all have that vulnerable, is the real-you as opposed to the professional-you going to be liked and accepted as well. And how do you act and what's the norm of the group. You know, it was really uncomfortable for a long time, and --

EA: Did you speak to Sandi before, did you have conversations with Sandy about it before you came?

PB: I didn't have a lot of conversations with Sandi about anything.

EA: Because I remember, you know from that --

MP: Sandi was very closed in the work that she did.

EA: Gee 'cause in the beginning I remember thinking, who does that, I was in disbelief, you're really going to mandate people to come to a training and there's really money for this and we could really do this and then as we got moving along with the trainings our relationship, at least my relationship with Sandi took a 180.

MP: I'm sure it did, but as somebody in central office, the stuff that Sandi did was the stuff that Sandi did and she didn't like other people involved in it. So as a central office person I could tell you in-depth about a lot of projects that different people were working on, not the stuff Sandi was working on.

EA: And I think what I valued about getting to know Sandi was I really learned a lot about how the State system oppresses women. You know I had never, there was a lot of fear.

MP: She's a very intelligent woman that did a lot of really good work.

EA: There was a lot of fear. She had a lot of fear about like that same stuff you're talking about. How much to bring yourself in and navigate in that because she would get pushed back and that sexism was something I had never even thought of and I'm really starting to get a picture of what OCFS, the culture of OCFS was and how political things are and how that sense of scarcity I think.

MP: Things are really political, the time I went to central office that Sandi was there, I know from my perspective, gender didn't play into it. I think it might've later on with different directors, but when I went to central office it was a very female-led organization.

PB: I still think there was some gender dynamics in that. One of the things I think is important to say is that when this project started that first year it was supposed to be one year, design the training, deliver it to all staff and that's it.

EA: Yes.

PB: And be done, and at the end of the year I remember standing in the lobby of the Augusta Civic Center saying, and people saying 'we're not done. There's more that has to be done,' and it was completely, you know it was really clear and Sandi went back and made sure that the contract that got set up with the Muskie School contained the provision for the ICWA work group to be continued. That Muskie would have a role in facilitating that and that was funded for many years and that was an important transition.

MP: And I think that's, well it was also one of the best decisions because when you're bringing two or five, for all the tribes that attended groups of people together with kind of different perspectives and different bent on the common goal of working for kids and families. I think you have to have a neutral facilitator because if any of the tribes or the State had taken the lead role of the facilitation role in that, I think it would've fallen apart. We had to be at the table as equals with somebody else doing the harder work.

PB: I think that's why we facilitate the YLAT [*Youth Leadership Advisory Team*] group too.

MP: Probably.

PB: It's the same kind of thing that you need to be, you need to be participatory in the process fully engaged and not have to do that balancing between--

MP: And even if you can do the balance, there's a different power shift for the other people that attend the group.

PB: Yeah.

RG: What were some of the things that came out of that, those early meetings about the challenges you were seeing and the barriers that came up?

PB: One of them, well I mean one in just the workgroup itself. I remember this. This is a bit of a story, but this is an example of that sometimes there was this blunt, quick, fast push back



and sometimes it was harder to do that. I remember one time when Molly, it was in the early days, Sandi was there and Molly said 'I've got a question I want to ask, but I'm not sure it's a really fair question.' And I was like, 'oh my god what is she going to say.' And so she sort of hemmed and hawed and everybody was quiet and she finally asked the question and I don't remember what it was. It was something about data, but it was such a benign question, but it seemed like to her it seemed really challenging to ask it, so it was this funny, that to me that seemed about the power dynamics to the asking or sort of being forceful with power with the State agency. I think sometimes it was really easy and sometimes it seemed really hard just within the group.

EA: I think that that, in my mind, I think at that time that was the only, either we were silent or we were bitchy. I mean there was no in between. It's either you have to be really forceful and -- or you don't say anything.

PB: It builds up.

EA: Yes. There was no like trying to give people the benefit of the doubt or you know any of that at the time. It was real hard to get to the place where we could really look at each other as people. We didn't want to see those State people around the table as being humans, you know that would make it difficult. You know that would mean that we would be conciliating or whatever. We would be giving something up if we did that. That's a feeling. I remember what happened.

PB: Or the temptation to take care of us.

EA: Yeah, and that's what I mean. It's either we're totally taken care of white people or we're being freaking horrible and mean and coming out all aggressive and it's, I think it took a while for us to feel like it's okay to be in the middle.

PB: Yeah.

EA: You know it's alright.

PB: I think that's a parallel--

MP: And I think that comes out in two ways because I think that comes out for females too.

PB: Yeah, yeah.

MP: If you're assertive as a female you're perceived differently than if you're assertive as a man.

PB: It strikes me too that there's some parallel to how the work was getting played out to those kinds of things probably happening in practice. So when you think about that time period there's some other practices issues that were, that were difficult. I mean there's stuff that came up in the training.

MP: It was racism.

PB: Right, so examples like think of some of the things that you heard from people that they would call on you for help or that you'd have to go to the districts to direct. What are some examples of that? I think that's what Rachel's asking about.

RG: What was identified as problems? Why was it, I mean aside from, there was some recognition that the State was not in compliance.

MP: See, I can only answer the later because I wasn't involved in the early years.

EA: I remember things like tribes not being informed, like feeling I wasn't at the table so I must've been on the menu, being surprised by decisions that were made without them knowing, going to court and finding out you know that they decided to do this with a child and the tribe not knowing, go ahead Connie speak up. She's shaking her head yes.

MP: We're laughing at your comment about wasn't at the table, I had to be on the menu. Never heard that before.

EA: Oh, *(laughter)* and I think you know I remember like some of the cases, Molly, Pleasant Point cases and some of the Micmac and maybe even the Maliseets saying you know we felt blindsided. We felt ganged up on. We go to the court and we go into conference before we go to the Judge and we go into conference with the attorneys and you know they're doing all these things and making all these decisions that we didn't know about and they didn't consult with us. So that, I remember those kinds of stories.

PB: Or meetings being set up and being, people being told at the last minute, not being engaged in the establishment of a meeting, hearing about court dates at the last minute or hearing about court dates after things had already happened.

CS: A lot of things were happening where things were set up and they weren't told about it and like you said you know they were told at the last minute and they already had several other things that were going on and they couldn't make it to be there.

EA: So in some of the early trainings it was, I remember people being real surprised on some of the evaluations being or even in the workshops itself, being surprised that Tribal Child Welfare workers didn't just do child welfare. You know that --

MP: Right.



EA: These people you know they're doing all this other stuff and they have a lot of responsibilities and they don't just have a caseload of whatever the maximum was at the time. You know that, and thinking and they have degrees.

PB: That's right, I remember that too.

EA: I remember people being real surprised that you know --

MP: Well that struck me at the Summit.

EA: Yeah, yeah.

MP: When we had the first Summit.

EA: They had advanced degrees.

MP: And we didn't.

PB: Right, right.

EA: And then I think the policy that we developed, the Indian Child Welfare policy that we've developed really addressed those early things.

MP: Right.

EA: And some of the problems that we've identified through the years. You know around co-case management instead of thinking of the tribe as this outside agency, but thinking of the tribe as a parent.

MP: Yeah, I think that was, I think that was a piece. I don't even think initially people thought of the tribes as an outside agency. I think they, with equality, I think because we're so used to being in charge of our cases and dealing with providers in a certain way when we need things and they were really kind of looking at the tribe as a provider as opposed it --

EA: Right.

MP: Forget equal partner, but just another you know really important participant. You know some of the calls that I would get when I first started this and that was you know five or six years into the workgroups so I think some things had changed, but -- do you want to stop that?

RG: Yeah, I'm going to pause it.

(Recording Paused to Allow New Participants to Join)

RG: All right, so this the second part of the recording for file number FG-R-201411-0011. Sharon Tomah is joining us. Sharon, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

MS. TOMAH (ST): Yes.

RG: Great, and I have to let you know that if at any point during the recording you indicate that there's a child or an elder currently in need of protection or there's imminent risk of serious bodily harm or death to an identifiable person or group including yourself, that that information may not be protected as confidential.

ST: Yes.

RG: Do you understand?

ST: Yes.

RG: All right. Do you want to pick up where you left off for a minute?

MP: Yeah, I'm to think of where that was. Oh, so a lot of the calls that I used to get when I started was a lot of lack of understanding of involvement and I think you know people had the training in 1999, 2000 you know when it was rolled out statewide, then nothing else was really done. There was a little piece of it in pre-service training, but you know what workers get or got in the course of how pre-service was done then, which was the five weeks with the Child Welfare Training Institute, it was all so new and there were so many pieces, I would be highly doubtful if people really remembered much about any specific training other than they knew something was different, so they knew they needed to talk to their supervisor kind of thing. So I would get a lot of calls in regard to you know there's a family team meeting. The parents don't want the tribe there so we had it without the tribe and now the tribe's upset and not understanding that there are times that, and even from the State's perspective, let alone the tribe's perspective, where you know it is a family team meeting, but we're also participants as are the tribes and we need to be there. We need to be able to have the people that we feel are important to be there that it's not just a family's call or they would call with questions about placement because... And a lot of calls about adoption and termination of parental rights and just really not understanding that it was kind of a government to government relationship as opposed to State to provider relationship and it wasn't just suggestions that the tribe was making. It was things that needed to be followed.

So those were a lot of the initial things when I took on this position in 2004 that I was doing anything that initially you know was more negotiation kind of stuff with me, the more I learned because I didn't know a lot about the Indian Child Welfare Act either when I joined in 2004. So it was a learning process for me and learning you know the separate ways that each tribe's child welfare agency functioned and what the expectations kind of were from each tribe to go from sort of negotiating with caseworkers to really them just having the authority to just step in and say no you need to do A, B and C and you know so that was a real growth process in this



roll. You know and I still do like an educational piece when people call, but the bottom line is if you've got to do, you've got to do it.

PB: Yeah, it seems like to me in the early days, this may be a judgment on my part, but it seems like that caseworkers were always in this state of overwhelm. I mean that's probably an ongoing thing to say about caseworkers, the demands. And in some ways I get the impression that it was like the stuff that had to happen with ICWA seemed like extra stuff.

MP: Yes.

PB: Compared to what they knew, that this is the things that you did.

MP: Right.

PB: From start to finish on a case and then there was this extra stuff and I don't know if somehow that created a sense of, you know, get to it if you can kind of thing as opposed to you know what I mean?

MP: I do, and it was also something that the Assistant Attorney Generals and the guardians ad litem weren't as informed about unless they really worked in the Washington County, the Penobscot County or the Aroostook County areas.

PB: Right.

MP: And then it still might've been shaky, but they knew more about it.

PB: Yeah.

MP: So I think it was a real educational process not just for us, but for other pieces of the system.

PB: Right, right.

MP: And I think that it certainly has gotten much better. I mean Aroostook County is doing some fantastic stuff now that they aren't even involving me where they don't have to anymore, the relationships are so good. You know I don't need to be there.

EA: I think that it's taken a really long time even for me to have, say with confidence that best child welfare practice following ICWA benefits all children.

PB: Yeah.

EA: It's taken a long time for me to get there. I mean it was always like you know why should you follow this law, because we said so. You know why should you follow this law because you know it's the right thing to do, but it's really only been in the, since the TRC work we've been involved in that I can say with you know, I know, I just know it. I know that if caseworkers call and follow those tenets of ICWA it benefits all children.

MP: I think the difference with the TRC work and, you know it's interesting you say that, but looking at the TRC work and my perspective of the Indian Child Welfare Act is, it has gone from law and even you know best intent historical knowledge, to real people's stories of how damaging it was and even when we got more into the intent and the spirit of the law, it was still kind of nebulous and out there. It wasn't you know somebody's father or you know hearing somebody speak it at like the talking circle we had at Penobscot Nation and just hearing people's intense pain because the system was so ignorant and wrong.

EA: I mean that defensiveness from the, those early trainings about you know 'why you're so special. Why do you guys have special rights? Why you got this special law,' and you know taking that defensiveness I had and really internalizing that and thinking about it and trying to come up with you why, like some real solid, good answers that are, what is the word, un-refutable or whatever. It's taken a long time to really get there. I think I had to fake it a little bit, to like fake it until you make it for a little bit, you know say those words because you benefit from you know our colonization, because all of these things and to really feel it now.

ST: I almost felt like in the an early days it was more, that it was an afterthought, the whole thing and I think that the caseworkers were so overwhelmed it was just like the straw on the camel's back. Like oh my god we've got to do this extra thing and...

MP: It's the extra thing they didn't have to do often so they were even more scared of it because it wasn't rote.

ST: Exactly, and I think when there wasn't this sort of coalition and there wasn't some of the, like it wasn't so much of a group, you had individual ICWA workers and so I think that they didn't have sort of a strength in numbers.

PB: Yes.

ST: And I do think there was like a little bit at some point when there was some, a little bit from the State caseworkers not really looking at the ICWA caseworkers as credibly.

PB: Yes.

ST: As their own State Child Welfare workers, so they tended to be sort of in, I don't know just a little bit --

EA: Dismissive.

ST: Dismissive, yeah and actually looking at them as from an equal type of social worker or caseworker.



MP: And I think too that so many of our staff are young.

ST: Yes.

MP: And when you're young and entering into a system like that to feel powerful in front of anybody is really intimidating, so I do think you, I mean I look at my early work as a social worker, my work now is very different and I think you get kind of, like your back up and feel like you have to be in control to do it because you know you're so insecure.

PB: Two things I want to add though, it was some other veteran caseworkers in that first year that were the most defensive and difficult to deal with.

MP: Yeah, see I wasn't involved with it.

PB: Really, really difficult and in the second year that we did the training, I remember one of the things that we included as a handout was resumes for the ICWA staff, which like seemed sort of bizarre to me now to think that --

MP: You had to prove them.

PB: You know Erlene's resume was one of the handouts to really establish that she was a professional. That's really --

MP: Insulting.

PB: Bizarre.

MP: It's insulting.

PB: But there was questions about it and I remember that being really prickly that day.

MP: But I think that's how we viewed family in that day too.

ST: CMIA also had a role in the early day.

PB: Oh yeah.

ST: And like it was called Central Maine Indian Association. Terry Polchies, he's still around, and they would hire people that were like family support advocates and those people like George Ward and I think it was Irene Augustine, and people like that would go to different like Child Welfare meeting and almost like you have family, amplifying the family's voice and so I remember that they would go through a lot too because they were considered, like they were not really actually ICWA workers, but they were trying to advocate for families and so

that also complicated things and I think sometimes people were confused about what their role was.

PB: Yeah.

MP: But I have to wonder of some of the successes now aren't even as much, the knowledge and importance of ICWA for some people as it is that as an agency we're more inclusive of families now, that we weren't before so it doesn't seem as weird to staff to invite other people to the table as decision makers and I wonder if we hadn't made that shift as an agency in regard to family involvement. If we wouldn't even be where we are now with our tribal work.

PB: I agree, I mean, I think at those early days that you know DHS made the decision and there was no ifs, ands, or buts and so other agencies or other providers --

MP: Right.

PB: You know tough luck if you don't agree with it, you know.

MP: And they couldn't get, you know when I started as a caseworker part of it was so different too because there was such less oversight. I mean a child came into care and you had to have a judicial review within eighteen months.

PB: Wasn't it crazy.

MP: And then every two years after that.

PB: Yeah.

MP: And now you're in court at a minimum of every six months so there's a lot more oversight on cases than there used to be so it used to be easier with getting away with ignoring whatever anybody else wanted because court was a year and a half away and by then something would've changed anyway --

PB: Right, right.

MP: Than there is now.

PB: People would give up.

MP: Yeah.

PB: That's bizarre to think about that.

MP: I know.

PB: Yeah.



RG: Can you tell me about what those early trainings were like?

MP: I was just a participant.

EA: The first one we did was in Aroostook County.

MP: Which probably was a mistake to start there.

PB: It might've been the best thing we did.

EA: Yeah, it was horrible. It was traumatic. It was very traumatic for me. I had to bring my baby with me. He was a year old and, because I nursed him and I couldn't leave him, so I had to bring him and he was crying and he was upset probably because he could feel, feel the energy of the room and I did share the evaluations with you Rachel, but on, I remember we would, after the trainings we would sit there and read the evaluations and they were pissed off that there was a kid there, and I thought... I felt it was hostile. It felt so hostile walking in there and it felt hostile and that made me feel more like imposing will and power over them, making them get in a circle, making them smudge. You know, which probably wasn't a very good spiritual place to be; you know forcing people to be in a circle, you know I was young though. That was a long time ago and just I remember leading people through trainings and you know still having that, trying to make it as uncomfortable for them as possible. That's where I was at anyway.

MP: The two things I remember most as a participant was the smudging circle and the film. Not even the Belongings film, there was another film that you guys showed that was a very --

EA: Well that clip from Lakota Woman, when she was being taken to a residential school.

MP: I think that was the one.

PB: Yeah, they cut her hair and --

EA: Yep, I think I wanted that shock.

MP: And I probably would've remembered the Belongings video if I hadn't seen it so much since then. You know it's just --

PB: I think the first training just technically we learned some things about the flow of the training day that we did differently so you know if anything the folks in Presque Isle, I think we refined the training so it was a little bit better flow. I mean technically speaking, but I remember it was really very, it was like our first workgroup meeting. It was the tension and defensiveness, was just --

MP: Well I think it's important to also remember that one of the reasons that this all came to the head in the perfect storm of 1999, was because of the things that had happened in Aroostook County as well.

PB: And I don't think I was as clear about exactly what happened.

MP: But they would've been.

PB: I know, but I'm just saying that we didn't, I didn't have that kind of perspective, maybe you did Esther, but I mean I knew something had happened, but I didn't know what I know now.

MP: You didn't know how egregious it was.

EA: I knew something had happened because the State, I don't know if it was related to this incident, but I remember me and Denise going to a public hearing that the State had around that time and we went to one in Ellsworth where they were hearing, were you there too?

CS: I was there.

EA: Yeah, and I don't even --

CS: I spoke that day.

EA: Yeah, and Denise did too and I did.

CS: Because there was a conflict.

EA: Yeah, it was something about, it was a public hearing about Child Welfare Services and I don't know if it was in relation or in a response to what had happened to that young girl.

MP: Or was it that --

CS: That the one that --

MP: Was it the --

EA: Or maybe it was accreditation or something --

MP: Or was it part of the pilot, Tribal Family Service review and one of their focus groups?

PB: No.

EA: No. There was legislature, it was a legislative body.

CS: That's when they were all up on panel right?



EA: Yeah.

CS: I remember her speaking about, that had come about after the deal if I'm, correct me if I'm wrong, about the little girl that ended up (*PB: Logan Marr*) suffocating from --

PB: Duct tape.

MP: Oh, they might've had public hearings throughout the state after Logan Marr.

CS: This is what started that. That's what that public hearing and when I went, for me dealing with DHS on a personal note, wow, I felt there was a conflict of interest with Pam and Bob Glidden, which just to lay it out there, in my eyes that was the big conflict and that's what was driving some of the stuff up there. But, I just wanted to say I was on that panel and I --

PB: Can we pause?

CS: I was very heated.

RG: I was going to pause for one second and note that Like Joseph is joining us. Luke, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

MR. JOSEPH (LJ): Yes.

RG: Great. Sorry, I didn't want to distract from that. (*Inaudible*), can you tell me a little bit more about the things that were said in that?

CS: Just for me personally, what I had gone down there for is to just get my voice out there about what I felt was going on up there. And you know a lot of it, I was seeing it you know and a lot of the people that were around me that were fighting with DHS themselves weren't standing up for themselves. They were giving up and I was at that point this ain't happening. This ain't going to continue, you know. And I had to get my voice out there and that was one of the things that I threw out, was the conflicts.

RG: Tell me a little bit about the things that you were seeing happening in the area?

CS: The children were being removed.

(Side conversation – EA: Can you come back at 11:30? Can you guys come back at 11:30?)

There was a lot of children that were being removed and weren't being returned. Even after reunification plans had been followed through. A year later I'm in Ellsworth still fighting for my kids and you know at that point and time everything on the reunification plan was done. I had followed through with everything. I had divorced my ex-husband. I think at that point I

might have had Rena back and I was still fighting for my other three kids and it was just one thing after another. You'll never be able to raise these kids. They had given me two psych evals, which of course I failed. I don't think the same as everybody else and it just didn't work. And what I was finding is everybody was giving up and here I am, I've done everything I can. I've got the State telling me you can never raise your kids. I'm still fighting and when you mentioned the tribe had hired an attorney on behalf of my kids because it had gotten that bad. And it was just, I seen everybody else give up around me and I've got, you know, three other kids I'm fighting for and done everything I'm supposed to do and I'm still stuck. A year and a half later I got my two girls back. It took me five years to get Shawn, and Shawn was probably the hardest one hit. He still has, I find that the ones that are gone the longest are the ones that hurt the most.

PB: I don't think the system ever understood that for most kids going into foster care it was --

MP: Traumatic.

PB: Far worse --

CS: Yes.

PB: Than the challenges in their family. I think that still is a mystery to Child Welfare staff.

MP: And I think it's really interesting to hear your story --

CS: That's just a--

MP: From my perspective now --

CS: Just a piece.

MP: Because, oh I'm sure, but just you know I was a caseworker in the '80's and '90's and I didn't have any ICWA cases, but I could imagine layering on kind of the racism and the thoughts of the agency on top of what we were doing and you know as a caseworker, there were a lot of kid-- I won't say there were a lot, but you know the kids that I reunified with their parents, I remember very clearly that the kids, I'm embarrassed to even say this, but that the kids I reunified, like the protective workers and supervisors would run over and say 'how could you put that kid back. I did so much work getting them out of their house and their parents are horrible and how can you put them back when we've done all this work to save them kind' of thing and you know we really raised the bar like you know we didn't send people back because they were safe, we sent them back once they thought people hit our perspective of middle class.

PB: Yes.

MP: And yeah, it's true and as a caseworker, you know I can you know list, I can think in my head of some of the kids that I reunified, but the kids whose parental rights I terminated I kept on my board and I terminated 33 kids when I was a caseworker and that's what you got more



of the kudos for than you did reunification in the '80's and '90's when I was a worker and that was the mindset of child welfare. You know it's horrible to think about. You know the kids I sent home, I can look at you know some I still have contact with even now and you know some were successful, some weren't, but the home was still safe. You know some of those kids would've, might've been successful or not aging out of foster care too you know, but it was a very different mindset on you know how many kids have you terminated as opposed to how many kids have you sent home. And the way your peers looked at you.

PB: Yes, yeah.

MP: And that's horrible.

ST: But don't you think the profession also like the, where the profession was at the time also influenced--?

MP: Yeah, it was the culture of Child Welfare, nationwide--

ST: --of child welfare, of social work, you know go forth and go save people and do good and --

PB: Yes, yes.

EA: Institutionalize them.

ST: Yep.

CS: I remember a conversation that I had with my worker at the time, Sue Putnam. I'll never forget that conversation. She brought up some things that had happened right after the kids were taken and she said something to me about family. Do I have other family members? Well at the time I've got an alcoholic mother and my grandmother wasn't in the position. My great aunt already had plateful and the aunt that I would've had done it, was out of state... There was just no way I could've done it. So of course they're just spreading the kids out and I remember telling her, you know, it takes a tribe to raise a child and she told me I was wrong. And I says, you know, I kind of argued the point trying to explain to her that I was not just raised by my mother. I was raised by my grandmother and my aunts. I was passed around and that's okay because I took a piece from everybody I ever met. When it comes to reunification plan they expected me to be supermom. They expected me to raise the children in the eyes of how they see a fit.

PB: Yes.

CS: Well that's not how I was raised.

MP: I think Sharon's right, I think that was the mindset of the profession.

EA: I think that's why it was difficult in '99 when the legislature passed that law that let, allowed the State to provide foster care reimbursement to tribally-approved foster homes. It was really hard for those caseworkers to give up that control they had over deciding what foster homes are paid for this child.

MP: And I was still fighting that when I, that was one of the things that licensing would come to me about.

EA: Yeah, even --

MP: They don't anymore, but up until even three or four years ago, I would say they were.

PB: You know, I'm appreciating Betsy Tanian again, and you think about that culture of Child Welfare in Aroostook County --

MP: She was an amazing advocate.

PB: She, when she became the Director for the Maliseets.

CS: I remember.

PB: She took on that and like really literally fought for the rights of the Maliseet people and really to extend that to all of the tribes and I think in the process, I don't know how to say it, --

EA: Met some resistance.

PB: I just think she got labeled as, well you know what I mean, she got labeled as --

MP: She did.

PB: She got labeled as... As a pain in the butt.

CS: Right, yes.

PB: And really her reputation was really, but she never stopped.

EA: But even, even with --

MP: But part of that reputation caused people to just do what she wanted.

LJ: *(Inaudible)*.

EA: Even within our group the native people, I remember myself in particular having a lot of issues with that cultural manual because I saw so much exploitation of our native ways and cultures. I was so afraid that those were going to be put down into a manual and this is how



you be Indian and to me it scared the shit out of me be—oops--because I didn't want people to think that you know it's okay to take kids out of the reservation as long as you do these things with them then they'll be okay.

MP: As long as you have a dream-catcher over there.

EA: Right, as long as you have a dream-catcher, as long as you teach them songs and I was really --

MP: Well I was disgusted and I'm not native.

EA: I was really upset with that manual because at the time the --

PB: I remember that.

EA: Well, it was probably between Betsy and I, Betsy and I had a lot of conversations about it.

MP: One we were reading on it, it was on the internet or something.

EA: I don't know, but I was upset because I was worried number one that our culture cannot be quantified and written down like that. You can't say okay go ahead be an Indian.

LJ: This is how to be an Indian.

EA: Right, and then I was also worried that it would give the State more license to keep taking our children away if they had this manual to keep them connected.

PB: Right.

EA: But you know I see things differently now. I've changed --

MP: It judged families that didn't follow the manual.

EA: Right, I've done, you know and when we did the Belonging video we heard from people who were taken who maintained connections with the tribe and still had the same level of trauma.

PB: Yes.

EA: You know so our thinking has changed a lot or at least mine has to know that you know really the best thing for children is to stay in the community, stay there.

PB: Yeah.

EA: But I agree that manual for those kids that were separated and that's all they had was good. I mean it was a lifeline for them.

MP: People --

EA: But I was worried about the longer implications.

MP: People still get so fearful, like everybody can say yes, best practice is keeping your kid in the community whatever that community may be, but then people get so scared of losing control because like what if they run into each other at the grocery store or what if the parent goes to the kid's sports game. Yeah, what if? Who cares? That's how you keep them --

PB: Who cares? That's awesome.

MP: That's how you keep them in their parent role and feeling connected and you know people feel that they have to put this almost protection bubble around foster kids like they don't know what happened in their own life and it's, it's crazy.

PB: I think it is fear too that they're going to be the one that's hung out to dry if something bad happens.

ST: What was kind of frustrating to me is like that we would get calls like as soon as somebody was going to age out within a month or a month and a half, or when no longer placement can support them because they were too aggressive or too violent, so then all of a sudden they start calling and the child's going to age out because there's no more funding for them to stay where they're at and so you know, oh by the way we have this person, can you help them and --

LJ: Yeah, we used to have that happen--

ST: They're going to age out, they're going to lose their MaineCare, they're going to lose their you know money to live and all of that and I can remember you know a number of cases in particular that I met them because they came off the bus out of foster care.

MP: That's disgusting. At least now their MaineCare continues until they're 26.

ST: Yeah, back then it was like you're out of placement. Bye, see you.

LJ: Oh, no I was just, Sharon was saying, that happened just recently with one of the kids that timed out with our program. Well I never got the chance to work with him, but Tania did and he, I guess when he got dropped off he was bouncing house to house, didn't know where he was going, had Section 28 services while he was in care. I don't think they, whether his placement or parents were trying to get the Section 29 up and running, but that there was a gap in between that so, yeah he was just kind of basically dropped. Dropped off in the community, you're an adult.



ST: Here you go.

LJ: Here you go.

EA: That's still happening? Because at our ICWA Summit we had, that young Passamaquoddy boy that was dropped off at your agency, Sharon, when he turned eighteen and he was on panel.

MP: It's still happening.

ST: Because he was trying to stab somebody in the throat and they couldn't manage him anymore.

MP: It's still happening regardless though because when kids turn twenty-one, if we haven't made that permanent connection for them, then they're done.

EA: Yeah, so I think that was a lot, that fear, loss of control on the caseworkers part was there a lot.

RG: So, I'm very mindful of the time, ten minutes.

EA: She's going to have them wait out there for ten more minutes.

RG: Okay, I'm just wondering if there are wrapping up thoughts about this aspect of the conversation in particular?

PB: What did you say?

EA: Wrapping up thoughts about this part.

ST: I guess just that, I mean for me just even though I wasn't like part of the ICWA coalition in the beginning, but just over time that I seen that there's been some good changes and seems to be moving in the right direction.

EA: Yeah, I just came back from doing a session in Caribou and it was like a different place than I was at in 1999 because I hadn't been up there since.

MP: And it really is because if I look at the Aroostook County now there are very few people left up there that were there in 1999.

CS: Oh yeah.

EA: The defensiveness that came from the caseworkers in Caribou this time was they were defensive like that we're not like that anymore. We don't do that. We do better practice, which was a good defensiveness because they were you know standing up for the good stuff that they're doing and very, very much concerned with helping Maliseets and Micmacs develop their own foster homes and that was something that you never would've heard of --

CS: No.

EA: In 1999.

MP: And I think too, there's always going to be spots of bad practice, but I think there's always in child welfare whether it's Tribal Child Welfare or State Child Welfare. There are always going to be some staff who are better at their job than other staff who are more accepting, who you know, who are just more skilled than other people.

ST: And I think DHS, you know just from the workers that I see, I think the bar has been raised in terms of like the quality of the worker, the training that they get. I've been very impressed with you know their level of facilitation skills and just--

RG: Well the other difference is now you have to be a licensed social worker and the licensing board has upped their standards for what qualifies for a degree for licensed social worker. But when I started you didn't have to be licensed, so we had phys-ed majors, history majors, I mean they weren't social workers.

EA: So what year was it that the human rights violation ruling came, 2007?

PB: 2008 or 7, something like that.

EA: Yeah, so there was a violation, a human rights, Maine Human Rights Commission ruled that the State Department Human Services, a caseworker and a supervisor were guilty of racial discrimination.

MP: I think it was just a caseworker.

EA: It was just a caseworker?

PB: The supervisor got skipped.

EA: Supervisor and the caseworker, and the caseworker --

MP: I had to testify at that.

EA: The caseworker's name was Janel Cadman and what I had heard after --

MP: It was Janel Hershey at the time, I believe.



EA: I don't think so, I was in the same office with her at the time, but when I was working for Muskie, when I first, I worked for Muskie. But anyway, that came about because of racial remarks that were made to a Penobscot woman saying you people up there and you know really talking about Indian Island disparagingly.

MP: She was talking about, well she was also talking about basically why would she believe anything that another native person told her about how well she might be doing because you people all cover and lie for each other.

EA: Yep.

ST: They stick together.

PB: One of the things that was compelling to me about that was there was her practice and her perspective and I remember when we were talking about it as a group that some of the folks from central office said when we heard there was a human rights finding against a caseworker in that office --

EA: We knew who it was.

PB: We knew who it was and I thought like there's, yeah there's the systemic piece of like how, how do we --

MP: It is very difficult to --

PB: I just - Let me just finish what I'm saying. How do we as human beings, as white human beings, we have to step out of the comfort of our privilege to say hard things to take on hard things, to make waves when that's not at all what we're socialized and trained to do. Those, that to me that's the other piece that's implicated in this and there's times when I feel, like other conversations that we've had in a group when you hear someone or see someone say something, you know like we, we can stay in our flippant comfort zone --

EA: And let the Indians deal with it.

PB: But have to push ourselves up, it's exactly right. I say that in the same respects that I own it in the way that we have to act in a way that's not comfortable for us, so.

MP: I agree with that. I also think there's another piece layered onto that, on top of that though and that's the State personnel system.

PB: I totally get that, yep.

MP: And it's workable, but I think that sometimes it's so daunting for people that they don't want to enter into that and that's too bad because we need to get rid of people that can't do their job well.

PB: We need to speak it, one for that person who and how they're performing, but for that person's supervisor and for the culture of an office to know that these things, that we can talk about these things. So it's as much for the whole leadership development of the office as well as it is for contending with someone whose performance may be inappropriate.

CW: So one thing I'd just like to add from the TRC perspective is that it seems like so much that was egregious is now shifting and there's still currently instances where there're kinds of cases that you had--. Where from your perspective should the TRC be looking now to fill the gaps in the record that we have so that we can have recommendations be spot on and not based on stuff that happened in the past if no longer as current?

PB: One of the things that I would wonder about is contracts or expectations of providers in relation to working with tribal youth and families within Child Welfare and I don't know what we know about that, about how does that spread? Part of the issue with the success of our work was that we had a really strong relationship at the central office level and that we had to do some things to get it pushed more into case practice.

MP: Yes.

PB: That that was, that was I think an early flaw in the work that we were doing that that didn't happen enough. So one, I think that insistence, we discussed at some point having an ICWA resource person in each office, which would make, it would be a demand on the office resources and so one person, a supervisor who could become more expert. Who could be network with the same kind of person across different districts so that their office has a go-to person --

LJ: Right.

PB: About what to do A to Z with things ICWA, ICWA-related and that idea came up in one of the ICWA Summits I think and really has not been acted on and I think that would be a really valuable piece that could be both an internal and external resource.

EA: I think it would be good and I'm supposed to email Julie, Julia Simmons about this to get the TRC to be able to look at evaluations of the caseworkers after Martha and I deliver the training that we do. We do a three-hour training now for caseworkers to look at their evaluations. That might be a good --

MP: What do you mean to look at their evaluations?

EA: So the TRC can have access to those evaluations that those caseworkers fill out.

MP: Oh, the course evaluation.



EA: Yeah the course evaluations.

MP: When you say evaluation I think personnel.

EA: No.

MP: And I'm like, how would that work.

EA: To see, you know to see how, not only how, how people are rating Martha and I, but to see --

MP: Their attitudes.

EA: Because there's some, yeah – there's some telling comments on those evaluations. So, I'm going to email Julia Simmons and see if we can get copies of those for Rachel.

MP: Tell her I'm in agreement, so in case she has to check with both trainers.

The interesting thing about that is we used to get a lot more comments about like you were saying earlier Esther, why is this special and we used to get a lot more comments about so why are you doing this. What about the other cultures and we haven't gotten those since at the start of the training now I explain why all cultures are important, but why this is special and those comments haven't been on the evaluations since then.

PB: I also think, the other part I think is that the ICWA work group has, the staffing for that has not been funded for a few years because this work really subsumed a lot of that.

MP: And we've got to get back to that.

EA: That's why we're doing the visioning at 12:30.

PB: So I think, one, we have to get back to it, but also if the State would commit to funding that.

EA: So I'm aware of all the organizers out there waiting to get in for our lunch, so it would be, I mean I don't know if you would be open to it Rachel, but maybe our next meeting is December 9th, not then, but maybe after the first of the year, if you wanted to revisit this here.

RG: I would like to revisit this-

EA: This group and maybe get some more people here.

RG: Yeah, absolutely because there are a number, I mean, we talked about the early piece, which I think is really important and I would like to bring that a little bit more forward and talk about like Carol, I think, I'm really glad that you wrapped it up in that way, but I want to expand on that, what you want to see--

CW: We want to hear more also about, as the architects of convening the TRC. What your frank sentiments are about what's happened, what the impact is, what disappointments there are, what could happen, so that we can see this as a phase in a longer process, what needs to come next?

PB: So another thing I would say is that when the ICWA workgroup was starting it was the same time that the incident happened in the Maliseet community.

EA: Yes.

PB: And I think that there was a legislative committee, a special committee that looked at that. Donna Loring probably convened it. It seems like Peggy Rotundo was involved with that and I don't know if you have been able to gather that information or --

CW: A legislative committee--

PB: I think it was a special committee that did that looked at that.

CS: I thought it was too.

PB: It was looking at compliance --

EA: It came up with that Maliseet State agreement.

PB: Yeah, I think that grew out of that, but the committee really looked at a bunch of stuff and I, it was happening parallel to this and I'm not --

CW: It was around 1999.

PB: It was 1999.

EA: Betsy Tanian would be the one that would have --

PB: And Peggy Rotundo, Donna Loring-- There's probably some legislative documents available, so there's a --

CW: So we've got a researcher, Joe who is researching that, so we can get him on that.

PB: Yep.

EA: So perhaps we can get together like --



CW: If you remember the LD or the name of the commission that would be helpful.

EA: The people that were in 2008, if we could get many of them back to the table. We might be able to like Marylou.

PB: Yeah.

EA: And others.

PB: Yeah.

CW: Great.

EA: All right.

RG: Thank you all.

EA: Thank you.

PB: Thank you, this is good.

[END OF RECORDING]