

COMMUNITY

Nisga'a Nation
Nass Valley, BC

Project:

Educating Aboriginal Youth on a River Raft Journey about Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

Nisga'a Nation, Nass Valley, BC

Ksim Git Hlwawaaak Millie Percival is the Victims Assistance Coordinator at the Access to Justice Department with the Nisga'a Lisims Government. The Nisga'a Nation is represented by Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) — a modern administration based on traditional culture and values. Nisga'a Government has the authority to pass laws on a broad range of matters. At the same time, Nisga'a lawmaking authority is concurrent with federal and provincial authority. The Nisga'a Government is comprised of NLG, the four Nisga'a Village Governments, and three Urban Locals.

Millie Percival completed the OCTIP online training course, *Human Trafficking, Canada is Not Immune*, and learned about the issue of domestic trafficking of Aboriginal girls and women. The training prompted questions about whether this was an issue in Millie's community. After attending the "Train the Trainer" workshop in Prince George in 2013, Millie organized a "Train the Trainer" workshop for service providers and community members, which was held in June 2014. After the two-day training, and with the support of her colleagues, Millie formed an anti-trafficking committee in her community. Millie began to deliver talks and presentations on human trafficking and sexual exploitation issues at Village Government sessions, and to groups of community members, parents, and youth.

“The best thing about this activity was the timing” said Millie. “I caught the youth’s attention in the midst of an excellent experience, they were attentive, connected and had just been through an activity where they bonded through being aware that their safety on the water was dependent on one another.”



Presenters and organizers of the Train the Trainer workshop on Human Trafficking: Left to right: Victor Porter, Millie Percival, Melissa Hyland, and Kevin Lescisin.

Millie learned that a group of youth from Gingolx, Laxgalts'ap, Terrace Nisga'a Local and Kermode Friendship Centre (Terrace) were participating in a River Raft Journey. The Journey's final destination was New Aiyansh, and the community organized a welcome lunch and other activities to honour the youth participating in the Journey. The activities included a presentation to raise awareness about human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The youth appreciated Millie’s presentation and the discussion that followed. As a way of expressing their gratitude, the youth invited Millie to participate in an event the next day designed to thank their sponsors, leaders, and mentors. During the event conversation on the issues of human trafficking and sexual exploitation continued informally—and as a result, one participant shared an instance of exploitation being experienced by a friend. The friends were able to support one another to ensure a safe outcome.



“This story highlights the importance of seizing every opportunity to raise awareness on human trafficking and sexual exploitation; and in particular, providing community members with the ability to identify exploitation and human trafficking and recognize indicators. Exploitation and human trafficking can happen anywhere, and the best way to prevent it is to be aware and know the indicators.”

**– Millie Percival
Victims Assistance Coordinator,
NLG Access to Justice Department**