

I once had a home that stood straight
and tall,
A solid foundation built with bricks
and all.
This home had withstood so many a
storm.
But the last disaster was not of the
norm.

As the storm slowly passed and a
new morning dawned,
I thought all was gone, but I was
so very wrong.
The foundation I found was still
standing intact,
Although shaken a bit, I found only
a crack.
Three walls remained with missing
bricks just a few,
The fourth wall was crumbled and
would need to be new.
The process would be slow but the
reward would be mine,
For with courage and strength,
I'm rebuilding my family –

Project PONY
ONE BRICK AT A TIME

By Elizabeth Neview

The Project to Protect Our Native Young (PONY) was developed to offer services to the non-offending caregiver of children alleged to be abused. The program is funded by a grant from the Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau – Child Abuse Prevention (CB-CAP) programs.

Studies show that non-offending parents of children who are sexually abused suffer distress when the abuse is discovered. Studies also show mother of sexually abused children experience greater levels of depression than mothers whose children are not abused.

It is known that an abused child's ability to cope with being victimized depends upon the caregiver's response to the discovery of abuse. It is also known that psychological stress can affect a parent's ability to provide the type of support that is needed to decrease the negative effects of abuse upon a child. Thus, it is very important to provide an opportunity for the non-offending caregiver to work through their concerns about the abuse event. Then they can be well prepared to support their child effectively with abuse-related issues.

The supporters of Project PONY recognize that in the Choctaw community, physical and sexual abuse indicates a need for interventions with a family. Therefore, the educational and support services provided by Project PONY are offered to any family impacted by any type of child abuse.

Project PONY Curriculum

- Week 1: "One Brick at a Time"
(Introduction to the program)
- Week 2: "The Healing Journey"
(Speaker – Non-offending parent)
- Week 3: "The Path Begins Here"
(Speaker – Survivor)
- Week 4: "Stretch Marks on my Sanity"
(Self care – NOC needs)
- Week 5: "Bring in the Mop!"
(Crisis-Stress management)
- Week 6: Open
(Or Alternate Activity)
- Week 7: "Recipe for a Healthy Child"
(Child Development/Discipline)
- Week 8: "It Takes a Village"
(Sex Offender Dynamics)
- Week 9: "How the Snake Acquired their
(Sex Offender Dynamics)
- Week 10: "Protectors of the Village"
(Criminal investigations)
- Week 11: "Protecting the Gift"
(Healthy Relationships)
- Week 12: "It's a celebration!"
(Family Day/Night Activities)