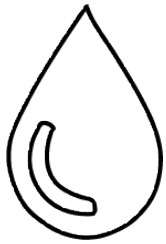
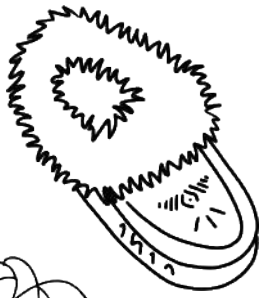
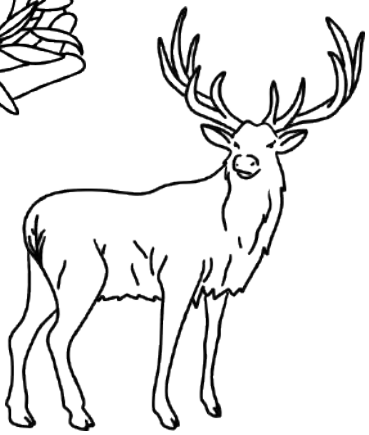
Pathfinding Towards a Flourishing Future

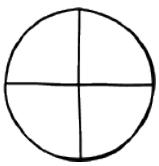
Awareness and Advocacy Guide:

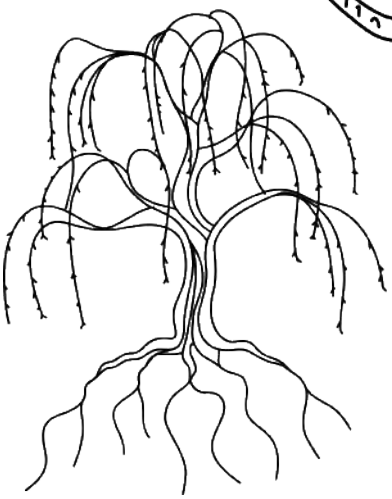
Addressing the Need for Improved Services for Indigenous Children and Youth, Including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People

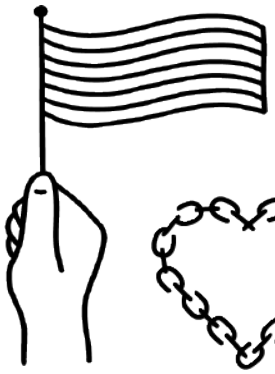












“The answers are in our heart and memory”
– Knowledge Sharing Session Participant

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Section 1: Background Information

Welcoming Remarks

We welcome you to read this Guide in whatever order is most beneficial for you. We have broken down this Guide into multiple Sections to make it easier for you to explore, as outlined in the **Table of Contents**.

Important Note

The research and information gathered to create this guide was meaningful, but not comprehensive to truly reflect all the distinct experiences of diverse Indigenous peoples in Canada. This is due to time constraints and limitations outlined deeper in this guide. This guide should be seen as a building block toward improving services and supports to Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. It is necessary that further consultation and engagement with Indigenous communities and services providers is completed to ensure true positive, meaningful, and sustainable changes are realized. Therefore, we stress the importance of continuing discussions with Indigenous communities and regions to foster a more complete regionally representative understanding of the unique and distinct needs and experiences of diverse Indigenous peoples across the country. Therefore, it is important to recognize this guide as a living document and future contributions should be welcomed to expand on the knowledge and insight held sacredly within it and extend its reach.

Acknowledgement

Our Team acknowledges the unceded, unsurrendered territories of the Indigenous people in what we now know as Canada. We recognize and honour the sacred relationships that have existed among the Indigenous people of this land since time immemorial.

Disclaimer – Protect Your Spirit

Some of the contents of this Guide may be hard to read or may cause various emotional responses, including negative feelings. This can be especially true for those impacted by colonization, residential schools, and intergenerational trauma, or trauma of any kind. We encourage you to take care of your spirit in ways that are meaningful to you and to reach out for support if needed.

If you are unsure of where to go for support, please refer to We Matter's Toolkit for Indigenous Youth, which can be requested here: https://wemattercampaign.org/toolkits/youth.

You may also refer to the developed Directory of Resources, Supports, and Services for Indigenous Youth released with this report for more information on available resources and supports for Indigenous youth. It can be found here: https://wemattercampaign.org/get-help.

Glossary

The following terms are used throughout this Guide. We have described their explanation below to further assist your understanding of the contents of this Guide.

2SLGBTQQIA+: 2SLGBTQQIA+ - 2-Spirit (Two-Spirit), lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual. The + where used denotes the diversity of remaining identities not covered in the acronym[1].

Wise Practices: Acknowledging that there are different criteria in defining Best Practices, wise practices are defined as locally-appropriate actions, tools, principles or decisions that contribute significantly to the development of sustainable and equitable social conditions[2].

Colonization: The process of assuming control of someone else's territory and applying one's own systems of law, government, and religion[3].

Compassionate Care: commonly referred to in health care but can be applied to any service provision, it is an approach to providing support that emphasizes the importance of empathy, true concern, compassion, and respect individuals[4].

Dimensions of Wellness: as defined by Knowledge Sharing Session participants, this includes Culture, Balance, Purpose, Identity & Belonging, Physical Wellness, Mental Wellness, Spiritual Wellness, Environmental Wellness, Occupational Wellness, Social Wellness, Financial Wellness, and Safety[5].

Empowering: an approach to providing support that understands how oppression impacts an individual's power over their lives and places importance in strategies that help them overcome systemic oppression and related barriers[6].

Harm Reduction: an approach to working with people that involves working with people without judgement, meeting them where they are at, and not requiring them to stop using substances as a precondition to receiving support[7].

Institution: refers to any organization or social structure designed to govern a field of action, such as education, healthcare, and legal systems[8].

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[1] https://mmiwg2splus-nationalactionplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2SLGBTQQIA-Report-Final.pdf
[2] Best Practices in Aboriginal Community Development: A Literature Review and Wise Practices Approach (2010). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259176947_Best_Practices_in_Aboriginal_Community_Development_A_Literature_Review_and_Wise_Practices_Approach
[3] https://www.facinghistory.org/en-ca/resource-library/stolen-lives-indigenous-peoples-canada-indian-residential-schools-0
[4] https://www.aacnnursing.org/5B-Tool-Kit/Themes/Compassionate-Care
[5] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[6] https://onlinesocialwork.vcu.edu/blog/empowerment-theory-in-social-work/
[7] https://www.hri.global/what-is-harm-reduction
[8] https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/social-institutions/

Methodology: the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic[9].

Programming: refers to organized work aimed to improve or advance the social conditions of a community or group of people[10].

Residential School System: Among colonial policies… the residential school system was intended to eradicate the language, cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs of Indigenous children in order to assimilate them into the Canadian society[11].

Resource: refers to any support or assistance available to people and provided by different groups, organizations, and agencies[12].

Services: aid, help, or assistance provided by an individual, group, or organization usually in the area of social, health, or cultural services[13].

Strength-based: an approach to working with people that is grounded in social work, but can be applied to a variety of settings, where the focus is on the individual's strengths, and viewing them and resilient and resourceful. It involves taking a client-led approach to care and promoting individuals to see their own value and ability to make change in their lives[14].

Support: providing assistance – support can encompass assistance in a wide range of emotional, social, material, health, and wellness areas[15].

Systemic: when something affects or involves the whole system in a society. For example, systemic racism refers to the way racism is embedded in every level of various institutions and creates a system of oppression and inequity[16].

Trauma-informed: a care approach that recognizes, considers, and understands the impacts of trauma, especially that related to the impacts of colonization of the Indigenous people of Turtle Island, and ensures individuals are provided support in a way that promotes healing and prevents re-traumatization and re-victimization of individuals[17].

Wellbeing: the necessary balance among the different areas of wellness that help us live a good life, whatever that looks like to us.[18]

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[9] https://libguides.wits.ac.za/c.php?g=693518&p=4914913
[10] https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Social+service+program
[11] https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-017-0055-6
[12] https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/social-resources
[13] www.britannica/com/topic/social-service
[14] https://info.nicic.gov/sites/default/files/Strength-Based%20Approach.pdf
[15] www.cmha.ca/brochure/social-support/
[16] https://vpfo.ubc.ca/2021/03/systemic-racism-what-it-looks-like-in-canada-and-how-to-fight-it/
[17] https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/social-research/institutes-centers/institute-on-trauma-and-trauma-informed-care/what-is-trauma-informed-care.html
[18] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Wholistic Wellness: term used to describe and acknowledge the way these dimensions of wellness interact and interconnect to promote an overall state of wellbeing[19].

[19] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Section 2: Introduction

What is We Matter?

We Matter is an Indigenous youth-led and nationally registered organization dedicated to Indigenous youth support, hope and life promotion.

Our work started with the We Matter Campaign – a national multi-media campaign in which Indigenous role models, youth, and community members from across Canada submit short videos, written and artistic messages sharing their own experiences of overcoming hardships, and communicating with Indigenous youth that no matter how hopeless life can feel, there is always a way forward.

Suicide rates for Indigenous youth are several times higher than that of other Canadians, as well as rates for challenges like addiction, abuse, and school drop outs. We believe this doesn't have to be the case.

Our mission is to communicate to Indigenous youth that they matter, and create spaces of support for those going through a hard time while fostering unity and resiliency. We provide a forum for people across the country to share messages of hope and positivity. By sharing our stories, our words of encouragement, and our authentic messages of hope and resilience, we help to make a community and nation stronger.

Through our national projects and programs, We Matter:

- Connects Indigenous youth with positive messages of hope, culture, strength, healing, mental health and life promotion
- Gathers, connects, and amplifies Indigenous and Indigenous youth voices and stories
- Creates space and opportunity for Canadians to celebrate and honour the voices and experiences of Indigenous youth
- Creates and distributes materials and resources designed to encourage and support Indigenous youth and those who work with Indigenous youth
- Builds Indigenous youth capacity in schools and communities by helping to implement Indigenous youth-led initiatives and enabling peer-to-peer support[20]

[20] https://wemattercampaign.org/what-is-we-matter

Why Is This Guide Important?

We Matter Perspectives

"I think this guide is important to raise conversation and cause reaction with action to the topics discussed. It is important to keep giving a voice to those who do not feel heard properly. Every year brings new challenges and changes, if we as a society hope to improve the outcomes and "statistics" of this, we must find the grace to recognize what calls to be improved, effectively.

– Stephanie Landherr, Co-Contributor

As an Indigenous youth-led organization it is important that we continuously engage with and listen to the voices of those that we serve. In creating this guide we've had engaging discussions using real-life experiences and diverse perspectives. We plan to continue conversations to continuously identify and close gaps in care. Youth want a space where they can openly discuss current issues and feel they are truly being heard without judgment. We Matter aims to create this space for Indigenous youth.

This guide will Identify beneficial qualities and educational requirements for support workers. This guide will strengthen kinship using wholistic systems in care. It will build a strong, full circle support mechanisms and reliable networks for youth. This guide will serve as a tool to support youth through different life transition periods.

Understanding where the gaps and barriers to accessing effective support will assist us in reframing our existing programming. It will allow us to develop additional programming that will improve our reach and effectiveness. This guide will further help us to strategize mobilization efforts with other partners and organizations.

- Lisa Neault, Co-Contributor

How to Get Involved

Whether you are an Indigenous youth, community member, ally, organization or business, there are so many ways to help share hope, culture and strength.

For more information, please visit https://wemattercampaign.org/get-involved.

Ambassador of Hope Program

Ambassadors of Hope are Indigenous youth ages 16-26 who share messages of hope, culture and strength within their own community and surrounding region. With support from the We Matter team, they deliver presentations on hardship, hope, and healing across schools and communities. They live by example in order to inspire and connect with other Indigenous youth, break mental health and suicide stigma, and promote healthy communities[21]. For more information, visit https://wemattercampaign.org/activities/ambassadors-of-hope.

Annual reviews of this guide will be conducted and we hope that your feedback will improve this guide over time. We welcome you to send any comments/questions to us at info@wemattercampaign.org and subscribe to our newsletter.

[21] https://wemattercampaign.org/activities/ambassadors-of-hope

History and Context

> "Indigenous youth often face similar challenges, no matter where they are. Colonization and Residential Schools have taken many things away from Indigenous communities, including culture, language, family bonds, and traditional values, creating deep hurt and disconnection. There is no easy solution to this – but what helps is education, validation, persistence, consistency, gentle love, and culturally relevant support.
>
> It's important to let youth know that many of the things they are experiencing are not their fault. There is a larger structure and system which has created pain, hurt, and dysfunction. This pain, hurt and dysfunction is sometimes passed down from generation to generation within a family and community – this is known as intergenerational trauma". [22]

The intergenerational trauma and impacts caused by the Canadian residential school system and colonization have been clearly documented[23]. It is important to acknowledge that the harms perpetuated in the residential school system have persisted and are observed in the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in the child welfare system[24]. According to the 2016 Census, 52.2% of children in foster care are Indigenous, but they only account for 7.7% of the child population in Canada[25].

[22] https://wemattercampaign.org/toolkits/support-workers

[23] Please see examples: Bombay et al, "Suicidal Thoughts and Attempts in First Nations Communities : Links to Parental Indian Residential School Attendance across Development," Journal of Development Origins of Health and Disease, May 6, 2018; Bombay, Matheson & Anisman, "The intergenerationl effects of Indian Residential Schools: Implications for the Concept of historical trauma," Transcultural Psychiatry, Vol 51(3), May 22, 2014; McQuaid, Bombay, Arilla, McInnis, Humeny, Matheson & Anisman, "Suicide Ideation and Attempts among First Nations Peoples Living On-Reserve in Canada: The Intergenerational and Cumulative Effects of Indian Residential Schools," The Canadian Journal of Pscyhiatry, 2017; and Bombay, Matheson & Anisman, "The impacts of stressors on second generation Indian residential school survivors," Transcultural Psychiatry, 48(4) 2011.

[24] Please see examples: First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada et al. v Canada (AG), 2016 CHRT 2; First Nations Child and Family Services Joint National Policy Review, Final report, June 2000, by Dr. Rose-Alma J. MacDonald, Dr. Peter Ladd et al; Loxley, Wien and Blackstock "Bridging Econometrics and First Nations Child and Family Service Agency Funding: Phase One Report', Dec 2004; First Nations Caring Society of Canada, "Wen-De, We Are Coming to the Light of Day," 2005; Loxley, DeRiviere, Prakash, Blackstock, Wien and Thomas Prokop, "Wen-De The Journey Continues, The National Policy Reivew on First Nations Child and Family Services Research Project: Phase 3, " 2005; Rose-Alma, McDonald, Ladd et al. "First Nations Child and Family Services Joint National Policy Review, Final Report, June 2000; 2008 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons, Chapter 4: First Nations Child and Family Services Program – Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; and 2011 June Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada, Chapter 4 – Programs for First Nations on Reserves.

[25] Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care, Government of Canada, online: https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1541187352297/1541187392851

Over the past couple of years, several states of emergency have been declared in First Nations communities due to the rise in suicides[26]. Therefore, there is clearly a direct impact of intergenerational trauma from colonization and the residential school system on Indigenous youth, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.

Conclusively, there is a dire need to improve supports and services for Indigenous children, youth, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people to ensure their well-being. The impacts of colonization have impacted us all. By uplifting and addressing the needs of Indigenous youth, we bring healing to our communities as a whole. We urge you learn more about the impacts of colonization in Canada and to become personally involved in reconciliation efforts and activities in your community.

Helpful links:

- Orange Shirt Society: https://www.orangeshirtday.org/orange-shirt-society.html
- National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: https://nctr.ca/records/reports/
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/
- Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada: https://www.portageandmainpress.com/Books/I/Indigenous-Writes

[26] Please see for Tataskweyak Cree Nation - https://globalnews.ca/news/8027784/tataskweyak-state-of-emergency/; Shamattawa First Nation -https://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/we-are-currently-facing-a-suicide-crisis-shamattawa-first-nation-declares-state-of-emergency-1.5433605; Wapekeka First Nation - https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40376644; Attawapiskat First Nation - https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/11/state-of-emergency-declared-over-suicide-epidemic-in-canadas-first-nation-commu nity; Sioux Valley Dakota First Nation - https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/sioux-valley-dakota-nation-suicides-state-of-emergency-1.5758782; Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation -https://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/state-of-emergency-declared-on-makwa-sahgaiehcan-first-nation-after-suicides-attempt s; Kumar M, & Tjepkema, M., "Suicide among First Nations people, Métis and Inuit (2011-2016): Findings from the 2011 Canadian Census Health and Environment Cohort" June 28, 2019 online: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/99-011-x/99-011-x2019001-eng.pdf?st=AVMNOs-q.

Purpose

This Advocacy and Awareness Guide was developed by We Matter to truly improve the awareness, access, and quality of supports for Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, and to empower service providers and others who work with Indigenous children and youth. Through collaboration with Indigenous researchers, youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and service providers who work with Indigenous youth, we have created this Guide to be used as a learning tool for service providers, policy makers, and any others whose work impacts the lives of Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. The purpose of the Guide is to share the knowledge gathered through this project. That said, it is important to acknowledge that wisdom is not stagnant and that this Guide is a living document that will embrace and welcome future contributions.

In development of this Awareness and Advocacy Guide, an initial assessment of gaps, barriers, best practices, and needs related to supports and services for Indigenous children, youth and 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people was conducted. To complement the research, Knowledge Sharing Sessions were held to consult and engage with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, children, youth, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, as well as key stakeholders, service providers, and support workers who work with Indigenous children and youth, to foster a better overall understanding of the gaps, barriers, best practices, and needs.

In summary, this Guide seeks to capture a picture of the needs, gaps, barriers, and best practices in supports and services for Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. The hope is that this Guide can be used as a tool to raise awareness and effectively advocate for improved supports and services available to Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.

Moreover, to increase the impact and effectiveness of this Guide, we endeavor to create a communication strategy and work towards making the knowledge contained in these pages more accessible by creating different formats and ways to share the information. To ensure information from the Guide can be utilized in a practical, relevant, and hands-on way, workshops must be created.

How to Use this Guide?

This Awareness and Advocacy Guide was developed by We Matter to improve awareness, access, and quality of supports available to Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, across Canada. We stress the importance of facilitating discussions in your community and region to support a more representative and wholesome understanding.

As a Service Provider, policy maker, government representative, or anyone who works with Indigenous children and youth, you can use this Guide as a learning tool to:

- Inform, guide, and improve your activities and behaviours when working with Indigenous youth and other service providers, and in making decisions that impact resources, supports, and services available to Indigenous children and youth
- Broaden your knowledge about types of resources, supports, and services available to Indigenous youth
- Support youth in advocating for and to access services that wholistically meet their wellness needs
- Advocate for the improvement of resources, supports, and services for Indigenous children and youth
- Start conversations and build relationships to support the creation of networks of individuals and communities committed to improving services for Indigenous children and youth
- Gain knowledge and self-reflect to breakdown biases and to work towards a more harmonious, collaborative society

As an Indigenous youth in Canada, you can use this Guide as a tool to:

- Become more aware of what resources, supports, and services available in your community, region, and across Canada
- Support your own advocacy in accessing resources, supports, and services – it can be used as a tool to inform and educate others and yourself
- As a research tool that contains the voices of Indigenous youth to validate your experiences when informing others of your needs for specific supports and services
- Start conversations and build relationships to support the creation of networks of individuals and communities committed to improving services for Indigenous children and youth
- Gain knowledge to overcome barriers and to work towards a more harmonious, collaborative society

Guidance Boxes

Throughout this Guide, you will notice that after certain sections, we have included "Guidance Boxes" that discuss how the information can be used by different groups of people, such as Indigenous youth, service providers, decision makers, and all Canadians.

We hope these Guidance Boxes are useful for you in understanding how this information can be applied to actively improve supports and services for Indigenous youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. It is important to note that the guidance boxes do not list all the ways the information can be used, and are meant to be a starting point for conversation and action.

Sometimes the Guidance Box suggests to use this information as a starting point in learning more about specific topics or issues. In this case, we have linked some important resources which will help you to broaden your understanding of the topic or issue at hand.

Example:

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

By service providers…

By decision makers…

By all Canadians…

Creating Safe Cultural Spaces

Knowledge Sharing Sessions were held in groups of different demographics of Indigenous youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, to promote a sense of safety and relatability with other participants to ensure meaningful participation. In addition to recognizing the need for safe spaces, we also wanted to create opportunity for networking and dialogue to occur across people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives to foster intergenerational learning.

Strengths-based, trauma-informed, and empowering, inclusive, compassionate care approaches were used by facilitators during the Knowledge Sharing Sessions and wellness supports were present to support the participants should they require. Sessions were opened in a good way with a prayer and ended with a grounding session. Participants were made aware that the sessions were voluntary, and that if at any time they no longer wanted to participate, they could leave without fallout or adversity.

All participants were provided an honorarium for their time. Participants were also provided with thank you gifts that included self-care items such as writing tools, traditional medicines, a water bottle, a grounding stone, candle, and a We Matter resource card.

Facilitator's Wisdom

Community Arts Facilitation is a strength-based approach that invites participants to communicate through games, imagination, and movement in order to share stories and thoughts across their different social locations. The use of the arts in community work provides a space for stories and opinions to co-exist, rather than compete. The arts create an atmosphere of depth, nuance, and fun. A strength-based approach honours all contributions and creates the conditions for transformative change.

"I learned my community facilitation style mainly from my mother, Venetia Chaney. As a young immigrant from India, she connected with her neighbours by organizing summer block parties and winter parties, tea parties for children and stuffed toys, where there were bonfires and races, games and prizes. My mother has a gift for seeing the beauty in everything around her and making people feel loved and acknowledged. Those parties and gatherings are the heart of my style. Working towards moments of sparkling joy, of remembrance of our blessings, and of celebrating together. My grandparents, Victoria and Edwin D'Souza, lived in a family village in Saligao, Goa where neighbourly drop ins and evening music are very common. This informality, but with a guiding song or theme, is also an important aspect of my group work.

My mother also spent many years working as a recruitment officer for nurses in remote and rural nursing stations for First Nation Inuit Health department of Health Canada Ontario branch. There she learned a lot about the often abject conditions and neglect of First Nations communities at the hands of the federal health care system, and the challenges particularly facing remote and rural Indigenous communities. She was also exposed to the solidarity, survival and richness of culture in these communities. My mother's involvement in advocacy and improvement within that department was a very important learning environment for me as a young person."

– Nadia Chaney, Knowledge Sharing Session Facilitator

Wellness and Cultural Support

"As for my approach to wellness support, it is simple: be authentic and honest. Show up, exactly as I am, indicate to those I am in [virtual] circle that this is a safe space through role modelling, actively listening, affirming the knowledge shared with me and observing with humility. The youth are the "doctors" and have the answers. They more than anyone else know what is needed. I do not have the answers, therefore my role is to truly listen and be a student."

- River Petapun Johnson, Wellness Support

"As a helper, I am gifted a highly esteemed honour to hold space for the generation following me. The youth are my equals and as those before me had done in my own youth, I too have a responsibility to protect and nurture them. "Things I practiced and preached during these sessions include leading with kindness and an open mind. There is so much to everyone's individual stories, it is only fair to listen when one's story is being shared. I found in my different fields of work being authentic and wholesome is always the best practice. I chose to be attentive, reactive, responsive when required in a light and loving manner, for these topics can be heavy as it holds, and one of my gifts is to smile so others can too, or at least share a laugh for others to feel some light in darker times."

- Stephanie Landherr, Wellness Support

"In my work as a wellness supporter, it is important to me to break down barriers that make people feel alone, and separated from community. Being aware of power dynamics so that I can diffuse and redistribute the power I may inherently hold within a space to the participants is central to making safe(r) spaces for youth in a group setting. Active listening, uplifting what people bring into the space, allowing people to show up just as they are and meeting them where they are at, and centering the humanness of the group and each individual, are just some examples of how I aim to create a welcoming and supportive space. We are often told how to be in this world, and that how we are is wrong. So when I work 1on1 with anyone, they guide the process… think of those choose your own adventure books and the central story being supporting their wellness in that moment. I aim to honour people's natural humanity and gifts, and celebrate their contributions, to reflect their beauty back to them. And when people are having a hard time, listening and holding space for them to be just as they are helps them to discover their own path through the storm, I'm just there to help them navigate the storm or learn a new tool to help them get to calmer waters. That way not only are they supported in the moment, but hopefully they've gained something they can take with them in life as well."

- Chelsea Mulvale, Wellness Support

A Kinship of Mentors, Pathfinders, and Carriers of Youth Wisdom

To truly reflect the collaborative space created and the relationships build through this project, we have decided to call our project team a Kinship of Mentors, Pathfinders, and Carriers of Youth Wisdom. For us, this recognizes the significance of our own wisdom as Indigenous youth and mentors, the way we support one another in mentorship/mentee roles to advance our skills, learn, and grow, and how we have come together collaboratively to work toward meaningful change and improved ways, or paths, of supporting Indigenous youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. For efficiency, we often used the term Kinship in place of our above chosen project team name.

Guide Co-Creators

Project Lead: Shelby Thomas

Shelby Thomas is a lawyer with Dutch, Polish, and Métis ancestry, she has a strong background in advocacy who is passionate about ensuring equity and inclusion for Indigenous children and youth. She is a skilled researcher who is known for taking a trauma-informed, empowering, compassionate care, people-centered approach in all the work she does. Shelby has extensive experience assisting in Indigenous-led community-based projects and working with Indigenous organizations, particularly in the areas of youth and gender-based violence. Shelby previously served the community as a youth worker for six years and has worked on various high-profile public inquiries as commission counsel, including the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Shelby currently shares her skills as the Research Manager for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

Youth Researcher: Jenny Lay

Jenny Lay is a First Nations youth from Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation who uses her valuable life experiences as a tool to empower others and to advocate across many spheres. She has served on various boards and has presented nationally and internationally on topics relating to Indigenous youth mental health, violence against Indigenous women and girls, Canada's youth social protection systems, and Indigenous people with disabilities. As an impacted MMIWG2S+ family member, she has used her voice and expertise to make change for children left behind by violence and to guide her in her previous work with families of MMIWG2S+ and survivors of gender-based violence. Jenny has an educational background in psychology and mental health, event coordination, project management, and graphic design. She currently works with various organizations as a consultant and has recently launched her own promotions and consulting company.

Guide Co-Contributors

Facilitator: Nadia Chaney

Nadia Chaney is a South Asian (Indian) settler born on Treaty 6 territory, currently living in Tio:tia'ke. She has been a community arts facilitator for over twenty years, and in that time has hosted well over two thousand events, conferences, festivals and workshops. Nadia has worked in many different parts of the world supporting communities and frontline community workers in using the arts to build stronger relationships. She has a master's degree in Imaginative Education and a certificate of advanced graduate studies in Expressive Arts Therapy. She has an active personal practice as an artist, mostly in poetry and painting. For more details visit www.nadiachaney.com.

We Matter Mentor: Lisa Neault

Lisa was born and raised in the North End of Winnipeg, MB and is a citizen of the Metis Nation. Growing up Lisa was surrounded by foster and adopted cousins, providing early insight into what it was like for youth in care. At the age of 17 Lisa's first independent volunteer experience was mentoring Indigenous adults working on completing their high school diploma at Neeginan Centre. After having her first child Lisa moved to Nova Scotia to raise her family. Starting a new job in the financial field Lisa's career quickly progressed from financial services representative to Director of Operations for a Wealth Management firm. Lisa joined the We Matter team uplifting her knowledge of financial wellness to the organization and the youth they serve. Lisa is a continuous learner and holds certificates in Business Management, Indigenous asset based community development, and fundraising management. Various Elders and Knowledge keepers have contributed to Lisa's understanding of Indigegogy and personal wellness and Lisa is forever grateful for their teachings and continued support.

We Matter Wellness Support: Stephanie Landherr

Stephanie identifies as a First Nations from Treaty 5 Territory with a mix of spicy Italian. She began her journey working with youth in many areas of the field and off the field. Starting in Making Education Work Programs and in a Youth Aboriginal Council. Fresh from High school she began working in roles as a Youth Care Practitioner, Outreach Worker, Mentor and Mobile Crisis Response Worker. During the course of these roles she also earned several trainings (Suicide Prevention & Intervention, Non-violent Crisis, Mental Health First Aid Training, Fundamentals of Addiction Training) and two years of Business Administrations. Stephanie finds beauty in all forms of artistic expression and loves making mundane things exciting.

"We often get caught up being busy, we forget it's the smallest moments that create the biggest impacts." **– Stephanie Landherr**

Wellness Support: River Petapun Johnson

River Petapun Johnson is a Two Spirit (Moshikahan), Transgender-roles man of both Métis and diverse European ancestry, born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba - Treaty 1 Territory and homeland of the Métis Nation. Throughout his professional career, he has focused his efforts on serving Indigenous communities, gender & sexually diverse peoples and has made contributions to address race, ethnicity and gender-based issues such as domestic/family violence, women's health and empowerment, youth suicide prevention, addictions, poverty, crisis response and mitigation, MMIWG2S and 2SLGTQQIA+ advocacy, intergenerational complex and compound trauma work. River has received his greatest education from the stories and lived experiences of people he lives among, services, and meets along his journey; the sacred law of Wahkotowin being at the epicentre of his guiding principles.

Wellness Support: Chelsea Mulvale

Chelsea Mulvale was born to their father who is Irish and Norwegian and their mother who is mixed European with unknown First Nations lineage undergoing ongoing research. They grew up in central Ontario, later residing in southern Ontario - lands governed by the Williams treaties and the Upper Canada Land Surrenders. Their life path also brought them to their ceremonial and adoptive families in Peguis First Nation, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, and currently resides in Treaty 5 Territory. Chelsea has acquired education in topics of Civic Engagement and Global Citizenship, Adult Education and Community Development, Leadership and Management, Indigenous Trauma-Informed Care, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, and Political Systems and Organizational Change; and highlights that this simply compliments their greatest education which comes from lived experience and experiencing life with others. Chelsea is a facilitator and one-on-one mentor experienced in working with youth and adults in the areas of higher education, sexual and gender diversity, personal development and holistic wellbeing. Through their professional work Chelsea has focused their efforts on supporting and uplifting various communities directly affected by systemic oppression and colonization. They also advocate for change in the systems that cause harm.

Knowledge Keepers of Guide

Our Project Team would like to thank all the service providers who participated in this project, either through direct contributions or providing support to the youth and our team. We hope that your participation sparked hope and inspired you to continue your respected work with Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.

We also want to thank the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who shared their many gifts, traditions, stories, teachings, and learnings with us. We will carry all that you shared forward and will always remember to extend the kindness you shared with us to others.

Most importantly, we would like to acknowledge and thank all the youth who contributed to this project, including youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing or Verification Sessions, provided written submissions, or provided feedback on the developed Guide. This work is for you. We are truly inspired by your courage, resilience, and commitment and motivation to make change for yourself, your peers, and your community.

We Really Do Matter: Demographics of Indigenous Youth in Canada

Based on a study of youth in Canada released in 2021, we can understand the following about Indigenous youth in Canada:

- Currently, Indigenous youth aged 15-24 make up more than one sixth of the total Indigenous population.
- By 2041, it is projected that the Indigenous population in Canada could reach between 2.5 and 3.2 million persons.
- Young people aged 15 to 24 make up a larger proportion of the Indigenous population (17%) than the non-Indigenous population (12%).
- The share of youth who are Indigenous varies significantly by region. For example, while less than one in 20 youth in Ontario are Indigenous, in both Manitoba and Saskatchewan, that proportion is almost one in four.
- And while the Indigenous population is projected to age at a faster rate than the non-Indigenous- population, it is expected that the Indigenous population will remain younger, and that youth will make up a larger share of the population into the coming decades.[27]

Indigenous youth in Canada are a large, fast-growing population. The Knowledge Sharing Session discussions with youth solidified our belief that they are the true experts and that they have a strong understanding of what is needed for us all to live good lives. As those in positions to care for and make decisions that impact youth, we need to be open to understanding their experiences and learning the best ways to support them. They already have the solutions, we just need to listen to them.

"Our community does have to take a stance and we have to look, you know, to our elders, our youth, and remember that they are the next you know, they are the next seven generations... like look more at than just who we are ourselves, and understand the dynamics that our children are growing up in right now."

- Knowledge Sharing Session participant

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[27] https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/42-28-0001/2021001/article/00004-eng.pdf?st=-O_izqbA

Coming Together in Collaboration for a Better Future

A significant hope for the outcome of this work is that we come together to continue the relationship building, networking, and connection that took place during the Knowledge Sharing Sessions. We hope this project creates a ripple effect in the initiative to connect with one another in our communities, regions, and across the country. Connection proved to be one of the most valuable tools in this project and it was reiterated by Knowledge Sharing Session participants that collaboration is so necessary to improve services for Indigenous children and youth. We need to collectively work together and move forward toward a better future for us all.

"Many First Nations have historical relationships of cultural exchange that have been fractured by the colonial state. These networks are a step, amongst many, to rebuild that solidarity and allow diverse participants from First Nations across so-called Canada to see the repetitive destructive patterns of colonial logic and build strategic alliances and a space for communication and community care.

It was so moving to witness people from very different communities, ages and backgrounds building connections and alliances. The stories were personal and specific but there were so many similarities. Overall, I was struck by an easiness amongst participants, a kind of gentle humility and willingness to listen empathically. I believe this was the nature of the question, 'what would help the youth to thrive?' It brought out a tenderness, a togetherness and a shared sense of urgency. There was power in the listening and there was power in the sharing. In my experience, as we build trust through storytelling and deep listening, a network gains a sense of its own self...and new possibilities emerge. I'm looking forward to what grows as these relationships grow."

– Nadia Chaney, Co-Contributor

“Networking is a crucial part to growth, we must learn and adapt together. Sharing networks is how we build stronger foundations for something like our Knowledge Sharing Sessions. Contributing ideas, values and beliefs on certain topics may be tricky for some, but the objectives are always true. That we want for our next generations not to stumble into the turmoil of toxic cycles and broken patterns. Therefore, by providing a larger amount of networks that have the same objectives or connecting with individuals who share a similar vision is a best practice to those goals.

‘To truly understand one's journey in this life, we must also Respect and Honour the other journeys around us. If you do not understand what it is to walk in another's shoes, then may you learn from their steps’ – I chose this quote, because it is in these Knowledge Sharing Sessions we hear, see, and learn that all voices are important, all stories are important and unapologetically unique. Yet, in adversities we still join to share a space of understanding that we each hold our own special value and that in itself is important.”

– Stephanie Landherr, Co-Contributor

Section 3: What is Wellness?

Wellbeing

For the purpose of the Knowledge Sharing Sessions, we defined wellbeing as the necessary balance among the different areas of wellness that help us live a good life, whatever that looks like to us.[28][29]

Wellbeing is the quality of being in a balanced, healthy state across many possible various dimensions of wellness, including but limited to:

- Physical Wellness
- Spiritual Wellness
- Mental/ Intellectual Wellness
- Mental/ Emotional Wellness
- Financial Wellness
- Environmental Wellness
- Occupational Wellness
- Social Wellness[30]

When considering the various dimensions of wellness, we have used the term wholistic wellness to describe and acknowledge the way these dimensions of wellness interact and interconnect to promote an overall state of wellbeing[31].

For the purpose of this project, each of the above dimensions have been defined and described through research and through discussion with Knowledge Sharing Session participants. These descriptions can be found below.

Wellness as Defined by Knowledge Sharing Session Participants

The Knowledge Sharing Sessions provided us with the opportunity to hear from Indigenous youth, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, and service providers on their beliefs and ideas around the concept of wellness. These valuable discussions allowed us to further expand our understanding of wellness and how Indigenous children and youth achieve a sense of wellbeing through the access of resources, supports, and services. This is important because to truly meet the needs of Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, we must understand what those needs are from their perspective.

[28] https://cyfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Growing-Wellness-Activity_Guide_DIGITAL_FILE.pdf
[29] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[30] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5508938/
[31] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5508938/

Throughout the discussions across the different sessions, many themes of wellness emerged, including:

- Culture
- Balance
- Purpose, Identity & Belonging
- Physical Wellness
- Mental Wellness
- Spiritual Wellness
- Environmental Wellness
- Occupational Wellness
- Social Wellness
- Financial Wellness
- Safety[32]

The discussions of wellness as related to the above overarching themes proved to be extremely valuable in expanding our knowledge of the dimensions of wellness as understood by Indigenous youth.

Culture

Culture was consistently described as an overarching theme in all aspect of wellness for Knowledge Sharing Session participants. For them, culture wellness encompassed being grounded in a wide variety of distinct Indigenous worldviews, practices, beliefs, customs, and traditions, and activities, including speaking traditional languages. Knowledge Sharing Session participants consistently reiterated the need for the application of a cultural lens in all aspects of wellbeing.[33]

Balance

A common theme throughout many wellness models and in our discussion with Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the necessity of balance across the various aspects or dimensions of wellness.[34] This balance was often reflected in participants' reference to the medicine wheel and the necessary balance between the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional.[35]

The medicine wheel offers a descriptive model of wellness that can be understood in relation to all things. It includes traditional teachings and wisdom that provides a wholistic understanding of life itself.[36]

[32] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/47727829_Developing_A_Holistic_Wellness_Model
[33] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[34] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/47727829_Developing_A_Holistic_Wellness_Model
[35] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[36] https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/189286/pages/understanding-holistic-wellness-through-the-medicine-wheel

Knowledge Sharing Sessions participants further expanded on the importance of balance as it relates to wellness by acknowledging the importance of balance in everything in our world and universe, including all living things, events, etc.[37]

Purpose, Identity, & Belonging

Purpose, Identity, and Belonging were commonly mentioned throughout the Knowledge Sharing Sessions when discussing concepts of wellness[38]. These concepts are also reflected in the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum, a complex model designed to support First Nations mental wellness. According to this model, Mental wellness is a balance of the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional. This balance is enriched as individuals have: purpose in their daily lives whether it is through education, employment, care-giving activities, or cultural ways of being and doing; hope for their future and those of their families that is grounded in a sense of identity, unique Indigenous values, and having a belief in spirit; a sense of belonging and connectedness within their families, to community, and to culture; and finally a sense of meaning and an understanding of how their lives and those of their families and communities are part of creation and a rich history**"**.[39]

Safety

Safety is paramount to achieving a sense of wellness for Indigenous youth, as youth often mentioned needing the safe space to conduct many of the activities that provide them with a sense of wellbeing. Feeling safe is not only connected to the physical space, but it also encompasses the perceived safety of the situation or environment.[40]

Physical Wellness

Physical wellness was described by Knowledge Sharing Session participants through a variety of physical senses and activities. Key aspects of physical wellness as described by participants include being well rested, physically active, nutritionally cared for, having a safe home, a sense of cleanliness, access to clean water, and feeling a general sense of physical wellbeing.[41]

Spiritual Wellness

Knowledge Sharing Session participants described spiritual wellness as encompassing a wide variety of personal, religious, spiritual, and cultural practices, activities, and ceremonies that helped to feel a sense of inner peace, spiritual guidance, and comfort. Some participants described this as "taking care of your spirit". Many participants also

[37] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[38] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[39] https://thunderbirdpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/24-14-1273-FN-Mental-Wellness-Summary-EN03_low.pdf
[40] https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/meaningful-life/feeling-safe-stable-and-secure/feeling-safe-stable-and-secure
[41] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

recognized the importance of having connection to the land to promote spiritual wellness.[42]

Mental Wellness

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants described mental wellness in terms of both emotional and intellectual aspects of mental health. For example, many participants expressed that mental wellness is achieved when you "think" well and have perspectives that are beneficial and helpful, such as understanding that growth comes from hardship and the importance of positive thinking. As one participant described it, "life is a healing journey", and being mentally well encompasses these kinds of learnings and understandings of the world and your personal experiences.[43]

As mentioned above, mental wellness also includes the emotional aspect, which many knowledge sharing sessions participants described as having a sense of calm in their life, minds, and bodies. Participants also described mental wellness as being able to cope, feeling content with their life, having emotional connection to other living things, and feeling a sense of safety. For some of the participants, mental wellness was associated with having healed from trauma in their life, particularly the intergenerational impacts of colonization and residential schools.[44]

Financial Wellness

Knowledge Sharing Session participants described financial wellness as the ability to have their basic needs met and to be able to afford the necessary things needed to live a good, meaningful life.[45]

Environmental Wellness

Environmental wellness was described in many ways by Knowledge Sharing Session participants, with a common theme of having a connection to the environment and land. Participant described the importance of being in recognition of the seasons, the creatures, and our interconnectedness with all living things. Many participants stressed the importance of land-based learning and education and learning to live self-sufficiently and sustainably off the land.[46]

Occupational Wellness

Knowledge Sharing Sessions participants described the need for meaningful work that compensates them enough to live a good life. This was particularly common for youth participants who often mentioned the need for more meaningful, well-paying employment opportunities for youth in their communities.[47]

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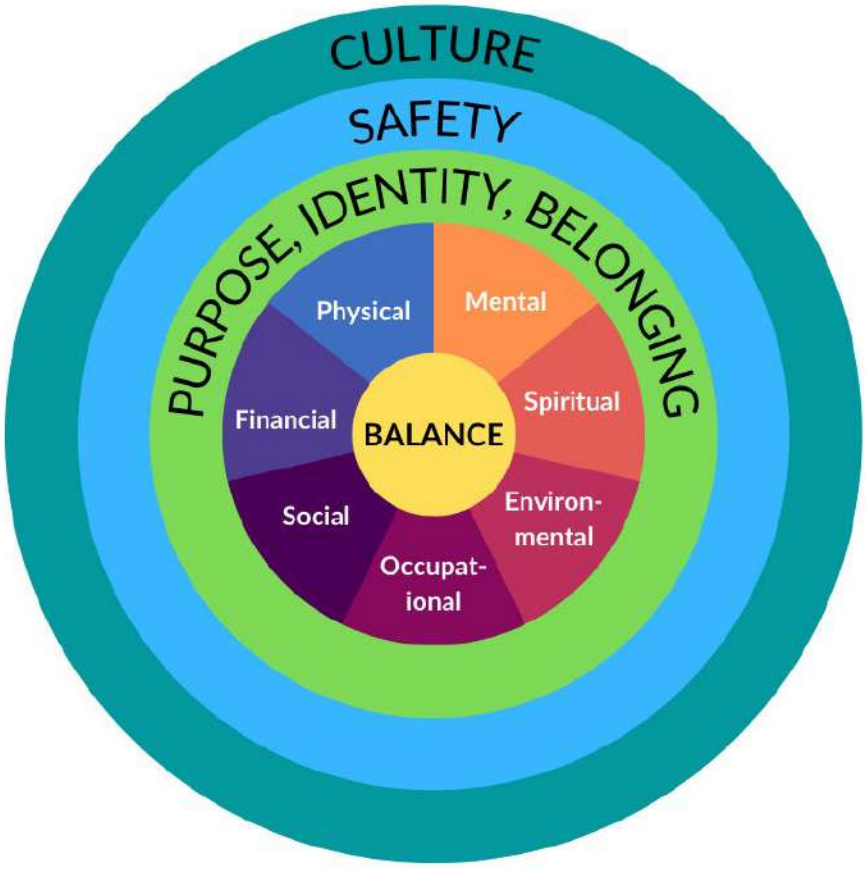
[42] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[43] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[44] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[45] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[46] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[47] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Social Wellness

For Knowledge Sharing Session participants, social wellness encompasses maintaining healthy, fulfilling, supportive connections to family, friends, communities, nations, ancestors, and all human life. It includes relatability, common experience, mutual care, respect, sharing, and many other ways that we relate to one another.[50]



So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Consider your own dimensions of wellness and the things you do to maintain and enhance your personal wellbeing.
- Share this section of the guide with caregivers, supports, and other community members who are a part of your life and use it as a discussion tool to explore your own wellness needs and how they can be best supported by the people in your life.
- Review the **Wise Practices** section of this Guide to learn more about how your wellness needs can be best supported by the people in your life.

By service providers…

- When working with Indigenous youth, ensure you provide the opportunity to explore and include the various ways they understand, maintain, and enhance their wellness.
- Understand that wellness is personal and individualized. Consider how activities that promote wellness may look different across various groups of people, cultures, communities, etc.
- Review the **Wise Practices** section of this Guide to learn more about how you can best support the wellness needs of Indigenous youth.

By decision makers…

- Consider your own ideas of wellness and how these differ or are similar to the concepts discussed above.
- Consider how you can influence others to expand on their ideas of wellness, especially when making decisions that impact the lives of Indigenous youth.
- Review the **Wise Practices** of this Guide to learn more about how you can best support the wellness needs of Indigenous youth.

By all Canadians…

- Become more aware of the complex an individualized wellness needs of Indigenous youth.
- Consider how you can promote wellbeing in your community through the various dimensions of wellness as defined by Knowledge Sharing Session participants.
- Review the **Wise Practices** of this Guide to learn more about how you can best support the wellness needs of Indigenous youth.

Important Resources:

- https://www.csmh.uwo.ca/docs/Indigenous-Child-and-Youth-Wellness-and-Resiliency.pdf
- First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework | Thunderbird Partnership Foundation (thunderbirdpf.org)

Section 4: What Supports Are Available for Indigenous Youth?

Environmental Scan of Supports and Services Currently Available to Indigenous Children and Youth, Including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People

An environmental scan was conducted to identify the existing resources within Canada that provide services to Indigenous children and youth, including Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.

As a result of the environmental scan of the resources, supports, and services available to Indigenous children and youth, we have created a supplementary resource to this guide, **Directory of Resources, Supports, and Services for Indigenous Youth**. This resource will become available on the We Matter website at time of publication of this Guide. It can be found here: https://wemattercampaign.org/get-help.

Overview of the Types of Services and Supports Available to Indigenous Children and Youth

Healthcare

- Traditional healers
- 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific care
- Gender-affirming care
- Reproductive and sexual health care

Employment

- Youth specific employment services
- Indigenous specific employment services

Education

- Post-secondary Education Opportunities
- Public education
- Indigenous specific training programs
- Art and music programs and activities
- Adult education programs (Grade 12)
- Post-secondary Education Funding
- Sponsorship for First Nation students
- Bursaries, scholarships, and other funding for Indigenous students in post-secondary education

Mental Health

- Mental health/ psychotherapy – counsellors, psychologists, other professionals

- Psychoeducation
- Medications
- Support Groups
- Self-care

Life Skills/Personal Development

- Budgeting/money management programs
- Parenting programs
- Self-care workshops, activities
- Mentorship programs

Culture

- Elder, Knowledge Keeper guidance and support
- Cultural activities, workshops, and events

Spiritual and Religious

- Indigenous spiritual care and guidance
- Christian-based supports, services, and activities

Recreation & Sports

- In school programming
- Music and arts programming
- Non-profit organization programming

Justice/ Legal Services

- Public legal support programs
- Youth-specific legal written material and information sessions

Youth-specific Advocacy Services

- Related to criminal matter
- Related to child welfare
- Related to abuse
- Youth Advocates (quality assurance advocacy, investigative
- Gaps in jurisdictions

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use the Directory of Resources, Supports, and Services for Indigenous Youth as tool for you to find the resources, supports, and services you need.
- Explore what resources, supports, and services are available across Canada
- Use this as a tool for advocacy for the development of specific services in your community.

By service providers…

- Explore what resources, supports, and services are available across Canada and use this as a tool to develop new services in your community and to enhance currently available services.

By decision makers…

- Explore what resources, supports, and services are available across Canada and use this as a tool to advocate for and develop new services.

By all Canadians…

- Become aware of what resources, supports, and services are available in your community and across Canada for Indigenous youth.
- Assist, volunteer, or donate to the resources, supports, and services that help Indigenous youth in your community.
- Advocate for the improvement and access of resources, supports, and services in your community.

Important Resources:

- **Directory of Resources, Supports, and Services for Indigenous Youth: https://wemattercampaign.org/get-help**

How Are Youth Accessing Services & From Who?

Government Services

"Canada has a decentralized, universal, publicly funded health system called Canadian Medicare. Health care is funded and administered primarily by the country's 13 provinces and territories."

The Government of Canada also funds various social services and programming, including income security, employment assistance, social housing, seniors care, child welfare, disability support, Indigenous affairs, and domestic and family violence services.[48]

Distinctions-based Organizations

These include First Nation, Metis, and Inuit organizations and Band Councils, including Tribal Councils and Chiefs' organizations. These organizations and its related programs and projects are funded through various channels, including federal/provincial/other grants, and community initiatives. It is important to that that distinction-based organizations are not funded equally due to many factors.[49]

FNIHB Services

First nation Inuit Health Branch "supports the delivery of public health and health promotion services on-reserve and in Inuit communities. It also provides drug, dental and ancillary health services to First Nations and Inuit people regardless of residence."[50]

Not-for-profit Organizations & Charities

Not-for-profit organizations and charities rely primary on grant funding, donations, and fundraising efforts to keep their programming active[51]. Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants noted that they often accessed supports and services from not-for-profit organizations in their communities[52].

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[48] http://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013828/1565364945375

[49] http://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013828/1565364945375

[50] https://ehq-production-canada.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/012b1ea62088bdb7a1aa395baa1fa6807dfd58be/original/1623441476/b162925db8ca7dccf1d1d0c196f7060f_FNIHB_Onboarding_101_2021_06_03_final.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIBJCUKKD4ZO4WUUA%2F20220929%2Fca-central-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20220929T211046Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=2b9dbe3e9f83e30708ede446a68f9e24fa1ce0e87f98ab4b8cd9c41b857b816b

[51] https://ehq-production-canada.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/012b1ea62088bdb7a1aa395baa1fa6807dfd58be/original/1623441476/b162925db8ca7dccf1d1d0c196f7060f_FNIHB_Onboarding_101_2021_06_03_final.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIBJCUKKD4ZO4WUUA%2F20220929%2Fca-central-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20220929T211046Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=2b9dbe3e9f83e30708ede446a68f9e24fa1ce0e87f98ab4b8cd9c41b857b816b

[52] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Out-of-pocket expenses

There are many opportunities for individuals to access wellness supports and services through the private sector. However, for many Indigenous people, these services offer more barriers than solutions. Even with a sliding fee scale, many of these services are just too costly for individuals and families to access.[53]

Grassroots and Community Initiatives

It is important to acknowledge the contributions and efforts of community members and advocates whose work often goes underfunded, unrecognized, and undocumented. Grassroots initiatives were mentioned by many Knowledge Sharing Session participants to be so important to their communities. Many participants cited the value of community members understanding where the gaps were and filling those gaps through their own programs and activities, paying for expenses out-of-pocket or through fundraising efforts.[54]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the different initiatives and organizations in your community that offer services to Indigenous youth. Explore how you can develop connections with people and organizations that serve your community. How can you get involved?

By service providers…

- Use this information as a starting point to explore different initiatives in your community and across Canada, including how they are funded and organized.
- Use this information as a conversation starter when working with Indigenous youth. How, when, and where are the Indigenous youth in your community accessing resources, supports, and services?
- Connect and network with the different people and organizations that service your community.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a starting point to explore different initiatives across Canada. Explore how these initiatives are funded and organized. How can you influence or make a positive impact on these initiatives? How can you support these initiatives sustainably and meaningfully?
- Use this information as a conversation starter to influence others to think critically about the impacts funding has on resources, supports, and services for Indigenous youth.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information to begin discussions with your friends, family, community, and colleagues about the different initiatives in your community and how you can best support them.

[53] http://ojs.uwindsor.ca/index.php/csw/article/view/5728/4674

[54] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Where?

In Community

It is a well-known challenge for Indigenous people in remote, isolate, and northern communities to access supports and services within their community[55]. Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants mentioned the burden of having to leave their families and communities to access services such as health care, education, and mental health services.

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared how when they did access services within their community, it was often at the school or community centre. They also mentioned their parents, counsellors, and workplaces as valuable resources to access supports and services.[56]

Urban Centres

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants mentioned how community, friendship, and cultural centres were a place they could go to access many supports and services. They also mentioned the necessity of having access to supports and services within the schools to make it easier for youth to access.[57]

Online

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared how they accessed a lot of resources, support, and helpful information online due to the lack of services in their community. However, some participants noted that having online supports can be a barrier for those who live in northern, remote, or isolated communities that do not have reliable internet connection or where it is too costly to obtain.[58]

Tele-services

There are many telephone services available to youth, particularly supports around mental health such as suicide or crisis management.[62] While telephone services tend to be accessible, they do present some barriers and challenges which are described later in the guide.[59]

[55] http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7012120
[56] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[57] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[58] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[59] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

When?

Although the majority of supports available to Indigenous children and youth are meant for one-time, short-term, or occasional access, many Knowledge Sharing Session participants expressed the need for ongoing, long-term support.[60]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a conversation starter and tool to advocate for broader access of resources, supports, and services in your community.

By service providers…

- When working with Indigenous youth, provide different methods of accessing resources, supports, and services to increase availability and access.
- Use this information as a conversation starter and tool to advocate for broader access of resources, supports, and services for Indigenous youth in your community.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a starting point in exploring how Indigenous youth access services and as a guide when making decisions that impact the availability of services. How can you support these initiatives sustainably and meaningfully?

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a conversation starter and tool to advocate for broader access of resources, supports, and services in your community.

[60] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Section 5: Wellness Needs of Indigenous Youth

Assessment of Wellness Needs of Indigenous Children and Youth, Including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People

Understanding the need for a wholistic approach to wellness and service provision, our Project Team assessed support and services provision needs of Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. This assessment was conducted through an environmental scan of current supports and resources in Canada, an analysis of information received through the Knowledge Sharing Sessions of this project, as well as through the lived and professional experience of the project participants.

What Resources, Supports, and Services Do Indigenous Children and Youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People, Need to Improve and Ensure Their Wellness?

Culture & Spiritual Care Needs

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants identified culture as essential to their wellbeing. Participants spoke of the importance of access to and knowledge of traditional foods, cultural teachings, and participating in cultural workshops. and activities. They also spoke of learning and speaking their traditional languages, having relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and the significance of learning traditional roles and life stages.[61]

Knowledge Keepers spoke of the importance of “preparing your bundle”, including having cultural and spiritual self-care items ready for use, such as medicines or a rattle. Many participants reiterated the significance of the drum in their life. As one participant mentioned, “Drumming and singing is how we're all connected, I believe”.[62]

Of significant importance to some Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the need for barrier-free access to cultural supports, support workers, and activities. Participants mentioned the importance of having access to cultural and spiritual care when individuals need it the most, which is “sometimes when they are not sober”.[63]

Some Knowledge Sharing Session participants identified many distinct activities related to culture that promote their sense of wellbeing. Some examples of these are having

[61] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[62] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[63] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

access and learning how to care for traditional outfits and regalia, beading, singing, learning the cultural significance of hair, attending full moon and sweat lodge ceremonies, and having access to traditional medicines.[64]

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants also mentioned the importance of spiritual care, which often intertwines with culture care. In addition to the above activities, Knowledge Sharing Session participants identified the importance of prayer and "taking care of your spirit" to achieve wellness.[65]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a tool to advocate for barrier-free, accessible access to culturally relevant services when accessing resources, supports, and services.

By service providers…

- Ensure you consider cultural and spiritual care needs when working with Indigenous youth.
- Outreach and engage with Indigenous communities in your region to better understand the distinct cultural needs of the communities you serve. How can you help break down barriers to accessing cultural and spiritual care for Indigenous youth?

By decision makers…

- Consider how culture has a positive impact on youth outcomes and promote and advocate for programming that includes culture.
- Outreach and engage with Indigenous communities in your region to better understand the distinct cultural needs of the communities you serve. How can you help break down barriers to accessing cultural and spiritual care for Indigenous youth?

By all Canadians…

- Respect the importance of culture in the lives of Indigenous youth.
- Make space for culture and spiritual care when interacting with Indigenous youth.
- Outreach and engage with Indigenous communities in your region to better understand the distinct cultural needs of the communities you serve. How can you help break down barriers to accessing cultural and spiritual care for Indigenous youth? How can you show your respect for the diversity of Indigenous cultures in your daily life? For example, in many First Nation communities, it is a sign of respect to offer tobacco to the individual or group of people you are meeting with. It is important to remember that traditions differ across Canada, and it is essential to work with the Indigenous communities you wish to be involved with in order to understand how to best respect their culture, customs, and traditions.

[64] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

[65] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Mental Health Support Needs

Of significant importance to Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the need for coping mechanisms. Many participants mentioned the need for specific skills to cope with grief and loss. Paramount to several participants was the need to heal their intergenerational trauma caused by colonization and residential schools. Many see this trauma as a barrier to wellness in themselves, others, and in their community as a whole. Youth mentioned the need for youth-specific supports designed to deal with the impacts of these particular issues.[66]

Access to counselling, psychotherapy, support groups, and self-care workshops were important to Knowledge Sharing Session participants. They also mentioned the necessity for culturally relevant mental health care that acknowledges and blends traditional healing practices and Western mental health care practices.

Youth in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions stressed the importance of having youth-specific mental health workers that are knowledgeable and relatable in life experience and culture, and that provide them with space that is safe for them to feel.[67]

Of important note by Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the need for support in developing healthy perspectives about life and personal experiences. The also stressed the importance of being able to access and participate in self-care, to recharge, and to express themselves creatively.

Another often mentioned need when it comes to mental health supports for Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the need for more support due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also related to this discussion was the need for more online support amid the associated pandemic lockdowns.[68]

Addictions Supports and Services Needs

Service providers in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions mentioned the need for addiction services in the community. As mentioned previously, Knowledge Sharing Sessions participants also voiced the need for accessible, barrier-free access to culture, including culturally relevant addiction services that meet the individual where they are at in their sobriety.[69]

[66] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[67] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[68] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[69] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a tool and conversation starter to advocate for barrier-free, accessible access to mental health and addictions resources, supports, and services in your community.

By service providers…

- Use this information as a tool and conversation starter to advocate for barrier-free, accessible access to mental health and addictions resources, supports, and services for Indigenous youth in your community and across Canada.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a learning tool to better understand what mental health and addictions resources, supports, and services are most needed by Indigenous youth in your community, region, and across Canada.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information to deepen your understanding of the dire need improved quality and access of mental health and addictions resources, supports, and services for Indigenous youth.
- Use this information as a starting point in exploring the specific mental health and addiction needs in your community. What supports are currently available and what is working in your community? How can you support these initiatives in your daily life?

Physical Health and Wellness Needs

Youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions stressed the need for youth specific health services and clinics. Sexual and reproductive health care was also important to them, and many stressed the need for more and easier access to gender affirming care.

Knowledge Sharing Session participants voiced the need for access to basic care, such as food security, including more food sharing programs, safe and affordable housing, access to clean water, and affordable access to sports and recreation.[70]

"A community needs to be healthy and feel and have its basic needs covered before it can really start repairing the trauma of the past and work towards growing a better future. When people are struggling to survive, people don't have much time for dreaming or hope or even caring for each other."

- Knowledge Sharing Session participant

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a tool and conversation starter to advocate for barrier-free, accessible access to physical and health care resources, supports, and services in your community.

By service providers…

- When working with Indigenous youth, ensure basic needs are met and addressed.
- Use this information as a tool to advocate for youth specific health services in your community.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a conversation stater and to advocate for more youth specific health services in your community, region, and across Canada.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as starting point in exploring the importance of physical wellness for youth and how you can be a part of the solution in providing basic needs and healthcare for all Canadians.
- Use this information as a starting point in exploring the specific physical wellness needs in your community. What is the level of accessibility to physical and health care resources in your community? How can you be part of the solution to make these supports more accessible for Indigenous youth?

[70] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Financial Wellness Needs

Youth in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions stressed the importance of youth having access to the necessary funds to attend or participate in programs, supports, and services. They also mentioned that it was important for more funding opportunities to exist for youth-specific initiatives. They also stressed the importance of having the necessary knowledge and skills to manage money effectively and to meaningfully participate in the economy.[71]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a conversation starter and as a tool to advocate for better access and quality of financial literacy programs in your community.

By service providers…

- When working with Indigenous youth, consider financial barriers to accessing resources, supports, and services, and how you can be part of the solution.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a conversation starter and tool to advocate for better funding, more support and resources, and financial literacy programs for Indigenous youth.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in exploring how financial wellness impacts all other dimensions of wellness. Become more aware of the many challenges faced by Indigenous people when participating in the Canadian economy.
- Use this information as a starting point in exploring what financial wellness resources, supports, and services are available in your community. How can you be part of the solution to make these supports more accessible for Indigenous youth?
- Become part of the solution in better access to funding, resources, and support for Indigenous youth initiatives through sharing of information and resources in your community.

[71] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Environmental Wellness Needs

Several Knowledge Sharing Session participants expressed the need for connection to the land in order to be well. Youth mentioned the importance of understanding nature and how to live off the land. Youth said that they need more opportunity to be with, learn, and heal in the land.[72]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information to advocate for more access to land-based learning and education, access to the land and water, and land-based healing opportunities in your community.

By service providers…

- When working with Indigenous youth, ensure you provide the opportunity to Indigenous youth to connect to the land.
- Begin the conversations with the Indigenous youth you work with on how they connect to the land and ways you can foster and support that connection.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a starting point in exploring the significance of the land and waters to Indigenous people and use it to guide your decisions that impact Indigenous youth. It is important to reach out to the Indigenous people and communities in your specific region.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in exploring the significance of the land and waters to Indigenous people in your region. Learn how you can support the ongoing relationships with the land and water, and initiatives to protect them.
- Be part of the solution in protecting the lands and waters: use your voice, commit to action, start conversations.

Occupational Wellness Needs

Youth in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions mentioned the importance of having access to meaningful employment that is personally fulfilling and allows them to financially meet their other needs in order to live a good life, particularly access to employment in their own communities.

Youth also mentioned the importance of having access to education and training that allows them to provide for and take care of their own communities.[73]

Education Needs

Youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and service providers all stressed the need for land-based learning and education. Knowledge Sharing Session participants also noted

[72] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

[73] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

the importance of including culturally relevant activities and teachings in schools. Of significant importance to many participants was incorporating Canadian and region-specific history of Indigenous people within the classrooms so that all are exposed to and learn the "true history" of Indigenous people.[74]

Many youth mentioned the need for more support for Indigenous students in academia. They also stressed that they need more accessible post-secondary education and training programs, including wholesome financial support to attend and be successful in these programs. Youth also stressed the importance of teaching students real life skills that help youth to be successful as adults.

During the Knowledge Sharing Sessions, youth also stressed the importance of having engaging and compassionate educators and in-depth mental health education in schools so that people can recognize symptoms, get help, and respond appropriately to others.[75]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information to advocate for better access and quality to employment programs and resources, including education and training programs and access to land-based education and learning, in your community.

By service providers…

- When working with Indigenous youth, consider how access to employment and education can impact outcomes. How are you incorporating the education and employment needs of Indigenous youth in your programming? Consider the ways in which you can support access to education and employment services.
- Use this information to advocate for better access and quality to employment programs and resources, including education and training programs, for Indigenous youth in your community, region, and across Canada.

By decision makers…

- Explore and consider how education and employment impacts outcomes for Indigenous youth and use this information to influence your decision making.

By all Canadians…

- Consider how you can be part of the solution in providing better access, quality, and opportunity for education and employment for Indigenous youth.
- Use this information as a starting point in learning more about the education and employment challenges faced by Indigenous youth in your community and become involved in the solutions.

[74] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

[75] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

2SLGBTQQIA+ Awareness and Education

Several youth, service providers, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers stressed the desperate need for 2SLGBTQQIA+ education in the community, to service providers, and other youth. Many participants noted that Indigenous children and youth are being negatively impacted by the stigma, lack of education, and hate for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.

Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and youth stressed the importance of bringing back the traditions, teachings, and sacred roles of Two-Spirit people in Indigenous society. Youth spoke of the need for more education around gender and sexuality for youth.[76]

[76] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information to advocate for 2SLGBTQQIA+ education and awareness initiatives in your community.
- Use this information as a starting point in learning about how to be an ally to Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth in your community and across Canada.

By service providers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning how to best support Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about how 2SLGBTQQIA+ Indigenous youth are best supported, advocate for these changes in your community, and use your learning to guide your decision making.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about 2SLGBTQQIA+ issues, as well as movements and efforts in your community and region and how you can support them.

Family and Social Support Needs

Several Knowledge Sharing Session participants highlighted the need for more resources, supports, and services for families as a whole. Participants often highlighted the need for support to meet basic family needs, such as safe and affordable housing, as well as more food sharing programs. They also mentioned how childcare and access to activities and programs for families to participate in together would be beneficial.[77]

According to a 2021 study on youth in Canada, Indigenous youth are about three times more likely to be young parents than those in the non-Indigenous- population[78]. Understanding the importance of healthy families, many Knowledge Sharing Session participants recognized the need for more affordable, accessible childcare and access to mentors and support for new parents.

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants stressed the necessity for wrap-around care and support for Indigenous children and youth “pushed out of care”. They also stressed the importance of having access to justice and court support workers, and advocates and others who can help youth to advocate for themselves. Of particular importance to many youth was having access to mentor and healthy role models from who they can model their own behaviours from.[79]

[77] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

[78] https://www.150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/42-28-0001/2021001/article/00004-eng.pdf?st=-O_izqba

[79] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Social Wellness Needs

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared how having healthy connections to others, such as friends, family, and the community was important to them for their wellness. They expressed the need for learning from one another, sharing our gifts, resources, and medicines, and necessity of being close to home. Youth shared how it was important for them for people in the community to check in on them and how they wish they had access to more sharing circles and peer discussion opportunities. Participants shared the importance of community activities, representation in public spaces, positive role models for youth, and community engagement. Some youth said it would be helpful for community activities to be posted online so that they are better aware of when opportunities arise.[80]

Of significant importance to some Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the need to have relationships with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and others grounded in their culture. They also spoke of the importance of recognizing our connection to and the contributions of our ancestors to our lives today. Many participants mentioned the need for healing to occur as a community and how that can be fostered by our connection with one another in our shared experiences.[81]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a tool to advocate for better access and quality to family and social support resources and services in your community.

By service providers…

- When working with Indigenous youth, ensure you consider their family and social support needs, and how the wellbeing of the family and social support system impacts outcomes for Indigenous youth.

By decision makers…

- Consider the unique challenges faced by Indigenous youth in terms of their social support and family structures and use this information in your decision making to improve access to family and social support resources for Indigenous youth.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the impacts on colonization on Indigenous families and communities and the effects that are still felt today.

Important Resources:

- Indigenous Writes | Portage & Main Press/HighWater Press (portageandmainpress.com)
- Impacts of Colonialism on Indigenous Children and Families in Manitoba | MARL

[80] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

[81] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Online Content

During the Knowledge Sharing Sessions, many youth mentioned how access to online resources, supports, and services is important to them. However, it is also noteworthy to mention that in some northern, remote, and isolated areas, connection to the internet continues to remain a barrier. In some locations, it is not yet available, too costly, or is too slow to properly open or save resource information.[82]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information to advocate for equitable access to internet connectivity, online resources, and alternative formats of information.

By service providers…

- Explore how online content can increase access to the resources, supports, and services you offer.

By decision makers…

- Consider and explore the importance of online access to resources, supports, and services, and use this information to influence your decision making.

By all Canadians…

- Explore how access to the internet impacts many northern, remote, and isolated communities and learn how you can be part of the solution.
- Advocate for equitable access to internet and web-based resources for all Canadians.

Important Resources:

- Broadband Internet in Indigenous Communities - HillNotes

The Need for Purpose, Identity, & Belonging

According to a 2021 study, the majority of First Nations (91%), Métis (93%) and Inuit youth (97%) reported that they felt good about their Indigenous identity[83]. As mentioned in previous sections of this guide, Knowledge Sharing Sessions participants expressed the need for supports and services that assist them in "finding and growing themselves". Particularly, many youth in the sessions mentioned how it was important to them to be comfortable and feel good about who they are, to have a sense of pride, to live life with a purpose, to be fulfilled, and to have the necessary safe space to be who they are authentically.

Elders and Knowledge Keepers expressed the importance of carrying family and community traditions forward and teaching youth about their role as young people in society. One Knowledge Sharing Session participant shared that "youth need to be instilled with a sense of pride since infancy".[84]

[82] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[83] https://www.150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/42-28-0001/2021001/article/00004-eng.pdf?st=-O_izqba
[84] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Another source of a sense of purpose, identity, and belonging is learning how to incorporate the concepts into your life. Empowerment, personal growth/development, and other self-help workshops and activities can help youth to improve their worldviews and perspectives and help them achieve a sense of healthy identity[85].

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a starting point to explore what identity means to you and the ways you can grow your sense of identity, purpose, and belonging.

By service providers…

- Learn about and ensure you consider the ways you can help to foster a healthy sense of identity, purpose, and belonging with the Indigenous youth you work with.

By decision makers…

- Consider and explore how a healthy sense of identity, purpose and belonging impact outcomes for Indigenous youth, and use this information to influence your decision making.

By all Canadians…

- Be respectful of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and learning.
- Learn more about how to be an ally to Indigenous communities.

Important Resources:

- https://wemattercampaign.org/toolkits/youth
- Toolkit for Support Workers • We Matter (wemattercampaign.org)
- Ally_March (reseaumtlnetwork.com)

[85] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

The Need for Safe Space

In order for youth to access supports and services, they need to feel safe to do so. Many youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions mentioned the need for more safe spaces specifically designed for youth. They expressed the need for having the infrastructure to support these spaces and the autonomy to choose, consent to, and programming. As stated by one knowledge sharing session participant, "youth need space to express the child within them". Youth want to feel safe at home and in their communities, and this was particularly important for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth who participated in the sessions.[86]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information to advocate for equal decision-making ability and power when it comes to the types of resources, support, and services are funded or resourced in your community.

By service providers…

- When working with Indigenous youth, ensure you provide safe space before doing any work.
- Learn about how you can best foster a sense of safety when working with Indigenous youth.
- Review the section, **Creating Safe Cultural Spaces**, of this Guide to learn how we created safe spaces for Indigenous youth.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a starting point to explore how access to safe spaces promotes better outcomes for Indigenous youth and use this information to guide your decision making.
- Review the section, **Creating Safe Cultural Spaces**, of this Guide to learn how we created safe spaces for Indigenous youth.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning how you can be a part of the solution in creating safe space for Indigenous people in your community.

Important Resources:

- Creating Culturally Safe Spaces — UTS (utsdesignindex.com)

[86] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Section 6: What's Missing?

Gap Analysis in Supports and Services for Indigenous Children and Youth, Including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People

Now that we understand the types of resources, supports, and services available to Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth, we must consider what is missing in terms of these supports and services. The gaps in services and supports for Indigenous children and youth are many and this listing is not exhaustive but is meant to give general insight into where supports and services are lacking and where they can be improved.

This gap analysis has been completed through analysis of the Environmental Scan of Supports and Services in conjunction with additional information obtained through the Knowledge Sharing Sessions. For a detailed overview of these findings, please see **Appendix D: Gap Analysis Findings**.

Summary of Findings

Gaps in All Supports and Services

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared many general gaps related to the provision of all supports and services. These included not having expansive, accessible resources to know where to go to access specific supports and resources in their region and the lack of supports and services of all types in their communities, especially in rural, remote, northern, and isolated communities.[87]

Participants also cited the lack of understanding of what is happening in communities and the lack of experience in service providers sent to the community. They also noted the lack of safety in accessing services, as well as the lack of long-term care and little consistency in service providers. Many youth mentioned the issue of support and services being reactionary, not preventative.

Moreover, youth noted there is a lack of accommodations and support necessary to overcome barriers to accessing supports and services. They noted the lack of food security and the lack of programs, supports, and services to address hunger.[88]

[87] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[88] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for barrier-free, accessible access to all types of resources, supports, and services in your community.

By service providers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific gaps in your community and support the initiatives of Indigenous communities and people to fill the gaps.
- Use this information as a starting point in analyzing the specific gaps in the services you provide and how they can be filled.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the gaps in resources, supports, and services for Indigenous youth and use this information to guide your decision making.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific gaps in your community and how you can support the initiatives of Indigenous communities and people to fill the gaps.

Gaps in Youth Specific Support

Many Knowledge sharing Session participants acknowledge the gaps in age-specific supports and services for youth, such as support beyond the age of 18 and specific support for teenagers in general. This is particularly true for Indigenous youth aging out of care, where many participants expressed that there just is not enough support for these youth to prepare and be successful.[89]

A common concern of many Knowledge Sharing participants was the lack of safe, accessible, designated youth spaces in their communities, such as youth drop-in centres and spaces for hosting events and activities. They also noted that there is a lack of funding for youth-led initiatives and lack of specific supports for youth impacted by human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

A significant gap for many Knowledge Sharing Session participants is the lack of mentorships, role modeling, and peer programs for Indigenous youth.[90]

[89] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

[90] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

"In the absence of having proper role models or a support system, the kids then become their own support system."

– Knowledge Sharing Session participant

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for age-specific supports and services in your community.

By service providers…

- Use this information as a learning tool and consider how you can advocate for and promote age-specific services in program planning.

By decision makers…

- When making decisions that impact programming, think about the needs of youth and how you are prioritizing them to address the gaps identified above.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the gaps in youth-specific services in your community and how you can best support the initiatives of Indigenous communities and people to fill the gaps.

Gaps in Mental Health and Addiction

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared many gaps related to mental health care and addiction, such as the lack of mental health and addiction supports and services in their communities, the lack of prompt access to in-person mental health supports, and the lack of focus on harm-reduction focused care. Of particular concern shared by many participants was the lack of culturally relevant, sensitive, and aware mental health services. They also noted that there is a lack of availability of long-term, sustainable mental health services. Some mentioned how they often only have access to crisis support when they need long-term and preventative mental health care.[91]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for mental health and addiction supports and services in your community.

By service providers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the gaps in mental health and addiction services in your community. Consider what causes these gaps and how they can be addressed. What are ways you can actively be part of the solution in addressing these gaps?
- Consider how you can be part of the solution in addressing the need for long term access to mental health services. What in your community, organization, workplaces, needs to change to address the lack of long-term mental health care?

By decision makers...

- When making decisions that impact mental health services for Indigenous people, consider how you can contribute to addressing the gaps in mental health and addiction services.

By all Canadians…

- Consider how you are contributing to the goal of having a collectively mentally healthy community. How do you acknowledge and support the mental health needs of your community members?

[91] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Gaps in Education and Employment

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared that there is a lack of cultural awareness, teachings, and practices in school, as well as little opportunity for land-based education and learning. Moreover, there is a lack of Indigenous specific supports in schools and educational institutions. Participants also identified the lack of awareness and education on the shared history of Indigenous people, colonization, residential schools, and related impacts.

Participants also shared that there is also little opportunity for youth to access sustainable employment that allows for self-sufficiency in many communities. They also noted that there is little opportunity for Indigenous youth to gain skills in financial literacy, including budgeting, saving, and how credit works.[92]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for culturally relevant practices, in education systems, including land-based education and learning opportunities.
- Use this information to advocate for Indigenous-specific supports and services in education systems.
- Use this information to advocate for more education, training, and employment opportunities for Indigenous youth in your community.

By service providers…

- Consider the ways you are recognizing and being inclusive to Indigenous ways of learning, understanding, knowing, and being in your programming and work.
- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific gaps in education and employment for Indigenous youth in your community and how you can be part of the solution in filling those gaps.

By decision makers...

- Consider how you are creating space for and prioritizing Indigenous ways of learning, understanding, knowing, and being in the decisions you are making. How are you creating space for indigenous ways of knowing – prioritizing in the decisions you are making?
- Consider how you can create opportunities in education and employment for Indigenous youth in the decisions you make.

By all Canadians…

- Consider how you are contributing to safe spaces for Indigenous youth in your community.

[92] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Gaps in Cultural and Spiritual Supports and Services

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants voiced the struggle of not having access to Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and others who carry traditional teachings. They shared how there is a lack of access to barrier-free cultural supports, programs, activities, and learning opportunities. Indigenous youth shared how they felt there was even less access for those who live in urban centres. Some shared how there is a lack of support and spaces for Indigenous youth who are mixed blood. They also shared how there is decreasing access to traditional medicines or little access at all. Of significant concern for many participants was the lack of opportunity for youth to learn traditional practices of how to live off the land sustainably.[93]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for access to cultural and spiritual supports and services in your community.

By service providers…

- Consider how can prioritize the cultural and spiritual care needs of the Indigenous youth you work with.
- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific gaps in cultural and spiritual care for Indigenous youth in your community and how you can be part of the solution in filling those gaps.

By decision makers...

- Consider how you can support opportunities for Indigenous youth to access cultural and spiritual care.

By all Canadians…

- Consider how you are acknowledging and making space for the cultural and spiritual care needs of Indigenous people in your school, workplace, and community.

[93] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Gaps in Supports and Services for Families

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared how there is a lack of whole family programs and activities, including skill building and learning opportunities for parents and others in the lives of youth on how to best support them.

Of particular note is the lack of specific resources for youth experiencing intimate partner and family violence[94]. There is also little education and support for promoting healthy relationships for the whole family. Some participants noted the lack of support for young mothers and fathers, and how there are little opportunities for youth to learn traditional parenting skills and family roles.[95]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for access to supports and services of all types for families in your community.

By service providers…

- Consider how you are contributing to a preventative focused approach to supporting Indigenous families.

By decision makers...

- Use this information as a starting point in learning how you can support the needs of families in your decision making.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the gaps in supports and services for families in your community and how you can support initiatives that provide services to families.

[94] Appendix D: Gap Analysis in Supports and Services for Indigenous Children and Youth, Including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People

[95] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Gaps in 2SLGBTQQIA+ Specific Supports and Services

Knowledge Sharing Session participants referenced the gaps in 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific supports and resources, especially the lack of services in all communities. Some mentioned the lack of accessible gender-affirming care. They also referenced the lack of safety in accessing health supports and services and the lack of designated safe space for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth. Participants cited the need for designated land for 2SLGBTQQIA+ gatherings, as well as the need for land-based healing supports for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.[96]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use information as a learning tool and to advocate for access to 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific supports and services in your community.

By service providers…

- Consider how you are contributing to the wellness of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth you work with. How can you respect and honour their specific wellness needs?

By decision makers...

- Consider the ways you can engage with 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth when making decisions that impact their lives.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific gaps in 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific supports and services your community and how you can support the initiatives of Indigenous communities and people to fill the gaps.
- Consider how you can be inclusive to and honour the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community on a daily basis.

[96] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Gaps in Recreation and Sports

Participants of the Knowledge Sharing Sessions expressed the lack of recreation and sports opportunities in their communities, as well as the lack of necessary funding, resources, supplies, and infrastructure needed to provide these opportunities.[97]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for barrier-free, accessible access to recreation and sports in your community.

By service providers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific gaps in recreation and sports in your community and support the initiatives of Indigenous communities and people to fill the gaps.
- Use this information as a starting point in analyzing the specific gaps in the services you provide and how they can be filled.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the gaps in recreation and sports for Indigenous youth and use this information to guide your decision making.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific gaps in recreation and sports your community and how you can support the initiatives of Indigenous communities and people to fill the gaps.

[97] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Gaps in Justice and Legal Support

Gaps discovered through research and through review of the Knowledge Sharing Session findings include the lack of youth-specific legal support and the lack of legal education provided to youth, especially regarding their rights. There is also a gap in having access to justice systems that are reflective and inclusive of Indigenous ways of understanding and being.[98]

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for barrier-free, accessible access to youth-specific legal support in your community.

By service providers…

- Consider how you are contributing to a preventative focused approach to justice issues faced by Indigenous people in your work.

By decision makers...

- Consider how you can create avenues for accountability.
- Consider how you can support the inclusion of Indigenous ways of understanding, learning, knowing, and being in the justice system.
- Consider the ways in which you can support making the justice and legal system more accessible to children and youth, whose lives are often impacted by these systems.

By all Canadians…

- Consider the ways you can raise awareness on legal education in your community and be part of the solution in addressing the lack of youth-specific legal support.

[98] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Section 7: Challenges and Barriers

Assessment of Challenges and Barriers Faced in the Provision and Access of Supports and Services for Indigenous Children and Youth, Including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People

Environmental Challenges and Barriers

Geographic Barriers

Just being able to access supports and services due to geographic barriers was a common concern of many Knowledge Sharing Session participants. Many participants shared the experience of having to leave the support of their family, community, and culture to access basic health, reproductive, and mental health care. Youth shared how this also negatively impacted their education and employment.

Knowledge Sharing Session participants who live in rural, remote, northern, and isolated communities noted how when they did travel to other communities or urban centres to access services that options for transportation and accommodations are limited and costly. This is also true of bringing services into the community. For example, one participant noted that it was difficult to bring in Elders and community supports to their community due to limited winter road access and the excessive cost of flights.[99]

Infrastructure

Youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Session shared how infrastructure is often a barrier in their communities, where there is no designated safe space to run programs, supports, and services. Participants mentioned how due to the lack of infrastructure, buildings are often used for more than one service. They also mentioned that for some communities, limited transportation infrastructure, such as well-developed roads and alternate means of travel, make it difficult and costly for them to travel to other communities to access services or bring them in. Having access to the internet and necessary technology to access supports and services was also voiced as a barrier by participants.[100]

Of note is the barrier of Indigenous people not being completely sovereign over the lands and waters that they have relationships with, and how decisions made by non-Indigenous people impact their lives. Some participants called for “land-back” for all Indigenous people.[101]

[99] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[100] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[101] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Systemic Challenges and Barriers

Several Knowledge Sharing Session participants cited colonialism as a cause for many, if not all, of the systemic, structural, and institutional barriers experienced. They also noted that there is little accommodation for these barriers and how they particularly impact Indigenous people.

Specifically, Knowledge Sharing Session participants noted the barrier of not having Indigenous people or those who can relate and support Indigenous-led endeavors at front desks, in various service sectors, and in positions of decision-making ability. They also noted the issue of not being able to inherently access specific services due to blood quantum methods to identify Indigeneity.[102]

Funding

Funding was cited several times as a barrier to accessing supports and services. Knowledge Sharing Session participants described issues with project-based funding and lack of investment into community-based, grassroots initiatives. They also noted that grant and funding application processes are limited, inflexible, highly competitive, and are not sustainable. Service providers noted how there is minimal funding to support the work needed to connect and reach youth and that they often supplement activities by paying out of pocket.[103]

"Funding is a barrier. Not just funding, but competition for funding and some of the, you know, lateral violence that kind of comes out around that because everybody's competing for such scarce resources."

– Knowledge Sharing Session participant

Long Wait Times

Knowledge Sharing Session participants expressed concern over the time it takes to access services. Many shared that long waitlists and referral times are barriers that need to be immediately addressed. Some youth expressed that the long wait times to access support can cause them to lose hope.[104]

Bureaucracy and Red Tape

Bureaucracy and associated red tape were consistently described as barriers by Knowledge Sharing Session participants. They shared the many issues with bureaucracy and how it impacts supports and services, including the time it takes to process requests, the substantial effort required, and the issue of having to meet

[102] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[103] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[104] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

specific criteria to access programming, supports, and services, such as being in a certain age group or geographical location.

Service providers mentioned that colonial processes make it difficult to provide services to Indigenous children and youth, including the academically driven nature of applying for project funding and the structure of approval processes.[105]

Policy

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared several barriers relating to policy, including the time it takes for change to occur because of decision-making processes and the lack of Indigenous and youth representation in government and decision-making positions. They also shared that they feel their advocacy is limited due to systemic barriers and that it is hard to influence those in decision making power when they do not value culture, land, or wellness in the same way that they do. Overall, policy changes in all levels and sectors are needed to truly improve supports and services for Indigenous children and youth.[106]

Availability and Quality of Service Provision

For Knowledge Sharing Session participants, there were many barriers related to the availability and quality of the services they access. For example, many participants shared that due to geographical location, they must leave their communities to access many supports and services. Therefore, they access supports and services minimally or only when absolutely necessary.[107]

Participants also shared that when many of the supports and services that do come into the communities are temporary, just as the service providers who administer the programs and services. They mentioned how there is little follow up and the services are unstable. They also shared how sometimes people must wait too long for specific programs and services to come again and lose hope. Another barrier identified by participants was the lack of Indigenous people in certain fields and professions and lack of community members trained to provide supports and services.[108]

Justice System

Some Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared how the justice system can impose many barriers to Indigenous people. Even after overcoming challenges, they shared how criminal records are a barrier for those who have changed their lives and want to provide support now, take certain programs, cannot afford to apply, or have no support to apply for pardons.[109]

[105] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[106] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[107] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[108] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[109] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Economic and Social Challenges and Barriers

Impacts of Colonization, Residential Schools, and Intergenerational Trauma

The barriers that result from colonization are countless. Colonization, residential schools, and intergenerational trauma continues to impact the lives of Indigenous people in every way as they are forced to navigate the systems that once sought to destroy them[110].

Participants of the Knowledge Sharing Sessions cited several barriers related to colonization, in addition to trust, which is described in its own section. They particularly noted the direct impacts of colonization and intergenerational trauma on issues such as the child welfare system and gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people (i.e. MMIWG2S+). Participants shared the many systemic barriers with the child welfare system, including children having access to their culture and community, experiencing abuse in the system, and children and youth being used for economic means.

Additional barriers mentioned included addictions, lateral violence, colonial influence of patriarchy in traditions, community resistance, fracture in community collaboration, diminished opportunity to open up by survivors of abuse, and loss of hope. They also shared how it is increasingly difficult to hold outdoor programs and activities due to the weather and that overharvesting of traditional medicines and plants by non-Indigenous people impedes their already limited access. Participants also mentioned there are limited opportunities and safe spaces to go for healing.[111]

Lack of Understanding and Racism

Another barrier mentioned by Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the lack of understanding and respect for Indigenous ways of life, beliefs, customs, and worldviews. They shared that Youth participants also shared how they felt that service providers can't relate to their life experience and that they sometimes don't feel respected when accessing supports and services. They also shared that they sometimes experience a dismissal of needs, or they are offered different supports when asking for another – for example, being offered medication for mental health concerns when therapy is not immediately available.[112]

Knowledge Sharing Session Participants also shared that experiencing racism when accessing supports and services is a major barrier. They shared that there needs to be more cultural awareness and protocol training and policies.[113]

Trust and Acceptance

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared how trust was a barrier for them in accessing supports and services. They expressed how the lack of trust in service

[110] https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/genocide-and-indigenous-peoples-in-canada
[111] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[112] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[113] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

providers, justice system, government workers, police, and healthcare workers stem from the intergenerational trauma of residential schools, the mistreatment of Indigenous people, and the history of broken promises from the government[114]. Moreover, the continued experience of racism when accessing services further compounds existing issues with trust. Participants shared how there is a disconnect among service providers and community members and they felt that sometimes youth did not want to talk about their experiences or ask for help due to these issues.

Participants also shared how they often faced triggers that reminded them of the past and present injustices they experience as Indigenous people. For example, one participant shared how they felt it was triggering for community members to see their children have to leave home to attend high school, being residential school survivors themselves.

Youth who participated in the sessions shared how receiving reactionary responses from adults in their lives can be a barrier to reaching out for support. Some youth also expressed that they didn't feel like they had designated safe space as mixed-blood Indigenous people.[115]

Religion and Culture

Some participants in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions expressed how challenge barriers can exist for youth when communities and people become divided between providing traditional cultural activities and church/Christianity-based activities. It is important to note that many youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions expressed the need and desire for access to their culture and traditions. Some shared that they felt that the availability and high availability of church-based programs reduces opportunities for them to access to their culture.[116]

Influence of Mainstream Culture

Knowledge Sharing Session participants stressed how youth are inundated with mainstream culture and how these influences in education, institutions, and society are a significant barrier to youth having access to their traditional Indigenous ways of being. They reminded us of the importance of including culture in school and revising educating to ensure Indigenous youth are instilled with a sense of pride in who they are and that traditional teachings are given value.[117]

Burnout

Unfortunately, burnout was commonly mentioned as a barrier to accessing supports and services by Knowledge Sharing Session participants. Lack of funding to support

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[114] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5698028/#:~:text=Indigenous%20peoples%20face%20systemic%20racism,needed%20to%20address%20these%20failures.

[115] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

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frontline staff and overwhelming responsibilities and pressure make it difficult to fully support Indigenous youth in the way they need.

Participants shared that often service providers are the only support for multiple people. They also described how high turnover impedes long-term care that is so needed by Indigenous youth. Of particular note, service providers mentioned the bleak reality of Elders and Knowledge Keepers being overworked and spread too thin across different departments, agencies, and organizations.[118]

Communication

Communication was described as a barrier by several Knowledge Sharing Session participants. Specific barriers mentioned include the lack of communication among service providers and lack of communication about services available in communities. They also mentioned that there is a lack of opportunity for service providers, youth, and community to participate in circle discussions, which prevents the necessary solution-building communication to occur.

Participants also referenced the lack of supports and services available in distinct traditional languages, which impedes their ability and trust in accessing services.[119]

Economic Barriers and the Lack of Basic Needs

Knowledge Sharing Session participants shared many economic barriers to accessing supports and services, from having access to safe and affordable housing and food to the lack of access to privatized care. They shared how it is difficult to focus on other aspects of wellness when basic needs are not met, especially the difficulty of facing hunger and being expected to participate and learn in school and other activities. Participants also expressed how funding is major barrier in accessing post-secondary education for youth. They shared how there are many misconceptions about who is funded to attend post-secondary education and what that funding covers. Some university students shared how they often have to make difficult choices to make ends meet or miss opportunities like going home to visit family due to excessive costs.[120]

Education

Education was referenced as a barrier for many Knowledge Sharing Session participants. This included having to leave home to access education and not having education and training opportunities to train their own community members to provide services. Youth shared how it was difficult for them to maintain connection with their home communities when leaving to access education.

Participants also shared how the inadequate, underfunded education provided in some Indigenous communities makes it hard for them to prepare for success in higher education and that sometimes youth are “pushed through” the education system without

[118] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[119] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[120] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

being supported in the way they need to successfully learn the necessary material. Some youth mentioned how it is difficult for them to learn Indigenous studies and history from non-Indigenous people.[121]

Barriers Related to COVID-19

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants cited many barriers in accessing services during the COVID-19 pandemic. They shared how lockdowns and mandates made it difficult to access the services and supports they usually relied on. For many people, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted their mental and social wellness.[122]

The "Troubled Teen" Industry

Although not mentioned during the Knowledge Sharing Sessions, we wanted to bring awareness to and highlight the issues of the "Trouble Teen" Industry. In North America, every year young people are sent to facilities with discipline interventions designed to "fix" youth. Often these facilities and programs, such as gay conversion camps and behaviour modification camps, are unethical and cause more harm than good to participants. Not only do they strip youth of their voluntary consent and personal autonomy, but methods have been found to be risky, punishing, cruel.[123]

[121] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[122] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[123] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

So how can this information be used?

By Indigenous youth…

- Use this information as a learning tool and to advocate for barrier-free accessible access to all types of resources, supports, and services in your community.

By service providers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific barriers faced by Indigenous youth in your community.
- Support the initiatives of Indigenous communities and people to address the challenges and barriers.
- Help to build capacity in your community to address the specific barriers identified.

By decision makers…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the barriers in accessing resources, supports, and services for Indigenous youth and use this information to guide your decision making.

By all Canadians…

- Use this information as a starting point in learning about the specific barriers to accessing resources, supports, and services in your community and how you can support the initiatives of Indigenous communities and people to fill the gaps.

Section 8: What Works?

Assessment of Wise Practices When Working with Indigenous Children and Youth, Including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People

Ownership and Accountability by All

To truly improve the awareness, access, and quality of supports and services available to Indigenous children and youth, it is imperative that service providers, policy makers, government workers, administration, and all who work with Indigenous children and youth be accountable and take ownership for the current situation. We all must look at the ways that we contribute to the inadequacy and inaccessibility of the current services provided to Indigenous children and youth, and the systems that perpetuate these issues, and use that as a guide and motivation to work toward a better future individually and collaboratively.[124]

Relationship Building

Relationship building is key to improving the awareness, access, and quality of supports and services available to Indigenous children and youth. It is essential that service providers, policy makers, government workers, administration, and all who work with Indigenous children and youth build relationships with the Indigenous people and communities they work with and whose decisions they impact. A key aspect of relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and communities is a sense of allyship, showing up authentically, and supporting the empowerment of Indigenous people and communities. To learn more about how to be an ally, the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network has created a useful guide, which can be found here: https://reseaumtlnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ally_March.pdf

When Working Directly with Indigenous Children and Youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth

Youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and service providers offered many best practices when working with Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. We have grouped these into best practices when working directly with Indigenous children and youth and best practices when making decisions that impact Indigenous children and youth.

Role Modelling

Knowledge Sharing Session participants highlighted the importance of adults in their lives modelling the behaviours they want to see. They expressed how they want more

[124] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

adults to look up to, to guide them, to demonstrate how to do things, and to support them when they need it the most.[125]

Commitment to Healing and Wellness

Knowledge Sharing Session participants noted that it is important for service providers working with Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, to be in a good place and well enough themselves to provide support. It is important that service providers understand life as a healing journey and that they consider all aspect of wellness to provide wholistic approaches in their supports and services.[126]

Person-Centered Approaches

Youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions stressed the importance of providing individualized, personalized approaches, or client-centered care. This is fostered through taking time to become aware of each individual's personal history to better understand where they are coming from and how to better help and support them. It is important to not assume that all youth are on the same level and to meet them where they are at when you provide support. Another way to promote client centered care is to facilitate youth discussions among your colleagues, in your organizations, and communities.[127]

Long-term & Preventative Care

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants stressed the need for long-term care. Youth shared how it is crucial that service providers "follow up and follow through", keep in contact when possible, and ensure that contingency plans are in place to ensure long-term access to needed services.

Knowledge Sharing Sessions also emphasized the importance of preventative care. As one participant shared, "we need to teach youth before they have to learn the hard way". In relation to this, participants also started that it is important that service providers provide timely responses to requests. The also stressed the need for service providers to be reliable.[128]

Consider, Welcome, Incorporate, Invite, and Include Culture in All Aspects of Service Provision

It was made clear during the Knowledge Sharing Sessions that for Indigenous youth, culture is central to all other aspects in their life. Therefore, it is essential that service providers and other who work with Indigenous youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, consider, welcome, incorporate, invite, and include culture in all aspects of their service provision. For participants of the Knowledge Sharing Sessions, this looked like being interested and invested in getting youth involved in their culture, opening doors for

[125] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[126] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[127] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
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youth to participate in cultural activities and opportunities, and fostering cultural connection to Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, and the community.

It was also mentioned by Knowledge Sharing Sessions participants that service providers need cultural awareness training to understand and value the importance of culture in the lives of Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous youth. They also mentioned the importance of incorporating Indigenous frameworks in all work, asking and not assuming cultural needs, being culturally distinct but barrier-free in service provision, normalizing traditional teachings, and protecting the land, plants, and medicines from overharvesting and overuse by non-Indigenous people.[129]

Collaborate & Commit to Community-based Solutions

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants stressed the importance of supporting and recognizing community-based solutions. Participants shared that it is essential to build relationships with the community and people you work with. They also mentioned that it is important for service providers, organizations, and others who work with youth to collaborate and work together, especially when developing care plans for Indigenous children and youth.[130]

Provide Safe Space

As shared by Knowledge Sharing Session participants, providing safe spaces for Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, is paramount when providing supports and services. They mentioned the importance of ensuring the physical space is safe, which can be fostered by promoting the development and use of designated spaces for youth. Participants also voiced the importance of focusing on belonging and accepting, being genuine and empathic to youth, being non-judgemental, and making youth feel welcome. It is also important to normalize and destigmatize youth experiences, be aware of the power dynamic that exists between youth and those in positions of perceived authority, and to allow youth to use their voice to express their needs and ask questions without disempowering them or making them “feel embarrassed or dumb”.

Some examples of practical best practices to promote safe space is to give youth the option to access both male and female service providers and promoting lateral kindness in your workplaces, organizations, and communities. Overall, it is important to be a safe haven for youth and to never turn them away in time of need.[131]

Provide Accessible & Barrier-Free Services

Of significance to Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the importance of providing accessible, barrier-free services, including providing accommodations where necessary. This includes meeting youth where they are at, providing equitable access to supports and services, and offering resources to support the access of supports and

[129] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[130] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[131] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

services, such as through disability accommodations, transportation, and economic support. It is also important to acknowledge and respect the traditional hunting and gathering seasons of communities and make accommodations where necessary.

Youth expressed the importance of ensuring timely access to services, ensuring youth and the community know of what is available to them and the benefits of programs and services, and preventing gatekeeping to supports and services, especially those that relate to cultural support and education. Participants shared that it would be especially helpful to discontinue age restrictions for the access of programs and services, to utilize technology to increase awareness, and to share resources and supplies within communities.

Youth also mentioned the importance of creating accessible spaces through providing alternative approaches to care, such as art- and music-based therapy and land-based therapy.[132]

Meet Basic Needs First

Knowledge Sharing Session participants highlighted the significance of meeting basic needs first when supporting Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. Practices such as providing food and access to clean water were important to youth when accessing services. They also stressed the importance of taking care of planning and other barriers to access services, such as transportation and supplies. Service providers mentioned the necessity of considering the determinants of health and using that as a guide to providing support.[133]

Value Youth

Of significance to many youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions was the importance of valuing youth for who they are, for their gifts, and for their contributions. This includes being understanding and open, listening to and enthusiastically engaging with youth, validating what they say and their experiences, encouraging youth and supporting their choices, and fostering two-way relationships that builds bond and trust.

Knowledge Sharing Session participants said that it was important that youth are honoured, recognized, and are meaningfully compensated for their contributions and time. They also shared the importance of promoting positive identity through empowering them, reminding youth of their value, accepting them for who they are, and promoting their presence and voice wherever possible. Youth stressed the importance of being open and understanding to youth and "not just spend time with them when they are happy".[134]

[132] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[133] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[134][134] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

Of note was the expressed need by Knowledge Sharing Session participants to place youth in leadership roles, to remind them of the opportunities and possibilities of the future, and to help them to understand they have purpose and are here for a reason. As one participant put it, we need to "anchor descendants to ancestors" and remind them of their value just for being themselves as Indigenous youth.[135]

Educate Yourself, Become Aware

One key aspect of mentioned by many Knowledge Sharing Session participants was the necessity for service providers and other who work with Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people is to become educated in a wide variety of topics that impact youth. This includes becoming aware of the history and impacts of colonization and intergeneration trauma and how to best support individuals and communities impacted by colonial violence. Of particular importance was becoming educated in how to best support Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth.

It is also important to understand the specific economic, systemic, and social barriers and disadvantages faced in the communities you work in. Establishing rapport with community members is also essential to gain a fulsome understanding of cultural differences and how you can appropriately support and accommodate.

Youth in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions stressed the importance of doing the research if you don't have the answers and treating your discussions with youth as education because they are the experts of their own experience.[136]

Relatability

Youth participants of the Knowledge Sharing Sessions mentioned how it was important for them to have access to services providers and supports that they can relate to. They voiced the need for more support from individuals who have gone through similar experiences and the value of sharing your own life experiences with youth so they can learn. Participants mentioned how it is also important to connect with youth through shared activities that promote relatability such as through music or discussion of mutual interests. Another important aspect of this is letting youth know who you are and providing thorough, friendly introductions.[137]

Public Perception

Youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions shared how public perception is important, especially in their perceived safety of accessing services from individuals and organizations. Youth stressed the importance of "helping youth quietly", doing work for the right reasons and not for publicity, having good public relations, and changing the narrative about youth struggles to promote understanding and inclusivity.[138]

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[135] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[136] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[137] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[138] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

When Working Specifically with Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth in All Service Sectors

Knowledge Sharing Session participants noted that is especially important to create safe space for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. This includes practices such as not assuming, but asking what they specifically need, ensuring the use of proper pronouns, supporting and promoting teachings and learning about traditional Two-Spirit roles within community. Participants also noted how it is essential for service providers to be trained in how to best provide support to 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.[139]

When Making Decisions that Impact Supports and Services for Indigenous Children and Youth

Listen and Learn from Youth & Include Them in Decision Making Processes

Many youth who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Sessions stressed the importance of learning from youth. This includes inviting them to and making safe spaces to share and be a part of the decision-making process, amplifying their voices, and compensating them appropriately for their contributions and time. It is essential to understand that "youth are experts of their own experience" and to not tokenize youth by misrepresenting or limiting their participation.[140]

Community-led Solutions

Many Knowledge Sharing Session participants emphasized the importance of community-led solutions. This includes reaching out to the community and asking them of their needs, including communities in decision making discussions and processes, supporting and prioritizing community-based initiatives in funding, resource provision, and infrastructure, and supporting self-determination. Some examples of these best practices include providing resources to communities to host workshops and activities and hiring locals to meet service and infrastructure needs.

In addition to the above, youth noted how it is important for people and organizations to acknowledge the land and people they work with. Youth also stressed the importance of those in decision making power to advocate for shorter access and response times for all supports and services, and for a focus on prevention when developing resources. Youth shared how it is essential to work toward long-term programming, including always promoting long-term, sustainable core funding for programs and services.[141]

[139] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[140] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings
[141][141] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

What Now?

This Advocacy and Awareness Guide is meant to be an evergreen document that can be updated and edited as necessary to appropriately reflect the current times.

If you have any feedback, comments, revision, additions, or notice an error in this document, please reach out to us through our contact form at https://wemattercampaign.org/contact/.

Section 9a: Creation of the Guide

Creating the Guide Grounded in Kindness

We Matter was presented with an opportunity to apply for funding to run a project that will contribute to addressing the gaps in the care and approaches available in addressing the effects of intergenerational trauma due to colonization. It has been highlighted that much work has been done in addressing the trauma caused by residential schools across the Indigenous populations in Canada. However, it remains that the effects of colonial genocide extended into all corners of Indigenous people's lives resulting in intergenerational trauma that directly impacts Indigenous children, youth and 2SLGBTQQIA+. These impacts are exacerbated by the continued ongoing colonization and empty approaches to reconciliation. Gaps in the supports, approaches, and funding to address the needs of Indigenous children, youth and 2SLGBTQQIA+ remain, and this is what informs this project.

We Matter values youth and community voice. It became clear in the consultations, during the initial stages of building out our approaches, that the community members most affected needed to inform the solutions and next steps. Many reports are created and end up sitting in a file, so the intention was to bring the youth and community voice to life. This would ideally reach many people in many areas so that they can apply what they've learned in any small way they can. That is our call to action to you – the reader, whoever and wherever you are.

It also a hope that this could be an example of how to work with youth, as we share what we did to foster safe spaces for youth to express their needs, and as we share our reflections on what we could do better next time, as we are always evolving and bringing new life to what we do. In this it is also We Matter's hope to take what we've heard and continue to address the needs that we heard in the sharing sessions in collaboration with youth, within the scope of what We Matter does.

The idea for this guide was born from frustrations with the lack of holistic and nurturing supports and services. It was determined that one way to improve services available to children and youth was to create more dialogue around the issue to influence change. Thus, this guide creates an opportunity to create deeper awareness and advocacy.

This work is not meant to be done alone. After We Matter met with Shelby Thomas in their consultations, they realized that she held the skills, drive, and heart to lead this project. We Matter saw that the way she works aligns with We Matter's goals of uplifting and promoting the lives of Indigenous youth. Therefore, they engaged her to become the project lead for the creation of this guide.

To support this work, Jenny Lay was invited to embark on this journey as a co-creator! As a true collaborative process, this work was planned to be flexible and adapt to welcome different thoughts, suggestions, and approaches. In sharing her wisdom,

Jenny instructed that the proposed work is better characterized as a guide over a campaign because it allows for more expansive and long-term use as an evergreen resource that can be applied in a variety of ways, including as a campaign tool. It is so inspiring to work with Jenny as she pours her heart into everything that she does! In her work, Jenny has ensured that we truthfully bundle the sacred wisdom we gained from all the knowledge holders at the sharing sessions!

Nadia Chaney was invited to facilitate the Knowledge Sharing Sessions. Due to Nadia's skill in fostering accessible spaces for creative thought and expansive experience in community facilitation, along with her fun-loving spirit, she fostered a vibrant and welcoming virtual environment. She played a crucial role in ensuring everyone's voice was heard. As a way to honour Nadia, the guide tries to capture her nurturing soul and enlightening wisdom so it can be more widely shared and experienced to the benefit at all!

Lisa Neault from We Matter held a key role in the realization of this guide. She demonstrated true flexibility and adaptability. She always showed up as a stable grounding rock to ensure that everyone involved felt supported. Lisa's contributions to the guide have been welcomed whole-heartedly and her loving and supportive spirit is braided into this guide to extend its reach!

Most of the time, when you are doing this type of work, you do not have enough hands to properly care and support the community. Therefore, wellness and cultural supports were an essential component to creating a safe, inclusive and comforting space!

River Petapun Johnson agreed to make himself available as a wellness support for the sessions. He was vital as: he empowered participants to show up authentically in the moment; he listened in a way to ensure participants felts heard; and he absorbed all knowledge shared to demonstrate its value! The guide attempts to capture his guidance so that it can be cherished by more!

Stephanie Landherr fosters an energetic environment that makes you feel like you are walking on sunshine. She played an integral role as a cheerleader with her radiating positivity, her nurturing spirit, and her loving nature. You could feel her presence even virtually! Her excitement and passion for this work is clear and it is our hope that her spirit is represented in the pages of this guide to ensure that as many people as possible can be uplifted by her energy!

Terrance Thomas agreed to make time to provide his cultural and spiritual care! He was always so willing to offer his strong and meaningful guidance grounded in culture. He ensured each session started in a good way by opening with a prayer! He was always so apt to share himself and his teaching with everyone!

Last and certainly not least, the creation of this guide would have been a lot thinner, if it was not for the knowledge holders, the participants of the knowledge sharing sessions! It is We Matter's hope that we were able to properly reflect the sacred knowledge that

was shared! We Matter recognizes it's sacred responsibility as knowledge carriers to authentically represent the passions, spirit, soul, love, truth and wisdom of the knowledge keepers! We Matter hopes you all know how inspiring each and everyone of you are! We are forever grateful for this opportunity and for everyone who contributed, because together we can create the change we wish to see!

Section 9b: Methodology[142]

This Guide is a living document, and the intent is that it will be updated periodically to accurately reflect the times. Moreover, we emphasize the importance of continuing the conversation on improved support and services for Indigenous children and in all settings.

Research

Personal and professional experience and connections as well as online research was done to gain a better understanding of the supports and services available to Indigenous children and youth nation-wide. This research and the information gained during knowledge sharing sessions was analyzed to complete an initial assessment of gaps, barriers, best practices, and needs related to supports and services for Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.

Indigenous Youth-Led

As Indigenous people with different experiences and worldviews, each member of our Kinship provided invaluable perspectives to this project and its related components.

The research components of this project were undertaken by an Indigenous youth researcher who has extensive grassroots experience coupled with strong backgrounds in research, communication, and project coordination.

[142] The research and information gathered to create this guide was meaningful, but not comprehensive to truly reflect all the distinct experiences of diverse Indigenous peoples in Canada. This is due to time constraints and limitations outlined deeper in this guide. This guide should be seen as a building block toward improving services and supports to Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. It is necessary that further consultation and engagement with Indigenous communities and services providers is completed to ensure true positive, meaningful, and sustainable changes are realized. Therefore, we stress the importance of continuing discussions with Indigenous communities and regions to foster a more complete regionally representative understanding of the unique and distinct needs and experiences of diverse Indigenous peoples across the country. Therefore, it is important to recognize this guide as a living document and future contributions should be welcomed to expand on the knowledge and insight held sacredly within it and extend its reach.

"As an Indigenous youth researcher, I strive to ensure transparency and accuracy when working with Indigenous people, communities, and organizations. I understand from my own experience for this to be particularly important when working with Indigenous youth. It is essential that the voices of youth are not lost or overshadowed by our own perspectives and biases. I believe their truths are reflected accurately to the best to my abilities as a researcher within this Guide. Moreover, I express that my heart and spirit have been instilled into and moved by this work. My passion for improving the lives of Indigenous people and meeting and working with such inspiring young Indigenous people with similar experiences to my own has provided me with immense motivation at the most crucial times. I thank all the youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and service providers for their generous contributions and for trusting our Project Team with their insights in the hope that together we can work toward improving the quality and access of supports and services for Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth. Kinanakomition, ekosi." **– Jenny Lay, Co-Creator**

The Indigenous youth researcher was supported in her work by an Indigenous youth mentor who has extensive community work experience and a strong and passionate background in research, legal training, and working with children and youth. It was essential for the mentor to support the researcher by recognizing and empowering the researcher's brilliant ideas, thoughts and work and provide guidance that helped to realize the researcher's vision.

"First and foremost, I must acknowledge the amazing and caring mentors that have supported and empowered me to foster my gifts and have guided me into becoming the best and most kind version of myself including my parents, my grandparents, my siblings, my partner, my friends, Grandmother Velma Orvis, Elder Blu Waters, Grandmother Bernie Williams, Grandmother Kathy Louis, Grandmother Louise Haulli, Christa Big Canoe, Tenley Desroches , Thomas Barnett, Jenny Lay, Jennifer Cox, Bobbi-Jo Lillie Virtue, Petra Turcotte, Shaylen Smith, Gladys Radek, Marion Buller, Naiomi Metallic, Hadley Friedland, Kirsti Mathers McHenry, Cindy Blackstock, and Brenda Gunn. As an Indigenous youth mentor, the adventure to creating this guide transpired organically and through relationships. During our life journeys, we are fortunate to hold diverse roles and responsibilities. As this project flourished and evolved, I understood that I was to carry a mentorship role for this project. I saw this as an opportunity to empower the gifts of many wondrous people involved in the project and to support them in doing work that honours their true and authentic abilities, purposes, and selves. As we heard in the knowledge sharing sessions, mentorship and guidance is vital to supporting the wellbeing of Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people. Mentorship is about investing time, energy and care in people to help each other ignite our sparks and realize our true potential, purpose, and fulfillment. My approach to mentorship is through fostering relationships by creating empowering and compassionate spaces. In each moment, it is integral to guide with kindness. As similar to a willow tree, it is important to remain flexible to ensure you are creating supportive environments that meet diverse peoples' individual needs. It is also essential to self-reflect as well as remain open, humble, and willing to learn to ensure that as a community we work together in unity to create an inspiring, delightful, and harmonious world for future generations despite our differences in our diverse experiences, opinions, approaches, perspectives, and ways of understanding. Wandering through life gently."

– Shelby Thomas, Co-Creator

Intersectionality and Indigenous Ways of Knowing

To comprehensively understand how to truly improve supports and services for Indigenous children and youth, the application of an intersectional lens in all our

research was crucial. This approach highlights how individual experiences are shaped by various dimensions of being, such as race, gender, class, and that these dimensions must be considered in their relation and interaction to one another to grasp the full picture[143].

Although it necessary to look at these various dimensions of the human being, it is also imperative that we acknowledge and honour our traditional ways of knowing and relating, which go further than intersectionality in that it understands us humans as interdependent and interconnected to all living things, not just to one another[144]. In our initial assessment and analysis of the Knowledge Sharing Session discussions, we have incorporated both approaches to understanding in our work.

Ethical Research

Our project team recognizes the importance of upholding ethical principles and standards when conducting research with Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous children and youth, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.

Project Team activities to support and uphold common standards of ethical research[145]:

1. **Informed Consent** – provided participants with an overview of the project and its purpose, including the purpose of the Knowledge Sharing Sessions and how the information collected will be used; ensured voluntary consent and let participants know they could withdraw from the sessions at any time.

2. **Protection from Harm –** made participants aware that they were not asked to retell their stories in any way; provided wellness supports during and following Knowledge Sharing Sessions.

3. **Right to Confidentiality** – allowed participants the right to be named or remain confidential in their responses; ensured participants' information is securely stored and only accessed as necessary; provided participants the opportunity to review the guide and to inform on how their contributions would like to be captured.

4. **Transparency** – remained honest and truthful in all activities related to the research in this project; discussed the limitations of this project and its related research.

5. **Participant Debrief** – wellness supports remained online for participants to access; if a participant left suddenly, a team member quickly did an email check in to make sure they were okay; participants were provided with an email should they want to follow up; participants provided with a follow up email which included a feedback link and were encouraged to provide feedback.

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[143] https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Daniel-Theriault/publication/264667611_Principles_for_the_application_of_intersectionality_to_qualitative_inquiry/links/548094b30cf22525dcb5f70a/Principles-for-the-application-of-intersectionality-to-qualitative-inquiry.pdf

[144] https://www.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/Fact%20Sheet%203%20EN%20FINAL.pdf

[145] https://psychology.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/2-4-conducting-ethical-research/

6. **Care for Vulnerable Persons** – ensured all participants under the age of 18 provided parent/guardian consent prior to participating; Knowledge Sharing Sessions were held in groups of different backgrounds to ensure safe and meaningful participation.

Furthermore, the Project Team took steps to ensure that they met several requirements and standards for ethical and meaningful engagement with Indigenous youth outlined in Indigenous Youth Voices: A Way Forward in Conducting Research with and by Indigenous Youth[146], including:

1. **Accessibility** – although working in tight time constraints, this work was done to meet Indigenous youth and children, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, where they are at; created different opportunities at different stages of the process for participation; accepted contributions in various formats, including written submission or oral feedback.

2. **Indigenous Youth Developed and Led Research** – in creation of this Guide, uplifting Indigenous youth voices has been of central focus, including supporting youth in changing narratives and supporting the resurgence of Indigenous cultures, ceremonies, languages and stories; throughout the report, we highlight youth thoughts, expressions and ideas.

3. **Holistic Approaches** – for the Knowledge Sharing Sessions, we recognized the importance of being inclusive of the diversity found in Indigenous communities; offered and created opportunities for meaningful participation by youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and services providers; we acknowledge that more engagement and work should be completed to ensure a more comprehensive and true representation of the distinct experiences of diverse Indigenous peoples across Canada.

4. Research Ethics Defined by Indigenous Youth – approached engagement with youth in an ear-wide-open and ready-to-listen manner to ensure that Indigenous youth were heard, and that they dictated the way forward in doing this work in a good way.

5. Community-Led and Culturally Specific – led by respected and trusted Indigenous peoples and involved the voices of many Indigenous peoples from different regions in Canada; we stress there is a need to continue the conversations with Indigenous communities to expand on the knowledge presented in this Guide.

6. Reciprocity – in taking on the sacred responsibility of creating this Guide, we understood our duty and obligation to doing this work in a way that truly benefits Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people; one key responsibility was to respect others time by ensuring that we came to sessions with a

[146] Indigenous Youth Voices: A way forward in conducting research with and by indigenous youth, Indigenous Youth Voices & First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (2019).

present mind and spirit to create meaningful relationships; recognized our responsibility in ensuring these relationships are maintained into the future.

7. **Support the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 66 – i**t is further recognized that multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations is integral to realizing the wellbeing of Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people.

Although the First Nations specific framework - Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession[147], does have its limitations in in its application to other Indigenous groups in Canada, including Inuit and Métis people, we believe it does provide some value in guiding our work on this project. We encourage you to learn more about these principles at: https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/[148].

Knowledge Sharing Sessions

Participant Demographics

To support the need for wholesome and distinct representation of Indigenous groups across Canada in our project, our Knowledge Sharing Sessions included Indigenous youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and service providers from various provinces and territories. We invited participants through a public callout on the We Matter website and social media outlets, as well as through email distribution.

The Project Team conducted 6 Knowledge Sharing Sessions in total:

- Service Provider Session
- Elder and Knowledge Keeper Session
- Session for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth
- Session for Youth Aged 7-14
- Session for Youth Aged 15-25
- Blended Session of Youth, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and Service Providers

The Knowledge Sharing Sessions were comprised of the following participants:

- 29 Youth participants (28 participated in Knowledge Sharing Sessions; 1 provided written submission)
- 9 First Nation, Inuit, and Métis Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Cultural/Spiritual Leaders
- 7 Service Providers working directly with Indigenous children and youth

Discussion Questions

Prior to the sessions, participants were provided with a Participant Guide to prepare. The Participant Guide included an Agenda, information about the project and its purpose, how their Responses would be used toward the creation of the Advocacy and

[147] https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/
[148] https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/

Awareness Guide, and information on where to access support before or after the Knowledge Sharing Sessions.

There were approximately 10 questions per Knowledge Sharing Session. Participants were given the option to respond during the sessions or via written submission either before or following the session.

Themes of Discussion:

1. Support and service needs of Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people

2. Gaps, challenges & barriers faced in accessing supports and services

3. Strengths and best practices when working with Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people

Feedback Survey

Knowledge Sharing Session participants were provided with a feedback survey link following each session. Results of this feedback survey are included in Appendix A: Findings from the Knowledge Sharing Sessions Feedback Survey.

Graphic Recording of Knowledge Sharing Sessions

All six knowledge sharing sessions were graphically recorded by an Indigenous youth graphic designer. These graphic elements have been included throughout the Advocacy and Awareness Guide to further enrich your understanding of the concepts discussed through visuals.

The Graphic Recording Sessions were digitally created with pen, marker, and oil paints. The approach was to use icons and symbols that reflect the concepts discussed throughout each session. The complete graphic recording pieces can be found in Appendix C: Graphic Recordings of Knowledge Sharing Sessions.

Knowledge Verification Sessions and Feedback of Guide

Purpose

It has been important to our Project Team to maintain transparency and truth and to honour the voices of our project participants throughout our work.

To ensure we accurately captured the truths that were shared by Knowledge Sharing Session participants, we provided the draft Advocacy and Awareness Guide to all participants of the Knowledge Sharing Sessions to review and provide written feedback.

In addition to this opportunity to provide written feedback, we held two Knowledge Sharing Verification Sessions. These Knowledge Verification Sessions included participants from the Knowledge Sharing Sessions, including youth, service providers, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers.

The approaches to the Knowledge Verification Sessions were similar to the Knowledge Sharing Sessions. Participants were provided opportunity to give feedback on draft Awareness and Advocacy Guide, and clarification and additional feedback was sought on various items. Participants were provided an honorarium for their time and contributions.

Limitations to Project Research

As with any research, there were limitations to this project. As an integral aspect of ethical research, these limitations have been identified below to further your understanding of the project and to guide your application of the developed material in this Guide.

Research Limitations

An overwhelmingly clear limitation of this research when conducting the environmental scan and gap analysis of supports and services available to Indigenous youth was the lack of expansive directories and databases related to supports and services for Indigenous youth or Indigenous people in general. Moreover, it is important to note that much of the collection of data on resources, supports, and services for Indigenous youth was collected online. This leaves out many supports and services that are not advertised online, including grassroots initiatives, which many Knowledge Sharing Session participants have said are so essential in their communities.

It is important to note that as a result of this project and its research, our Project Team has created an expansive directory of resources available to Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ young people, which can be found at https://wemattercampaign.org/get-help.

Knowledge Sharing Sessions Limitations

Due to the short timeframe of this project, there was a limited number of participants and time for participants to register before the Knowledge Sharing Sessions occurred. Due to these factors, we acknowledge the lack of national representation and how these disorganized demographics do not provide a regionally representative picture of the current situation. It is important to note, however, that even with a complete distinct, regionally representative sample, each individual has a unique perspective and experience, and it is important to value that in itself.

We also recognize the limitations of conducting Knowledge Sharing Sessions virtually. As described later in the Guide, internet connection remains a barrier for many communities. Moreover, holding national virtual meetings means that participants were in different time zones, which can cause scheduling conflicts. We also recognize that it may be harder for participants to open up or get to know one another in a virtual setting, or for facilitators to easily set the tone or vibe of the discussion.

Fortunately, despite the limitations, we truly believe the Knowledge Sharing Sessions were extremely successful and gave youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and service providers the space to come together for these much-needed discussions.

Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

	Discussion Question:	Knowledge Sharing Session for Service Providers	Knowledge Sharing Session for Elders and Knowledge Keepers	Knowledge Sharing Session for Youth Aged 7-14	Knowledge Sharing Session for Youth 15-25	Knowledge Sharing Session for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth	Knowledge Sharing Session 6 Blended	Written Submissions

Support and service needs of Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth	**What does wellbeing mean to you?**	· Self-identity		· Balance of everything · Sleeping good · Sleep well · Look well · Think well · Have no guilt · Feel good · Taste better · Smells like cupcakes · Calm, peace around me	· Peace · Good rest · 5 senses · Smelling traditional foods and burning medicines · Calm home · Living in peace · Community and family healing from intergenerational trauma · Holistic wellness – mind, body, spirit · Comfort food · Essential oils · Inner peace · Colour blue – safety · Learning and speaking traditional language · Sage and cedar · Tastes like tacos · Seeing the land · Smelling sage · Warmth of having friends and family near · Pets · Clean bathroom · Happy community · Smiling children · Fields full of plants and berries · Warm blankets from dryer · Sticky sap · Sand · Fresh fruit, home cooked meals · Clean water · Smells like being out on the land – mud, sap, wet earth, dry grasses, sweet fern, wild strawberries, homemade bread · Strong connected community · Creatures and the land	· Happy with life and content · Being balanced, medicine wheel · Protecting your peace · Speaking your language · Spirit is comfortable · Self-care · Showing up for myself to do my healing · Spirit is comfortable · Rested and calm in mind and body	· Being balanced mentally, physically, and spiritually · Being comfortable in your own body and in your own space and skin · Understanding that growth and good things come from hardship and feeling weak · Having access to space that's safe and allows for an authentic version of self to be · Holistic wellness – fulfillment · Living in peace · Preparing for your bundle · Rattle and drum · Inner peace · Smells sweet – like love · Looks like a shine from the inside · The seasons, winter, fall spring, summer · Authenticity · Shining from the inside	· Thinking positively · Feeling good about it · Knowing you are safe · How you feel about yourself

	What helps you to feel well/ feel a sense of wellbeing?		· Raising young people with a sense of pride since infancy · Learning how to make and take care of traditional outfits · Cultural support · Beading · Learning about traditions – long hair · Traditional language · Being self-sufficient, knowing how to live off the land if necessary · Putting prayers out for guidance, help, and to learn from each other · Understanding life is a healing journey · Drumming – we are all connected through the drums across all cultures · Singing	· Sports · Drawing · Walking · Relaxing · Watching TV · Talking to people that make me feel safe · Talk to parents and friends · Reading	· Meaningful work · Secure and reliable housing · Access to the land · Being respected · Having spaces and support available · Indigenous spaces in institutions, wellness workers, representation in universities · Community support – offering to take on to the land, sharing medicines · Thoughtfulness in programs – food gift cards · Hot food · Clean water · Safe housing · Attending ceremonies such as full moon ceremonies, sweats · Sitting with elders · Bring in nature, with trees and water · Bathing · Going for walks · Being with family · Cleaning · Putting toes in water · Time spent with friends, family, and elders sharing · Laughing · Playing games with family, friends, community · Sports · Spending time with friends · Pets · Being well fed · Baking bannock · Feeling “at home”	· Healing intergenerational trauma · Being physically active · Connecting with relations · Being creative · Being safe in my thoughts · Having emotional connectedness · Healthy boundaries · Healthy mind, body, and spirit · Taking care of yourself · Healing · Being outdoors · Berries	·Traditional activities · Spending time alone · Nature · Recharging · Filling up own cup · Developing resilience · Reflecting on traditions · Living with a purpose · Sharing in appreciation of our ancestors’ contributions towards wellbeing today · Connecting with community – shared experiences, supporting each other, understanding that were not alone as Indigenous people in Canada · Sharing food, cooking meals together · Taking care of myself – eating, reflecting, alone time · Carrying family traditions forward · Hand drumming · Spending time with family · Bike riding · Space for being my authentic self · Taking care of all aspects of wellness	· Knowing I have a warm place to stay · Having food in my stomach · Knowing the things I need will happen · Talking to my family · Checking in · Sharing circles, discussion with peers · Getting involved

	What supports and services do you feel are most needed/ requested by Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth?	· Online content · Identity – grow, find themselves · Addictions services · 2SLGBTQQIA+ education/ understanding for community · Coping mechanisms · Relationships with Elders · Culture · Know where they come from – history, teachings · Role models · Sports and recreation · Cultural teachings · Connect with elders and learn knowledge · Lack of knowledge carriers in communities · Cultural teachings · Cultural workshops and activities · Shared meals · Medicine wheel workshops · Hunger for identity · Role models · Skill building · Gender and sexuality · Gender affirming care · Safe space for youth and kids to come together – they are in control of the space · Basic needs for families	· Youth health clinics and services · Online health services · Supports and resources for kids "pushed out of care" · Money management · Life skills · Showcasing, highlighting, promoting Indigenous teaching about who we are as whole a person – four quadrants · Learning teachings about how to conduct ourselves in our respective roles as a student, teacher, etc.		· Supports for grief · Youth spaces · Access t cultural support workers · Access to ceremonies · Youth mental health workers · Family support · Access to medicines · Safe spaces · Academic support · Support available online · Wifi · Clean water · Sufficient nutrition · Pandemic support · Education access and support · Community engagement	· Support programs · Training programs	· Learning traditional language · Land based education for personal connectedness to the land as part of wholistic growth · Having a safe space for youth to connect with one another · Engaging and compassionate educators · Culture in school · Workshops · Counselling · Teach about history of the First People of Canada · More circle meetings · 2S, men, and boys' circles · Online groups to better share information about activities · Meet basic needs – food · Mental health supports and services · Education about mental health so people understand how to help and the severity	· Listening to youth · Donating to youth · Volunteers for youth · Mental health · Diversity education · Advocacy support – help them advocate for themselves

		· Childcare · Parenting programming · Court/justice support · Express the child within them · Barrier free access to culture and spiritual care · Coping with grief and loss · Space to feel · Sense of community · Judgement free spaces to be who they are						

	What makes you feel supported as a youth? How do people, organizations, and others make you feel supported? / How can we helpers make youth feel safe and supported when they access services?	· Normalize · Give them space · Respect · Feel like they are hearing what youth are saying · Provide monetary value to services · Provide food · Acceptance · Feeling welcome to participate in traditional activities · Meet them where they are at – they need places to go when they are going through turmoil · Don't just spend time with youth when happy	· Support from people who have went through similar experiences and overcame – homelessness, addiction	· Support my choices · Like my ideas · Encourage me · People are excited to see you/ they are happy you are around · Friendly introductions · Fun activities together · People listen and help · People want to keep you and your body healthy	· Understand intergenerational trauma · Safe spaces · Education · Accommodation · Help quietly	· Be aware of economic disadvantages · Have good public relations · Hold gatherings · Provide elder support · Amplify youth voices · Don't tokenize youth · Changing the narrative · Inclusivity	· Designated safe space to meet and not a building that is used for other things · Try to understand youth · Be aware · Allow youth to be who they are	· Listening to them · Encourage them · Reassurance
	How do you access support or where do you go to do these activities? Who helps you access these activities and spaces?	· Community centre · Internet is accessed a lot for information due to lack of resources in community		· Parents · Counsellor · Friendship Centre · Mom · Internet		· Organizations · Personal groups · Workplaces		

Gaps, Challenges & Barriers Faced in Accessing Supports & Services	**What activities, supports, and services would be helpful for you that you don't have access to right now?/ What are the gaps?**	· More services for 2SLGBTQQIA+ community · More health care – lacking doctors in community · Mental health and addiction services that are culturally relevant, sensitive, and aware · Safe spaces, drop-in opportunities · Nation/distinctions-relevant Indigenous supports · More support for young aging out of care · Harm reduction · Funding for youth projects · Barrier-free supports and services (have to meet their criteria/ standards) · Safe places · Lack of awareness about what's happening in community · Need more opportunity to learn about supports and services · Creating safe space for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in community	· Services and supports beyond 18 · Support for post-secondary students · Specific resources for four age groups of children and youth: early childhood, elementary, secondary, post-secondary · Help with relationship struggles · Coping skills for relationships, healthy relationship skills – whole family and intimate relationship · Support for youth who siblings abuse them · Support for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people · Lack of experience in interns serving community – often sent to community for experience · Treating older youth like children · Success preparation · Bring our teachings back – of the old ways of how our grandmothers and	· Activities for older kids and teenagers · Fast access to counselling ("takes months and moths to get")	· Institutions need to accommodate and support Indigenous people connection to land/ living off the land · No/ little services available in community · Lack of access to culture for urban Indigenous youth · Access to traditional medicines · Access to traditional knowledge · Seasonal ceremonies open to the public · Infrastructure to connect with other communities · Internet connection · Indigenous student centre in all schools	· Services and supports beyond 18 · Lack of education within organizations · Supports and services for northern communities · Mental health supports · Safety in access health services · Not enough good paying jobs with benefits to be self-sufficient as youth · Consistency of care providers	· Community workshop hosted by community members · Places for youth to just hang out · Community support for youth coping from impacts of COVID-19 · Support for parents	· Youth positions on council

			grandfathers walked, normalize this · Travel supports · Support BEFORE aging out of care, preparation · Space for youth who are “mixed-blood” · Role models · Support for young mothers and fathers · Little people who know the teachings or willing to pass on freely · Teachings about young boys · Land based education · Internet connection					

	What are the limitations, challenges, and barriers to accessing services?	· Child welfare system, number of Indigenous · Church-based programs when young people want to learn about who they are in their culture, want to connect · Adults lead the youth – they need to model the behaviour they want to see · Reactionary responses from adults in their lives · Lack of support for grassroots organizing · Grassroots people have to fill the gaps · Wait months to access services by referral · Northern communities don't have facilities to support activities/ needed supports and services · Red tape of trying to plan activities, especially cultural activities – time to process requests · Colonial processes of planning activities and gatherings · Lack of Indigenous people working at the desk who can relate to the youth, lack of support · Lack of access to get to community where Elders and	· Addictions · Homelessness · Abuse in foster care · Children being used for income in child welfare system · Food insecurity · System is designed to break them down not bring them up · Inundated with mainstream culture – need revised education to have pride in culture and self · Need to maintain connection to community when leaving for post-secondary · Our values are not at the forefront of society · Being in non-Indigenous foster homes · Older generation has had trauma and they don't want to open up and it affects the next generation. This is our young people now · Sometimes hard for youth to see the future is even possible · Lack of education · Systemic · Institutional	· Time it takes to access services – months · Have to leave community to access services – travel, time · Lack of services in community · COVID-19	· Distance from other communities · Time it takes to access services · Transportation · Racism · Location/ geographic barriers in programs · Long wait time for services · Ability to advocate/ effectiveness of advocacy is limited · Gatekeeping · Systemic structure – barriers, colonial · Instability of services, no continuity · Over harvesting, overuse of medicines/traditional foods by non-indigenous people · Distance from services · Poor Wi-Fi · COVID-19 · Lack of stability in service providers · How long it takes for change to happen · Poor education in remote communities makes it hard to prepare for post-secondary · Broken promises from government · Being taught Indigenous studies by non-Indigenous people · Loss of way of life	· Gendered teachings · Having to meet specific criteria to access services · Remote location · Subpar quality of service when we do get them · Lack of funding to provide support · Counsellors who can't relate to my life experience · Lack of resources in Inuktitut language · Youth criminal records for those who have changed their lives and want to provide support now · Lack of cultural training · Lateral violence · Criminal justice system discrimination · Distance · Language · Long waitlists · Band-Aid solutions · Providing medication rather than therapy due to costs, access, etc. · Having to miss school or work to access healthcare · Don't have support of family or community when leaving to access services or care · Inflexible application processes – academically driven · Northern communities often ignored in services/ projects · Little/ no representation in government	· Lack of resources to access land based education – transportation, finances, safe space, minimal budgets, location, community willingness · Gaps in social system due to colonization · Impacts of colonization · Some with decision making power do not value land based education · Need to place more value in Elders' teachings · Access to food – can't think about anything else · Communication · Fracture in community collaboration	· Sometimes people don't want to talk about it or ask for help · Trust · Lack of communication · Funding · Not available when you need it – on demand

		Knowledge Keepers are or to bring them in · Elder burnout – overworked · Bureaucracy · Pressure, stress, lack of support for frontline staff – not sustainable · Burnout of helpers · Lack of funding to support frontline workers properly · Role modelling from adults · Support systems · Being the only support for someone – burnout · Not being able to access cultural services as a support person with an Indigenous person due to being non-Indigenous · Funding for youth-led projects · Lack of respect for youth efforts · Competition for funding · Lateral violence · Competing for scarce resources · Community resistance	· Time to process basic needs request · Funding · Infrastructure · Youth have to leave community in a plane to go to school – parents who may be residential school survivors may be triggered · Youth need ways to earn money in communities · Post-secondary funding, lack of and too low of funds to be sustainable · “mixed blood” youth feel like they don’t belong · Education – youth passing through without learning · Disconnection from culture · Lack of funding for sports · Lack of funding for own cultural items			· High turnover of support workers · Intergenerational trauma · Access to education · Access to post-secondary funding, not enough funding to survive · Addictions		

	What would make it easier for youth to have access to these activities, supports, and services?	· More knowledge/ interest by educators to get children and youth involved in culture · Barrier-free · Youth driven · Provide education to service providers	· More support funds for sports · Language to be taught in school and cultural activities · Equitable access · Make youth aware of supports and services – advertise · Don't make youth feel embarrassed or "dumb" for asking something · Sponsorships for activities and sports · Travel subsidies · Transportation · Supports in schools · Having an Indigenous room in schools · Safe spaces	· Shorter referral time · Services more responsive, timely	· Transportation · Establish in person supports in the community · Advocacy · Accommodations for people with disabilities · Prevent overuse of medicine by non-Indigenous people · Stop the gate keeping to our culture · Bring the culture an land based teachings into school · Affordable stable internet access · Hunting/gathering support	· Both male and female counsellors available in school · Cultural training for employers · Create safe spaces for understanding dialogue · Promote lateral kindness · Organizations need to establish a diversity policy · Avoid making general commitments to diversity · Invite 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to sit on boards and committees · Prioritize the needs of remote communities – reach out to them · Prioritize hiring locals · Provide support to local youth to achieve required education/credentials for necessary positions in community · Pay qualified locals to create necessary infrastructure needed to create accessibility to programs and services · Provide long-term, sustainable funding for core programming · Ensure contingency plans are in place to ensure continuity of care · Genuine peers · Therapists that live in the community · Video chat application for grant/ funding opportunities	· Awareness · Leadership · Education · Social media outreach and organization · Creating accessibility · Transportation · Food · Communication to create awareness · Having a safe space · Leadership – placing importance in leadership · Destigmatizing · Educating · Provide youth with food and groceries	· Being able to talk to others openly · "spreading the word more" · Not being afraid or embarrassed to ask for help

Strengths and Best practices when working with Indigenous children and youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth	**What do you think are the best approaches in supporting Indigenous youth, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth? What can service providers do better?**	· Being an ear to listen, just listening · No judgement- be aware of authority position · Don't listen just to respond or have an answer · Be a role model · Anchoring ancestors and descendants · Help youth to know they have a purpose, they are here for a reason · Remind of importance of role of youth · Cultural transmission · Raising awareness · Destigmatizing – special needs, differences, effects of trauma of colonial oppression · Involve community – let them know of the benefits of services · Empower · Promoting · Facilitating youth · Pay youth for their time and contributions · Peer support – pay! · Recognize, honour, respect youth for the time · Verbally recognize youth · Monetary value for their time	· Normalize our teachings · Friendship centres locally and across Canada should work together · Cultural teachings should be open regardless of distinctions – children will still benefit · Land based education · Connect to youth through music · Give youth a vision, something to look forward to · Encourage youth · Remind of possibilities · Must not let youth get to the point of homelessness – getting lost to the street · Have to be in a good place to support · Provide information and encouragement, how to advocate for themselves · Help youth to do it themselves · Meeting youth where they are at · Individualized support – don't group everyone and expect them to be at the same level · Reach out to those connected to culture and involve them in your services and programs · Culturally aware and sensitive educators and service providers · Understanding life as a healing journey		· Build relationships with the community and people · Connect Elders with students · Long-term support	· Be aware of cultural differences · All supports need 2SLGBTQQIA+ training · Follow up · Follow through · Prevention · Plan for long term care · Plan for long term programming · Include community in all discussions and decision making · Prioritize community input · Frequent check ins · Genuine care · Empathy · Non-judgemental · Do the research if you don't have the answers · Be kind, open, · Do check-ins · Include youth in your research · Youth-led projects · Consider determinants of health and accommodate to meet needs · Community based solutions · Training in supporting transgender youth · Doing the work for good reasons not for publicity · Build relationships · Break down the power system to allow for more community based solutions	· Creating a safe space · Focus on belonging and acceptance · Land based education · Utilize technology to create awareness and accessibility	· Consent · Become aware of person's history to better help them · Teach youth before they have to learn things the hard way

			· Allowing space where they don't have to hold back from who they are · Make youth feel good about they are · Don't overshadow youth and their stories · Best practices · Finding connection through food, activities					

	Thinking of the times you accessed supports and services, what made you feel safe, understood, and welcomed? / How can helpers make youth feel safe when accessing supports and services?	· More understanding/ openness from "older" people · Elders and older generations speaking about roles of 2S people in traditional society	· Create a safe place · Educate yourself on how to be a good helper · Instilling value · Understand everyone is gifted	· Adults with great education who don't lie to your face · That I won't get scammed/ sense of trust · Actually listen · Look like they want to help you · Not lying · Not wasting my time · Wearing a mask · Good vibe, looks welcoming, not sketchy · Here for the right reason	· Welcoming · Non-judgemental · Distinctions-free support · Respect for culture and traditions	· Respect boundaries · Representation in public spaces · Feeling respected · Being compensated for time spent contributing · Seeing Indigenous recognized – on a larger scale, too · Inclusivity · Telling the truth · Giving space to be heard · Treating youth like normal people · Listening to youth · Service providers take the time to get to know their clients to understand their personal needs	· Having a bond · Trusting relationship · Listen to youth in a way that builds a positive relationship · Knowing where to access supports/service providers and liaising connection · Two-way relationship · Open communication with parents · Respecting experiences – treating it as education, understanding youth are the experts of their experience · Keep parents informed of activities and outreach ahead of time · Taking care of logistics and other barriers to access · Treat youth like they are worthy of your time · Use social media to build interest and engage with youth in a relevant way · Provide a barrier-free safe, welcoming place – don't turn youth away · Keep contact	

	What are your immediate goals in life and what kind of support do you need to achieve them?			· Being able to share with others, feelings · Support for things wanting to learn or not yet good at · Talk with people who are good at what you want to learn · Talk with people who know what they are doing · Mentor, role, models · Focus on school – help with getting homework done				· Assist youth to learn/reclaim traditional language – funding, infrastructure

	In a "perfect" world, with all the resources and access available, what is your vision for supports and services in your community ? What would that look like?		· All youth grow up knowing what unties us on this land, know our shared history · All are aware of residential schools and the history of colonization and how it impacts us · Every textbook rewritten so that Indigenous scientific contributions are recognized, Indigenous stories are highlighted · No blood quantum for Indian Status · Real indigenous issues being taught in school · Food security · Healthy habits · Land acknowledgements by all officials · Clean drinking water · Strong connection to culture · Youth centre in every community – safe haven and teaching centre for youth, gathering place · Learning and teaching about traditional plant use, medicines	· Group activities · More activities about self-expression · 24/7 community centre for teens · More activities for people my age – have something to do everyday (age appropriate activities based on interests) · Video games, sports, running around · People have the things that they need · People are happy and live in a happy place	· All respect our culture and traditions · Dry communities · Community gardens · Sustainable living · All educated on how to get food from the land and how to process it in a traditional way · Healthy herds of animals · Our land is honoured and protected · Healing our trauma to have a better future · No survival mode · Cultural camp in every community · Food sovereignty · All eat healthy · Land stewardship	· Mental health centres in every community where Indigenous staff are thoroughly trained in diverse topics such as gender, sexuality, misogyny, racism, cultural traditions of local community, religion, disability, mental health · All youth have opportunity for post-secondary education · Doctors and nurses live in our communities · Indigenous people are the decision makers · Each person has a support person · Self-determination truly exists · Not have to battle with Indigenous Services Canada · Services providers listen and value our input · Service providers follow up and keep their word · Service providers are honest · All communities have sensory rooms · Indigenous youth have everything they need to live a good life – pimatisiwin · We spread lateral kindness · More Indigenous doctors and nurses	· Take pride in community, doing group clean up so youth take pride in land · 2S specific land for gathering, organizing, and communicating · Fully trained Indigenous people represented in all career paths to take care of our own needs in the best way · Social gathering practicing cultural traditions · Ribbon skirt making, sharing circles – · All participants have enough supplies to participate in opportunities · Family outings – opportunities for families to participate in activities together · Social systems that allow communities to address their issues from within · Safe · Free of racism · Indigenous frameworks for social outreach · Programming in a wholistic way – address spiritual, mental, emotional, physical	· Healthy

			· Centre for cultural exchange – across all cultures as well · No age restrictions · Sharing resources, supplies in community centre · Food security · Safe haven · Larger centres for youth · Educational awareness for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people · People get through their trauma · Not afraid to share their story – not let it be a block for young people so they can thrive · Young people have a voice · Our people have self-worth and believe in themselves · People are able to use their voice · Sense of belonging · Group powwows · Youth have access to supplies and instruction for cultural activities and crafts					

Appendix B: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Feedback Survey Responses

Which Knowledge Sharing Session did you attend?	Do you think enough time was given for participants to respond?	What did you like about the Knowledge Sharing Session you attended?	Is there anything we could have done differently?	What would you like to see in future sessions?	Do you have anything else you would like to share?
Youth Session C: Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth	Yes, there was enough time.	I got to learn about lgbq 2s+ youth and listen other people about what safe place and talk about the community.	No I think it was good	I like to see more lgbq and Learning about it to feel safe and hearing other people story's .	No thank you
Service Provider Session: March 26, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	I love hearing from others and the experiences they encountered.	It was fantastic	Nothing i can think of right at the moment	I hope there will be more opportunities like these in the near future .
Youth Session C: Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth: March 31, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	I greatly valued and appreciated having my opinions and concerns heard by the knowledge sharing session facilitators. It was a great opportunity to share my knowledge, opinions and more in a safe environment with people like me.	The session was wonderful however my critiques would surround the amount of time given to each individual to hunk and respond on questions.	I would love to see the groups being maybe slightly smaller in size so that people could say more in their session.	
Youth Session C: Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth: March 31, 2022	No, the session should have been longer.	I like how there was supports available during the sessions and I enjoyed the discussion we had.	Not that I could think of.	na	
Youth Session B: Indigenous Youth Ages 15-25: April 2, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	I could answer in chat and was no pressure to show my video . I loved listening to others like me	No	Can't think of anything!!!!	I really enjoyed being around other Indigenous youth
Youth Session A: Indigenous Youth Ages 7-14: April 2, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	I liked the other kids sharing	No	More kids participate	No

Youth Session A: Indigenous Youth Ages 7-14: April 2, 2022	No, the session should have been longer.	What I liked about The Knowledge Sharing Session is the topic about talking about you're feeling's and wellness, overall I loved the session	The thing about it that I wish happened was using google meet and making the session longer	A longer session is what I'd love to see	No, that is everything, Thank you for having me :)
Youth Session A: Indigenous Youth Ages 7-14: April 2, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	I liked how everyone had a voice to say what they thought 😁	I think there should have more creative questions.	I would love to see or hear them taking action on what they say	I really liked talking to everyone 😊
Youth Session B: Indigenous Youth Ages 15-25: April 2, 2022	No, the session should have been longer.	Was a very welcoming space.	More youth attending	Breakout rooms	I enjoyed sharing my perspective and knowledge!
Elder and Knowledge Keeper Session: March 30, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	scope of discussion	skip the "ice breaker". keep intro's to being "elevator pitches"	questions provided earlier and same questions used in sessions	have facilitator watch time better
Youth Session C: Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth: March 31, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	Everybody contributed from a wide variety of perspectives, people were allowed to build off one another, everybody was receptive to others contributions, the host of the event was very obviously interested, engaged and enthusiastic	Longer time	-	-
Youth Session C: Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth: March 31, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	Meeting others like me	Host an in person session	In person sessions	Amazing job thank you so much
Youth Session B: Indigenous Youth Ages 15-25: April 2, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	The feeling of connection	I thought it was good	More hands on things	No
Youth Session A: Indigenous Youth Ages 7-14: April 2, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	The games and questions , mostly the people were so nice	Elaborate on question for young kids	Thank you he had fun	was happy to contribute

Elder and Knowledge Keeper Session: March 30, 2022	No, the session should have been longer.	I liked that there was a wide variety of participants from different communities and was good to hear the different concerns with our youth and communities.	Just a bit more time for individuals sharing.	A combination of youth and elders ... Making the connection.	Miigech for accepting me to be apart of WeMatter!!
Elder and Knowledge Keeper Session: March 30, 2022	No, the session should have been longer.	Two youth were involved, And communities across Canada	It would've been nice if we had an elder to offer good thoughts and may be virtual smudging	It would be nice if we could meet in person	I admire everybody's truth especially the two Youth, thank you
Youth Session C: Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth: March 31, 2022	Yes, there was enough time.	The workers running the event! Very attentive	I throughly enjoyed everything planned	More participants, maybe more reach out on social media (Facebook, reaching out to colleges, high schools to see who's eligible to participate)	You can tell when workers are there just to collect a paycheck and if they truly care about the work they are doing. This was an absolutely amazing team and can see their hard work and dedication! Miigwetch!

Appendix C: Graphic Recordings of Knowledge Sharing Sessions

ELDER & KNOWLEDGE KEEPER SESSION
MARCH 30, 2022
CONNECTION TO CULTURE
"HELP YOUTH BEFORE" THEY BECOME HOMELESS
YOUTH SPECIFIC HEALTH SERVICES
ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
AGE SPECIFIC RESOURCES
Challenges & Barriers
Needs
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP SKILLS
MONEY MANAGEMENT
MENTORSHIP
"TO KNOW I AM LOVED" & TAKEN CARE OF
SUPPORT FOR 18+
COPING SKILLS
Gaps
MAINTAINING CONNECTION TO HOME COMMUNITY
CLEAN WATER FOOD SECURITY
SUPPORT FOR YOUNG FAMILIES
LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN SERVICE PROVIDERS SENT TO COMMUNITY
SKILLS TO BE SUCCESSFUL AS ADULTS
ADDRESSING THE NEED OF
"PUSHED OUT OF CARE"
IMPROVED SUPPORTS & SERVICES
LEARNING TRADITIONAL SONGS
ALLOW YOUTH TO BE THEMSELVES
FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH, INCLUDING LGBTQ2S+ YOUTH
FRIENDSHIP & COMMUNITY CENTRES WORKING TOGETHER
Best Practices
PEOPLE UNDERSTAND HOW COLONIZATION & RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IMPACT US
CULTURAL TEACHINGS OPEN & AVAILABLE REGARDLESS OF DISTINCTION
"PRIDE IN MY CULTURE" PRIDE IN WHO I AM
INDIVIDUALIZED CARE
ALL YOUTH KNOW OUR SHARED HISTORY
NORMALIZE OUR TEACHINGS
In a perfect world...
INVOLVE ELDERS & KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS
INDIGENOUS SPACE IN EVERY SCHOOL
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS
WHOLISTIC CARE
UNDERSTAND EVERYONE HAS A GIFT TO OFFER
SELF-SUFFICIENCY & LEARNING TO LIVE OFF THE LAND
EDUCATE YOURSELF ON HOW TO BE A GOOD HELPER
GIVE YOUTH SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO
"LIFE IS A" HEALING JOURNEY
WALKING IN THE OLD WAY OF OUR GRANDMOTHERS & GRANDFATHERS
LAND BASED EDUCATION
WE MATTER

LGBTQ2S+ YOUTH KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSION APRIL 2, 2022
Needs
SELF-SOOTHING TECHNIQUES & COPING SKILLS
PEACE
"ELDER SUPPORT" OPPORTUNITIES WITHOUT BARRIERS
LACK OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES
LACK OF CULTURALLY ANCHORED TRAINING
JURISDICTIONAL & GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES
BAND-AID SOLUTIONS
Challenges & Barriers
"MORE SUPPORTS, PROGRAMS, & TRAINING
"THINGS TO MAKE US FEEL" COMFORTABLE IN OUR LIVES, COMMUNITIES, & BODIES
SUPPORT BEFORE CRISIS
LACK OF FUNDING FOR GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE
LACK OF REACH OUT
Gaps
FOOD WASTE
LATERAL VIOLENCE
CRITERIA TO ACCESS
SENSE OF BELONGING
ADDRESSING THE NEED OF
SELF-CARE
IMPROVED SUPPORTS & SERVICES
FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH, INCLUDING LGBTQ2S+ YOUTH
"TREATING ME LIKE A NORMAL PERSON
MUTUAL HELP & CARE
TRUTH
RECOGNIZE THAT YOUTH HAVE EQUALLY IMPORTANT, VALUABLE, WELL-INFORMED OPINIONS
In a perfect world...
Best Practices
DECOLONIZED TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE
MAKE TIME TO LISTEN & GIVE SPACE TO AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE
BE AWARE OF SYSTEMIC BARRIERS
"GOOD VIBES" OF BELONGING
BREAKING DOWN THE POWER SYSTEM TO ALLOW FOR COMMUNITY BASED SOLUTIONS
MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS
PROVIDE LGBTQ2S+ EDUCATION
ALL INDIGENOUS YOUTH CAN ATTEND POST-SECONDARY
"SEEING MYSELF" REPRESENTED IN PLACES
"BRING INDIGENOUS" LGBTQ2S+ PEOPLE TO THE FOREFRONT OF THE CONVERSATION
HEALTH CENTRES IN EVERY COMMUNITY WITH TRAINED LOCALS
WE MATTER

SERVICE PROVIDER SESSION
MARCH 26, 2022
Needs
BASIC NEEDS FOR FAMILIES
TEACHINGS
CULTURE
CULTURALLY RELEVANT ADDICTIONS & MENTAL HEALTH CARE
ACTIVITIES
STRATEGIES TO COPE
COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE
KNOW WHO THEY ARE
ANCHORING ANCESTORS & DESCENDANTS
SAFE SPACE
LAND BASED EDUCATION
SPACE FOR YOUTH & KIDS TO COME TOGETHER
CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS
SPACE FOR YOUTH COMING OUT
AGING OUT OF CARE
Gaps
IDENTITY
IF WE CAN'T DECOLONIZE THE SYSTEM, WE MUST REBUILD IT
BUREAUCRACY
LACK OF SERVICES IN REMOTE & ISOLATED COMMUNITIES
Challenges & Barriers
FUNDING & BUDGETS
SCARCE RESOURCES & COMPETITION FOR FUNDING CONTRIBUTES TO LATERAL VIOLENCE
LACK OF AWARENESS
COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS
BURNOUT
ADDRESSING THE NEED OF
IMPROVED SUPPORTS & SERVICES
FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH, INCLUDING LGBTQ2S+ YOUTH
BARRIER FREE ACCESS TO TRADITIONS & CULTURE
JUDGEMENT-FREE
INVOLVE COMMUNITY
HONOURING THE ROLE & PURPOSE OF YOUTH
LISTEN TO THE YOUTH!
DESTIGMATIZE
COMPENSATE YOUTH FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS
FOLLOW UP
RECONCILIATION
HARM REDUCTION
SUPPORT FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS
Best Practices
REPRESENTATION
A LONG WAY TO GO TOWARDS
HEALING IS A JOURNEY
MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE AT
FEEL SAFE TO EXPRESS THEIR INNER CHILD
INDIGENOUS SERVICE PROVIDERS
"STILL HEALING, STILL LEARNING, STILL FINDING WAYS TO COPE"
EMPOWER
BE AN ALLY
RESPECT THE TIME & EFFORT OF YOUTH
PROMOTE YOUTH
ROLE MODELS
WE MATTER

YOUTH 7-14
KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSION
APRIL 2, 2022
Needs
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
PHYSICAL WELLNESS SUPPORT
OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN
STRONG CONNECTIONS TO FAMILY, FRIENDS, & COMMUNITY
ACCESS TO SPORTS, RECREATION, & HOBBIES
PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENTS
ACCESSIBLE SUPPORTS TO REMAIN BALANCED
Challenges & Barriers
LITTLE AWARENESS OF SUPPORTS
LACK OF FAST ACCESS TO SUPPORT
"MORE ACTIVITIES FOR" THE OLDER KIDS
COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS
Gaps
ACCESS TO MENTORS & ROLE MODELS
SPACES TO OPENLY SHARE FEELINGS
"SOME SERVICES NOT" AVAILABLE IN MY COMMUNITY
HAVE TO GO TO URBAN CENTRES TO ACCESS SERVICES
"COUNSELLING TAKES" MONTHS & MONTHS TO GET
ADDRESSING THE NEED OF
IMPROVED SUPPORTS & SERVICES
FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH, INCLUDING LGBTQ2S+ YOUTH
Best Practices
HONESTY & TRUST
FRIENDLY INTERACTIONS
BE EXCITED & HAPPY TO SPEND TIME WITH YOUTH
"SUPPORT" MY CHOICES
ALL HAVE HELP TO GET WHAT THEY NEED
ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES FOCUSED ON EXPRESSING YOURSELF
PROVIDE GENUINE HELP & CARE
AGE SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES TO ATTEND EVERY DAY
CONNECT THROUGH MUSIC
COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR TEENS OPEN 24/7
BE RESPONSIVE
MAKE RESOURCES AVAILABLE ONLINE
"PEOPLE ARE HAPPY &" LIVE IN A HAPPY PLACE
PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES WITH YOUTH
"HELP TO KEEP" MY BODY HEALTHY
In a perfect world...
WE MATTER

YOUTH 15-25
KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSION
APRIL 2, 2022
Needs
RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER
ACCESS TO SELF-CARE ITEMS
RELIABLE HOUSING
"STRONG FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES" HEALING TOGETHER FROM INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA
"TAKING CARE OF YOUR" OWN WELLBEING IS TAKING CARE OF OTHERS
OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN & SPEAK TRADITIONAL LANGUAGES
"HAPPY COMMUNITIES"
CONNECTION TO SELF
OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND CEREMONIES & SIT WITH ELDERS
"CONNECT TO" MY CULTURE
EMPATHY & UNDERSTANDING
PROVIDE SUPPORTS WITHIN INSTITUTIONS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
ACCEPT OTHERS INTO YOUR COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATION
HIRE FROM & GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY
LAND & PEOPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
PROVIDE GRIEF SUPPORT WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS
PROVIDE SPACE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TO GATHER
Best Practices
Gaps
LACK OF TIMELY & RESPONSIVE SERVICES
LACK OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
LACK OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES IN EVERY COMMUNITY
EDUCATION IN COMMUNITIES
ADVOCACY SUPPORTS
LACK OF SUPPORT & ACCOMMODATIONS FOR TRADITIONAL HUNTING SEASONS
HELP QUIETLY
RESPECT FOR PERSONAL BOUNDARIES
ADDRESSING THE NEED OF
IMPROVED SUPPORTS & SERVICES
FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH, INCLUDING LGBTQ2S+ YOUTH
Challenges & Barriers
RACISM
FREQUENT STAFF TURNOVER
MISSING SCHOOL OR WORK WHEN TRAVELLING TO ACCESS SERVICES
WAITLISTS ARE YEARS LONG
LACK OF AFTER HOURS SUPPORT
FUNDING SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS TO GO HOME TO COMMUNITIES
RESOURCES TIED TO SPECIFIC SERVICE PROVIDERS
DISTANCE FROM SERVICES & SUPPORTS
"HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS"
SERVICE PROVIDER & COMMUNITY DISCONNECT
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
TRADITIONAL LANGUAGES EVERYWHERE
CULTURAL HEALING CENTRES
BASIC NEEDS ARE MET TO ALLOW COMMUNITIES TO HEAL - NO SURVIVAL MODE
In a perfect world...
LAND IS PROTECTED & HONOURED
HELPING TO BUILD UP REMOTE COMMUNITIES THAT STRUGGLE WITH CONNECTION
BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMUNITY GARDENS
EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO THE INTERNET
WE MATTER

Appendix D: Gap Analysis in Supports and Services for Indigenous Children and Youth, Including 2SLGBTQQIA+ Young People[149]

Service/ Support Type	Desired State	Identified Gap	Gap Due To? (Barrier)	Possible Solutions
All Services Provisions	All youth have access to comprehensive databases and online directories that outline regionally available supports and services	Lack of awareness of what is available to youth/ No comprehensive resource yet available	Communication Infrastructure Education Funding/Economic barriers Policy Lack of Understanding	Create community resource databases Train community members how to use technology to share information and resources Provide necessary infrastructure to develop resource databases

[149] Appendix A: Table of Knowledge Sharing Session Findings

	Wide range of services available in communities to meet the demands and wellness needs of the community	Lack of services of all types in Indigenous communities, esp. northern, remote, and isolated communities	Infrastructure Funding/Economic Barriers Availability/Quality of Service Provision Policy Burnout Education Communication COVID-19 Bureaucracy and Red Tape Geographical Barriers Impacts of Colonization, Racism, and Residential Schools Colonial Systems Long Wait Times	Doctors and nurses, other service providers live in community Education and training programs in communities so that community members can learn how to provider services for themselves

	All service providers are aware of and understand the community they serve, particularly the specific issues they face and how to best provide services to them	Lack of understanding of what is happening in communities and experience by service providers sent to communities	Lack of Understanding, Bias, and Racism Lack of Trust and Acceptance Communication Education Funding/Economic Barriers Policy Burnout Availability/Quality of Service Provision	Education/awareness Send experienced service providers Education/train own community members to support
	All Indigenous youth feel safe to access resources, supports, and services	Lack of perceived safety in accessing services	Lack of Understanding, Bias, and Racism Lack of Trust and Acceptance Intergenerational Trauma Colonial Systems Long Wait Times Availability/Quality of Service Provision	Education/awareness

	All Indigenous youth have access to long-term service providers	Lack of consistency in service providers	Colonial Systems Funding/Economic Barriers Burnout Policy Lack of Understanding, Bias, and Racism Long Wait Times Availability/Quality of Service Provision	Education/train own community members to support Support for frontline workers and service providers
	All communities have access to low-cost, reliable, high-speed internet access	Lack of access to technology and reliable internet connection to access resources, supports, and services and to connect with others	Colonial Systems Funding/Economic Barriers Infrastructure Bureaucracy and Red Tape Policy	Internet subsidy programs In community infrastructure to support high-speed internet access Training and hiring locals to develop necessary infrastructure
	All supports and services provide assistance and resources to youth to overcome barriers necessary to access supports and services	Lack of accommodations to overcome barriers or meet resource needs to access services	Colonial Systems Economic barriers Infrastructure Bureaucracy and Red Tape Policy Long Wait Times COVID-19 Communication	Wraparound supports Designated funding available to overcome barriers to access Develop necessary infrastructure to provide barrier-free access

Youth Specific Supports and Services	Indigenous youth have access to supports and services well beyond 18, understanding that growth and development continues well after this age	Lack of supports and services for youth beyond 18	Colonial Systems Funding/Economic barriers Communication Bureaucracy and Red Tape Policy Infrastructure	Open supports and services to youth over 18 Create designated/specific services and supports for youth beyond 18, young adults
	All Indigenous children and youth have access to supports and services tat are designed for their specific age group	Lack of specific resources for age groups of children – early childhood, elementary, secondary, post-secondary	Colonial Systems Funding/Economic barriers Communication Policy Bureaucracy and Red Tape COVID-19 Lack of Understanding, Bias, and Racism	Deliver age-specific programming in schools
	Designated safe space for youth drop-in and programming in every community	Lack of designated safe spaces for youth	Infrastructure Colonial Systems Policy Funding/Economic barriers Bureaucracy and Red Tape COVID-19 Lack of Understanding, Bias, and Racism	Designated funding for youth centres in every community Train and hire locals from community to develop infrastructure and host programming for youth

	All Indigenous youth aging out of the child welfare system have access to long-term wraparound supports that meet their wellness needs and promote personal growth and success in society	Lack of support for youth aging out of child and family services care, require long term support and preparation for success	Colonial Systems Bureaucracy and Red Tape Economic barriers Lack of Understanding, Bias, and Racism Policy	Indigenous-led child welfare systems Develop across Canada programming specifically for Indigenous youth aging out of care
Mental Health	All Indigenous youth have access to short and long term culturally relevant mental health services	Lack of culturally relevant, sensitive, and aware mental health services	Colonial Systems Lack of Understanding, Bias, and Racism Bureaucracy and Red Tape	Educate/train more Indigenous people in mental health fields Provide training to current mental health service providers in cultural awareness, sensitivity
	All Indigenous youth have access to responsive, in-person mental health support when they need it	Fast access to in person mental health supports	Colonial Systems Long wait times Geographical barriers Bureaucracy and Red Tape	Mental health supports that live in the community
	Mental health supports and services are available for Indigenous youth in every community	Lack of mental health services in the community	Geographical barriers Education/Training Colonial Systems	Mental health supports that live in the community Every person has a designated support person
Addiction	All Indigenous youth have access to harm-reduction focused supports and services	Lack of harm-reduction focused care	Racism, bias, lack of understanding Colonial Systems Funding/Economic barriers	Educate/train service providers Designated funding for harm-reduction care

Education and Employment	All Indigenous youth have access to culturally relevant education and cultural teachings, practices, and activities within their schools and education institutions	Lack of cultural teachings, practices in school	Racism, bias, lack of understanding Colonial Systems Economic barriers	Educate/train service providers Designated funding for cultural support in schools
	All Indigenous youth have access to land based education and learning opportunities	Lack of land based learning and education	Racism, bias, lack of understanding Colonial Systems Funding/Economic barriers	Educate/train service providers Designated funding for land based education and learning
	All Indigenous youth have access to employment opportunities in their communities that are sustainable and provide sufficient compensation for self-sufficiency	Lack of opportunity for sustainable employment that allows for self-sufficiency	Colonial Systems Geographical barriers Infrastructure	Communities employ their own members to provide services within the community, with infrastructure developed and maintained by community members to create opportunities for employment
	All Indigenous youth have access to education and other supports when attending educational institutions	Lack of indigenous-specific supports in educational institutions	Colonial Systems Geographical location Racism, bias, lack of understanding	Indigenous support centre in every school/ educational institution – specific funding for this position
Safe Space	All youth have a safe place to go when needed to access supports and services in their community	Lack of Indigenous and youth-specific drop in resource centres, shelters, and safe spaces 24/7	Infrastructure – little buildings to hold programs and services in; buildings used for more than one service Funding/Economic barriers	Designated funding for youth centres in every community Education/awareness of importance

Culturally Relevant Services and Access to Cultural and Spiritual Care	All Indigenous youth have access to people who can share traditional knowledge	Lack of access to knowledge carriers, people who carry traditional teachings and willing to share them	Geographical barriers Colonial Systems Impacts of colonization, residential schools, intergenerational trauma Funding/Economic barriers Gate keeping Racism, bias, lack of understanding	Designated funding for cultural support in schools Creation of and more funding for Elder/Knowledge Keeper and youth mentorship programs Cultural centre/camp in every community
	All schools, educational institutions/organization and training programs are culturally sensitive and aware and have mandatory cultural awareness training	Lack of cultural awareness and education within institutions, organizations	Colonial Systems Racism, bias, lack of understanding	Mandatory cultural awareness training in every school, educational institutions/organization
	All Indigenous youth have the opportunity and necessary resources to access cultural supports, programs, and activities	Lack of barrier-free access to cultural supports, programs, activities, and learning opportunities	Colonial systems/structure Funding/Economic barriers	Seasonal ceremonies open to the public Funding, grants, and programs to provide resources to access
	All Indigenous youth have the opportunity and necessary resources to access cultural supports, programs, and activities	Lack of spaces for youth who are mixed-blood	Colonial Systems Impacts of colonization, residential schools, intergenerational trauma	Lateral kindness, acceptance Education/awareness
	All Indigenous youth have the opportunity and necessary resources to access cultural supports, programs, and activities	Lack of access to cultural support, activities, and relevant resources in urban centres	Colonial Systems Funding/Economic barriers Racism, bias, lack of understanding	Education/awareness More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services for Indigenous youth

	All Indigenous youth have the opportunity and necessary resources to access cultural supports, programs, and activities	Lack of access to traditional medicines for all youth	Colonial Systems Overuse/overharvesting by non-Indigenous people Funding/Economic barriers Infrastructure – transportation, access	Education/awareness Protection of Indigenous plants/animals Self-determination over land
	All Indigenous youth have the opportunity and necessary resources to be educated in how to live off the land and how to harvest food and process it	Lack of education and awareness opportunities for youth to learn to live off the land/ traditional practices and way of life	Colonial Systems Overuse/overharvesting by non-Indigenous people Burnout	Education/awareness Protection of Indigenous plants/animals Land based education and learning in all curriculums Funding for land based education and learning programs
	All Indigenous youth are exposed to land based education and learning	Lack of land based education and learning in schools and education/training programs	Colonial Systems Racism, bias, lack of understanding Overuse/overharvesting by non-Indigenous people Economic barriers Bureaucracy and Red Tape	Land based education and learning in all curriculums Funding for land based education and learning programs
Family Wellness, Relationship Supports, Intimate Partner Violence, and Family Violence	All individuals in the lives of Indigenous youth are provided support, education, and skill building opportunities	Lack of support for parents – education, skill building opportunities, how to support youth	Economic Barriers Colonial Systems Policy	Education/training More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services

	All Indigenous families have the necessary supports and resources to live a good life	Lack of whole family programming, support, and activities	Colonial Systems Policy Funding/Economic Barriers	Education/training More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services
	Youth have access to youth specific, barrier-free supports and services for IPV	Virtually no specific resources available across Canada	Racism, bias, lack of understanding	Education/training Funding/infrastructure
	All Indigenous families have access to education and support to understand how to promote healthy relationships	Lack of whole family support, education on how healthy relationships	Colonial Systems Policy Funding/Economic Barriers	Education/training Funding/infrastructure
	All indigenous new mothers and fathers, particularly young parents, have wraparound, culturally relevant support	Lack of support for young/new mothers and fathers	Colonial Systems Funding/Economic Barriers Policy	More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services
	All indigenous families have access to culturally relevant support, education, and teachings about family and individual roles	Lack of awareness of teachings on family and individual roles	Colonial Systems Impacts of colonization, residential school, and intergenerational trauma Funding/Economic Barriers Racism, bias, lack of understanding	More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services
	All Indigenous youth impacted by family violence have wraparound, barrier-free, culturally relevant supports and services	Youth-specific support for those impacted by family violence	Colonial Systems Racism, bias, lack of understanding Impacts of colonization, residential school, and intergenerational trauma	More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services

Recreation & Sports	All Indigenous youth have access to sports and recreation programs to promote wellbeing	Lack of support for travel – funding, access to vehicles, etc.	Funding/Economic Barriers Infrastructure Geographic Barriers	More programs to support barrier-free access to sports and recreation More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services
2SLGBTQQIA+ Specific Services	All Indigenous youth have access to safe, low-barrier gender-affirming care should they require	Gender-affirming care not accessible	Geographic Barriers Funding/Economic Barriers Time away from education, school	Policy change More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services
	All Indigenous youth have access to 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific supports and services within their community	Specific support services for LBTQ2S+ youth not available in every community	Geographic Barriers Infrastructure Funding/Economic Barriers	More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs, supports, and services
	All Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth feel safe in accessing services across all sectors	Lack of safety in accessing health services	Racism, bias, lack of understanding Impacts of colonization, residential school, and intergenerational trauma	Awareness/Education Inclusivity Lateral kindness Policy change
	Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have space and land to gather, organize, and heal	Lack of designated land/space for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to gather	Colonial Systems Racism, bias, lack of understanding Funding/Economic barriers	2S Specific land for healing, organizing, gathering
Other	Funding for youth-led projects, activities, and initiatives is widely available and accessible	Lack of funding for youth-led projects	Colonial Systems Racism, bias, lack of understanding Funding/Economic barriers	Policy change Education/awareness

	Mentorship and peer programs for youth are available in every community	Lack of Role Models, role modelling/ mentorship, and peer programs and opportunities	Impacts of colonialism, residential school, and intergenerational trauma Colonial Systems Bias Economic barriers	Adults need to lead the youth – they need to model the behaviour they want to see More funding, infrastructure, and resources for programs
	All youth know our shared history – taught comprehensively in schools	Lack of awareness/education of shared history	Colonial Systems	Rewrite, correct history books, revise curriculums
	All people in Canada are aware of the impacts of colonization, residential schools, intergenerational trauma	Lack of awareness/education by non-Indigenous people	Colonial Systems Racism, bias, lack of understanding	Rewrite, correct history books, revise curriculums
	All have food to eat, no food insecurity	Lack of food sharing programs, services, resources for youth, especially in rural, remote, northern, and isolated communities Lack of food security	Funding/Economic barriers Infrastructure – access, buildings	Community gardens Sustainable living programs and education Knowledge of how to live off the land Protection of lands from overuse/overharvesting
	All youth who are impacted by human trafficking and sexual exploitation have access to wraparound culturally relevant supports and services	Lack of support for youth impacted by human trafficking and sexual exploitation	Colonial Systems Impacts of colonization, residential school, and intergenerational trauma Bias Trust and Acceptance Racism, bias, lack of understanding	Education and awareness

Appendix Findings from Knowledge Sharing Session Feedback Survey

Background Information

18 Participants from the Knowledge Sharing Session provided feedback via an online survey sent following each session.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the Knowledge Sharing Sessions received positive feedback. Of particular note was the call for more opportunities for youth, elders, and service providers to engage in similar sharing circles more often. Participants shared how they felt valued, heard, safe, and welcomed during the sessions. Some suggested that the sessions could have been longer. Overall, participants shared they were appreciative of the space given to provide insights and to listen and share their knowledge and experiences with others.

“I liked how everyone had a voice to say what they thought” – Indigenous Youth 7-14 Session Participant