CSSCF | Centre for the Study of Services to Children and Families

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION IN CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

2022 | Volume 4 (Special Issue). Pages 4-21

Indigenous Wise Practices

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Citation: Birk, S., Cho, H., Duong, L., Gill, H., & Kooner, S. (2022). Indigenous wise practices. *Research and Evaluation in Child, Youth and Family Services*, *4*, 4-21. https://doi.org/10.14288/recyfs.v4i1.197535

Abstract

The Indigenous Wise Practices research study emerged for the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to understand the journeys of Child Youth and Mental Health (CYMH) clinicians in integrating Indigenous Wise Practices and culturally safe approaches in their work with Indigenous clients. Through this research, MCFD intended to explore the areas in which additional support could be provided on structural levels, including policy changes, for CYMH clinicians to seamlessly integrate Indigenous Wise Practices and culturally safe approaches. Moreover, this research study anticipated discovering which Indigenous Wise Practices are currently being implemented in the practices of CYMH clinicians. This research study aimed to explore the various barriers, gaps, and challenges that hinder the ability of clinicians to integrate such practices in their interactions with Indigenous clients. In this final report, there will be an introduction to discuss the goals and purpose of this research study. The research study and the methodology were guided by trauma-informed, strengths-based, and decolonization theories. Although the report provides a more thorough explanation, this research study utilized non-probability research methods inducing selective and convenience sampling methods. Indigenous Elders and CYMH clinicians were interviewed to gain in-depth insight regarding the most effective practices with Indigenous children, youth, and families. Through these interviews, student researcher's derived similar themes that emerged from Elders and clinicians. The meeting with the Elders offered five key themes including, 1) The holistic understanding of self, 2) Listen to understand, 3) Creating a safe space, 4) The Medicine Wheel, and 5) Spirituality and ceremony. Moreover, the clinician interviews provided nine themes including, 1) Clinicians' understanding of Indigenous Wise Practices, 2) Journey towards incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices, 3) Clinicians' willingness to learn and remain open-minded, 4) Cultivating whole system relationships, 5) Time and patience for fostering a genuine connection, 6) Barriers in relationship building with Indigenous communities, 7) Indigenous-led Service Delivery that brings Change to Practices and Policies, 8) The need to increase culturally sensitive practices, and 9) Acknowledgement of past and current harm created by the system. In this research study, it was discovered that developing meaningful relationships with no time constraints and increasing Indigenous-led services is a pertinent practice that should be incorporated largely into the MCFD services. These findings were explored in the context of the literature utilized to support the development of this research study. The limitations of this research study included a small sample size with a discredited ability to generalize the findings, time constraints for clinician interviews and circle meetings, and the strictly virtual setting of this study. The final section explores implications for future areas of research, policy implementation, and changes in practice.

Keywords: Indigenous, Elders, Wise Practices, Cultural Safety, Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH)

DOI: 10.14288/recyfs.v4i1.197535

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Introduction

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is the governing child protection body throughout the province of British Columbia (BC). MCFD currently uses six Structured Decision Making (SDM) Tools to assess child protection concerns. The safety assessment is one of these six tools. It is designed to provide guidance through the use of clear descriptors to social workers when determining the immediate safety of children. This information guides the decision regarding whether the child may remain in the home without safety interventions, may remain in the home with safety interventions in place, or must be placed out of the home to ensure safety.

The purpose of this research study is to identify whether the safety assessment tool is being completed as intended by child protection teams across BC. Teams within the Vancouver/Richmond SDA have been engaged in a model fidelity approach (using the tools when and how they were intended) using the SDM Tools over the past year. This project has included providing refreshers on each of the tools to teams within the SDA. One issue that has been identified by workers who use the safety assessment tool is that social workers are not always gathering information about every question on the safety assessment. This issue was raised by social workers during SDM Tool refresher training. The safety assessment is a crucial portion of the SDM Tools, as it determines if a child may remain in their home. In order to ensure that the safety of children is assessed thoroughly and consistently across all families, it is critical to understand if the safety assessment tool is being used as intended. If the tool is not being used as intended, supporting staff to increase their capacity to use the tool properly is warranted. This shift in practice is important to ensure that all social workers are modeling best practice approaches in child welfare. The questions associated with this research are as follows: 1) Are social workers asking or gathering information for all the questions in the safety assessment, regardless of the reported concerns? 2) If not, why not? What are the challenges and barriers? 3) How can staff be better supported to use the safety assessment as intended? The goals of this research include identifying how social workers are completing the safety assessment, current gaps within the safety assessment practice across BC, and recommendations on how practice can be improved to support model fidelity and align with best practice approaches within the child welfare system.

Additionally, researchers should be aware of the traumatization of the Western approach to research with Indigenous communities (Windchief & Cummins, 2021). It is essential to not appropriate and generalize Indigenous ways of knowing, and to approach knowledge with curiosity and respect (Windchief & Cummins, 2021). In an attempt to not further perpetuate colonial practices, the principles of OCAP (ownership, control, access and possession) need to be upheld throughout any research process (First Nations Centre, 2007). These principles recognize the necessity for Indigenous peoples and communities to determine how research studies will be conducted, used, safeguarded and shared at every stage of a study (First Nations Centre, 2007). Thus, decolonizing the approach to conducting research is a fundamental component when engaging with Indigenous communities.

Before researching Indigenous Wise Practices, it is essential to understand what this term entails. Indigenous Wise Practices are approaches that acknowledge the traditional knowledge and the contextual nature of Indigenous communities' experiences (Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework, 2015). Indigenous Wise Practices harbour decolonization, reconciliation, and anti-racism towards Indigenous communities (Wesley-Esquimaux & Snowball, 2010). It is also important to note that Indigenous Wise Practices are unique to each community, and practices should not be generalized to all communities. Indigenous Wise Practices are grounded in traditional knowledge of the Kwantlen First Nations' Seven Laws, storytelling, the Medicine Wheel, and the Circle. The seven laws, spirits entrusted by the Creator to watch over humanity, shared seven values. These values include humbleness, forgiveness and understanding. Next, storytelling is a vital component for many Indigenous communities. Storytelling is an essential aspect of

Indigenous culture that provides connections to ancestral experiences, new experiences, guidance on becoming a better human being, and preserving culture (Lawrence & Paige, 2016). Moreover, the Circle is used by Indigenous Elders to share important teachings through listening and sharing by creating a space where everyone is treated with respect and equality (Raven Speaks, 2012). The Circle is a way to begin the healing process, promote understanding, prevent or solve problems, build trust, share common experiences, create connections, learn from others, and identify ways to grow (Stevenson, 1999). Indigenous cultures approach health, wellness, and healing through the medicine wheel. The balance of all four spheres of humanity is required: the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual (Kemppainen et al., 2008).

For Indigenous communities in Canada, the most fundamental definition of sovereignty stems from "the natural right of all human beings to define, sustain and perpetuate their identities as individuals, communities and nations" (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, p. 105). Sovereignty is an innate human characteristic that can be expressed through the principle of self-determination for Indigenous peoples to find power in the freedom to make their own choices (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). The strong connection that Indigenous peoples maintain with their homelands and territories existed long before Canada formed as an independent country.

Through this literature review, recommended practices, gaps in the literature, limitations, and implications for future research emerged. An essential recommended practice by Richardson and Murphy (2018) included training non-Indigenous staff to practice Indigenous Wise Practices. That is, non-Indigenous staff should be thoroughly educated and trained on the history of colonization, its impacts on Indigenous communities, Indigenous traditions, practices, and trauma-informed theory.

The implementation of Indigenous Wise Practices should be implemented in collaboration with Indigenous communities. Collaboration could encompass aspects such as hiring Indigenous staff for all levels of an organization, elevating Indigenous voices when developing programs, and incorporating Indigenous traditions in consultation with Indigenous communities (Richardson & Murphy, 2018).

Researchers must learn about Indigenous traditions and practices, and they must involve Indigenous members in all stages of the research process (Maar et al., 2019). Due to the belief that Indigenous ways of practice are not scientific and scholarly, there is limited research available on the implementation of Indigenous research frameworks and Indigenous Wise Practices (Mercer et al., 2010). As reflected by Wesley-Esquimaux and Snowball (2010), Indigenous Wise Practices enhance Western approaches by fostering culturally sensitive practices that are utilized by clinicians when engaging with Indigenous communities. At the conclusion of this research study, the results will attempt to inform and navigate the implementation of Indigenous Wise Practices.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout this research study, various theories informed and guided the research methodology. To begin, trauma-informed theories ensure safety, collaboration, choice, and empowerment to share the individual's interpreted narrative (Levenson, 2017). Trauma-informed practices highlight the significance of collaboration to ensure a reduction in power imbalances between the client and the clinician (Levenson, 2017). Moreover, this research is guided by strengths-based theories in social work practice. The strengths-based theory emphasizes an individual's inherent strengths that allow them to overcome challenges (Askew et al., 2020). The strengths-based theory disentangles the beliefs that individuals are responsible for the deficits in their situation and shifts the focus on the individuals' resiliency (Askew et al., 2020).

The decolonization theory is utilized to inform the implementation of effective practices with Indigenous populations. Decolonization detaches colonial practices when engaging with Indigenous and racialized communities (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Decolonization provides space for self-determination, and economic and cultural freedom (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). The

theories outlined above guide this research by providing frameworks to incorporate in research question development and analysis. The theoretical frameworks offer insight into how the methodology could be constructed to answer our research questions.

Conceptual Framework

This research study aims to explore pivotal components of Indigenous Wise Practices in the development and implementation of CYMH services for Indigenous children and youth in British Columbia (BC). Specifically, the term Indigenous is deliberately used throughout the research study about this population group over the synonymous term Aboriginal. Although both are similar terms, Indigenous is associated more with activism, whereas Aboriginal is related more with legal discussions in government policy (University of British Columbia, 2021). The negative affiliation that historical and present government policies often possess for many Indigenous peoples has led to the use of the term Indigenous (University of British Columbia, 2021). The application of Indigenous resonated more strongly for this research as it is a collective term that refers to First Nations, Métis, and the Inuit in Canada. This research study uses Indigenous as it does not focus on any specific community, rather, it is applied as an inclusive term. However, it is essential to be aware that each Indigenous community has their own unique Indigenous Wise Practices that this research study may not be able to address. The methodology section presents the process for conducting interviews with CYMH clinicians, DAA clinicians, and Indigenous Elders.

This research study aims to increase knowledge of the tools and resources utilized by clinicians with Indigenous children and youth in their transition from Western models to wise practices. Additionally, it will be used to inform the continued integration of successful models of wise practices for clinicians.

Research Methods

The student researchers used non-probability (i.e., selective and convenience) sampling methods for this research. The Elders were selected for their knowledge, teachings, leadership in the Indigenous communities and willingness to participate. The purpose of speaking to Elders was to obtain information that is connected to Indigenous cultures. As Elders have a connection to cultural roots and lived experiences of Indigenous cultures before forced assimilation, it was critical to directly converse with Elders to gather learning that is authentic and respectful of traditional knowledge. The teachings provided by Elders aided student researchers in verifying, correcting and incorporating information regarding Indigenous cultures and practices within MCFD. The clinicians were selected for their knowledge and application of wise practices in their work, willingness to participate and availability during the scheduled interviewing period. Criteria for inclusion were: Current CYMH and DAA clinicians who self-identified to incorporate wise practices in their work. Those who do not meet the criteria described were not included in this research study.

The Elders were invited by Marlena Kaltsidis, the Aboriginal Policy and Program Analyst of the MCFD Aboriginal Policy and Program Team (APPT). Five Elders participated in the Elder Circle. In consultation with APPT, student researchers appropriately obtained consent, generated respectful interview questions, presented Elders with suitable honorariums and gifts and harboured cultural safety during the Elder Circle. The clinicians were recruited through an Invitation to Participate email sent by a student researcher and forwarded by Kali Love, through the internal MCFD email contact list. Kali is a MCFD Program Evaluation Analyst. Interested clinicians contacted student researchers via email and then were sent a link to provide consent and fill out the demographic survey. Student researchers then proceed to arrange the meeting. There was no response from DAA, therefore, only CYMH clinicians were interviewed. Seven clinicians participated in the interviews. There was minimal risk for the research participants. The clinicians had varying cultural backgrounds, years of experience with MCFD, and educational levels (see Appendix A).

Six out of seven clinicians had Master's degrees and one clinician had their Bachelor's degree. The clinicians had varying levels of experiences with MCFD. The most experience one clinician had was twenty-two years. The clinician with the least

experience was five years. The remaining clinicians had varying experience from five to fifteen years.

For data collection, student researchers spoke with the Elders and CYMH clinicians. The circle with the Elders and interviews with the clinicians were held over Zoom due to COVID-19. The circle and interviews were also recorded and transcribed through Zoom, with one interview being professionally transcribed. Student researchers manually omitted all identifiers from the transcripts. The circle with the five Elders was four and a half hours long, and student researchers asked the Elders three questions.

Student researchers used semi-structured interviews for consistency and validity. The interviews with clinicians were about 45 minutes each, and clinicians were asked eleven questions. As part of the research process, student researchers met with the MCFD sponsors bi-weekly for support throughout. These meetings were also used for student researchers to gain knowledge on how to best engage with the Elders most respectfully and appropriately. In consultation with APPT, especially with Marlena Kaltsidis, student researchers received guidance on protocols for engagement with Elders.

The primary qualitative data for this research study was obtained through interviews with clinicians and the circle with Elders. Student researchers utilized triangulation methods with collaborative group meetings to collect data, analyze the interviews and circle meetings, and code the themes.

Triangulation in qualitative research involves the use of multiple methods or data sources to establish validity and credibility (Peersman, 2010). Data, investigator, and theory triangulation methods were used in this research study. Data triangulation is the use of a variety of data sources (Peersman, 2010). Student researchers used the data from the circle with the Elders and interviews with clinicians. Investigator triangulation involves using multiple researchers in collecting and analyzing data (Peersman, 2010). All five student researchers were involved in collecting, coding and analyzing data. Theory triangulation uses various theoretical perspectives in the research (Peersman, 2010). Additionally, trauma-informed practice, strengths-based theory, and decolonization theory guided this research and the findings.

An inductive approach was used for coding and codes were generated as data was analyzed. The NVivo program was used to code the data. To begin, structural coding was used in the initial coding stage to break down the data of the interviews by each question. The student researchers then continued with line-by-line descriptive coding, summarizing data by using a few words that capture the theme from the data. The student researchers then grouped the codes together that have similarities, and looked for patterns to emerge. After the individual student researchers completed the coding for their interviews, the group met together to conduct intercoder reliability to find the central themes from all the interviews.

The last step in gaining data was the optional closing circle where the five Elders and even clinicians were invited to reconnect as a group with the student researchers so that student researchers could share the research findings from the circle and interviews before the final presentation and report. The purpose of this circle was to verify findings and receive. It was also an opportunity to give thanks and close these relationships. This component is critical to closing relationships in good ways while instilling decolonizing methods.

Findings

Findings from Elders Circle

During the circle with the Elders, the student researchers had the opportunity to ask three questions (Appendix B). There were five key themes that emerged from the knowledge shared by the Elders. The themes were: 1) The holistic understanding of self, 2) Listen to understand, 3) Creating a safe space, 4) The Medicine Wheel, and 5) Spirituality and ceremony.

The Holistic Understanding of Self. The Elders spoke about the importance of clinicians and clients having a holistic understanding of self. This means having self-awareness, self-love, and self-care. Starting with self-awareness, it is not only important for clinicians to recognize who they are and where they come from, but also to ensure they are creating safe spaces for clients to do the same. Elder E3

suggested asking these questions, “How can I be the person that I want to be? How am I damaged and what does my trauma look like?”

Knowing the answers to these questions and understanding oneself enables healing, which leads to self-belief and self-love. The Elders emphasize having love for oneself to prioritize mental well being. As one Elder stated:

> We need to first love ourselves. The thing about mental health is that we first have to, when we're working with someone, make sure that they have a good grasp of love for themselves, and a good sense of self worthiness. The difference for me from the time was youth right up to the Elderhood, or walking that path, was… learning to love myself, I was learning to care for myself, protect myself and share it right taking healthy chances (E3).

A way to love oneself is through self-care as it is a protective factor. When an individual is fatigued, it affects how they think, feel, and behave. Elder E4 said:

> It dawned on me that in those low periods, where I get mad and do things, because I'm hugely tired, and those dark entities come into me and make me feel that way, making me become irrational, not true to who I am, and not balanced (E4).

Elder E2 said, “When you embrace yourself with something that's healthy, it’s gonna get you to different places.” In speaking with all Elders, it was evident that taking care of oneself is important when providing support to clients but also for clinician’s mental well being.

Listen to Understand. Next, the Elders highlighted the importance of listening to understand. Elder E3 said, “A person can really make a difference in someone’s life by listening to them, by paying attention to them, and not just once but time and again, until finally when they finish telling their story.”

To support a client, the clinician must have the ability to patiently and carefully listen to the client talk about where they are from, what their culture is, and what their story is. Elder E3 suggested:

> Looking at a drug addict, one must ask, why is he or she a drug addict? There's pain, there's trauma. They're using drugs as a band aid. They're using sex as a band aid. If they’re working all the time, they use work as a band-aid. We need to go back, find out where the issue is through their story (E3).

Creating a Safe Space. It is integral for clinicians to create a safe space in order for the clients to share their stories. For Indigenous clients, clinicians must provide a space that is welcoming for Indigenous clients. If clients have not shared their stories, perhaps it is because they have not felt safe.

Clients will not open up and start the healing process until they feel comfortable and safe. Elder E2 said, “All we were there is to create a safe place for them to do what they need to do for themselves. They're doing the work.” Elder E4 shared an example of an unsafe space. They said, “Too many times a child is taken out of the classroom to be interviewed by a social worker. They’re put into an office. How scary is that? How much more trauma are we creating because of that?”

The Medicine Wheel. Another key component highlighted by all the Elders was the Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel represents balance. Elder E5 said, “If we were to look at the medicine wheel, as a tool of self-reflection, we look at defining health as a balance between mind, body, spirit and emotions.” Elder E4 shared that they ground themselves in the Medicine Wheel through balancing all the quadrants. Elder E2 stated that the medicine wheel can help one understand where they actually come from. Elder E2 also asked, “How many of you guys actually have your wheel with you? [laughs] I’m just kidding, I’m just kidding. It’s inside you, it’s inside you. So whatever you get from here [points to heart], is good medicine.”

Spirituality and Ceremony. Finally, the Elders emphasized spirituality as it has been neglected and dismissed in the mental health and healthcare fields. Elder E3 said, “You need to include spirituality into the healing practices if you are working with Western medicine. If you don't include spirituality, you're missing the mark.” Many practice spirituality through ceremony. Elder E3 said,

> We have many tools in the sense of ceremony. Ceremony is what will help save people. What is the spirituality of these people? The tool is going and attending functions like a pow-wow or going to a sweat lodge, or going to a drumming circle, or learning how to sing and dance for that particular culture that you're living at, or doing a full-moon

ceremony.

Other ceremonies the Elders spoke about included praying, fasting, taking spirit baths, and smudging.

Findings from Interviews with CYMH Clinicians

The interviews with clinicians included eleven interview questions (Appendix C). The clinicians were of various ethnic backgrounds. Five clinicians identified as Caucasian, one identified as Asian, and one as Indigenous (Appendix A). With these diverse cultural backgrounds of clinicians, it should be noted that there is an element of cross-cultural work. Nine themes emerged from the analysis of data from the information provided by the MCFD clinicians: 1) Clinicians' understanding of Indigenous Wise Practices, 2) Journey towards incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices 3) Clinicians' willingness to learn and remain open-minded, 4) Cultivating whole system relationships, 5) Time and patience for fostering a genuine connection, 6) Barriers in relationship building with Indigenous communities, 7) Indigenous-led Service Delivery that brings Change to Practices and Policies, 8) The need to increase culturally sensitive practices, and 9) Acknowledgement of past and current harm created by the system.

Clinicians' Understanding of Indigenous Wise Practices. When speaking with CYMH clinicians about the term Indigenous Wise Practices, some clinicians had not heard of this specific term, while others had various definitions. However, the common understanding was that Indigenous Wise Practices referred to the use of traditional ways of healing. The clinicians shared their awareness that these traditional or Wise Practices were most effective when supporting Indigenous clients. One clinician stated, "My definition of Indigenous Wise Practices is essentially Indigenous-led practices, where it should be and needs to be informed by Indigenous Elders, leaders, members, in that particular area, in the land, in the territory" (P03). Clinicians were also aware that every client is unique, and their needs will be different. Clinicians use creativity and flexibility to support clients in accessing traditional ways of healing.

Journey Towards Incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices. While all the clinicians had differences in their journeys towards incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices, there were common elements. A few clinicians acknowledged their lack of knowledge about Indigenous people and their history in Canada. However, these same clinicians found themselves gaining valuable insight from Indigenous-led training taken at the workplace. The San'yas training was felt to be very effective for a few clinicians. One clinician stated "well the San'yas as I mentioned that was life altering, there's no other way to put it for me" (P06). Another clinician also stated "the biggest one would be the San'yas training through" (P03).

Other clinicians started their journey of learning about Indigenous Wise Practices when they enrolled in Indigenous courses in post-secondary, while others had their interest peaked when travelling abroad and engaging with Indigenous people in different countries. There were commonalities for all clinicians when speaking about their journey and use of Indigenous Wise Practices.

A similarity found across all clinicians was the continued interest in learning and their openness to work with Indigenous people in the most supportive and culturally safe way. Every clinician shared a passion and interest through their openness to engage with every article, training or community activity that could progress their journey. There was also a shared attitude and perspective from all clinicians when incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices, and the importance of relationships was highlighted which will be spoken about next.

The Clinicians' Willingness to Learn and Remain Open-Minded. Clinicians shared that being open to learning about Indigenous ways can lay the foundation for incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices in CYMH practice. Being curious will lead to better initiation. One clinician noted the art of questioning and listening while listing some examples, "approach it in a more peaceful manner, to be quiet more, to be able to ask questions and kind of know when not to. Because there's various, there's really subtle things that can be really disrespectful" (P02). As first impressions are crucial and potentially lasting, it is essential to attempt engagement using a suitable approach that comes from a place of respect in the eyes of Indigenous communities.

Cultivating Whole System Relationships. As differences exist between every Indigenous

community, researchers have been mindful not to perceive each community in a generalized context. In spite of this, the emphasis on valuing community and family, and viewing situations through a holistic lens appeared to be a consistent shared value. The dynamics of an intervention will inevitably differ when working with a single individual versus a group or more than one client. Hence, many Western-based interventions may not be as suitable if they were designed for practice with an exclusive focus on the client. To quote a clinician in their interview, they said:

> I've been encouraged to use a different approach when you're working with an Indigenous family because they're not going to necessarily want to fill out a checklist online. Instead, it may involve meeting over a cup of coffee or going for a walk or throwing rocks into the river or any of those ways of engagement. It's going to be based on what they are needing, and it could look like five meetings before we get actual concrete assessment data gathered (P06).

This particular approach towards gradual relationship building is relevant to the subsequent themes as well.

Time and Patience for Fostering a Genuine Connection. Clinicians have noted timeline constraints as a presenting systemic challenge within the current colonized system they are embedded. For clinicians to provide the space to foster a genuine connection with Indigenous clients, time and patience in building trust are important. It is often the case that this cannot be done meaningfully within the expectation of within the expectation of time which many Western-based assessments and interventions are limited. There must be a shift in focus on valuing the relationships more than capturing the objectives and numbers of system-led designs. A clinician shared an example that taught her to recognize the differences in what Indigenous clients value when engaging with the system:

> We have a really laid out intake process that is meant to sort of, like, do a quick snapshot of where people are at and determine their criteria for services. And um, for some folks that feels like that process takes forever when it's like, you know, could be up to two hours appointment. But, um, the message that I hear a lot through my work, front and center or out in community is that- that actually is no time at all… for somebody to warm up and open up and feel comfortable talking about their deep struggles (P04).

Barriers in Relationship Building with Indigenous communities. During the interviews, several MCFD clinicians identified the need to implement outreach services and engage with Indigenous people by meeting clients in their home communities to promote a sense of safety. This can strengthen the relationship with Indigenous clients and families. Indigenous children and families often do not come to MCFD offices due to the lack of culturally safe services. A clinician stated that “it could be that you're going to meet clients at the friendship center because the MCFD building is terrifying” (P07). The clinicians have identified the need for MCFD leaders to connect with Indigenous leaders as they need to learn about how to appropriately integrate wise practices within the MCFD framework. Additionally, clinicians spoke about the need to foster ongoing relationships with Indigenous communities. The purpose of these ongoing relationships is to promote Indigenous-led changes or the development of policies and procedures.

Indigenous-led Service Delivery that Brings Change to Practices and Policies. Practices, policies, and frameworks are shaped from a colonized, Western, and medical model approach. Clinicians have identified the need to have Indigenous-led practices and service delivery shaped and formed by Indigenous Elders, leaders, and community members. A clinician stated, “I would say that kind of goes back to what I was saying earlier about if our leadership, our leaders in the ministry are connected to the [Indigenous] leaders in communities that would have a big impact” (P07). It is also vital to ensure that Indigenous children, youth, and families are involved in developing practices and policies as well. The partnership is essential to promote the self-determination of Indigenous communities and demonstrate how to integrate wise practices appropriately and safely by clinicians.

Clinicians shared that they do not have the flexibility to work with Indigenous clients in ways that go outside the parameters of current policies and practices. As shared by a clinician, “I find that I value

our structure and I value our process and I value our policy. But I also know that we need flexibility to work outside of that and be creative" (P06). For instance, sharing food and drink together is a part of the ceremonial aspects of Indigenous cultural values, so it is an accommodating and organic way of engaging with clients in the community. This includes critical aspects such as building relationships with clients. There is a lack of policies and procedures that encourage and support clinicians in their journey towards learning how to use Indigenous Wise Practices.

Need to Increase Culturally Sensitive Practices. Practices within CYMH should focus on traditional ways of healing. Clinicians shared that there are not enough opportunities for them to learn what Indigenous Wise Practices would look like and how they can use them in their practice to better support Indigenous clients. Clinicians should be provided opportunities to learn what traditional ways of healing are and how they can be implemented. These teachings should come directly from the Indigenous communities the clinicians are working in. Current practices should move away from checklists and standardized procedures and look to what the client needs. There should be an opportunity for clients to access cultural support and for clinicians to have the knowledge to assist with this. As one clinician shared, "we need to do more than learning about it… we need the capacity and the flexibility and the resources to implement it" (P06).

Acknowledgement of Past and Current Harm Created by the System. Lastly, clinicians spoke of the need for MCFD as an organization to acknowledge the harm that has been caused. There needs to be an acknowledgement of how the organization has caused harm in the past, and how in some ways the continuation of that harm. When interacting with Indigenous individuals, CYMH clinicians should be aware of the intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples. There is a real fear of Indigenous children being taken away and MCFD is not the first place many Indigenous people turn to for support. A clinician stated, "They wouldn't come to us for help because we haven't done the bridging. We haven't acknowledged our mistakes, we haven't acknowledged our impact on them enough. We haven't… essentially we haven't repaired the damaged relationship" (P03). To conclude, steps need to be taken toward repairing relationships and cultivating ongoing relationships between MCFD and Indigenous communities. Additionally, there is a dire need to create space for Indigenous leaders and elevate Indigenous voices.

Discussion and Limitations

The findings of this study indicate the need for the ongoing shift from Western-based models of practice to integrating Indigenous Wise Practices into CYMH services. In learning about sharing from Elders and each clinician's journey in incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices into their practice, various aspects of what encouraged their learning were identified. The results are informed by a trauma-informed lens, strengths-based theory, and decolonization theory. An analysis will be provided to explain how the literature supports our findings.

In this manner, there were firsthand encounters in recognizing how the circle transcends into a healing process by sharing common experiences, creating connections, and a sense of community (Raven Speaks, 2012). Many teachings related by the Elders through means of storytelling centered on messages of self-love and self-care for guidance on becoming a better human being (Lawrence & Paige, 2016). The medicine wheel is a prominent tool that can be utilized to visualize wholeness and self-reflection, as well. This can be used in part with storytelling for an Indigenous client to reflect on every four quadrants of the wheel in how it impacts their life, and identify which aspect may be off-balance. The medicine wheel can also be seen as an educational tool for the Indigenous belief that striving for balance in all four spheres – mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual – is necessary for healing (Kemppainen et al., 2008). In consideration of Indigenous children and youth attempting to access mental health services for various needs, such teachings that highlight the wellness of the whole person are a valuable source in aiding their healing journey. Moreover, clinicians who are open to using healing circles as a space for

storytelling provide a suitable environment where they can purposefully listen to understand the finer details of their client's lives. Indigenous clients identify the circle as an outlet where, through intimate sharing, they can build trust and share common experiences (Stevenson, 1999).

The notion of what characterizes a safe space for an Indigenous client may differ in ways from that of a non-Indigenous client. A trauma-informed lens can impart understanding to clinicians that simply upholding professional values such as confidentiality, competence and a non-judgmental attitude are not enough because of the damaging impact caused by system-led professionals in the past towards Indigenous clients and their families.

Within the framework of Indigenous Wise Practices, facilitating ways of engagement that are Indigenous-led resonate with the value of sovereignty and self-determination (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). For this reason, collaborating and involving Indigenous Elders as part of therapeutic interventions are a means of creating a safe space for Indigenous clients.

Spirituality and ceremony are key components that Indigenous Elders advocate for to integrate as part of Indigenous Wise Practices. In accordance with Mercer et al.'s (2010) findings, spiritual practices may differ from what can be derived in a scientific and scholarly manner which attests to the lack of existing research in this domain. Subsequently, there may be a lack of therapeutic interventions that pertain to spirituality and ceremony today. Therefore, future implementation of Indigenous Wise Practices in CYMH organizations should consider incorporating more diverse approaches that entail these components in engagement and delivery. The varying definitions of what Indigenous Wise Practices could mean based on each clinician's interpretation of the term showed a lack of uniform theory coupled with a foundational knowledge of the decolonized practice. This research aims to add to the understanding of what Indigenous Wise Practices are by collaborating with Indigenous community members such as Elders, which is part and parcel of decolonizing research practice (Windchief & Cummins, 2021).

Adopting an open-minded willingness to learn is a key theme that participants expressed in encouraging the incorporation of Indigenous Wise Practices. Possessing this mindset in seeking to learn about Indigenous ways and knowledge that participants may not have previously been aware of is recognized as a significant contributor to building relationships the right way. This is an important step towards steering away from colonized ways of practice. A narrative approach can be utilized in practice with Indigenous clients to allow space for storytelling, sharing of history, learning about Indigenous perspectives, and being mindful of the trauma that is spoken about. As noted by Lawrence and Paige (2016), using storytelling as a form of narrative therapy supports connection to culture and promotes the holistic wellness of an individual. In addition, this theme aligns with some of the values of the Seven Laws of Kwantlen Nation which have been elaborated upon by previously documented learning. Particularly, the virtue of Humbleness in recognizing and valuing the knowledge of another culture and the virtue of Understanding that needs to be upheld is integral for exercising Indigenous Wise Practices as part of this theme.

Building relationships with the community and whole family systems as opposed to a single individual is a vital component of Indigenous Wise Practices. Participants have shared that regardless of which Indigenous community they work with as every community is different, there has been a consistent emphasis on integrating whole systems for an Indigenous client's mental health journey. According to Stevenson (1999), helping professionals such as social workers or counsellors, have been able to provide the necessary support to Indigenous communities and individuals through the usage of healing circles, talking circles, or sharing circles. To effectively engage with members of Indigenous communities, there is a fine-tuned and careful way to approach that needs to come from a place of respect, honouring time and space, and safety. Participants have related how vital it is to not re-traumatize people who are attempting to come to engage in a system that has essentially traumatized them in the

past and had continually done this.

The Aboriginal Policy Framework in British Columbia (2015) stated that components of building strong relationships rely on collaborating and striving for collective decision-making. This relates to how family and community coming together in the circle is part of a restorative process for the Indigenous client. There is also a need to take time and have patience for fostering a genuine connection between clinicians and clients.

Western-based practices tend to be confined by structural limitations such as time constraints that hinder the process of establishing meaningful and trusting relationships with Indigenous clients. This has also been provided as feedback from Indigenous partners as working against meeting the scope of Indigenous Wise Practices. Aligning with the Teachings of the Seven Laws of Kwantlen Nation, virtues such as Understanding, Humbleness and Generosity need to be upheld, and this means allowing the space and time for a sincere therapeutic relationship to be developed in the right way. From a trauma-informed approach, it leads to the understanding that the Indigenous population has suffered from severely damaging relationships in the past with the Western systems as a result of historical events. Therefore, it is imperative that clinicians provide time and patience without conditions to sincerely bridge this gap, and cultivate relationships in a paced and careful manner.

Outreach work and community involvement from the clinicians were identified as common and effective ways to address barriers in establishing relationships with Indigenous clients and communities. Interventions that typically take place within an organization building with the client entering the workplace can be modified and implemented in another place of a client's choosing. Offering Indigenous clients the choice to voice what constitutes a safe space to them and accommodating their needs in this regard, can eliminate some looming barriers in relationship building. In accordance with Wesley-Esquimaux and Snowball's (2010) understanding of Indigenous Wise Practices, they consist of culturally sensitive practices that can work collaboratively towards enhancing Western approaches that already exist. In addition, the discussion that future CYMH program development and revisions should involve collaboration with Indigenous community members and hiring Indigenous staff at all levels of the organization supports the decolonizing theory of this research's framework.

Indigenous communities need to establish Indigenous-led service delivery that can lead to changes in existing practices and policies. Sovereignty and the principle of self-determination is an innate part of Indigenous identity in its expression of freedom in making their own choices for the good of their own community (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Relating to the strengths-based theory, creating Indigenous-led service delivery is a way of emphasizing an Indigenous community's presenting strengths and sense of resiliency as opposed to deficits (Askew et al., 2020). This also ties into the subsequent theme of increasing culturally sensitive practices. In order to address the dearth of traditional ways of healing, the direction should be geared towards hiring Indigenous staff who can elevate Indigenous voices in aspects such as policy development or necessary practices changes. Moreover, Indigenous-led services can increase the collaboration between Indigenous communities for further guidance on the appropriate implementations of Indigenous Wise Practices.

Acknowledgement of historical wrongdoings committed against Indigenous populations is another necessary step towards incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices in the right way. Beyond this, clinicians need to be mindful in considering how past harm may still persist in the present system. In particular, child protection and child removal characterizes how system-led institutions in Canada had addressed perceived issues within Indigenous families. Among various reasons, this may be one aspect as to why many Indigenous clients retain a deep sense of mistrust and apprehension in engaging with CYMH services. Overall, practice must be trauma-informed to recognize and reduce any power imbalances between the clinician and client (Levenson, 2017).

There were several limitations identified in this research study. The research criteria aimed to survey British Columbian CYMH clinicians working in various agencies across the province. However, limited access in recruiting respondents from DAA means that the sample size consisted exclusively of CYMH clinicians from MCFD. Therefore, this limits the generalizability of the findings and diminishes overall external validity. Another limitation is time constraints and mismatched availability between researchers and participants.

If time constraints had not been a factor, it may have led to an increased sample as there were instances of interested participants responding after the window of time that data collection was completed. Additional participants may have had distinct experiences to share within their own practice that could have contributed to the themes differently. As a result, this research was subject to under coverage bias as it inadequately represented some members of the population within the sample. Another limitation is the purely virtual format of the data collection process which was a shift away from how this evaluation was originally planned to be facilitated. Indigenous Elders were included among our participant sample, and traditional ways of connecting with these Indigenous Elders were unable to be accommodated due to COVID-19-related public health restrictions, timeline constraints, and geographical barriers. This is especially relevant given that many Indigenous Wise Practices pertain to sharing of knowledge and information through traditional ways in the space of a physical circle. Along with technical difficulties that resulted in critical loss of time in the midst of some interviews, the lack of flexibility in options for conducting interviews could have inadvertently influenced the outcome of the provided data and the collection process. In spite of these given limitations, this evaluation has been able to identify what Indigenous Wise Practices are presently integrated into BC CYMH services.

Implications for Future Directions

Provide MCFD Clinicians with Education to Support them with Using Indigenous Wise Practices.

The clinicians acknowledged several training opportunities, such as San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training, Brief Child and Family Interview Intake Training, and the Kairos' Blanket Exercise.

The clinicians found these trainings beneficial and gained information that they could implement into practices with CYMH services. Educational training and classes can be used to support Indigenous clients by providing cultural safety and awareness of how to speak with Indigenous clients with safety and awareness of the trauma and historical challenges they may have experienced. A clinician stated they participated in personal education such as attending workshops outside of MCFD, community events, traditional feasts, and reading books from Indigenous authors (P05, research interview, March 16, 2022). They also recommended, "localized training" which includes learning about Indigenous groups where the MCFD office is located (P05, research interview, March 16, 2022). Education on the historical, and political contexts of Indigenous colonization was important and identified in many of the interviews with clinicians as it shaped their practice with Indigenous clients and families. The need for continuous and ongoing teaching, training, and learning that comes directly from Indigenous communities, leaders and Elders were identified in the research as clinicians expressed that they did not have the knowledge on how to best support Indigenous clients in traditional ways. Being creative and flexible in the opportunities provided for clinicians can support their journey with implementing Indigenous Wise Practices.

Further Research can be Completed to Determine How to Create Partnerships with Indigenous Communities.

Clinicians have identified the gap between the MCFD leadership and the Indigenous leaders in the community. A clinician stated, "if our directors are not connected with the leaders in Aboriginal communities that's a problem. So that to me is a tool like when our leaders and the leaders in those communities [connect] (P07, research interview, March 17, 2022). This demonstrates that the partnership between Indigenous communities and MCFD needs continual improvement. Further

research on how to mend the strained relationship between MCFD and Indigenous communities can be completed to identify areas of improvement to better support Indigenous children and families. As identified from this research, the definition of mental wellness in Indigenous communities is very different from the medical model. To bridge this gap, there must be a relationship that respects the Indigenous worldview, to appropriately implement Indigenous Wise Practices within service delivery. There is limited research in this area, and formal plans to mend the relationship are needed. This must be done using a trauma-informed and community-centered approach which starts with an understanding of trauma and its impact on relationship building with Indigenous communities. The research from the literature review indicated that community participation, collaboration and engagement empowered Indigenous individuals and communities. It promoted self-determination and equitable involvement in Indigenous communities to influence programs and policies using transformative change (Petrucka et al., 2016). This demonstrates the power of amplifying Indigenous voices and valuing their contributions to service delivery.

Further Research can be Completed to Understand Service Users' Perspectives.

There is a lack of research available that is committed to understanding the perspective of Indigenous children, youth, and families in relation to receiving Indigenous Wise Practices within the child youth and mental health service framework. The Aboriginal Policy and Practice Model focuses on supporting the involvement of Indigenous children and families, extended families, Elders, traditional knowledge keepers and communities in decision making, inclusive of Indigenous Wise Practices, values, and traditions (Aboriginal Policy Framework in British Columbia, 2015). Shaping the policy dialogue and service implementation can be done by allowing Indigenous communities to self-direct and be involved in decision-making with a community engagement approach (Ryan et al., 2006). Speaking to the children, youth, and families about what is helpful for them and determining which Indigenous Wise Practices resonate with them is essential to understanding the needs of the service users.

Indigenous-led Service Delivery that Brings Change to Practices and Policies.

Current research indicates the lack of policies and frameworks within Western agencies that directly involve Indigenous communities. Most Westernized models only consult Indigenous Elders, leaders, and communities but do not provide the opportunity to create and implement programs and policies (Ryan et al., 2006). During this research, it was evident that knowledge provided by Elders on the traditions, cultures, and practices can be implemented into service delivery. These include engaging in self-awareness, self-love, and self-care. It is essential to listen to understand, create safe spaces to provide autonomy for clients and integrate spirituality and ceremony within practices. The medicine where provides an opportunity for clinicians to support Indigenous children, youth and families to find balance using the four quadrants. As one Elder stated, "if we were to look at the medicine wheel, we look at defining health as a balance between mind, body, spirit, and emotions" (E5). It can be vital to continue these conversations with Elders and meetings to promote relationship building. The knowledge from the Elders can be used to provide improved services for Indigenous clinicians and could benefit Indigenous children, youth, and families. Research indicates incorporating Indigenous wise practices into agencies has proven benefits for Indigenous people. Using wise practices can encourage connections to Indigenous culture, language, and self-identity. Each wise practice is unique to a distinct Indigenous community, and the cultural practices can be included in a way that reflects the values, beliefs, and desires of the community (Ryan et al., 2006).

Conclusion

Overall, this research study provided significant insight into the current experiences of CYMH clinicians integrating Indigenous Wise Practices. Indigenous Elders offered thorough knowledge on aspects such as the self, relationship building, and traditional and cultural practices. Additionally, CYMH clinicians highlighted the barriers that hinder the implementation of Indigenous Wise Practices and

provided insight into how these challenges could be overcome. Thus, the findings shared by Indigenous Elders and CYMH clinicians can be utilized to inform MCFD policies and practices to encompass the various changes necessary to harbour and cultivate safe spaces for Indigenous clients and CYMH clinicians. MCFD must continue to heal the relationships with Indigenous communities by acknowledging the past and current wrongdoings of the organization. Incorporating the valuable information gathered in this research study can work toward elevating Indigenous voices and providing Indigenous communities with the autonomy to guide Indigenous Wise Practices into MCFD services.

Funding Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Acknowledgements

Student researchers express gratitude to everyone who collaborated on this research project. The Elders provided invaluable teachings that student researchers will not only use for this research process, but will also implement in their personal and professional lives. Additionally, Child Youth and Mental Health (CYMH) clinicians provided integral information regarding their practice with Indigenous clients. Lastly, the support received by both Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) sponsors and the Principal Investigator provided guidance throughout that was essential for this research process.

Elders: Betty Gladue, Kathryn McCooeye, Philip Gladue, Christine MacIntosh, & Michael Harris

CYMH Clinicians: James Woodworth, Anita Deneault, Megan Klotz, Nelson Szeto, Heidi Preston & all the other clinicians who participated.

MCFD Research Sponsors: Terry Lejko, Kirsten Mah, Kali Love, Heather Gesner, Rhonda Ducharme, Maurice Squires, Breanna Viala & Marlena Kaltsidis

Principal Investigator UBC: Dr. Barbara Lee

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Appendix A

Clinicians' demographic information

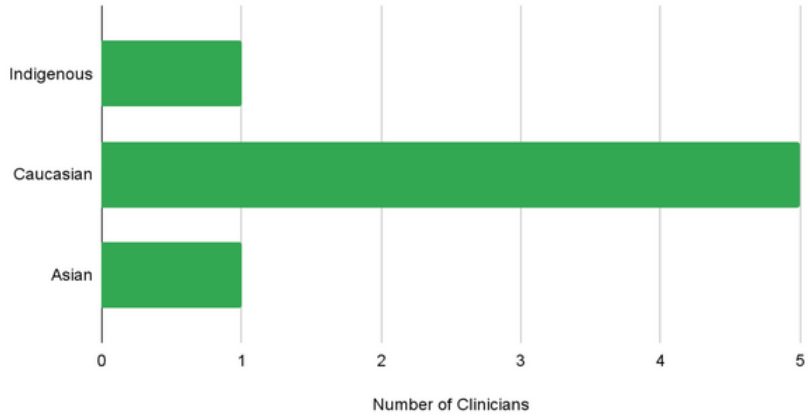


Figure A1. *Clinicians' Cultural Background*

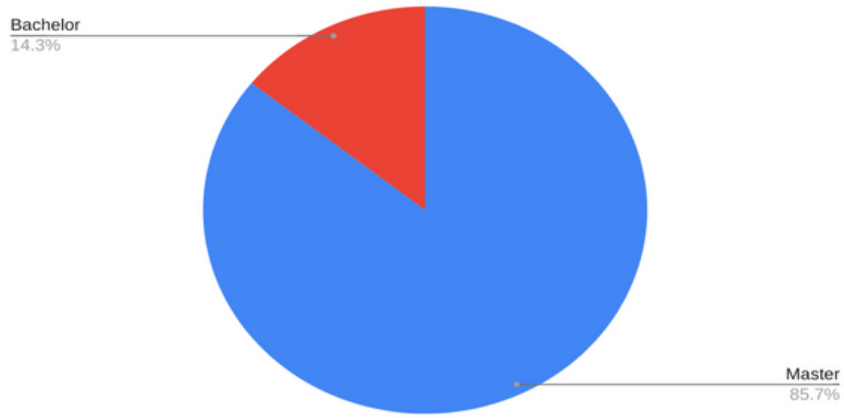


Figure A2. *Clinicians' Education Level*

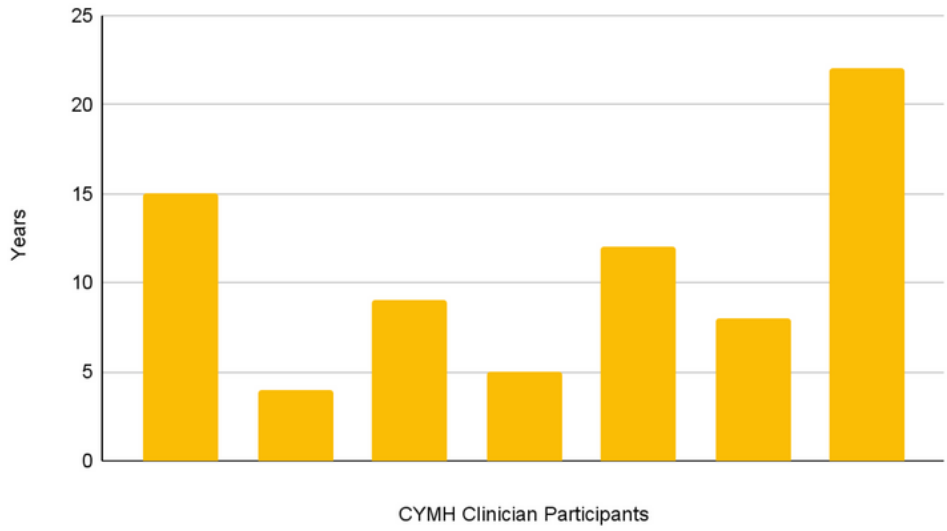


Figure A3*. Clinicians' Years of Experience at MCFD*

Appendix B

Questions for Elders

1. How do you describe mental health and wellness?
2. What are some of the traditional ways or teachings that you or your community use to support mental wellness? What do these look like in your lives?
3. From your perspective, how could clinicians support the inclusion of traditional and cultural ways in professional practice?

Appendix C

Interview Questions for CYMH Clinicians

1. Can you tell me about your role in MCFD?
2. How do you define Indigenous Wise Practices?
3. What were the circumstances that started and led your journey towards incorporating Indigenous Wise Practices?
4. How and why do you incorporate Indigenous Wise Practices?
5. How do you ensure these practices are delivered in a culturally safe way?
6. What training, learning, or connections have fostered the implementation of Indigenous Wise Practices into your work? (for example, specific MCFD training, relationships with Indigenous communities, training outside of MCFD, etc.)
7. What challenges do you experience using Indigenous Wise Practices with children, youth and families? Were there any systemic challenges?
8. What would be some useful tools or further training that would have helped you learn about integrating Indigenous Wise Practices into your work?
9. How did the use of Indigenous Wise Practices provide different outcomes for children, youth and or family?
10. Do you have any additional thoughts about the integration of Indigenous Wise Practices into CYMH that you think would be useful for us to note?
11. Would you like your name stated on the “acknowledgement” section of the final report? The acknowledgment section will be at the end of the report thanking research participants for their involvement by name. You may remain anonymous if you chose to.

Sustainable Communities

A Guide to Community Asset Mapping

FALLS BROOK CENTRE

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

There is nothing like an economic crisis - especially one which threatens your livelihood or the continued existence of your community - to focus your thinking on the future and what is important to you and your family.

In any economic crisis, among the hardest hit are regions long dependent on one industry. People whose lives are directly tied to resource industries have been among the first to suffer the consequences of these transformational changes. They often react with anger and disbelief, despair and helplessness. Eventually, they must confront reality.

When mills or other conventional operations shut down, communities are faced with a stark choice: adapt and rebuild or wither away. If your community is facing the loss of its primary industry, or if you see such a threat on the horizon, you may wish to take emergency or preventive action. It is possible for communities to re-invent themselves so that they not only survive, but thrive. They must look at themselves with new eyes, recognize the potential which lies within themselves, and build a resilient economic base which is sustainable in the long term.

The premise of sustainability is that the needs and aspirations of the present can be met without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. The process of developing sustainability is circular rather than linear; it is a cycle of replenishment rather than depletion.

This manual can launch your community on a process of renewal and resilience. It can help you facilitate the initial step towards successful transition from dependence on a single industry to innovative development based on diverse utilization of community resources. This transition often begins with a small group of determined citizens who engage others in the process of visioning, planning and implementing a sustainable future. The community should cultivate the capacity to shape its own ways of life and work.

As Falls Brook Centre has worked for many years in the field of sustainable resource based communities, we realize the necessity for community preparedness and therefore we encourage the facilitator to focus their attention on community resiliency. Much depends on local leadership and the resources available to them to plan for and implement sustainable development. But

communities also need tools which will make the process coherent and practical. There are many models for strategic planning and experts to advise you. This manual is meant to get you started so that you can move into a comprehensive planning process with a clear understanding of what you have to work with.

GETTING STARTED

The first step in sustainable community revitalization is to look at the dimensions of the current situation and to identify community strengths and weaknesses which will help or hinder its transformation to a more diverse economy.

It is likely that when a crisis strikes, a few citizens will want to react immediately. Some will fight to retain the status quo; this may or may not be feasible. Others will look forward and hope of a different future. Usually, there is a small group which comes together to figure out what action can be taken. Their first step is logically to assess the situation in search of a solution. This can be done through a process called Asset Mapping.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Resiliency is the mechanism through which assets are assembled by a community to overcome economic, social and environmental challenges. Based on participatory conversation, community resiliency is the ongoing ability to work together to identify strengths and challenges, establish common goals, mobilize resources and take collective action. Communities that build resiliency are able to take the steps to survive crisis, influence change and become healthy, vital places, as it is the community itself that cultivates capacity to shape its own ways of life and work.

ANALYZING AND UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION

Asset Mapping is a group exercise which enables communities to see themselves from a new perspective and to identify directions for socioeconomic development which may not have been recognized before. It helps you think positively about the place in which you live and work, producing a common view of what is considered important in the community. It also challenges you to recognize how other people see and experience the same community and space. It is the starting point for strategic planning because it identifies what assets the community has and how they might be utilized in the future.

> COMMUNITY:
>
> A social group, of any size, in a given locality, who share governance and a common economic and/or cultural history.

WHAT ARE ASSETS?

Assets are the attributes and advantages of a community which are considered essential for the maintenance of its quality of life. Assets are what we want to keep, sustain and build upon for the future. They come in many shapes and forms:

Natural assets are what we have in our natural environment: water, wood, minerals, wildlife, fertile soil, etc.

Built assets are physical structures like buildings and public infrastructure (recreational facilities, water and sewage treatment, etc.)

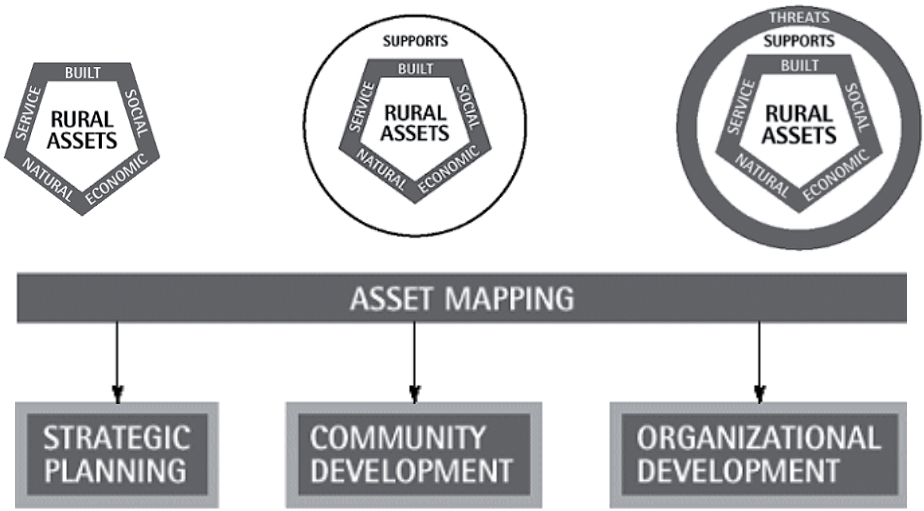
Social assets are the values and culture of the community, including traditions and attitudes of sharing, cooperation, and mutual support.

Economic assets are the jobs and businesses which provide livelihoods.

Public (service) assets include medical and educational services - hospitals, schools, municipal services and others provided by governments.

Intangible assets are usually undiscovered or underutilized skills, expertise and willingness to volunteer and participate in working towards common goals.

The Asset Mapping workshop allows your community to make an inventory of these assets so you know what you have to work with in designing a sustainable future. Mapping community assets means creating a list of good things you already have, ranking the most valued assets, and understanding why these assets are highly valued. An Asset Mapping session will help citizens share an appreciation of what resources exist, what supports them and what threatens them. This is the first step towards a plan of action.



T. Fuller, 2002

It is important throughout the process to allow time for informal conversation and networking. Even though the people attending these sessions may have met, in this process they will learn new things about each other which can lead them to stronger or more productive collaborative actions.

The person who facilitates the asset mapping session and the subsequent steps does not have to be a professional facilitator. The following steps are guidelines that should be adapted for the group size and the community needs. However, he or she must be able to guide the process without directing it. If it

is someone from the community, that person should be one who is generally respected as fair and unbiased. Sometimes the process is more productive if the facilitator comes from another community and has no emotional baggage that could affect their impartiality.

The following are instructions for organizing and facilitating an Asset Mapping session. The outcome of this session should be a list of suggestion and projects to be considered when pursuing strategic planning.

FACILITATING AN ASSET MAPPING SESSION

ADVANCE PLANNING

1. Secure a date and venue, send out invitations. Be sure to include every organization you can think of!

2. Publicize the session in local media and with posters.

3. Take care of logistics ahead of time as much as possible. Three hours should be anticipated for a session. Arrange the room in tables or circles of ten people or less. Assign people to tables by some random selection method like numbers. Each group should nominate a person to write the notes and speak on behalf of the group.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO INCLUDE:

- Local Council
- Youth groups like 4-H
- Women's Institute
- Environmental Groups
- Chamber of Commerce
- Church Groups
- First Nation Organizations
- Tourism
- Service groups like Lions, Rotary etc.

AT THE SESSION

1. Introduce yourself and have all participants introduce themselves. People should be asked to give their names, their organizational affiliations (if any), and one reason why they came to the session. This enables people who may not know each other to make connections if they wish to. Try to keep this brief and discourage people from getting into a discussion at this point.

2. Set the stage. Review the agenda. If there are community members present who played key roles in setting up the session, invite them to speak briefly about their intentions and hopes for the process. Briefly describe what assets are, what Asset Mapping is, why the community has gathered, and what the goal of the session is.

3. At the tables, use the feedback sheet (Appendix 1), have the participants individually write down the assets in their community which are most important to them. It may be helpful to read out the questions so everyone is clear about the task. If there are people who are not comfortable with writing, it may be better to let them say out loud their assets when comes the time to share with the while group.

4. When the individual asset lists are ready, have the participants share their assets with the group, write all the assets on the flip charts marking the recurring ones. Ask for additions or questions, and ask if there are any surprises. Some of the assets on the list may be grouped into categories where they are related to each other. Allow for a little discussion, but keep the process moving.

5. Go around the table and have each person pick his or her top assets, the ones that they most participants want to sustain and build upon. Then underline the three most popular assets as chosen by the group. This helps to assess the group's interests.

6. Go to the second question on the feedback sheet. This identifies the threats or challenges facing the chosen assets. Give the participants time to write down what they consider as threats to those assets and have them share their answers in a round table, writing them on the flip chart. Ask the group to choose the top three threats which affect the top three assets (see if some of them can be linked to others). Allow the participants to express their doubts and concerns, but stay focused on the task. The next step allows them to develop and explore solutions.

7. Go to the third question on the feedback sheet. It asks for ideas about what would be needed to support the priority assets and keep them strong against the identified threats. Again, let them write down their ideas and go around the tables asking for their answers, writing the ideas on the flip chart as they are expressed. More discussion is encouraged in this stage, as it is where the ideas and projects to move forward with may start to form. Have them brainstorm solutions in response to threats.

This is a good point to break for refreshments.

8. Back at the tables; identify projects which would incorporate a number of supports to threats that can be undertaken as a starting point. Once you feel that the group is content with brainstorming of solutions and potential projects, move to the last question on the feedback sheet and repeat the roundtable process. Finish by discussing the organization of the next meeting; identify key players who were missing this time and who should be invited next time. Encourage participants to bring two friends next time.

9. Wrap-up the session by asking each table to report its findings to the whole group. Try to set a date for a follow-up session and determine its goals. Make sure the participants have filled out the contact sheet before they leave. Also, we suggest that you give the participants time to fill in an evaluation form (Appendix 3). (Evaluation is a management tool that allows for measuring the outcomes of the workshop, the progress of the group and identifies areas that need improvement.)

It is important for people to leave with ideas about specific projects related to the community assets in mind. At this stage, projects, not long-term planning will engage people, because they want to see action. Once some projects have been undertaken, the community will begin to feel empowered and will be able to look further into the future. Longer term strategic planning will follow.

WORKSHOP CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Feedback Sheets and Evaluation Form for all participants (Appendix 1)
- ☐ Participant Contact Sheet (Name, Organization and Contact Information) Very important if a follow-up session is to take place
- ☐ Copies of the agenda
- ☐ Snacks for Nutritional Break
- ☐ Flip Chart Paper and Markers
- ☐ Pens and Paper for all Participants
- ☐ Copies of Agenda
- ☐ Handouts arranged in order
- ☐ Masking Tape
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Paper Clips
- ☐ Name Tags
- ☐ Visual Aids (TV, VCR/DVD, projector/screen) and extension cords (if you intend on doing a presentation)

WHAT COMES NEXT?

The follow-up session should focus on choosing and planning one or two projects, allowing for further brainstorming and moving to an action plan which outlines specific tasks. Start by revisiting the recommendations and outcomes from the asset mapping workshop. Once the group has agreed on a project to undertake, you can ask them to fill in the Planning Grid (Appendix 2) to allow project brainstorming to begin.

Now that you know your community's assets and have some plans to develop them through projects, you may want to look at the bigger picture. As a community closely tied to the natural resources, you might want to use an ecological governance model for guidance into and throughout the strategic planning process.

Ecological governance embeds the inclusive perspective of the environment at all levels of decision-making. This approach generates options for resource management through innovation, conservation, resource allocation

and changing patterns of use. It should be a cooperative interaction that the community uses to decide what is in their common interest and how they will act collectively. Beginning with describing and understanding the current situation, which now includes an asset inventory; this governance model or planning framework looks ahead to what the future should be, and works backwards from that vision to the present. Ecological governance uses a technique called backcasting to illustrate the steps which need to be taken to move your community from here
to there.

HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT

1. **Identify**, in a participatory manner, all present stakeholders, social systems and ecosystems surrounding the identified subject of interest.

2. **Adopt** a projection for the resources in the region. Apply existing use patterns of stakeholders, social systems and ecosystems to a 10-20 year projection, creating a "business-as-usual" baseline. This tells you where your community will be if the status quo is maintained and nothing changes.

3. **Create** a desired (ideal) future vision of the community for stakeholders, social systems and ecosystems 10 years into the future. Analyze how that future could work for everyone.

4. **Consider** the projected needs of the community/region.

5. **Review** the supply/demand dynamics and options for resources. Identify all current sources of the resource and determine if there are any reserves that are being overused or degraded. Determine alternatives to these assets.

6. **Backcast** and create various paths to follow by designing incremental policies and programs that can get the community from "there" (the desired future projection) to "here" (where we are now). Working backwards determines what needs to be done in order to attain that future.

7. **Walk, talk, write, promote.** Your conclusions must reach the public and particularly key decision makers, if they are to be successfully implemented.

Ecological governance is a method to promote forward momentum. It clarifies the steps required to make the vision a reality. Options and challenges can

be identified. When a group or community takes on a model of ecological governance in their future planning, they could break up the 7 steps into manageable separate sessions focusing on a couple of the actions/steps per gathering – taking time for discussion, breaking to leave time for thought and regrouping to continue working forward.

Now that you have this manual and have read through the process of Asset Mapping and Ecological Governance you have the necessary tools to begin the community strategic planning process. Once you begin the process you will find out which of the suggested methods work best for you and then you can begin to make adaptations to meet the needs of your community and accomodate to the unique future visioning process on which you will embark.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Asset Mapping. A Handbook

http://www.rural.gc.ca/conference/documents/mapping_e.phtml

Canadian Rural Partnership by Tony Fuller, Denyse Guy and Carolyn Pletsch, produced by the Government of Canada.

The Community Tool Box

ctb.ku.edu/tools/en

This is a team from the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas.

CIEL - Centre for Innovative Entrepreneurial Leadership

www.theciel.com

Helping communities to strengthen leadership and become culturally vibrant, sustainable, business-friendly areas.

The Community Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP)

www.carleton.ca/cedtap

A not-for-profit organization in the field of community economic development (CED), grants community-based organization and community development initiatives.

Service Continuity Planning

http://bcp.nonprofitrisk.org

An online course to aid in the development and implementation of a plan to prevent the disruption or termination of services, especially in regards to voluntary sector services.

The Polis Project on Ecological Governance

www.polisproject.org

Centre in Victoria, B.C., where research meets community action. Looking at incorporating an environmental perspective in all aspects of decision making.

Falls Brook Centre

www.fallsbrookcentre.ca

An environmental education and sustainable living demonstration centre in rural New Brunswick. Four main areas of focus Community Development, Organic Agriculture, Forest Stewardship and Appropriate Technology.

We must become the change
we want to see.

~ Mahatma Gandhi

FEEDBACK SHEET

Name: _____

What community do you live in? :_____

What organizations or groups are you part of? :

_____

1. Outline the six most important assets in your community: (we are looking for things such as physical, economic, cultural, related to people and natural assets):

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Tell us what you think is threatening these assets and the long term prospects for your community:

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. What needs to be done to keep the community strong and healthy and to support those assets?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. How can we work together? What are the best ways to "connect" communities? And what has worked for them in the past?

_____
_____
_____
_____

PLANNING GRID

Name of the Project:
Project Leader:
Project Goal:
What?
Why?
When?
Where?
Who?
How?

WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

Please take the time to answer the following questions:

1. Overall, how would you rate the methods used to deliver the workshop?

Not at all interesting		Reasonably		Very interesting
1	2	3	4	5

2. How would you rate the facilitator's knowledge of the subject matter?

Poor		Fair		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

3. Did the facilitators present the subject matters effectively?

Not at all		More or less		Very much so
1	2	3	4	5

4. Has the workshop met your needs?

Not at all		More or less		Very much so
1	2	3	4	5

Please explain:

_____

_____

5. What did you like best about this workshop?

_____

_____

Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU!

~ Perhaps the oak tree is brought into creation by two forces at the same time. The acorn from which it all begins is the seed which holds all the promise and potential, which will eventually grow into a tree. Yet there is another force at work, the future tree itself, which wants nothing more than to exist so it pulls the acorn into being, guiding the evolution from nothingness to maturity. It is the oak tree that creates the very acorn from which it was born.

Perhaps when a few people recognize that there is another force operating in community development, much like the oak tree, it is those determined individuals that ensure the future sustainability of the community. ~

Falls Brook Centre
Knowlesville, New Brunswick
Tel: (506) 375-4310
www.fallsbrookcentre.ca

FUNDY
CANADIAN
MODEL FOREST
NETWORK

Best Practices in Aboriginal Community Development: A Literature Review and Wise Practices Approach

By Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux and Brian Calliou

2010

Produced with the Generous Support of

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The Banff Centre
inspiring creativity

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Printed at The Banff Centre

October 2010

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The Challenges of Aboriginal Leaders

The most effective contemporary Aboriginal leaders are visionaries, with big dreams for their nations and organizations.(Calliou, 2005-2006) They are a new breed of leaders who are thinkers and doers, committed to life-long learning, and have the best interests of their community at heart. They are risk-takers, entrepreneurial in spirit, and strategic thinkers. They do not fear change, but rather embrace the challenges they face, and turn threats into opportunities. However, there still are many Aboriginal communities whose leaders are elected or appointed to positions of leadership who do not have any formal training in management, administration, or governance. They are at a disadvantage without such knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, Aboriginal leaders are experiencing increasing authority and responsibilities as both federal and provincial governments make jurisdictional space for Aboriginal self-government and embrace the delegation of community services to local control. Today we see Aboriginal leaders meeting more frequently with senior government leaders and industry CEO's, negotiating agreements on behalf of their communities. Aboriginal leaders are working in a rapidly changing world that is globally inter-related, market-driven, and highly technological. All leaders are dealing with very complex issues in this new world order, and Aboriginal leaders need to keep pace. Leadership development is a necessity during these complex times. (Calliou and Voyageur, 2007)

Aboriginal leadership development and capacity building is important for true self-government and for communities to take advantage of economic opportunities. (Calliou, 2007; 2008) Manley Begay, a Navajo scholar, argues that Indigenous leaders are dealing with the effects of colonialism and "have become responsible for the tasks of rebuilding, reuniting, reshaping, and revitalizing these nations."(Begay, 1997) A study exploring First Nations leadership and leadership development in Saskatchewan within the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations organizational context was carried out by Ottmann (2005). The First Nations leaders that participated in this study shared personal and professional leadership and leadership development experiences and philosophy. The leaders indicated that being a First Nations leader was challenging because it continuously contended with two fundamentally different cultures – Western and First Nations. In addition, First Nations poverty, lack of funding, residential school effects, addictions, among other things, make leadership difficult. Because First Nations leadership is physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually taxing, many of the Chiefs cited internal rather than material satisfaction as a primary motivator. Moreover, these leaders were often motivated by a cause and the desire for collective well-being and positive change. Family, community members, other leaders, Elders, and the 'Creator' were acknowledged as sources of strength and inspiration.

Developing Aboriginal Leaders

The First Nations leaders who participated in the Ottmann study perceived leadership development as a life-long process of formal and informal learning experiences. Consequently, many of the leaders indicated that leadership development began in childhood with individual and family development.(Ottmann, 2005) The leaders described the need for a First Nations leadership development program that was flexible (able to work in community, tribal, and provincial settings), cognizant of First Nations culture, needs, and issues, and aware of current and innovative leadership practices. They also felt that a First Nations leadership development program should also incorporate Western knowledge, skills, and education. Indigenous leaders indicated in a competency study that they need western knowledge on leadership and management, but that these had to be adapted to meet their specific community and cultural needs. (Calliou, 2005)

Studies that focus on Indigenous leadership development ultimately have significant implications for theory, research, fundamental, and practical applications for learning organizations.(Ottmann, 2005; Begay, 1991, 1997; Calliou, 2005, 2007, 2008; Cowan, 2008) These studies also confirm that successful communities first need to build a culture of positive practice, a “habit of doing things” to realize their visions. Aboriginal peoples also need to create (with a sense of ownership and consequent responsibilities for the ownership) their own unique community development plan. Such a plan needs to fit in the intersection of the strengths the community has (the “what”), the core values the community holds (the “why”), and a deep understanding of the available resources that can be used (the “how”). Out of changing perspectives on how Aboriginal peoples do business, grow and influence their leadership, and create a changing vision for their communities have come a number of initiatives that have produced templates of success and comparative examples of ways of doing things that are fully Indigenous and sustainable “wise practice” development practices.

Wise Practices in Aboriginal Leadership

Aboriginal leaders and managers need the same leadership development training as others. However, Aboriginal cultures have unique issues that are very different from non-Aboriginal leaders. For example, they are dealing with the effects of colonization, dispossession from lands and resources, and residential schools. (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2009; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004) They also deal with problems that others may not face such as poverty, the enduring legacy of loss of culture, responsibility for overseeing community development, and little employment or economic development within their communities.

In spite of multiple obstacles, First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples have been moving rapidly on the path to reclaim and invigorate their leadership, languages, cultures, teachings, and community practices. The dialogue that is now taking place in Aboriginal communities is rooted in their unique body of knowledge, manifested through oral histories and lived experiences. There is a recognized need to return to and invigorate ancestral "wise practices" and engage community members, from youth to Elders, in a reassertion of fundamental belief structures, values and ceremonial practices.(Little Bear, 1998, 2004; Calliou, 2005; Cowan, 2008; Warner and Grint, 2006; Redpath and Neilsen, 1997) Taking back and revitalizing "our own ways" will ensure that Aboriginal peoples will continue to re-connect their traditions and practices and strengthen the sacred circle of life.

Over several centuries, First Nation and Aboriginal communities across Canada experienced several "crisis events" in the form of various epidemics, imposition of law, dislocation and residential schooling that caused historical trauma. Some communities appear to have succumbed to the aftermath of multiple traumatic incidents, and this has all too frequently resulted in negative media attention (Bussidor & Bilgen-Reinart, 1997, Shkilnyk, 1985).

This kind of negative media coverage paints a picture of dysfunctional Aboriginal communities. Many authors have written on the trajectory of loss and promoted a broad discourse about the continuing conditions of poor health, impermanence, and negative socio/cultural impacts (Brave Heart, 2004 A, 2004 B, Wesley-Esquimaux, 2004, Miller, 2004, Churchill, 1995). This has also been referred to as the "deficit paradigm" where social pathologies are often the focus of research and media stories of Aboriginal peoples. (Ponting and Voyageur, 2001)

Advancing the Wise Practices Approach to Aboriginal Leadership Development

The research that The Banff Centre is undertaking is looking at the Aboriginal community of Alberta specifically, and Canada generally, from the other side of the ledger of lived experience. Looking past the label of "crisis event" and the seemingly hopeless legacy of long-term interference and

disabling government policy, this research focuses on what has been manifesting in a multitude of achievements and success stories of Aboriginal communities. The projects will examine, highlight and map the intiatives taken and how they achieved success.

The Centre will do this recording in a variety of ways; through the assembling of a cohort of young Aboriginal people from across Alberta involved in data gathering (including interviewing community members, elders and community leaders) and journaling; through multi-media methods that utilize video, radio, and photography to record sessions and community visits; and through writing. In addition, the Banff Centre will oversee the work of four research teams who will record narrative histories and events that trace how these successful ventures developed from inception to concluding institutions and cultural cerebrations such as Metis Crossing in Smokey Lake, Alberta.

This particular review will examine a range of concepts related to Aboriginal leadership recognizing that, as in any other social system of knowledge and practice, Aboriginal leadership development is being constantly refined to identify the most productive and effective ways for Aboriginal leaders and leaders-in-training to respond to the needs of their communities. Hence, efforts have been made in the preparation of this report to go beyond a typical literature review to capture community voices and actions relevant to the concept of Aboriginal leadership.

The Nexen Chair in Aboriginal Research, in conjunction with the Banff Centre, has been given responsibility to document this movement and demonstrate the experiences and successes in Aboriginal communities across Alberta, and in some instances the rest of Canada. (Bishop Bowes, 2009-2010) Furthermore, the authors of this report fully expect that the definition and conceptualization of wise practices will continually evolve and be subject to refinement, as experience and knowledge expands within the Aboriginal community and through the applied research projects.

The authors of this review welcome the fact that “the concepts of participatory research and community involvement, the incorporation of traditional knowledge, culturally-appropriate, and community- based research methods have gained momentum in recent years within First Nations and Inuit settings” (Schnarch (2004:82). This review of Aboriginal leadership and First Nation socio-economic success through a wise practices lens, as part of the bigger project, is based on recognition of local systems of knowledge and practice, in which the concept of Aboriginal leadership is perceived as both complex and holistic. We recognize that Aboriginal leadership and community success include traditional elements (such as spiritual meanings, cultural imagery, and indirect modes of communication), contemporary culturally appropriate models (as determined by Aboriginal leaders), as well as aspects that have actively responded to ever-

changing relations between Aboriginal and "mainstream" cultures. In addition, we recognize that there are Western features of leadership that are being purposefully adopted by Aboriginal leaders to fit and benefit their knowledge and practice. As previously stated, there is great need for leadership development and training programs for Aboriginal leaders. One tool for leadership development is the best practice case study.

Best Practices Approach

Leadership development programs use a variety of methods and approaches to learn about leading and managing.(McGonagill and Pruyn, 2010; Leskiw and Singh, 2007) Besides formal lectures in post-secondary institutions, many also rely on the case study approach. Leaders and managers within a variety of organizations use best practice case studies to look for ways to improve.

In recent years, it has been popularized by organizational gurus as an incessant buzzword, often overused in community and leadership development models that are looking for absolute formulae in what is inherently a relative and ever-changing environment: human socio-cultural/socio-economic conditions.

- A best practice is a proven method, technique, or process for achieving a specific outcome under a specific circumstance and in an effective way.
- It is a concept based on lessons learned by one group, which can be passed on to another group, facing a similar set of circumstances or tasks.
- The experiences learned by one community or organization that can be shared with another.

Utilizing best practices can save both time and money and assist in improvement in organizations and in individual leadership and management practices.

Another definition states that best practices are the "methodologies, strategies, procedures, practices and/or processes that consistently produce successful results." (Plate, Foy and Krehbiel, 2009, p.i) A best management practices definition states, "Best management practices refer to the processes, practices, and systems identified in public and private organizations

that performed exceptionally well and are widely recognized as improving an organization's performance and efficiency in specific areas." (GOA/NSIAD, 1995, p. 6)

Thus, best practices case studies carefully document innovative and outstanding case histories in a specific practice area. They serve as models and provide guidelines for others to learn from because of the detailed analysis of the practice under study. There is an assumption that calling practices "best practices" means that they can be replicated, that ideas and inspiration are generated from them, and can contribute to development practices in the student. Adoption of such practices may also cause a change in the way that existing organizations carry out their work and lead to improvement, effectiveness, and efficiency. The idea is that these documented stories can make a difference to others who study them and transfer the knowledge into action by using as a guide for their own project. Another use of best practices case studies is to use as a benchmark against which to compare one's own community or organization process. Through this comparison of how a known successful organization does a certain practice, one's own community or organization uses this information to improve or change its processes and practices.

All best practices case studies are not of the same character and quality. Factors affecting the length and depth of descriptions of each case include the character of the practice under study, the researcher/author, local context, and amount of information available. Thus, in one sense, each best practices case study speaks for itself.

Until very recently - and following a trend in mainstream western models of leadership, organization, and community development - the term "best practices" has been used by many Aboriginal social/cultural researchers, community developers, activists, and leaders to try and pinpoint what works in Aboriginal communities as well, with the intention of sharing the potential lessons with other communities, so they do not have to re-discover what has already been established as a proven method. Some good examples of highly regarded best practice models can be found through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, Winners of the Aboriginal Relations-Best Practice Awards of Distinction. Other examples include the community development and language preservation work that is regularly portrayed by the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, the Performance Art Network of Native Earth Performing Arts, Wawatay Radio and Television in Northern Ontario, and the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society in Alberta.

We acknowledge that across this country and over time, there have been countless successful and flourishing (however localized) Aboriginal projects, designed to support communities and develop their leadership potential. The best practices and lessons learned have been generously shared with the Aboriginal community at large via various media.

Review of Literature of Best Practices in Aboriginal Community Development

Leadership in Aboriginal communities generally involves leading and organizing community development initiatives, provision of community services, and economic development. Much of the research and available studies of Aboriginal best practices are of economic development or community development. We will now review some of this literature and studies of best practices in Aboriginal community and economic development. We chose the following 13 studies because they gave empirical data for their conclusions and provide practical knowledge. They also represent a good sampling and variety of studies of Aboriginal best practices. These studies have generally identified certain key success factors that provide a basis for understanding how or why some Aboriginal communities achieve results.

1. Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development

One of the best known studies of successful Indigenous economic development is the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED). The HPAIED began in the mid-1980s at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University when Joseph Kalt, a political economist, and Stephen Cornell, a sociologist, explored why some Native American tribes were defying the odds and achieving economic success and strong community growth. Some tribes stood out from others in achieving success, while the majority was struggling with poverty and dependence. They originally focused narrowly on tribal economics, especially employment and businesses. However, they discovered that tribal economic development was much broader and was affected as much by social and political factors as economic factors alone. One could not understand tribal economic development without considering the entire community structure, systems and institutions. In other words, the study of tribal economic development required a holistic approach where a broader set of success factors could be identified and explored. (Cornell and Kalt, 1988, 1990, 2000; Cornell and Gil-Swedberg, 1995; Kalt, 1993; Jorgensen, 2007)

What the HPAIED study found was in order to achieve successful tribal economic development, there had to be a strong self-governing community that had a stable environment into which investors were willing to risk investment dollars. Only after these factors were in place, could they achieve success in their economic development ventures. The HPAIED study identified four main key success factors: (i) de facto sovereignty; (ii) effective institutions that match the culture; (iii) strategic direction; (iv) strong, action-oriented leadership. They termed this the nation-building approach to Indigenous community economic development. They also contrast the nation-building model with the traditional Bureau of Indian Affairs approach to tribal economic development which they described as short-term results oriented initiatives that meet external needs and policies, rather than the needs of the tribal community.

Sovereignty. The first factor of tribal success in the nation-building model was to actually practice local sovereignty, that is, to practice genuine self-rule and local control with a "sovereignty attitude." Tribal leaders who took control, were better able to meet community needs and able to learn from their experiences or any mistakes.

Institutions Match Culture. The second success factor was to build effective institutions that match their culture. Institutions are the rules of how people relate and interact in a community. There are both formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions include , the rule of law including tribal constitutions, laws, and courts. Informal institutions include traditional protocols, norms and mores that are learned throughout one's life. Good governing institutions must be effective and culturally appropriate. To be effective, institutions must achieve stability, security and certainty for the community in how members are expected to behave in all their relationships. These institutions must also feel legitimate to the community, so they buy-in and respect them. Thus, institutions that reflect or coincide with traditional and cultural ways of being and doing will be more successful. Indigenous peoples do not easily accept institutions or structures that are imposed on them from external sources.

Setting a Strategic Direction. The third factor of success was to set a strategic direction, so that long-term planning could be mapped out in order to set a vision to build the kind of society they desired. Through this long-term planning the communities set priorities to focus scarce resources on, monitored progress and actually felt the consequences of their decisions and actions. They became proactive instead of reactive.

Action-oriented Leadership. The fourth success factor identified by the HPAIED study was strong leaders who took action. These leaders did not just think of ideas, they ensured their ideas were turned into action. They actually carry out plans, ensure strategies are implemented, and see the results of the effort. These were strong leaders who led drastic changes in their communities, who were willing to break with the status quo so there would be improved conditions in their communities.

2. National Centre for First Nations Governance

With respect to the First Nations in Canada, the National Centre for First Nations Governance, an independent, non-profit, Aboriginal run institution, has developed a variety of programs to assist in leadership development and governance. To support these efforts they undertook research to develop their model for successful First Nations governance which includes a set of key components that include: the people (citizens); the land (territory and community lands); laws and jurisdiction; institutions; and resources. Through the governance of these key components, they also identified the following governance principles necessary to lead and govern First Nations successfully: strategic vision; meaningful information sharing; participation

in decision-making; territorial integrity; economic realization; respect for the spirit of the land; expansion of jurisdiction; rule of law; transparency and fairness; results-based organizations; cultural alignment of institutions; effective inter-governmental relations; human resource capacity; financial management capacity; performance evaluation; accountability and reporting; diversity of revenue sources. (NCFNG, 2009)

The Governance Best Practices Report profiles best practices for each of the Governance Centre's seventeen principles of effective governance. The practices are drawn from the experience of First Nations, tribes and aboriginal organizations across Canada and in the United States. There are specific reports that profile actual practices being followed and provide a brief snapshot of strategies, techniques, procedures or processes that produce efficiencies in governance. They are intended to make concrete the universal principles of effective governance by profiling their implementation in specific First Nations contexts. While the reports are intended to serve as models, each community determines for itself how the principles are brought to life in their specific contexts. The purpose of these reports is to educate First Nations and identify ways to connect with others to improve their understanding on these matters. The Centre encourages their widespread use and gives permission for them to be shared and replicated from their on-line website.

3. Institute on Governance

The Institute on Governance is an independent, non-profit public interest agency located in Ottawa, Ontario with a mission to advance better governance in the public interest. They also carry out a number of reports including on Aboriginal governance. In some of their reports they have set out a model with five principles of good governance that include: legitimacy and voice; direction; performance; accountability; fairness. (Graham, Amos and Plumptre, 2003; Graham and Bruhn, 2009; Bruhn, 2009)

4. UN Development Program

The United Nations' Development Program (UNDP) has identified nine principles of good governance for assistance to developing countries that include: participation; consensus orientation; strategic vision; responsiveness; effectiveness and efficiency; accountability; transparency; equity; rule of law. (Graham, Amos and Plumptre, 2003)

5. DIAND Governance Action Plan

The federal government of Canada's Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development created a governance action plan to guide its work with First Nations building their capacity for self-government. In their governance action plan they identified seven "key drivers or levers of capacity development for good governance" that include: a vision or sense of self as self-governing; stable and effective leadership; effective governing institutions; culture match; strategic orientation; citizen engagement; effective and stable intergovernmental relations. (INAC, 2000)

6. Friendship Centre Movement Best Practices in Governance and Management

The Friendship Centre movement in Canada has done great work to bring culturally appropriate services and programs to urban Aboriginals and off reserve Indians. The National Association of Friendship Centres partnered with the Institute on Governance to document various Friendship Centres' best practices. The key factors of successful practices include: board governance; executive leadership; staffing; volunteers; strategic planning; evaluation; adaptive capacity; external relations; sustainability; fundraising; and human resource management. They documented one best practice case study on each of these practice areas to illustrate that specific Friendship Centre's approach to achievement.(Graham and Kinmond, 2008; Graham and Mitchell, 2009)

7. Conference Board of Canada

The Conference Board of Canada produced a report that examined 10 Aboriginal communities and identified six key factors to success in creating wealth and employment as part of Aboriginal economic development efforts: strong leadership and vision; strategic community economic development plan; access to capital, markets and management expertise; good governance

and management; transparency and accountability; and the positive interplay of business and politics.(Loizides and Wuttunee, 2005) In another report on best practices for Aboriginal businesses they set out the following keys to success: purpose; clear corporate vision; winning attitude; using creativity to overcome obstacles; good location; experience and expertise; hiring people from outside community; recruitment and retention; and developing partnerships.(Sisco and Nelson, 2008) In yet another report on successful Aboriginal businesses, they explored 10 case studies and determined that there were three main keys to success: leadership; sound business practices; and strong relationships and partnerships. (Sisco and Stewart, 2009)

8. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

RCAP's report identified five critical factors of success in community economic development in the following manner: restoration of power and control over lands and resources; development of a positive and encouraging social/political/cultural climate for Aboriginal economic development; development of enabling instruments for use in surmounting the problems facing Aboriginal economic development; development of a skilled and positive forward looking labour force; acceptance and willingness to engage in economic activity by the mainstream in collaboration with Aboriginal people. (Wein, 1999; Newhouse, 2009)

9. Human Resources Development Canada

The federal government's Human Resources Development Canada department produced a report on Aboriginal social and economic development that set out lessons learned that they feel are important as factors for successful Aboriginal development: governance; planning and policy development; control over resources and funding arrangements; program delivery and management; accountability; capacity-building; and other requirements such as, coordination across programs, combining human resource and economic development, linking education and training to employment. (HRDC, 1999)

10. Comprehensive Community Planning Workshop

The Okanagan Indian Band in B.C. hosted a workshop on comprehensive community planning and INAC wrote a report on it setting out the lessons learned, that include: community-based and community-driven; build a planning team and process; financial resources mobilization; capacity building, planning tools and resources; intergovernmental relations; linkages, networking and sharing of best practices. (INAC, 2005)

11. Public Works Management in First Nations Communities

The department of Public Works and Government Services Canada and the department of Indian Affairs Canada developed a report on good public works management in First Nations communities that explored the experiences of six communities to identify the following keys to

success: vision; leadership; policies; management and administration; self-sufficiency; human resources; asset protection and management; accountability; and fiscal accountability. (INAC and PWGSC, 2002)

12. Canadian First Nation Community Economic Development Planning

This research project intended to provide First Nations and INAC with a self-assessment tool known as the Community Capacity Index to measure socio-economic development. The composite indicators came from the Harvard Study on Indian Economic Development and other studies, which provides consistent evidence that top rated indicators that have been effective in developing capacities in Aboriginal communities are stable and similar across Aboriginal communities: informal and formal leadership; self-determination; respecting community values; partnerships; planning for the future.

As Manuel (2007:74) says, "not all tools and approaches will work in every community. Success will depend on the community capacity levels, resources (financial and human), as well a cultural match". Manuel (2007) worked with key leaders of successful First Nations communities who had won the CANDO Economic Developer of the Year Award and notes that each community had its own approach to community development – "each First Nation must find their 'made at home' approach. Although recommendations and studies are put forward for consideration by all, it must be realized that each community will have to find their unique approach to development planning. There is no cookie cutter approach that can work for all communities, but instead the approaches will be as diverse as the First Nations that exist in Canada (Manuel, 2007:76).

13. Indigenous Research and Education, Charles Darwin University

Aborigine scholar Darryl Cronin of the Indigenous Research and Education faculty, Charles Darwin University in Australia, developed a paper exploring what Aboriginal people think about governance and community development. He identified key elements of a governance and development approach that include the following: Aboriginal authority; jurisdictional authority; cultural appropriateness; research, education and training; leadership; strengthening families; direct and adequate funding; private and non-profit sector partnerships; and capacity of government agencies. (Cronin, 2003)

From this literature review, we see some similarities and some uniqueness in the keys to success that each study identified. Drawing on these studies, we have identified what we feel are the seven key success factors to successful Indigenous community development that we term "wise practices" and will form the basis of our wise practices model: identity and culture; leadership; strategic vision and planning; good governance and management; accountability and stewardship; performance evaluation; collaborations, partnerships and external relationships.

Before going on to discuss this wise practices model, we want to consider the critique of best practices research, as well as, the critique of research into Indigenous communities.

Critique of "Best Practices"

One problem with the notion of best practices is there are different conceptions of what criteria are to be used in defining a practice as a "best practice". The term is sometimes criticized as being narrowly responsive to one or another ideological lens. Thus, what is identified as a key criterion for a best practice may differ, for example, between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Stephen Cornell argues that the middle class dream of success in the U.S. is not necessarily the definition of success that most Native Americans hold(Cornell, 1987) Furthermore, some argue that best practices in adult education runs the risk of eroding its traditional grounding in an ethic of social justice and the common good.(Bartlette, 2008) We cannot assume that what works in one situation, context or culture will not necessarily work in another.(Krajewski and Silver, 2008)

Leadership and management education of indigenous leaders is seen as a key to success in their governance and economic development.(Calliou, 2005, 2008; Callaghan and Christmas, 2005) Western-based theories and practices are generally held out to be useful for indigenous leaders to acquire. Theories from the mid-1900s onward tended to prescribe indigenous peoples to discard their culture and traditional practices and learn "modern" knowledge and skills related to business management. However, this has rarely led to success. Geert Hofstede argues that the failure of much of the international development initiatives of the 60s and 70s was at least partly due to this lack of cultural sensitivity in the transfer of management ideas.(Hofstede, 1980, 1983, 1993)

There is a growing skepticism about the universality of best practices and the extent to which those standards can be judged and utilized according to universal levels (Dahlberg et al., 1999). For example, and directly in line with Aboriginal perspectives on best practices, these authors asked, "How could [quality] take into account context and values, subjectivity and plurality?

How could it accommodate multiple perspectives, with different groups in different places having different views of what quality was or different interpretations of criteria?". As Aboriginal leadership has articulated time and again the authors also pointed out that, "This problem became more acute as people began to talk about the importance of the process of defining quality and best practices and how this should include a wide range of stakeholders, not only academic experts but children, parents and practitioners."(Dahlberg, et al, 1999:4) There is a growing tendency to recognize the fact that there is no practice that is best for everyone or in every situation, and no best practice remains best for very long as people keep on finding better ways of doing things.

Some commentators have argued that indigenous peoples must build from a cultural basis, rather than discarding culture and traditions.(Wuttunee, 2004; D.H. Smith, 2000; Alfred, 1999; Calliou; 2005) Others have argued that while it is important to learn this modern management and organizational development knowledge, it ought to be reconciled with traditional cultural values, practices or processes.(Redpath and Neilsen, 1997; Calliou, 2005) Thus, culture matters.

As one area of importance that Indigenous leaders and managers of programs reliant upon external funding face, evaluation processes and tools reflect western European values and knowledge. As one commentator noted, "The 'dance' between western assumptions of evaluation superiority and Aboriginal assumptions of uniqueness are at the root of the question of how to satisfy the evaluation needs of funders without trampling on, or otherwise marginalizing, the Aboriginal ways of knowing and communicating." (Johnston, 2010, 2) O.L. Davis Jr. (1997:3) notes, "success stories seem easily converted into best practices, from accounts of direct teaching to implementation of Outcome Based Education (OBE) Programs, from self-concept enhancement strategies to implications for teaching from brain research findings. With rare exception however, such accounts are not case studies; most are de-contextualized …their purpose is in fact more about advocacy, and not necessarily a process of illumination".

Still, in spite of the acknowledged diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations across Canada in many models of the leadership and community development, there is an implicit expectation that the best practices developed by one community (regardless of its cultural background and socio-cultural practices, regardless of its unique colonial experiences, and regardless of its unique visions, goals, and priorities) can be easily generalized into other contexts.

Consequently, more and more people, including researchers, community members, and social activists, note that something is missing in how we approach best practices in the Aboriginal community and in leadership development (Wesley-Esquimaux & Snowball, 2009; Thoms, 2007). It is not so much about rejecting the idea that we all ultimately benefit from sharing

knowledge, experiences, and practice, but rather about an explicit recognition that, when it comes to Aboriginal communities, as Thoms (2007: 8) notes, a "best practice" in one situation should not automatically be regarded as replicable in similar situations given, "the variety of unique cultural and situational environments that characterize Native peoples lived experiences".

Hylton (2002) also notes that "there is considerable variation in Aboriginal beliefs and traditions from one Aboriginal community to another. … Therefore, there is no unified set of best practices but, rather, many such practices that emerge from diverse cultures and community experiences". Thoms (2007:8) adds that "the term 'best' is a hierarchical, non-Aboriginal construct" and is concerned that "the emphasis on 'best' studies tends to create a reliance on the lessons learned in large, well-funded, academically directed studies and marginalizes Aboriginal knowledge learned on the frontlines through socio-cultural insight, ingenuity, intuition, long experience, and trial and error".

With this critique of best practices and the western knowledge basis, Indigenous and other scholars and commentators have argued that western knowledges and practices must adapt to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples and their cultural differences.

Bringing Culture Back In

In light of the foregoing critique and in order to resonate with Indigenous leaders, we argue that culture matters and that we need to find processes to bring culture back in. Political scientist Taiaiake Alred, a Mohawk scholar, identified the characteristics of strong Indigenous communities: wholeness with diversity; shared culture; communication; respect and trust; group maintenance; participatory and consensus-based government; youth empowerment; and strong links to the outside world.(Alfred, 1999) Using an Indigenist research framework, the research must focus on "the lived, historical experiences, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests, aspirations, and struggles of Indigenous [peoples].(Rigney, 1999)

An Aboriginal model of leadership can be defined in terms of skills, abilities, and traditional gifts underlying an individual's traditional-spiritual name, clan, life experience, or what are commonly referred to as Aboriginal identity and cultural ties (King, 2008; see also, Warner and Grint, 2006; Cowan, 2008; Little Bear, 2000; Couture, 2000). King (2008) uses the term "Aboriginal Intellectual Capital" to recognize and define cultural competences of Aboriginal leaders:

> "An Aboriginal leader's development comes from the mentoring of peers, staff, and faculty; and from the community's traditional teachers, healers and Elders. Aboriginal students are equally effective role models accountable to their communities and bearing their own leadership responsibilities to support and develop leadership characteristics in others."

King (2008) also recognizes that Aboriginal people have philosophies that encompass a holistic approach to learning that are imperative to Aboriginal leadership growth and development.
Alfred, in citing Leroy Little Bear, captured the essence of required patterns of traditional leadership or the ideal personality for leaders as follows:

> Given the opportunity, a culture attempts to mold its members into ideal personalities. The ideal personality in Native American cultures is a person who shows kindness to all, who puts the group ahead of individual wants and desires, who is a generalist, who is steeped in spiritual and ritual knowledge—a person who goes about daily life and approaches "all his or her relations" in a sea of friendship, easygoing-ness, humour, and good feelings. She or he is a person who attempts to suppress inner feelings, anger, and disagreements with the group. She or he is a person who is expected to display bravery, hardiness, and strength against enemies and outsiders. She or he is a person who is adaptable and takes the world as it comes without complaint. That is the way it used to be! That is the way it should be! (Alfred:10)

Irwin (992:10) says that traditionally, First Nations leaders were not elected but "emerged from natural order and laws of nature." As Ottmann (2005) adds, the leadership development process would begin with childhood encouragement and directions from Aboriginal Elders, and with inspiration and support from other Aboriginal leaders. Hence, in a very real sense, the shared positive values and beliefs of the community would create a future leader.

Today, just as in the past, Aboriginal leadership is complex, intricate, and multifaceted, as it holistically encompasses many social domains and spheres of knowledge and practice: community economic development, social environments that are supportive of the actualization of self-governance aspirations, business and employment opportunities, an active involvement of Aboriginal youth in the decisions that impact their lives, a full recognition of traditional knowledge systems and their role in creating collective futures, and the removal of barriers to social, educational, political, and economic opportunities in both on and off reserve contexts (Foley, 2008; Calliou, 2005; Warner & Grint, 2006).

Mainstream leadership theories can be divided into two types: transactional, with an emphasis on contingent rewards for performing and punishments for non-performance, and transformational, with an emphasis on developing a vision and communicating that vision in a charismatic, inspirational fashion (Bass, 1990). In the rich context of Aboriginal traditions, this dichotomy seems far too superficial. According to Julien, Zinni and Wright (2009), Aboriginal leaders, regardless of gender, are driven by spirituality and a long-term egalitarian perspective with a focus on the good of the community.

> "Aboriginal leaders are mindful of the long-term perspective and see the world in a very different fashion than many non-Aboriginal leaders. One is struck in speaking with these leaders about the lack of ego, the lack of hierarchy in how they view their subordinates and how decisions need to be made based on the impact on the whole community and not just a narrow individualistic perspective. Aboriginal leaders talked extensively about the seven generations approach to leadership: about an absolute sense of making the right decisions today with a sense of obligation to how these decisions would influence the next seven generations in the community. Most leaders spoke passionately about the long-term view and the need to focus their decision making on the community as a whole" (Julien, Zinni and Wright, 2009: 4).

It appears that all culturally-ideal Aboriginal leadership strategies include an emphasis on spirituality and a long-term perspective that focuses on the good of the community.(Ottmann, 2002) These translate into particular practices and activities, grounded in the Seven Sacred Teachings that make Aboriginal organizations excel in bringing together all the elements necessary to set

up culturally-appropriate ideal leadership structures.(Cyr, 2009) One teaching tool common to Ojibway and Cree peoples, contains bedrock principles for living. They also refer to this as "The Seven Grandfathers", and because it involves translating sophisticated Aboriginal concepts into English, it often shows up in different English formulations. One of the more widely-used forms is as follows:

- (Bravery/Courage) Aak-de-he-win – To face life with courage is to know bravery.
- (Respect) Ma-na-ji-win – To honour all of Creation is to have respect.
- (Humility) Dbaa-dem-diz-win – To accept yourself as a sacred part of Creation is to know humility.
- (Truth) De-bwe-win – to know these things is to know the truth.
- (Honesty) Gwe-ya-kwaad-zi-win – To walk through life with integrity is to know honesty.
- (Love) Zah-gi-di-win – To know love is to know peace.
- (Wisdom) Nbwaa-ka-win – To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom.

The Seven Sacred Teachings present orderly steps to living in a good "state of mind" and represent both a pathway and the interconnected nature of the human growth process. The wise practices journey through these Teachings begins with understanding and embracing the significance of the following values. We can effectively tie these teachings to leadership development and community engagement, and share a traditional pathway to wise practices in any community that expresses an interest in learning about and activating these principles. (Borrows, 2008)

These prinicples illustrate that a community-centered, strength-based approach, deeply rooted in traditional practice works as it aims to strengthen leadership and social organization among community members who interact regularly and share institutions of social life. Strengthened social organization is, in turn, a means to enhance the ability of community members to engage in collective problem solving, to improve self-sufficiency and efficacy, bolster internal control, and to make the community a desirable place to live. Such changes benefit individual and family functioning.

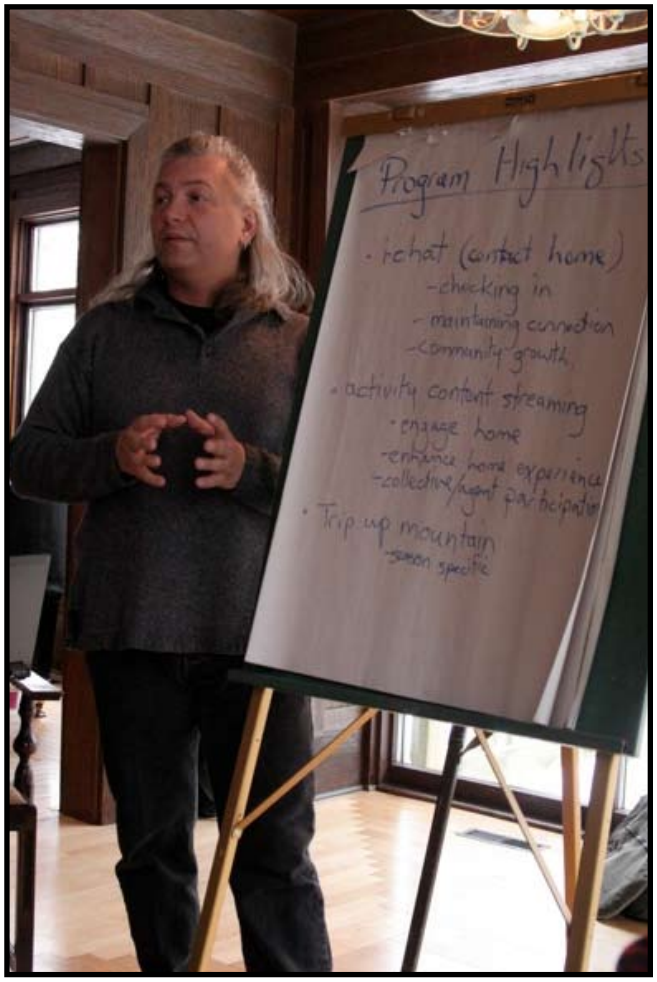
A community-centered approach to developing leadership and fostering success means embracing asset-based and capacity-focused approaches as opposed to needs-based and barrier-focused approaches thereby enlivening concepts that have wide ranging utility in the promotion of new/old forms of leadership development and community engagement. Today, we are looking back to go forward in reconstituting our social and governance strengths and informing the practices of our leaders to always be wise.

The Wise Practices Approach

Taking the critique above into account and the need for Aboriginal case studies, we adopt the notion of wise practices as a basis for our community based research model. Wise practices can be defined as … With the understanding that a "best practice" in one situation should not automatically be regarded as replicable in other similar situations and describing this as an ill-founded "cookie cutter" presumption, Thoms (2007) proposes the term "wise practices" as one that better reflects the fact that the Aboriginal world is culturally heterogeneous, socially diverse, and communally "traditional" while at the same time ever-changing.

The term "wise practices" has been actively propagated by UNESCO (2000) with an understanding that the definition, conceptualization, and implementation of wise practices will continually evolve and be subject to refinement, as individual and community experience and knowledge expands. **Wise practices are best being defined as locally-appropriate actions, tools, principles or decisions that contribute significantly to the development of sustainable and equitable social conditions.**

According to Davis (1997:4), "wise practice, by its very nature, is idiosyncratic, contextual, textured, and probably inconsistent. It is not standardized, not off-the-shelf, and not a one-size-fits-all concept". Wise practices reflect the richness of relationships, respect for uniqueness, and the contextual nature of community and leadership development where nothing is static, as people bring in and send out different experiences, views, and energies.



Best practices tend not to be contextualized, and individuals portrayed as best-practice practitioners are always considered exemplary individuals (Davis, 1997). On the other hand, "wise practices always are situated thoroughly in their context, and recognizable, commonly ordinary individuals use them in real, specific life circumstances. Consequently, when other professionals take the time to learn about these wise practices, they can readily acknowledge

the reports' enhanced authenticity and credibility. The reports ring true" (2). Community efficacy, use of knowledge, and applied skill sets become real life barometers of leadership effectiveness and support.

Encompassing traditional values of inclusiveness, appreciation for local knowledge, and respect for all relations, this approach also closely resembles pre-contact social environments in North American native cultures that were both reflective, giving people time to internalize choices and reach consensus about what needs to be done; and integrative, giving voice to everybody, with social life happening within complex relationships and with nobody left behind. It allows Indigenous leaders to bring culture back in as a foundation for their community leadership.

Implicit in the concept of wise practices, as we use it in leadership development, is the imperative that a future leader must know his/her community so that he/she is able to work with the community to identify the locally-appropriate wise practices. In a sense, he/she has to be "wise" about the community to be able to recognize as well as define the wise practices in question. Calliou (2005) found this to be true when the Banff Centre surveyed Indigenous leaders who stated knowledge of community history and culture was an important competency for leadership.

When one explores the term "best", one question that arises is by whose standard. What does success mean? (Calliou, 2005 & Cornell, 1987) In a wise practices approach, one does not have to put numbers to communities' achievements so that community development can be judged and compared to generalized and widely adopted standards. Rather, this approach integrates communal experience to qualify, or describe, the community's sense of well-being, socio-economic and cultural efficacy. And, in effect, their sense of well-being and success will very likely differ from another community, even when they are closely situated. Thus, and according to Meacham (in Sternberg, 1990:187) the use of ancestral based "wise practices" and the concept of "wisdom" as a marker of community based skills sets, are not just content-based, but associated with "the manner in which knowledge is held (and) how that knowledge is put to use". It also speaks volumes as to how it is extended, interpreted, and put into practice.

The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) has already successfully adopted an understanding that wise practices begin from a position of internally generated and culturally appropriate knowledge and must be tailored to the capacity building and cohesion needs of each individual community based on their common understandings and historic practices (2-Spirited People, 2008). Healing Our Spirit Worldwid – The Sixth Gathering held in September 2010 in Honolulu was focused on successes, wise practices and common issues in health, healing and addictions within Indigenous communities.

With regards to what is “wise practice” and the wisdom it is based upon, Joy Goodfellow (2001) lists the following characteristics of wisdom: sound reasoning ability, an expression of concern for others, an ability to learn from ideas and environment, an ability to make sound judgments (moral issues), the expeditious use of experience, and the use of intuition. All of which foster an ability to see through things, read between the lines and interpret his/her environment.

Practical wisdom that is implicit in the wise practices approach, combines practical knowledge with sound judgment and thoughtful action (Fish & Coles, 1998; Sternberg, 1990). What makes this approach truly well-fitted to Aboriginal frameworks of knowledge and practice is that many Aboriginal communities already understand what works in their homelands and territories. They are open and receptive to learning from their environments and from new ideas, in many instances all they really need is the tools to mobilize inherent knowledge and leave behind imposed restrictions. Through this research, the Banff Centre is seeking to re-mind them that they already possess wisdom of practice and this wisdom belongs where it is being practiced and being constantly (re)created by the whole community.

But, as Bandura (1994) reminds us, a resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort -“some setbacks and difficulties in human pursuits serve a useful purpose in teaching that success usually requires sustained effort. After people become convinced they have what it takes to succeed, they persevere in the face of adversity and quickly rebound from setbacks. By sticking it out through tough times, they emerge stronger from adversity”. In other words, we can also learn from our mistakes if we become a learning organization who reflects back upon decisions made and actions taken.

As this “Indigenous Knowledge” approach fits well within Aboriginal social frameworks, it can be utilized in community and leadership development as a valuable tool, but also as a reflection of deeply held and meaningfully practiced Aboriginal cultural and spiritual values such as the Seven Sacred Teachings.

The Banff Centre Wise Practices Model

Following research on developing wise practices, we can identify and develop models to ensure that communities will not just “develop leadership” in a conventional sense of this overarching concept. They will be re-building balanced communal practices, using what they already have: wise practices, implicit and explicit communal wisdom, a sense of cultural identity, an appreciation for time and deep practice, respect for togetherness and reciprocity, and deeply-seeded reverence for traditional teachings. The key for success for the communities faced with significant obstacles is the realization that these traditional communal “possessions” are powerful tools to restore harmony and balance.

From the literature review we identified **seven key factors** of successful Indigenous community development that must be taken into consideration when employing a wise practices model. The first key factor is **identity and culture**. Leaders of Indigenous communities have stated that they as leaders need to have a strong understanding and knowledge of their culture, community and their traditional territories.(Calliou, 2005; Ottmann, 2005) The second factor is **leadership**. Effective leadership is key to seeing a community project through to completion. Third, is **strategic vision**. A wise practice approach involves a leader or team of leaders to set out a strategic vision - a long-term pathway that the community or organization they lead can build a plan around, focus scarce resources on specific strategies, and mobilize the workers to carry these out. Fourth, is **good governance and management**. Governance is what leaders do. In carrying out their governance functions they are actually carrying out good leadership practices, that is, mobilizing people and resources around a meaningful, long-term, strategic vision. They set up effective systems, structures, and processes for the community or organization to function well. They delegate the detailed management tasks to skilled persons to carry out the strategies and specific tasks that move them along the pathway to their vision. The fifth key to success is **accountability**. Good leaders and managers are accountable for their decisions to allocate scarce resources. They act as stewards of the assets and resources they oversee. They are open and transparent in accounting for their decisions and their spending. Sixth, is **performance evaluation**. Good leaders and managers practice results-based leadership. They get feedback through a variety of systems to measure the performance of the workers and the progress on carrying out the strategies, that is, in seeing that results are being achieved. The seventh key factor is **good external relationships and partnerships**. Achievement and success of initiatives in Indigenous communities often require external support or financial support. Thus, the successful Indigenous communities and organizations build good working relationships with external funders, bankers, suppliers, etc.

Wise Practices Key Success Factors

- Identity and Culture
- Leadership
- Strategic Vision and Planning
- Governance and Management
- Accountability and Stewardship
- Performance Evaluation
- Collaborations, Partnerships and External Relationships

The Banff Centre wise practices model of leadership development for community development will be respectful of Indigenous communities and take into account the critique of Indigenous academics. We will not just go in to pick the brains of community leaders and leave with the knowledge. Rather it will be a partnership with the community playing an active learning role. They will gain research and leadership skills while following a process to learn to narrate their own stories of success. Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that research into Indigenous communities requires navigating the "tricky ground" which is the middle ground where the research questions and research plan must traverse "the spaces between research methodologies, ethical principles, institutional regulations, and human subjects as individuals and as socially organized actors and communities."(L.T. Smith, 2005, 85) Native American scholar Jay T. Johnson argues that since the term "research" is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism that "a thoughtless use of standard research techniques would run the risk of perpetuating European imperialism in a study that hopes to further, rather than diminish, Indigenous self-determination. A respectful, partnership approach that meets the communities' needs will avoid such intellectual colonialism. (Johnson, 2008, 130)

The wise practices model will use multi-disciplinary methods, using arts based research methods to visually capture the wise practice case study story, along with a textual narrative. The action learning process will help community leaders find their voice and narrate their own story of achievement.

Disciplines that have relevance for the "wise practices" research we will undertake include the following: participatory action research, problem-based learning, community based research, arts based research, case study, narrative inquiry, as well as drawing from the existing "best practices" research done to date on Indigenous community development.

Action Research

Our wise practices approach will utilize some elements of action research. Action research is a form of enquiry that enables practitioners to investigate and evaluate their work by creating new ideas about how to improve their practice and putting their ideas forward as their personal theories of practice. (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006) Participatory action research embraces principles of participation and reflection, and empowerment and emancipation of groups seeking to improve their social situation.(Walter, 1998)

According to Wadsworth (1998) " Participatory Action Research (PAR) is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action . . . in order to change and improve it. They do this by critically reflecting on the historical, political, cultural, economic, geographic and other contexts, which make sense of it. … Participatory action research is not

just research, which will be followed by action. It is action, which is researched, changed and re-researched, within the research process by fully engaged participants. Instead, it aims to be active co-research, by and for those to be helped. It tries to be a genuinely democratic or non-coercive process whereby those to be helped, engage and determine the purposes and outcomes of their own inquiry." Action research involves utilizing a systematic cyclical method of planning, taking action, observing, evaluating (including self-evaluation) and critical reflecting prior to planning the next cycle (O'Brien, 2001; McNiff, 2002).

The wise practices approach, just like PAR, uses reflection, planning, action and observation as the modes of operation that put its circles of learning and activity in motion. An excellent example of participatory action research in community leadership is the Leadership for a Changing World research project at New York University Wagner.(Ospina et.al., 2004, Ospin and Dodge, 2005) The decision to do participatory research grows out of a deep belief in the ability of people to challenge injustice and oppression and take increased control of their lives and communities through collective action, no matter how slow such change may seem to take. "What we do know based on best practice and leadership research is they will surely not become empowered, liberated or transformed on our schedules" (Maguire 1993:176).

Problem-Based Learning

The wise practices approach will also incorporate some elements of the problem-based learning method for educating and developing leaders and managers. Problem-based learning is the theory and practice of using real world work assignments on time limited projects to achieve performance objectives and to facilitate individual and collective learning. (Smith and Dods, 1997; Tan, 2005) Problem-based learning is based in the tradition of learning by doing, that is, learning through practice. This method provides clear and consequential feedback as to whether goals were achieved and why a project succeeded or failed by taking an after action review. It also provides the opportunity to learn to work in teams and in collaboration. Through a process of documenting the learning journey, such as journaling, group dialogue, after action review, they learn from studying their actions.

Deep Listening Research Method

Our wise practices approach will incorporate elements of the Deep Listening research model. Monash University and RMIT in Melbourne, Australia initiated an advanced degree program for Koori Aborigine students pursuing their masters and doctorate degrees in the Education Faculty. They used a method called Deep Listening, which is a method that allows alternative ways to do and disseminate research and allows Indigenous voices to emerge. Deep listening is an English translation of an Australian Aborigine concept. The Deep Listening method was used to carry out research into Indigenous organizations and communities in Australia so that they could deeply explore their traditional knowledge as a basis of developing their leaders, organizations and communities. The Koori cohort were able to research and preserve their history by recording it and in the process revitalising their culture and generating new stories. They were narrating their own cultural stories through a process of deep and respectful listening which in turn builds the community. The deep listening can occur with all the senses and can even take place in silence, such as listening to the land and the ancestors. As a methodology, “the practice of Deep Listening is an invitation into culturally congruent ways of learning and knowing. Epistemologically, it incorporates multiple ways of knowing and multi-vocal texts such as narrative, digital story-telling, poetic text, theatre and music.” (Brearley, Calliou and Tanton, 2009, 4-5)

Narrative Approach

The narrative approach allows for community subjects to express their voices. Gardner (1995:9) says that “leaders achieve their effectiveness chiefly through the stories they relate . . . in addition to communicating stories, leaders embody those stories”. And what is even more important for Aboriginal leadership – “the innovative leader takes a story that has been latent in the population, or among the members of his or her chosen domain, and brings new attention or a fresh twist to that story” (Gardner, 1995:10). Indigenous scholar Russell Bishop speaks of the importance of

a variety of community members telling their own stories and states that “story telling is useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the ‘diversities of truth’ within which the story teller rather than the researcher retains control.” (Bishop, 1999, 24)

Hence, if we want to learn from wise practices, we do not have to replicate them to see if they work in a different context. Instead, we need to listen to wise stories of other leaders, at the same time looking for the stories that were once told in our communities. At the point where these two streams of stories intersect and where the old and the new meet, there is an impetus for revival that can be used by communities and their visionary leaders to create or revive their own stories of effective practice.

According to Gardner (1995:11), visionary leaders are different than the innovative ones in that they are “not content to relate a current story or to simply reactivate a story drawn from a remote or recent past”. They continuously create new stories and this is exactly how one learns from wise practices: by first listening and observing, then assessing the strength in one’s own community and how the lessons learned from wise practices can support and change how things are done, and finally by creating a new story within the traditional sphere of knowledge and practice. And, what needs to be stressed here is the fact that in Aboriginal communities, people are already sophisticated in the stories – “to put it simply, one is communicating with experts” (Gardner, 1995:11). Community members “come equipped with many stories that have already been told and retold” (Gardner, 1995:14).

The challenge for Aboriginal leadership is to reorient the communities to overcome any stagnation, sadness, or hopelessness. Aboriginal leaders must help the community in this community narrative. They need to help the community revive traditions, dialogue about the strength of their culture, their dreams, and to re-story their place in the world.

The lesson for the leader is that the story that he or she conveys “must fit” – “the story needs to make sense to audience members at this particular historical moment, in terms of where they have been and where they would like to go” (Gardner, 1995:14).
Each of these disciplines lend something to our wise practices approach to Indigenous community development research. It is rigorous, yet culturally attuned. It adheres to “a strict set of ethics devoted to self-determination of indigenous peoples.” (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2008, 14)

Conclusion

The concept of wise practice is designed to engage communities in action research, facilitating a dialogue about their strengths and achievements, reflect on how and why they achieved success, and to narrate their own success stories. The process provides ways of developing their leadership. The stories that are narrated and documented become case studies that inspire and teach other Aboriginal leaders and community members. Our literature review of best practices case studies on Aboriginal community development formed the empirical basis for us to establish the seven key factors of success: identity and culture; leadership; strategic vision and planning; good governance and management; accountability and stewardship; performance evaluation; and collaborations, partnerships and external relationships.

This concept of wise practice can also be explored by leadership theorists who seek to understand alternative ways that leadership is carried out in community development projects. It is practical and hands-on, and deeply rooted in culturally appropriate and relevant systems of knowledge and practice.

It is only appropriate that the last word belongs to an indigenous leader. Jackie Huggins is an Indigenous Australian author, historian, Aboriginal rights activist, and a respected leader in the Aboriginal community working for reconciliation in Australia, who speaks of the importance of the action oriented Indigenous leader, “To my mind, you cannot speak about the need for leadership within our communities without being prepared to take on responsibility yourself. It’s not enough to point the finger at those who have let us down and to expect others to come forward and fix our problems. Nor can anyone afford to call themselves a leader unless they truly have the interests of our community at heart”(Huggins, n.d.).

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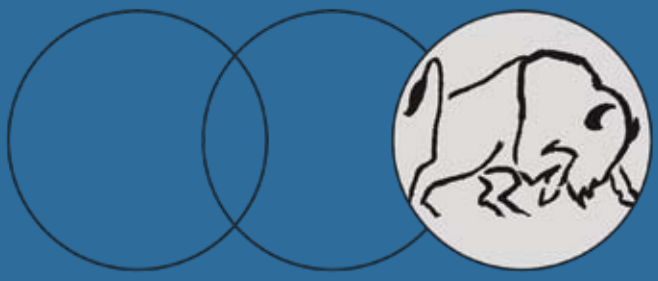

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Printed at The Banff Centre
Banff, Alberta, Canada
October, 2010

Aboriginal Leadership and Management, Box 1020, Station 45, 107 Tunnel Mountain Drive, Banff, Alberta T1L 1H5
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Community Asset Mapping 2.0 -First Nations

A guide to planning and facilitating a community asset mapping session

FNWSC
First Nations With Schools Collective

Acknowledgements

This community asset mapping guide was prepared by:

Meaghan Irons, Western University student as part of the City Studio: Women in Civic Leadership Political Science 3320E course at King's University College.

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This guide is the revised version (2.0) after feedback received from the youth training session on asset mapping facilitation held in Barrie on October 28, 2017.

We would like to acknowledge the members of the First Nations With Schools Collective (FNWSC) whose leadership, insights and efforts in working with their respective communities were integral to this project.

Thank you to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) for funding this project.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank those who provided their insights without which this project would not have been possible. This includes those who helped to facilitate, take notes, and share their views during community engagements during February and March 2017 held by participating FNWSC member First Nations, including: Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, M'Chigeeng First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, Bkejwanong Territory (Walpole Island) and Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve.

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Introduction

Every First Nation community, holds within it, treasures; some unknown, some purposely hidden, some for all the world to see in its pursuit of fulfillment and well-being.

Whether we have the good fortune to pursue post secondary education in Mohawk language acquisition at Six Nations Polytechnic, attend a men's bundle teaching workshop at the Woodland Cultural Centre at M'Chigeeng First Nation, or scroll the long list of student names memorialized on the Mt. Elgin Indian Residential School Monument at Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, all of these First Nation community assets, if leveraged and thought of strategically in a larger education community plan could assist education and community leaders to go further quicker in the restoration and preservation of a different way of life, an alternate view of history, and a different way of doing and believing about education for its families.

While each First Nation community faces incredible erosion of ideas, beliefs, world views, knowledge of the 'old' ways; there are beacons of light, of purpose, of intent in actions of individuals, small groups, leaders, and in strategic community planning efforts to stop the depletion. Now its just a matter of coordinating these efforts into a collective call to action for education transformation.

One does not have to look much further than their own backyards in their own communities to see the efforts. There are human, natural and built resources at every turn. Sagamok looks to Elder Myna Toulouse (human) to teach quillwork or gaawyikaajigan (cultural) at their annual July Anishinaabemowin language camp (cultural-built), Walpole Island seeks the Anishinaabemowin language advice of Reta Sands, Jennie Blackbird, and Elizabeth Isaacs (human-cultural) to translate a species-at-risk resource (knowledge-cultural) and parents of Oneida Nation of the Thames look to one another and Standing Stone Elementary staff to plan for the annual Grade 6 Home Land (social-cultural) trip whereby students visit their Oneida relatives in the United States to reconnect to their history and cultural lineage.

There has never been a more pressing time to harness and think strategically about First Nation community collective efforts to preserve, rebuild, and further grow our community assets to teach a different story, grow a different Indigenous citizen - one proud in their heritage, identity, namesake and ability to contribute to the world and their communities.

We believe one way to think strategically about this is through community asset mapping.

What Are Assets?

Assets are the attributes of your community including land, knowledge, skills, programming, education and infrastructure that a person, group or entity posses, that serve as a source of strength to oneself and others in the community. Assets are attributes that you want to sustain for future generations.

A case in point is Wikwemikong's 14 km trail called Bibamikawe (infrastructure-built) found in the heart of Manitoulin Island forests (land-natural) offering environmental and natural medicine information posts (knowledge-cultural) for families seeking a way to get outside and hike (skills-social). One can see quickly how Wikwemikong's trail becomes an outdoor classroom to help address the community's family well-being and education goals from an Anishinaabek perspective.

Another example of an asset is Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation's land claim settlement (social) and trust (financial). As a result of the land claim settlement, countless additional assets such as historical research papers (archives-built), trust management practices (governance-social) and community engagement processes (civic engagement-social) are now available to the community to further meet their community's financial, economic and treaty education goals.

Strategically leveraging community assets or strengths such as those found at Wikwemikong and Mississaugas of New Credit starts with community asset mapping. Community asset mapping offers community members a way to see community assets in a new light to be built on with intention as places of strength.

What Is Community Asset Mapping?

- A process where community members collectively create asset diagrams by identifying and providing the information about their own community's assets

- Analyzing why certain attributes are strengths and seeing the opportunities in assets that may be less easily identified

Why Is Community Asset Mapping Useful?

Asset mapping can benefit communities by:

- Building on and expanding existing community strengths
- Facilitating community involvement in research and action
- Generating a shared awareness of community assets
- Assisting in the management of resources, community development and planning
- Identifying capacity and potentially increase capacity within the community

Why Situating Anishinaabe/Haudenosaunee Thinking at the Centre of Community Asset Mapping is Important

When thinking, speaking and acting from an Anishinaabek/Haudenosaunee way of being, community asset mapping will:

For the Community:

- Prioritize Indigenous perspectives, knowledges and histories as most important.
- Privilege the voices, experiences and lives of Anishinaabek/Haudenosaunee peoples and their relations with land.
- Situate language, traditions and teachings for future generations as central to education transformation.
- Validate and represent authentically Anishinaabek/ Haudenosaunee worldviews.
- Retain intellectual power within First Nation communities to allow for control of information, traditional knowledge and cultural artifacts.
- Identify recurring patterns of racism in current broader social and political systems and how these continue to serve to privilege the colonizer.
- Maintain organization and management of discourse processes within the community for the development, needs, articulation and vision of the community.

"We need to begin to think, and speak and act from the centre of our Indigenous being, from the centre of our culture and Indigenous way of life. To do this we must become educated in our own way of life and the Indigenous knowledge, way of being and acting that flows from it. We should not be activating major change in our communities, instituting governmental formulas and social organizations, initiating potentially culture changing development projects without being well educated in our Indigenous way of being and able to do it from our own traditions. Taking intelligent action has to be informed and driven by our Indigenous culture, traditions and our way of life" - Jim Dumont, 2006"

For the Participant:

- Increase the ability to scrutinize Eurocentric domination and control throughout its various structures and processes
- Assist Indigenous peoples to construct empowering perspectives
- Encourage critical self-reflection whereby feelings of low self esteem in Indigenous populations are also seen as consequences of systemic racism and colonial structures.
- Understand how dominant thinking and practice became a part of colonization and still pervade in communities today.
- Provide an opportunity to question and examine closely the impacts of colonialism on communities.

"it is this consciousness, thinking like Onkwehonwe, seeing the world through indigenous eyes, taking hold of our responsibilities and living them, *that is the character of a transformed and decolonised person"* - Takeke Alfred, 2005

Facilitation Suggestions

This guide will outline one method of conducting an asset mapping session, and is easily adapted to fit the needs of your community. This section will be divided into two sections applicable to the facilitation team:

1. Planning the Session
2. Leading the Session

The first section provides information for facilitators on preparing to host an asset mapping session including suggested materials. The second section lays out a sample timeline for an asset planning session. This section will equip the facilitator and their team to handle the diverse array of situations that may arise during the session as well as how to encourage participation while keeping the session on track.

I. Planning the Session

Who Should Attend the Session?

A diverse selection of community members should be invited to attend the session. The more diverse the backgrounds of the participants, the more effective the asset mapping session will be in identifying key attributes. Also important, is contacting local Elder(s) several weeks prior to the event who can lead any opening protocols as appropriate and determined by the community. It is recommended to have multiple sessions to ensure that sessions are small to encourage participation and attendance and that there is a representative sample of the community present. Some examples of sessions could be: students, Elders and community leaders, educators and general members of the community.

Where and When Should the Session Be Held?

The time, date and location of the session should be announced a few weeks before you plan on holding the session. Allowing 2-3 weeks to advertise and invite participants will likely increase the attendance levels. Circulating a brief infographic (Appendix 1) that explains the details and purpose of the asset mapping session prior will allow people to understand the purpose of the event.

The space selected should be accessible and accommodate the size of the group anticipated. The space should be flexible so that both small and large groups activities can be accommodated and people can easily move around. Ensure the space is able to accommodate the needs of the opening protocol without disruption i.e., fire alarms and smudging needs, space to assemble in a circle, closing entry into high traffic areas during ceremony, etc.

What Materials Will Be Needed?

You will receive a bin with the following materials:

- Chart paper
- Masking tape
- Coloured sticker dots
- Butcher paper for drawing community maps
- Coloured markers, pens and pencils
- Asset category symbols
- PowerPoint slides and speakers notes

The Facilitator will be responsible for the following materials:

- Community maps for each participant (8.5 x 11 inch paper sized)
- Laptops for notetakers
- Gifts for helpers and or Elders who provide their assistance
- Snacks/ lunch for participants
- Printing the handouts provided for small groups (Asset chart samples, SWOT analysis samples, conducting a SWOT analysis resource sheet)

How Many People Are Needed to Run a Session?

While only a facilitator is required, it is highly recommended to have a team to assist the facilitator with the session to ensure it runs smoothly. The facilitator will have an important role in ensuring that the session stays focused and that the participants are providing the feedback that is necessary to gain from the session. It will be difficult for the facilitator to do this without other team members to provide assistance with recording the minutes for the session and working with the small groups. It is crucial to at least have a notetaker who will be recording detailed minutes for the session as a full record of the session will be required in order to gain a full and in-depth understanding of the community's needs for the final report. The recommended team roles include:

- *Facilitator* - in charge of leading the session
- *Facilitator Assistant* - in charge of writing notes on charts and filling in the map
- *Notetaker* - in charge of taking detailed minutes for the session
- *Coordinators* - in charge of ensuring that small group activities are running smoothly, takes notes for each small group, passes out materials etc…

Now that you have determined who is coming to the session, advertised the session and gathered your materials and staff, it is time to lead the session and gather community asset information.

II. Leading the Session

This section will provide you with a suggested step-by-step guide to leading the session to maximize participation and usefulness of the information gathered.

1. Opening Remarks

Outcome: Ensure local cultural protocols are adhered to i.e. smudging, opening prayer or thanksgiving

Facilitator to invite local leaders to welcome participants and thank them for their commitment to the project. Any facilitators should acknowledge the traditional territory and give thanks to the people of the territory for allowing the gathering to occur in the territory.

2. Welcome and Introduction

Introducing the Power of Mapping Community Assets for Education Planning

Outcome: Participants to understand the objectives of the session

Facilitator will review the objectives of the session listed in the Introduction section. The focus of the session is to develop an understanding of what assets are, what assets the community has and why those are assets, and determine what opportunities there are to increase the strength of assets that are not as strong.

FNWSC Background and Progress Update

Outcome: Participants to understand the role of the FNWSC and how previous community engagement feedback is utilized to inform the FNWSC work

Facilitator gives a brief background on why information on community assets are being gathered and shared with FNWSC, Who the FNWSC and how this information gathered in the past is used to create further opportunities for growth in the future. Make reference to the FNWSC *Draft Summary Report of Community Engagements Roll-Up as of June 14, 2017* and any community specific feedback gathered in past engagements. Facilitator will connect the work to other communities doing the same as participants in the Collective and stress the importance of working with other nations.

Agenda and Expected Outcomes of the Day

The facilitator will give a brief overview of the agenda for the day.

3. Decolonization Lens

Outcome: The icebreaker will help participants move beyond Western views of education and draw on traditional ways of knowing and learning

Facilitator's can choose one of the following suggested ice breakers or may use their own.
Ice Breaker A

The facilitator chooses a selection of items/articles for each table to look at. Items should be a variety of traditional and conventional schooling items such as a drum, rattle, candle, moccassins, textbook, ruler, cedar branch, sage, tobacco pouch, feather, etc. Depending on size of group, one item can be shared amongst a group or given to each participant. Participants are asked to share how the item could represent education for their community. Each small group assigns a reporter to share the discussion of the group or individuals are given time to share their thoughts. A large circle share is best if space and time allows. Notes should be taken throughout the time to capture community's beliefs about education and inform the asset mapping activity discussions that will occur later on.

Ice Breaker B

The facilitator will begin the session by handing out Decolonization Data Set (Appendix 2) and Samples of Decolonization Activities & Plans (Appendix 3). On the page is a data set of examples that represent what working through a decolonization lens is and is not. Please work by yourself as you compare the ODD-numbered examples and contrast them with the EVEN-numbered examples. The statements on the left side represent a decolonization lens. Those on the right do not. For each of the two data sets below, take 5 minutes and ask yourself the question:

What will be the effect of each statement on asset mapping?

Then find a partner and take 5 minutes to share your thoughts. Groups will be called upon to share their thinking. Assign a recorder to note the discussions and feedback.

4. Setting the Stage

Outcome: Participants will understand how to identify assets in their lives and community through categorization

The facilitator will begin the session by naming the 5 categories of assets:

1. Social / Financial - relationships (external or internal), networks, and programs
2. Cultural - traditions, common values, language, customs, beliefs, and arts
3. Human - knowledge, skills, competencies of individuals in the community
4. Built - buildings, equipment, machinery, and physical infrastructure
5. Natural - land, natural resources, wildlife and ecosystems

The Facilitator’s Assistant will write each category on one piece of chart paper that is hung on the wall at the front of the room, visible to all participants.

5. Individual Activity: Personal Asset Mapping

Outcome: Participants will brainstorm at least 5 assets in their own lives and circle them on their individual maps.

The facilitator will hold up a map of their community (Appendix 4). On that map, the facilitator will have circled 5 areas that hold assets in their life. The facilitator should try to select an asset from each category for demonstration's sake. If possible, the facilitator should select assets that the community will be able to benefit from in the future.

Each participant will be given a map and a pen. They will circle 5 assets in their life on the map and write what they are and why they are assets. Participants will have 10 minutes to complete this task.

6. Group Activity: Asset Categorization

Outcome: Participants will have an understanding of how the assets in their own lives can be shared to benefit more people in the community.

The facilitator shall ask the participants to share the assets they circled on their personal asset map. The facilitator's assistant will circle the location of each asset on the large community map (Appendix 5). Each asset shall also be written on the chart paper in its corresponding category (Appendix 6). Each asset category chart has a symbol (included in the supplies) which is to be taped to the asset category charts, and its colour should be the same as that used on to circle assets on the community map. When participants share their assets they also have to say what category or categories it falls into, and give a name if it is a human asset. Assets can fall into multiple categories (i.e. built and social for school) but the facilitator should encourage participants to be as descriptive as possible when describing assets.

The facilitator should prompt participants with questions such as:

- Why did you identify that as an important asset?
- What aspect of that asset makes it important or strong? (Especially if it falls into multiple categories like a hospital or school- are they referring to the building or the people in it?)
- Why did you select that category for the asset?
- Who were you thinking of when you thought of that asset?

Note: it is important to gather as much information about (at least names) people selected as human assets as possible, as the hope is to approach those individuals in the future to see if they would like to share their skills and knowledge with the greater community.

7. Break

Ensure that participants are continuing to stay engaged by having brief breaks.

Note: Asset mapping is a diverse activity, and participants may get off topic or begin to discuss other areas not closely related to asset mapping. In those circumstances, especially if the discussion has shifted to government effectiveness, it is a good idea to pause the asset mapping topic and allow participants to speak on their concerns for a short period of time. Creating a new chart with these ideas will allow for those concerns to be passed on after the session and addressed in the later proposals.

8. Small Group Activity: Asset Strength Analysis

Outcome: Participants will develop a deeper understanding of their community assets by thinking in-depth to determine the core of the asset that makes it a strength to the community

In their small groups, participants will be given 1 asset category chart and will determine the current strength of the assets on that chart. They will place coloured dots next to each asset using a strength based measure of 3, 2 or 1 dots.

The measure is as follows:

3 dots = the asset is currently **very strong**
- everyone is aware of the asset and sees it as a community strength
- it benefits the entire community
- it is being utilized to its full (or almost full) potential in all capacities

2 dots = the asset is currently **moderately strong**
- the community is aware of the asset and its value
- it is benefitting a sizeable portion of the community
- it is being utilized but not to its maximum potential and in all capacities

1 dot = the asset is currently **not very strong**
- only a few people know about it or see its value as an asset
- it is not benefitting the entire community (i.e. only immediate family/ friends)
- it is not being utilized or the capacities for use still need to be recognized

Have the Coordinators split off with each group and take notes on the discussions that each group has, and their consensus on what makes that asset an asset.

Guiding questions for the small groups may include:
- Why are these assets so important?
- What makes these our key assets? What is the core of why these attributes strengthen our community?
- Are there any surprises? What do these surprises mean?
- What is missing from our assets? Where are the gaps?

After placing a dot next to each asset, participants will determine whether the assets with 1 or 2 dots can be strengthened within the community alone or if they would benefit from funding and support from FNWSC. Participants should put wither “C” or “FNWSC” next to each 1 or 2 dot asset.

9. Small Group Activity: SWOT Analysis of Assets

Outcome: Participants will use their deeper understanding of the assets to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis of key assets.

Participants will conduct a SWOT analysis of the assets that they gave 1 or 2 dots and that they wrote “FNWSC” next to. A SWOT analysis is a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis. SWOT analyses are used to:
- Evaluate the full potential of community assets
- See how that potential can be achieved and the asset strengthened
- See how assets can be combined to produce stronger assets

- See where the community currently has opportunities to strengthen assets and where opportunities can be created
- Work through the possible weaknesses and threats that exist.

There are 4 steps in conducting a thorough SWOT analysis:

1. Start by discussing the *strengths of the asset right now*
    - Why was that asset identified as important?
    - What capacity is that asset being used in?
    - What would the desired use of the asset look like?
2. Discuss why there are *weaknesses with the asset's current utilization*
    - Is the asset being used?
    - How can the current use be improved?
    - What is hindering the asset from being a strong asset right now?
3. Look for opportunities to overcome the weaknesses and achieve the desired strength
    - Are there opportunities to combine assets?
    - What is the community already doing in another area that we could implement here to strengthen this asset?
    - Can we work with any other communities or the FNWSC to strengthen the asset?
4. Discuss what possible threats could arise that would affect your ability to use the opportunities to improve the weaknesses
    - What are the costs associated with strengthening the asset?
    - What could impede our plans to overcome the current weaknesses?

SWOT analyses are meant to be in-depth, so a thorough analysis of the asset is encouraged, especially in the opportunities category. Encourage participants to put be creative and put down as many ideas as possible.

Once they are done with their SWOT analyses, they should be put up around the room so that all the participants can read the other SWOT analyses from other groups. Give participants time to read all the analyses, and write down comments on sticky notes. Once everyone has a chance to read through what the groups came up with, have a final discussion and debrief to address what information was gathered in the session, if anything was left out, and if there are any more ideas to be added to one of the charts.

Some guiding questions for the discussion include:

- Is there anything you would like to add to a SWOT analysis?
- Are you happy with the results of the asset mapping session?
- How will we start strengthening assets with 1 or 2 dots that have a "C" next to them?
- Based on the discussions that took place today and the assets, strengths, and opportunities identified, where would we, as a community, like to go from here?

10. Next Steps

Outcome: The Facilitator shall explain the next steps to the participants, ensuring that they are aware of what this information will be used for and how it will be used.

The Facilitator explain the process going forward to participants:

- Facilitators will first compile all data from the session into one document

- Facilitators will attend a post-asset mapping session discussion with other community Facilitators to share their results
- Committee in charge of the research and policy proposals will use the results from all the sessions to establish key themes
- These themes will be used to draw up a funding proposal and policy proposal
- These proposals will be submitted to the Federal Government
- The Committee will send responses and updates to the Facilitators who will provide the information to their communities

11. Thank You

Outcome: All participants have achieved a greater understanding of what strengths their community has, and how they can combine, use or harness the attributes of their own lives to better benefit and educate their own communities.

The Facilitator will close the session, thanking the participants for attending and for their enthusiasm and participation. They will also reiterate the importance of continuing the discussion on what assets their community has and how they can be reworked and used to benefit the whole community and promote lifelong learning.

12. Closing Remarks

Outcome: Ensure local cultural protocols are adhered to i.e. smudging, closing prayer or thanksgiving

Facilitator to invite local leaders to thank participants for their commitment to the project and for attending and contributing to the asset mapping session.

Analyzing The Results

Immediately After the Session

Immediately after the session is the best time to begin categorizing and compiling all your results into one document. The Facilitator should work with the Notetaker and Coordinators to ensure that all the information recorded from the session is included in the final results report. The Facilitator will bring this report to an all Facilitator's meeting and discussion discussion once all the communities have completed their sessions.

It is also the task of the Facilitator to ensure that a copy of the results is provided to the community member. This may take any form, but it is recommended that the Facilitator create an infographic that outlines the main results from the session. This should be posted in a place easily accessible to all community members.

Writing the Facilitator's Report

In an effort to ensure that all communities have the opportunity to have their needs addressed, following a similar template for the results will make it easier to synthesize all of the results collected into one large funding proposal that will represent the interests of all of the involved communities.

This report should include:

- For each category:
    - List of all assets that the group came up with
    - Which assets are determined to be very strong
    - Which assets are determined to be less strong
- A copy of SWOT analysis for each of the categories
- A copy of the session minutes
- A copy of the small group minutes
- Facilitator's reflections of the session including:
    - How the Facilitator thought the session went,
    - How engaged the participants were,
    - Where their community's opportunities to strengthen their assets are
- A copy of any concerns that were brought up by participants during the session that may not directly relate to the asset mapping process

The format of the report is at the discretion of the Facilitator. However, charts and graphics are always encouraged.

All Facilitator's Meeting

The all Facilitator's meeting should take place a few weeks after all the communities have had the chance to hold their asset mapping sessions, and a week after each Facilitator has submitted their results report. At the meeting, each Facilitator will be expected to contribute and provide feedback on their sessions. This feedback will include question prompts on topics such as:

- Participant engagement
- Evaluation of assets by the participants
- How the community viewed their assets
- Where the opportunities to strengthen their assets lie
- Which categories and assets were seen as most valuable

Facilitator's should bring a copy of their report to the meeting to use as a point of reference for these discussions.

Next Steps

The results of the Facilitator's meeting will be used to create a final report that will represent the interests of all of the communities involved. This report will include the assets in each category determined by the communities, the assets that are valuable but less strong, a SWOT analysis of the major theme areas and a section for recommendations on how the money requested will be used to build on the current assets by strengthening and expanding the scope of these key attributes. The report will be used to generate a funding proposal which will be submitted to the federal government.

A copy of the final report and funding proposal will be given to each community. An infographic presenting these ideas will also be provided that can be put on display that will highlight the key aspects of the final report and proposal requests.

Please Note:

A complete guide to writing the Facilitator's report will be sent out in early January. This is just an overview of what you could think about when planning and leading the session to help you write the report later.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Infographic

Sample infographic that could be posted within the community to advertise the asset mapping session. Copies of this infographic can be distributed by facilitator request.

Appendix 2: What does Decolonization Practice look Like? A Data Set

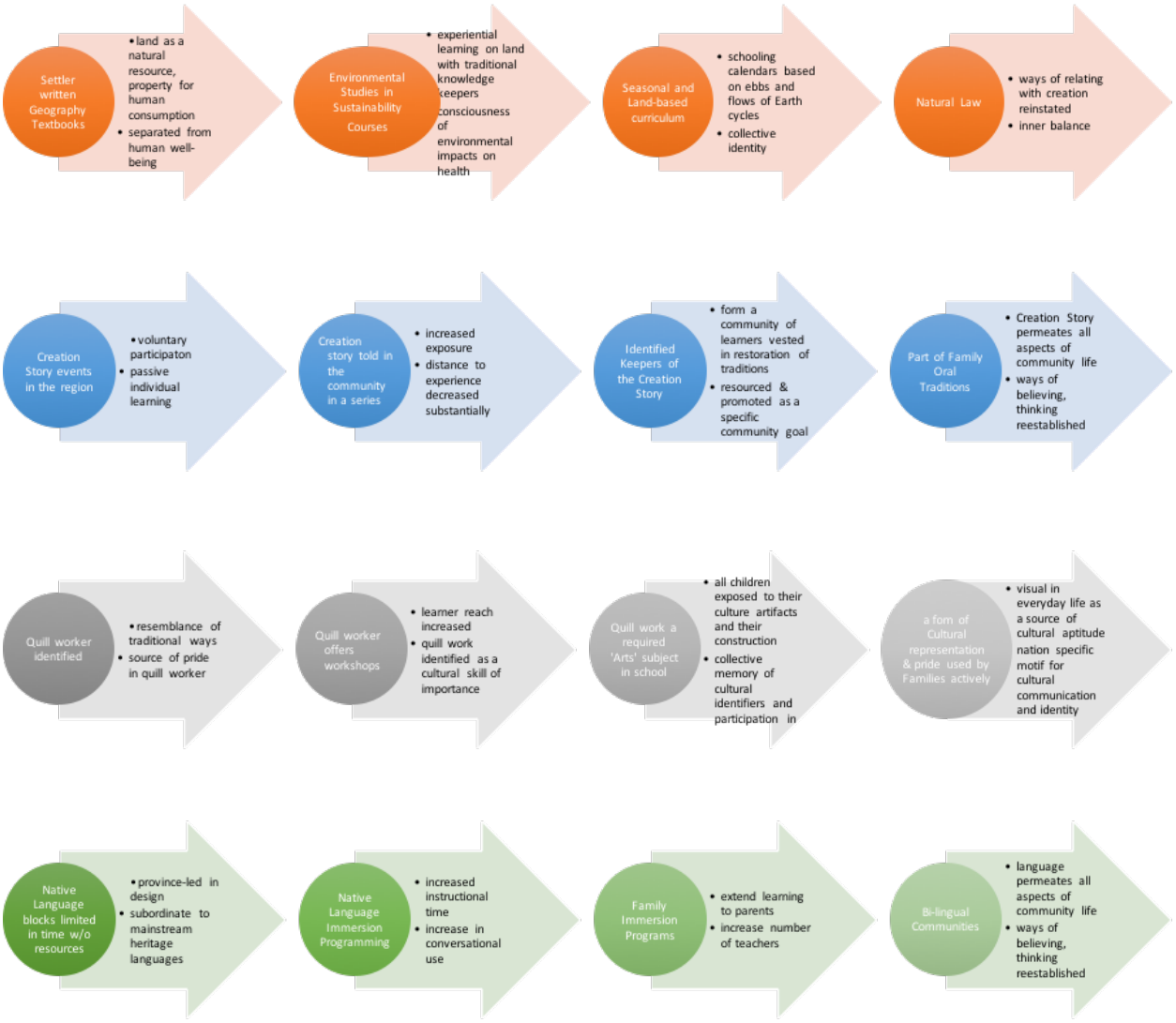
Instructions: On the page is a data set of examples. Please work by yourself as you compare the ODD-numbered examples and contrast them with the EVEN-numbered examples. The statements on the left side represent a decolonization lens. Those on the right do not. For each of the two data sets below, ask yourself the question:

What will be the effect of each statement on asset mapping?

Then find a partner and share your thoughts.

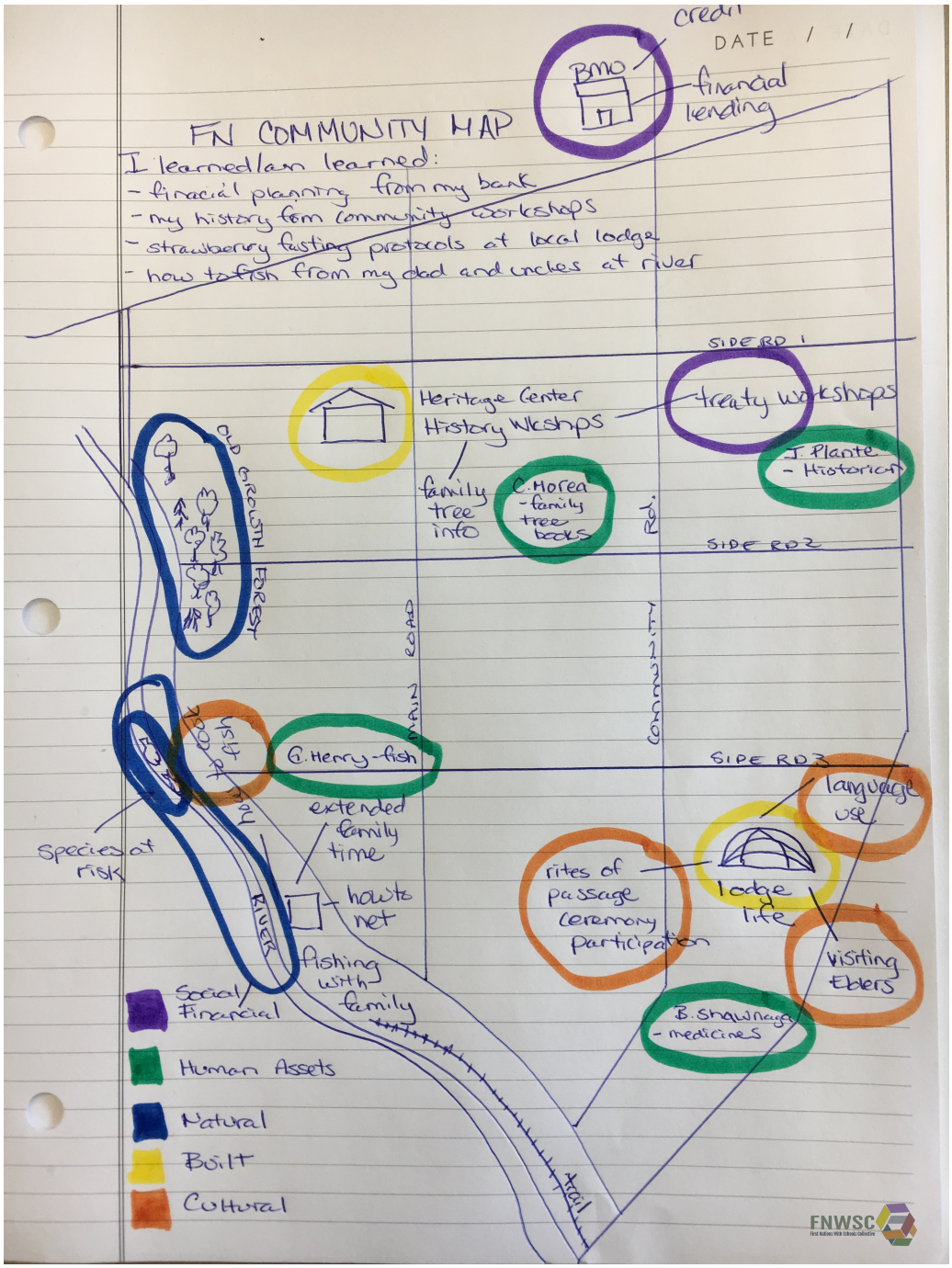
YES	NO
1. Apply helping practices that are relevant to Indigenous communities	2. Reliance on Western dominant knowledge i.e., scientific-inquiry methods that deconstruct the whole in order to understand its parts
3. Challenge the oppressive structures that colonizing paradigms have constructed	4. Center the stronghold of Western academia particularly those aspects that continue to uphold colonial ideals and values
5. Highlight and endorse the production and promotion of respectful representation of Indigenous traditions, culture and knowledge within educational contexts.	6. Accept or do not question Eurocentric assumptions of superiority within the context of history
7. Critical analysis of unequal power relations and its ongoing damage to Anishinaabe/Haudenosaunee culture, in particular, Anishinaabe/ Haudenosaunee languages i.e., English courses that reinforce British colonial literary works as superior to those written by Indigenous authors	8. Colonial curricula that offer students a fragmented and distorted picture of Indigenous peoples i.e., subject areas that isolate knowledge; practices of naming and categorizing
9. A need to understand and respond to the 'politics of distraction'; to move beyond being kept busy and engaged with Crown strategies led and implemented by them	10. Anishinaabek/Haudenosaunee epistemology is ignored or marginalized

Appendix 3: Visual Graphics of Samples of Decolonization Activities Coordinated by Communities for Education Transformation



Appendix 4: Individual Activity Map

A sample map that has been completed by an individual which highlights the assets that have played an important role in their life. The key aspect of this activity is encouraging the participants to think beyond typical concepts of assets as being physical objects or schools, but to see the assets that are harder to identify (because they may not be utilized by everyone in the community) but are still important to them. The facilitator should encourage this thinking by highlighting assets that are not within the usual conception of community assets, specifically assets such as family members, traditions, and nature.

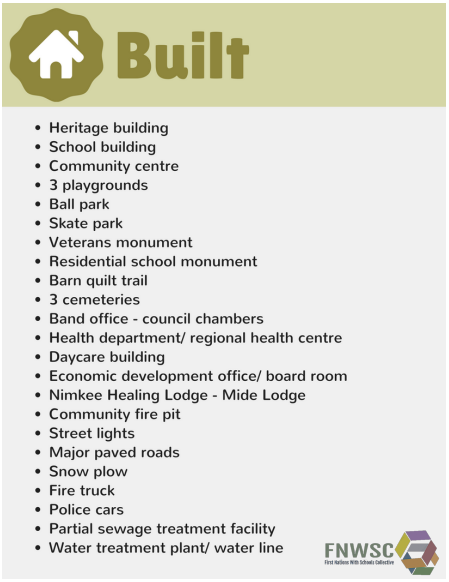


Appendix 5: Community Asset Map

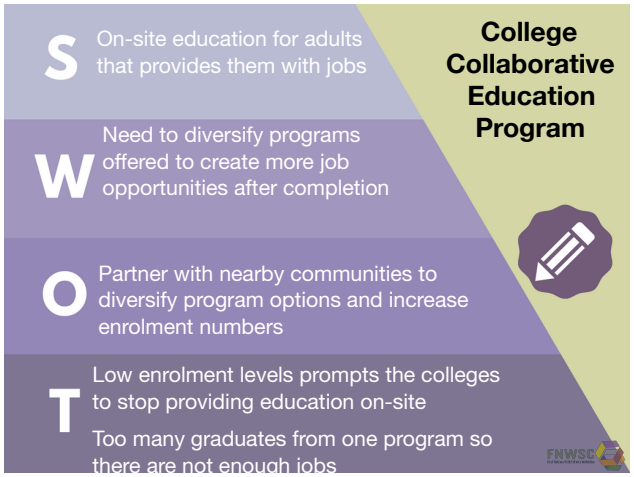
A sample of a community asset map. This map outlines key assets within the community that are based off the assets highlighted in the individual asset maps. Having a visual representation such as the one below will highlight the positive aspects of the community that are already recognized and valued, and will be important for encouraging continued participation and ensuring that morale stays high throughout the session. Focusing on the strengths and not addressing the less developed assets as weaknesses is key to ensuring that participants do not get overwhelmed or discouraged with the following tasks of conducting the SWOT analysis.

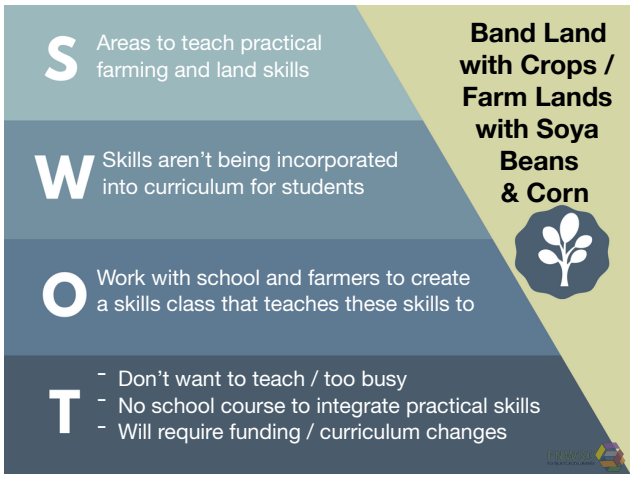
Appendix 6: Asset Charts

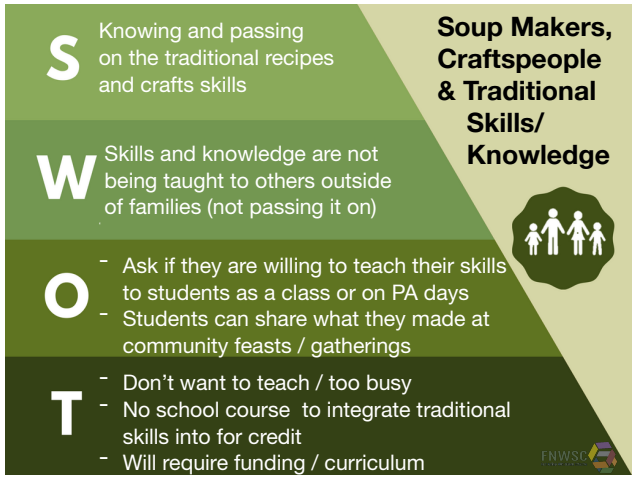
A sample of how the assets can be divided up and placed in appropriate categories. Using consistent images and colours can help participants to sort the assets they think of into easily identifiable categories as well as make it easier to recall which asset goes in which category later on if they are all colour coordinated.



Appendix 7: SWOT Analysis







A sample SWOT analysis for the grouping of assets in the 1 or 2 ranking level. Emphasis should be placed on the Strengths and Opportunities categories in the discussions. The facilitator and coordinators should stress that this is their opportunity to determine how they want to shape and use these assets in the future, and having a clear outline of the available opportunities already within the community is key to strengthening the assets efficiently and effectively. The SWOT analysis is one of the the most important components of the asset mapping session, as it is these analyses that will be used to create the final report. Facilitators are asked to ensure that participants are going in depth in their analysis both in the small group and large group discussions.