ASSEMBLY OF SEVEN GENERATIONS

Braiding Grassroots Wisdom

A Toolkit to Start and Share Wise Practises Among Indigenous Youth Groups and Collectives

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We want to acknowledge all the wisdom and knowledge that was shared with us during the creation of this toolkit from past, present and future Indigenous youth.

Chi-miigwech, kinanastomitanan to Nimkii Azibikoong Youth Collective, The Indigenous Support Project, Young Indigenous Women's Utopia, Revitalizing Our Sustenance, Chokecherry Studios, Reclaiming Our Roots, Western Arctic Youth Collective, Stoney Nakoda Youth Council, Georgian Bay Anishinabek Youth (GBAY), Indigenous Harm Reduction, Fishing Lake Metis Settlement, Niizh Manidook Hide Camp, our hosts Shanese Steels, Reeta Koostachin and Quinn Mewasige, all the folks that tuned into the webinars and supported behind the scenes.

Thank you to Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G) and everyone in its network for continuing the work of bringing communities together and working toward the implementation of TRC Call to Action 66. This work continues for those that have left us too soon, those that needed community the most but could not find it and those that will need community now and in the future.

We would also like to thank the Youth Hope Fund and those that nominated A7G for this fund, a fund that was created from many years of advocacy of Indigenous youth and their supporters who hope to see an end to the ongoing suicide and mental health crisis that affects so many Indigenous youth. This fund is administered by Indigenous Services Canada.

As well as Tewegan Aboriginal Housing who continues to support the ongoing work of A7G and made this toolkit possible.

Community work is never singular or individual. This toolkit is yet another example of what we can create together.

WHY A TOOLKIT?

Over the years, we have been doing many fun and exciting things and youth from across Turtle Island (aka Canada) have noticed. Indigenous youth often ask us: "How did you start A7G" or "How could I do this in my community." So we're writing this toolkit to answer those questions!

We decided with the help of many other amazing youth groups we have relationships with, to create a toolkit on how to create a youth group as well as wise practices to be shared amongst each other to help build the best communities we can.

There is no exact way to do this work, it will look different in every community. These are just helpful tips and wise practices to get you where you need to go.

Indigenous youth continue to carry the weight of their communities and the intergenerational effects of colonial trauma. Despite this unfair burden, Indigenous youth are finding ways to care for and love their communities; youth are finding ways to support one another, grieve with one another and thrive together.

The true amount of labour that goes into making healthy and safe communities can never truly be measured. This toolkit is simply the tip of the iceberg and more wise practices and innovative ways will continue to add to the collective knowledge of everyone that participated in this toolkit.

The labour and love of this toolkit was created by years of relationship building among a network of Indigenous youth, aunties, uncles, unties, protectors and knowledge keepers. Relationships are not transactional and take time to build. Relationships help us learn and support us when we need it. Relationships are reciprocal and require care to maintain.

With this toolkit and many additional pieces of research, report writing and on-the-ground work of Indigenous youth, youth groups and collectives, we will continue to advocate for the full implementation of TRC 66. The amazing work that has guided this toolkit deserves to be honoured and acknowledged because this work saves lives.

METHODOLOGY *(aka How we created this toolkit)*

For this toolkit, we used several unique approaches such as a literature review, our lived experiences, interviews with unique youth groups and projects and we hosted three webinars with experts on topics like Community Building, Peer-to-Peer Support and Life Promotion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This toolkit comes from ongoing conversations stemming from the following reports, we encourage you to read the following the become familiar with ongoing calls to action from Indigenous youth and communities over decades.

A Roadmap to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66, Indigenous Youth Voices, 2018 **https://www.a7g.ca/uploads/9/9/9/1/99918202/final__2_-_indigenous_youth_voices_-_roadmap_to_trc_66_-_compressed.pdf**

A Way Forward in Conducting Research With and by Indigenous Youth, Indigenous Youth Voices and The Caring Society, 2019 **https://www.a7g.ca/uploads/9/9/9/1/99918202/indigenous_youth_voices_a_way_forward_in_conducting_research_with_and_by_indigneous_youth.pdf**

Justice, Equity And Culture: The First-Ever YICC Gathering Of First Nations Youth Advisors, Assembly of Seven Generations and Youth In Care Canada, 2019 **https://www.a7g.ca/uploads/9/9/9/1/99918202/38228_chrt_compensation_report_v5_final.pdf**

Accountability in our Lifetime: A Call to Honour the Rights of Indigenous Youth & Children, Assembly of Seven Generations and The Caring Society, 2021 **https://www.a7g.ca/uploads/9/9/9/1/99918202/accountability_in_our_lifetime.pdf**

Children Back, Land Back: A Follow-Up Report of First Nations Youth In Care Advisors, Assembly of Seven Generations and The Caring Society, 2021 **https://www.a7g.ca/uploads/9/9/9/1/99918202/79004_land_back_report_v5f.pdf**

BRAIDING GRASSROOTS WISDOM WEBINAR SERIES

We wanted to make our research accessible and engaging, so we turned our conversations into webinars where folks stopped by to listen and ask questions the day of. In addition, the conversations can live on as reference points.

We encourage you to read this toolkit and watch the webinars to soak in as much learn and soak in as much as you can. You can watch all the webinars on the A7G YouTube Channel **youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9_zhPevwgUphnwzw7ZLmeCM9MoArwbUa**

The first webinar focused on Community Building and asked participants to speak to:

- How they define community building
- Building community through food sovereignty
- Challenges with creating safe community spaces and how they navigate them
- Ways to build community off-the-grid
- Wise practices for community building

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvJa3o3DhqE&t=1s

The second webinar focused on Peer-to-Peer Support and asked participants to speak to:

- How they define peer-to-peer support
- How culture informs and grounds their work
- The knowledge and skills they believe other young may need to do peer-to-peer support
- Wise practices for supporting Indigenous youth

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYZOuKjREww&t=52s

The final webinar focused on Life Promotion and asked participants to speak to:

- What life promotion work looks like and feels like to them
- How land-based programming connects with life promotion
- The unique differences and struggles youth in the north may experience
- Wise practices for supporting Indigenous youth

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHF-HThqyBk

FEATURE SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEWS

We wanted to also share stories from a few of the youth groups that are doing amazing work because while tips and how-tos are great, some of us learn more from storytelling. So we interviewed youth from the Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G), mentors from Niizh Manidook Two-Spirit Hide Camp and the Toronto Indigenous Support Project (TISP). In this toolkit they are included as feature stories that highlight:

- How their projects, initiatives, and work got started, and what inspired them
- How culture grounds their work
- The ways they navigate and address challenges
- Wise practices for supporting Indigenous youth

Wise Practices

We intentionally chose the language of wise practices instead of best practices as "there is an assumption that calling practices 'best practices' means they can inspire others and encourage leaders to improve their own practices" (Calliou and Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010), which can imply that what is a best practice for a specific group can be universally applied to others. Further, "we cannot assume that what is successful in one situation, context, or culture will necessarily work in a completely different one" (Krajewski and Silver, n.d.), a practice cannot be universally applied to every project, program, etc. and expect to be relevant or relatable. Wise practices acknowledge that "there are many gifts and strengths in a community that strategies for growth can build upon." Wise practices give more agency and provide grassroots groups the ability to adapt practices to meet the needs of their communities.

SECTION 1 | BUT FIRST, DEFINE YOUR VALUES AND VISION!

We want to avoid prescribing steps, remember these are only recommendations and suggestions BUT we really encourage you to first define your values and vision!

Why? Because creating your values and vision first will allow you to focus on what you really want to accomplish, maintain your integrity and help you find like minded peers to work with.

"We want to know we are making concrete changes in our communities – important to acknowledge what this looks like" – Kyla Judge, Georgian Bay Anishinabek Youth

What You Value Will Guide Your Work

Sometimes we don't really know what our values are until we say them out loud or write them down. Knowing your values will help you know what type of opportunities you will take and which ones you will have to say no to. For example, if you're doing a lot of land-based work and your values are to take care of the land, you wouldn't take money from a resource extraction company. People will notice when you stick to your values and it will help build trust in your work.

Defining your values will also help you decide whether a person or space is safe for the work you are trying to do and for Indigenous youth. Your values act as a vetting process or ethics screen, if it doesn't fit with you and your values, you can say no.

Here are the values that we created when we were writing the Roadmap on the Implementation on TRC 66 as an example:

Values

As Advisors, we identified words and phrases that represent Indigenous Youth Voices' core values. Each person coming into the initiative was asked to review, agree on the values, and carry out the work with these values as their guide:

- Strengths-based and Solution-based
- Amplifying the voices of Indigenous youth 30 and under
- Non-partisan
- Non-representative
- Honour
- Open Mind
- Open Heart
- Transparent
- Inclusive
- Solidarity
- Truth
- Spiritual Laws
- Indigenous Knowledge
- Indigenous Languages
- Ceremony

Vision

The vision is often more broad. The vision is your hopes and your dreams for your community and the youth you want to work with. Your vision will help you focus but shouldn't restrict you either. Many folks we spoke to got their vision from seeing a gap in community, wanting better for their peers and/or from ceremony, dreaming and cultural stories.

The vision for A7G is pretty broad:

> Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G) is an Indigenous owned and youth-led, non-profit organization focused on cultural support and empowerment programs/policies for Indigenous youth while being led by traditional knowledge and Elder guidance.

Whereas Revitalizing Our Sustenance is more specific:

> Revitalizing Our Sustenance Project (ROSP) is an Indigenous youth-led program to help provide Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth opportunities to learn about the importance of sustainable agriculture practices while feeding our community! **We strive to revitalize our relationships to food, community, and the land.**

Both work for both groups and that's what matters. Make it work for you and your team. Make it make sense for you. Here are some questions to get you started:

- What do you hope to see change due to your work?
- What are your hopes from your community?
- What kind of impact do you want to have?
- Is there a specific gap you'd like to address?

FEATURE STORY | ASSEMBLY OF SEVEN GENERATIONS (A7G)

About the Organization

A7G is Indigenous owned and youth-led organization that focuses on cultural support and empowerment programs/policies for Indigenous youth while being led by traditional knowledge and Elder guidance. After being incorporated, A7G began working on events such as Elders and Youth Gatherings, Round Dances, and various workshops. A7G also began working on writing the Implementation of TRC Call to Action 66. Initiatives create themselves as A7G gathers through language drop-ins, land-based learning, and webinars. The work A7G is currently doing are Friday Night youth gatherings, Land-Based activities, Men's Support Circle, Language Revitalization, Research and Report writing, COVID Community Care, and more.

Creation and Inspiration

Indigenous youth came together during the winter of Idle No More in 2012, and have been actively working as A7G since 2014, and then incorporated as a national non-profit organization in 2015. A7G are composed of Indigenous youth from various nations with roots coming from various territories. They saw the importance of a national Indigenous youth voice and platform, and believe that the assembly of youth from across Turtle Island will contribute to our own success and healing for ourselves and the next seven generations.

Grounded in Culture

For A7G, everything always comes back to culture and teachings. An important aspect of A7G is how they bring back old ways through connecting with the land, creating a space to exchange goods, and working on a community garden in the warmer months. Through the many activities and events A7G works on, it is all based on the roots of culture, ancestors, land, and kin; and they do it in a good way with elder guidance alongside their endeavours.

Navigating and Addressing Challenges

Because A7G often works together as a collective on almost every aspect of their work, it only makes sense to navigate challenges together. However, within A7G the circle is also what you make of it. Ashley from A7G says that she learned to do things in a good way and that, "it starts with you and what your values are. If you're going to be creating safer spaces you need to work on yourself. It really does start with you, and also what your values are."

A7G's approach to addressing harm is to first prioritize the person who was harmed. This means that every situation will be different and finding resolution can take time but the focus should never be to sweep harm under the rug or put harmful actions aside for the sake of "but he does good work."

Wise Practices for Supporting Indigenous Youth

A7G moved away from co-CEO roles, and instead transitioned into many helper roles where they all have a part in how A7G operates, which in turn alleviates pressure, is more inclusive, and everyone shares a collective responsibility. Harmony, a helper with A7G said, "they're just easy to work with, like when we did deer-hide tanning they were really flexible with my schedule… I think I help motivate people, trying to keep the energy up, but also when my energy isn't up other people are motivating me – it's cool how we all circle back to each other." These "helper" roles are a way of building capacity and allows for younger generations to pick up the work for their peers. The idea of working through things together is emphasized in their daily work as A7G.

Being Trauma Informed

We've found that trauma-informed care often comes naturally to many Indigenous youth; however, it's still very important to take the time to understand what being trauma informed means because Indigenous youth often carry many forms of trauma from colonization, institutional trauma or childhood traumas, and we always want to avoid retraumatizing or harming our peers and community. Being trauma informed helps you better support youth that you will be working with.

Trauma informed means having an understanding that many youth, if not all, will have some type of trauma in their lives and so this means we have to make the time to meet folks where they are at. Some broad examples of being trauma informed, especially for Indigenous youth, can look like:

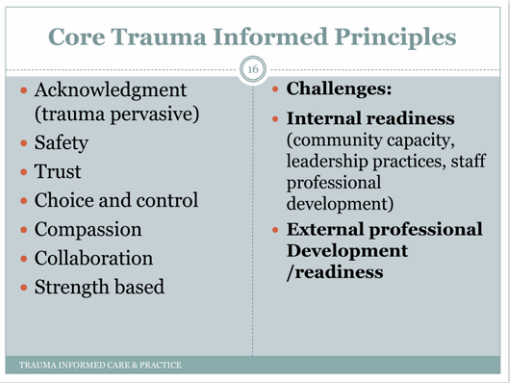
- Don't assume anything. You may not know entirely what a youth is going through so don't assume.
- Don't take things personally. If someone doesn't show up or follow through with a promise, it's not about you so there's no need to get upset.
- Some youth will need more supports to participate in activities or events so thinking about things like transportation, childcare, and wage losses, etc. is important when planning things.
- Be okay with silence. Some folks might not trust you right away or might respond slower so get comfortable with silence and waiting for a response.
- Check in with folks often but also believe folks when they say they're having fun or are fine. Not everyone expresses things the same way and that's okay.
- Judgement and shame have no place in community building. Just don't, squash those thoughts the moment they come into your mind.
- Use and encourage pronouns!

- Apologize, apologize, apologize. Get really comfortable with saying sorry and correcting your errors. You will make mistakes but the most important part is owning it and folks will usually be pretty forgiving.
- Food and snacks go a long way.

> "It's important to not be one of the barriers that youth face."
> —Alex Sack-Redden, Reclaiming Our Roots

Some helpful resources on trauma informed care:

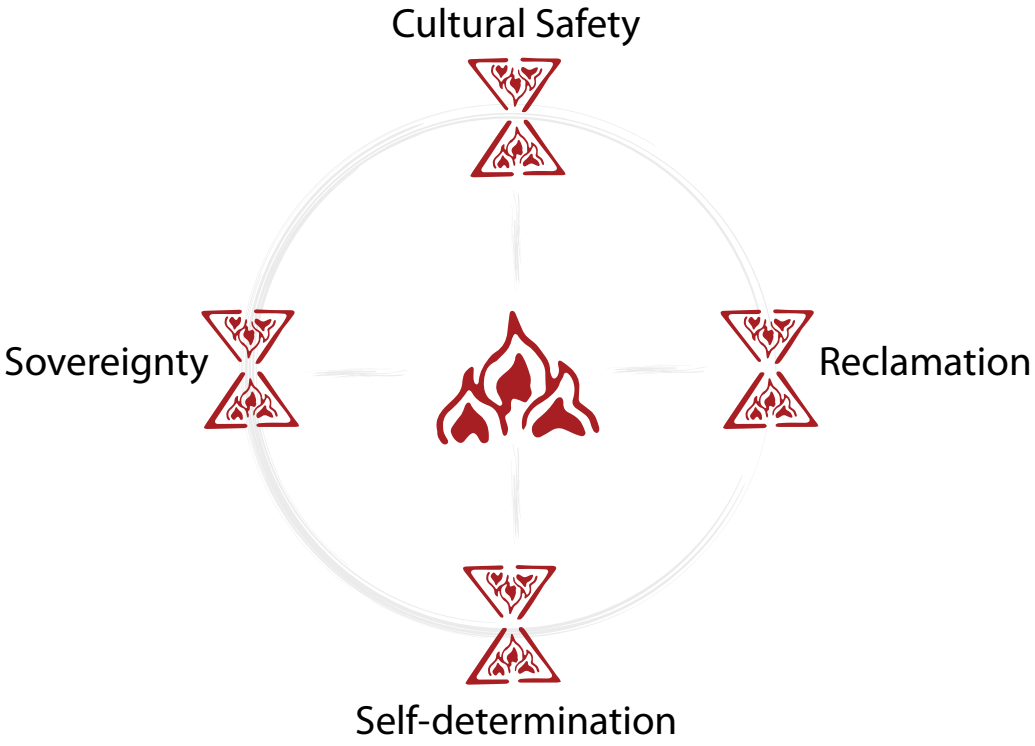
- Ticking the box of "cultural safety" is not enough: Why trauma-informed practice is critical to Indigenous healing, Authors: Nicole A Tujague; Kelleigh Louise Ryan **https://search.informit.org/doi/epdf/10.3316/informit.004410346624511**
- Orange Shirt Day – Learning about trauma-informed care **https://www.indigenoushealthnh.ca/news/orange-shirt-day-learning-about-trauma-informed-care**
- Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families **https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/child-teen-mental-health/trauma-informed_practice_guide.pdf**
- What's New is Really Old: Trauma Informed Health Practises Through an Understanding of Historic Trauma, Dr. Patricia Makokis and Dr. Margo Greenwood **https://www.nccih.ca/docs/context/WEBINAR-TraumaInformed-Makokis-Greenwood-EN.pdf**



A HARM REDUCTION APPROACH

We cannot say it any better than how Native Youth Sexual Health Network has explained Indigenous Harm Reduction.[1]

The Four-Fire Model



What would these fires looks like on the ground while understanding the importance of the central home fire?

Redrawn from https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/indigenous-people-vol11/indigenizing-harm-reduction

1 https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/indigenous-people-vol11/indigenizing-harm-reduction

Using the four-fire model

Cultural Safety

> ***"Acknowledge the power differences that exist between service provider and client/patient. Allow and create spaces for Indigenous peoples to feel safe to be our whole selves when receiving care."***

For Indigenous community-based service providers and community members: Indigenous youth may not always feel safe and at home with their culture for many reasons. Allow them to name who or what kinds of support they are interested in having, or learning more about, whether they are traditional or Western/mainstream.

Work directly with Elders, knowledge keepers and traditional supports in your community. Build relationships and trust so you can make referrals with confidence, but be open to individuals' hesitations and concerns. Avoid shaming young people (or anyone else) for choosing a mainstream method or wanting to try multiple options.

Respectfully work with and gently challenge abstinence-based programs that cite "traditional values" as a reason for not allowing people who are using substances to access ceremony or traditional medicines. Being 100% sober all of the time may be an extremely difficult task; if it is a minimum requirement for support, many community members may not qualify. Create options that meet people where they're at, while respecting traditional and community protocols – like welcoming people into a space without them needing to

actively participate, or ensuring there are people present who know how to work with individuals under the influence in respectful, humanizing ways to de-escalate any concerns or harmful interactions.

For non-Indigenous service providers and harm reduction advocates: Good intentions are often not enough. Be aware that you are part of the legacy of trauma and violence experienced by Indigenous peoples as a result of the actions of (even well-meaning) service providers, health care professionals and others. This means you must develop trust and build relationships while showing that you are making an effort to end that legacy. Actively inform the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people you are working with of your efforts, and be open to being held accountable for your actions or inactions, even if they were well intended.

For example, avoid complaining about or becoming frustrated by low turnout in medical programs or clinic settings. Have regard for the systemic factors influencing community behaviour. Not going to a clinic or hospital may actually be a form of harm reduction, since Indigenous peoples are often denied care and discriminated against, and even face death as a consequence of colonial attitudes of health care practitioners. Your actions can help to change this. Leverage the power and privilege you have for the benefit of Indigenous peoples. Advocate for meaningful involvement of Indigenous communities and individuals. If Indigenous people are only frontline workers or temporary staff, but not management, challenge this and endeavour to change it.

Reclamation

> ***"Colonialism uprooted and distorted many structures and ways of life within our communities. Reclaiming cultural practices can strengthen us."***

For Indigenous community-based service providers and community members: Talk with each other and actively listen to each other's stories. Make a sincere effort to not judge, and be aware of your judgments when they come up. Involve all kinds of leaders, especially young people, in discussions about how best to support one another. It can be hard to understand what really is "traditional" or "Indigenous," especially when things like religion, gender stereotyping and the taking away of our children all distorted how we pass on our values and practise our culture.

The resurgence of Indigenous understandings and identities of gender and sexuality is essential to our communities. Two-Spirit and gender-non-conforming people have always been at the frontline of resistance.

For non-Indigenous service providers and harm reduction advocates: Be comfortable with the uncomfortable. That is, learn how to talk about colonialism and recognize how you may be complicit in a system that supports colonial structures and practices. Be willing to support and advocate cultural activities – like ceremony – that don't fit into standard, Western disease-control models of effective prevention and treatment.

Self-Determination

> ***"Allow individuals, communities and Nations to decide specifically for ourselves what works best for us."***

For Indigenous community-based service providers and community members: Work with community members individually to find out what their needs are and what works for them, knowing these will probably differ from person to person. What you think is the main concern may not be the main concern for someone accessing services or looking for support. Maintain confidentiality and privacy as much as possible, even in small communities. Ensuring that basic needs – like food, clothing and safe housing – are met is a first step to building trust. After these needs are met, other issues can be addressed. People often develop their own coping mechanisms and strategies that should not be overlooked. For example, what is labelled as "problem substance use" may be helping with anxiety or trauma.

For non-Indigenous service providers and harm reduction advocates: Avoid a pan-Aboriginal approach to service provision. Don't assume all Indigenous peoples are the same or have similar traditions. For example, there are 198 distinct First Nations in BC alone. You don't need to be a cultural expert, but you need to be aware of cultural appropriation. Know whose territory, specifically, you are in, and the various communities you serve and share space with.

If you have more anthropological knowledge of Indigenous cultural traditions or practices than an Indigenous community member has, or has access to them, look at why this might be so. Consider the barriers that communities face in accessing their culture.

Sovereignty

> ***"Principles like non-interference teach us to support and meet people where they're at."***

For everyone: Court-mandated treatment is not the answer to everything, especially if those treatments or supports are not meeting someone where they're at, like requiring sobriety or non-use all of the time. Harm reduction is not always about reducing the amount of substances used. Harm reduction can be about identifying and knowing what behaviours or consequences are harmful, and knowing which of these can be reduced and for whom. For example, drinking alcohol may seem like a problem, but it can be far more dangerous to be thrown out of the house as a consequence of being under the influence, especially if this occurs in the winter.

For Indigenous community-based service providers and community members: If we focus solely on substance use, we miss the larger story – the systemic reasons that we, as Indigenous Nations, are facing such alarming statistics when it comes to sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, as well as harm and death associated with substance use. We also must focus more on understanding the factors that contribute to this reality to avoid internalizing harmful beliefs about our communities and Nations as inherently bad or unhealthy. Trust that individuals know what is best for them in the moment. Shaming our people for struggling will get us no closer to restoring what was taken from us.

For non-Indigenous service providers and harm reduction advocates: Be a respectful guest and visitor. Honouring original agreements between Indigenous Nations, Indigenous peoples and settlers is just as important to this work as clinical practice.

SECTION 2 | COMMUNITY BUILDING AS A WISE PRACTICE

Sometimes we can be restricted in the ways we think about what is possible. We worry about how much money something costs or if we are going to have enough participants to meet reporting deliverables. Children and youth aren't impacted by these things, they don't worry about money in the same way adults do. Many just create ideas and are pure in the way they think and the futures they imagine. Indigenous children and youth can also feel pressure to do many things as they may carry many things that are heavy to hold – carrying the weight of sleeping languages, passing on traditions, or feeling an emptiness of not knowing certain things about their culture.

When looking to get started, know that things don't happen as immediately as you want. While as a first step it's important to have a clear intention that allows you to create goals to work towards, sometimes we can become so goal oriented that we forget that we are human and need time and support – that we are beings that need to be loved and accepted. Invite people from your community to be on the journey with you and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be a part of what you are trying to achieve in your goals and objectives.

Getting started doesn't need to be formal. Community building is whoever shows up and wants to help out or hang out. That's where the conversation starts and shows who genuinely wants to be there. It lets people share their stories, experiences, and exchange teachings. The work won't go far without community and other voices involved.


ASK
IS WHAT I AM DOING SUSTAINABLE?
FOR ME? FOR LAND?
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
ACCESS TO FOOD + SEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY
WHAT GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE IN YOUR REGION?
ADVOCACY AGAINST POLLUTION
RESEARCH ON SOIL
CARE KITS
LANGUAGE + CULTURE
PROGRAMS
ASK KIDS: WHAT DO THEY NEED
GARDEN FAMILY
AS A NEW MOM IT CHANGES MY WAY OF CONNECTING TO FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
HAVING A GOOD MIND WHEN YOU GROW FOOD
WHOEVER SHOWS UP TO THE GARDEN IS OUR COMMUNITY
KIDS - IMAGINATIONS
IDENTIFY SAFE ADULTS
FREEDOM TO SHAPE OUR FOOD SYSTEMS
OUR IDENTITY + HOW WE CONNECT TO OUR FOOD
INVITE EVERYONE TO JOURNEY
IF KIDS ARE ABLE TO USE THEIR VOICE + BE LISTENED TO
CREATING SAFE SPACE
AMPLIFY YOUTH VOICES
COMMUNITY MURAL
IT TOOK A VILLAGE TO MAKE THIS MURAL
WE WROTE ABOUT THE THINGS WE FACE
TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT ISSUES THAT IMPACT THEM
CREATE AWARENESS + REDUCE STIGMA
HOW DO WE KEEP EACHOTHER SAFE?
UTOPIA 2.0
HONESTY
ACCOUNTABILITY
YOUR VOICE MATTERS
SPEAK OUT AGAINST RACISM
WE WALK AROUND WITH HISTORICAL TRAUMA. IT IS HEAVY EVERYDAY
TO COME TOGETHER AS FAMILY
ASK: DOES THIS BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY?
WORK TOGETHER TO ACCOMPLISH THINGS FOR COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY BUILDING
RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACHOTHER + LAND
BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE + WHERE YOU COME FROM
APPROACH WITH LOVE
CLEAR INTENTION
RECLAIMING TERRITORY WITH PERMANENT INFRASTRUCTURE
BRAIDING GRASSROOTS WISDOM
JAN 23 2022

Food for Thought

- Ask Indigenous children and youth what they need and want and let them drive the work. Amplify their voices.
- Don't invalidate the knowledge and wisdom of Indigenous children and youth just because they are young.
- Create opportunities for children and youth that you never had, simply because you can.
- Give the wisdom to the youth so they can eventually take over and lead the work.

> "Through community building you understand what it means to have food sovereignty as this encompasses the goals you are trying to pursue, especially with food sustainability and food access (which many communities lack), there are few food growers and few people doing seed saving work."
>
> —Denise Miller, Revitalizing Our Sustenance

- Think about your end game. Who is this work for? What impact will it have and is this going to do something positive for the community? Does it benefit the children and youth in your community? How do you know that it will?

> "Get involved with community, community matters, the people in your community care for you too, just like family would."
>
> —Gabby Daniels, Young Indigenous Women's Utopia

- Do a community call out! Invite folks to be a part of the vision and goals.
- Be honest with the people involved in and supporting the work. Ensure you are accountable to each other.

SECTION 3 | **PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT**

Define Safe(r) Spaces

> "Safe spaces need safe adults."
> —Skye Durocher,
> Fishing Lake
> Metis Settlement

Promoting Indigenous children and youth to feel good about their own mental health creates safer spaces as they can self-voice and share what is going on in their lives, their struggles, and talk about their feelings. For this to happen, safe community spaces need to have safe adults and require us to recognize that not every adult is a safe person. When the voices of young people are shut down and disregarded, they will no longer be willing to open up and connect. Indigenous children and youth need to have their voices respected, amplified, and driving the work that is meant to support them.

Creating the Space

When looking to create safer spaces it's important to consider who is running the program/project/workshop, etc. and identify if the person leading the work is a safe adult. As organizers, we must also acknowledge that just because we don't ***think*** children and youth need certain things doesn't make it ***true.*** The only way to know and understand the needs of your community is to ask, "what do kids need and want?" In the Community Building webinar, an interviewee spoke to how when she asked this question to the youth they said they wanted hygiene products, and she had assumed they already had them (when they didn't). So, she built a "youth closet" and filled it with shampoo, conditioner, hair elastics, and sanitary products. She also added that to make it "as painless as possible" the youth can access it whenever and take as much as they need. By asking the youth what they needed, listening to their responses, and following through with action, we can create programs, workshops, resources, etc. that are relevant and supportive to their actual needs. In the end, you can have the best youth program, but if you aren't taking the time and being intentional in amplifying youth voices and asking them questions, there is no guarantee they will come simply because they haven't been made to feel welcome in a space meant to be their own.


PEER TO PEER SUPPORT
TEACHING EVOLVES WITH US...
REACH OUT!
COMMON TRUST
MENTORSHIP
LEARNING ACROSS GENERATIONS
TURNING TO OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS
BEING OPEN
COMMUNITY OF CARE
WE KEEP EACHOTHER SAFE
SAFER SPACES
BRAVER SPACES
SPACE FOR A SMUDGE
BEING ABLE TO ASK FOR HELP FROM AN ELDER OR COUSIN OR FRIEND
ACCESS TO MEDICINES + CULTURE
WILLING TO GIVE BACK
BUILDING SOMETHING BIGGER THAN OURSELVES
BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK
RE-HUMANIZING
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
BEING SOMEONE PEOPLE CAN TRUST
KNOWING THE YOUNG PEOPLE
LISTENING + VALIDATING THEM
PROVIDE SUPPORTS THEY IDENTIFY
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO
TRAUMA INFORMED CARE
HEALTHY BOUNDARIES
RECIPROCITY
BE INFORMED OF BARRIERS PEOPLE FACE
KNOW YOUR LIMITS
NO.
SELF REFLECTION + ACCOUNTABILITY
LISTENING + REFLECTION SKILLS
RESILIENCY IS A SKILL
IMPLEMENT CYCLES OF GENERATIONAL HEALING
SELF CARE IS COMMUNITY CARE

The Importance of Relationships at the Beginning

Making connections in order to build a community doesn't need to be formal. Starting off with folks you already know and trust is a good starting point to build off of. In our conversations with different youth groups and collectives, they shared how a lot of their community building was mostly making sure that everyone knew that the community was invited and welcomed. Those who showed up genuinely wanted to be there, and it allowed for conversations about their stories, experiences, and teachings to be exchanged.

Relationship building and maintenance is a big aspect of community. A youth from A7G says that the relationships created at A7G span across different nations, which in turn mean there are allies across nations as well. Indigenous ideas of community building means reclamation, and continuation of non-individualistic structures that our ancestors knew so well.

> "We are our teachings – learning and understanding that is a great skill to have so you're not always stuck in a linear form of trying to heal or trying to help, you know that change is consistent."
>
> —Anna Feredounnia-Meawasige, The Indigenous Support Project

Relationships With People and the Land

Relationships with the land and people should be reciprocal. Growing these reciprocal relationships come naturally. Reeta from A7G says, "The A7G gardens had a lot of hours put into them and had a lot of helpers because it took a toll on your body. Being out there together and working towards that same goal was community building."

Relationships aren't always easy, this includes relationships with people and the land. Community isn't necessarily a group of your friends but it's a group

of people coming together for a common cause or goal. Of course, being friendly with each other makes it easier! But there will always be bumps and hiccups in relationships.

Starting Relationships

Once you know your values and have a vision for the community you're trying to create, it will be easier for you to not only decide if the connection you're building will fit into the scope of your vision, but the person you're creating that connection with will also know how best to align themselves with what your collective is trying to achieve.

Most of the time, we already have these connections in our lives. They are our elders, knowledge holders, language keepers, and of course our aunties, uncles and unties!

There are many ways to build community. One of the basics is to have clear intentions, as an identified intention allows you to create goals to work towards. It is important to think about who you're doing this for, what impact it will have, and if it benefits the youth and community.

As a wise practice, it would be good to identify who is safe – kids won't come to the program if the person leading it isn't safe. Your values will definitely help with this as well as creating community guidelines which we will discuss more in Section 4.

As another wise practice, it would be good to find folks who are able to help with the administration side of things. The administration side of things can be the most daunting and stressful parts of organizing. Administration can mean anything from writing emails, social media, organizing files and receipts, keeping track of budgets and expenses, and more. Finding folks that are naturally good in these areas is really helpful but it's often the part of the work that goes unnoticed so just remember to check in on your administration friends.

FEATURE STORY |

THE INDIGENOUS SUPPORT PROJECT

About the Project

Founded in 2020, The Indigenous Support Project provides relief materials and cultural education to Indigenous communities within Canada and across the globe. They help Indigenous peoples and youth in Toronto through food security, cultural education, peer-to-peer support, and community outreach. They also help with Canada-wide COVID relief and network to help other regions such as New Mexico, Nepal, and Bangladesh. They are dedicated to funding and delivering charitable services through Indigenous ways of knowing and being and strive to inspire and improve the lives of those who need support.

Creation and Inspiration

Seeing her community impacted by climate change and food sovereignty inspired Anna to begin this work and with friends and community helped with their free time to get TISP started. When they first started TISP they were mainly focused on food and encampment support and did not have as many aspects to their work as they do now. Establishing partnerships for support was essential for them to get started as it was difficult to access funding as a grassroots group when you are not registered. Once they were more established and they had people willing to work with them they began to receive more funding and donations.

Grounded in Culture

Culture is everything for their organization. They try to approach all their work from Indigenous perspectives. When they talk about food sovereignty, they try to connect it back to supporting Indigenous people. "You cannot

be houseless without food support on your own land or not have access to the land" says Anna. As they are an Indigenous organization, they know it's important that everything be rooted in culture and Indigenous practices.

Navigating and Addressing Challenges

A big challenge they experience is partnering with and getting support from non-Indigenous people and organizations. When you are doing this work and they have good intentions it's important to partner with them as it gives a wider perspective to show people you can work together, and they don't need to limit themselves. Another challenge they encounter is ageist comments from older adults who may not take them as seriously because they are young or don't have as much experience. When navigating a world where most people don't care about Indigenous issues and they are an organization who focuses solely on trying to better Indigenous lifestyles and provide them support, they feel unheard unless there are larger "issues" present in the news or social media. This can make them feel unheard and unmotivated as nobody is listening. They navigate these challenges by remembering that for every person who looks at it in negative ways there are people who are willing to create partnerships with them and who genuinely care about Indigenous experiences. And that they are apart of an organization trying to do this work and that there are other Indigenous organizations and grassroots groups doing similar work.

Wise Practices for Supporting Indigenous Youth

They believe that taking the shot and going for it is worth it. Even if things seem crazy or unrealistic, it'll work out and the good thing is that if it doesn't you can say you tried. And you can keep trying, and every time you try, when you come back, you learn something new, so you are not always failing. You are taking something away while learning and gaining the experience you need to get where you want to be. Also, being transparent with the people that support you is something they have tried to do since the very beginning.

SECTION 4 | ACCOUNTABILITY: SO YOU MESSED UP, NOW WHAT?

In 2021, we asked Indigenous youth to define accountability. They told us that there are six determinants of accountability which are: Responsibility, Safety, Respect, Reciprocity, Relationship Building and Integrity. We continue to use these determinants to help us define accountability for ourselves and our communities.

In response to proposed Bill 2S10 - Assembly of Seven Generations Youth Dialogue, Dec 21, 2020

LIVE GRAPHIC RECORDING Tiaré Jung | Drawing Change

No matter who you are, you're going to make mistakes! The most important part is owning your mistakes, stopping those mistakes and doing better for yourself and those around you. The idea of trying to be perfect all the time comes from centring whiteness in our lives.

White supremacy shows up in even the most well-intentioned organizations. As explained by Tema Okun of dRworks, it doesn't always look like overt discrimination; the subtler characteristics of white supremacy can be just as ingrained and harmful. By explicitly naming and challenging these characteristics, organizations can take steps towards establishing a more equitable and inclusive culture.

How Perfectionism Reinforces White Supremacy

Perfectionism is a characteristic of white supremacy that holds everyone's work to an unreasonable standard set by those with the most privilege.

In practice, white supremacist perfectionism can look like:

- Failing to spend necessary time and energy on training
- Giving credit only to the loudest and most visible contributors
- Focusing on the few mistakes over the many successes
- Conflating someone's work with their worth

Overcoming White Supremacist Perfectionism

Changing a culture of perfection can start right away, even just with one person.

Here are a few ways to get star ed:

- Focus on the positives as well as areas for improvement
- Give consistent appreciation for everyday efforts
- Offer patience for mistakes and growing pains
- Invite suggestions for improving the feedback process

source: https://publicallies.org/perfectionism-and-white-supremacy

> "Once we set up young people to lead with their hearts we then need to create a community that does the same."
>
> —Darryl Kootenay, Stoney Nakoda Youth Council

A great tool many groups and communities use are group norms or community agreements. They are essentially the expectations, values and also what will not be tolerated in a community or group. Below are some examples:

How to make a community agreement

What you will need:

- Something to write on (including a computer/phone) that everyone can see
- Someone willing to write down what folks say
- Bonus: Someone willing to make it into a cool graphic

How to do it:

- Ask everyone to share how they expect to be treated. Sometimes if the group is shy, we ask in a circle format and then go into popcorn style. But the circle allows everyone to at least share their thoughts a little.
- Ask everyone what are their boundaries and hard nos

Centring Survivors Always

Some mistakes will require more time to "fix" and sometimes harm can never truly be fixed. Severity of harm caused needs to be considered and we must always centre survivors in our work. Your values and community agreements will help you decide when a line has been crossed and when something needs to be addressed. Things to consider when harm has been done:

- Was the action nonconsensual? (e.g., sexual harassment or assault, touching without consent, power dynamics, manipulation, was the person using drugs or alcohol?)
- Was harm done against a minor?
- Does the harm show signs of behaviours that can impact the entire group/other youth? (if the answer is yes to any of the above, the behaviour is usually not isolated)
- Was it a mistake/ignorance or intentional?
- Are there supports available for the survivor?
- What does the survivor want to do next? (e.g., wants to step away from the group, wants a restorative justice circle, needs time to think, etc.)

It can be hard to hold folks accountable but it's important to maintain trust with family, peers, and community. There is no acceptable reason to protect someone who has been abusive or harmful especially to Indigenous youth, no matter how helpful or how much of a "good worker" they might have been. Creating safer communities means making tough decisions sometimes.

FEATURE STORY | NIIZH MANIDOOK TWO-SPIRIT HIDE CAMP

About the Hide Camp

Niizh Manidook means Two Spirit, in Anishinaabemwin (Ojibwe language). The hide camp's pronouns are they/them/theirs.

Niizh Manidook Hide Camp (NMHC) is a cultural revitalization initiative based in the Southern Georgian Bay aimed at restoring and preserving the art of traditional hide tanning in our shared Lake Huron, Erie, and Ontario watershed territories.

They are a Two-Spirit hide tanning collective creating safer space for Two Spirit/2SLGBTQQIAA+ (two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, androgynous+) youth and Two-Spirit community members.

We talked with organizers about how their inspiration behind creating the camp, community building, challenges they've navigated, harm reduction, and how culture grounds their work.

Creation and Inspiration

In 2015, Hunter, an organizer and mentor with Niizh Manidook (they/them), started hide tanning and did not have Elders or Knowledge Keepers to learn from and did not know where to go for teachings. After attending a moose hide tanning camp something clicked, and they wanted to bring the teachings back home with the intention of creating a safe space for the Two-Spirit community to learn these teachings. Beze, an organizer and mentor with Niizh Manidook (they/them), wanted to reclaim tanning in southern Ontario and create space for Indigenous people who don't fit into the binary. Together, in 2019, Hunter and Beze hosted the first Niizh Manidook Hide Camp in Ontario very small with family and friends.

Community Building

Community building is grassroots which led them to bring together a collective of beginners, mentors, and Elders and build a Two-Spirit community across their homeland territories. By making connections with other Two-Spirit communities in Edmonton and Thunder Bay, they were able to create connections within their reclamation work. Community building thinks about community needs so that people attending don't need to worry about anything, and can just work on hides. This means making things accessible not just for able-bodied people, providing childcare for participants, and making them feel welcomed.

Grounded in Culture

Culture is embedded in their work and when people do moose hide tanning it brings the spiritual connection that can lead into more cultural aspects. Many families come from hunting and trapping backgrounds that were fractured by colonialism. Hunting and hide tanning go hand in hand. It deepens connection to creation and traditional art and is carried through community. This includes repurposing and restorying the hide tanning in a non-gendered way. Restorying is to shift and change the perspective of the narrative, the Niizh Manidook Hide Camp is pushing against some of the gender binary that's pushed onto Indigenous peoples, and they're pushing back against it in a community-based way. They do not believe one practice is strictly men's or women's roles and are trying to shift away from this thinking for Two-Spirit, non-binary, trans, and queer people. They remind us that Two-spirit people need to be a part of the circle.

Harm Reduction

In the camp they try to recognize that the space is cultural while also not blatantly saying "no drinking, no drugs"' as their approach to harm reduction is a cut-off. They set boundaries with participants and tell them they can't do it within the space or campgrounds.

Navigating and Addressing Challenges

Physical accessibility of space on the land was a challenge that they knew could not be addressed reactively but required conversations to take place beforehand. Providing participants with information on the location of the camp, washrooms, and giving the lay of the land before, and asking participants "how can we make this space more accessible for you?" allows for people to come into the camp feeling like they have a place. Other forms of accessibility such as emotional and spiritual are important as well, and with Elders and medicine, people look out and take care of each other.

Wise Practices for Supporting 2SLGBTQQIA+ Indigenous Youth

They recognized it's important to take feedback from the youth and their ideas, for example participants really wanted to do a workshop about pronouns and introduce them as they felt it was needed in the space. "They also hold a lot of space for youth who need to leave early, have conversations around shared experiences, trauma and grief, and to have peer support from older Two-Spirit people for someone who needs it.


LIFE PROMOTION
RELEARN
REDEFINE
RECONNECT
WITH PARTS OF OUR IDENTITY THAT WERE FORCIBLY TAKEN FROM US
LEADING WITH YOUR HEART
THE ROLES + RESPONSIBILITIES I CHOOSE TO CARRY
HEALING JUSTICE
WHEN WE TAKE CARE OF EACHOTHER IT'S THE ONLY WAY WE SURVIVE
THE ACT OF RECLAIMING OUR ANCESTRAL TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE IS LIFE PROMOTION
CREATING SPACES FOR YOUNG INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TO CONNECT TO LAND + TO ENJOY LIFE
REDUCE THE STIGMA AROUND DRUG + ALCOHOL ABUSE
WE ALL DESERVE LOVE + CULTURE
IT TAKES TIME TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES + TO DECOMPRESS.
CONSTANT CYCLE
GRIEF IS A REAL ONE
DELAYED + PROLONGED GRIEF
WE HAVE TO BE THERE FOR THE ONES THAT ARE STRUGGLING
SELF DETERMINATION
SO IMPORTANT TO HAVE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE DESIGNING + PROVIDING SERVICES TO INDIGENOUS
TAKES TIME TO GRIEVE
HARD TO FIND AN INDIGENOUS THERAPIST
CONTINUE THE CIRCLE OF EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE
BE GENTLE ON YOURSELF
HOW TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WHEN THEY ARE TRIGGERED?
BE HONEST ABOUT STRUGGLING WITH DEPRESSION
THIS WORK IS SO FULFILLING + SO HARD
TO SUPPORT OUR YOUTH
DONATE
LISTEN
TAKE US SERIOUSLY
TIME
WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
BEING GRATEFUL FOR OTHER'S SUCCESS
RESOURCES, (FOOD + HOUSING + LIVING) FOR YOUTH IS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

SECTION 5 | OUR HOPES AND DREAMS FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

Life Promotion

Life promotion is critical to the hopes and dreams of Indigenous children and youth. It is about having hard conversations and providing opportunities for Indigenous children and youth to unpack their experiences while receiving genuine support and connection. Life promotion is relearning, redefining, and reconnecting with parts of our identities that have been forcibly taken away due to colonization and reclaiming traditional knowledge and connecting with the land. Life promotion is about being able to think with our hearts rather than our heads and understanding that once we set them up to lead with their hearts, we then need to create communities that do the same. We can do this by not only giving experiences to young people but exposing them to ***different*** experiences. Through these experiences they will be able to find their voice and values of how they want to contribute to their community's well being.

> "Reclaiming traditional knowledge is life promotion – relearning, redefining and reconnection with those parts of our identities that have been forcibly taken away."
> —Kyla Judge, Georgian Bay Anishinaabek Youth

Life promotion also requires us to know and raise awareness on the systems and barriers Indigenous children and youth must navigate in places, like the north, that don't have a lot of cultural supports and services accessible to those who need it. This is why it's essential that Indigenous children and youth are driving the work of life promotion, so that the spaces and supports that are created allow them to connect wholeheartedly and holistically while connecting them to culture. Life promotion cannot be treated like a nine-to-five job. It is so much more and requires you to show up with your whole heart and understand that all relations deserve love and culture, even if they are on the streets, houseless, or are not sober. Ceremony is for those who are in their darkest moments, and it is through our traditions that give us hope and keep our spirits alive.

> "Life promotion is not just counselling or land-based camp, or presentations. It's so much more. It's about building relationships. You show up with your heart."
>
> —Alyssa Carpenter, Western Arctic Youth Collective

Community Self-Care

- Think about the places you come from and the unique relationships you have to them
- Manage our levels of compassion and what we can give to our communities.
- Give yourself time to breathe and be intentional in your rest as this work can have impacts on your own emotions and mental health.
- Listen to your body. We all need breaks and there's no shame in that.
- Ask for help!
- Say no. If you're not into something, just say so because everyone will be able to tell anyways.

- Trust the process. Sometimes our worries and fears make us more stressed out than the actual situation.

Almost all the groups we talked with just had an idea and a passion. It's hard work but it's doable especially with the right people and ideas above. Just remember you are definitely qualified to do this work and you have good intentions. The skills you have will continue to grow and you'll acquire new skills along the way, too. We do this work because we care and that's really the foundation.

> "We realized there is a lack of access to ceremony and cultural items for houseless folks, started drumming and singing wherever they went that had Indigenous peoples."
>
> —Nanook Gordon, Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction


RECIPROCITY
TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE YOU NEED TO LIVE WITH THE EARTH NOT JUST ON IT
NETUKULIMK
MSIT NOKMAQ
RESPECT ALL OUR RELATIONS
GOOD HEARTEDNESS
FIRST FISH
FIRST HARVEST
GIVE BACK
HOW DOES CULTURE INFORM + GROUND YOUR WORK?
KINDNESS TO MYSELF, PEERS + LAND
SEE THROUGH AN INDIGENOUS LENS
SHARING SPACE TOGETHER
HOW TO BRING OR CALL PEOPLE IN WHEN OUR BOUNDARIES ARE CROSSED
SOCIAL JUSTICE
ACCESS TO FOOD + LAND
WERE NOT ISSUES PRE-CONTACT
SMUDGING CAN BE CEREMONY
FOOD BRINGS US TOGETHER
WE ARE INDIGENOUS CULTURE
GOING OUT TO A PARK WITH OUR DRUMS
URBAN SPACES ARE VALID

SECTION 6 | **SUSTAINABILITY**

A youth from A7G points out that the environment feeds the work, and the environment is made from a very specific set of principles. At A7G, the youth that attend the circle often come from different nations, and the circle then becomes a nation-to-nation gathering where each youth carries teachings from their home territory. We feed these different teachings into our collective well-being which in turn feeds A7G's sustainability.

Being able to sustain the work you do within the community or movement is important. It is something that feeds into your collective well-being, which will in turn feed the movement, community, or the work that you do.

An organizer from Toronto Indigenous Support Project says that we are our teachings. Change is consistent, and learning and understanding that we are our teachings is a great skill to have so you're not always stuck in a linear form of trying to heal or trying to help.

You cannot sustain a movement by doing all the work alone – a youth organizer from YIWU says, "people in your community care for you just like family does," which is to say that in order to sustain yourself and the work, it is imperative that you ask for help! You can experience burnout otherwise, and taking care of ourselves is taking care of our community – caring for ourselves is community care.

Ways to Sustain the Movement, Community, or Work

- Asking for help
- Safety Net/Network of Support
- Connection to the Land
- Circles – not like expecting youth to just know how to be a good communicator or a good supporter. There should be role models in the space that have the capacity to address difficult circumstances and who have the ability to step in and speak up if need be. There should also be "housekeeping" rules that everyone should be expected to remember. Creating those rules together also offers a good chance at an honest conversation everyone expects to feel supported.
- Decolonizing the idea of hyperproductivity – Go into situations being respectful and trauma informed, and setting boundaries, being open to learn from the youth, you aren't just teaching them, they are also teaching you
- Shared responsibilities – Colonization and capitalism encourage us to think of ourselves and fit into hierarchy structures but community doesn't work like that. There should never be one leader in a community; everything from leadership to clean-up roles should be shared. This also will alleviate the weight off of a few people.
- Remember your values always – We cannot stress this enough but your values, vision and community agreements will sustain your work.

> "Put a lot of faith in community to keep each other safe – this is a liberating experience"
>
> —Betty Pewapsconias, Chokecherry Studios

Some Tools and Resources That Have Helped Us

Making posters and social media posts

- For poster, graphic making and even presentations: Canva **canva.com**
- To connect your socials: Hootsuite **hootsuite.com**
- To help with making budgets: Google Sheets **google.ca/sheets/about**
- For making reports and research that can easily be shared among a group: Google Docs **google.ca/docs/about**
- For registration forms for outings, care packages, workshops, etc: Google Forms **google.ca/forms/about**
- To keep everything together: Google Drive **www.google.ca/drive**
- For website making: Weebly **weebly.com**
- To keep track of your spending: Quickbooks **quickbooks.intuit.com/ca**
- For webinars: Zoom **zoom.us**
- For quick updates and brainstorming on the go: Facebook Messenger
- For donations: Paypal **paypal.com**
- When you need some rest ;) : Calm App **calm.com**

Trusted Sources of Funding

- Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Program (OIYPP) **oiypp.ca** (March only)
- Laidlaw – Various Grants **laidlawfdn.org/grants-and-programs.html#iycff**
- Taking It Global – Rising Youth Community Supports Projects **risingyouth.ca/files/RY-Community-Support-Projects-EN.pdf?hostreferSubdomain=false**
- Fundraising! (e.g., taco sales, raffles, special events)
- Call for Donations (this goes back to asking for help)

CLOSING

Community work and community building is hard work. It's hard because we're trying to create something that goes against the mainstream but this work will sustain us now and in the future. We have to remember that we are not the first ones that want to see safer communities. There have been many deadly Indigenous leaders who have created the opportunities that we have now and so we're just carrying on the work. When we get older, community work will continue to evolve and be better for the next generations.

We hope this toolkit sparks some ideas, pushing you into action and provides some guidance on working with young people and community. We hope that this toolkit serves as a reference point and we can't wait to see all of the amazing work youth continue to do in their communities.

We love you and value you so much.

ASSEMBLY OF SEVEN GENERATIONS

a7g.ca

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