



Implementing Land Based Resiliency in First Nations Youth:

Report of Work with Indigenous Communities
and Primary Suicide Prevention

Weaving created by Tilly Charlie (2017), as part of her work with the project.



Territory Acknowledgement

The authors of this report wish to acknowledge the unceded and traditional territories of the Stó:lō people (people of the river), on which this work took place.

Learn more about Stó:lō territory by watching *Beautiful Land of the River.**

We gratefully acknowledge our ability to live and work on this traditional territory.



*https://video.ufv.ca/media/BeautifulLandoftheRiver/0_ripj4qus/35433

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Introduction to the Reader





éy swáyel tel sí:yá:ye (good day my friends),

For more than two decades, we have been devastated by the suicide rates of youth within Indigenous communities. This rate is significantly higher compared to suicide for non-Indigenous youth. The work that we engaged in since 2015 is about suicide prevention of First Nations and Indigenous youth, working with key communities and how they interpret prevention, and what we can do to create a positive, healthy environment for our youth and their future. In this report, we document our project work that took place over more than five years, working with Indigenous communities. Except for one Nation, all communities were within Stó:lō traditional territories.

The project focused on youth within Stó:lō communities, their wellness, cultural identity, and primary suicide prevention (as per the funding secured). We refer to primary suicide prevention as mental, cultural and spiritual wellness. While our work is identified as research, we primarily describe the work as a way to identify the practices and activities that would promote and sustain wellness, cultural identity, and Land-based resilience.

The intention of this report has two co-existing purposes. First, it is a way to document, honour, and contribute to what we call the Knowledge Basket in Stó:lō communities who were part of this project. Secondly, we hope that the work will help inform future work within more Indigenous communities.



We acknowledge that every community is unique. As such, each reader or community may take what may be useful from our work and assess what does not apply to their circumstances. Further, we hope that our work will promote and sustain wellness for Indigenous youth, their families, and broader communities.

We would like to make a note on language used within the report. Within this report, we refer to the specific names of Stó:lō communities who were part of this project over the five years. Otherwise, broader language, such as Indigenous communities, is used.

During the course of our work, we lost many youth, family, and community members. We know that the struggle and the concerns are still there. We hope that what we have done has made a difference in the lives of the people we worked with. We express our deep gratitude to all the communities and contributors who made this project possible. Our gratitude extends to the lands and places within traditional Stó:lō territory where the activities took place.

Mekw tel sq'eq'ó (All my relations*),

Adrienne Chan, Michael Blackburn, Nikki LaRock, Matthew McIntyre, and Lisa Wolgram

On Behalf of The Project Team, Land-Based Resiliency



*We acknowledge with gratitude Jonny Williams for his support in providing Halq'emeylem words in this report.

Project Summary

Project Origins

The *Fraser Region Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Collaborative*¹ released their final report in 2012. The report resulted from two years of stakeholder engagement, in an attempt to address the on-going and devastating loss of Indigenous youth by suicide within the Fraser Valley and Stó:lō Regions. Identified in this report was the specific need for a community-based response to prevent Indigenous youth suicide.

In 2014, the Fraser Health Authority (FHA) was made aware of potential funding through the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). FHA reached out to Seabird Island and the potential project team to discuss a response to the CIHR call for proposals. The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) was engaged to participate, and our Youth on the Land, a community-driven team, was born with the goal of understanding and promoting Land-based resiliency in youth as a primary prevention against suicide. Our team was amongst one of the first, First Nations community-led proposals to be awarded funding through the CIHR.

Project Phases

The Land-Based Resiliency project took place over two components² or phases from 2015 to 2020. Component 1 of the project commenced in 2015 and resulted in a pilot project between Seabird Island Band, Fraser Health Authority (FHA), and the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV). The four Principal Investigators of the CIHR Grant (Component 1)³ were Leslie Bonshor, Adrienne Chan, Heather McDonald, and Wenona Hall. The Principal Investigators, with the project team began by identifying that Seabird Island Band would lead the project, with participation from their youth.

The primary focus of this report is on Component 2 of the project. However, we think that it is first necessary to acknowledge the foundational work, activities, and lessons within Component 1 that ultimately resulted in the continuation of the project into Component 2, which extended to five Indigenous communities.

¹ Fraser Region aboriginal youth suicide prevention collaborative: Suicide prevention, intervention and postvention initiative: <https://www.suicideinfo.ca/resource/sieco-20130907/>

² The use of the word “component” is language used by the funder, CIHR.

³ CIHR Component 1 Grant #17379



Laying the Project's Foundation

Research in Context: Developing the team and working with Seabird Island Band

One of the Principal Investigators, Leslie Bonshor had a previous working relationship with Heather McDonald. In the early stages of development, Leslie invited Adrienne Chan and Wenona Hall, at the University of the Fraser Valley, and Heather McDonald to work together as a team. Following initial discussions, a grant application was submitted, and Heather established the link between the Chief and Elders from Seabird Island Band since she works at Seabird Island. However, the ongoing development and relationship was fostered among all project team members throughout the duration of the project.

In Component 1, a great deal of time was spent building relationships between the project team members and between the team and Seabird Island Band. We know that relationships are key to working with Indigenous communities and crucial where any health promotion or intervention is part of the project. It was important for the project team to develop its core values, approach, and relationships amongst themselves and Seabird Island Band.

Over time, the project team strengthened relationships through meetings with the Chief, Elders, community members, and youth. The youth were directly contacted and engaged with, in order to ensure their voices were strongly heard and listened to throughout the project. We wanted to know what their needs and interests were. The project was intended to be community driven.

The purpose of a community-led approach was intentional throughout the project. The project team practiced, as much as possible, a decolonial and Indigenous approach to the project. The goal of maintaining a decolonial and Indigenous approach was not an easy task. This meant ongoing dialogue, tension, and movement throughout the project. Before activities with the youth, the team took the time to deeply learn and come to understand what decolonial and Indigenous research methods mean, especially in the context of Stó:lō communities, and to gain perspective on how and why this approach is foundational to the overall well-being of Indigenous youth.

In the first year of the project (2015), a two-day workshop with Sandrina da Finney was held. Sandrina has an extensive background in Indigenous research methods, and this set the groundwork on which our team built our methodology and methods. We were engaged in discussing research and what it means to decolonize a team and research through Indigenous research methods. The two days included Elders and youth who were witnesses to our process and gave us their feedback and thoughts at the end of the second day.

In addition to the workshop and meeting with the community, the team conducted an extensive literature review on decolonizing and Indigenous research methods regarding suicide prevention and intervention models for youth, particularly Indigenous youth. This work ensured that the project team members would centre community and relationships in the research throughout the project.

Lastly, the project team situated themselves by embracing the concept of *Two-Eyed Seeing*, developed by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall. The concept, “refers to learning to see with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing... and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all”⁴. The four Principal Investigators made the concept foundational for the team, in that, non-Indigenous team members and Indigenous members engaged in relational dialogue to facilitate direct knowledge exchange (oyeqelhtel; reciprocal trade). Leslie Bonshor has a wealth of Aboriginal health policy and practice experience; Wenona Hall has a background in Indigenous methodology, and both have a personal/family reputation of knowledge holders and as wise women. Adrienne Chan and Heather McDonald have considerable experience working with First Nations peoples. The composition of our team enabled the broad-based use of *Two-Eyed Seeing*. This included our research assistants and co-researchers.

This foundational work resulted in the creation of a Knowledge Basket for Land-based youth resiliency for primary suicide prevention. Essential to the Basket are four Stó:lō principles that would guide the project. This metaphorical Knowledge Basket intends to share with others about the work, its processes, and lessons learned. Foundationally, the Knowledge Basket would honour past work and act as a legacy of continuing such work.

Sitel Basket (Knowledge Basket)

Component 1 and Component 2 was specific to place and territory. Stó:lō principles, values, and language guided the planning of all activities engaged in by the youth. This means the work was situated in the “webs of relationships that constitute S’olh Temexw, and drew guidance from the specific cultural understandings, practices, teachings, and wisdom derived from Stó:lō relationships with the land”⁵.

⁴ <http://www.integrativescience.ca/Principles/TwoEyedSeeing/>

⁵ Victor 2012; Gardner (Stelomethet) 2002; Carlson 2010



The project team was honoured to have received and embraced many basket and basket-making lessons from Elder Wendy Ritchie (daughter of Salish Master weaver, Rene Point Bolton). Elder Wendy Ritchie's teachings offered the project team a deeper sense of the profound importance of both knowledge creation and knowledge transfer. The terms knowledge creation and transfer are words used by funders and within the Western research tradition. This project used the idea of the basket as the place where our most precious possessions would be kept: knowledge about youth suicide prevention.



A good basket is both functional and beautiful. To be functional, materials need to be properly prepared (communities have the resources they need) and layers need to be tightly woven together (researchers and communities all working together). To be beautiful, creativity needs to be applied and yet traditions and ideas from others can be incorporated. The project collaborators note that no two baskets are alike; given the same materials each weaver will construct a unique basket. This goes for communities who are looking to create their own work and it is the hope that this Knowledge Basket is helpful.”⁶

The Knowledge Basket is made and filled by the knowledge, experiences, and learnings that took place on Stó:lō territory and in the workshops with the project team. The above image represents the knowledge (Sitel) and the ethics that have guided the work of the project team to best address Indigenous youth suicide through Land-based healing. Sitel is a basket used to store one's possessions, treasures, and (or) knowledge.

This report is grounded on this shared knowledge of the basket and the lessons learned contained within it. In this basket, the many elements, such as community members, Elders, knowledge holders, researchers, youth, funders, partners, and the teachings of the Land and the animals, have come together, with their own individual offerings, to weave a metaphorical Basket with the common goal of primary suicide prevention among Indigenous youth.

⁶ CIHR Grant Component 2 Proposal

This basket carries the experiences, lessons, and knowledge(s) of past and present of the work that has transpired since the pilot project took off in 2015.

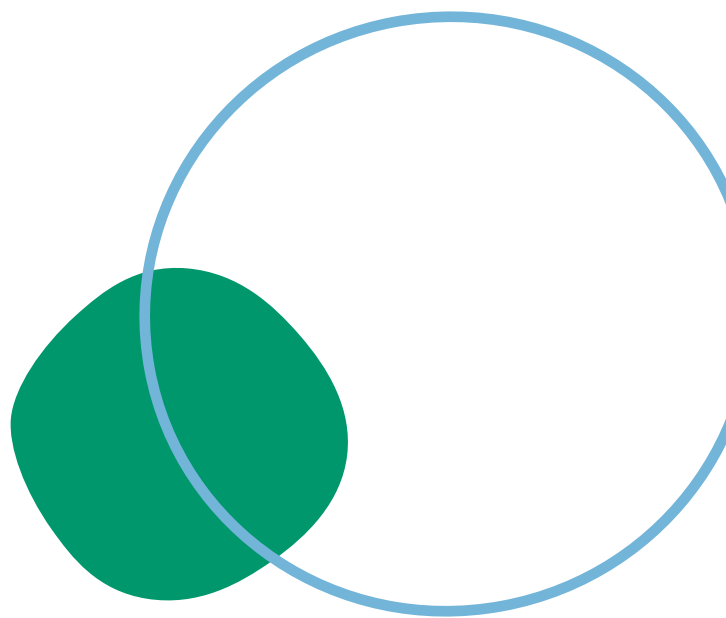
Stó:lō Guiding Principles

The project team drew heavily from the following Stó:lō Principles to underpin the entire research project's ethics. The below image highlights the four principles discussed in the workshop with Sandrina de Finney. They were developed and gifted to the project in our work with Gwen Point during the early stages of Component 1. This is Stó:lō xwelmexwqel, Stó:lō way of doing things.

- **si:yaya yoyes**; *Friends working together* – Working together honours the gifts each person brings to the research. We walk together as equals to understand the path we must take to move forward.
- **oyeqelhtel**; *Reciprocal trade* – Each person brings something different to the table; each leaves with something different than what they brought. We do this through listening and learning. We are all givers and receivers.
- **mekw stam ilileq'tol**; *Everything is connected* – Land, air, water, fire, spirit, creatures. Everything has a role, everything matters, and everyone is needed.
- **kw'okwestsitsem tl'os lexw kw'ets kw'ets**; *Looking back is looking forward* – the lessons are already there; we will find them and use them. Our future becomes clearer when we contemplate our past.



With the relationship-building process on-going and with the added awareness of the critical importance of decolonial and Indigenous research methods, the joined goal of creating a Knowledge Basket, and guiding principles, the project team moved into working directly with the youth in the Seabird Island community. These considerations are at the forefront of this work because it provides the foundation and intention behind activities completed in Component 1 and 2 of the project concerning primary suicide prevention by Indigenous youth.



Project Summary: Component 1

“This is Who We Are – Seabird Youth”



I’m definitely quite enjoying being a person of the land and it’s amazing how much strength and power you get from knowing and understanding who you are and where you’re from”
– *Youth Participant*

The Seabird Island Band project came to include a Guiding Group of Elders, community members, Knowledge Keepers, youth, practitioners, and project team members. Many Seabird Island Band youth participated in various Land-based activities engaged with their own territory and community. The activities were intentional in building resiliency with youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members. Activities included:

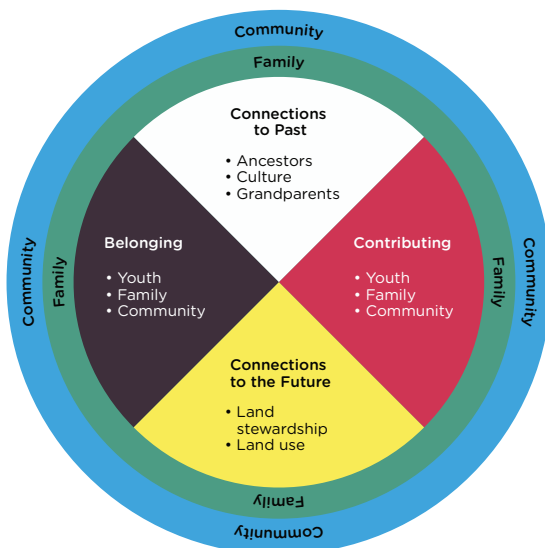
- Hikes
- Plants and medicine gathering
- Overnight supervised camp
- Tree identification and uses of cedar
- Understanding concepts of fishing and hunting

The activities provided immersion experiences intended to build on the inherent strength of the youth’s Stó:lō identities. For some youth, this meant talking more about culture and cultural identity before going out onto the Land.

The team worked towards primary suicide prevention by developing and implementing a Land-based healing and resiliency strategy. The project team viewed primary suicide prevention as maintaining and ‘improving’ health, mental health, and building a connection to community, Land, and Elders. A significant outcome of the pilot project was the creation of a *Land-based Youth Resiliency Model*.



Youth Resiliency Model



Please note: This model is discussed in further detail in the Land-Based Resiliency section.

As a result of the work with Seabird Island, the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* acknowledges that as “youth connected with their land and community, they simultaneously participated in creating their future”⁷. Some youth commented that they had never been on a hike but appreciated the opportunity to do this for the first time. Their first connection to the Land was built on the foundational knowledge of Elders and community members. Thus, the work with Seabird Island Band solidified the foundational role of positive, culturally grounded youth identity in youth wellness. As a result, the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* supported positive identity formation and positive youth interconnections to each other, their families, community members, and the territory in which they live.

The groundwork coincides with a growing body of literature that asserts that Indigenous youth’s reconnection with their culture(s) is an effective intervention to suicide⁸. With a successful model in place, supported by both community experiences and previous research, the collaborative agreed to engage with CIHR in Component 2 of the research, to grow and adapt the model in four different and diverse communities impacted by Indigenous youth suicide.

The funding of the pilot project with Seabird Island Band officially concluded in 2016. However, the work continued with Seabird Island Band because of the continued commitment of the community and the project team. We intended to sustain the work that we had initiated and continued to support Seabird Island community through the entire length of our work.

This report acknowledges all the crucial and many voices of Seabird Island community members and the Fraser Region Youth Suicide, Intervention, and Postvention Collaborative (FRC) for their dedicated time, skills, and knowledge in working with the on-going issues and concerns of Indigenous youth suicide in their communities.

⁷ CIHR Grant Component 2 Proposal

⁸ Hallet, Chandler, & Lalonde, 2007; Walls, Hautala, Hurley, 2014; Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003; Kirmayer, Brass, & Tait, 2000; Chandler et al., 2003; Isaak et al., 2010; Chandler & Proulx, 2006)

Project Summary: Component 2

“Implementing Land-Based Resiliency in First Nations Youth”



I was just thinking, what is not a connection to the land?
Because everything that we are is the land, and that's who we are.”
– Youth Participant

Component 2 of the project was funded in 2017, and the main project activities in the communities formally concluded in the fall of 2020. Ongoing work was established by a number of project team members in what has come to be known as legacy projects from Component 2, to sustain the work and continue to build capacity within communities. While there were particular components that were defined by this project, many of the activities and goals are ongoing and are considered as interconnected and continuous (e.g., Land stewardship, relationships to the Land, plants, and medicines).

Relationship Building, 2017 – Present Day:

Component 2 of the project was intended to build from the work that we did in Component 1, with Seabird Island. Therefore, relationship building was a goal of our work and a necessary part of working with communities. Relationship building engaged six Nations and communities: Sq'ewlets, Semá:th, Mission, Nuxalk, Yakwekwioose, with Seabird Island Band, and the project team.

The project team included the University of the Fraser Valley, Fraser Health Authority, Vancouver Coastal Health, Stó:lō Nation/ Resources and Research Management Centre, and First Nations Health Authority. The team continued working together collaboratively as an integral aspect of the project. For the project team, relationship building was an on-going process requiring courage to speak, frank discussions, active listening, and ample opportunities for reflective practice. The work was firmly grounded in Stó:lō territory, with

at least two Principal Investigators associated with the University of the Fraser Valley, who provided the administrative and financial lead for the project. All the project meetings and discussions occurred at the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre or in the Nations community locations. This was deliberate and important in highlighting a connection to the community and not to any institutional body.

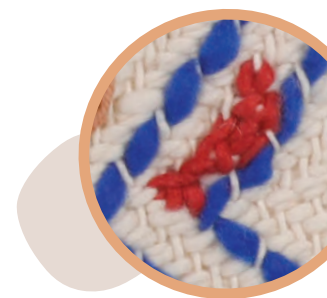
A summary of the specific work that took place in 2017 includes:



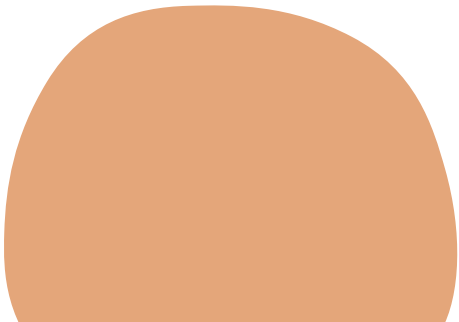
- Through the relationship-building process, the project team understood better where each community was in terms of resources and capacity for their youth. This process allowed the project team to meet the community where they were at, understand what they wanted for their youth, how they wanted to work with their youth, and determine how to best support the overall community.
- The relationship building process or “consultation” involved the project team gathering with each of the communities Chiefs, Elders, Youth Workers, and (or) other pertinent community members on their territory. As part of the CIHR funding requirements, each community signed the application, and they each wrote a letter of recommendation for the application.
- When planning activities, the project team referred back to the relationship building process. Elders and community members were critical decision-makers in activity planning.
- In 2017, activity planning was underway, as youth began to attend gatherings and camps, establishing relationships between youth, the project team, and community members.

Implementing Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model Activity Highlights (2017-2020):

While 2017 was a foundational year with some Land-based activities with youth, 2018 to 2020 involved the most programming based on the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* adapted from work completed in Component 1 of the project. Some project highlights from 2017 to 2020:

- **What happened:** On the Land activities, such as camps, youth gatherings, weekly activities (hiking, culturally-based workshops) that took place throughout Stó:lō traditional territories. Some of these activities were community-based and intended for the youth of one particular community. Other activities involved youth from more than one community and/or youth from across all of Stó:lō territory (such as the overnight camps). All activities were intentional to strengthen a connection between youth, their identities, territories, and communities. Two camps in particular (2018 and 2019) provided an intensive experience to be on the Land, stay overnight, work with elders in storytelling, cedar projects, survival skills, etc.



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- **How it happened:** Community members, program coordinators, Elders, and the project team came together to plan, guide, and facilitate Land-Based Resiliency activities with youth, based on the model and Stó:lō guiding principles. Strong relationships remained a central focus throughout the project. This ensured that the youth and the community's needs took precedent over the academic outputs of the project. Work within each community will be highlighted throughout the report.
 - **Project Documentation and Knowledge Sharing:** As the Land-Based Resiliency Project was coming to a formal end, anticipating the final year, the project team and project collaborators came together to reflect, discuss the lessons learned and commence a conversation about how this would be shared with others. Throughout the project, the importance of sharing the knowledge and lessons learned with the participating Stó:lō communities and other communities interested in the work was important to the team. Within the timeframe of the project the project team also shared about the project through presentations given at conferences, wrote papers, hosted a lesson's learned gathering, and the contribution of this final report to help fill the Knowledge Basket.
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Component 2

Introduction

Implementing Land-Based Resiliency in First Nations Youth

Powered by the successes and lessons learned from the pilot project with Seabird Island Band and faced with the continuing loss of lives by suicide in our region, the project team took stock of ongoing funding and energy that would be required to continue and extend this work to others. We strengthened our team with more Indigenous knowledge holders and reached out to communities to see who wanted to engage with our work. In doing so, a stronger and broader-based team was developed.

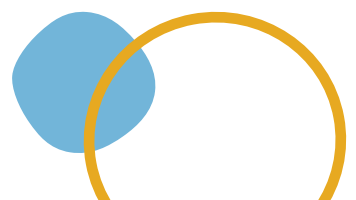
In 2016, the team applied for further funding to build on the work completed in Component 1. In January 2017, Component 2, titled, *Implementing Land-Based Resiliency in First Nations Youth*, was funded and officially underway. One of many goals of Component 2 was to adapt and implement the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* from Component 1 as a preventative approach to youth suicide in five diverse Indigenous communities (initially there were four Indigenous communities involved).

Component 2 formally concluded their main activities in the fall of 2020. This report provides an ongoing legacy for continuing the work of primary suicide intervention and for any community that may be interested in adapting and implementing the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* into their communities to promote wellness, suicide prevention, and to sustain cultural identity. Our model is intimately secured in Indigenous principles, ways of knowing, and community driven work.

Communities and Partners

Component 2 was dynamic and complex in terms of the work carried out and the many people involved in the project. It included working with six Indigenous communities in some capacity, institutions, individual contributors, partners, and funders over four years. The project was supported by specific financial and in-kind donations, which placed an additional layer of guidance on the work. The project team continued to practice decolonial and Indigenous research methods, built upon the foundational work from Component 1 of the project. The commitment from all project collaborators and especially community members demonstrate the critical importance of engaging youth through Land-based activities as a means of primary suicide prevention.

While the primary funding was for the project team to work with four communities, we engaged with six throughout Component 2. The four new communities were Mission Friendship Centre, Nuxalk First Nation, Semá:th Nation, and Sq'ewlets Nation. While Seabird Island Band was not directly funded, it remained an essential part of the project and was supported by the project team. Unfortunately, due to the project proximity and resources, Nuxalk was unable to participate in the project. In January 2019, Yakweakwioose Nation signed on and participated fully in the project.



Community Partners

Throughout this report, we describe our relationships and the work we did with each of the following communities.



Mission Friendship Centre is located with the city Mission.



Nuxalk First Nation is located near the remote community of Bella Coola on the central coast of BC.



Seabird Island Band is located on the Fraser River, near the town of Agassiz.



Semá:th Nation (Sumas First Nation) is located in the greater Fraser Valley area; it is a semi-urban reserve.



Sq'ewlets Nation is a rural reserve near Harrison Bay.



Yaxweakwioose Nation is located in the Upper Fraser Valley region at Sardis, near Chilliwack, British Columbia.

Institutional Collaborators & Funders

In addition to the collaborative work with six Indigenous communities, we acknowledge and express gratitude for the financial support we received from its institutional collaborators and funders. In addition to the financial support, there were many in-kind hours that were contributed by many communities and organizations. This project was able to continue due to all of these organizations who supported their staff to participate.



Component 2 Overview

The remainder of this report includes the following:

- A detailed description of the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* utilized in Component 2 of the project, including activities and programming with youth in each community
- The many **lessons learned** from the project
- **Concluding thoughts** on future implications and recommendations for current communities and those interested

Additionally, within the Appendix are adaptable templates that may support communities interested in the work or its continuance in Stó:lō territories.

Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model

The Land-Based Youth Resiliency section of this report describes the very work that transpired in each of the communities since 2017. The purpose of this section is multipurpose, in that it will:

- Offer a description of the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* to serve as both a starting place for communities who may be interested in utilizing it and a reference for communities currently engaging with the work of primary suicide prevention.
- Provide activity and program details within Component 2 of the project and within each of the communities we engaged with.
- Provide context and background into the planning of each of the activities. This will offer additional support for communities and or individuals interested in implementing the model in their communities.
- Share stories, links to videos, photos, and quotes from the perspectives of youth, communities, and the project team.
- Furthermore, it will honour the dedicated work that has transpired over Component 2 within the Stó:lō communities.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned will become the focal point of this report for the very purpose of sharing resources and knowledge with all communities. In 2019 and 2020, many of the project collaborators, youth workers, assistants, and team members came together to reflect and discuss the Land-Based Resiliency project's lessons. The Stó:lō principles guided the conversations within the gathering, and in particular, by the Stó:lō principle, **kw'okwestsitsem tl'os lexw kw'ets kw'ets**; *Looking back is looking forward – the lessons are already there; we will find them and use them. Our future becomes clearer when we contemplate our past.* The lessons learned are intended to support communities' on-going work and for new communities who may be interested. Further, the section will speak to the process undertaken by four research assistants, which set the lessons learned gathering up for success.

Concluding Thoughts

While this Knowledge Basket is specific to Stó:lō principles and territories, everyone is invited and welcomed into this space. The work described within this basket is meant to provide a starting place for anyone interested in the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* to work with Indigenous youth and primary suicide intervention in their territories while honouring the work that has transpired on Stó:lō territories.

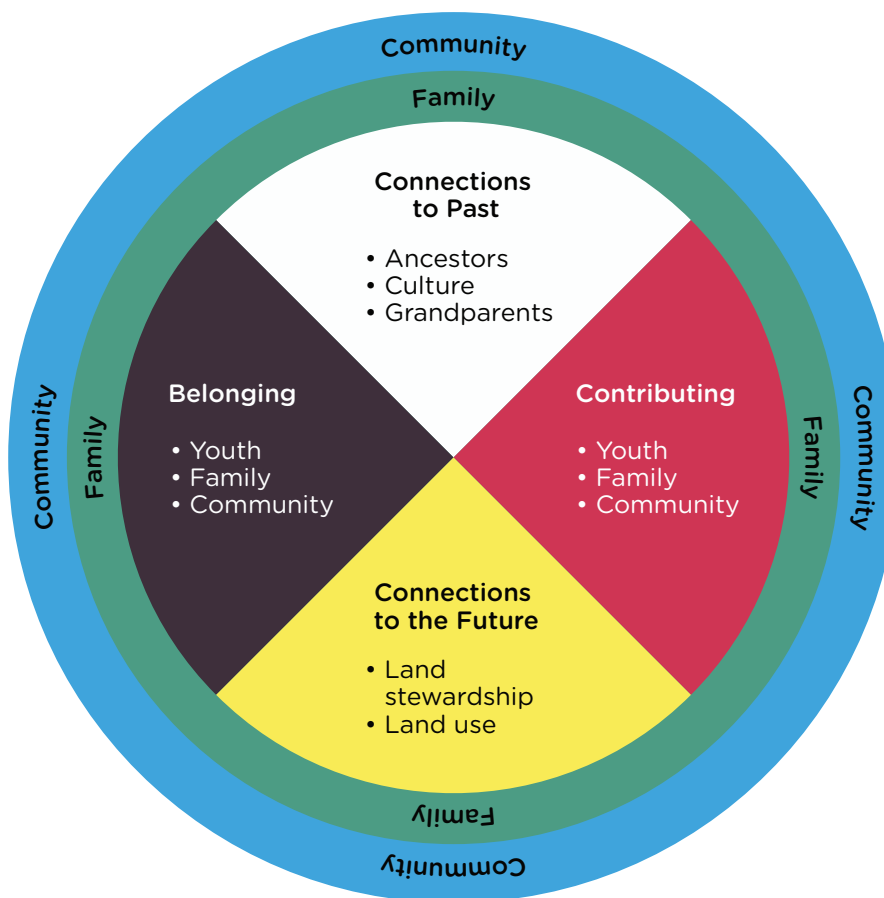
Additionally, it is helpful to consider this report as something not fixed in time or within the past, but rather as a living document related to a particular place. The work is still in motion, alive, and ever-changing. The templates and lessons learned can be adapted to the principles and values of a specific project immersed in a particular place/space. They are intended to be flexible enough to account for any changes that could occur. The *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* ideas would apply, but the particulars, such as stories told and activities planned, may be vastly different.

Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model

Through the Medicine Wheel representation (see below), the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* brings together an interconnected and balanced approach to primary suicide prevention and intervention with Indigenous youth. We acknowledge that not all Indigenous communities use the Medicine Wheel. However, the Medicine Wheel is useful as a model, even if not the key to the way all Indigenous peoples view the world.

In this particular adaptation of the Medicine Wheel, each item has equal importance in addressing primary suicide prevention. Reflecting on the Medicine Wheel, the Land-based activities in both Component 1 and 2 worked towards achieving a balance of ensuring that youth contribute, are connecting to the future, feeling a sense of belonging, and connecting to the past. The *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* (below) became particularly useful when family and community surround and work with youth. For example, when guardians dropped off youth of at our Camps, many stayed for some or the whole duration of the camp.

This particular model was developed from our research: what we know from working with youth, and knowledge from within the project team.



The *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model* was an outcome of Component 1 with Seabird Island Band. During Component 2, the model was used as a starting point in our discussions with each new community. The discussions helped others to visualize the foundations of our work, as a means to consider what might be feasible in their communities. As such, the planning of research-related and Land-based activities in each community continued to foreground the honouring and respecting of the knowledge and wishes of that community, while centering the interconnected elements of Land, culture and identity.

Additionally, the model is rooted in both specific community knowledge and literature about youth suicide prevention. The project collaborators also drew heavily from the theory of Cultural Continuity⁹, “which posits that *community connections to the past* (such as language and culture programs) and *community commitment to the future* (such as control of education and lands) are protective against suicide”¹⁰.

In work with Seabird Island Band, the youth had the opportunity to examine their culture and identify their own goals to create space for belonging and contributing. Of importance, the youth are both guided and supported by their communities in the activities. In this project, we noticed that as youth “connect with their community and the Land, they connect with, and participate in the creation of, their future”¹¹. Throughout Component 2, the project activities with the youth offered similar opportunities for connection, belonging, contributing, yet remained flexible to the specific community’s needs.

In addition to an understanding of the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model*, all activities in Component 2 continued to be guided by Stó:lō Principles and protocols, community members, and Elders. Activities in Component 2 resulted from extensive planning in community meetings, and research assistant’s dedication in carrying out the work, and community members supporting their youth.

⁹ Chandler and Lalonde, 1998, 2009

¹⁰ CIHR Grant Component 2 Proposal

¹¹ CIHR Grant Component 2 Proposal



Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model in Practice

Large group activities such as camps and youth conferences often involved more than one community, if not all of them. Invitations generally were extended to any Indigenous youth in Stó:lō territory who was able to attend. Some communities also did specific community-based events for their own youth, which will be shared in the next section. It is important to note that stories from the youth are entirely their own and are shared with their permission. The photos and videos were taken with permission from their guardians as part of their attending the activities. As a principle, youth had their own autonomy to give permission or withhold use of their photos or videos.

Youth Gatherings

2017 Youth Conference

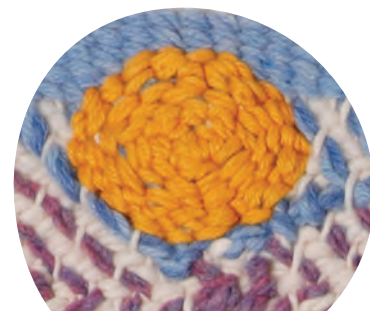
In year one of Component 2, a youth conference was held at the long house on Stó:lō Nation site, March 24th to 26th. The conference was hosted by Seabird Island Band in partnership with Leq'á:mel First Nation, where 20 youth attended. Youth attended from Sq'ewlets and Sema:th.

Conference planning:

- Youth, supported by community, voted on who to invite, to present, and to facilitate. They focused on people they knew and were comfortable with.

Conference highlights:

- The youth took on planning roles, which resulted in a capacity and leadership building experience.
- There were intimate spaces (around fires) where the youth had conversations with Elders and community leaders.
- Transformations in youth were evident. On Friday night (first night) many youth were reluctant participants, on Saturday morning some were cold and wanted to go home. By Saturday evening spirits were high and youth were fully engaged. On Sunday (last day), when family joined for a youth honoring ceremony, the vast majority shone with pride and confidence and begged to stay longer.



2018 Land Gathering

From March 16th to 18th, year two of Component 2, a Land Gathering was held for youth at Sts'ailes Lhawathet Lalem (Sts'ailes Healing House). The gathering included 30 youth and 20 adults, including four Elders. Everyone participated together in a lodge-type setting. Culturally significant indoor and outdoor activities were planned for the youth.

Gathering highlights:

- Even though it was only youth who registered, some adults remained at the gathering for some or all of the weekend when dropping the youth. The adult participation was a strength that showed the importance of family and community.
- Debriefing with youth-leaders after the gathering, highlighted transformations for both youth and leaders alike. All individuals noted the difference that the gathering had made for them in thinking about culture, Land, and being together.

Youth on the Land Camps

Multiple camps were held throughout Component 2. Different communities participated in the camp activities organized by the project team and community members' support, including Elders. The camps provided immersive activities that built upon the foundation of the *Land-Based Youth Resiliency Model*. The youth's activities were culturally relevant and ultimately supported their sense of belonging, connections to the past and present, and offered opportunities to contribute.

Youth on the Land Camp, July 2017

Hosted by Seabird Island Band, in which all communities in Component 2 were invited to attend. This camp was also held at Sts'ailes Lhawathet Lalem.

Camp Highlights:

Included preparing and eating duck, learning about medicines/plants, and drumming and singing.

Lessons learned:

We recognize the pros and cons of using awards and rewards for participation. Competition is not always healthy, and can marginalize those who are silent and observing. There are also pros and cons of video recording. We developed a good deal of raw footage. There were some difficulties in accessing the footage because of formatting compatibility. However, footage was edited into some successful clips (see Appendix 4).

Youth Origins Experience Camp, August 2018

Sq'ewlets Nation in partnership with Stó:lō Resource and Research Management Centre held a four-day camp for the youth. The conception behind the Sq'ewlets Youth Origins Experience comes primarily from current thinking and exploration of the relationship between archaeology and cultural sites, material heritage and belongings, tangible and intangible heritage and therapeutic practice (Schaepe et al 2017a) This is done in the context of building land- and culture-based resilience as a primary intervention of youth suicide in Indigenous communities, focusing on youth.



Youth working with a teacher on wilderness survival.

Camp Activities and Highlights:

- Youth Orientation: overview of Digital Sq'ewlets website, discussion about Stó:lō concepts such as sta'ames, sx wóx wiyám, and sqwélqwel, and how these relate to archaeology and history.
- The youth went on a place names tour of Sq'ewlets territory with Sonny McHalsie.
- Youth were given an introduction to Qithyil archaeobotany, and handled plants and seeds; inspections were made using a digital microscope.
- Youth discussed cultural protocols and were ferried to Harrison River, where they worked with Sq'ewlets/Stó:lō ancestral belongings. They were also ferried to Oithyil Island where they visited the pit houses. They had to navigate through dense ground cover required to get across the island, and an archaeobotanical sampling took place.
- Leadership, community members, youth, and their parents had a very positive response to the intent and outcome

Youth on the Land Camp, August 2018

In August 2018, the Project Team held a 4-day (3 nights) camp at Squawkum Park Campground located next to Sq'ewlets traditional territory, near Harrison Bay. In attendance were: 30 youth, youth workers, five Elders, research assistance and researchers, 21 adults to support camp. The camp helped the overall goal of primary suicide prevention through Land-based resiliency activities.

Camp Activities:

- During the day, youth had the opportunity to engage in various activities that were set up at “stations”. The youth could rotate in and out of these activities. Stations included: wool weaving, cedar work, rock painting, language learning, crocheting, and carving.
- All activities aside from the spiritual swim took place at Squawkum Park Campground.
- Camp activities included a morning spiritual swim (spiritual bath) at Chehalis River, meaningful to youth. Further, teachings were given regarding the traditional and contemporary practice of spiritual bathing for Stó:lō people. The youth made their own decisions. They decided if they wanted to swim or not, which most did. Other activities included weaving, cedar weaving, rock painting, Halq'emeylem language learning, crocheting, canoeing, slahal, carving, woodland survival skills, and games.

Camp Highlights:

- Many experiences offered youth a way to build relationships with others and the Land, contributed to youth mental awareness by providing positive experiences and teaching about culture and Land.
- Due to smoke caused by local forest fires, a health advisory was issued, and the camp was cut one day short. As a means of completing the work that had begun at the camp, at the time, Sq'ewlets Chief Andy Phillips recommended that we invite all of the camp participants to a final closing day at a later date.
- As a result, a one-day camp was held in October at Richard Malloway Memorial Longhouse at Yakwekwioose in Chilliwack. Being nearly two months after the camp, the date made it difficult for all youth to attend. Fifteen youth, four Elders, youth workers, three project team members attended and engaged in activities. Activities included survival training, the use of traps and snares, and a closing ceremony.

Youth on the Land Camp, August 2019

A Youth on the Land Camp of Component 2 was held from August 15th to August 18th, 2019. It was held at Sweltzer Creek Campground on Soowahlie First Nation Land and near Cultus Lake. The camp included 21 – 30 youth from the ages of 12 – 18 a number of Elders and youth workers.

Camp Activities:

- The youth engaged in activities fundamental to their identity as Stó:lō people, such as morning spiritual swims, prayers before meals, storytelling, smudges, cedar weaving, making natural medicines, drumming instruction, wool weaving, Halq'eméylem language instruction.
- Youth from outside of Stó:lō activities were made welcome through cultural activities specific to those nations, such as a traditional pipe ceremony.
- Connecting with Elders was supportive of multi-generational learning, spiritual guidance, blanket ceremonies, and lessons focused on mental wellness practices.



Youth holding up the weavings they completed at the camp.

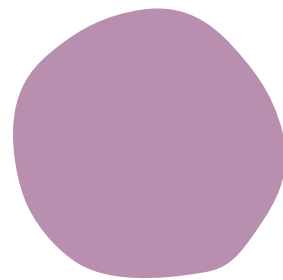


Camp Highlights

- The youth were engaged in a wide variety of cultural activities. With more familiar activities, youth were keen to participate and share their knowledge and asking questions.
- Two main drummers would sing a dinner song. As the camp went on, the youth became engaged and were taught lessons from the drummers. By the end of the camp, seven youth consistently joined in to help with the songs.
- The location of the camp and Land -based activities held in Soowahlie, was fundamental to the relationship between youth and the Land. Facilitators, chaperones, and Elders were able to reference the Land during activities and teachings. The location placed them in an area of importance historically, politically, and spiritually to Stó:lō people (YOL Report, 2019).

Camp Reflections and Lessons Learned:

- The youth carried out particular roles and responsibilities throughout the weekend, including being respectful in the activities and practices. Upon reflection, we recognized that Elders could be engaged in assessing and evaluating the efficacy of the camps (and other activities) through watching for identifying giftings evident in youth participants.
- The camp was intentionally structured with a loose itinerary of times and activities planning by organizers and chaperones.
- Youth were encouraged, not forced, to participate in activities/practices that allowed youth to choose when or how they would interact with the camp activities. This resulted in varying levels of engagement from activity to activity based on youth autonomy. However, despite these variants, the majority of youth participated in each of the activities.



Youth Responses to Land-Based Resiliency Activities

“

Until I met all my friends at the youth trailer, I wasn't much connected until they got me into the singing. Until I met all my friends, then I started connecting to the land ever more. All my relations”

“

It was cool making new friends.”

“

I felt really safe to be myself and accepted.”

“

I liked doing the swims with everyone.”





“

I liked having all the different ages here, like even the young ones.”

“

I really liked being out of the house.”



Workshops

In addition to camping and culturally relevant Land activities, workshops were held to equip youth with further engagement and identity building opportunities.

Youth in Leadership Workshop, October 2017

A Youth in Leadership workshop was held at Boothroyd, on October 29, 2017, during the first year of Component 2. The youth from our communities were invited to attend and many participated. The workshop worked towards building leadership capacity among youth, which contributed to their overall well-being and resiliency.

Digital Storytelling workshop with Dr. Marlynn Bennett, July 2017

Marlynn Bennet is the Indigenous Social Work Chair at the University of Manitoba, where her work has had a focus on working with young people telling their story. In July 2017, a three-day workshop included nine youth from the four communities and included a research assistant, and four adults. The session gave youth skills to develop their own digital story, which resulted in a short video clip that had pictures, music, and a story composed by the youth. Each day began and ended with a talking circle. The youth were able to work as individuals or paired together. The overall theme of the workshop was identity, culture, and home. Two of the youth posted their digital stories on YouTube.

One of the participants who gave permission captured a sense of home in his video, saying,



...Community events – you get to hang out with your cousins and do any of the activities. Enjoy their company while it lasts. House gathering – this category is for the cousins you consider – like they are almost siblings. You go to their house and watch tv and play video games. ... (we can) find remote locations for fort building. This is fun when you are able to make plans with your favourite rez friends or cousins. (DST PA)”¹²

Hiking

Throughout the project, day hikes provided foundational opportunities for youth to become engaged and connected to their territory, Land, and with one another. In 2018, 3 hikes were organized. One such hike was at the south end of Chilliwack Lake.

¹² Quote drawn from Adrienne S. Chan: Chapter 11: Storytelling, Culture, and Indigenous Methodology

Camp set up.
Youth learning about cedar.
Youth doing a weaving at
the camp.



Community Specific Land-Based Youth Resiliency Activities 2017 to 2020

Many communities engaged in a long-term program of activities linked to the core goals of mental wellness, Land-based activity, cultural identity, and belonging. Each community worked from their resources and strengths and were guided by our core goals. A few activities and notes are highlighted here.

Yakweakwioose Nation

- Youths met every Tuesday with research assistance and youth work
 - Working with cedar, weaving, and beading, drumming, singing, cedar weaving
- Summer activities such as visiting the longhouse and hikes in local territories, including sacred sites

Mission Friendship Centre

- Youth participated in outreach programming with a youth worker from the Centre. This included visiting sites and youth programming, such as moccasin and drum making.
- Youth also participated in the Digital Storytelling Workshops, camps, and hikes.

Sq'ewlets Nation

- A Salmon Ceremony was planned with research assistance and parents
- Introducing language classes, drum making, nature walks, cultural youth exchange, regalia making, developing identity in their community, canoe pulling and fish canning in the summer, and a trip to Museum of Anthropology in spring and fall.

Semá:th Nation

- Ten youth attended the Gathering our Voices event in Port Alberni
- Youth attended leadership camp part of Seabird Youth
- Youth participated in workshops, camps, and hikes





Seabird Island Band

- Continued to develop youth programs consistent with LBR Model
- Seabird Island was not funded by our grant, but our commitment was to continue to support them, and was therefore supported by the project team
- Participated in regional hikes and camps organized by the project team
- Cultural programming offered once a week with a guest speaker
- Seasonal youth outings on the Land to learn about their territory
- Hosted a camp with youth from other nations invited

These activities and events symbolize the ongoing work. Before and during the project some community-based activities were already taken place. Our goal was to build on what was already happening in communities and to bring into focus the benefits of youth connections to culture, identity and Land, for youth wellbeing. Our wish was to strengthen the efforts of communities and help them develop practices and activities for youth and community that would extend long beyond the confines of the research project.

During the period from March 2020 onwards, activities continued in our communities following Covid-19 guidelines. Research assistants and youth workers were able to have social distance in activities such as: building garden planters, planting garden planters, walking in small groups on the land and identifying traditional medicines and the importance of cedar. Online activities were present to support youth who may have felt isolated and needing contact. Online activities continued on a regular basis for mental wellness, including “checking in”, crafts, carving, and storytelling.

Helpful project documents:

Please refer to Appendices to see templates, Land -based resiliency assessment, and links to Youth on the Land videos.

Lessons Learned

Kw'okw'estswitsem tl'os lexw kw'ets kw'e ts: *looking back is looking forward*; the lessons are already there; we need to find and use them. Our future becomes clearer when we contemplate our past. – Stó:lō Principle

Significance of Lessons Learned

The project team identified the necessity to consider, reflect, and share the project's lessons learned. The project team recognized the importance of continually reflecting on what they already know and what offerings they had to contribute to the project goal. There was a level of understanding that lessons were always available to guide the work of primary suicide prevention with Indigenous youth. The team gathered together near the project's formal wrap-up to reflect on their lessons learned.

Stó:lō principle, **Kw'okw'estswitsem tl'os lexw kw'ets kw'e ts**, means that looking back is looking forward; the lessons are already there; we need to find and use them. Our future becomes more apparent when we contemplate our past. This principle is a reminder of the tools, stories, and protocols that already existed within the Knowledge Basket but now include lessons learned from Component 2 of the Land-Based Resiliency project. We kept all four Stó:lō principles in mind when we gathered for a day of reflection, sharing, and learning.

How the Lessons Learned Came to be

Before the gathering, four of the project research assistants came together to collaborate and to set the Lessons Learned Gathering up for knowledge sharing. The research assistant's analysis continued in using the approach of Two-Eyed Seeing to help form their analysis, which was shared at the Lessons Learned Gathering. Two of the research assistants, were Youth Workers from Yakwekwioose and were specifically engaged with for their experience of working with Indigenous youth, their knowledge of their own relations and knowledge of their own community.

One of the research assistants reviewed the project's written documentation, which included approximately sixty documents. What came out from the review were nine themes that were to guide the remainder of the Lessons Learned process.

Lessons Learned Themes:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Presence of People | 6. Decolonization and Indigenization |
| 2. Relationships and Connections | 7. Assessment and Reporting |
| 3. Protocol, Ceremony, Teaching, and Practice | 8. Planning |
| 4. Places, Land, and Belongings | 9. Funding and Resources |
| 5. Questioning | |

The Lessons Learned Gathering provided a space in which all project team members and all extended collaborators could come together to reflect on the project, its teachings, and how the lessons were to be shared. This section draws heavily from the research assistants' hearts and written work and is further supported by CIHR team members who attended the gathering.

What are the Lessons Learned?

Presence of People

The presence of people indicates all individual involvement that extends beyond 'hired workers' to the understanding that the whole community is a vital resource. The overall project was supported through a growing network of intergenerational relationships developed over time and within the communities. The project team came to understand that each individual's role is beneficial to the youth's overall wellness because of their relationality due to their own lived experiences, knowledge, and gifts. The presence of having the right individual contributes something new and unique to the success of the project. By drawing on the strengths of cultural knowledge embedded in each individual, the work can continue to grow and change to meet the community's needs. Each person's involvement creates an opportunity for new and ongoing connections between individuals that strengthens the project goals and the community it operates within.

Specific Examples of Lessons Learned

People are an essential resource. Youth are not going to learn everything they need to know about their identity from a book. Therefore, it is vital to have the right people involved, such as people who carry particular wisdoms or stories and are well suited for and enjoy working with youth.

There is a need for a list of community resources that includes people of all ages.

It is important to recognize that older youth may have different gifts and that by providing them with mentorship opportunities communities can support strong leadership for Land-based activities, such as camps. This lesson highlights the essential view that the community is a resource – including Elders, adults, youth, parents, and all of their gifts.

There is value in inter-generational approaches to planning Land-based activities.

People of all ages gathered together ensures multiple perspectives are represented. For an inter-generational approach to be effective, relationships need to be built with respect, trust, and love.

Everyone is educated in different ways and represent diverse perspectives.

All team members, which includes the project team and extended project collaborators, ensured to come to meetings with open hearts and minds to learning and planning to best support the youth. During activities, it was important for the team to demonstrate this to the youth, so they learn how to build relationships themselves.

Relationships and Connections

Relationships and connections include those between communities, people, Land, ancestors, animals, and spirit. Recognizing this way of knowing provides learning opportunities that strengthen and support the working communication, coordination, and community. The Land-based resiliency activities worked towards strengthening connections with all relations through a two-way transference of knowledge, experience, perception, care, and culture. The project team, youth, and broader community drew upon all relationships and connections as cultural tools to inform planning and activities.

Specific Examples of Lessons Learned:

Relationships (such as familial relations, friends, Land, and spirit) act as supports when youth are experiencing challenges to their mental wellness. This learning draws on family and community's fundamental importance in planning and carrying out Land-based resiliency activities. For example, a youth who attended one of the summer camps confided in a camp friend about their struggle with suicide ideology. The youth's friend could confidently contact the youth's family and other supports to let them know what was happening.

Relationship to the Land helps to form and inform the identity of youth as xwelmexw people. Emphasis should be placed on teaching young people stories about the Land, how to pray, and how to connect and steward the Land. This includes knowing that different places will have their own meanings and stories, which should be recognized by team members.





The land is like our church - our church is going to the land. Having a connection to the land will help youth when they go through hard times because they'll have something to believe in."

- Matthew McIntyre, Research Assistant and Indigenous Youth Worker

Protocol, Ceremony, Teaching, and Practice

Relationships inclusive of the Land work together to support youth wellness by revitalizing and recognizing cultural identity. Youth better understand their identity through relationship building when activities follow Stó:lō protocols, ceremonies, teachings, and other cultural practices. Our Land-based activity planning drew upon Stó:lō protocols, ceremonies, teachings, and other cultural traditions, as integral components of cultural revitalization and identity. Youth and the project team engaged in these practices can build, strengthen, or discover personal cultural identity. These practices through activities promoted overall wellness in the youth, their families, and their communities.

The project team, volunteers, and extended community members are not excluded from the benefits of such activities. These practices are used as medicine for everyone's mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness. Through protocol, ceremony, teaching, and cultural tradition, the project team has found opportunities to support the youth in developing a strong sense of Stó:lō youth identity within their broader communities.

Specific Examples of Lessons Learned:

Gatherings and activities must make room for ceremony and protocol to provide learning opportunities for youth, community members, and coordinators alike.



We had a ceremony at the camp after auntie Bib fell. Though we were sorry that she was hurt, it was a good teaching moment for the youth because they got to see how a ceremony should take place when someone falls/gets hurt. A lot of our ceremonies and protocols have been forgotten about. We're trying to bring all of that back. We want to bring back the meanings of all of the different ceremonies (birth, puberty, marriage - we don't know all of them). There is such deep meaning behind a name. They're not only carrying a name, but they are also carrying the name of an ancestor."

- Nikki LaRock, Research Assistant and Indigenous Youth Worker

Places, Land, and Belongings

The places, lands, and belongings of S'ólh Téméxw provide meaningful opportunities to explore, interact, and connect with different communities, knowledge, and aspects of Stó:lō territory. Youth identity is further strengthened by focusing on the revitalization of cultural understandings around Stó:lō specific places, Land, and belongings. This theme considers the Stó:lō guiding principle, **Oyeqelhtel**, *Reciprocal trade; each person brings something different to the table; each leaves with something different than what they brought. We are all givers and receivers.*

Specific Examples of Lessons Learned:

The relationship to place, Land, and belonging is one of reciprocity. The project team and youth were often mindful that as they benefited from the Land 's wisdom, it was important to offer something in return.

Youth need the opportunity to visit different communities. The places and Land s of gathering and belonging created a communication and learning network that is not limited to one particular place. Youth were able to engage and learn from youth living in different communities. For example, youth can learn about medicines and other Land-based activities in each territory, which can offer a more profound sense of connection and knowledge.

Opportunities to learn about families in each territory. It is important to recognize the local knowledge of place, Land, and belonging.

Provide youth with learning opportunities to see how particular places were used in the past compared to the present. For example, using the longhouse gave opportunities to teach about living in the longhouse long ago, compared to how it is used today. Youth were interested in how people lived off the Land before and now.

Allow youth to explore their traditional territory. For youth, CIHR team members, and communities, this learning offered a more in-depth understanding of the importance of knowing who you are and where you come from. This knowledge for youth strengthens their future as individuals and role as community members.



Questioning: Posing Questions, Seeking Knowledge

Everyone brings a unique perspective and curiosity that helps inform and challenge the work being done. Questioning develops a more informed learning system by drawing upon knowledge from the community, project team members, and youth. Questioning, or curiosities is informed by the unique worldviews and perspectives of every participant. The result of exploring questions and curiosities then brings forth new understandings that benefit the entire project. The process of questioning or exploring curiosities creates a cycle of continuous learning that works to guide the discovery and uncover beneficial knowledge.

Specific Examples of Lessons Learned:

Allow for the opportunity for questions to be asked and curiosities to be explored.

In planning meetings, this process ensured all voices are heard and new ways of thinking about Youth Suicide prevention to be considered.

It is important to ask questions of oneself, of each other, and other people.

This ensures that everyone, including research assistants, is held accountable for the learning process and that all voices are heard to figure out a way forward in a good way.

Questioning recognizes that learning is an on-going process.

This offers a culture of leaning into curiosity, learning, and listening.

Decolonization and Indigenization

The project team continuously worked towards engaging with Indigenous research and decolonizing methods throughout the entirety of the project. The project team recognized that decolonization is an on-going process and would never be completed in one project. This was particularly true when dealing with some funders and institutional bureaucracies.

One way that we contributed to this on-going decolonization process, was to implement Stó:lō ways of knowing and doing. The team continually made reference to the four Stó:lō principles from Component 1 of the project.

Additionally, utilizing the method of Two-Eyed Seeing was considered a valuable approach throughout the project. The team always aimed to give priority to Indigenous voices throughout the project. By understanding and exercising these practices, the project team (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) worked towards removing the barriers to youth identity by deconstructing colonial influences on youth and community wellness.

Specific Examples of Lessons Learned:

Flexibility should be honoured. For example, while a schedule for the camp was created, it was not necessarily followed when it became apparent that something else needed to be done. It is important to be flexible and to respond at the time to what needed to be taught/addressed as we went along. There were many learning opportunities and supports provided by doing this.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment and reporting were on-going requirements of the research project. Our attempts to decolonize and Indigenize these processes required learning throughout the project. Project team members would come together to better understand and focus on Stó:lō specific strategies that support the project and its goals with Stó:lō youth and communities. Assessments and reports were made with the flexibility to document information and ideas from the project's initiatives and share what has been learned, discovered, and recognized with others. Identifying, understanding and communicating the impact of the work we did supports the future, the youth, their wellness, and the work in communities.



Ultimately, our Stó:lō representatives preferred their own observational approach, through the lens of their own Elders, reinforcing the basket metaphor of having people work together (tightly woven) without gaps between knowledge holders.”

- Alanaise Goodwill, Project Collaborator

Specific Examples of Lessons Learned:

Consider alternative approaches to assessments. Rather than using only written evaluation forms, think about assessment activities such as sharing circles, in-person conversations, or artwork. During camps, for example, youth engaged in sharing circles at the start and end of the day. This allowed the project team to check where the youth were consistently and their needs. We also used the “speakers’ corner” idea to have kids come forward and speak their mind to a video-recorder. Additionally, monthly meetings were considered as sites of ongoing assessment. Everyone in attendance had longitudinal views of the youth engagement process and had deep knowledge of what the youth and their families had gone through. Therefore, we were able to use all of this information in moment-to-moment decision making as the project and activities took shape.

Where evaluation forms are used, ensure language is understood by youth.

Please see Appendix 3 for example.

Planning

Planning with Indigenous communities was key to the success and progress of this project. The planning was done through relationships, community, and communication. In collaboration with all project collaborators, the project team came to planning from a place of support and ready to learn from one another. Through responsive, organic planning, the team could adapt any activities to meet the youth, community, and project needs. This planning style created a malleable structure that informed all aspects of the project. The planning process worked towards the outcome of the activity, supporting the overall wellness of the youth. Further, this created opportunities for youth to engage with the project's goals in their own way. They told us what activities matter to them, what healthy eating meant to them, and asked questions about how they could be more connected to some aspects of the project (e.g. land activities, being with elders). In this sense, planning has allowed the project team to draw on past and present youth input and experience as a mechanism to guide the project forward.

Specific Examples of Lessons Learned:

Planning with the concept of always keeping relationships in mind, means that activities with youth can be more successful.

Creating a flexible checklist and planning template would be helpful in terms of project sustainability. For example, if the current project team could not attend or plan a camp, there would be documentation for new planners to follow and adapt to their activity. A “How to Plan a Youth Camp” resource guide would help communities plan a camp for the first time.

Funding and Resources

The funding allocated was directed by the youth's needs and supported the project and its project team as they worked together to fulfill those needs. Understanding the Stó:lō community and individual needs helped to determine the amount, type, and use of funding and resources throughout the project. This information was vital in developing strategies that question and challenge colonial perspectives on allocation and distribution while utilizing Stó:lō specific ways of knowing and doing. As the project team considered the future, one goal was to create a funding and resource model that provides consistent and sustainable support that benefits the youth's wellness.

Challenges faced with funding remained persistent throughout the project. For example, the university's financial policies, and interpretation of those policies sometimes was as a barrier to the project. The university and other organizations have specific policies on honoraria. The Principal Investigators worked with the university to resolve these matters. In the project team's experience, Elders may not often ask for money or accept it, as they want the funds to go all towards the youth. It is important to acknowledge Elders for their work, and there is an expectation that they will be compensated. One possible solution is to offer gifts, but this is not always feasible for what the Elders will accept.


Closing Thoughts

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. In closing, we consider future implications and recommendations of the work. We express our gratitude for taking the time to read about our project and the work that took place on the traditional, unceded, and ancestral territories of the Stó:lō people.

We hope everyone has felt welcomed to the knowledge contained within this metaphorical Knowledge Basket. While this Basket was developed within the specific context of Stó:lō principles and territories, our work was intended to be adaptable to other territories. The work described within this Basket provides a starting place for anyone interested in the *Land-based Youth Resiliency Model* to work with Indigenous youth and primary suicide prevention in their territories. Overall, we wanted to work with youth to contribute to their mental wellness and wellbeing.

The intent of this Knowledge Basket has been to provide a space to honour the work that has transpired in our Indigenous communities, with youth, parents, Elders, Chiefs, and community members. Additionally it is our intention that this report will serve as a partial legacy to the work that has taken place and continues to occur. The work is not finished, and many of us continue on past the end of Component 2 and will work on what we have named as legacy work.





In thinking about the work of the future, it is helpful to consider this report as something not static in time or within the past, but instead as a living document related to a particular place. However, we do acknowledge that the past history of colonialism has shaped our present day. We believe that the Knowledge Basket is consistently in motion and ever-changing. What may work in one community may not work in another. We have to consider relationships, capacity, and resources and how what we have learned can support future work.

As an additional resource, you will find an Appendix, where there are templates and models that may help your community. Like the report, each item is meant to be flexible and adapted for a community's specific needs.

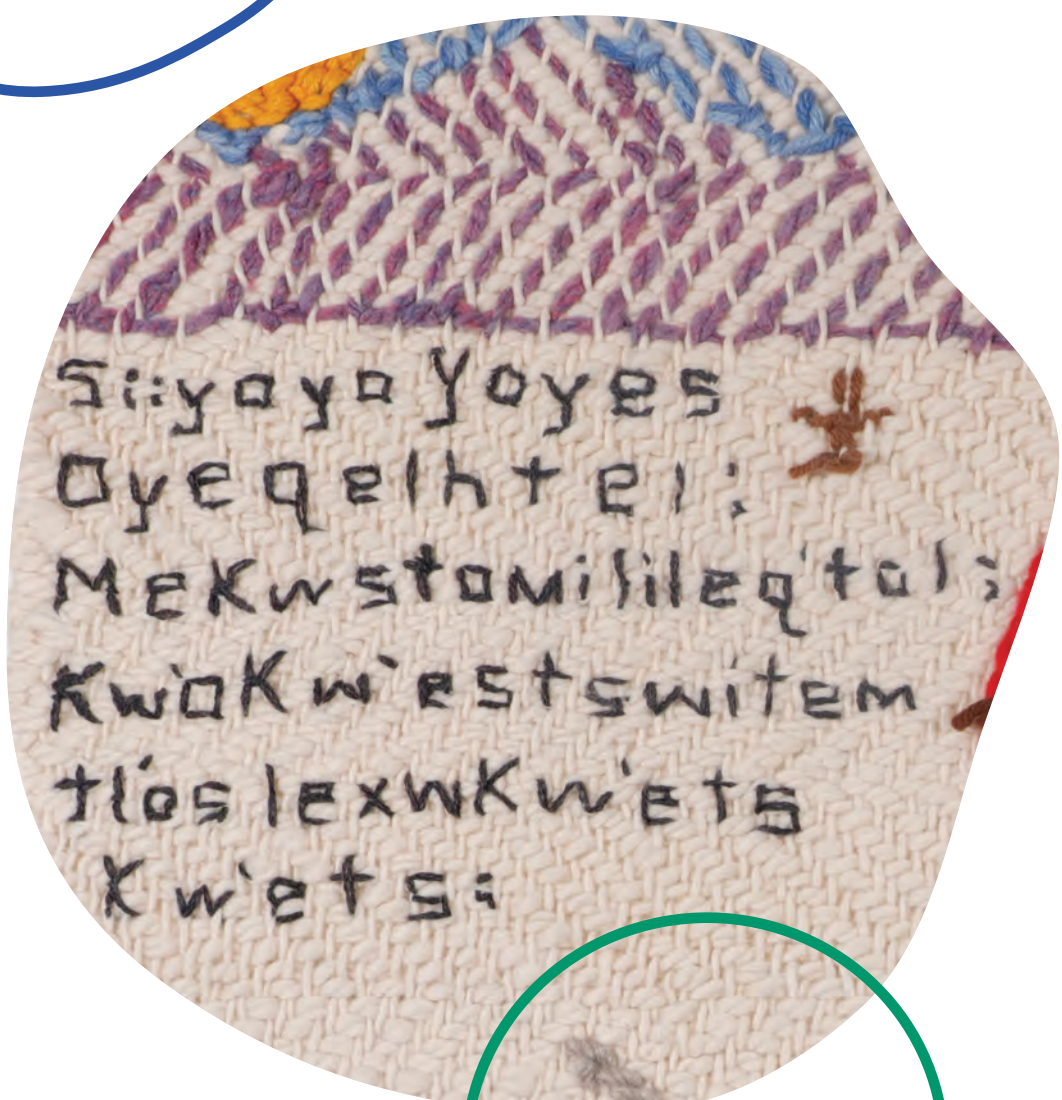
With deep gratitude, thank you to everyone who participated in any capacity where they could in this project for the prevention of Indigenous youth suicide. We hope that this will lead to continued and ongoing work for the future.


Yalh yexw kwas hóy (Thank you)
éy cha te swáyel (Have a good day)
Mekw tel sq'eq'ó (All my relations),

Adrienne Chan, Michael Blackburn, Nikki LaRock, Matthew McIntyre, and Lisa Wolgram

On Behalf of The Project Team, Land-Based Resiliency





Si:ya ya yoyes
Oye qelhtel: 
MeKwstomilileq'tal:
Kw'okw'estswitem
tlos lexwkw'ets
Kw'ets:

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Implementing Land Based Resiliency in First Nations Youth

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Many people assisted us in our camps, hikes, and workshops. We acknowledge them for their contribution to our work with youth, especially elders, parents, and community collaborators.

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Appendix 1:

Guiding Group Terms of Reference

The guiding group terms of reference was developed in Component 1

Goals

1. To support and enhance the strength of [name of community] youth, their connections to the land, ancestors and culture, and their identity
2. To involve [name of community] youth in a project that will strengthen all four aspects of their being
3. To inform the work of the Youth Resiliency Research team (YRR)

Purpose

1. This group will plan and implement land-based resiliency strategy for [name of community] Youth.
 - a. Who are the participants?
 - b. What are the activities?
 - c. How will we monitor and evaluate how the strategy unfolds?
2. This group will plan and implement youth engagement strategies and ensure that the youth voice is part of the planning and implementing
3. This group will help the YRR team understand the lessons learned about creating a resiliency strategy to be applied in similar work with other communities.
4. This group will advise to ensure that cultural/Indigenous knowledge and/or [name of community] intellectual knowledge is protected from exploitation, expropriation and misrepresentation in the research process

Duties

1. ensure the right people are included in this group
2. organize youth engagement events
3. identify the activities that the youth will participate in as the strategy
4. plan and implement activities
5. set parameters around youth participation
 - a. how many?
 - b. what ages?
 - c. constant group?
 - d. just youth?
6. recruit youth
7. monitor and evaluate as activities unfold
8. share lessons learned with research team
9. meet regularly to accomplish duties
10. report activities of this group to the research team and to [governance body] quarterly and as needed

Membership

This group includes youth, elders, knowledge holders, youth works and Lands/Rights and Title, research staff.

Other members may include mental health staff and research team members.

Community members that volunteer their time for group meeting will be paid honoraria.

Adhoc members are invited to specific meetings as indicated. For instance, cultural workers could be invited or people with specific knowledge to share.

New members are invited as needed.

Persons who are interested in becoming a group member may express their interest to one of the members who will bring the suggestion forward to the group.

The chairs is elected by the group.

The secretary is elected by the group.



Operations

1. ensure that all members are aware of the research component
2. establish a meeting schedule
3. establish a secretary
4. the chairs provide agenda items for each meeting
5. the secretary schedules meetings, books rooms, writes the agenda, takes the minutes and distributes minutes and agendas to group members
6. the secretary prepares reports for the research team and chief and council as indicated. All reports are vetted by the leadership team, and guiding group if necessary.

Appendix 2:

Implementation Model



Appendix 3:

Assessment of Land-Based Resiliency Activities

Assessment Template: CIHR Component 2 Activities

The assessment template was created for youth at our camps. The below survey was made from the perspective of youth, utilizing images and less on complicated verbiage. The below assessment was used in addition to sharing circles at the start and end of each day, and in-person video interviews (with consent of youth and guardians).

What did you think?

How did you feel before you arrived at camp?

How do you feel after being at camp?

Circle the things that improved your well-being

Learning about myself

Engaging in cultural practices

Connecting with others

Learning about my community

Being with the land

Appendix 4:

Youth on the Land Videos (2018)

Day 1: <https://youtu.be/bAN3ph53x5M>

Condensed Version: <https://youtu.be/Qgml3SFO1dA>

