Environmental Scan of Urban Indigenous Services

Regional Municipality of Halton

City of Burlington and Towns of Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville, Ontario

This project was funded by Heritage Canada,
in partnership with Grandmother's Voice and Ska:na Family Learning Centre

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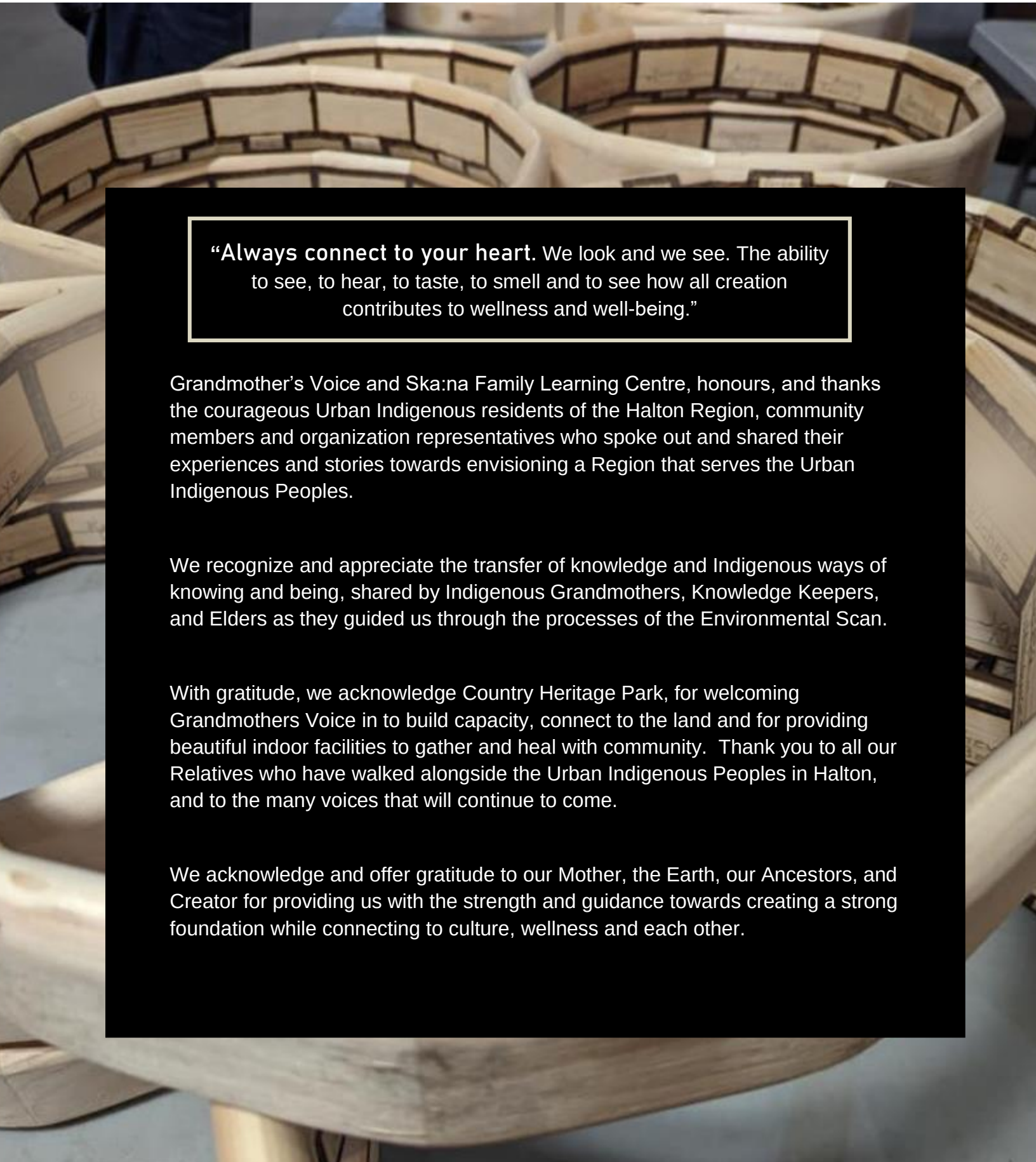
HONOUR



> **“Always connect to your heart.** We look and we see. The ability to see, to hear, to taste, to smell and to see how all creation contributes to wellness and well-being.”

Grandmother’s Voice and Ska:na Family Learning Centre, honours, and thanks the courageous Urban Indigenous residents of the Halton Region, community members and organization representatives who spoke out and shared their experiences and stories towards envisioning a Region that serves the Urban Indigenous Peoples.

We recognize and appreciate the transfer of knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing and being, shared by Indigenous Grandmothers, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders as they guided us through the processes of the Environmental Scan.

With gratitude, we acknowledge Country Heritage Park, for welcoming Grandmothers Voice in to build capacity, connect to the land and for providing beautiful indoor facilities to gather and heal with community. Thank you to all our Relatives who have walked alongside the Urban Indigenous Peoples in Halton, and to the many voices that will continue to come.

We acknowledge and offer gratitude to our Mother, the Earth, our Ancestors, and Creator for providing us with the strength and guidance towards creating a strong foundation while connecting to culture, wellness and each other.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Heritage Canada Grant

In June 2022, Grandmother's Voice (GV), in partnership with Ska:na Family Learning Centre (Ska:na) received funding from Heritage Canada to build capacity for Indigenous Peoples in the Halton Region through the development and incorporation of an Indigenous Heritage Cultural Centre. The grant proposed building a sustainable Indigenous-led community-based organization that serves by sharing Indigenous ways of being and knowing. "In this region, there is a need for safe spaces and accessibility to Indigenous culture, training, and education". (Heritage Canada, Indigenous Heritage Cultural Centre – Grandmother's Voice, October 2021)

1.2 Grandmother's Voice

Grandmother's Voice (GV) is an Indigenous women-led grassroots organization founded in the Halton Region. GV aims to strengthen the lives of Indigenous Peoples through healing, reclaiming identity and rebuilding relationships. Its goal is to remind the people that balance, and personal and professional growth is important in moving toward healing. GV works to reclaim and restore culture, connect to land, and promote language, holistic health and well-being. "*Just like the braided sweet grass, we are stronger woven together*."

Since 2016, GV has worked to connect Indigenous Grandmothers, Knowledge Keepers, Elders and culture to Halton's Urban Indigenous and non-Indigenous people while also working with local organizations to further their understanding of Canada's Indigenous Peoples while they work toward Truth and Reconciliation.

Led by Jody Harbour, co-founder, GV through a PROGrant supported by the Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic School Board, created the first Halton Learning Lodge (2018). PRO ran for one full school year. In 2019, GV continued to share Indigenous knowledge and provide services in the Halton Region both virtually and in-person.

Grandmother's Voice Community Gathering in the healing garden.

In March 2021, GV acquired space at Country Heritage Park to create wellness spaces and land-based healing. GV has continued to utilize the facilities and the land to host community gatherings for culture, healing, education, and training, effectively creating wellness spaces and promoting land-based healing. This same space has also been used to do assessments for Indigenous families.

GV has collaborated with Indigenous organizations across Ontario and is a proud member of the Indigenous Health Network**,** a collective of over 20 Indigenous Organizations that act as advisors in the health sector, Southern Ontario.

1.3 Ska:na Family Learning Centre

SKA:NA is an Oneida word that means PEACE. Peace in everything: the medicines, the language, the people and the environment, our World.

Ska:na Family Learning Centre (SFLC) is committed to an informed practice approach in developing Indigenous frameworks to support Reconciliation efforts with the primary goal of educating and training partner organizations and families.

The Mission of Ska:na Family Learning Centre is “to connect families, children and youth with the necessary services that will enhance their quality of life and instill a desire for lifelong learning and for young children (0-6 years old), a Peaceful “SKA:NA” beginning. SFLC is a committed champion for children and youth in the mainstream early learning and youth system. SFLC operates programs and services in the Municipalities of: Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent and Sarnia Lambton. Figure 1 provides a summary of programs and services offered in these communities.

Figure 1: Ska:na Family Learning Centre

Truth & Reconciliation Healing informed approaches, Capacity building, System Navigation, Education, Training and Reconcili-action.
Windsor-Essex 2 Licensed Child Cares Centres 1 Licensed Before & After, in-school Child Care 2 Child & Family Centres
Sarnia-Lambton 1 Licensed Child Care Centre 1 Licensed Before & After, in-school Child Care 1 Child & Family Centres
Chatham-Kent 2 Licensed Child Care Centre 1 Child & Family Centre

1.4 Halton Region Overview

Halton Region is a regional municipality in Ontario, Canada, located in the Golden Horseshoe of Southern Ontario. It includes the city of Burlington and the towns of Oakville, Milton, and Halton Hills. Halton Region acknowledges the Treaty Lands of the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation as well as the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Anishinabek. There are no specific First Nation communities located within the boundaries of Halton; however, there are Indigenous Communities around Halton including: The Mississauga of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council, Metis Nation of Ontario, Credit River Metis Council and the Grand River Metis Council. https://www.halton.ca/The-Region/Projects-and-Initiatives/Building-meaningful-relationships-with-Indigenous#02

According to the 2021 Canadian Census, Halton Region had a population of 596,637 living in 208,601 of its 214,322 total private dwellings, a change of 8.8% from its 2016 population of 548,435. With a land area of 965.71 km^2 (372.86 sq mi), it had a population density of 617.8/km^2 (1,600.2/sq mi) in 2021.

1.5 2021 Census Highlights on Indigenous Peoples - Canada

Indigenous Peoples, their communities, cultures and languages have existed since time immemorial in the land now known as Canada. **The term "Indigenous Peoples" refers to three groups—First Nations people, Métis and Inuit—who are recognized in the Constitution Act.** However, while these groups are representative of the Indigenous population as a whole, each is diverse as reflected in over 70 Indigenous languages reported during the 2021 Census, over six hundred (600) First Nations who represent their people across the country, the plurality of groups representing Métis nationhood, and the four regions and 50 communities of Inuit Nunangat that Inuit call home. Between 2016 and 2021, the Indigenous population in Canada grew by 9.4% to 1.8 million Indigenous people, or 5.0% of the national population The growth rate was almost double that of the non-Indigenous population. According to Statistics Canada, the faster growth rate of Indigenous Peoples is generally attributed to higher birth rates, combined with changes in the way respondents answer the census questionnaire from one census to the next.

https://www.halton.ca/Repository/Indigenous- Relationship-Building-Initiative-Report

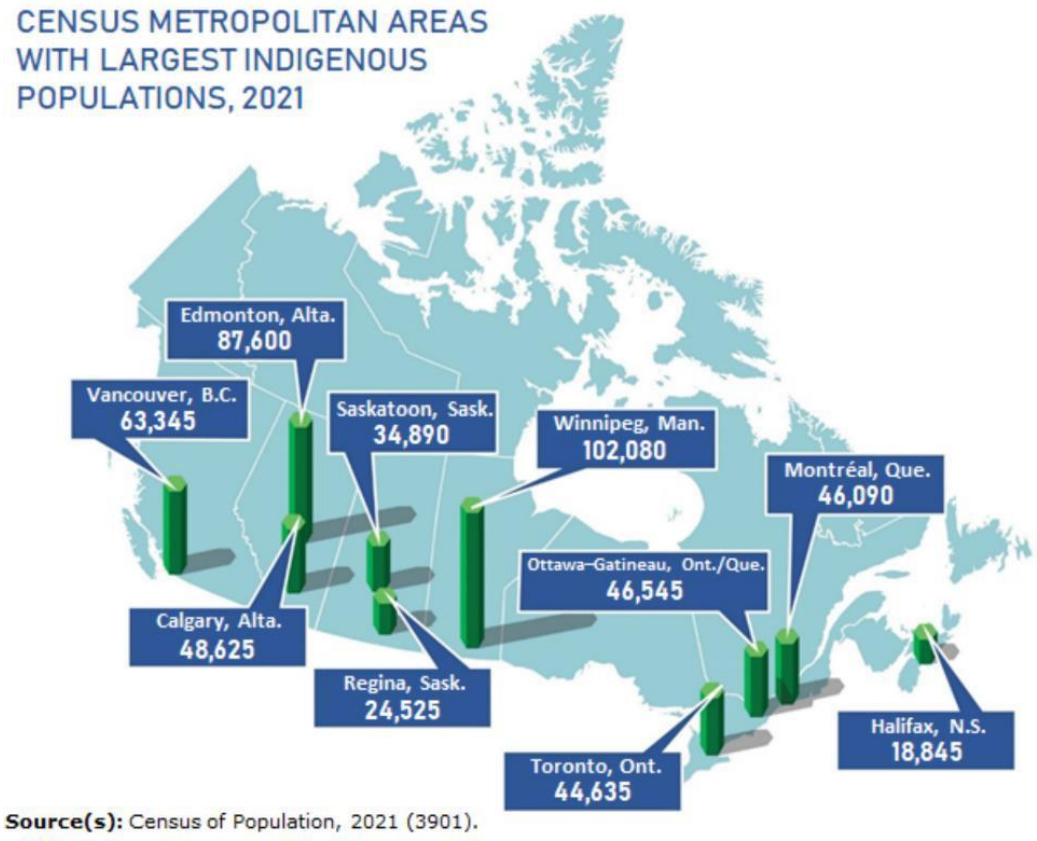
For First Nations, Métis and Inuit families, grandparents often play an important role in raising children as well as in passing down values, traditions and cultural knowledge to younger generations. In 2021, 14.2% of Indigenous children lived with at least one grandparent, compared with 8.9% of non-Indigenous children.

Indigenous Peoples were more likely than the non-Indigenous population to be living in a dwelling that needed major repairs (16.4% versus 5.7%) or live in crowded housing (17.1% versus 9.4%) in 2021.

In 2021, almost one in five Indigenous people in Canada (18.8%) lived in a low-income household, using the low-income measure, after tax. This was down nearly 10 percentage points from 2016. The decline was likely driven by government transfers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Canada, 237,420 Indigenous Peoples could speak an Indigenous language well enough to conduct a conversation. While the number of people with an Indigenous mother tongue has been in decline, there has been growth in the number of Indigenous second-language speakers.

To read the complete Census, visit: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220921/dq220921a-eng.htm



1.6 Indigenous Population in Halton Region

Indigenous population in Halton Region grew by 7.9% between 2016-2021. In 2021, there were 5,890 Indigenous Peoples in the Halton Region representing 1% of the total population. These numbers are viewed with caution as the 2021 census data may not be a true representation of the actual population, given that Indigenous People are sometimes reluctant to provide personal information and take part in the Census. https://www.halton.ca/Repository/Indigenous-Relationship-Building-Initiative-Report

Figure 2 illustrates the population growth of Indigenous Peoples by municipality.

Figure 2: Indigenous Peoples by Municipality, Halton Region

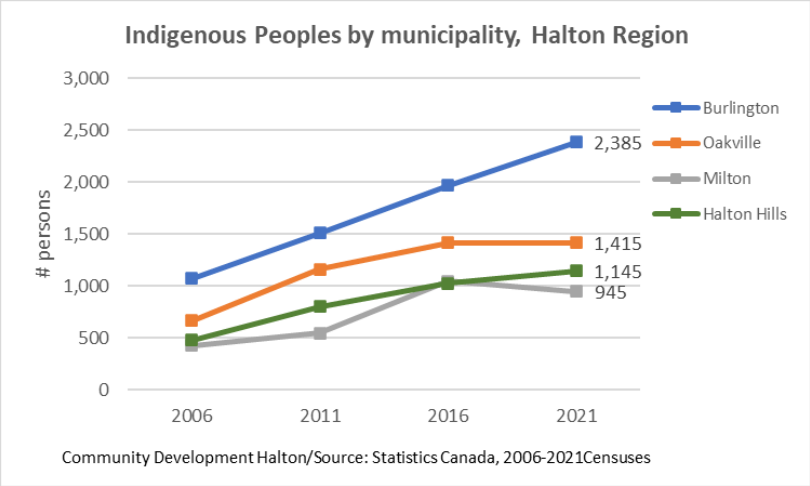
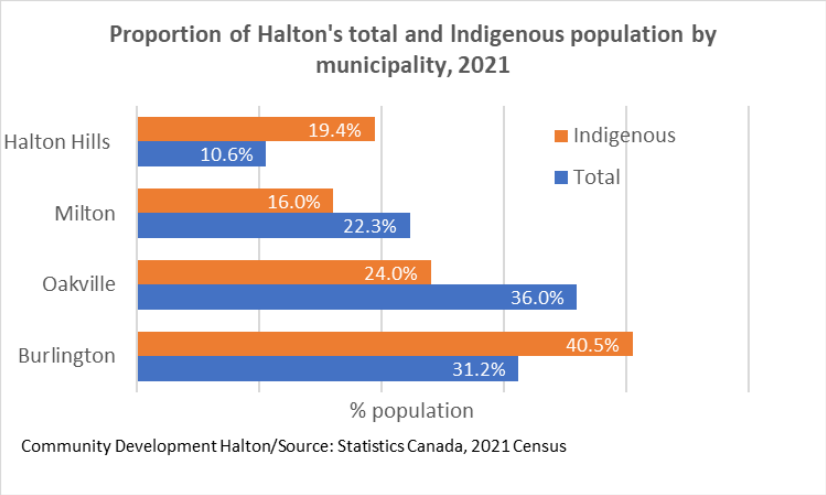


Figure 3 shows the proportion of Halton's total population vs Indigenous population by municipality.

Figure 3: Proportion of Halton's Total population vs Indigenous Population by Municipality



In the Halton Region, Burlington and Halton Hills have a higher proportion of Indigenous population than the total population. Between 2016 and 2021, the rate of growth of Indigenous population residing in Burlington (+20.8%) was significantly higher than its non-Indigenous population (+2.0%), Compared to the rest of Halton Region, Burlington has the largest Indigenous population, with the city accounting for over 40% (2,385) of Halton Region's 5,900 Indigenous Peoples. The city with the largest proportion of Indigenous Peoples, however, is Halton Hills at 1.8% (1,145 people). Indigenous population in Oakville is still unchanged between 2016 and 2021 while its population records a 10.3% increase. Oakville has 36% of Halton's population and the second highest percentage of Indigenous population at 24%. https://mariannemeedward.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2021-Census-Indigenous-Community-Population.pdf

Figure 4 shows the population of the Halton Region by Indigenous ancestries.

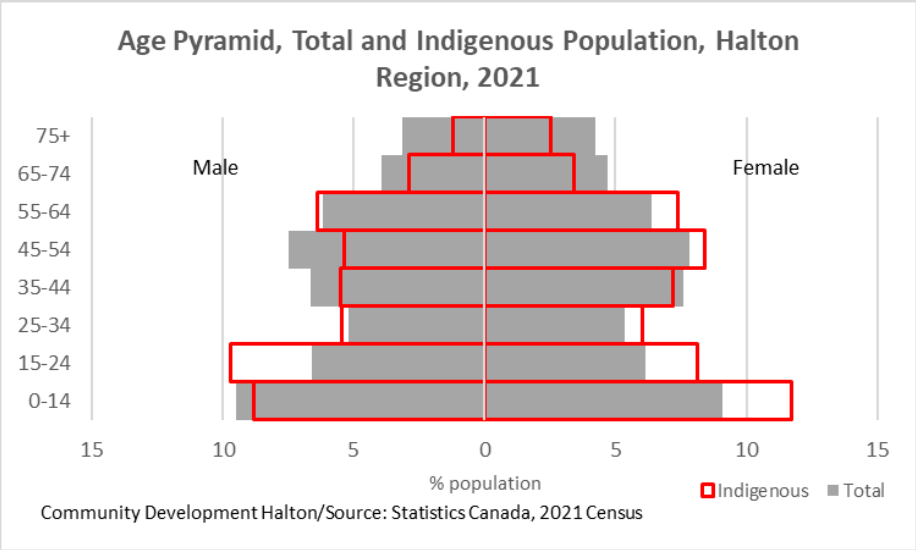
Figure 4: Population by Indigenous Ancestries, Halton Region 2021

Population by Indigenous ancestries, Halton Region, 2021		
Indigenous ancestry ONLY		1,295
single Indigenous ancestry	1,250	
mutiple Indigenous ancestries	45	
Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestries		7,370
single Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestries	7,210	
multiple Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestries	160	
Total		8,665
Community Development Halton/Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census		

Over half (57%) of Indigenous Peoples identified themselves as First Nations, 38% Métis and less than 1% Inuk (Inuit). About 2% reported any two or all three Indigenous identities. Over one quarter (29%) of Indigenous Peoples have Registered or Treaty Indian status. Between 2016 and 2021, the First Nations population in Halton grew by 11.3% compared to the national average of 9.7%. The growth of the Métis population (4.1%) was slower than the Canadian average of 6.3%. Of the Indigenous population in Burlington, 59.7% (1,425) were First Nations peoples, 35.2% (840) were Métis, and 0.6% (15) were Inuit. https://mariannemeedward.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2021-Census-Indigenous-Community-Population.pdf

In 2021, over 8,600 residents in Halton had Indigenous ancestry. Ancestry refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the person's ancestors, an ancestor being usually more distant than a grandparent.

Figure 5: Age Range Total and Indigenous Population, Halton Region 2021



As noted in Figure 5, the average age of Indigenous Peoples in the Halton Region was 36.2 years compared to 39.8 years for the total population in Halton. The average age of Indigenous men and women was 37.1 years and 35.1 years respectively. One-fifth (20.5%) of Indigenous Peoples were under the age of 14 years compared to 18.8% for the total population. About 10% of the Indigenous population and 15% of the total population were seniors.

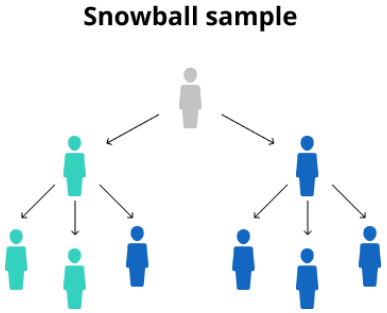
Image from Canadian Geographic representing Indigenous Peoples in Canada, First Nation, Inuit and Metis.
https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/

1.7 Environmental Scan of Urban Indigenous Services in Halton Region, Indigenous Heritage Cultural Centre – Grandmother's Voice Grant

To develop a greater understanding of the Indigenous services landscape in the Halton Region and fulfill the requirements of the Heritage Canada grant; Ska:na, in partnership with Grandmother's Voice (GV) approached Mary Medcalf, Research Consultant, to discuss the need for an environmental scan to better understand the extent and nature of services for Indigenous Peoples in the Halton Region.

Information gathered by the Research Consultant could subsequently be used to guide the initial transformation to timely, accessible, and culturally relevant support for urban Indigenous Peoples as well as undertake a process to create a respectful, inclusive community for Indigenous Peoples to live, work and heal.

In October 2022 the Research Consultant met with representatives of both organizations to propose a process to undertake this qualitative research. Cheryl Taggart joined Mary Medcalf to assist with the environmental scan. A decision was made to use the snowball sampling method to recruit research participants, beginning with members of GV. Snowball sampling or chain-referral sampling is defined as a non-probability sampling technique in which the samples have traits that are rare to find. This is a sampling technique, in which existing subjects provide referrals to recruit samples required for a research study. The nature of snowball sampling is such, that it cannot be considered for a representative sample or in that case for statistical studies. However, this sampling technique can be extensively used for conducting qualitative research. https://www.questionpro.com/blog/snowball-



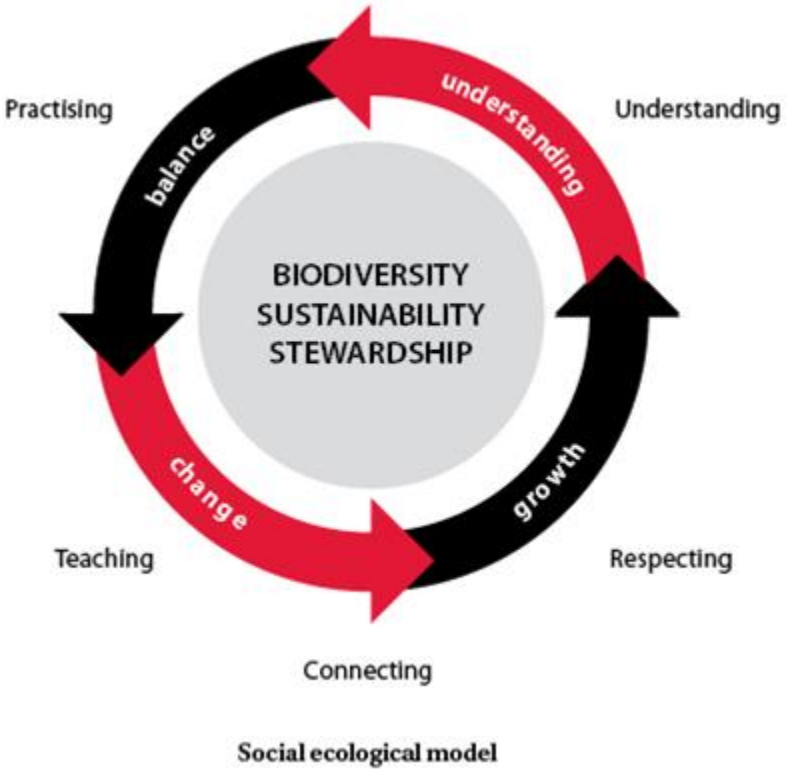
Once the data was gathered, the Research Consultants used thematic analysis, a method for analyzing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns (Braun and Clarke 2006).

2. Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Teachings

All programing, infrastructure, services and supports must be anchored in Indigenous knowledge, beliefs and values. To truly understand Indigenous ways of being, this section of the report includes a variety of Indigenous teachings. Results from the environmental scan and subsequent recommendations should be read within the context of these important teachings. All community actions should be guided by Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous wisdom.

"Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing are holistic and based on local conditions which reflect the inter-relationships between people, animals, plants, and everything that exists in the ecosystem – including those things seen and unseen" –

Chiefs of Ontario, 2012.



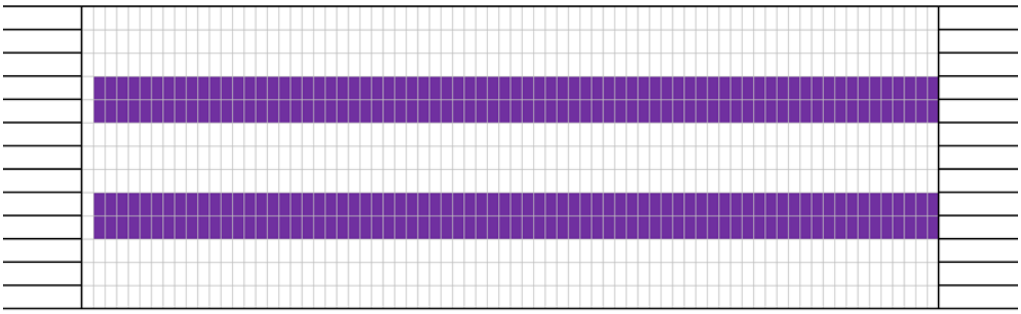
Social ecological model

The model above was designed by Brown and Brown (2009) to illustrate the circular process of understanding the world around us, sharing this understanding, and contributing to the knowledge and health of all by cultivating universal stewardship to promote biodiversity and sustainability.

2.1 Two Row Wampum Treaty Belt

Central to the transformation of services toward Indigenous ways of knowing and being, is the Two Row Wampum Belt. The Two Row Wampum belt is the symbolic record of

the first agreement between Europeans and American Indian Nations on Turtle Island/North America. John Borrows, an Indigenous legal scholar and the author of *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*, describes the physical nature of the Two Row Wampum as follows: "The belt consists of two rows of purple wampum beads on a white background. Three rows of white beads symbolizing peace, friendship, and respect separate the two purple rows. The two purple rows symbolize two paths or two vessels travelling down the same river. One row symbolizes the Haudenosaunee people with their law and customs, while the other row symbolizes European laws and customs. As nations move together side-by-side on the River of Life, they are to avoid overlapping or interfering with one another." *https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/a-short-introduction-to-the-two-row-wampum*



A SFLC representation of the Two Row Wampum Treaty Belt

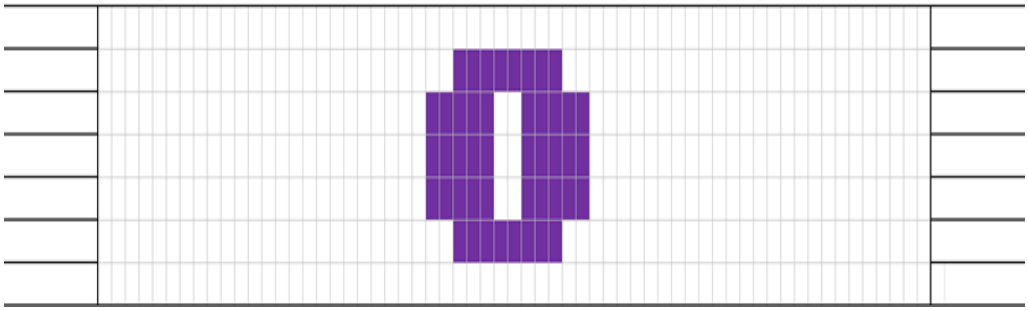
"We will not be like Father and Son, but like Brothers. [Our treaties] symbolize two paths or two vessels, travelling down the same river together. One, a birchbark canoe, will be for the Indian People, their laws, their customs, and their ways. The other, a ship, will be for the white people and their laws, their customs, and their ways. We shall each travel the river together, side by side, but in our own boat. Neither of us will make compulsory laws nor interfere in the internal affairs of the other. Neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel." (Ray Fadden, Kanien'kehá:ka Historian)

2.2 One Dish One Spoon Wampum Treaty Belt

A second central teaching which frames the context for transformation in the Halton Region is the One Dish One Spoon Wampum between the Anishinaabe Three Fires Confederacy and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The One Dish One Spoon Wampum Treaty is the most well-known international 'one-dish alliances'. The One Dish One Spoon Wampum is a treaty (agreement/promise) between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee prior to European contact. Having open and peaceful hunting grounds were necessary in the survival of all the people - this treaty strengthened a mutual respect for sharing.

The teachings of the agreement are that **the earth is one dish that provides for us all, and that we need to live healthy lives**. Nation leaders should eat from this

common dish, sharing one spoon and only taking what each one needs. There are inherent responsibilities in sharing land, food and resources while taking only what you need ensuring there will always be something for others and for future that generations.
https://futurecitiescanada.ca/portal/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/02/fcc-civic-indigenous-tool3-teaching-twodishonespoon.pdf
https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/a-dish-with-one-spoon



A SFLC representation of the One Dish One Spoon Wampum Treaty Belt

The Dish is the purple design in the middle, it represents ‘Sharing & Respect’. The white design inside of the purple dish is the one spoon that represents ‘Mindfulness & Peace’.

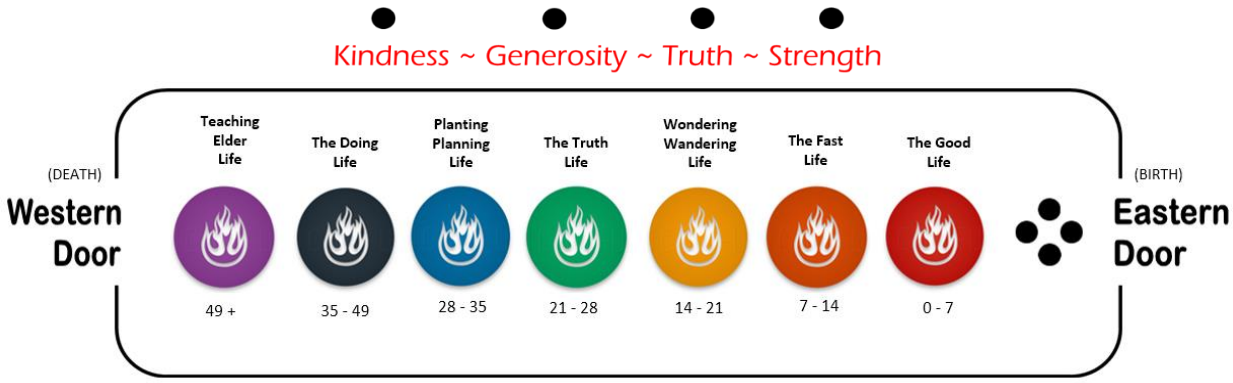
The One Dish One Spoon teaching is a reminder to both, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, that we should take no more than what we need, and to always be mindful of the needs of others.

2.3 Mino Bimaadziwin, The 7-Stages of Living the Good Life in Balance

Mino-Bimaadziwin is an Anishinabek worldview, meaning “living the good life in balance”. Some of these teachings were given to Ska:na Family Learning Centre by Gertie Beaucage, “Zhawanobinaisseekwe”. Zhawanobinaisseekwe is an Elder and Knowledge Keeper from Nipissing First Nation. She is a member of the Makwa dodem - Bear clan and a Niswe Midewiwin - 3rd degree Midewiwin Traditional Knowledge Keeper.

Zhawanobinaisseekwe shared that **everyone receives four gifts before they are born**: **Kindness, Truth, Generosity and Strength/Belief**. Parents receive the gift of a child and everyone in the community also receives the child as a gift. There is a sacred bond between children and parents and if a child cannot stay with their parents, others have full responsibility to teach *Mino-Bimaadziwin* regardless of their relationship to the child. It will be imperative that mainstream organizations understand and embrace *Mino-Bimaadziwin* as a framework for providing support to Indigenous Peoples.

Figure 6: The 7-Stages of Living the Good Life in Balance



The 7-Stages of Living the Good Life in Balance

The Good Life (Birth to age 7)

After birth, the first seven years is the Good Life. During these first seven years, there usually are Elders, grandmothers, and grandfathers around who support parents in providing for all the needs of the child. This marks a very important time in child development. Because this stage is so important, the family is often supported by the extended family with mothers and fathers being supported by their mothers and their fathers. Through their unconditional love and discipline, the child comes to know what life all is about. They become strong and confident. These teachings begin early in life.

The Fast Life (Ages 7 to 14)

This is when the child starts preparing for their 4-day vision quest at the time of puberty. It is a time of celebrating the transition into adulthood. The men look after the boys during their vision quest and the women look after the girls during their berry fast. These rites of passage ceremonies help to nurture confidence and build healthy self-esteem. As young people learn about the changes that are happening within, they also learn about their roles and responsibilities as men and women. After each of their respective rites of passage, boys are re-introduced to the circle as young men and girls as young women.

The Wandering/Wondering Life (Ages 15 to 21)

This is a time when young people begin to ask questions and challenge ideals and concepts put before them. As they strive to find themselves, this is also known as the Wandering Years. In their travels young people begin to find their teachers and to gain new experiences. Youth begin to question their life's purpose. The Wandering phase is also called the Wondering phase, as that is what happens when they make decisions and consider consequences. For example, they may consider, "I wonder if I did this what would happen? It is a time for testing limits and discovering the consequences of behaviours and choices that shape their character.

The Truth Life (Ages 21 to 28)

After the Wandering/Wondering life, Elders, teachers, and mentors guide young people to the next phase. During this time, they find their true self, gifts, and strengths. They develop their own concepts of life, beliefs, and value systems. Young people question what their parents taught them and seek information from other sources to verify what they learned to be true. They become the teacher to their children.

The Planting/Planning Life (28 to 35 years)

Next is the Planting or Planning stage. During this time in life, they begin to nurture the seeds planted throughout their life thus far.

The Doing Life (35 to 49 years)

The Doing stage is where they practice all those things that they have learned on this life's journey. This is the time to do their work, a time to follow through with the Creator's plans for them and fulfill the purpose they were given before they came to the world.

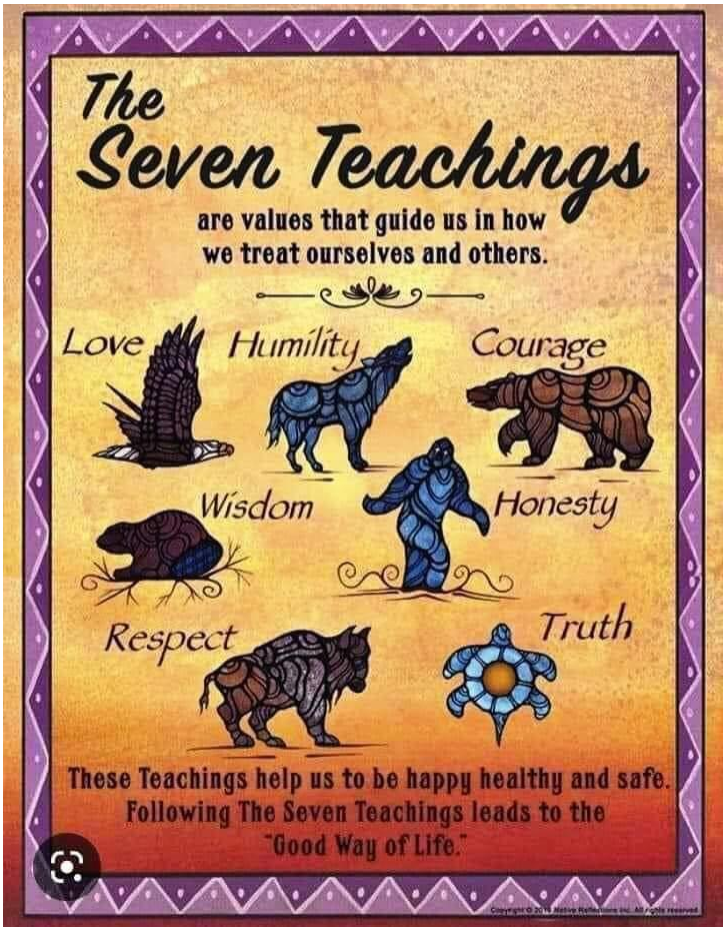
The Teaching/Elder/Power Life (Age 49 and onwards)

The Elder stage begins at 49. This is the giving-back stage where they gain family, clan, and community responsibilities. When they become an Elder, they come back and teach the young ones and continue the circle of teaching by passing on the knowledge to younger generations.

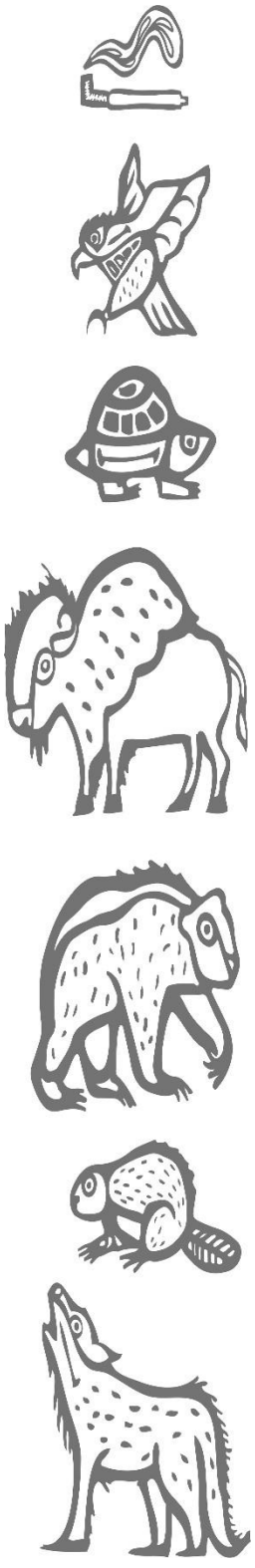
Elder sharing knowledge with Youth. Photo by Rupert Mackie
https://www.concordia.ca/cunews/main/stories/2019/11/19/concordia-professor-uses-land-based-learning-to-connect-indigenous-youth-to-cultural-teachings.html

2.4 The 7-Grandfather Teachings

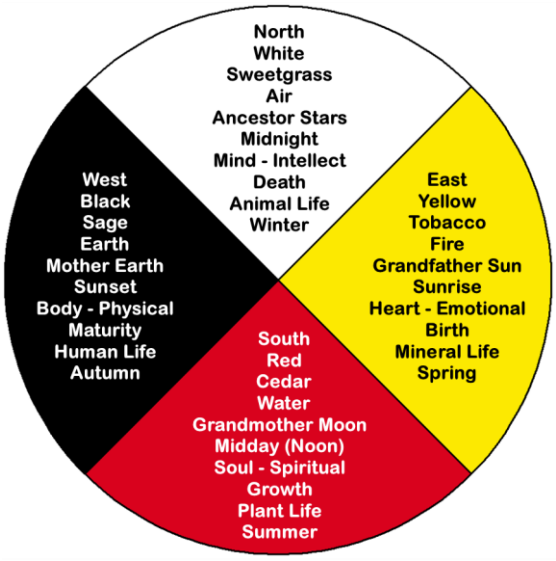
The first Elder was given these gifts of knowledge by the **Seven Grandfathers**. These gifts were to help the people live a good life and to respect the Creator, the earth and each other. The Seven Grandfathers told the First Elder that "Each of these teachings must be used with the rest; you cannot have **wisdom** without **love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth**…to leave one out is to embrace the opposite of that teaching. If one of these gifts is not used with the others, we will not be in balance. We must remember these teachings, practice them, and teach them to our children".



The Seven Grandfather Teachings - Love, humility, courage, wisdom, honesty, respect, truth .https://www.inspiringyoungminds.ca/fnmi-resources/classroom-decorations/



2.5 The Medicine Wheel Teachings



The Medicine Wheel represents all of creation, harmony, and connections. The medicine wheel reminds us that we need to **balance all four aspects of our being** – the **spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental aspects**. It is considered a major symbol of peaceful interaction on Earth (all races of people, the directions, all the cycles of nature, day and night, seasons, moons, life cycles, and orbits of the moon and planets).

2.6 Four Sacred Medicines

Indigenous Peoples were gifted four medicines, and together they are referred to as the four sacred medicines. The four sacred medicines can be used in everyday life and in ceremonies. Each have a different purpose:

Tobacco (Semma) - is used in a smudge and as an offering for everything and in every ceremony. Traditional tobacco was given to communicate with the spirit world. When we make an offering of tobacco, we communicate our thoughts and feelings through the tobacco as we pray for ourselves, our family, relatives and others.

Cedar (Giizhgaandak) - is used in a smudge to purify your surroundings and makes a medicinal tea. When cedar is put in the fire with tobacco, it crackles. When it does this, it is calling the attention of the spirits to the offering that is being made.

Sage (Mshkodewashk) - is used in a smudge to prepare people for ceremonies, teachings and meetings. Sage is used for releasing what is troubling the mind and for removing negative energy.

Sweetgrass (Wiingashk) - is the sacred hair of Mother Earth. Its sweet aroma reminds people of the gentleness, love and kindness she has for the people. It gains strength when braided.

https://aht.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/FourSacredMedicines.pdf

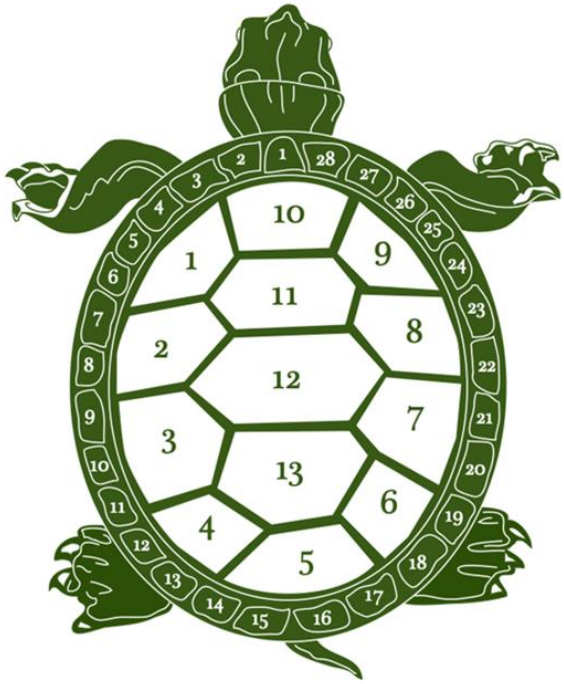
2.7 Seven Generations

The **Seven Generations** is based on an ancient **Haudenosaunee philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future**. This principle states that we should make decisions about how we live today based on how our decisions will impact the future seven generations.

In Indigenous culture, **Elders** are highly respected community members who provide teachings and wisdom not only to their immediate community but in many cases to surrounding communities as well. “Elders are traditionally highly regarded as teachers, philosophers, linguists, historians, healers, judges and counselors (Gerlach, 2008, as cited in Gerlach et al., 2008). The importance of Elders in early childhood cannot be overemphasized. Elders should be given opportunities to share their cultural knowledge and wisdom and to provide opportunities for educators to teach children about what protocols to be followed when Elders are present.

2.8 Thirteen Grandmother Moon Teachings

In Indigenous culture, the moon symbolizes tranquility, guidance, protector.
It represents the creation of Turtle Island also known as the continent of North America, on turtle's back or more accurately the “earth grasper”, from our creation story.



January – Mnido Giizis (Spirit Moon)
The first moon of Creation is Spirit Moon. Sprit Moon manifests through the Northern Lights. It honours the silence and realizes our place within all of Great Mystery’s creatures.

February – Mkwa Giizis (Bear Moon)
The second moon of Creation is Bear Moon. We honour the vision quest that begins in the fall. During this time, we discover how to see beyond reality and to communicate through energy rather than sound.

March – Ziissbaakdoke Giizas (Sugar Moon)

The third moon of Creation is Sugar Moon. As the maple sap begins to run, we learn of one of the main medicines given to the Anishinaabe which balances our blood and heals us. During this time, we are encouraged to balance our lives as we would our blood sugar levels.

April – Namebine Giizis (Sucker Moon)

The fourth moon of Creation is Sucker Moon to illustrate when the sucker goes to the Spirit World in order to receive cleansing techniques for this world. When it returns to this realm, it purifies a path for the Spirits and cleanses all our water beings. During this time, we can learn to become healed healers.

Image of Full Moon
Source: https://muskratmagazine.com/ojibwe-moons/

May – Waawaaskone Giizis (Flower Moon)

The fifth moon of Creation is Flower Moon when plants display their Spirit sides for all the world to see. This life-giving energy is one of the most powerful healing medicines on Mother Earth. During this moon we are encouraged to explore our Spiritual essences.

June – Ode'miin giizis (Strawberry Moon)

The sixth moon of Creation is Strawberry Moon. The strawberry's medicine is reconciliation. It was during this moon cycle that communities usually held their annual feasts, welcoming everyone home, regardless of their differences over the past year, letting go of judgment and/or self-righteousness.

July – Mskomini Giizis (Raspberry Moon)

The seventh moon of Creation is Raspberry Moon, when great changes begin. By learning gentleness and kindness, we may pass through the thorns of its brush and harvest its fruit, as we gain knowledge that will help in raising our families.

August – Datkaagmin (Thimbleberry Moon)

The eighth moon of Creation is Thimbleberry Moon (Blackberry Moon). We honour the thimbleberry which produces an abundance of fruit once every three years. The thimbleberry is one of the first plants put on Mother Earth. Its purpose is to protect the sacred circle of life by allowing us to recognize and understand the teachings that come from the Spirit World.

September – Mdaamiin Giizis (Corn Moon)
The ninth moon of Creation is the Corn Moon during which time we learn about the cycle of life. Each cob of corn has 13 rows of multicoloured seeds which represent all the spirits waiting to begin their Earth Walk. These will be the future generations for whom we must prepare.

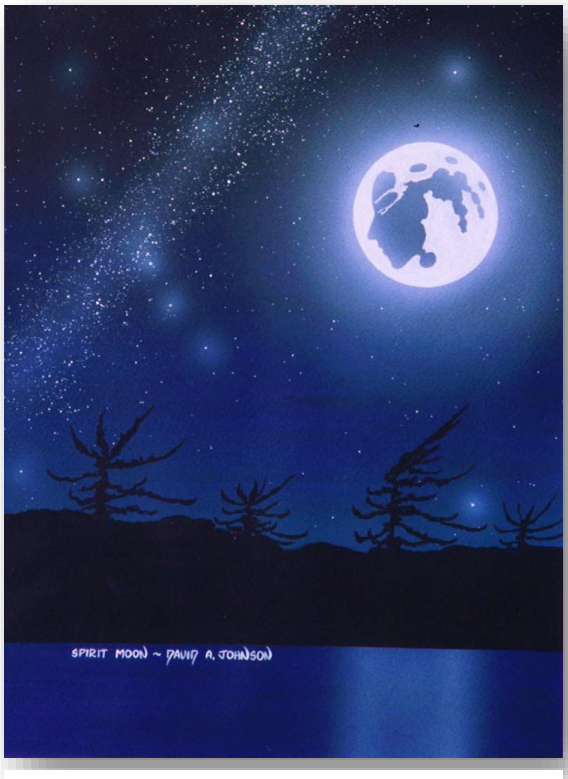
October – Biinaakwe Giizis (Falling Leaves Moon)
The 10th moon of Creation is the Falling Leaves Moon, a time when Mother Earth is honoured with the grandest of colours. As all of Creation makes their offerings to her, we become aware of all the miracles of Creation before us, and our spiritual energies are once again awakened.

November - Mshkawji Giizis (Freezing Moon)
The 11th moon of Creation is the Freezing Moon. At this time, the Star Nation is closest to us. As every creature prepares for the coming fasting grounds, we are reminded to prepare ourselves for our spiritual path by learning the sacred teachings and songs that will sustain us.

December – Mnidoons Giizis Oonhg (Little Spirit Moon)
The 12th moon of Creation is the Little Spirit Moon which represents a time of healing. By receiving visions of the spirits and good health, we walk the Red Road with purest intentions. We share this most positive energy with our families and friends for the good of all.

Blue Moon – Mnidoons Giizis (Big Spirit Moon)
The 13th moon of Creation is Big Spirit Moon. Its purpose is to purify us, and to heal all of Creation, a process which may take a three-month long spiritual journey. During this time, we receive instructions on the healing powers of the universe and transform into our own vision of the truth.

The 13 Grandmother Moon teachings are from "Kinoomaadiewinan Anishinabek Bimaadinzinwin, Book Two. Author Arlene Berry.



Spirit Moon, David A. Johnson
https://www.trentu.ca/library/archives/artcollection/2001.16 3.1

3. Sources of Information and Community Engagement

The information contained in this report was obtained from the following sources:

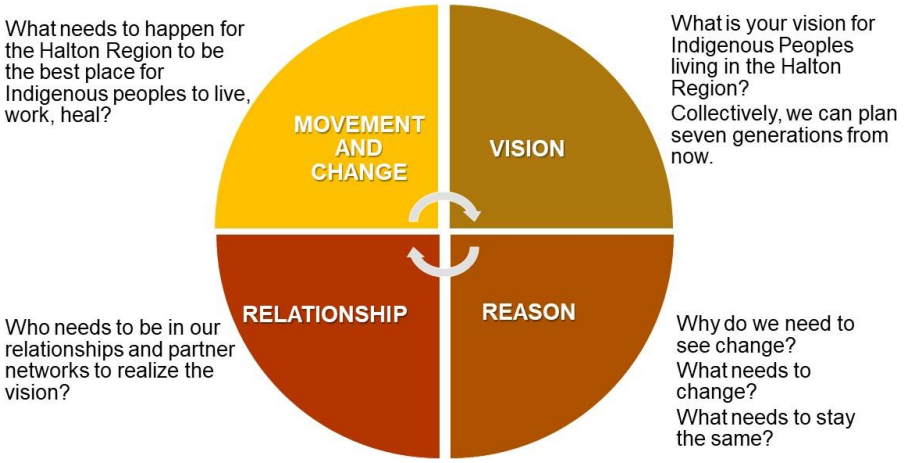
1. Statistics Canada (2021)
2. Literature/research
    a. Trauma-informed organizational change
    b. Resources for organizational change
    c. Recruitment, hiring, and retention in workplaces.
3. Foundational Indigenous teachings Indigenous community development
   Community Voices
    a. Grandmother's Voice
        i. November 7, 2022; Via Zoom; nine (9) participants
    b. Halton Region Urban Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Voices
        ii. November 21, 2022 (in-person, seventeen (17) participants)
    c. Halton Region Service Providers Voices and Insight
        iii. December 12, 2022; (in-person, nineteen registered (19) participants)
    d. Community Gathering for Feedback
        iv. February 6, 2023; In-person; fifty-seven (57) participants
        v. February 6, 2023; Via Zoom; thirty-eight (38) participants
4. Written responses from community members who could not attend meetings but wished to take part: one participant
5. Individual interviews with representatives of nine organizations in Halton Region
6. Inventory of Services for Urban Indigenous Peoples in the Halton Region: eighteen responses (18)

NOTE: Some participants attended more than one meeting.

The inquiry was guided by a Visioning Circle, gifted to Mary Medcalf, Research Consultant by Grandmother Gertie Beaucage, "Zhawanobinaisseekwe" from Nipissing First Nation. The Visioning Circle can be adapted to facilitate community discussions, while respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Figures 7 - 11 show how the Visioning Circle guided the flow of the conversations and illustrate movement through the circle, with additional focused questions.

Figure 7: Guiding Questions to Inform the Environmental Scan



In addition to the questions above, the following questions were asked:

Vision

Imagine a time in the future when people look to our community as an exceptional example of an inclusive, respectful, and culturally healing community for Indigenous Peoples. What are you most proud of? What has the community accomplished? What are the areas where you feel more engagement and support could have the most impact on Indigenous children, families and individuals?

Reason

What has contributed to building successful relationships with the Indigenous community in Halton Region? Why do we need to see change? What needs to change? What needs to stay the same?

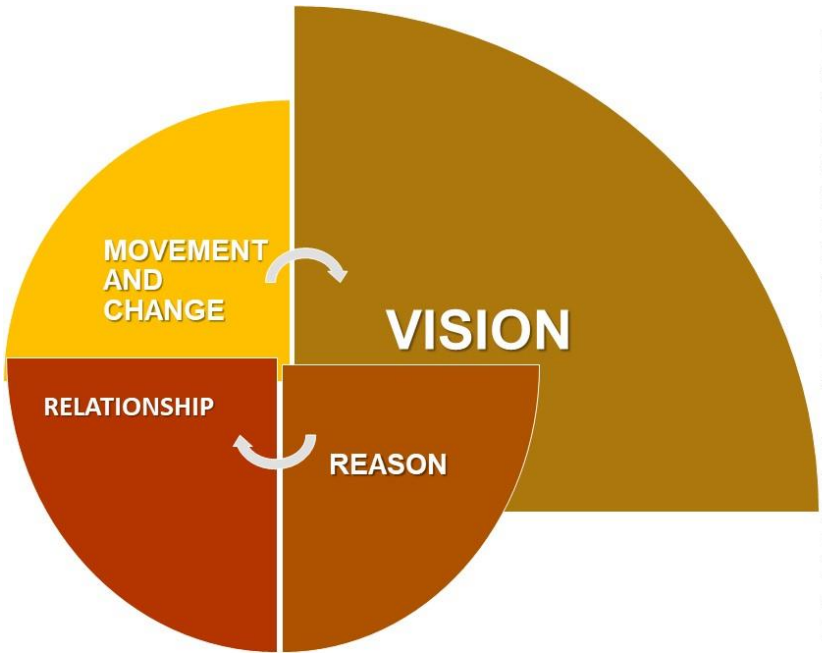
Relationship

Who needs to be in our relationships and partner networks to realize the vision? Is your agency engaged with the Indigenous community in the Halton Region? If so, in what capacity? Are there established community networks (relationships, partners) in the Halton Region and if so, is your agency connected to them?

Movement and Change

What needs to happen for the Halton Region to be the best place for Indigenous Peoples to live, work and heal? If your agency is not connected, would you like to be involved in a community network focused on engaging with Indigenous communities, in collaboration with others?

Figure 8: Vision

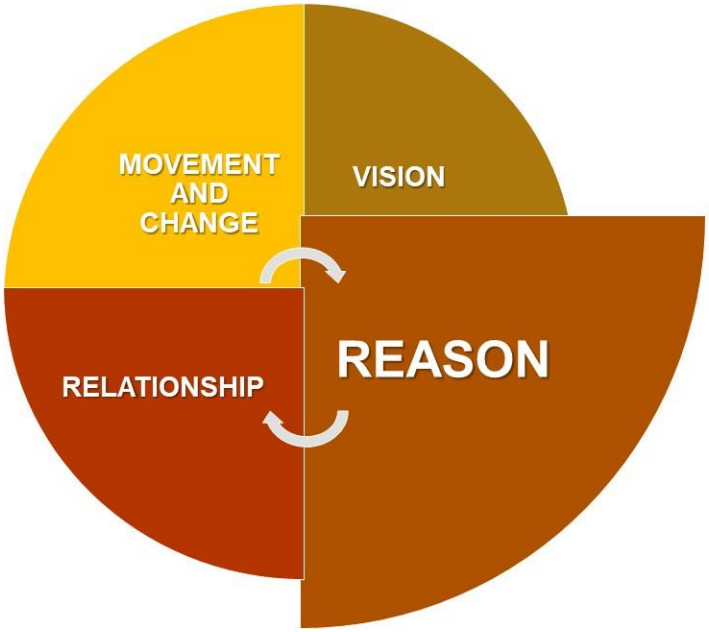


Imagine a time in the future when people look to our community as an exceptional example of an inclusive, respectful, and culturally healing community for Indigenous Peoples.

What are you most proud of? What has the community accomplished?

What are the areas where you feel more engagement and support could have the most impact on Indigenous children, families and individuals?

Figure 9: Reason



What has contributed to building successful relationships with the urban Indigenous community in Halton Region?

Why do we need to see change? What needs to change? What needs to stay the same?

Figure 10: Relationship

Who needs to be in our relationships and partner networks to realize the vision?

Is your agency engaged with the Indigenous community in the urban Halton Region? If so, in what capacity?

Are there established community networks (relationships, partners) in the Halton Region and if so, is your agency connected to them?

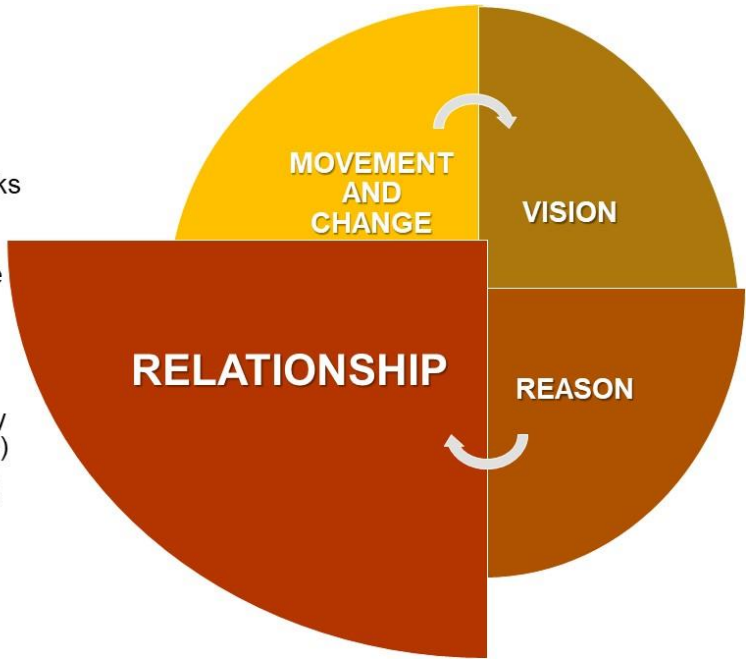
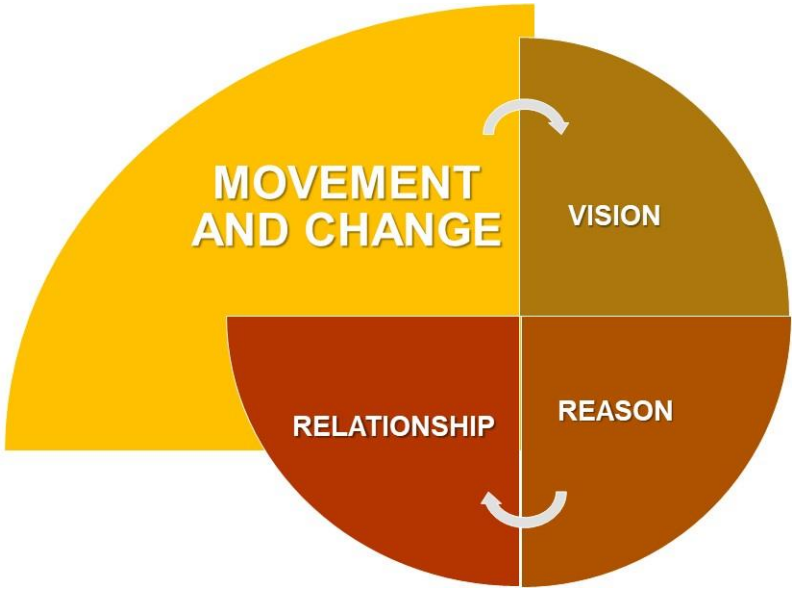


Figure 11: Movement and Change

What needs to happen for the Halton Region to be the best place for urban Indigenous Peoples to live, work and heal?

If your agency is not connected, would you like to be involved in a community network focused on engaging with Indigenous communities, in collaboration with others?



4. Results of the Environmental Scan

4.1 Inventory of Services in Halton Region

All service agency participants were asked to complete a working sheet to identify the following:

- Organization Name
- Geographic Areas Served (Halton, Halton Hills, Oakville, Milton, Burlington)
- Population Served (Community, Families, Adults, Youth, Children, Other)
- "Mainstream" Services Provided (Adult Services, Cultural, Child Services, Counselling, Advocacy, Education, Employment, Family Services, Food Security, Health Care, Housing, Income, Legal, Recreation, Referral, Transportation, Other)
- Indigenous Specific Services Provided (Adult Services, Cultural, Child Services, Counselling, Advocacy, Education, Employment, Family Services, Food Security, Health Care, Housing, Income, Legal, Recreation, Referral, Transportation, Other)

The worksheet was completed by those service agency participants who attended the December 12, 2022, community gathering or took part in an individual interview. Thirty (30) agency participants returned eighteen (18) worksheets. In one case, two forms were completed by one agency, the responses matched so the information was merged, reducing the number of responses to seventeen (17). One form was returned post individual interview, for a total of eighteen (18) responses.

This exercise was not intended to yield an exhaustive list of services, but rather to provide a "glimpse" of what is offered in Halton Region, specifically for urban Indigenous Peoples. **The scan of services showed limited support services for Indigenous Peoples. There are a few programs and initiatives that are time-limited with *"some Indigenous content*", and some organizations offer education and training to their staff.** Since 2021, there have been local, Indigenous-led pop up events honouring Indigenous culture in the Halton Region specifically during June and on September 30.

It is difficult to determine if Indigenous specific support and acknowledgement is embedded in the organizations that participated in the scan. Given the limitations of this aspect of the scan, further exploration will undoubtedly reveal a wider network of services offered in the Halton Region specific to Indigenous Peoples.

The Research Consultants recognize that the Inventory of services was created from a non-Indigenous construct, thus using language and form that does not "fit with Indigenous worldviews". In 2017 Nipissing University undertook a project entitled "Strengthening Campus Mental Health Supports: Barrier Identification and Rectification in Supporting Aboriginal University Students". The name of the project was shortly

thereafter changed to “Dibaadan” by a respected Elder, Muriel Sawyer, from Nipissing First Nation.

Sawyer explored appropriate terminology to be used within Dibaadan. For example, in mainstream society, the term ‘mental health’ is used to describe a positive emotional and psychological wellbeing; in contrast, the Medicine Wheel reinforces balance between emotional, physical, spiritual and mental self – a more holistic approach – equally caring for each area to live a good life, “mino-biimaadzwin”.

A key component which arose from this was the impact language has on individuals, focusing on the concern about the stigma attached to mental illness and potentially negative impacts this may have on students participating in the project. (Student Counselling Services. (2017). Dibaadan, “Speak the Truth, Speak from your Heart”. Nipissing University. Student Development and Services.)

If the community conducts another survey of Indigenous-specific services, the Inventory of Services in Halton Region, the form should be revised to reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

4.2 Visioning Circle

Of the 170 responses to the cumulative discussion, the majority of responses (65) were catalogued as "visioning", while 63 represented "reasons" and 29 were in response to Movement/Change. The lowest number of responses (13) were located in the "relationships" section. Readjustment to more appropriate Visioning Circle locations produced the following number of responses: Visioning: 80; Reasons: 53; Relationship: 12; and Movement & Change: 25.

4.3 Vision

Participants were asked to imagine a time in the future when people looked to the Halton Region as an exceptional example of an inclusive, respectful, and culturally healing community for Indigenous Peoples. What would participants be most proud of? What has the community accomplished?

Vision Statements are broadly divided into two major categories: **culture and space** (including governance). Visioning included references to accessibility of space and culture to Indigenous Peoples. For the purposes of this report, these areas of focus have been delineated; however, in conversations during the data gathering phase, participants emphasized the symbiotic nature of space and culture which exists and thrives in inseparable co-relation.

Figure 12: Vision - Emerging Themes, Culture and Space

4.3.1 Easily Accessible Physical Space to Allow for Connection to the Land

Vision statements regarding space largely fell into two categories: 1) **physical/geographic space**; and 2) **political space**, i.e., "a place at the table", for decision making. Of note, partnering with allies was suggested but the larger emphasis was on the need for Indigenous Peoples to take ownership and responsibility for "creating our own identity".

Vision statements regarding accessibility contained the practical matters of transportation to Indigenous events/spaces in the Halton Region; other evidence of accessibility was measured by the willingness of the political system to bring Indigenous Peoples to political tables to guide the community change process.

Physical space was described as gathering places, ceremonial spaces for sweat lodges, sacred fires; welcoming spaces that allow Indigenous Peoples to make connections with one another; spaces and places for healing. A space that facilitates ability to connect with the land, water, medicines and future generations.

Political space, a place at the table, is the promotion of land-based programming created, guided, delivered by Indigenous Peoples and creating policies regarding access to space without barriers. This requires politicians to listen to what Indigenous Peoples need/want, not an imposed service without consultation. Indigenous Peoples must actively participate in, and guide political systems (health, justice, social services, education) as equal partners.

4.3.2. Consistent Cultural Learning and Expression Opportunities

Vision statements regarding culture emerged with two themes: 1. **Visible** cultural representations in the community: *"Culture needs to be seen first."*; and 2. **Embedded** cultural expression of inclusion within the political system as well as within service agencies.

As stated by participants, key elements of cultural learning and expression opportunities include:

- Early age Indigenous education centres
- Health systems that share Indigenous traditional medicines without discrimination
- Taking steps to welcome all urban Indigenous voices in the Halton Region
- Education opportunities that include language acquisition
- Joint public displays of traditional and recent Indigenous symbols
- Community awareness that "understands and makes space" for Indigenous ways of being
- Language and terminology that is respectful and understood across groups
- Recognition that "culture is not a service - it is a way of being"
- Land-based healing which is viewed as legitimate by healthcare professionals
- Cultural sensitivity training

4.4 Reason

Participants were asked what has contributed to building successful relationships with the urban Indigenous Peoples in Halton Region? Why do we need to see change? What needs to change? What needs to stay the same?

The most frequently stated reasons for change are the need for **space** and **culture** (visible and embedded). As noted in the Vision, there is a need for physical space with emphasis on ensuring a safe place in the urban environment. The responses involving the concept of culture overall reflected the "absence of" rather than changes or modifications required to the status quo. A third theme is a lack of awareness, **education** and knowledge of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, especially within the municipalities.

Figure 13: Reason Emerging Themes

The discussion prompted reflection on community awareness of Indigeneity but did not identify current strong and/or successful relationships between urban Indigenous Peoples in Halton Region and the political bodies, institutional structures or the community at large.

4.4.1 Space

Participants identified the need for Friendship Centres/Wellness Hubs or similar gathering and healing places. These were seen as providing the necessary venues for urban Indigenous Peoples to feel "*safe*" and "*proud*," with opportunities to access traditional healing and language acquisition. Participants expressed the need for all municipalities to "*offer spaces and hubs*" as part of their political undertakings.

4.4.2 Culture

The need for cultural awareness was expressed as the need for policy and procedural change as well as physical structures and areas that actively promote Indigeneity. This included Indigenous displays in public spaces, particularly in municipal buildings as one way to raise awareness that "*we are here*". The groups reiterated that there are no land-based Indigenous-led centres that promote Indigenous values and gathering places for sacred fires, sweat lodges, languages and traditional medicines. There may be opportunities to create "*Indigenous leadership centres or circles*" as a path to more visibility and to also help communities proactively embed Indigenous values in organizations.

The majority of participants noted that there are few Indigenous voices at planning tables; this was described as not only having a seat at community tables, but "*to be there with equality*". Additionally, there is need for political change in policy and hiring practices that include Indigenous ways of knowing and being. This requires movement to "*beyond acceptance to inclusion as the norm*". " This requires a transformation toward recognizing that "*Indigenous is not just another culture within the broader Canadian society*".

4.4.3 Awareness

Participants noted that there is lack of understanding in agencies, municipalities, and the overall community of the history and teachings of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Non-Indigenous community members need broader understanding of treaties and their corresponding responsibilities.

4.5 Relationship

The discussion of relationship primarily focused on who needs to be in relationships and partner networks to realize the vision? Service agency participants were asked whether their agencies/organizations were engaged with the Indigenous community in the urban Halton Region? If so, in what capacity? Are there established community networks (relationships, partners) in Halton Region and if so, is your agency connected to them?

Relationship responses were limited but reflected the themes of space and culture. See Figure 14.

Figure 14: Relationship Emerging Themes

Generally, responses referred to relationships with geographic space (land, water, Indigenous community). One reference was made to services and institutional connections (school boards, municipalities, Region, police and healthcare) without any identification of existing networks, agencies, political partners, etc.

Moving those relationships forward are captured in three quotes: "*taking the time to build relationships*"; "*foster connections*"; "*find common ground*".

4.6 Movement and Change

Participants were asked what needs to happen for the Halton Region to be the best place for urban Indigenous Peoples to live, work and heal? While there were fewer responses to this question, three themes were found: 1) **Space**; 2) **Culture** and 3) **Awareness**, with the most frequent responses related to culture. See Figure 15.

Figure 15: Movement and Change Emerging Themes

4.6.1 Space

Space was described as a safe, physical location accessible to urban Indigenous Peoples which facilitates "*getting more people involved socially, including fasting, sweat lodges, medicines and language schools*".

4.6.2 Culture

Examples of embedding Indigenous culture into the Halton Region were once again listed as moving away from the colonial way. "*We need to stop doing it the colonial way--it only works to maintain the status quo, listen to Indigenous voices”*.

4.6.3 Awareness

Participants noted that to promote awareness of urban Indigenous Peoples and the challenges they face, the community needs to "*Keep the conversation going", "Everything starts with conversation but not everyone wants to be engaged in the conversation*". "*Grandmothers' Voice has brought the request and needs to be at the forefront, but more relationship building has to happen*."

Table 1 provides a summary of the themes that emerged from community conversations. The themes are not rank-ordered and demonstrate consistency across all aspects of the Visioning Circle.

Table 1: Summary of Themes

Vision Circle	Space	Culture	Awareness
Vision	✓	✓	
Reason	✓	✓	✓
Relationship	✓	✓	
Movement & Change	✓	✓	✓

5. Creating Movement and Change

5.1 What We Heard in the Environmental Scan

From the beginning stages of the Environmental Scan of Urban Indigenous Services in the Halton Region there has been consistent interest displayed at the institutional and municipal levels. Respondents often represented municipal communities and the Halton Region, and there was representation from educational institutions by board members, trustees, administrators, and school board Indigenous leads.

The municipalities devoted time to the interview process and articulated the desire to be more connected with the Indigenous population in the Halton Region. Most interviewees identified the Calls to Action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a beginning roadmap to changing both perceptions and interactions with Indigenous Peoples. At the same time, these municipal representatives identified their own personal need for education and relationship, missing in past attempts to engage with Indigenous Peoples. The TRC largely guides efforts, but it is recognized that those within municipal leadership are seeking greater depth of education and understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Implementing the Calls to Action is usually complicated by linear colonial thinking; thus, there is need for a consistent strategy that incorporates different ways of knowing. This is not because there is not the willingness to learn, but rather access to learning is often limited and generalized for non-Indigenous communities. Greater knowledge would allow for richer and stronger planning through the “Indigenous lens” and facilitate learning, growing and participation together in community in a respectful and inclusive manner.

The concept of building and growing relationships between urban Indigenous Peoples (individually and collectively) and municipal leadership was emphasized frequently but knowing how and where to begin building was more challenging. There is visioning evident by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, but it does not appear to be a joint vision yet; therefore, attempts for movement/change are not always understood or valued by all parties.

This was also seen within the health care responses: Indigenous ways are not incorporated in meaningful ways into health pathways. Health care providers identified feeling “*lost*” when attempting to provide services, and Indigenous individuals also identified feeling “*lost*” and “*disrespected*”. Providers said that feeling “lost” often

involved not knowing or understanding how to provide care from an Indigenous lens and not receiving direction from the institution that was clear, consistent, or compassionate.

Place emerged very strongly as a theme in all conversations- both the need for land-based Indigenous education and the need for actual, physical space to practice Indigenous ways, (culture/language/medicine) and the strong sense that Indigenous Peoples should have unrestricted access to public lands for the purpose of practicing their culture. Understanding that the relationship with the land is essential to Indigenous well-being was a recurring theme and responses demonstrated a “yearning” for the land. Environmental issues regarding the care of the earth were strong from both non-Indigenous and Indigenous perspectives. The responses demonstrated a two-eyed perspective but displayed a commonality of purpose which can be utilized for mutual caring.

Research of existing programs, cultural events, programs, etc. revealed a larger than expected number of events currently in place or developing throughout the Halton Region. However, this did not align with the narrative provided during community conversations, demonstrating to the Research Consultants there may be a limited amount of interconnectedness and/or communication between both providers/municipalities and urban Indigenous Peoples.

The major narrative in this feedback is the need for:

- A dedicated space for urban Indigenous Peoples to gather, heal and engage in their culture
- Opportunities to express Indigenous culture visible to the community and within organizational protocols, policies and practices (embedded)
- Political action to facilitate respectful and welcoming communities
- Indigenous leadership and voices at all levels of action and planning
- Training and ongoing education for municipal, community organizations and the greater community on Indigenous ways of knowing and teachings
- Strengthened, renewed or new relationships between existing community networks, agencies, and urban Indigenous groups/individuals
- Stable, permanent funding for Indigenous positions within municipalities and agencies
- Transformation of municipal and agency recruitment, hiring and retention practices

These findings mirror those articulated in similar research in Chatham-Kent (2021), Chatham-Kent (2017), Windsor-Essex (2017), Sarnia-Lambton (2017), and Sarnia-Lambton (2015). Over the next several pages, **Table 2** provides a summary of findings from these Ontario communities and illustrates alignment with the Halton Region

environmental scan. It is clear from the table that the issues, challenges, and recommendations raised by the scan are reflective of information solicited from gatherings in other parts of southwestern Ontario.

Table 2: Recommendations for Change in Select Communities

Comparison of Recommendations for Change in Select Communities in Southwestern Ontario	Halton Region	Chatham-Kent	Windsor-Essex	Sarnia-Lambton	Chatham-Kent	Sarnia-Lambton
	E-Scan	E-Scan	Journey Together	Journey Together	Journey Together	Indigenous Working Group
	2023	2021	2017	2017	2017	2015
Create access to health care	X	X			X	X
Program funding to hire Indigenous staff	X	X	X	X	X	X
Stabilize existing services					X	
Economic development		X			X	
Access to transportation	X	X	X	X	X	X
Address service gaps	X	X	X	X	X	X
Secure sustainable funding	X	X	X	X	X	X
Outreach to urban Indigenous Peoples	X	X	X	X	X	X
Individual and systemic advocacy		X	X	X	X	X
Policy changes	X	X	X			
System navigation		X	X	X	X	
Community and provider engagement	X	X	X	X	X	X
Indigenous people control service design and delivery	X			X		
Increased availability of licensed child- care spaces and subsidies			X	X	X	
Mobile child-care services: in home and in organization			X	X		
Early intervention and prevention programs		X	X	X	X	X
Specialized services for children with complex care needs				X	X	

Table 2: Recommendations for Change in Select Communities Continued

Comparison of Recommendations for Change in Select Communities in Southwestern Ontario	Halton Region	Chatham-Kent	Windsor-Essex	Sarnia-Lambton	Chatham-Kent	Sarnia-Lambton
	E-Scan	E-Scan	Journey Together	Journey Together	Journey Together	Indigenous Working Group
	2023	2021	2017	2017	2017	2015
Create pathways for post-secondary education for Indigenous students		X		X	X	X
Develop policies which make it mandatory for non-Indigenous students to take Indigenous studies courses in post-secondary institutions						X
Seek concrete and visible strategies to promote Indigenous practices, including an education, outreach and engagement campaign to other service providers	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide services on and off reserve so that families do not have to leave their homes on reserve to access services.						X
Commit to strengthening families						X
Increase funding to on-reserve schools and services for youth						X
Facilitate closer working relationships with off- and on-reserve service providers	X	X				X

Table 2: Recommendations for Change in Select Communities Continued

Comparison of Recommendations for Change in Select Communities in Southwestern Ontario	Halton Region	Chatham-Kent	Windsor-Essex	Sarnia-Lambton	Chatham-Kent	Sarnia-Lambton
	E-Scan	E-Scan	Journey Together	Journey Together	Journey Together	Indigenous Working Group
	2023	2021	2017	2017	2017	2015
Ensure funding flows directly to organizations on a consistent basis			X	X	X	X
Create an advocacy group to advocate for stable funding for services and assess the funding and eligibility patterns of programs for Indigenous people, the coordination/continuum and geographic location		X				X
Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and asset mapping process to determine the nature, frequency and duration of programs needed (which might include programs for fathers, flexible child-care)						X
Provide place-based services – both rural and urban – with emphasis on creating urban hubs for Indigenous families. Transportation needs to be considered when developing services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ensure all children have access to the internet and when necessary, develop fund raising opportunities to ensure children have computers, iPad, etc.						X

Table 2: Recommendations for Change in Select Communities Continued

Comparison of Recommendations for Change in Select Communities in Southwestern Ontario	Halton Region	Chatham-Kent	Windsor-Essex	Sarnia-Lambton	Chatham-Kent	Sarnia-Lambton
	E-Scan	E-Scan	Journey Together	Journey Together	Journey Together	Indigenous Working Group
	2023	2021	2017	2017	2017	2015
Ensure that services are provided for older children, particularly to fill the service gap for children and families who are between early child-care and elementary school, to stabilize gains made in the education system	X					X
Organization administrations must recognize the need for and then create an internal path/political will to find ways to support urban Indigenous Peoples within the framework of Indigenous ways of knowing and teachings, understanding reconciliation efforts and their place as “learners”	X	X	X	X	X	X
Experienced community development is needed to move from problem-observation to meaningful actions	X	X				
Funding envelopes should differentiate between First Nations and Urban Indigenous support and must reflect the needs in the community		X				

Table 2: Recommendations for Change in Select Communities Continued

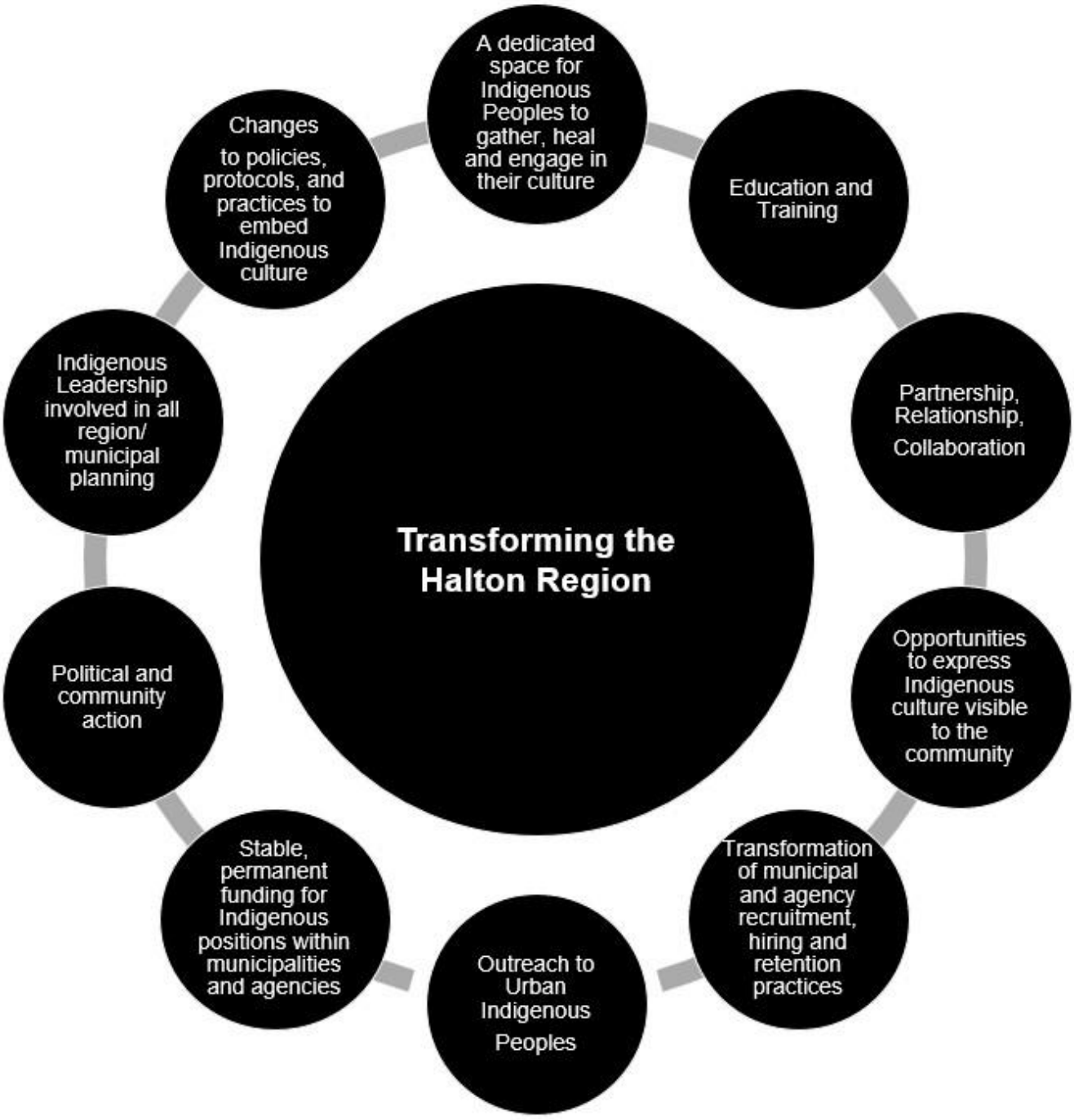
Comparison of Recommendations for Change in Select Communities in Southwestern Ontario	Halton Region	Chatham-Kent	Windsor-Essex	Sarnia-Lambton	Chatham-Kent	Sarnia-Lambton
	E-Scan	E-Scan	Journey Together	Journey Together	Journey Together	Indigenous Working Group
	2023	2021	2017	2017	2017	2015
System change is required rather than changing the individual to "fit" within the system	X	X	X	X	X	X
There needs to be intentional change of system structure to incorporate a parallel goal with urban Indigenous Peoples	X	X				
Referrals to SFLC should not eliminate the need for organizations to find a sustainable solution within their own organization		X				
Indigenous Peoples must be involved in all levels of planning for service delivery	X	X	X	X	X	X
The Indigenous Network should act on the considerable support from mainstream organizations to expand and strengthen the network of service organizations in Chatham-Kent		X				
The Ally journey requires education and knowledge-building with non-Indigenous individuals who will have a continuous impact on the outcome of any community initiative	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 2: Recommendations for Change in Select Continued

Comparison of Recommendations for Change in Select Communities in Southwestern Ontario	Halton Region	Chatham-Kent	Windsor-Essex	Sarnia-Lambton	Chatham-Kent	Sarnia-Lambton
	E-Scan	E-Scan	Journey Together	Journey Together	Journey Together	Indigenous Working Group
	2023	2021	2017	2017	2017	2015
In partnership with the Indigenous Network, Ska:na Family Learning Centre should take a lead role to provide education about, and model, Indigenous ways of knowing and teachings		X				
Resources should be leveraged to facilitate community action pathways to transform support services for urban Indigenous Peoples	X	X				
A dedicated space for Indigenous Peoples to gather, heal and engage in their culture	X					
Transformation of municipal and agency recruitment, hiring and retention practices	X					
Opportunities to express Indigenous culture visible to the community	X					

Figure 16 provides a summary of the main recommendations from the Halton Region to facilitate community transformation for urban Indigenous Peoples.

Figure 16: Transforming the Halton Region



Of note, all individuals and organizations interviewed for this environmental scan expressed a strong desire to be engaged with any initiatives to support urban Indigenous Peoples, to participate in training and education and, to participate in transforming the Halton Region toward Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Having made these commitments, the majority of participants noted that there is not a coordinated, approved (by urban Indigenous Peoples) approach to furthering a vision for the Halton Region. How are connections made? Who needs to be in the relationships? Who should lead collaborative efforts? How does the Halton Region ensure Indigenous leadership and local voices are engaged in an authentic and meaningful way?

5.2 Selected Questions Arising from the Environmental Scan

The federal commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 94 Calls to Action has prompted all levels of government to turn their attention to implementing those recommendations. As a result, there is a raised awareness and, within the municipal and regional government, an intention to be more inclusive of Indigenous cultures and to listen to Indigenous voices while learning and making space

1. How can Indigenous rights and cultural ways of being be included in the day-to-day operations of municipal and regional policies/procedures to create access for Indigenous Peoples and understanding for non-Indigenous community members.
2. How can the current level of political will (readiness) be harnessed to make the Halton Region the best place for urban Indigenous Peoples to live, work, and heal?
3. What existing areas offer common ground to build partnerships that offer mutual benefit and respect?
4. Knowing that there is already a variety of programs, events, cultural events within the Halton Region, how can the distinction of programs be quilted into the fabric of the community(ies) to provide greater access to multiple kinds of Indigenous culture and embed the ways of knowing for future generations?

6. Recommendations

Recommendations emerged from facilitated conversations, interviews, written responses, an examination of issues raised during previous reports, the scholarly literature, wise practices and initiatives from other communities. The environmental scan and subsequent recommendations provide an opportunity to harness the good will of the community and all levels of government to begin genuine transformation toward addressing the disparities and inequities in the current economic, educational, social, political and organizational systems.

Recommendations from the environmental scan for Halton Region fell into six broad categories:

1. Relationships, Partnerships and Collaboration
2. Space
    a. Physical
    b. Political
3. Culture
    a. Visible
    b. Embedded
4. Education
    a. Children
    b. Non-Indigenous Community Members
    c. Organizations
5. Resources
6. Observing and reflecting to determine the way forward with urban Indigenous Peoples (7 Generations)

6.1 Relationships, Partnerships and Collaboration

1. Throughout the Halton Region, there are staff and volunteers who are working, on behalf of organizations, toward reconciliation. We recommend that organizations and municipalities within the Halton Region support an Indigenous-led organization to serve the Region and lead transformation initiatives as well as lead the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.
2. Create an Advisory Circle(s) or expand the mandate of an existing Circle (network), to develop a community pathway to create a respectful and authentic space for urban Indigenous Peoples. A Community of Practice (CoP) may provide a much-needed space to create dialogue and relationships. The Circle or CoP should be Indigenous-led to ensure integration of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, with representation from across the community, capturing the regional interest to unite and build relationships. At minimum, urban Indigenous Peoples, the upper-tier and 4 lower-tier municipalities, planners, conservation groups, agencies, individuals, formal and informal associations should be invited to join the CoP.

6.2 Space

6.2.1 Physical Space

3. One striking narrative throughout the environmental scan is the need to create physical space, connections to Mother Earth. Physical space means gathering places, ceremonial spaces for sweat lodges, sacred fires; welcoming spaces. A space(s) that facilitates connecting with the land, water,

medicines and future generations.

6.2.2 Political Space

4. All levels of government in the Halton Region should reach out to urban Indigenous Peoples to create “political space,” hosting a variety of voices, offering a place at the table to facilitate the promotion of land-based programming created, guided, and delivered by Indigenous People. Urban Indigenous Peoples should advise on the creation of policies regarding access to space without barriers, access to health and social services, economic development, granting opportunities and should be provided with honorariums for their consultation time.

6.3 Culture

6.3.1 Visible

5. Create a physical space for urban Indigenous Peoples to gather for ceremony, relationship and healing.
6. Create or become part of a public portal (on-line resource) for the community to announce urban Indigenous community events, celebrations and initiatives.
7. Through the CoP, create a resource group to track and share funding availability to support initiatives.

6.3.2 Embedded

8. Make intentional change within the political arena and institutions/organizations, changing policies, procedures, recruitment, hiring and retention practices toward Indigenous ways of knowing. To make this doable there may be 2-3 organizations who agree to act as a pilot project to embed Indigenous teachings in all aspects of their organizations. All efforts should be Indigenous-led, recognize the traditions of Indigenous Peoples and acknowledge the trauma of their histories.

6.4 Education

6.4.1 Children

9. Create learning spaces, incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and being, teachings, traditions, language and philosophy within the community, within education systems and within institutions and organizations. Elders and Knowledge Keepers play an essential role as teachers so they must be involved in sharing their cultural knowledge and wisdom for the next Seven Generations.

6.4.2 Non-Indigenous Community Members

10. There are pockets of educational work in the Halton Region already occurring, both in-person and on-line. The CoP is a vehicle to uncover what is already in place, create the necessary collaborations, and design and deliver a comprehensive education strategy for mainstream organizations and the political sector to support urban Indigenous Peoples within the framework of Indigenous ways of knowing and teachings, understanding reconciliation efforts and their place as “learners”.

6.4.3 Organizations

11. Many organizations are working to incorporate an Indigenous perspective within their agencies and organizations but need Indigenous presence and guidance.

6.5 Resources

As with any initiative, there is a need for resources, both direct funding and in-kind.

12. We are recommending that the community explore the viability of supporting an Indigenous-led organization to serve the Region and lead transformation initiatives and lead the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

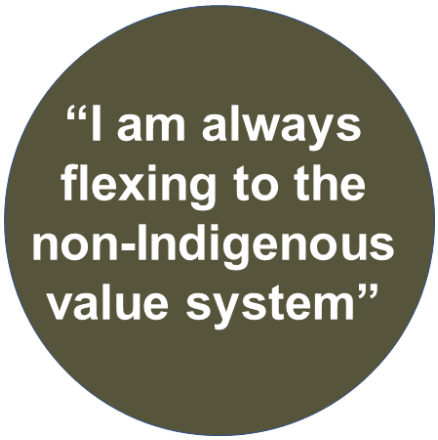
13. In the short-term, we are recommending the creation/expansion of a team of full-time Indigenous Specialists in the Halton Region, including Elders and Knowledge Keepers, representatives of Indigenous populations who, through the CoP, will lead the implementation of Community Action Pathways. Within the Halton Region there are municipalities and organizations that have these positions in place; all positions should be full-time and permanent.

14. Explore the possibility of hosting one or more graduate students from nearby post-secondary institutions and from various faculties and schools to complete internships in support of the CoP and Community Action Pathways. Students can provide much-needed support for research, liaison activities, administration, relationship- building, discovering wise practices in other communities, watching for granting opportunities, and working with municipalities on business and development plans.

15. Observing and reflecting to determining the way forward with urban Indigenous Peoples (7 Generations)

7. Discussion of Recommendations

Relationships, Partnerships and Collaboration



1. We recommend that organizations and municipalities within the Halton Region support an Indigenous-led organization to serve the Region and lead transformation initiatives and lead the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

Discussion: Throughout the Halton Region, there are staff and volunteers who are working, on behalf of organizations, toward reconciliation. While these organizations are to be commended for their commitment, it will be important that the urban Indigenous community identify an Indigenous-led organization to be at the forefront of community planning and change. This might involve an existing organization or the creation of a new one. The scholarly literature, the experiences of Indigenous Peoples and the Halton Region and wise practices state that all initiatives toward reconciliation must be Indigenous-led. *“Nothing about us, without us”*.

2. Create an Advisory Circle(s) or expand the mandate of an existing Circle (network), to develop community pathways to create a respectful and authentic space for urban Indigenous Peoples. A Community of Practice (CoP) may provide a much-needed space to create dialogue and relationships. The Circle or CoP should be Indigenous-led to ensure integration of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, with representation from across the community, capturing the regional interest to unite and build relationships. At minimum, urban Indigenous Peoples, the upper-tier and 4 lower-tier municipalities, planners, **conservation groups**, agencies, individuals, formal and informal associations should be invited to join the CoP.

Discussion: A frequent narrative involved the need to build relationships between urban Indigenous Peoples and other members of the community, including educational, social, and political institutions. One way that this can be accomplished is to create a Community of Practice (CoP). The CoP will facilitate the engagement of community members and coordination of activities.

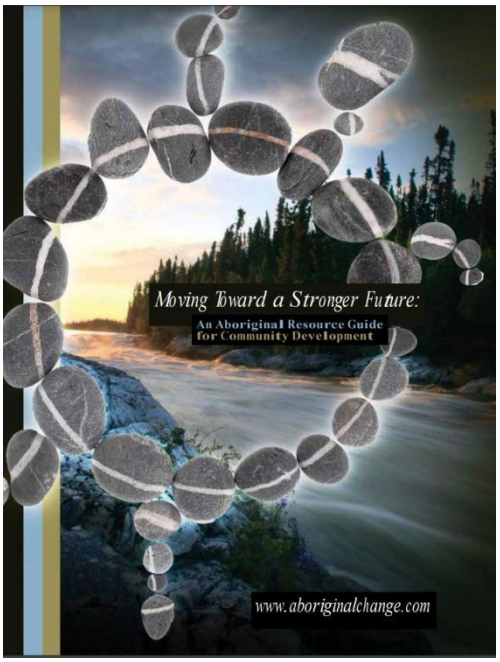
As described by Seven Directions: A Center for Indigenous Public Health, a community of practice is an

approach to learning where members share best practices and deepen their knowledge through interaction on an ongoing basis.

“Communities of practice have existed for as long as people have been learning and sharing their knowledge and experience through storytelling. Like our elders who pass down their knowledge and wisdom through stories, a community practice is innately Indigenous. It is a group of people who share a common concern, passion, craft, profession, or set of challenges, and come together to fulfill individual and group goals.

Those who are part of our community of practice benefit in the following ways: Connect with people who you might not interact with frequently or at all. Generate and explore ideas in a collaborative environment. Solve challenging problems through dialogue and exchange. Create new, mutually beneficial opportunities to network with others. Contribute your individual strengths to support a collective vision.”
https://www.indigenousphi.org/indigenous-community-of-practice

Through an Indigenous-led CoP or Advisory Circle(s) there is opportunity to create Community Action Pathways with Indigenous Peoples, incorporating Indigenous teachings. In *Moving Toward a Stronger Future: An Aboriginal Resource Guide for Community Development*, Little Black Bear & Associate's proposed a model of community development that could guide the Halton Region in its work (written in 2010, the authors of the Halton Report note that the use of language has changed since then, from Aboriginal to Indigenous). (See Appendix A for a summary of the proposed model in “*Moving Toward a Stronger Future: An Aboriginal Resource Guide for Community Development*”)



Front Cover, Moving Toward a Stronger Future: An Aboriginal Resource Guide for Community Development, 2010

While there are other guiding documents and best practices, this comprehensive resource is an example of a Two-Eyed Seeing process of community development, an approach of inquiry and solutions in which people come together to view the world through an Indigenous lens with one eye (perspective), while the other eye sees through a Western lens.
https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/mvng-twrd-strngr-ftr/mvng-twrd-strngr-ftr-en.pdf

SPACE

Physical Space

3. One striking narrative throughout the environmental scan is the need to create physical space, connections to Mother Earth. Physical space means gathering places, ceremonial spaces for sweat lodges, sacred fires; welcoming spaces. A space that facilitates connecting with the land, water, medicines and future generations.

Discussion: “While Western worldviews may see the land as the physical ground that we stand on, Indigenous cultures have many ways of talking about the land. From an Indigenous perspective, the land is a much larger concept more equated to the term ecosystem, which describes the interconnected relationships between the physical environment, biological organisms, atmosphere, and, in the case of Indigenous worldview, spiritual realm. The land is often described as sentient, meaning it has its own agency, spirit, and rights that are to be respected as much as those of humans and other beings.” (Usher, P. 1986. “Devolution of power in the Northwest Territories: Implications for wildlife” Native People and Renewable Resource Management 69-80)

In addition to physical impacts, disconnection from the land has negative impacts on the mental and spiritual well-being for many Indigenous communities. It is within these spaces where urban Indigenous Peoples can reclaim their identity and gather in relationship.

Political Space

4. All levels of government in the Halton Region should reach out to urban Indigenous Peoples to create “political space,” a place at the table to facilitate the promotion of land-based programming created, guided, and delivered by Indigenous Peoples, and to create policies regarding access to space without barriers, access to health and social services, economic development, granting opportunities.

Discussion: How does the community create space for Indigenous staff? Board members? Consultants? Support Indigenous-led in an authentic and meaningful way?

CULTURE

Visible

5. Create a physical space for urban Indigenous Peoples to gather for ceremony, relationship, and healing.

6. Create or become part of a public portal (on-line resource) for the community to announce urban Indigenous community events, celebrations, and initiatives.

7. Through the CoP, create a resource group to track and share funding availability to support initiatives.

Embedded

8. Make intentional change within the political arena and institutions/organizations, changing policies, procedures, recruitment, hiring and retention practices toward Indigenous ways of knowing. To make this doable there may be 2-3 organizations who agree to act as a pilot project to embed Indigenous teachings in all aspects of their organizations. All efforts should be Indigenous led, recognize the traditions of Indigenous Peoples, and acknowledging the trauma of their histories.

Discussion: There are wise practices in the literature and in experiences related to this recommendation. Organizations should be guided by Indigenous Peoples as well as the work currently underway toward changing policies and trauma-informed organizational change in the Halton Region and other communities. The Research Consultants have appended articles which may help to guide initial discussions, with an emphasis on trauma-informed organizational change.

Appendix B provides a summary of selected articles for initial consideration by the community.

EDUCATION

Children

9. Create learning spaces, incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and being, teachings, traditions, language and philosophy within the community, within education systems and within institutions and organizations. Elders and Knowledge Keepers play an essential role as teachers so they must be involved in sharing their cultural knowledge and wisdom for the next Seven Generations.

Non-Indigenous Community Members

10. There are pockets of educational work and resources in the Halton Region, both in-person and on-line. The CoP is a vehicle to uncover what is already in place, create the necessary collaborations, and design and deliver a comprehensive education strategy for mainstream organizations and the political sector to support urban Indigenous Peoples within the framework of Indigenous ways of knowing and teachings, understanding reconciliation efforts and their place as "learners."

Discussion: Who will teach the learners? There is a "heaviness" with the perceived responsibility of Indigenous Peoples to lead the learning of non-Indigenous people in addition to attending to their own cultural healing. However, until a strong complement of well-informed allies is in place to support the teaching, it will be difficult for the rest of community to conceptualize Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and to truly view history with an Indigenous lens allowing for a full and rich embedding of culture in the mainstream landscape.

Organizations

11. Many organizations are working to incorporate an Indigenous perspective within their agencies and organizations but need Indigenous presence and guidance. There are resources available in Southwestern Ontario and beyond, which can be tailored for the Halton Region. For example, Grandmothers Voice in the Halton Region, De dwa da dehs nye s Aboriginal Health Centre in Hamilton, the Centre for Indigegogy at Wilfrid Laurier University, Ska:na Family Learning Centre (Windsor- Essex, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton) and Anishnabeg Outreach Employment and Training Inc. in Kitchener and Guelph.

RESOURCES

12. We are recommending that the community explore the viability of supporting an Indigenous-led organization to serve the Region and lead transformation initiatives and lead the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

13. In the short-term, we are recommending the creation/expansion of a team of Indigenous Specialists in the Halton Region, including Elders and Knowledge Keepers, representatives of urban Indigenous populations who, through the CoP, will lead the implementation of Community Action Pathways. Within the Halton Region there are municipalities and organizations that have these positions in place; all positions should be full-time and permanent.

14. Explore the possibility of hosting one or more graduate students from nearby post- secondary institutions and from various faculties and schools to complete internships in support of the CoP and Community Action Pathways. Students can provide much needed support for research, liaison activities, administration, relationship-building, discovering wise practices in other communities, watching for granting opportunities, and working with municipalities on business and development plans.

15. Observing and reflecting to determining the way forward with urban Indigenous Peoples (7 Generations).

Discussion: There are organizations in the community that are already gathering data (for example, the Ontario Kids Network). They can be approached to determine their ability to support Indigenous-led community-based initiatives, perhaps conducting an annual survey of the community to identify community progress, using aspects of the article entitled *"Student Counselling Services. (2017). Dibaadan, "Speak the Truth, Speak from your Heart". Nipissing University. Student Development and Services*" as a guide.

8. Alignment with TRC Calls to Action, the Urban Indigenous Action Plan and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) selected relevant articles

The recommendations contained in this report comprise an important community strategy to support Indigenous Peoples and are in keeping with recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Urban Indigenous Action Plan.

The Calls to Action while directed at the federal government, include promoting public dialogue, public/private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation, addressing education, health, language and culture, with appropriate evaluation mechanisms, professional development and training for public servants, Indigenous-led initiatives, Indigenous leadership, and mechanisms to share ways of knowing and wise practices.

The Urban Indigenous Action Plan "supports reconciliation between urban Indigenous communities, the provincial government and the broader public service by:

- Recognizing relationships and culture as the foundational requirements for policy and program development; and,
- Guiding government and the broader public service to develop responsive, inclusive policies, programs and evaluations with, and meet the needs of, urban Indigenous communities.

Over the next several pages, Table 3 provides a summary of the alignment with the Calls to Action and the Urban Indigenous Action Plan.

Table 3: Proposal Alignment with TRC Calls to Action, Urban Indigenous Action Plan and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Recommendations	TRC Call to Action	Action Plan
RELATIONSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION We recommend that organizations and municipalities within the Halton Region support the creation of an Indigenous-led organization to serve the Region and lead transformation initiatives and lead the implementation of the	**66.** We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.	**Relationship Building:** Relationships between governments and urban Indigenous Peoples, communities, organizations and service providers are respectful, transparent, responsive and accountable.

recommendations contained in this report. Create an Advisory Circle(s) or expand the mandate of an existing Circle (network), to develop community pathways to create a respectful and authentic space for Indigenous Peoples. A Community of Practice (CoP) may provide a much-needed space to create dialogue and relationships. The Circle or CoP should be Indigenous-led to ensure integration of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, with representation from across the community, capturing the regional interest to unite and build relationships, At minimum, Indigenous Peoples, the upper-tier and 4 lower-tier municipalities, planners, conservation groups, agencies, individuals, formal and informal associations should be invited to join the CoP.		

PHYSICAL SPACE One striking narrative throughout the environmental scan is the need to create physical space, connections to Mother Earth. Physical space means gathering places, ceremonial spaces for sweat lodges, sacred fires; welcoming spaces. A space that facilitates ability to connect with the land, water, medicines and future generations.	**21.** We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority. **47.** We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous Peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts. 18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.	**Service Planning, Design and Delivery:** Programs and services are accessible, person-centred, culturally rooted and delivered in safe, culturally sensitive environments. Particular attention is given to diversity within urban Indigenous communities, including the needs of Indigenous women, youth, families, seniors, people with disabilities and LGBTQ2S+.

POLITICAL SPACE All levels of government in the Halton Region should reach out to Indigenous Peoples to create "political space", a place at the table to facilitate the promotion of land-based programming created, guided, delivered by Indigenous Peoples. And to create policies regarding access to space without barriers, access to health and social services, economic development, granting opportunities.	**53.** iii. Develop and implement a multi-year National Action Plan for Reconciliation, which includes research and policy development, public education programs, and resources. iv. Promote public dialogue, public/private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation.	**Relationship Building:** Relationships between governments and urban Indigenous communities, organizations and service providers are respectful, transparent, responsive and accountable. Service Planning, Design and Delivery: Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, service providers and governments are partners in provincial, regional and local policy and program design and delivery, to respond to current and future needs of communities. Policy Engagement and Co-Development: Policy development processes incorporate, reflect and respect the voices and diversities of urban Indigenous communities.

CULTURE **Visible** Create a physical space for urban Indigenous Peoples to gather for ceremony, relationship and healing. Create or become part of a public portal as on-line resource for the community to announce Indigenous community events, celebrations and initiatives. Through the CoP, create a resource group to track and share funding availability to support initiatives.	**12.** We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families. **13.** We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights. **14.** We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:	**Relationship Building:** Relationships between governments and urban Indigenous communities, organizations and service providers are respectful, transparent, responsive and accountable. Service Planning, Design and Delivery: Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, service providers and governments are partners in provincial, regional and local policy and program design and delivery, to respond to current and future needs of

CULTURE **Embedded** Make intentional change within the political arena and institutions/organizations, changing policies, procedures, recruitment, hiring and retention practices toward Indigenous ways of knowing. To make this doable there may be 2-3 organizations who agree to act as a pilot project to embed Indigenous	i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them. ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties. iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.	communities.
teachings in all aspects of their organizations. All efforts should be Indigenous-led, recognizing the traditions of Indigenous Peoples and acknowledge the trauma of their histories.	iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities. v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.	

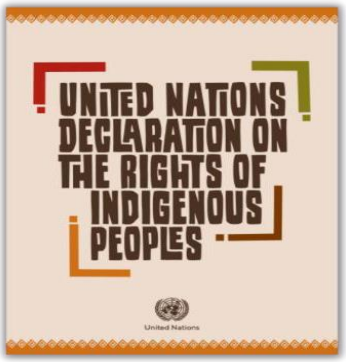
EDUCATION **Children** Create learning spaces, incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and being, teachings, traditions, language and philosophy in community, in education systems and in institutions and organizations. Elders and Knowledge Keepers play an essential role as teachers so they must be involved in sharing their cultural knowledge and wisdom for the next Seven Generations.	**10.** iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula. iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses. v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems. vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children. vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships, viii. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them. ix., Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties. x. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities. xi. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.	**Service Planning, Design and Delivery:** Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, service providers and governments are partners in provincial, regional and local policy and program design and delivery, to respond to current and future needs of communities.

EDUCATION **Non-Indigenous Community Members** There are pockets of educational work in the Halton Region already occurring, both in-person and on-line. The CoP is a vehicle to uncover what is already in place, create the necessary collaborations, and design and deliver a comprehensive education strategy for mainstream organizations and the political sector to support urban Indigenous Peoples within the framework of Indigenous ways of knowing and teachings, understanding reconciliation efforts and their place as “learners”.	**23.** We call upon all levels of government to: i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field. ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities. iii. Provide cultural competency training for all healthcare professionals. **1.** i. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools. ii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing. iii. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers	**Service Planning, Design and Delivery:** Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, service providers and governments are partners in provincial, regional and local policy and program design and delivery, to respond to current and future needs of communities.

EDUCATION **Organizations** Many organizations are working to incorporate an Indigenous perspective within their agencies and organizations but need Indigenous presence and guidance.	**23.** We call upon all levels of government to: i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field. ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities. iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health care professionals.	
RESOURCES As with any initiative, there is a need for resources, both direct funding and in-kind. We are recommending the creation/expansion of a team of Indigenous Specialists in the Halton Region, including Elders and Knowledge Keepers, representatives of the full Indigenous populations who, through the CoP, will lead the implementation of Community Action Pathways, Truth and Reconciliation and the Urban Indigenous Action Plan. Some municipalities and organizations have these positions in place; all positions should be full-time and permanent.	iv. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation. **23.** We call upon all levels of government to: i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field. ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities. iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health care professionals.	
Explore the possibility of hosting one or more graduate students from nearby post-secondary institutions and from various faculties and	**57.** We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples,	

schools to complete internships in support of the CoP and Community Action Pathways. Students can provide much-needed support for research, liaison activities, administration, relation shipping, discovering wise practices in other communities, watching for granting opportunities, and working with municipalities on business and development plans.	including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism	
EVALUATION Observing and reflecting to determining the way forward with urban Indigenous Peoples (7 Generations)		Evaluation: Data, analysis and evaluation informs the continuous improvement of policies and programs that impact urban Indigenous communities.

9.1 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) selected relevant articles



UNDRIP Article 08

1. Indigenous Peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.
2. States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for:

(a) Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;

(b) Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;

(c) Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights;

(d) Any form of forced assimilation or integration;

(e) Any form of propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against them.

UNDRIP Article 11

1. Indigenous Peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

UNDRIP Article 19

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous Peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

UNDRIP Article 27

States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous Peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous Peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous Peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous Peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.

UNDRIP Article 29

3. States shall also take effective measures to ensure, as needed, that programmes for monitoring, maintaining and restoring the health of indigenous Peoples, as developed and implemented by the peoples affected by such materials, are duly implemented.

UNDRIP Article 32

1. Indigenous Peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources. o 2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous Peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources. 3. States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

9. Moving Forward

The next steps for the community include integrating the recommendations contained in this report into a planning process to determine what steps can be taken to address current concerns and build toward a community where Indigenous Peoples can live, work and heal. The environmental scan can be used in conjunction with other information that has been gathered by the community or its partners, as an advocacy tool with funders and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the challenges faced by urban Indigenous communities to provide data for the pursuit of funding.

'Naa-Mehl, Marcia Dawson (2011) in "Planning for the Seasons: An Aboriginal Early Years Strategic Planning Resource, in Principles for Planning describes the Canoe Journey, an important teaching for communities seeking to transform toward creating a respectful, inclusive relationship with community members: *"Every canoe journey has a destination, and, on every journey, you will have a leader, a person at the head of the canoe who guides and gives direction to the paddlers. The leader can see the waters ahead of you and determine where you are going. He can also see the waters and land behind you. This person knows the waters, how to maneuver through rough seas and avoid rocks and debris. The people in the canoe trust their leader and respect him/her knowledge and experiences.*

Every person in the canoe has a seat and a paddle. They move their paddles in unity to move forward in their journey. Although these paddlers are individuals of different sizes, with different strengths and experience, they all work together to ensure a safe and successful journey. Everyone in the canoe is needed, they each have a role and every role is important" (page 30).

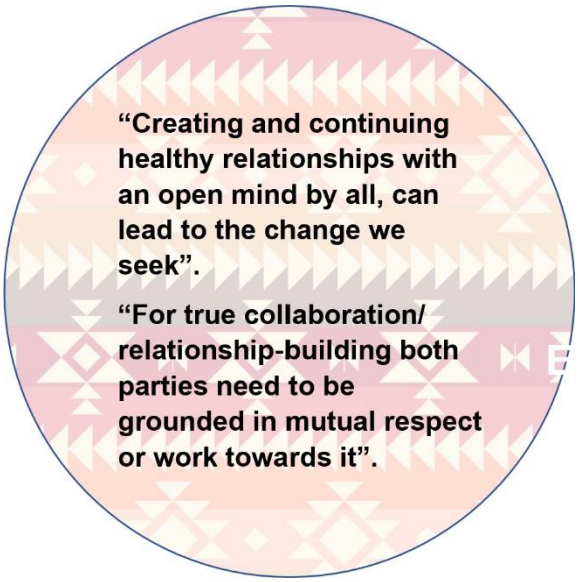
Canoe Journey
Source: https://favpng.com/png_view/paddle-puyallup-people-the-canoe-paddle-tribal-canoe-journeys-png/fXLsqmWa

9.1 Community Priorities

On February 6, 2023, the Research Consultants shared the preliminary report and recommendations with the community. Participants were asked to prioritize the recommendations. The in-person session provided participants an opportunity to rank order the recommendations and provide comments. Participants in the Zoom session were sent a follow up survey asking them to rank order the recommendations. A total of 33 participants rank ordered the recommendations and provided accompanying comments. The following commentary provides a rank-ordered list of the recommendations proposed by the Research Consultants. Comments generated to clarify or emphasize areas for follow up are included.

1. Relationships, Partnerships and Collaboration

This recommendation received the strongest response (45%) when viewed as a total across the rank ordered priorities 1-4, with 15% of the respondents identifying this recommendation as the priority. Relationships were identified by 12% as the second most important priority, with another 15% identifying it as the third priority and 3% ranked it as the fourth priority.



2. Space Physical

This recommendation received 21% response identifying physical space as the first priority among the respondents. Additionally, 6% identified this recommendation as a second priority, while 9% considered it a third priority. Visible physical space was consistently described as necessary in order to fully celebrate and demonstrate a visible culture. Overall, 36% of the respondents ranked physical space as the second priority in the list of recommendations.

3. Culture Visible

Cultural visibility was ranked as the number one priority by 12% of the respondents. This was closely followed as a second priority by 9% while 6% considered this a third priority and 3% as a fourth priority. Visible culture was identified overall as the third priority with 30% of the responses.

The comments indicate gaps between the current reality and the expressed vision of the best place to live, work and heal.

4. Education – Organizations

Only 6% of respondents considered education of organizations to be a first priority. As a second or third priority, this recommendation remained at 9% response. Comments revealed diversity of interpretation of who or how to educate.

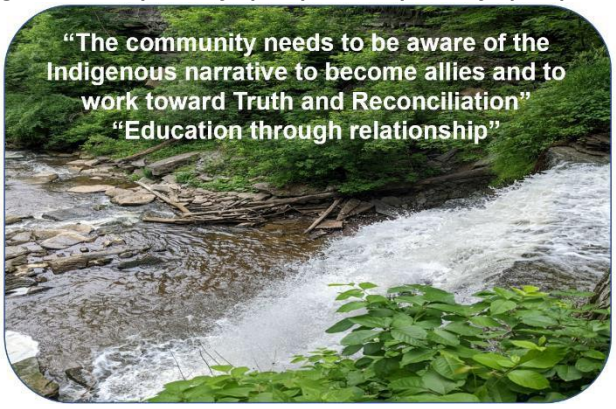
I. Education — Children

As a priority recommendation, the education of children was only cited by 9% of the respondents as a first priority. Additionally, as a second or third priority, the response was 6%.

However, when reviewing the comments, it appears that many of the "child" education goals are represented in the physical space recommendation through community celebrations of culture and way of life within a land-based learning environment.

II. Education for Non-Indigenous Community Members

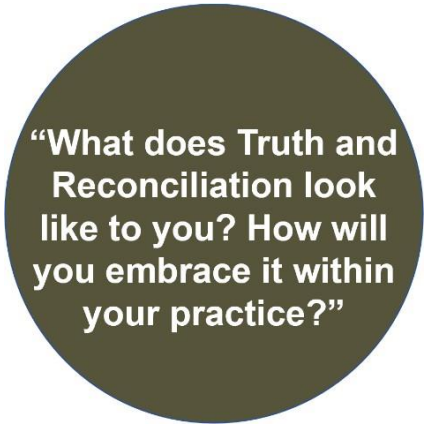
Overall, the response to this recommendation received the most diversity in priority response selections with respondents ranking from 1st priority (3%) to 6th priority (3%) and was the lowest of the priority selections with the exception of resource development. The narrative comments focused on the community's responsibility to "become aware" of Indigenous history and to actively integrate Truth & Reconciliation into their practices. A strong belief that educating the rest of community can only occur through relationships and honest conversations.

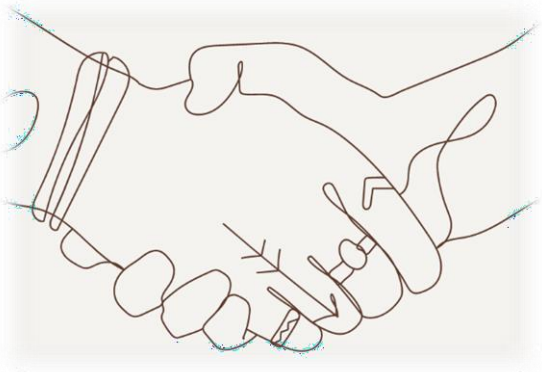


5. Culture Embedded

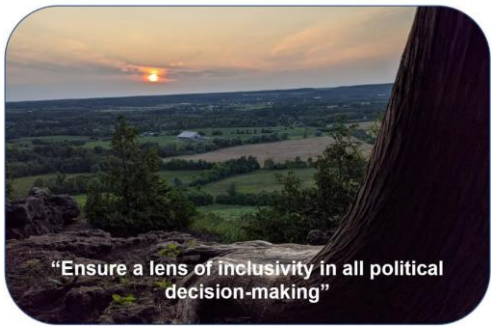
While most respondents acknowledged the need for culture to be embedded in the current systems, as a priority, the response ranged from 9% who viewed this as the first priority to 15% who only ranked it as a 5th priority. While acknowledging the desire for culture to be firmly embedded in community, comments indicated an awareness that Indigenous culture is not yet widely recognized or embraced in meaningful ways by the general population thus making "embedding" more challenging.

"We have to (as rest of community/ organizations operating through colonial systems) embed Indigenous practices into our work – not just click boxes / performative."





6. Space Political



This recommendation received a balanced response from respondents who ranked this evenly from 1-4 with 6% each of the total priority ranking.

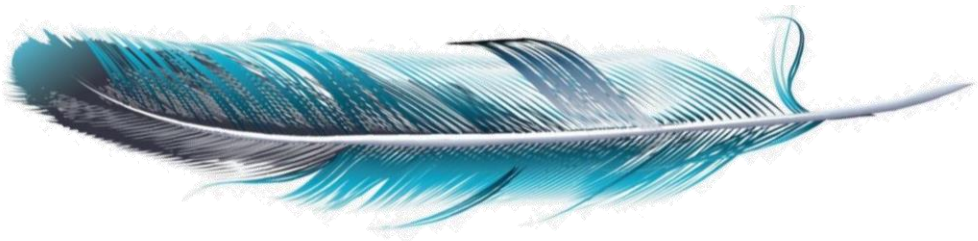
7. Resources

This recommendation received the least attention with responses falling in a range between 1 and 5 and representing only 3% of the responders. The comments regarding this recommendation indicated very different perspectives on resources and this may have influenced how responders ranked this as a priority. While some responders considered the land-based activities as “resources,” others responded from a systemic and political lens.

Final Thoughts

We are grateful for the large number of contributors to the project who respectfully provided information, with honesty and hope. These discussions revealed many opportunities for strengthening Indigenous leadership in the Halton Region. We have seen that the community is well-positioned to move forward with integrity, expanding existing partnerships and creating new relationships to deeply embed Indigenous culture and ways of being throughout the Halton Region. Through the Halton Environmental Scan of Urban Indigenous Services Project, we experienced many renewed and newly formed relationships with Grandmother's Voice and the community of Halton Region.

We are grateful to Grandmother Renee Thomas-Hill and Grandmother Gail Whitlow for their wisdom and support and for guiding our work. Thank you to the members and volunteers from Grandmothers Voice and to the staff of Ska:na Family Learning Centre for their generosity, as teachers and partners. And much gratitude to the members of our team who lent their creativity, time and commitment to this project.



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Canadian Geographic https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/

Appendix A: Resource Guide for Community Development

Little Blackbird & Associates, "Moving Toward a Stronger Future: An Aboriginal Resource Guide for Community Development", Public Safety Canada, 2010

Description of the Framework (Model)

The turtle guides the community development process.

"There are many different interpretations, but from our perspective the turtle is a significant and powerful symbol that we honour in our ceremonies. The turtle is central to the creation story when the land was built upon the back of the turtle; and this is why we call Mother Earth by her name: Turtle Island. It means our people were built upon a strong foundation; and so, the strength of our people is signified by the turtle because of our close connection to the land…" Elder Charles Scribe (Cree/Lakota)

Each component of the Framework (model) is explained below and can be modified for the Halton Region:

The Turtle – 7 Components for Change

The Turtle's Shell: (The Community & Big Picture) - The protective shell of the turtle represents the community; and a healthy community is the protector of its own people. The shell also points to the big picture or the broad scope of matters in the community. Our participants identified a number of key aspects of a community that can be summed up in the following statement: "A strong, healthy and vibrant community has sound leadership, essential facilitation skills, is well organized, and ready to move forward guided by core values." Each of these main components is outlined in the shell section.

Upper Right Limb: (Taking a Look – Determining Where the Community is at) - The upper right limb of the turtle represents tools of assessment or taking stock of where your community is currently situated in its development. These tools are about exploring your community's history, mapping out the assets, strengths, gifts, and opportunities in the community, discovering how community systems work, and creating an inventory of resources.

The Lower Right Limb: (Creating the Environment for Change) - The lower right limb of the turtle represents creating the right environment for change. In order for the community to embark on a journey of development, the timing and conditions must be

right for change to take place. Much like tilling the ground to prepare it for planting, the community must take steps to prepare for moving forward together. This involves building trust, positive relationships, partnerships, teamwork or working collaboratively together, listening to the voice of the people in the community, creating a core group of committed individuals, planning the first meeting, incorporating strong communication strategies, and making presentations and public speaking skills.

The Upper Left Limb: (Mobilizing the Community) - After the right conditions for change exist in the community, the next step is to mobilize all the available resources (financial, human, physical, etc.). The upper left limb of the turtle represents this component. To begin, we have outlined how to get started, find the community champion(s) or key people to make things happen and obtaining their buy-in to the development process and finally, engaging the community in committing to mobilizing its resources.

The Lower Left Limb (Planning for Change): The lower left limb signifies concrete planning for change. These are specific processes that begin to bring the plans of the community into focus. To do this, we explain how to develop a focus question for any session; how to create the vision and statement of purpose (sometimes called the “mission statement”); how to set goals and objectives; and finally, ending with some concrete advice on how to create a plan of action to move the community forward.

The Tail: (Overcoming Pitfalls) - The tail of the turtle signifies the challenges and obstacles that may need to be overcome. These are called pitfalls. We provide some ideas to help your community think about personal and community healing; conflict resolution; dealing with divisions, resistance to change; and criticism within the community; dealing with staff turnover and overcoming fears. Some of these pitfalls are going to take generations to deal with but the key point is to carry on with developing your community in spite of these obstacles. The Elders told us we should not wait for everyone to heal before you begin. They are right, the more you keep working at developing your community and yourself as an individual, despite these obstacles, the better it will be for your community's future.

The Head of the Turtle: (Leadership & Taking Action) – Finally, the head of the turtle is about leadership and taking action – the head greatly influences and oversees the process of development. This means the community is ready to move forward by taking action, evaluating its progress, celebrating successes, obtaining leadership support, making presentations and public speaking, and writing a funding proposal.

Appendix B: Summary of Selected Articles to Guide Organizational Change

Morris, M. (2017). Indigenous recruitment and retention: Ideas and best practices from a literature review of academic and organizational sources. Carleton University. pp. 1-89 (Selected strategies)

- The best assets for recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees are existing Indigenous employees.
- Make a commitment to embarking on the next generations of Indigenous recruitment and retention strategies (p. 57):
- Commit to the next steps in Indigenous recruitment and retention, which involves workplace transformation;
- Acknowledge that measures targeted at Indigenous peoples are not enough, that
- Government of Canada workplaces (and all workplaces) must be welcoming to Indigenous peoples, value their strengths and eliminate stereotyping and discrimination among public service managers and employees;
- Perform a workplace cultural audit which looks at structures, policies and practices for their impact on and inclusion of Indigenous employees
- Provide Training (p. 57): Provide training in Indigenous issues for all public service employees in all occupational categories and at all levels in fulfillment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 57th call to action;
- Professional Development and Training for Public servants
    - In addition to this training, provide training for managers in effective and collaborative modern management techniques, which would include a component of at least one day on managing Indigenous employees;
- Provide training and tools for managers and human resources personnel on cultural sensitivity to Indigenous candidates in the hiring process
- Establish best practices in human resources policy and practice (p. 58):
- Add Indigenous cultural sensitivity to competencies expected of all employees at every level and occupation, and support their training;
- Establish an Indigenous Human Resource Unit or resource person in every department and agency;
- Review job descriptions and postings particularly in regional offices in areas in which there are large Indigenous populations to ensure that value is placed on knowledge and experience of the local Indigenous culture and language. This might involve creating new job categories, such as "PM02 – Indigenous", in which cultural and linguistic knowledge are a part of the essential rather than asset qualifications of the position;

- Wherever an employee may be based, place value on knowledge of an Indigenous language and allow Indigenous and non-Indigenous public servants to make learning an Indigenous language a part of their training plan.
- Create a leadership training program for Indigenous employees that would have all the features of leadership programs plus address specific issues such as tensions between communities and Government; handling experiences of discrimination; and exploring whether and how to incorporate traditional values and strengths into one's work. Program cohorts could provide peer support to one another as they progress through the public service;
- Conduct research with existing Indigenous employees and managers about Indigenous recruitment and retention;
- Consider broadening concepts of bilingualism to include placing value on Indigenous languages;
- Ensure that Employee Assistance Programs are able to offer Indigenous specific cultural options, and can address mental health and distress concerns arising from bullying and discrimination against Indigenous peoples in the workplace;
- Acknowledge the effects that past and ongoing trauma may have on employees, the high rates of trauma among Indigenous peoples, and investigate the steps that would have to be taken to become a trauma-informed workplace.
- Acknowledge that some Indigenous employees require time off for reconnection to community or to traditional practices;
- Work with unions to develop cultural accommodation policies that are viewed as the norm and where managers would have to justify in writing to the appropriate authority why cultural accommodation could not be given
- Bring together concerned parties in clusters to work on advancing aspects of Indigenous recruitment and retention. Ensure that decisionmakers are a part of these clusters or are committed to implementing the recommendations of the clusters.

Action Canada. (2020). Inclusive futures: Indigenous Engagement in Canada's Workforce. (Selected content)

This report was driven by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Call to Action #7: "to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians." Their hope with the report and recommendations that follow is that it be considered a constructive component of the ongoing discussions of how Indigenous Peoples in Canada can be recognized, honoured and celebrated as we collectively work toward Reconciliation (Action Canada, 2020). Executive Summary (p.5)

The report examines four interlinked factors that contribute to Indigenous inclusion in the labour force, and which are incorporated into a suggested framework for developing a tool to measure how inclusive an organization's workplace is. They are:

1. The number of Indigenous Peoples employed by an organization
2. The opportunity for Indigenous employees to engage in training and upskilling
3. The availability of Indigenous cultural competency programs and spaces for cultural practices
4. The evidence of the champions of Indigenous culture within an organization

Additionally,

- "The proposed Indigenous inclusion diagnostic tool acts as an objective cultural audit of an organization's workplace and is akin to a rating system that can be used by Indigenous candidates looking to potentially join an organization... through analyzing best practices for Indigenous inclusion in workplaces and reviewing tools for assessing inclusive workplaces, this report draws from academic, government and publicly available research that focuses on Indigenous communities and workplace engagement." (Action Canada, p. 5, 2020).
- One of the most effective ways to retain Indigenous talent in a workplace is through the investment in an Indigenous worker's training and education**** (Action Canada, 2020).
- "Organizations that commit to engaging in Indigenous cultural competency training are more like to be exposed to respective Indigenous worldviews and experiences of colonialism, which allows for greater opportunity to create shared understanding within that organization (Action Canada, 2020).

Tujague, N., & Ryan, K. (2021). Ticking the box of 'cultural safety' is not enough: why trauma-informed practice is critical to Indigenous healing. Rural and Remote Health, 21: 6411. (Selected content)

- Trauma-informed practice asks, 'What is that person's story?' rather than, 'What is wrong with that person?'.
- Neurological research supports the view that unresolved trauma resides within the body as physiological memories, leading to distress, discomfort and disassociation when certain triggers are encountered.
- Trauma-informed care reduces the risk of re-traumatization by being sensitive to individuals' needs. Trauma-informed care involves trauma screening, building safe working relationships and managing patient disclosure and distress (Tujague & Ryan, 2021, p.2).
- An understanding of the Indigenous model of health is necessary to prevent re-traumatization. This model embraces connection to country, spirit, spirituality, ancestors, culture, community, family, kinship, the physical body, mind and emotions. Social and emotional wellbeing is tied to the broader social determinants of poverty, racism, unemployment and lack of safe housing. Trauma related to any of these domains affects the social and emotional wellbeing of Indigenous peoples (Tujague & Ryan, 2021, p 3).
- Trauma-informed practice training delivered through a cultural lens considers Indigenous perspectives of health and their experiences of historical and cultural trauma, racism and discrimination. Culturally safe, trauma-informed practices also consider Indigenous peoples' unique strengths' and resilience and stories of survival (Tujague & Ryan, 2021).
- Ward et al. found that the unsolicited, informal support of peers, Elders and other community groups played a significant role in supporting those with chronic illnesses. They identified a need for more education and knowledge for support groups. Sharing knowledge about trauma has been embraced by these groups, which has led to early identification of trauma conditions, informed support, awareness and empowerment within communities (Tujague & Ryan, 2021, p.3).
- Culturally safe, trauma-informed practice creates a safe space that allows healing to happen. It means hearing the whole story of a person before making a judgement. It is at its most powerful when Indigenous individuals and organizations work towards interrupting their own intergenerational trauma. The Seedling Group's approach to interrupting intergenerational trauma is to deliver training to those working with First Nations peoples about culturally safe, trauma-informed practice and care through an Indigenous lens (Tujague & Ryan, 2021, p.3).

Esaki, N., Reddy, M., & Bishop, C. (2022). Next steps: Applying a Trauma-Informed Model to create an anti-racist organizational culture. Behavioural Science, 12, 41. Pp. 1-11. (Selected content)

Introduction

“Reinforced in light of COVID-19 and civil unrest, there is a renewed focus of intentionally naming anti-racism, the process of actively identifying and opposing racism, and anti-oppression within the overarching umbrella of a trauma-informed approach. Without looking beyond the lens of individual trauma, professionals, organizations, and systems risk re-traumatization of individuals and communities who have experienced trauma resulting from interpersonal, systemic, and structural racism and oppression” (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p. 1-2).

Historical Trauma

Historical trauma is characterized as a traumatic event shared by a group of people that contributes to an increased prevalence of negative physical health outcomes, distrust, and mental illness in subsequent generations (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p. 2).

Trauma-Informed Care

“Cultural awareness, responsiveness, and understanding are essential to increasing access and improving the standard of trauma-informed care for children, families, and communities. Trauma-informed systems acknowledge the compounding impact of structural inequity and are responsive to the unique needs of diverse communities as represented by culture, history, race, gender, location, and language. Given the systemic roots of inequities, truly trauma-informed services require culturally responsive involvement across organizations, communities, and service sectors to reduce barriers, overcome stigma, address social adversities, and promote positive ethnic identities (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p.2).

The existence of ongoing stress, such as institutional racism, can exacerbate a person’s post-traumatic reactions. Therefore, it is essential to work with a lens based in trauma theory that acknowledges forms of oppression, such as racism and poverty (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p.3).

Organizations can experience trauma, just like individuals. The trauma can be from external or internal events, even from deleterious effects of dysfunctional internal dynamics that develop overtime. To work toward an anti-racist system, it is necessary to define the areas in which racism and White privilege are present, and all in the facility,

staff and clients alike, must have an opportunity to develop healthy and well-integrated racial identities (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p.3).

Cultural Humility

An often overlooked but fundamental principle of a trauma-informed approach involves cultural humility “Cultural humility through culturally competent practices (e.g., acknowledgement of diverse values, beliefs, and behaviors) supports the understanding of the multilayered intersection between trauma and aspects of culture including race, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, socio-political particularities, and language (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p.3).

On an institutional level, cultural humility asks that we interrogate identities that are culturally dominant or that have been assigned privilege with an equal curiosity as toward those that have been marginalized, to examine all identities with a critical lens, and to be vigilant to ways in which our workplaces reinforce or dismantle existing power structures. For an organization to be truly trauma-informed, it is essential that it be committed to a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p.3).

Sanctuary Model (created by Sandra Bloom)

The Sanctuary Model is an organizational culture intervention designed to support and facilitate the development of structures, processes, and behaviors that can counteract traumatic experiences or extended exposure to adversity. It provides organizations with blueprint for creating trauma-informed communities through organizational change efforts.

Bloom, through this model, thinks that the primary component that leads to change is the creation of a safe, nonviolent community that promotes recovery for all individuals, and helps survivors of trauma and chronic stress to move past the effects of the trauma and stress by rebuilding and creating healthy attachments. This model proposes seven commitments which focus on creating a safe and healthy environment by offering a set of organizational values that promote healing from trauma and adversity

The SELF framework is a powerful structure that helps to support innovation and guide conversations through the simple and accessible language of safety, emotion management, loss, and future, and is used to solve system and organizational problems in a fluid fashion that can also appreciate the complex issues faced by organizations (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p. 5)

This framework provides a trauma-informed way of organizing conversations and documentation in a simple and accessible language. These four categories (safety, emotion management, loss and future) represent four dynamic areas of focus for trauma recovery: this framework is also used to solve system and organizational problems in a nonlinear fashion that appreciates complexity.

“Understanding the culture change that implementing the Sanctuary Model brings can help other human service organizations that are considering models of systems-based, trauma-informed culture change, specific to the work of cultural humility and anti-racism. The Sanctuary Model supports these endeavors through the adherence to the seven commitments, the organizational values to creating a trauma-informed community, allowing all voices to be heard and considered and providing opportunities to begin to repair previous experiences of inequity and oppression” (Esaki, Reddy & Bishop, 2022, p.8-9).

“Transforming your organization with a trauma-informed approach” Relias.com Halper, A. (2020) discusses trauma-informed organizational change focused on client and staff care.

“Trauma-informed care is rooted in six principles. These principles, which providers may be familiar with applying with the individuals they serve, can also be implemented by leaders on an organizational scale. Here’s how the six principles of trauma-informed care apply to systemwide change.

Safety

- Ensure the physical and emotional work environment feels safe by implementing policies and procedures to proactively prevent stalking, harassment, and violence.
- As part of the onboarding process, train staff on how the therapeutic relationship can trigger clients and mimic the dynamics of abuse, and how to avoid this through healthy boundaries. Training topics can include the basics of trauma-informed care, crisis prevention and intervention, and abuse and exploitation prevention.

Trustworthiness and Transparency

- Build supervisory relationships based on trust by training supervisors on trauma-informed supervision.

- Improve retention to develop strong relationships between the organization and staff as well as between staff and clients. Retention comes from offering tangible support like competitive wages and benefits, manageable caseloads, and ongoing professional development. Implementing these changes may mean making other structural changes like re-evaluating funding through a trauma-informed lens.

Peer Support

- Consider hiring peer professionals to leverage the power of connection in the process of healing from trauma.
- Create safe, nonjudgmental spaces such as case conferences for staff to exchange feedback and emotional support.

Collaboration and Mutuality

- Engage all stakeholders, including clients and all staff, in the process of implementing trauma-informed care. Seek their input at every step of the process.
- Train staff to promote collaboration at every level of the organization — between managers and supervisees, between therapists and clients, and between the organization and external stakeholders.

Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

- Recruit people with trauma-informed perspectives by reaching out to organizations of trauma survivors. Reaching out to survivors also helps to break down the false binary of traumatized clients vs. expert clinicians, and it builds a culture that normalizes coping with trauma.
- Empower staff members to set goals for their own professional development and provide support to help them meet those goals.

Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

- As part of ongoing program evaluation, survey the demographics of the clients you serve, and seek to hire those with the same demographics.
- Develop a client or community oversight board that ensures your organization meets the needs of those you serve.

Student Counselling Services. (2017). Dibaadan, "Speak the Truth, Speak from your Heart". Nipissing University. Student Development and Services. pp. 1-34

The project was initially titled "Strengthening Campus Mental Health Supports: Barrier Identification and Rectification in Supporting Aboriginal University Students"; but was changed shortly thereafter to "Dibaadan" by a respected Elder, Muriel Sawyer, from Nipissing First Nation. Translated from the Anishnaabemowin language, Dibaadan means to "speak the truth, speak from your heart." (p. 6)

The values of the Seven Grandfather teachings became a cornerstone for the project (p. 7). Each Grandfather Teaching is a gift the Anishinaabeg carry, a potential tool for living a good life. These gifts are Truth (Debwewin), Love (Zaagi'idiwin), Honesty (Gwayakwaadiziwin), Bravery (Aakodeewin), Humility (Dabaadendiziwin), Respect (Minaadendamowin), and Wisdow (Nibwaakaawin)

The project also explored appropriate terminology to be used within Dibaadan. In mainstream society, the term 'mental health' is used to describe a positive emotional and psychological wellbeing; in contrast, the Medicine Wheel reinforces balance between emotional, physical, spiritual and mental self – a more holistic approach – equally caring for each area to live a good life, "mino-biimaadzwin" (p. 7).

A key component which arose from this was the impact language has on individuals, focusing on the concern about the stigma attached to mental illness and potentially negative impacts this may have on students participating in the project. Therefore, the adoption of "Dibaadan" as the project title and a focus on mental wellbeing (instead of illness) further created shared language for the project.

Indigenous Wise Practice

Every Dibaadan event began with a smudge with traditional medicines, an Elder present, acknowledgement of the Nipissing First Nation traditional territory, food and refreshments and an open amount of time to talk (p.8)

Mental Health' and Indigenous Peoples

- Mental health and mental illness are not terms commonly used by Indigenous peoples – instead concepts of mental wellness, balance among all elements, and living a good life are more likely to be used and comprise many aspects of the individual and community, including culture, identity, language, worldviews and history.
- Mental wellness is understood through a holistic lens ➔ therefore, incorporating all aspects of the individual, "physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs and goes further to include restoring balance and harmony in families and communities".

- Culture is at the core ➔ successful program and services supporting mental wellness are grounded in culture, facilitate 'connectedness and spiritual healing', and include a well-articulated philosophy and set of principles that reflect cultures, values and worldviews of Indigenous peoples.
    - Culture is treatment ➔ "putting culture as a central element changes the way we think about the current system, shifting the focus from an examination of deficits to a discovery of strengths."
    - Spirituality is consistently identified as essential to wellness ➔ "Spirituality is as crucial and universal as thought or emotion. Moreover, connection with this dimension of personality and existence is considered a vital part of individual and community health" (p. 11) ➔ contrasts with Western concept that mind, body & spirit are separate entities.

Language is linked to mental wellness – in Canada, there are over 600 Indigenous nations with over 60 languages spoken among them. The First Nations Mental Wellness Framework summarizes the 'strong link between mental wellness, healing, and language. Language is also closely related to access or barriers to program and service use, like location, communication styles, language of services including signage, physical design, service delivery style.

Mainstream Approaches do not 'fit' Indigenous Worldviews

"The incongruities between western institutional structures and practices and Indigenous cultural forms will not be easy to reconcile. The complexities that come into play when two fundamentally different worldviews converge present a formidable challenge. The specialization, standardization, compartmentalization, and systematization that are inherent features of most western bureaucratic forms of organization are often in direct conflict with social structures and practices in Indigenous societies, which tend toward collective decision-making, extended kinship structures, ascribed authority vested in elders, flexible notions of time, and traditions of informality in everyday affairs."

Culturally safe practices are imperative to increase access for Indigenous Peoples including services that are:

- Trauma-informed – learn about the community's history
- Systems oriented
- Worldviews/Cultural-honoring

Physical environment is also important in providing a welcoming feel for Indigenous (p. 17)

- Fill spaces and walls with more cultural symbols; move away from white “clinical” walls
- Ensure physical space reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Emphasis should be placed on decreasing a clinical or institutional feel. This may be accomplished with artwork and other modifications of the physical space.