

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER: A COMMUNITY GATHERING TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
SUMMARY REPORT



**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Table of Contents

[Background](#)

[Event Summary](#)

[Next Steps](#)

[Appendix A - Elder Reflections and Wisdom](#)

[Appendix B - Conversation Circles](#)

[Appendix C - Programs and Services Mapping Activity](#)

[Appendix D - Gathering Evaluation Results](#)

[Appendix E - Participant Contact List](#)

[Appendix F - Panel discussions: C5 North East Community Hub](#)

[Appendix G - Panel discussions: Creating a Culture of Support: Indigenous Sharing Networks \(panel discussion and presentations\)](#)

[Appendix H - Sharing Our Stories Presentations \(breakout session\)](#)

[Appendix I - Practice as Ceremony Presentation \(breakout session\)](#)

[Appendix J - A Journey to Becoming Allies: A Decolonized approach to funding and collaboration Presentation \(breakout session\)](#)

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Background

The Network of Indigenous Funders of Alberta (NIFA) is an informal group of government, non-profit and corporate funding agencies. This informal group has been in existence since 2003 and meets four (4) times a year to learn and share ideas in order to:

- Build Capacity of Indigenous Communities/Organizations to apply for and utilize funding
- Build Capacity of Funders to work effectively with Indigenous Communities/Organizations

Vision of NIFA: Working together as funders to enhance the success of Indigenous agencies and build the capacity of funders to work with Indigenous communities.

Over the last decade, there has been a marked shift away from the provision of core funding to annual and/or project-based supports among funders. In addition, there’s been change in how organizations and funders are looking at programs to address root causes of Intergenerational Trauma, healing within the Indigenous community and how to be responsive to Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions report. It is because of these shifts that the NIFA group exists to create space for funders to discuss issues and processes that impact how they conduct their business while creating space for dialogue and learning.

Not for profit groups and organizations are dependent on the relationship they develop with funders to access funding to implement their programs and services, just as funders look to organizations to meet the needs of the community. This interdependent working relationship needs the time and space to nurture meaningful outcomes for both sides.

In 2017, the NIFA group discussed options on how they could create an opportunity for targeted networking and interaction amongst its members, new funders and the Indigenous community. The outcome of these discussions was the premise for the “*Investing in our Future – Grants and Fundraising for Indigenous Communities*” session hosted in Calgary in 2018. The response to this event was positive and feedback provided from participants included request for future events. To build off the success of the Calgary event, NIFA decided to host an event in Edmonton in November 2019.

Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



Gathering Summary

On November 21, 2019, the Network of Indigenous Funders of Alberta (NIFA) hosted a one day gathering that brought together funding agencies, Indigenous agencies, Indigenous serving agencies and the Indigenous community-at-large to build relationships and participate in learning opportunities. The theme of the day was networking, collaborations and culture which centered around three focus areas:

1. To learn about, and discuss, successful collaborative approaches
2. To network with funders and other service providers of Indigenous programs and/or services
3. To participate in capacity building and/or educational sessions

The gathering wasn't your typical event where agencies and community come together with funders to discuss access to funding and programs but rather an opportunity for the Indigenous community, agencies and funders to connect and build valuable face-to-face relationships. The day provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about successful collaborations, and why they are important in our changing economic climate, as well as discuss ways in which we can all support Reconciliation by learning to work better together.

The gathering held at the Coast West Edmonton Hotel and Conference Centre was sponsored by Edmonton Community Foundation, with additional support from various local NIFA partners. The planning and execution of the gathering was supported by a local planning committee comprised of six NIFA members from the Edmonton area.

The event garnered great interest, with a final registration number of two hundred and six (206) attendees. Registration was designed to ensure Indigenous community had the most spots available with a limited number of spots for funding agencies. On the day of the gathering, approximately one hundred and fifty-five (155) people were in attendance. Of those in attendance, there was representation from twenty-six (26) different funding agencies and one hundred and seven (108) agency representatives and community members. A participant listing, that have consented to share contact information, is provided in Appendix E.

NIFA was honoured to have the support of six local elders, each representing one of the three Treaties in the province, as well as, Métis and Inuit, to ensure the event was representative of the Indigenous communities throughout the Province. These Elders attended and participated in various capacities throughout the day, including providing smudge, opening and closing prayers, blessings of the food and actively participating in the discussions and learning activities throughout the day. Three of the Elders shared their wisdom, reflection, and experience at the end of the day. Their input and knowledge assisted in framing the importance of oral practices being acknowledged and built into relationship building and funding practices.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Throughout the course of the day, there was a mix of relationship building, networking and learning opportunities. The gathering provided space for attendees to connect during two interactive sessions, lunch and short breaks.

One of the interactive sessions of the day was Conversation Circles. This activity provided an opportunity to network and learn from one another through informal discussions. Three different themes for this activity included relationship building, networking and collaboration with various questions posed within each theme. Participants were asked to move around the room, sit with people they didn't know and work through questions on all three themes. Some comments from the discussion on each theme are included below; a breakdown of the full discussion on each theme can be found in Appendix B.

➤ Relationship building

- Values, trust, action-orientated, open, respect, communication, eliminate competition, face-to-face time, flexibility, power balance, funder employee transition plan, unapproachable, transparent purpose

➤ Networking

- Like-minded people, improve capacity, stronger voice, sense of community, belonging, asset building, authentic relationships, embedded in community, limited resources, time commitment, alternative end goals

➤ Collaboration

- Open-mindedness, actively listening, grass roots level, leverage resources, governance challenge, space issues, formed informally, community circles, politics, fear of saying no

These sessions were supported with two moderated panel discussions in the morning on building and maintaining effective collaborative models for more efficient, effective program and service delivery. Information was collected throughout the day, during all panel discussions, activities, breakout sessions and reflections. Each of them are summarized within the appendices.

In order to support the networking theme of the day, participants representing an agency were asked to provide information regarding their programs and services as a mapping exercise to be shared with participants following the event and can be found in Appendix C.

Following the gathering, an online evaluation was sent to all registered participants the day after the gathering. This provided attendees an opportunity to reflect on the day and share their feedback to make improvements and changes if future opportunities arise. The planning committee received forty-two (42) completed evaluations or twenty-eight seven percent (27%).

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Themes that emerged from evaluation results:

- the importance and benefits of collaboration
- the power of collaboration' possibilities when numerous agencies come together as equals for a common goal with shared values (such as C5)
- spend less time on presentations and provide more opportunities and time to network
- more clarity on the purpose and intent of the day
- more discussion (with funders) on decolonizing funding approaches
- identify funders in the room; provide time and space for interaction with funders

Respondents felt the highlights of the event were the opportunities to meet and network with new people, learning about successful collaborations, the conversation circles and engagement of the Elders. See Appendix D for the full feedback from the evaluations submitted.

Next Steps

Based on feedback from the day and observations made during the gathering, participants identified the need to continue these conversations and opportunities to build relationships. The planning committee will follow up with attendees via email to survey the community on potential formats and topics for on-going discussions. The planning committee is looking into various platforms for smaller group discussions and exchanges of information as requested at the gathering. We will share this information with attendees as they arise.

For attendees in the greater Edmonton area, an opportunity to participate in more focused conversations regarding Indigenous program and services gap analysis, priority setting, and action planning will take place at Amiskwaciy Academy on March 12th from 10:00 – 3:00.

A special thanks to the members of the Edmonton Planning Committee:

- Alma Zukanovic, Indigenous Services Canada
- Brittany Whitford, Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association (ECALA)
- Cassandra Lundell, Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF)
- Debbie Clark, Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association (ECALA)
- Emilea Saadeh, (formerly with) City of Edmonton, Indigenous Relations Office
- Katherine Brown, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
- Sheilah Pittman, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

[Link here to access various presentations, resources, and other files from the gathering.](#)

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Appendix A - Elder Reflections and Wisdom

Elder Rose Wabasca (Treaty 8), Elder Tom Snow (Treaty 7) & Elder Walter Bonaise (Treaty 6)

We were honoured to have four (4) Elders participate throughout the event. One Elder (Elder Heather Poitras) provided spiritual support by offering participants an opportunity to smudge at the beginning of the day as well as blessing the food throughout the day. We also had an additional three Elders, one representing each Treaty area within Alberta, present throughout the day to participate in and observe the activities. These Elders were asked to provide their wisdom to participants on what they heard and learnt throughout the day during the event wrap up.

What they shared with us was the importance of relationship, that we are all related and need to learn to work together. They shared that one does not have to be Indigenous in order to “walk our ways”, that Creator put us on this earth to live in harmony and all that matters is that you are a good person when you practice your beliefs.

They stressed that in whatever we do, we need to address all four elements of the medicine wheel and address the spiritual part of everything (such as provide smudge and protocol) as was done during this event. They advised that we need to live with each other and not demean anyone spiritually, physically or intellectually. Moving forward, they shared that we need to close the gap between what we want to do or are trying to do and what we are currently doing and do not let funding (or lack of it) stop you from doing the good work you are doing.

The Elders believed that the interactive sessions offered at the event are important and should be the focus as the way to build relationship and work together. The Elders shared that with events like this, they are hopeful for the future and have seen a positive change over the years in how the Indigenous community is treated.



**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Appendix B- Conversation Circles

Themes: Relationship Building, Networking, Collaboration

An interactive session was held following the lunch break to provide an opportunity to network, build relationship and learn from each other through conversation circles. There were four questions provided for each of the three main themes of the day (relationship building, networking and collaboration) placed on tables around the room. Participants were asked to assign a recorder to collect the response of the group. Participants were also asked to move around the room; to sit with others they did not know and work through all three themes. In reviewing the responses, clear themes on each were drawn which are summarized below.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

1. Describe what a good working relationship looks like between community partners and funders?

- A good working relationship is one that is rooted in the following values: trust, transparency, accountability, respect, understanding, reciprocity, communication, maturity, collaboration, open-mindedness, accessibility and a shared vision.
- In order to establish good working relations, funders must be action-oriented and put the effort into learning understanding the goals and needs of the communities. They must avoid the silo effect and be properly aware of the organization mandate along with the issues of the communities. They can accomplish this by putting in the effort to get to know people through phone calls, person-to-person visits, and providing application to funding decisions feedback & input. It is also a huge time saver to meet the organizations where they are at and to have everyone at the same place.
- There is a difference between being an applicant/funder than being a partner. In order to get to a deeper level of relations, funders must be open to informal communication, respect beliefs, appreciate diversity, and be open to innovation.
- Funders must ensure that there is equity and proper handling and access to funds. They must clearly communicate the funding available and what the best fit is. To determine the needs, they must understand what the people are saying. They must seek knowledge from Elders as they are the foundation of change, the wisdom keepers and will know what the needs are from experience. Additionally, the power imbalance where funders have more power must be eliminated.
- The current system is about competing for limited resources. In order to establish a good working relationship, competition must be eliminated, and information must be shared transparently.

2. How do we create a model together to better meet the needs of the communities we serve and ensure everyone's voices are heard?

- There is no "one size fits all" model or one solution, but a set of solutions. In order to identify all needs and moving parts, the model should be based on the community and take into account the views of the people being served. If funders are not representing the people they are serving, then they are working backwards.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



- There needs to be more face-to-face time and engagement between the funders and the community in order to ensure the Indigenous voice is embedded in the process. Funders must start at grassroots level and get front-line workers involved.
- Funders should be flexible and open to new strategies in their model. They should look at traditional community models and seek guidance from the wisdom of elders.
- The model should be a human right's model, ensuring everyone at the table has equal participation and a safe space to speak up.
- There needs to be more sharing circles created in which agencies come together to work out how to effectively share information, tools and programs which are working or not working.
- There needs to be a common understanding of values, open communication, respect, accountability and understanding of the common goal. The model should be based on human relationships, moving from competition to understanding.
- There needs to be a power balance between funders and supporters. An ideal model involves more resources and partnerships between funders and organizations, along with flexibility to respond appropriately.
- Funding should not be limited in a way that causes mission drift.
- Bad example of a question: leading as to a western perspective. Comes from a place of privilege – models are a western practice.
- Need for Funder employee transition plan (when people leave).
- Selective in the grants you apply to. Need for more operational grants.
- Cooperation, knowing what kind of leverage you need.
- Flexibility and balance in what these regulations and policy can do.
- Some funders have more flexibility than government. Federal governments can't just work and think about it later, you have to play.
- Application process, Indigenous communities can't get through applications as well. They don't have capacity.
- Smaller organizations, employees paid to work off the edge of their desk to get funding - tend to lose funding to the big agencies.
- Lethbridge - process of looking at doing verbal applications and interview process instead of heavy applications.

3. How do you currently view your relationship with your various funders and what would you change if you could? (current vs. ideal/future)

- Current relationship:
 - There is a mix of relationships – both good and bad. There is no consistency between funders. Some funders are open whereas there are some the community never sees.
 - Funders are too restrictive and do not seem to understand the reality of working in the community. There is a question of trust as funders seem to be protecting a part of the gold. Additionally, some things cannot be communicated in the way the funders want them communicated.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



- There is no communication from funders, and communities must jump through hoops. Additionally, funders are not thinking long-term enough (3-5 years).
 - It can be complicated when funding is difficult to access. Finding information can be difficult when you have to search out various websites rather than a single consolidated source to inform people. The sprawled information can cause a disinterest in working together.
 - A senior center is critical but there is no funding available, there is a barrier stopping the community from solving this.
 - What makes a bad funder is the inability to relate to humans, distrust of the expertise of the organization, disconnected relationship (particularly with government funders) and showing no face to the community. Funders at the table like to think that they are approachable and conveyed to the community, however, feedback is that they are unapproachable.
 - There is fear of losing funding in relationship and risk of funders favoring certain programs because they had a relationship established.
- Ideal relationship:
 - An ideal relationship involves communication, accessibility, flexibility, creativity and listening to what the community needs. Having the funders come to the community to learn about Indigenous values makes an enormous difference.
 - Funders taking more responsibility to communicate with other funders as to how they could provide opportunities. There are many issues that funders are not aware of – understanding has to be at a nation-wide level.
 - Partnering with the organizations that have the same values. Building funding based on elements that affect clients.
 - There needs to be more multi-year commitments for more stability.
 - Funders need more human resources (staff)
 - Diluting of funds to build stronger relationships that contribute to the success of all peoples.
 - Conduct surveys on interactions between funder and recipient.
 - Attend open houses, events of funder.
 - Workshops training to help build capacity with funders.
 - Accountability data needs to benefit the community in better ways.
 - Funding recipients need to be bold (remove the invisible barrier) and ask for what they truly need.
 - If you have a narrow funding mandate, bring along funding information from other opportunities to share.
 - Transparent purpose to the paperwork and reprinting.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



4. If you had program implementation concerns, such as a sudden decline in participant numbers, and you couldn't understand why, what would you do? Would you reach out to your funders?

- 'Yes':
 - Communication has led to a better relationship
 - Funders are there to help
 - It's not all about numbers; it's about the quality of service. Need to better understand what the decline in numbers is about.
- 'No':
 - Funders are not flexible in being able to move money around in proposals. Sometimes they provide insufficient funds
 - Because there is a risk to losing funding
 - There is a fear of contacting funders, fear of failure and rejection
- 'Maybe':
 - It depends, some of the funders have done the work and are better than others
 - Would go to participants before going to funders
 - Reach out the citizens you serve to understand why they may not be participating. Gains an accurate understanding of the issue from the people directly rather than an idea from the funder which may not be the actual reason.
 - Understand the barriers for the participants – what are they missing?
 - Greater level of flexibility mid program
 - Add/remove budget line items

NETWORKING

1. What do you see as the purpose of a network?

- The purpose of a network is to build meaningful relations and connections through collaboration. A network brings like-minded people working towards a common goal together. Collaboration creates value, raises attention to issues, builds strength, improves capacity, and provides opportunities to create safe spaces for discussions.
- A network allows people to share information, knowledge, resources, ideas, successes and challenges with one another. Exchanging expertise is extremely beneficial as everyone has different talents, and it is an excellent opportunity to learn from others. A network provides access to mentors and diverse perspectives, allowing people an opportunity to build capacity and gain moral support.
- Networking is an organic way to build a stronger voice and a sense of community. It provides organic opportunities to identify resources and issues in the company. It is also empowering to be surrounded by like-minded people as it is easy to lose sight of the cause when working in silos.

Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



- In order for a network to be beneficial, it has to be one that meets often, does not focus on merely checkboxes, helps find blind spots, identifies gaps and has fluid communication.
- Networking provides opportunities to call on people who have applied for the same grants and/or completed the same applications. It allows people to support other people in different communities. This can be done by providing guidance and direction to those who are new to the funding process.
- Multiple agencies can come together and provide alternate viewpoints, experience, and tools. If one agency has experience tackling a challenge you can use their experience to better manage similar situations in the future. Other agencies may have assets which could be useable.

2. Are you currently part of a network and how has it benefited you?

Are you currently part of a network?

- Five respondents simply responded yes, and two indicated a no
- Additional comments provided are as follows:
 - As a founder and member of this network of funders "Indigenous Funders of Alberta", it has helped to connect what is funding, who are the funders and what are the issues there are.
 - Part of several networks, if no benefit, wouldn't be a part
 - Part of organizing event, opening up to new ways of seeing things
 - Various networks for various needs, help to develop
 - Provincial family and community support services – partnership with municipalities
 - Network been dissolved due to mismanagement, poor board management. Starting new and building a new network. Connection to community

How has it benefited you?

- Benefits from the Indigenous community – a sense of belonging
- They are very beneficial in community engagement for helping to stay in the loop and understand what is occurring in the communities.
 - Since it's a large land base, interagency meetings provide a good view of what is occurring and can identify areas to add value to.
- Coming together allows you to bounce ideas together and reduce duplication to focus on asset building and stronger relationships. Collaborating allows people to grow their network, support and connect with one another, and solve problems. Additionally, it is a time-saver to have everyone at the same place.
- Being segregated from one's own culture is a huge loss. Finding an Indigenous community through networks helps.

3. When part of a successful network in the past, in your opinion, what contributed to its success?

- Network must be based on genuine and authentic relationships. It must carry values of respect, collaboration, commitment, open-mindedness and trust. Additionally, a network must have regular interactions, enough to form meaningful connections.

Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



- A network must be trusting and willing to share their knowledge with one another. By sharing information, resources and strategies with one another, a network is able to learn from the past and create a safe place for honesty. Having enough information about each other's work can help everyone at the table understand how to best support each other. Additionally, sharing services and resources results in higher cost-efficiency.
- For networks to work they need people who are dedicated in working for a common goal. If multiple people come together and recognize a need for something, you will need a dedicated person to keep pushing the project forward.
- Need people to respectfully work together and allow them to disagree and challenge each other to make one another think. Being challenged is a good thing as it allows people to grow and learn. Give everyone an open space where they can have respectful discussions on the best ways to serve communities. Need to respect diverse protocols and cultures.
- A network should be embedded in the community, taking into account the traditional culture, values and wisdom of elders.
- A network needs to be action-focused or otherwise it is not useful. Members must show up and actually be active contributors.
- Administrative tasks such as taking meeting notes, keeping track of action plans, updating websites, distributing emails can help communication within a network.

4. What are some of your hesitations in joining a network?

- Lack of trust – there is competition and a network requires commitment of others. Sometimes people don't want to share valuable information and resources.
- There is risk that it will be an unsuccessful network. Signs of this are lack of communication, mismanaged events, and meetings without any benefits to the attendees.
- Networks require limited resources such as time, commitment and money, which are limited
- The members of the network may have alternate end goals or views
- Lack of capacity – the network does not have the ability to actually do something
- There is complacency within the network – fear of change
- Not having easy access to have spaces
- The network is not action-focused enough, it is slow moving.
- Fear of loss of identity.

COLLABORATION

1. When you hear the term collaboration, what does this mean to you? What does it look like and how would you go about forming a collaboration? What are some of the key things to consider?

What does collaboration mean to you? How would you go about forming a collaboration?

- Collaboration means working together with other like-minded individuals in order to achieve a common goal.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



- Values such as trust, teamwork, open-mindedness, transparency, equality are very important. Everyone should have the chance to present their view and be represented.
- Members must be willing to share information and decision-making processes.
- Collaboration can be formed by networking, reaching out for coffee, actively listening and putting in the effort to cooperate with others.
- Collaboration results in an increase in opportunities, better coordination of services, having access to other funding, and developing good partnerships for the benefit of the people being served.
- Collaboration means to start at the grass roots level, getting input from the community and elders.

Things to consider:

- The structure of the collaboration – the guidelines, individual mandates, implementation, goals, voting rules, financials and objectives.
- The contribution of the members should be considered; analyzing who is there at the table and who isn't.
- A connector or supporter is different than a collaborator.
- Need to consider what the collaboration's needs/gaps are, and who is best to fill it.
- Collaboration is not just working to a common goal, it is helping each other achieve a common goal.

2. From what you heard this morning from the panelists on successful forms of collaboration, do you see a potential use for you? How/In what way would you consider a collaboration?

Do you see a potential use for you?

- To engage stakeholders to reach common outcome, build capacity, leverage resources and knowledge, create diverse thinking, build bigger network
- Collaborations similar to the panelists have been tried in the city before and have not been successful
- Have to collaborate or else pieces will be missing.
- Collaborate to end issues such as poverty, and assist those with disorders such as Asperger's, schizophrenia, and Tourette syndrome.
- Funders recognize a need for collaboration among agencies and other funders.

How/In what way would you consider a collaboration?

- A collaboration is usually formed informally. Can be formed by reaching out for coffee and meeting people in an informal manner.
- It is challenging to form a collaboration because of external circumstances influencing decision making. Examples of this is the governments, and how long it takes them to process funding approval. Federal dollars should be spent on program delivery instead of talking.
- Another challenge is governance, who is there at the table. A collaboration should also have a facilitator to ensure there is sufficient communication between members.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



- Space, along with willingness to share information and other resources is often an issue
- Need all Indigenous organizations in Edmonton to come together to find out what they do
- Have community circles such as libraries and museums.
- A collaboration requires equality, common values and goals.
- A collaboration should be community, family and relationship focused. Forms of practice (ethical space) such as smudges and sharing circles should be allowed.
- Funders want outcomes, but they cannot forget to build a relationship and connect with the client; connect grass roots to the community.

3. If you were aware of a call for proposals and the funder requested as part of the proposal that you identify collaborators on your project, who would you identify and what would their role be?

- Would look at existing relationships – cannot force a relationship where it would not work.
- Would invite different groups to participate in order to find out what area the proposal is about
- Identify collaborators with shared values – those who understand how to work and be accomplished.
- The roles would depend on the individual's strengths, and the program
- Non-Indigenous organizations need authentic relationship with Indigenous peoples
- Funders can't tell you what to do, you need to tell them what you need
- There is a lot of overlap when non-Indigenous services, and Indigenous services try to provide funding, but this can create conflict.
- Funders using their power to drive an organization that might not be natural
- There is fear of saying no to the funder
- Funders are cutting the pie too small, too many groups, and forcing collaboration.
- Collaboration needs to be to meet the needs of people, but that is really hard when there is no overlap.

4. What are some of the barriers in forming a collaboration?

- Potential for competition for resources and lack of information sharing
- Lack of commitment and awareness in members, resulting in a high turnover rate.
- Different mandates/interests
- All members need to be present and contributing
- Whether individuals in the collaboration fit in, and if it fits their individual criteria's
- Whether the collaboration is actually useful – does it benefit the people being served?
- Lack of resources such as staff and time
- Politics
- Relationships and priorities may change and drift over time
- Unrealistic expectations from funders and partners

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Following the Conversation Circles, participants were asked to identify any key – “aha” moments they had during the activity share them with the group. The following responses were provided:

- Relationship between funders and NPO
 - Transitional plans when they are leaving, help the transition for the next person who takes the file
 - Have to jump through the hoops
 - Preparation
- Relationship building – understanding model
 - How language and misunderstanding happens
 - Create a space of understanding before you have that conversation
- Collaboration – its about getting yourself to the table
 - What the whole team is going to do
 - It's a process to get to the table
 - Then vision and the work
- Relationship building:
 - Head to heart – Indigenous mindsets
 - Rather be in the community and know the environment
 - Had to go to Industry to get something
 - People out there who want to help and have restorative justice
 - Parents rely on funders for dinner on the table, and it's good to know that the funders care
- Relationship building:
 - Organizations give safe spaces for these conversations to know where people are at, and what those spaces look like
- Decolonization
 - Having and breaking bread, informal meal, in the hallways, that's the moment when she realized what networking was
- Relationship building
 - The word trust. Create opportunities to tell your story, over food
 - Trust- a big US
- How can reserves connect with their urban partnerships
 - That separation has existed
 - How to cross those boundaries
 - The difference between reserve and urban
 - All my relations
 - Big challenge with funding, Stony plain and Paul FN, collaboration was hard, now they are comfortable and have trust
 - Where does the money go, we get stuck in the government systems
 - Have a space to talk about that. – friendship centres

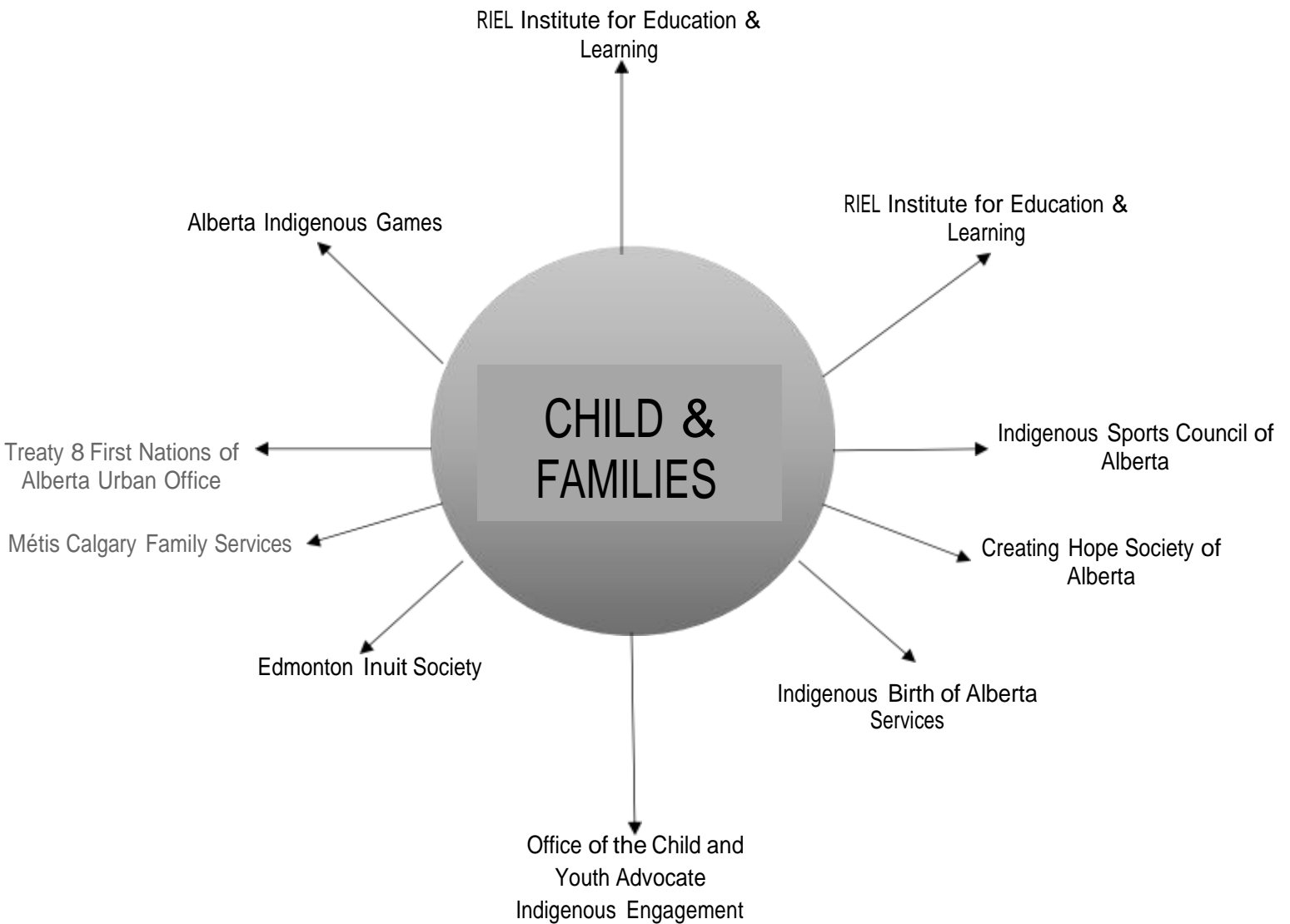
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



Appendix C – Programs and Service Mapping

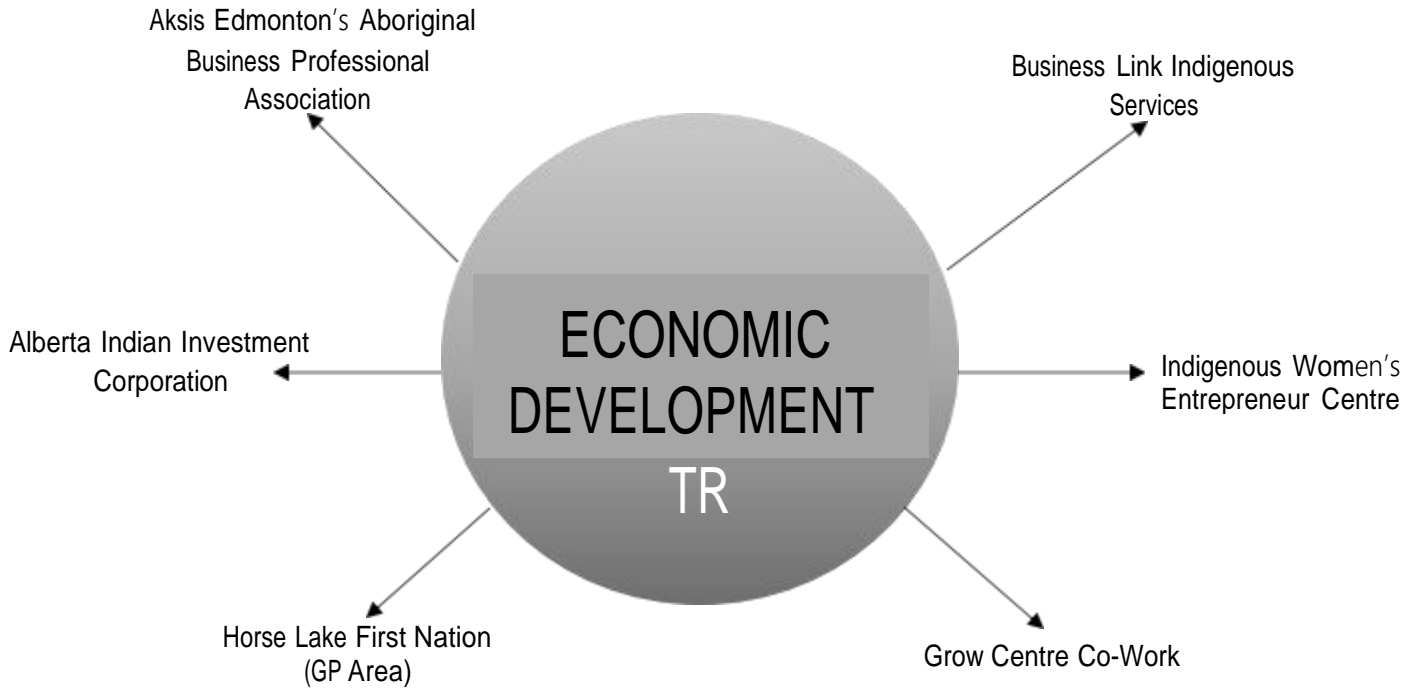
In order to support the networking theme of the day, participants were asked to complete a programs and services mapping exercise. Each agency/organization was asked to indicate what programs and services they provide, their contact information as well as the city in which the program/service is provided. Information was collected using sixteen provided themes, including an “other” category.

The results of this mapping activity are as follows:



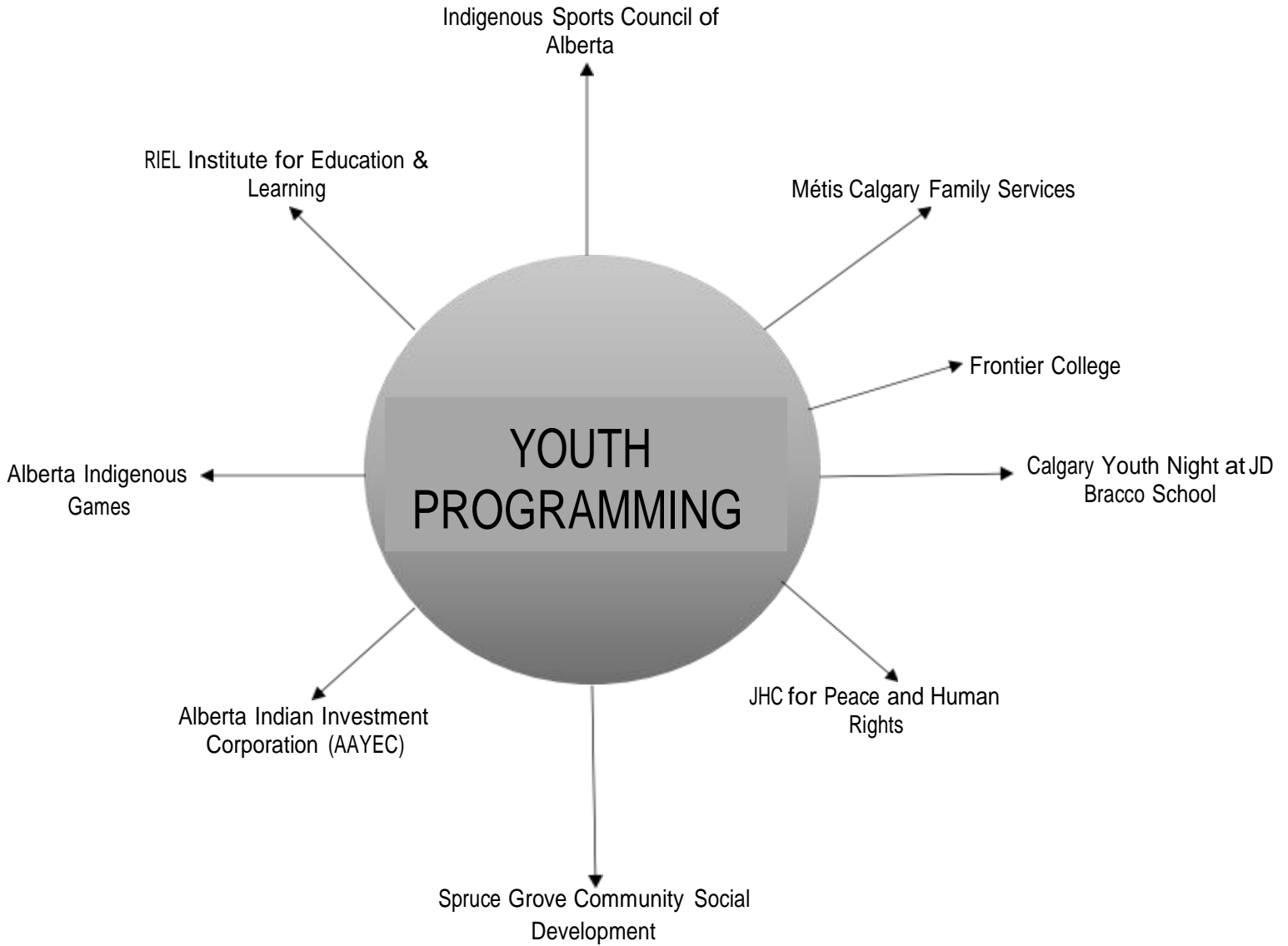
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





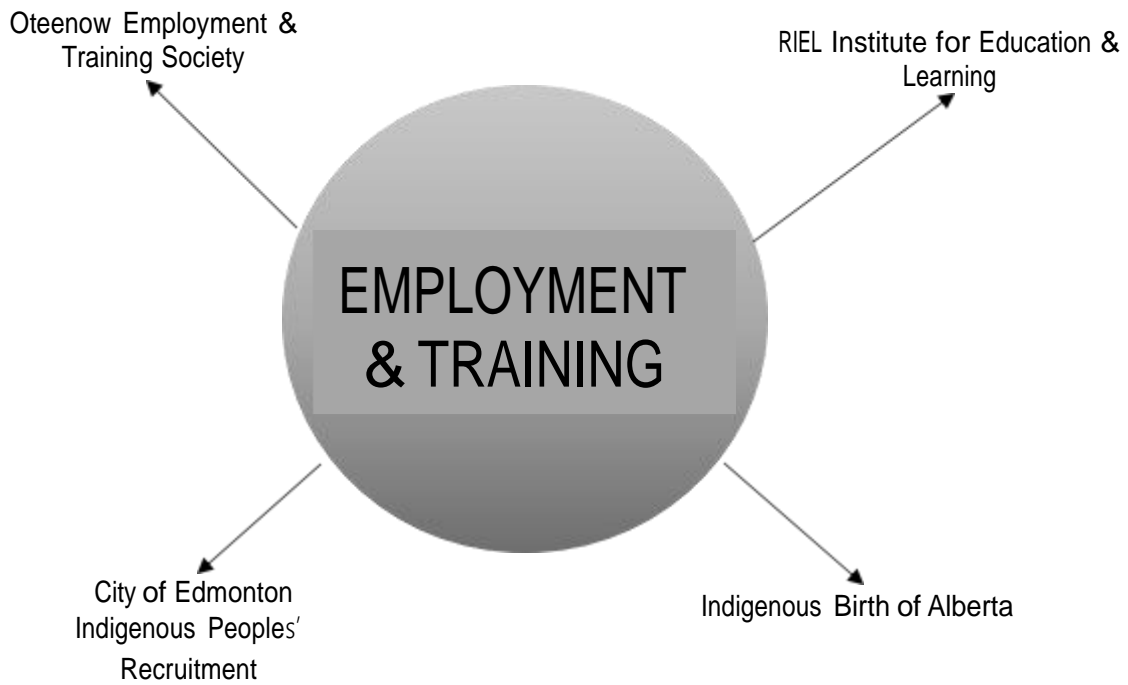
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





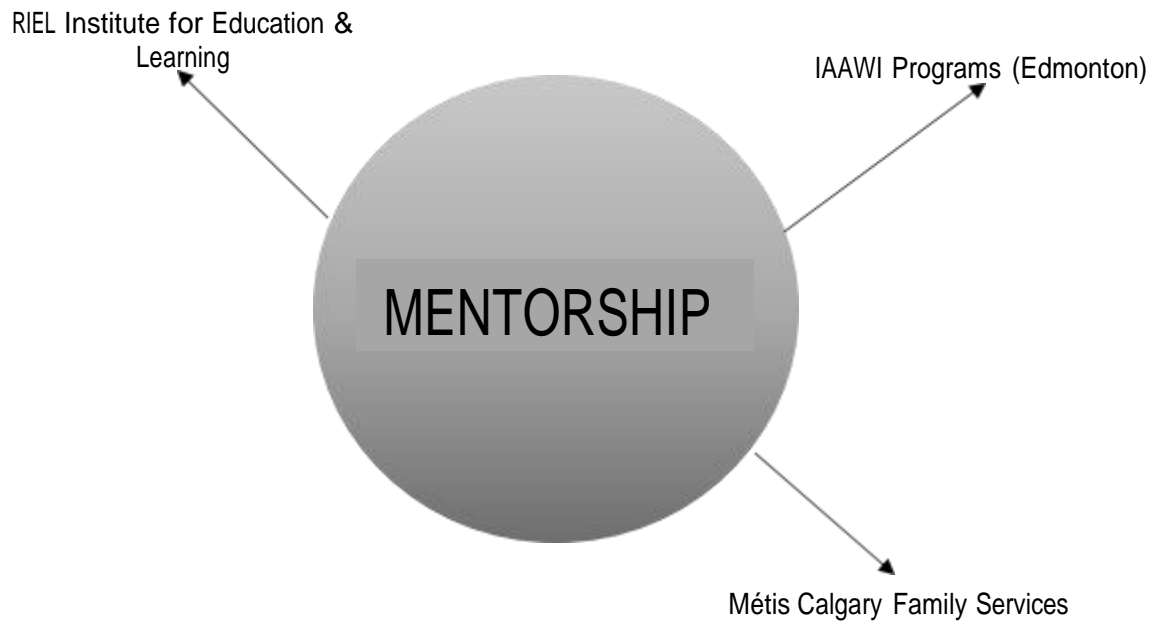
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





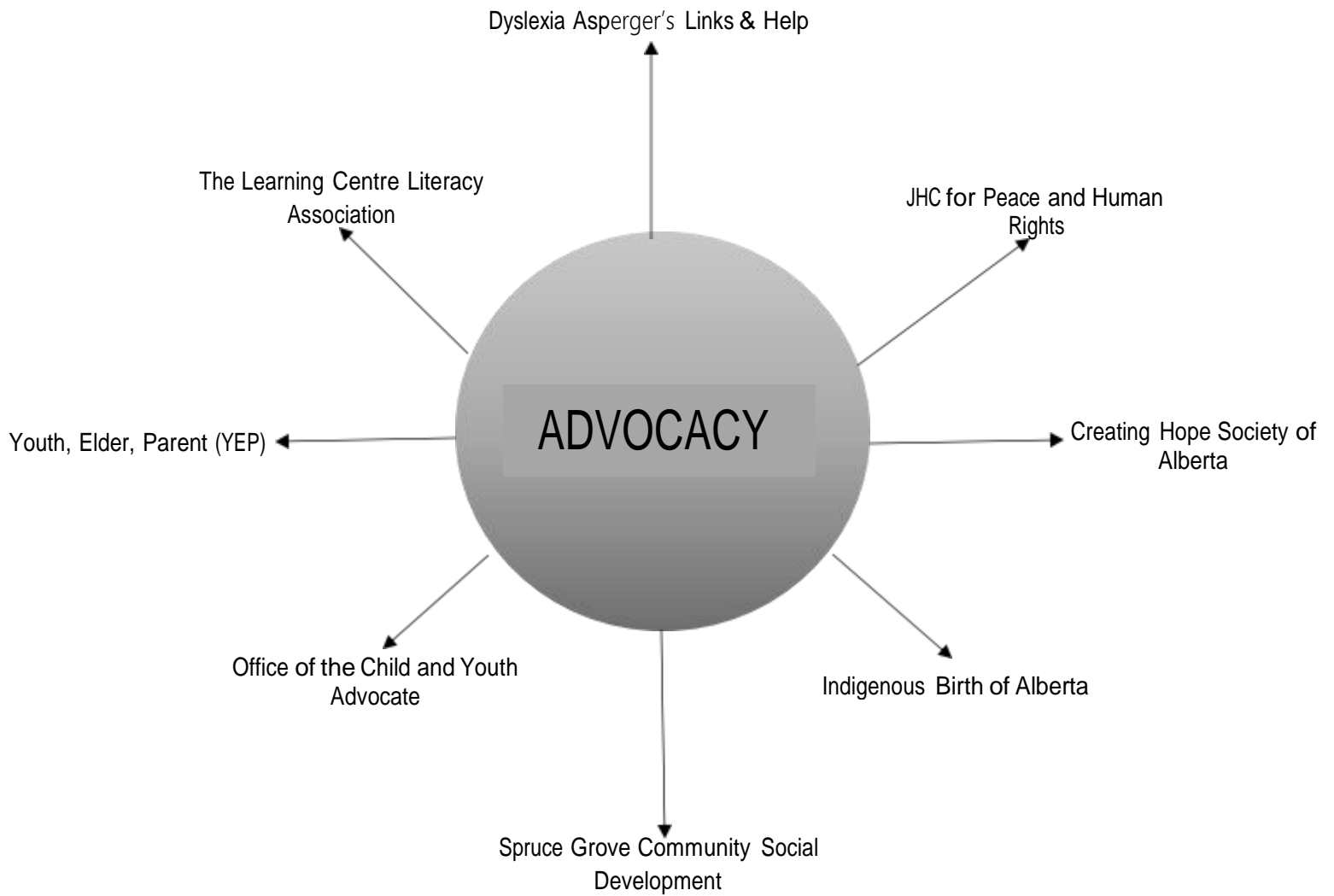
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





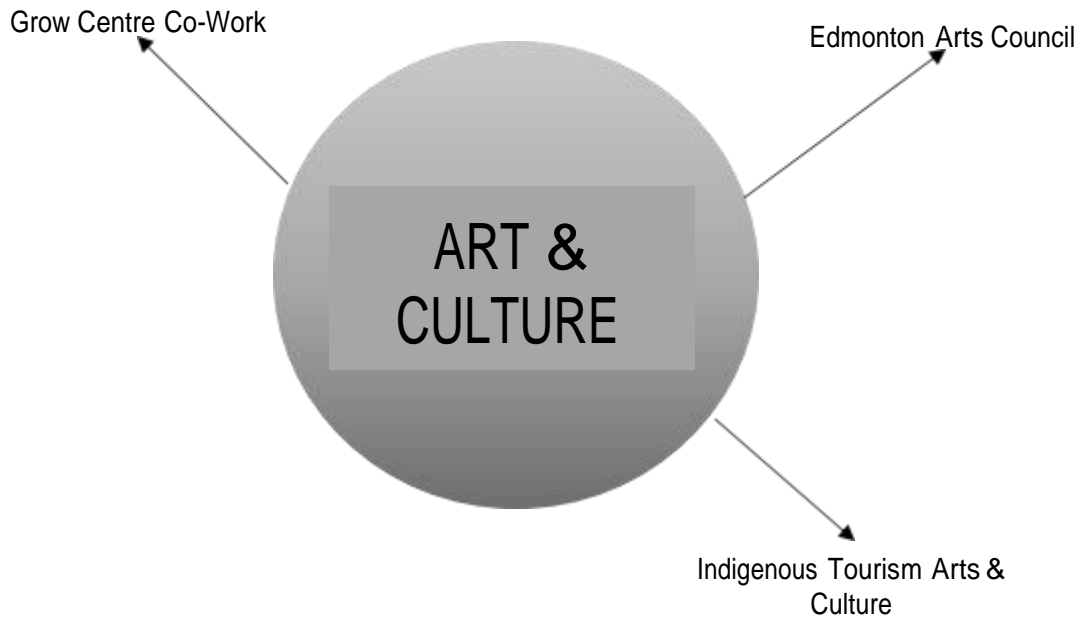
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





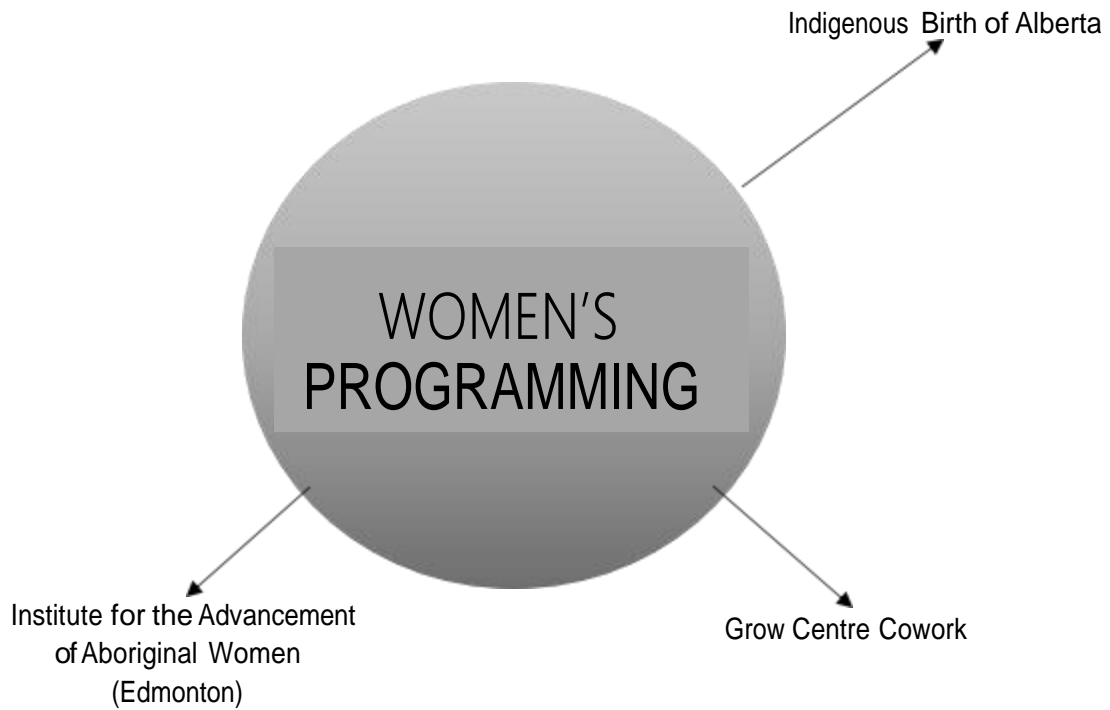
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**

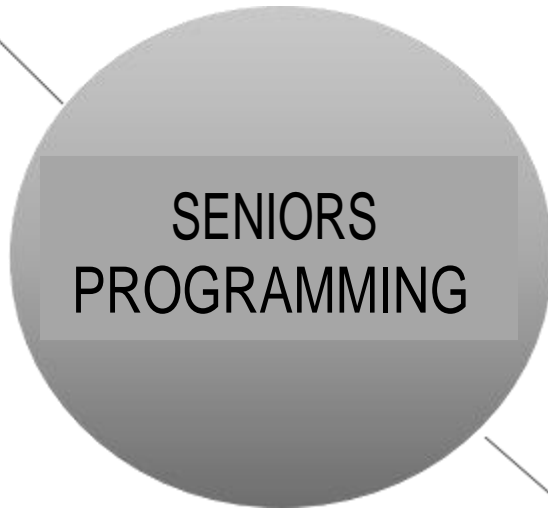




Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



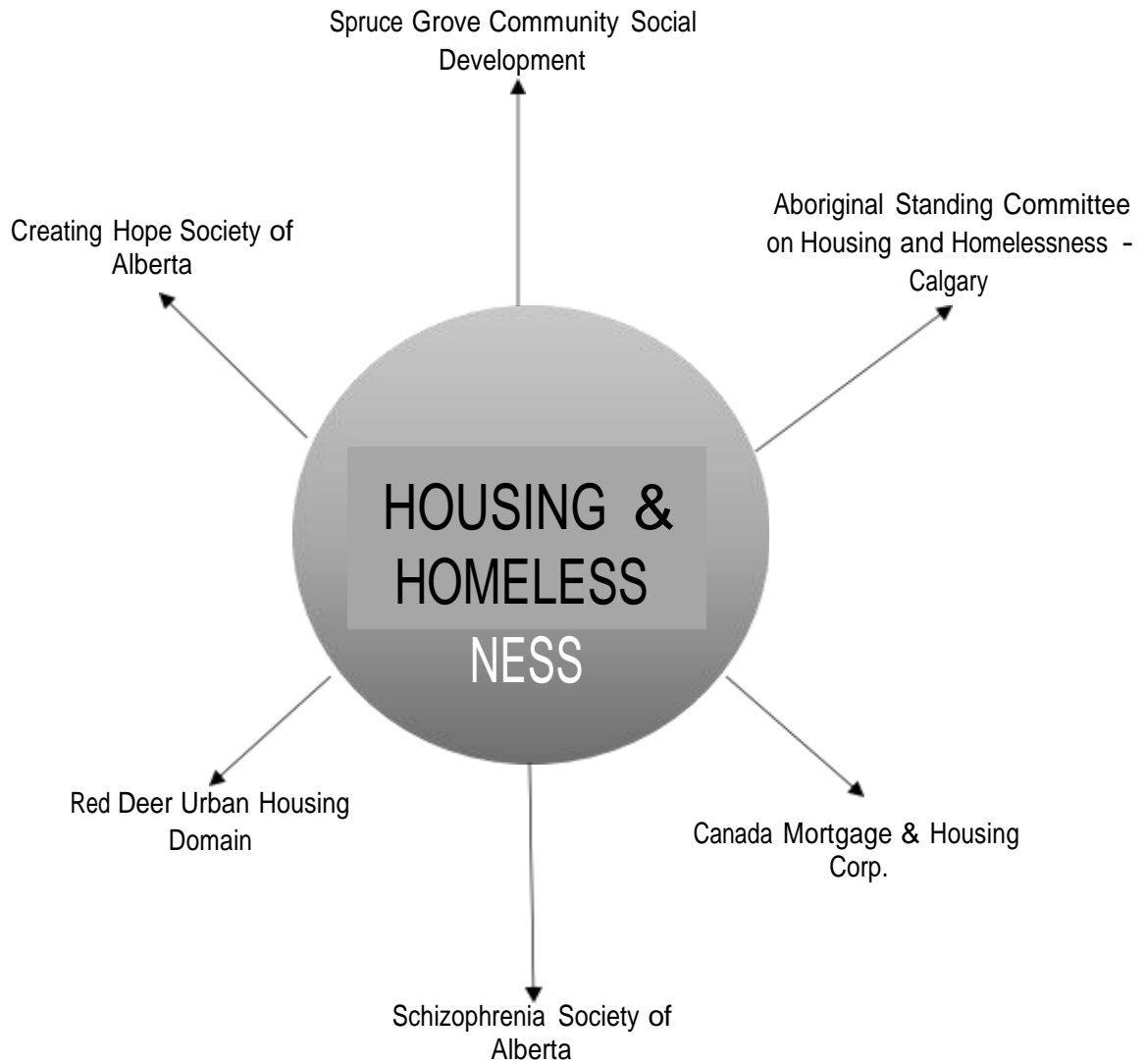
Spruce Grove Community Social
Development



Schizophrenia Society of
Alberta

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**





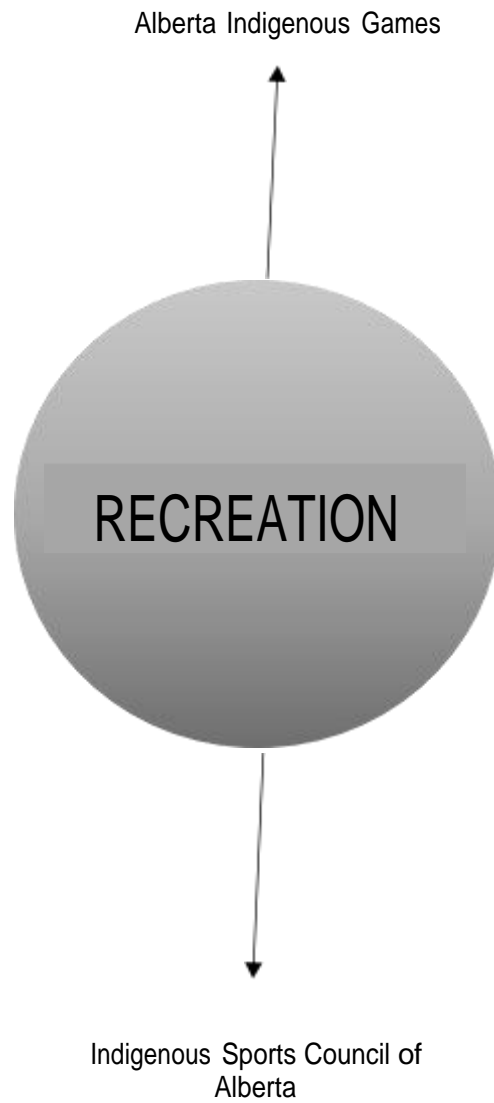
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





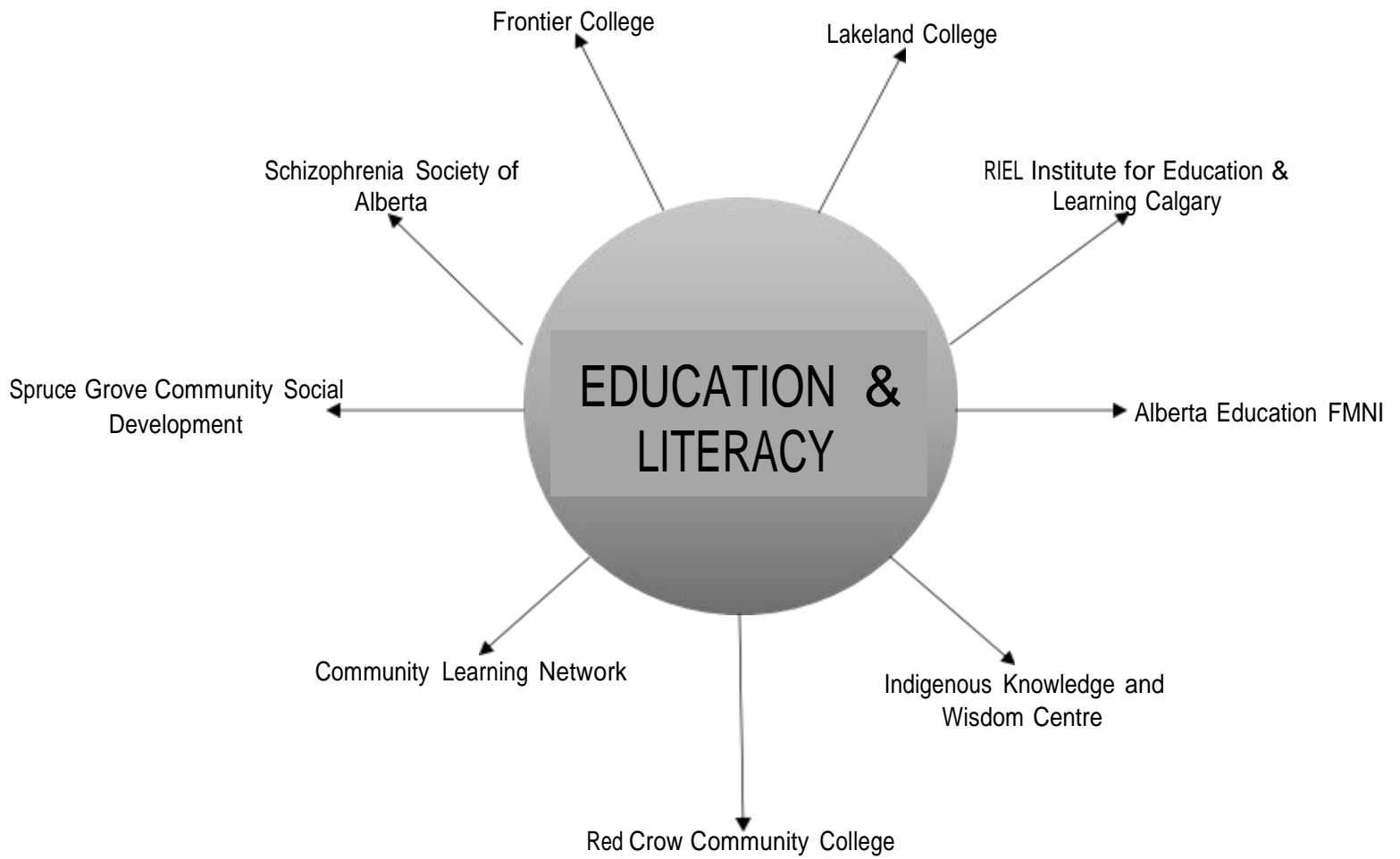
**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**





Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





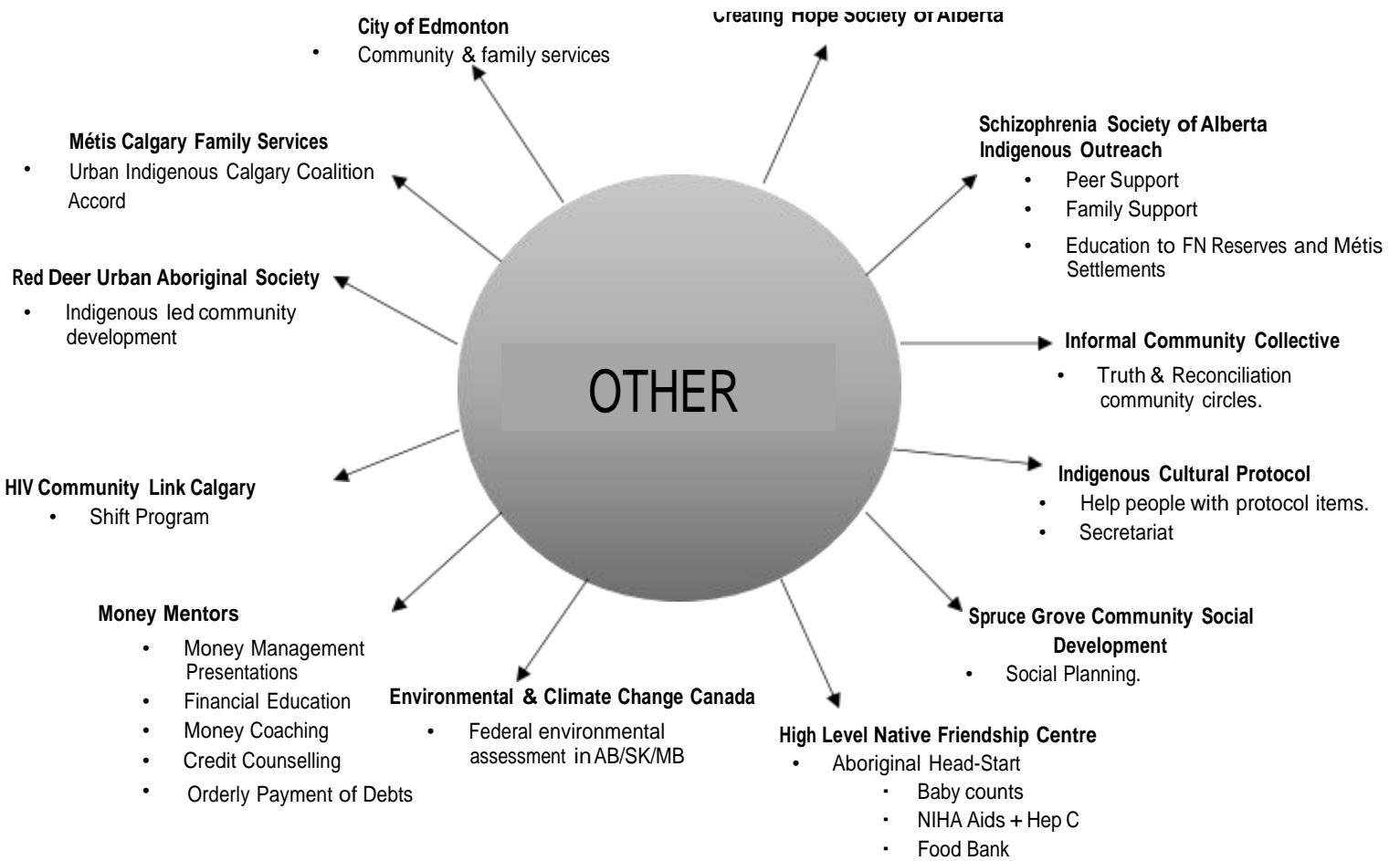
Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships





Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



Appendix D – Gathering Evaluation Results

The Network of Indigenous Funders of Alberta (NIFA) hosted this Indigenous community gathering on Thursday November 21st. The gathering was an opportunity to bring together funding agencies, Indigenous agencies, Indigenous serving agencies and Indigenous community members to build relationships and network. Twenty-one (21) different funding agencies and ninety-three (93) community organizations were represented to discuss topics such as decolonizing funding, Indigenous sharing networks and collaboration and culture. It was a true example of reconciliation.

A survey was conducted through the platform Survey Monkey with the link sent to all registrants via emails submitted through the EventBrite registration. The following are recorded responses of 42 attendees who submitted a response.

1. How did you hear about this gathering?

All 42 respondents provided an answer; however, 2 responses did not answer the question posed. Therefore, 40 responses were counted. The responses are as follows:

	At Work	Email	From a NIFA rep	Word of	Facebook /	Newsletter/ Bulletin	Total
Number of Respondents	9	8	8	8	4	3	40
Percentage of Respondents	22.5%	20%	20%	20%	10%	7.5%	100%

2. Which of the following groups - Community Organization or Agency, Funder, or Community Members do you represent?

	Community Organization or Agency	Funders	Community Members	Total
Number of Respondents	31	7	4	42
Percentage of Respondents	73.81%	16.67%	9.52%	100%

Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



Takeaways

3. What did you learn today?

Of the 42 respondents, 38 provided response to this question (90%). Their responses are as follows:

- C5 mandates & collaborations
- about exciting local initiatives and relationships
- collaborating, networking, additional resources within the community
- Lifting up others
- Sitting with funders and having that conversation and being heard
- Met some funders made some connections
- Nothing really
- Learned much about C5 and collaborative service
- The varied aspects of how groups have joined forces to meet similar needs in the community.
- Agency Collaboration can work
- Promising collaborative practices, more about Indigenous programming in Edmonton and area
- What good work the C5 is doing
- Collaboration can help organizations reach a common goal. Also, reporting is essential to ensure funds are well accounted for.
- Elders' wisdom
- That money may be available?
- The amount of need is great, and the funding amount is great but the priorities do not always match
- Collaboration works but all parties need a voice
- That we need to consider rural and urban issues and not just focus on urban issues
- Nothing
- Benefits of collaboration, communication and working together.
- Collaborative by C5, and lots interested in Indigenous evaluation
- There are many organizations to refer learners/ coordinators too.
- There were many learning opportunities today but one that I will act upon right away is the c5.
- I learned there is a lot of value of dreaming bigger than mandates and being willing to take risks.
- I learned about some awesome network innovations going on around the Province
- A more in-depth knowledge of C5 (I was only there for the morning)
- Collaborate!
- That agencies are working towards collaborative, wrap around services for people.
- A great networking opportunity
- the importance of being inclusive and collaborating
- Collaboration is priority

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



- the importance of respecting oral knowledge sharing
- About C5 activities which are done outside of organizational funding. Really appreciated their sharing of information on meeting the Syrian refugees at the airport and collaboratively supporting the communities from Fort McMurray fires.
- I learned about C5
- Benefits of networking, new ideas on approaching funding
- The power of collaboration
- Start where you are, refine and finesse along the way.
- That organizations should collaborate more to provide wrap around service

4. Rate each panel, session or activity based on the following sentence:
"I found the session informative"

Activity	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Total Responses
C5 Collaborative Panel	40.48% 1	35.71% 1	11.90% 5	4.76% 2	4.76% 2	2.38% 1	42
Indigenous Sharing Networks Panel	26.19% 1	33.33% 1	26.19% 1	9.52% 4	0.00% 0	4.76% 2	42
Conversation Circles	25.64% 1	56.41% 2	5.13% 2	5.13% 2	2.56% 1	5.13% 2	39
Sharing Our Stories, Karen McKenzie	13.51% 5	29.73% 1	16.22% 6	5.41% 2	2.70% 1	32.43% 1	37
Practice as Ceremony, Christie Pace	18.18% 6	18.18% 6	24.24% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	39.39% 1 3	33
Decolonizing Funding, ECALA	16.22% 6	18.92% 7	29.73% 1	8.11% 3	0.00% 0	27.03% 1	37
Overall, the whole day	25.64% 1	56.41% 2	7.69% 3	7.69% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	39

When asked to include any comment or feedback to the above ranking, 29 of the 42 respondents provided a response (69%). Their responses are as follows:

- Attended to network with funders
- Moving between topics for conversations felt too quick and superficial.
- Please bring this gathering back. It's absolutely great to see everyone come together and stand for the cause they believe in. We need more of this.

Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



- Have information books/ handouts, have the questions tucked in to have more time to contemplate on each question, there was not enough time to go through each question on the colored sheets.
- The casual networking was good. It felt like the purpose was for the funders. They controlled the narrative. I was informed 2 of the 4 people on the steering committee were funders and controlled the questions. The Indigenous people apparently were ignored.
- Great venue, content and food
- Panel session became stifling for the audience. Not enough interaction between presenters and audience.
- We need to have ceremony as part of the room to create ethical space.
- Information was helpful. Could have benefitted from some additional time to network between funders and agencies
- More funding info that we can take home and apply for.
- It would have been helpful if more information was provided as to the purpose of the meeting beforehand. I sent my ecDev officer thinking it was about obtaining funding.
- You had a list of funders that somewhat appeared on the screen sometimes but for 5 seconds which is not enough if we are going to copy them down. How are we going to know who are the funders? Also, nothing all day to show what funding and who provides it. How to get it. Nothing to help out anyone.
- The decolonize funding needs to be actually decolonized to be authentic
- I feel that there was just not enough time to get into the circles. Attending each would have been good, with enough time to get into discussions.
- Talking to other people was great. The people in the room have so much knowledge and wisdom.
- It would have been great to access that more somehow. The first panel on C5 was really long. I think the clarity of the day was lacking - was it to learn more about funders and their practices for Indigenous programs, was it to collaborate more together, was it to network...? Clarity of purpose and emphasis of the purpose throughout the day would have helped and purpose of each session or panel. Although the agenda was on the Eventbrite page, it might have helped to have a printed copy at each table. The conversation circles were a nice way to move around and talk to more people but there were so many questions to respond to. And I wasn't fully certain what the purpose of the conversations were meant to generate. The questions were really broad and not issue specific enough to feel like there was potential for the people at my tables to want to exchange information with each other and collaborate after the meeting. Holding an event is a lot of work so these comments aren't meant to negate the efforts put into organizing it. Breakfast and lunch were great.
- My expectations were totally different from what was offered. I thought the topics were to include funding sources.
- The conversation circles topics were not engaging me, only because I've been working in community in collaborative and network type work for literally decades. It was too basic; I

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



would have enjoyed something more challenging. But it would have been great to build youth leadership or for those just starting out in their careers.

- It was a very interesting day; I came away with a very good understanding of different wants and needs.
- It was well organized and well attended. It would have been nice to know who else was 'in the room' for networking purposes.
- The C5 panel was good, however it could have been cut down by about 15-30 minutes. Instead of extending it to take over the welcoming speech by Councilor Paquette, there could have been a longer break. The coffee break was too short as there was a lot of people that wanted to connect; however, I was only there for the morning, so the conversation circles may have provided this opportunity.
- Inspiring
- Would of like to have theme tables that people could attend, and discussion issues concerns and bring that back to the larger group.
- Some of the speeches were too long.
- As an example, Decolonizing funding would have been more effective if it was facilitated by funders; discussion could be had around what does decolonizing funding look like to client, service provider, and funder. How can we start to move towards decolonizing funding? I doubt that most of the room understood what the AISN was especially because it followed the C5, most believed it was another program, I believe the AISN is a valuable tool and resource for the Indigenous community but was not presented with clarity. The C5 presentation was far too long and a little self-gratifying. Breakout sessions spoke to individual programs rather than the actual advertised session.
- The morning was a bit disjointed because there was a lot of information which was being repeated by the presenters. I think that they could have divided the information to be presented by each one of them to make it more coherent.
- It was difficult to hear the speakers for the second panel - The conversation circles were meaningful - There was insufficient time for discussion of the decolonizing funding which was the topic I was most interested in.
- While panels in morning informative, good ideas, especially C5, the panels were too long. The promotion for the conference lead me to believe we could be hearing from various funders and the funding available to from various agencies.
- I enjoyed the C5 panel the most. For the Decolonizing Funding we were expected to come up with solutions, but I went to that session looking for steps for us to do to help make changes so I didn't get what I was looking for in that sense, but I did takeaway other learnings.
- I enjoyed the open floor for providing questions, comments and ideas.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



5. If a similar event were to be held again, what is one thing you would change?

Out of 42 respondents, 41 provided response to this question (97.6%). There responses are as follows:

- Clarity on spirit of intent
- Some actual sharing circles... with more time for listening to each other.
- Make it a two-day event- this will allow more time to create relationships
- More in attendance
- The ability to attend each session that were held in the afternoon
- Elders to sit in each panel and have the discussions
- Opportunity to connect directly with funders
- Actual networking with funders. Gave one funder over table and people can move around to each one like conversation cafe I think it's called.
- Mix up the agenda so that there is more audience interaction with each other and presenters.
- Have funders take a more active role in what they are doing in the future.
- More networking time and/or table talk
- More funding info for agencies to apply for
- Provide an agenda and outline.
- Seating
- Everything. My ears are still ringing from the sound system blaring contradictory sounds.
- More indigenous people leading
- More time, more networking, more time to ask questions. Much of the funding available seems to be geared toward non-profit. I was hoping for alternatives for our organizations.
- Highlight more work practice
- Having more room specific topics and have community members generate ideas for the agenda
- Funding sources
- Share some specific program / funding opportunities
- The conversation circle topics.
- The panel took a lot of time
- I thought it was a wonderful day, I would not change anything.
- I think there should be more time allotted for networking and for the breakout session.
- Would like more networking
- Setting it up so folks are forced to sit with different people and not their usual cohort
- Try not to fit too much in and allow for dialogue/discussion.
- More chance for discussion with different people and organizations. However still the organizers did a good job to encourage discussion
- As above, in order to come together on share challenges
- Shorten the panel discussions. Create more opportunity to meet different people.
- More chance to meet in small groups
- Funder engagement, regional
- Shorter panels



- The length of time for the morning session.
- Make the breakouts longer to allow time for discussion
- Be more specific on theme of conference. Too much to cover in 1 day.
- I felt like copies of the slides could have been provided for us to follow along as the screen was far away, or at least offer to email us the slides and provide a contact
- More time for Elder conversations. Teachings.
- Break up panels i.e. one in the morning one in the afternoon

6. What was the highlight of the day?

Out of 42 respondents, 40 provided response to this question (95%). Their responses are as follows:

- Seeing friends, colleagues, & meeting new ones
- collective prayers and visions/ wisdom of Elders
- I've enjoyed everything
- People coming together
- Collaboration discussions
- Meeting some funders
- Reacquainting with colleagues
- C5 panel
- Q & A in the afternoon.
- The stories of the C5
- C5 panel
- Decolonizing funding
- Meeting many interesting people!
- Free food
- Meeting a couple people in person I haven't yet met.
- The Elders
- Hearing from the elders.
- Collaboration
- Getting to talk to a couple attendees after the event
- Meeting new people
- The Indigenous evaluation circle in the afternoon but we did need more time because we had a big circle.
- Meeting stake holders and starting to build relationships
- The C5 presentation. Also, the fact that we have 80,000 in Indigenous people in Edmonton and 50,000 in Calgary
- The C5 panel presentation - very inspiring and so many take-aways and the Indigenous Sharing
- Networks Panel - validated the work I am doing
- conversation circles
- The c-5 panel in the morning... fascinating!!!

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



- C5 Panel
- Meeting new people passionate about similar things. Also, elder Rose's speech was very heartwarming and inspiring
- The C5 and the discussion tables
- Great day for networking
- importance gathering information and being able to share it in a respective way
- Elders / Tea with elders
- The discussions held at each of the tables (Relationship Building, Collaboration and Networking).
- Meeting others
- Success story of C5 and the approach to newcomers at airport, amazing way to de-bunk stereotyping of our people.
- Meeting others and making new connections
- Being able to connect with my moshum Elder Walter Bonaise
- Conversation circles

7. Are there any additional comments you would like to share?

Of the 42 respondents, 24 provided response to this question (57%). Below are their responses:

- Compressed Exercises & going from table to table did not offer healthy inclusion w new people
- Gratitude!
- It went to fast
- Smudge should have been available in the room all day. Terrible lack of cultural accommodation.
- Thanks for the opportunity to participate. Good facilitation.
- make things funding specific
- This was not what was advertised and many people I talked to were also very disappointed. Waste of my day.
- Perhaps less time on the panels and more time meeting community members in the various activities of the later part of the day. The format was good, but it could have been 2-3 days.
- Maybe next time provide a bit more time for unstructured, organic networking.
- Thank you so much for a day of inspiration and visioning. Time well spent!
- well done! and thank you.
- A yearly event like this would be awesome! so much to learn and share :-)
- Shorten the speeches.
- Really happy to have been in a gathering with many representatives of the Indigenous Peoples in AB. The Elders are always so insightful and sharing their stories is very educative I believe for most people. Their honesty is something we can all learn to embrace.
- Breakout sessions were too short and rushed. Overall great topics but not enough time to engage. Would also have been better to have material available.
- Please continue this, we all felt it was beneficial to ourselves and it will benefit our clients were gathered from this question.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Appendix F - Panel Discussions - C5 Community Hub

C5 North East Community Hub Panelists:

- Corinne Saad, Director of C5
- Cheryl Whiskeyjack, Executive Director of Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
- Erick Ambtman, Executive Director of Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Krysta Fitzgerald, Director, Ubuntu Children and Families

What is C5, how and why did it begin?

The C5 North East Community Hub is a collaborate that works together to provide programs and services to residents of North East Edmonton. C5 initially had no money for this hub, and they had to take little money from each group. However, the Edmonton Community Foundation took a leap of faith and provided funding, and the hub has evolved to provide services, but also respond to community needs. Some of the services they offer include employment services, family services, housing supports, children programs and senior services. This is a highly inclusive atmosphere that encourages diversity and connectivity.

The C5 Ubuntu program is part of the C5 Hub; the program works in partnership with Children's Services to support children and families dealing with multiple complex issues. Parents who don't have their children in their care are able to visit children at the hub in a healthy and relaxed environment. Additionally, they are able to take part in activities with their children to help improve their parenting skills and broaden their support network with other parents.

The Executive Directors of five agencies (1. Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, 2. Terra Centre for Teen Parents, 3. Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, 4. Boyle Street Community Services, 5. Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society) got together 5 years ago to do two things:

- 1.) work collaboratively on the ground where collective action can have greater impact for children, youth and families; and
- 2.) to advocate for systems change on the issues that affect the 30,000 Edmontonians they serve.

They can now attest to the power of collaborative action with the results they're seeing for individuals and families - and new ways of working they could never have anticipated.

C5 is a model of what can happen when agencies choose to think differently. They came together through the strength of their relationship and a determination to support children and families more effectively, not because they had to for funding. Their vision did not start with the how, but rather the

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



common goal of listening to the community and its most vulnerable peoples. This relationship is the foundation of everything they've been able to do the past five years. They understood the need to build capacity and create a new collaborative that could coordinate activities and take the voices of the people they service to the decision-making tables. Some of the issues they tackle include affordable housing and mental health services.

Organizational perspective within the C5 model

The C5 is not a physical entity, it is an idea of people coming together and forming a legitimate partnership. In order to implement change, they focus on moving to action rather than just planning and talking. By being action-focused, they are able to learn, and build on the strengths that each partner of C5 brings to the table. An example of this is their actions during the Fort McMurray fires. C5 was asked to provide supports for evacuees at Lister Hall. They were able to respond immediately to connect those affected by the fires to the services they needed or other resources that they could not get quickly enough.

The lesson the collaborative learnt from that experience is to provide services but also respond to what community members are telling them they need. They believe in doing what's necessary first, then convincing the funders later on, as simply following the money does not make sense to the communities they are serving. When the focus is what people need and the view is in a relational manner, things happen, and funding is received. The organization is more effective based off of the relationships they are able to develop. They are sometimes referred to as C5+ because they bring other partners to the work to most effectively serve people.

One of the most profound aspects of the C5 is the interconnectivity between the partner agencies. They let each other share the pie if one of the agencies does not have the resources. Additionally, there is training between the agencies that have helped them learn more about issues such as the terrible narrative newcomers to Canada were being told about Canadian First Nations peoples. In order to get ahead of this narrative, Bent Arrow would meet the newcomer families right at the airport. They would even go to welcome newcomers at 10pm on a Saturday. Also, by sharing resources such as trainings, the agencies have been able to save fiscally.

Challenges/Threats

Uncertain Waters:

The ability to work together well has allowed C5 to tackle problems easier. The work is done not to employ their staff but to help the people they serve. Working together keeps the group whole and grounded by keeping a focus on the challenges they are addressing. It allows them to control the narrative rather than responding to it. Each individual partner agency has had separate experiences from addressing various challenges. This provides a comfort when navigating uncertain waters as an

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



agency most likely has addressed the issue in their past and will know how to properly address it. One of the great aspects about working in a group is that when there is anxiety, there is someone help guide through it. A collaborative must navigate the waters to figure out how to write the story, instead of having it written about them.

Government:

Regarding political challenges, C5 has been careful to ensure that they have relationships across the political spectrum in both the party of power and the official opposition groups. They have created relationships with various politicians by making connections with those who demonstrated the same values and as a result, despite changes in the government, they have had the support of several members in the current political party in power.

Competition:

The system is set up to compete against each other, therefore it is imperative to figure out how not to do so. Being competitive will not help the children, youth and families that the agencies serve. By identifying where they can work together and best alone, they are able to avoid conflict and competition. Conversations such are dividing funding between partnerships are difficult but were not in C5's case because of the relationships they have established with one another. It is easy to fall back into competitive patterns of behavior during uncertain times, however C5 has been able to focus on the collective and relationships.

Dissolvent of Organization Vision and Goals

In order to prevent loss-of vision during situations such as staffing turn-over, C5 has mindfully embedded the vision into their staffing structures, strategic plans and at the Board level, so that if one of their Directors leaves, the agencies are still in collaboration with the same mission. Additionally, during their yearly retreat, C5 reflects, and collects data and stories of what they have done in the past year. They then match this with the strategic plan to ensure that they are aligned with their vision. Additionally, C5 has passed on learnings to their staff in order to avoid the organization dissolving if a Director were to leave. These learnings include not being restricted by red tape and ignoring standard operating procedures. To just start acting towards solving the challenges identified. C5 quickly saw that in the first 1-2 years, it was the "brain trust" of the Directors that was prepared to act when they needed to help the people they serve.

Miscommunication Across Board of Directors

Each of the organizations have different boards and the boards have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization. The boards of C5 have meeting nights in which they help each other understand what each board is trying to do. It was a slow progression, but the boards were willing to listen and understand. They even realized that they knew each other from other sectors of work. There is lots of cross knowledge between boards with past colleagues and relationships. This provides comfort to know that there are other groups/partners in Edmonton that they can reach out to for advice or resources. The

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



boards to some extent work together in ways such as administration, data, human resources and recruitment. C5 describes the Boards as really gone through an evolution, and when making decisions they now ponder the question “what would C5 say”. Knowing what the other organizations are doing helps the boards plan better.

Embedding Culture into Organization and the Collaborative

Embedding cultural into the organization is a very important aspect of C5. Staff and community have taken part in special cultural events to give them the cultural knowledge of the people they are serving. These include smudges, medicine picking, meals (soup and bannock) and engaging with elders to learn about meaning of protocol and ceremony. Learning about cultural has been highly enriching for staff, allowing them to help better serve their communities. Additionally, C5 truly believes in listening to what the clients are looking for, and healing by cultural events and traditional methods rather than just treatment. An example of the impact of cultural teachings is when Bent Arrow staff were asked by several newcomers to connect them to a Powwow event. The newcomers then chartered a bus to an Enoch Powwow, and had such a great experience that they contacted other people to attend. The community was very welcoming to the newcomers, and the newcomers had the amazing opportunity to experience the First Nation culture.

Audience Questions:

How is data shared between the organizations and how is this data used to inform funders about what the organization is doing?

- The Hub has a huge number of different programs and funding, for which the data is tracked separately. There is an integrated service delivery at the Hub in which the community members can log into a computer and enter their demographic data and the services used.
- Information is shared in a relational and organic way. C5 doesn't just send their partner organizations a file, but actually tells them what they need to know to better serve the client. The client's wishes are highly respected as to what they are willing to have shared. All the referrals are in relationship, and consequently the data is shared in a relational manner.
- It is important to collect numbers and data but also the stories that are shared. These stories bring meaning to the services offered and are motivational pieces for the staff. C5 makes sure to really listen to the stories people share in order to celebrate and highlight them in their annual reports.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



What advice do you have for someone who is hyperaware of the issues the C5 collaboration would have faced in the early days of the organization when competition and other barriers were faced? (How could a new organization move forward easily?)

- For C5, growing up the non-profit sector means viewing colleagues as allies rather than competition. This helped the C5 when they first formed as they had already established a previous history and relationship. If the goals and mission remain about the work the people being served, the path will be made clear. It is important to align and build relations with those who share similar values and goals. Additionally, it is important to keep organization values integrated in hiring practices.
- Everyone in the sector is willing to help and meet for coffee. It is important to talk with everyone, find mentors, and to build a network and sphere of influence.

What have you done to engage with pound makers and other Indigenous organizations in the community? People who need cultural and community support?

- A lot of times people get told what they must do to heal along with a time limit. This does not always work. C5, like Poundmakers aims to provide a combined or holistic approach as a treatment model, incorporating the knowledge and wisdom of elders in the healing process.
- It is important that families are given options. If a family is interested in Poundmakers or any other organization, they would absolutely be encouraged to explore that option.

If you were to start over the C5 again, what is something that you would do differently?

- C5 would not do anything differently as it was important to learn from the challenges and obstacles they faced. In doing so, they learned from the past to build a better relationship among themselves.
- The journey happened very organically, and things just fell into place, which is how collaboration works. The struggles taught them to learn from their mistakes.

Thinking from the heart and being passionate is what drives success.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Appendix G – Panel Discussions - Indigenous Sharing Networks

Creating a Culture of Support: Indigenous Sharing Networks - Lethbridge, Calgary, and Edmonton

Panelists:

- Barb Barclay, Native Counselling Services of Alberta, Southern Region Manager
- Amanda Scout, Lethbridge Community Engagement & Partnerships Coordinator
- Jacie Alook, Calgary Community Engagement & Partnerships Coordinator
- Mike Schoenthal, Edmonton Community Engagement & Partnerships Coordinator

What are the Indigenous Sharing Networks?

The Indigenous Sharing Networks are community driven by the community, for the community. They were developed to strengthen the voice of Indigenous peoples and their relationship with key stakeholders. This is accomplished by bringing together Indigenous Agencies, Indigenous serving agencies, the Indigenous community at large and all levels of government to: share information; discuss emerging issues; identify local needs; set priorities for action; and promote collaboration through development of community reconcili"action" plans.

Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network

The Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network has been in existence in one form or another since its first iteration as the Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge (an identified Urban Aboriginal Strategy City receiving funding) from 2006-2014. It has continued and evolved since into the Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network.

Process & Community Plan

- Inclusive – everyone welcome – all key stakeholders invited
- Grounded in Indigenous Culture
- Indigenous focused and led
- Uses community resources
- Focus on relationship and creating partnerships
- Reviewed and revised in 2018

The Community Plan and Network consists of four Strategic Areas of Focus developed through community engagement Areas of Focus:

- Health and Wellness
- Employment, Education and Training
- Community Supports
- Social Justice and Reconciliation

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Key Partners:

- City of Lethbridge
- Lethbridge Public Library
- Federal and Provincial Funders
- Indigenous Organizations
- Red Crow College and University of Lethbridge

Challenges

- Capacities
- Changes in Peoples/Roles/Organizations
- Systemic Barriers – Educational Piece
- Racism and Discrimination
- Connecting to on-reserve
- Current issues i.e. Supervised Consumption Site

Contact:

Amanda Scout

Community Engagement & Partnerships Coordinator

Native Counselling Services Alberta

Phone: 403.329.1968

Email: amanda-scout@nca.ca
www.sisn.com

Website:



**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Calgary Indigenous Sharing Network

The Intention of the Calgary Indigenous Sharing Network is to uphold and amplify the collective voice with regular community meetings and transparency. Community driven by the community, for the community.

The Community Plan

- Vision
- Recognizes and takes into account the importance of Elder & youth wisdom & realities
- Engagement for its development was done as a Circle

The Community Plan and Network consists of Six Strategic Areas of Focus developed through community engagement:

- Human Rights & Discrimination
- Justice
- Culture & Language
- Elders & Youth
- Healing & Resiliency
- Careers & Resources

Stepping Stones

- Traditional Community Models
- Circles inform and guide the process & function of the coalition
- Using the Supporting Indigenous Sharing Network (SISN.ca website) as one tool
- Highlight and celebrate cultural traditions, practices & ceremonies embedded within Treaty 7

Contact:

Jacie Alook, Woodland Cree, BA

Community Engagement & Partnership Coordinator

Native Counselling Services Alberta

Phone: 403-237-7850

Email: Jacie-alook@nca.ca

Website: www.sisn.ca

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Edmonton Indigenous Sharing Network
(In development)

Edmonton is seeking to develop an Edmonton Indigenous Sharing Network and is hoping to use this event as a platform to engage with stakeholders. The intension of the network is to take the learnings from the Lethbridge and Calgary Networks and start building smaller networks (circles) focused on key areas of focus to the Edmonton Indigenous community. There has been a lot of research and work done in the city in the past to collect information on gaps and priorities and that information will be used to start bringing together groups of stakeholders and the Indigenous community to start the conversation.

The Community engagement process will include:

- Indigenous agencies and non-Indigenous agencies that serve Indigenous clientele, all levels of government and the Indigenous community at large (those accessing programs and services)
- One on one meet and greets to start to build relationships and learn about Edmonton programs and service agencies
- Focus on what the Edmonton Indigenous community feel are the priorities (i.e. Youth, employment, education, etc.)
- Smaller circles will be formed based on priority areas of focus and will be made up of key stakeholders (inclusive)

Contact:

Mike Schoenthal

Community Engagement & Partnership Coordinator
Native Counselling Services Alberta

Phone: 780-220-0965

Email: Mike-Schoenthal@ncca.ca

www.sisn.ca

Website: [\(under construction\)](#)

[Link here to access Indigenous sharing presentations files from the gathering.](#)

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Audience Questions:

1. *(To Mike) What was the motivation to get the sharing networking going again in Edmonton?*
 - Edmonton has experience trying to build community models and we have seen some success south (with Lethbridge and Calgary) that we can learn from to be more successful
 - It all starts with asking partners how to collaborate to meet the needs of the community
 - There were concerns with the last project attempted, but we must focus on looking forward and how we can collaborate to work on this project together to meet the needs of the community.
 - Looking forward and see how this project can develop and evolve
2. *What is the Indigenous Networks involvement with the safe injection site in Lethbridge?*
 - Approximately 60-90% of users are Indigenous and as a network they are concerned with supporting those users and getting them directed towards the path of recovery.
 - The site has created an excuse for racism against Indigenous people based off of user demographics.
 - Concern is that Indigenous people are safe and are getting the support that they need
 - It's one of the busiest safe injection sites in the world
 - It is controversial
 - Concerned with supporting the users, and making sure they have resources for them to get help
3. *What is the state of Indigenous coalitions across Canada?*
 - There are 32 coalitions funded through Indigenous Services Canada across Canada with every province represented. As a network, we come together via conference call.
 - Looking to increase the work of the coalitions in order to increase partnerships and increase stakeholder involvement. Goal as a National Coalition is to come together as partners.
 - Urban centers have migratory people, how are they being funded?
 - Funding used to come through the Urban Aboriginal strategy, there was a change to the program in order to support partnerships.
4. *(To Mike) How do you plan to engage with non-Indigenous organizations and how would they be able to connect with you and the Edmonton network?*
 - Want to look at non-Indigenous agencies with a high percentage of Indigenous clientele and then bringing that agency into the circle so that they are aware of the support that they can receive.

Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships



- May be unaware of Indigenous agencies which could provide advice or resources
 - Will use this conference as a stepping stone to contact them
5. *How come I have not heard about some of these organizations?*
- There are over 60 stakeholders involved
 - Want greater community involvement rather than stakeholder board meetings
6. *What are the issues of the Indigenous seniors in Lethbridge in Calgary and do you help them with these issues?*
- In Lethbridge there is no specific agency serving Indigenous seniors. Seniors rely on the friendship center to keep them connected.
 - The health and wellness group holds a brunch every two weeks with the seniors
 - A grandmother circle is organized by the friendship centre in Calgary
 - Important to find spaces for Elder & Youth programs
 - Focusing on identifying where these are currently held
 - There is lot of Indigenous peoples migrating to the cities, majority of the population, with Seniors among them (There are 80,000 in Edmonton). The Senior population is much smaller in Lethbridge.
 - We need to know what the issues are and how organizations support them.
 - Elders are being invited to work with youth
 - Focusing on where they are at right now
7. *Are you working with the newcomer organizations to collaborate against discrimination and racism?*
- The Calgary network has reached out to the newcomers center in Calgary and host regular education and awareness sessions along with working with Indigenous communities.
 - There are several projects occurring
 - Try to connect with each other to inform themselves on the toolkits being used
 - Several groups in Lethbridge are involved with Indigenous groups.
 - In Lethbridge the Inclusion and Diversity Alliance is doing this type of anti-racism work



Appendix H - Sharing Our Stories

Breakout session #1

Sharing Our Stories with Karen Mackenzie from MacKintosh Consulting

How do we share the impact of our programs, services and new approaches that serve our communities? Participants share their insights and perspectives that reflect Indigenous culture and values to support an alternate approach to evaluation.

Participants were asked 2 key questions: How do we measure impact and tell stories? What do people want to take away from the session? Participants responses were as follows:

- Connections with others
- Increase awareness
- Measure success
- Help families
- Balance – qualitative value & quantitative measure
- Youth create evaluation system
- Functions of evaluation – what questions in an indigenous model
- Champion Indigenous evaluation
- Oral stories as core method
- Link to TRC and UNDRIP
- Build critical mass
- Include our elders in evaluation process
- Build Indigenous model – elevate voices
- Include stories from/of deliveries
- Collaborative evaluation
- Record Elder's evaluation
- How do you include impact of team in evaluation
- Create an Indigenous logic model to prove value of collaborative work
- Grant increase = reduce confusion
- Share stories with donors
- Build empathy & understanding
- Criteria for funding is limited
- Build relationships with source – use, community
- Make reporting more inclusive
- Recognize inherent rights of Indigenous people in evaluation
- Reflect culture
- Relationships

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



- Power in numbers
- Define our work – build on Indigenous knowledge + tradition
- Change proposal/grant applications



**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Appendix I – Practice as Ceremony

Breakout Session # 2

Practice as Ceremony with Christie Pace from Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

Practice as Ceremony is an analogy that describes the way we should practice with our families by describing the Sundance model and teachings. All Indigenous teachings start from the center and continues outwards from the medicine wheel. It teaches us to nurture one's own spirit through ceremony. Respecting the spirit of ourselves and walking in balance with all elements in a western and traditional world. The purpose of ceremony is to re-connect the individual to their roots and to provide a strong foundation of culture, pride and dignity. Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society discussed the Practice model and how everyone can implement it in the work they do with clients and service users.

The Practice as Ceremony model came as a research project, originally implemented by Amber Dion who used old ways and practices. Through a partnership between Bent Arrow, University of Calgary and Boyle Street, the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society started this practice in 2012. Practice as Ceremony is not seen as a method of practice or framework, but as old knowledge passed down from generations. It is the basis of sacred relationships and practices built on love and trust.

The Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society is committed to building on the strengths of Indigenous children, youth and their families to enable them to develop spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally so they can walk proudly in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Never losing sight of who they are or where they are going. Bent Arrow has taken the old ways of practicing and created a whole program around it to facilitate educational sessions and cultural camps for instance. They have revitalized old teachings or added to how they have done things in the past.

**Our Journey Together: A Community
Gathering to Build Relationships**



Appendix J – A Journey to Becoming Allies

Breakout Session #3

A Journey to Becoming Allies: A Decolonized approach to funding and collaboration” with Edmonton Community Adult Learning Society (ECALA) and Creating Hope Society

Participants joined the Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association (ECALA) in sharing ideas and strategies approaches to building capacity towards decolonizing funding that draws upon an Indigenous worldview and knowledge to emphasize the roles of ally-ship, community and collaboration. The workshop also featured Edmonton Community Adult Learning Society’s journey and past collaboration with not-for-profit agency Creating Hope Society in dialogue and engagement to emphasize the role of ally-ship and how its parallel to community centered practice as a facet to what decolonizing funding could look like.

The Edmonton Community Adult Learning Society (ECALA) allocates advanced education funding to organizations in Edmonton in order to provide foundational learning programs for adults. The council invests two million dollars annually in community-based adult learning in Edmonton. ECALA is committed to providing relevant and accessible professional development and mentorship opportunities, along with facilitating community conversations and raising awareness.



Our Journey Together: A Community Gathering to Build Relationships

