

ELDERS & KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS CIRCLES

A Summary of Indigenous Housing & Case
Management Engagement Sessions



ABORIGINAL STANDING COMMITTEE

on Housing and Homelessness

CHH | Collaborative for
Health and Home 

Written for the Indigenous
Health, Housing and
Homelessness Collaboration
IHHC (on behalf of the Aboriginal
Standing Committee on Housing
and Homelessness and the
Collaborative for Health to Home)

WRITTEN AND EDITED BY NICOLE WILLIAMS AND KATELYN LUCAS OF THE ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF CALGARY WITH THE GUIDANCE OF THE ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS AND IN CONSULTATION WITH THE INDIGENOUS HEALTH, HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS COLLABORATION.

These sessions are dedicated to the memory of William Wayne Bellegarde (Standing Stone) who suddenly passed away on June 14, 2018. His knowledge and teachings within these sessions were integral to the outcomes of the Elder's Circles. We are blessed to have had him participate and provide valuable contributions that will continue to inform future successes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Wallace Alexson	Kahkewistahaw First Nation
Florence Alexson	Kahkewistahaw First Nation
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BACKGROUND

INDIGENOUS HOUSING PROGRAM

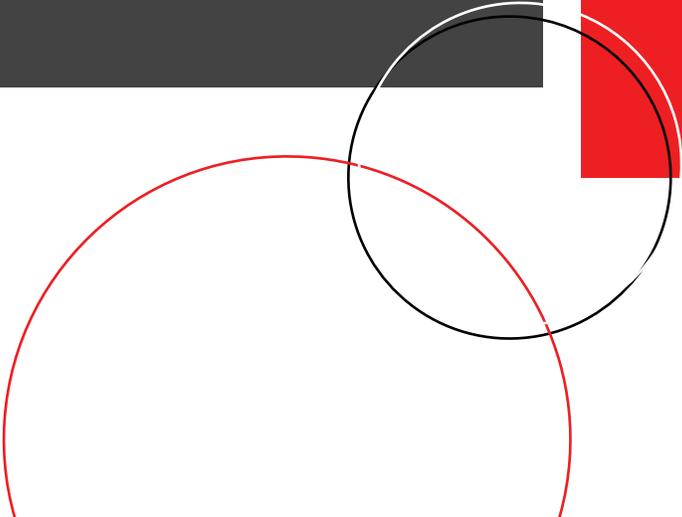
The Indigenous Health, Housing and Homelessness Committee (a collaboration between the Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness and the Collaborative for Health and Home) is in the process of developing a harm reduction housing model for Indigenous people. In order to accurately understand the most effective and culturally appropriate approaches, a review of the previous 20 years of Indigenous housing work and an environmental scan of Canada were conducted. The Elder and Knowledge Keeper Circles were intended to inform, from the wisdom of the Elders, recommendations that would be most effective regarding the future development of a program model. The Elders and Knowledge Keepers were gathered for three sessions and asked a total of nine questions guided the direction for the committee in developing a culturally relevant and appropriate housing program for Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness and housing scarcity.

CASE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

The Indigenous Health, Housing and Homelessness Collaborative endeavoured to review relevant case management standards reflecting best practices specific to Indigenous Peoples. Through the literature review practices and gaps were identified. A further three sessions were facilitated to obtain guidance on the components of effective practices to support further direction on the development of new approaches and revisions to those current case management best practices.

METHODS

The data from each of the sessions (April – July 2018) was analyzed to identify overarching themes and suggestions within each question. These are summarized below and guide the recommendations that follow. A draft was reviewed with the Elders and Knowledge Keepers (January 2019) to obtain approval and clarity on the outcomes of the sessions.





PART ONE

HOUSING

SESSION 1

QUESTION 1

HOW DO YOU THINK INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY SHOULD BE PUT INTO PRACTICE IN AN INDIGENOUS HOUSING PROGRAM?

Some of the challenges that were mentioned that must be considered when creating housing programs are the impact of residential schools, the culture shock that individuals face when moving to the city, and creating programming to support individuals with addictions. Further, it was expressed that many programs are institutionalized; and the importance of moving towards deinstitutionalization.

Many elements need to be included in Indigenous housing programs to enable cultural reconnection. Incorporating home blessings, smudging, sharing circles, cultural programming; as well as connecting people with their languages increase opportunities to develop a sense of identity. Protocol must be incorporated

as it plays an important role in ensuring that engagement cultural and ceremonial inclusion occur in a respectful and meaningful way. Further, ethical space needs to be created that exists outside of colonial structures, by developing cultural and ethical spaces including teepees and lodges. It is critical to educate clients as passing on knowledge and education will encourage them to take pride in their identity. A continuum of housing options including transitional housing and ongoing support. This will provide access and opportunity to individuals to take part in programs that meet their housing needs. In order to integrate culture and spirituality into Indigenous housing programs, methods of delivery and delivery mechanisms need to be further explored.

“WHEN YOU CONNECT TO KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS YOU BECOME MORE THAN JUST A PROGRAM.”



HOUSING SESSION 1



QUESTION 2

IF INDIGENOUS HOUSING IS HELPING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHO HAVE ADDICTIONS, WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES WILL ENSURE IT IS SUCCESSFUL?

One of the major themes that emerged from this discussion was the importance of reinforcing culture and identity. Culture can take place in many forms, including sharing circles, storytelling, land-based learning, and teachings of Elders. Blanket exercises can also be incorporated; however, these may be more relevant for non-Indigenous clients as participants, who can be taught about the history of what happened to children in residential schools and will help them to understand Indigenous peoples better. Elders are critical to be involved in cultural supports, as they provide therapeutic value through the use of prayer and teachings to help individuals overcome difficulties.

Programs need to support diverse demographics, including women, elderly individuals, children, and single parents. For instance, early interventions can be incorporated to help children heal from trauma. Education begins at home, and thus, ensuring that programs and activities occur in a meaningful space is imperative. Programs need to be indigenized and should incorporate

an Indigenous traditional worldview rather than a colonial perspective throughout. Further, facilities and housing to support individuals with addictions are needed and by employing an Indigenous model and returning to traditional ways of thinking and doing, Indigenous clients can be better supported.

“THE OPPOSITE OF ADDICTION IS NOT SOBRIETY; IT’S CONNECTION.”

“MODEL NEEDS TO INCLUDE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE ACCESS. WE NEED TO START ADDRESSING UNDIAGNOSED MENTAL HEALTH, ESPECIALLY INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA.”



HOUSING SESSION 1



QUESTION 3

IF AN INDIGENOUS PROGRAM IS HELPING HOMELESS INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHO HAVE ADDICTIONS, WHAT SPECIAL SKILLS, ABILITIES AND QUALITIES SHOULD WE LOOK FOR IN STAFF THAT ARE GOING TO HELP THEM?

Compassion and empathy are important traits for staff to possess. By being open-minded, non-judgmental, and respectful of clients, staff can better support the individuals they are working with. It is essential that staff are firm, fair, and impartial to ensure that they can set boundaries without being overly authoritative. Staff need to be aware of their own biases and must be tactful when they are supporting clients understanding their vulnerabilities.

“STAFF NEED TO DEVELOP TRUST, BUT IT’S HARD TO DO WITH NON-INDIGENOUS. THAT TRUST WAS BROKEN A LONG TIME AGO.”

The Elders advised that trust and understanding can be developed if staff have lived experience as this allows them to better relate to clients. It is critical that this support is consistent and ongoing in order to best support clients. Staff should be knowledgeable about issues in different Indigenous communities and should learn to understand the importance of Indigenous ways of thinking/knowing. In order to best support staff, it is essential that Indigenous programs incorporate staff wellness to enhance their capacity and reduce burnout.

“CLIENTS WANT TO BE SUPPORTED BY SOMEONE WHO HAS LIVED EXPERIENCE. FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WORKING WITH SOMEONE WHO IS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CHALLENGES. SOMEONE WHO HAS GONE THROUGH ADDICTION OR HOMELESSNESS ALLOWS THE CLIENT TO FEEL CONFIDENT THAT THEY ARE UNDERSTOOD.”



HOUSING SESSION 2



QUESTION 4

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO UNDERSTAND IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING PROGRAMS THAT ARE FOCUSED ON SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WHO ARE HOMELESS IN THE CITY AND ARE ADDICTED TO ALCOHOL AND OR DRUGS?

Context is an important factor that must be understood. For instance, it is important to understand the root causes of clients' addictions and the role that someone's environment plays in healing and overcoming addictions. The impacts of residential schools, the effects of colonialism, and the marginalization and the discrimination that Indigenous individuals experience must be recognized. Moving forward, there needs to be a shift away from paternalistic programs and towards treating individuals as equals. Continuity of

“THERE ARE BIG ISSUES AROUND ‘US’ AND ‘THEM’. WE MAY NEVER GET THROUGH THAT BARRIER BECAUSE WE DON’T UNDERSTAND HOW ‘THEY’ ARE THINKING.”

supports are required to best empower clients, including access to aftercare and long-term case management. This needs to be provided to increase the consistency across service delivery.

*“WE NEED TO GET THIS HOUSING MODEL DONE RIGHT. **WE OWE IT TO THE NEXT GENERATION.** HOW WE DO THAT IS BY INCLUDING ELDERS ON SITE, EVERY DAY. THEY WILL ENSURE PEOPLE GET ON THE RIGHT PATH, PROVIDING SUPPORT.”*



HOUSING SESSION 2



QUESTION 5

WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE THAT WOULD ENSURE THAT THE PROGRAM IS OPERATING FROM AN INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW?

An overarching theme that was discussed during the engagement session was ensuring that programming has an Indigenous focus. Connections with Elders from different nations must be provided in order to facilitate healing. This would allow clients to be involved in storytelling and protocols. Additionally, access to traditional Indigenous foods is important as this allows clients to participate in ceremony to learn about offerings and food preparation.

“WE’VE LOST THE WORLD VIEW. PEOPLE NEED TO EMPOWER AND OWN THEMSELVES AND GET OFF THE CULTURE OF DEPENDENCY.”

It is important to advocate for clients when they are looking for housing and to support them once they are housed, thus creating a holistic approach to housing. Creating connections and a sense of place are ways for individuals to overcome culture shock and may reduce their sense of isolation. Further, providing education and knowledge create feelings of empowerment.

*“TO GET PEOPLE HEALTHY, YOU NEED TO TREAT THEM AS A WHOLE. IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD – THIS IS STILL TRUE IN THE COMMUNITIES TODAY. **WE NEED MORE INTERAGENCY WORK TO HELP THE PERSON AS A WHOLE.**”*



HOUSING SESSION 2



QUESTION 6

HOW DO WE ENGAGE WITH ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS MOST EFFECTIVELY IN HOUSING PROGRAMS? WHAT IS THE ELDERS' ROLE?

Clients must be taught appropriate protocol to engage with Elders and Knowledge Keepers within programming. This may include what to wear and how to approach elders with tobacco. This will allow clients to effectively engage with Elders and creates greater knowledge about and connection to Indigenous culture. Elders have many roles and unique qualities and specialties. They are healers and may use smudging, ceremony, and knowledge to help those who are struggling with addiction. Elders should be incorporated into programming consistently along with counsellors and frontline staff.

“LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE ARTIFICIAL IN THEIR REQUESTS, BUT IF THE CLIENT IS GENUINE, THEY NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE PROTOCOLS AND LEARN HOW TO APPROACH AN ELDER. THE REQUEST MUST BE CAREFULLY THOUGHT THROUGH AND COME FROM WITHIN YOURSELF.”

“WHEN INCLUDING ELDERS IN PROGRAMMING WE NEED TO BE MINDFUL OF PROTOCOL. PEOPLE NEED TO BE EDUCATED IN PROTOCOL.”



HOUSING SESSION 3



QUESTION 7

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THOSE THAT STRUGGLE WITH HOMELESSNESS, TRAUMA AND ADDICTION TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN A HOUSING PROGRAM?

Young people need to be “reprogrammed” to become familiar with traditional ways and healthy lifestyles. Programs need to be developed to address trauma and addictions specifically, while also incorporating elements of Indigenous culture (e.g. medicines/ceremonies/teachings). A safe environment needs to be created to ensure that participants can engage fully and meaningfully in programs.

“WELFARE NOT ALWAYS GOOD – IT HAS CREATED PEOPLE WHO ARE DEPENDENT AND NOT ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES”

Discrimination that individuals face also impacts individuals’ success. In order to enable individuals to become more successful, more Indigenous housing needs to be made available. Additionally, as many individuals struggle to pay rent when receiving income support. Income support programs need to provide individuals with enough income to pay for their housing if they are to be more successful. Additionally, jobs need to be created that are suitable for Indigenous individuals with addictions.

“ADDICTION ISSUES HAVE BEEN NORMALIZED – IE: OPIATE CRISIS – NALOXONE INJECTIONS. THERE IS A REALITY THAT CRISIS AND CHAOS IS NORMAL. THE REALITY ON THE RESERVE IS DIFFICULT – HARD WHEN PEOPLE COME FROM THE CITY NO URBAN LIFE SKILLS, COME TO THE CITY THEY CONTINUE THE LIFESTYLE AND NEVER GET OUT OF THEIR RUT BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF SKILLS.”



HOUSING SESSION 3



QUESTION 8

WHAT COULD A HOUSING PROGRAM DO DIFFERENTLY TO ENSURE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN HOUSING?

There is a need for programming and housing to be Indigenous-focused to facilitate a culturally safe environment. This would allow people to attend different Indigenous ceremonies and sweats and would create a sense of home. Indigenous programming and housing would allow people to connect with others they can relate to. Training and workshops should be created to teach Indigenous people about how to care for their homes.

Housing programs need to incorporate trauma-informed care. This can be taught through staff training and by providing supports to Elders who are struggling with their own trauma or vicarious trauma. Further, it is important that staff and programs take into account the impacts of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop and intergenerational trauma in order to best support clients.

“WE NEED TO INCORPORATE COMMUNITY THINKING MORE. NOT COMMUNITY AS A JOB THAT IS WORKING WITH THEM, BUT INDEPENDENT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE THAT CAN SUPPORT – SUCH AS LONELINESS STOP THEM FROM FEELING LONELY, AND CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY RATHER THAN A PROGRAM. WE NEED TO HAVE COMMUNITY INVOLVED TO MAKE IT WORK.”



HOUSING SESSION 3



QUESTION 9

HOW CAN WE BETTER ENGAGE THE FAMILIES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WITH ADDICTIONS SO THAT THEY ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE PERSON BEING HOUSED?

Creating boundaries is a strategy that families can be taught to empower the individual who is struggling with addictions in a safe way that reflects their role as parents. Further, a continuum of housing options needs to be available, including harm reduction housing that meets people where they are at, while ensuring the safety of all family members.

“MANY PEOPLE WANT TO BE SOBER AND CLEAN, BUT THE CURRENT PROCESS IS SO INSTITUTIONALIZED WHICH IS NOT PART OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE.”

Providing Indigenous-specific housing is another way to facilitate learning about traditional Indigenous parenting. Supports should be continuous and ongoing. Through developing holistic tools, using an Indigenous worldview, and facilitating Indigenous programming, this creates a sense of belonging and allows people to connect to their Indigenous identities and learn about their creation stories.

*“IDEAL WORLD, GIFTING FAMILIES WITH TOBACCO AND PRINT. COMING TOGETHER AS A TRADITIONAL AND BIG FAMILY, SMOKE THE PIPE WITH THEM. GAIN AN AGREEMENT WITH THEM TO COME AND SUPPORT. **IF THEY BELIEVE IN THE TOBACCO AND THE PIPE THEY WILL COME TO HELP THEIR FAMILY MEMBER.**”*





PART TWO

CASE MANAGEMENT

SESSION 1

QUESTION 11

HOW CAN INDIGENOUS CULTURAL TEACHINGS BE USED IN CASE MANAGEMENT?

Elders and traditional Knowledge Keepers must be connected with agencies to facilitate cultural practices. However, agencies need to ensure that the Elders they are working with are qualified and have been gifted their teachings. This is important to ensure that cultural teachings are being shared appropriately. Cultural teachers must experience cultural ceremonies to ensure that they have experienced these practices themselves.

Diversity of Indigenous cultures and protocols need to be respected. To acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous practices, it is necessary that different Nations' ceremonies are attended. In order to ensure that indoctrination does not occur, rather there should be a focus on education and de-institutionalization. It is important that clients have the opportunity to learn about and pick medicines. This may include sage, sweetgrass, sweet pine, and cedar. This allows participants to learn Indigenous names for plants, their uses, and the importance of land-based teachings. This could be offered by Indigenous teachers in a workshop format. To ensure that teachings offered are appropriate, it is important to ensure that they are only teaching what is allowed to be shared with others.

“IT NEVER HURTS TO ASK ABOUT TERRITORIAL PROTOCOLS. IT WON'T BE SEEN AS A SIGN OF IGNORANCE, BUT AS A WAY OF RESPECTING THAT THINGS WILL BE DONE THE TRADITIONAL WAY FOR THAT REGION.”

Case management can also be used to connect clients to Elders and to act as a referral point. This will facilitate engagement with Elders and will enable clients to actively engage in their teachings. Further, it is important to teach clients protocol for ceremonies such as sharing circles, gender-based ceremonies, and asking Elders for guidance. This will allow them to engage in Indigenous ceremonies in a more meaningful and respectful way within the correct protocols expected.



CASE MANAGEMENT SESSION 1



QUESTION 12

HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORTS ARE GENUINE IN THE CULTURE?

Being aware of cultural protocols was suggested to be an important part of ensuring that case management supports are genuine. For instance, it is important to know protocol for both men and women and how to properly approach Elders. More frontline Indigenous staff and case workers need to be exposed to ceremony and traditions to be effective in their understanding of ceremony and cultural teachings. There needs to be an understanding of the impact of colonialization, residential schools, and the Sixties Scoop on Indigenous clients. At an organizational level, workplaces can become more indigenized by creating an environment that reflects familiarity of the culture and providing access to medicines or cultural activities that provide cultural teachings and community connection. Further, to ensure that case management supports are genuine, and cultural sensitivity should be practiced.

“INDIGENOUS EDUCATION CLASSES ARE DIFFERENT THAN LIFE EXPERIENCES AND PASSING DOWN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE THE CULTURE, IT HELPS YOU TO REMEMBER IT.”

“ENSURE THAT THE ELDERS AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS ARE ‘BONIFIED’ AND HAVE CREDENTIALS. IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE TO DO RESEARCH. SOME ELDERS ARE REALLY NOT ELDERS IN THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN GIFTED THEIR TEACHINGS”



CASE MANAGEMENT SESSION 2



QUESTION 13

WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT CASE MANAGERS DO THAT ARE NOT HELPFUL WHEN WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES?

Case managers who do not use methods of support that respect the individual's personal needs fail to recognise individuals' unique experiences. This approach prevents clients from opening up as it does not support the acknowledgement of the individual stories of those they are supporting. Judging and making assumptions about clients result in staff relying on their preconceived notions and does not encourage case managers to step back and listen to the clients they are supporting. Case management practices that are rooted in structural racism, stereotyping, and unconscious biases do not respect Indigenous culture. Instead, these practices marginalize clients and create a cultural hierarchy where some cultures are placed above others. Each of these approaches are harmful to clients and must be addressed to create culturally appropriate case management practices.

*“DIFFERENT NATIONS HAVE DIFFERENT PROTOCOLS. AN EXAMPLE IS THE CREE AND OJIBWAY TEACHINGS ARE DIFFERENT THAN THAT OF THE BLACKFOOT. **KNOW THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DIVERSITY AMONGST THE NATIONS AND TRIBES.**”*



CASE MANAGEMENT SESSION 2



QUESTION 14

WHAT SUPPORTS DO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE NEED WHEN THEY ARE MOVING FROM ONE SERVICE TO ANOTHER?

When supporting Indigenous clients moving from one service to another, service navigation is an important consideration. For instance, a liaison could support individuals moving into urban centers by helping them navigate the complex system of resources and services. This would move beyond providing clients with referral lists and can ensure that people are better able to access the supports required. Liaisons would better understand that there is a system that needs to be followed when navigating resources and services.

The importance of targeted supports to meet clients' unique needs must also be considered. This may encompass programming specifically related to spiritual, health (physical, mental and emotional), cultural and moral supports. Programs must be created to meet the needs of many different demographics, including seniors, children, and youth. For instance, this could include developing cultural activities specifically for seniors and youth to ensure that the programming they are engaging in is relevant and meaningful. Networking should occur between agencies to engage in further collaboration and to ensure that clients are not being passed around between agencies without receiving adequate or necessary support.

“ORIENTATION FOR CASE MANAGERS, AN OVERALL VIEW OF PROTOCOLS, EACH TRIBE HAS DIFFERENT PROTOCOLS, ITS NOT A ONE SIZE FITS ALL, NEED TO KNOW THE HISTORY, NEED TO WITNESS TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES.”

“DESIGN A BUILDING LIKE A TIPI THAT WILL ATTRACT PEOPLE TO IT FOR SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE AND TO USE AS A CULTURAL SPACE.”



CASE MANAGEMENT SESSION 3



QUESTION 15

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS IN CASE MANAGEMENT?

“MANY OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE LOST THEIR IDENTITY, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE OF THE LANGUAGE. LANGUAGE IS OUR IDENTITY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE BRING THE TEACHINGS THAT HELP TO PROVIDE IDENTITY.”

Elders and Knowledge Keepers are not case managers but are, rather, individuals who provide cultural knowledge and teachings. They understand the meaning surrounding ceremonies and facilitate connection to culture for others and they are direct resources for cultural and spiritual knowledge. Rather than advising, Elders and Knowledge Keepers watch, observe, and listen. Through engaging with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, clients can learn creation stories, songs, and history.

“ELDERS HAVE EXPERIENCED LIFE – RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, BEING TRANSPORTED FROM RESIDENTIAL TO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM WITH WHITE PEOPLE – ALL THESE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU HAVE HAD MAKE YOU ABLE TO TALK ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND TALK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES.”



CASE MANAGEMENT SESSION 3



QUESTION 16

HOW CAN WE BETTER ENGAGE THE FAMILIES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WITH ADDICTIONS SO THAT THEY ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE CARE PLAN OF THE PERSON IN RECOVERY?

In addition to supporting the individuals with addictions, it is important that families are provided with consistent supports. Many assume that families don't want to help; however, it is important to engage them and allow them to participate in the healing process if they wish to do so. Further, to better support families, it is essential that the stigma surrounding addictions and abuse are addressed. As addiction affects the whole family, addressing the stigma and judgment surrounding addiction will allow issues to be acknowledged and existing supports to be better utilized. Once the individual with addictions has completed the care plan, there needs to be a termination process that will allow them to continue on their own journey to recovery.

“CLIENTS NEED A CONNECTION TO THEIR FAMILY, THEIR NATION, AND COMMUNITIES – HOWEVER ADDICTION AFFECTS THEIR ABILITY TO MAKE THAT LEAP TO RETURN HOME.”

“THE ADDICT HAS TO WANT TO DEAL WITH THE ADDICTION THEMSELVES AND THE TRAUMA THAT MAY HAVE CAUSED IT. TELLING STORIES OVER AND OVER AGAIN CAN BE A TRIGGER. TRY TO INTERRUPT THEIR THINKING AND UNRAVEL THEIR CHILDHOOD AND TRAUMA IN A PROTECTED SPACE THROUGH CEREMONY AND SETTINGS.”



OUTCOMES

THE FOLLOWING OUTLINES RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD REGARDING INDIGENOUS HOUSING AND CASE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES.

STRUCTURAL

1. Implement organizational models that promote and support decolonization and Indigenization.
2. Conduct research to identify best practices and successes in other jurisdictions;
3. Evaluate best practices contextually for different populations to ensure that the model that is implemented is targeted and appropriate;
4. Strengthen resources available to ensure that organizational models (and their implementation) are adequately supported; and,
5. Employ and utilize more Indigenous staff in roles such as case managers, family advisors, and peer support (individuals with lived experience).

RECOMMENDATIONS

INDIGENOUS HOUSING PROGRAMMING MODEL

1. Facilitate cultural programming in collaboration with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the recommendations to allow clients to take part in cultural practices and ceremonies;
2. Provide cultural training to staff, counsellors, and supports to ensure that they are aware of the historical impacts of colonization, residential schools, and the Sixties Scoop clients so they can best support clients who are struggling with intergenerational trauma;
3. Teach appropriate protocol to staff and clients to ensure that engagement with Elders occurs respectfully and appropriately;
4. Advocate for more Indigenous-focused housing across the housing continuum to ensure that communities have diverse housing options and supports; and,
5. Develop Indigenous housing facilities that facilitate access to and inclusion of Indigenous ceremony and spirituality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CASE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

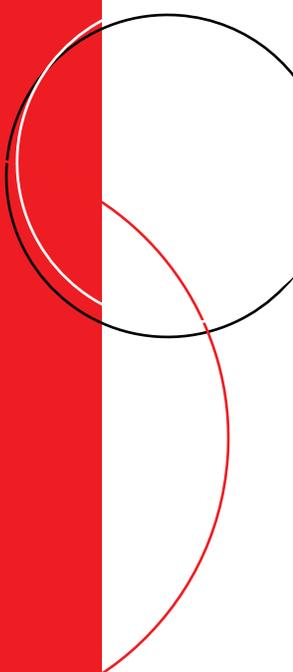
1. Promote case management practices that are rooted in approaches that are inclusive and equitable (i.e.: person-centered care) to ensure that each client's unique experiences are validated and valued;
2. Facilitate access to Knowledge Keepers and Elders to allow clients to reconnect with their culture;
3. Educate staff and clients about proper protocol to ensure that engagement with Elders is meaningful and respectful; and,
4. Provide holistic supports to ensure that clients' social supports are engaged in the healing process.



SUMMARY

The Elders and Knowledge Keepers reviewed the engagement document and identified that the key factor in providing genuine cultural programming supports is ensuring that proper protocol is followed across service delivery and programming for Indigenous peoples. This is a factor that ensures that those who are new to the culture are experiencing the diversity of cultural experiences, but also learning to navigate the diversity of Indigenous cultures and ceremonial practices. Protocols are defined by the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Teacher who defines the protocol for delivering their support, teachings and ceremonies.

Within Indigenous case management and housing programming models, cultural teachings are being delivered as opposed to sacred teachings. This distinction is extremely important for organizations to understand as cultural teachings are more general and encompass the cultural practices and teachings surrounding day to day living and ceremonies that engage community. Sacred teachings, on the other hand, are those teachings that one is either brought into due to lineage, mentorship, or when one is specifically sought after to engage in sacred teachings through years of ceremony and specific teachings. The Elders and Knowledge Keepers did not believe that those who are experiencing social challenges would be individuals ready or prepared to be entering into sacred practices. Therefore, clients should be exposed to cultural teachings and not sacred teachings or ceremonies.



There is a distinction in the definition of “Elder” that should be considered when seeking out supports from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. One should understand the role of the Elder they are seeking and understand the differences when they are establishing contact and requesting support. The Elders and Knowledge Keepers provided the following definitions to clarify the roles of Elders in the Indigenous community:



SENIOR

An elderly person who is defined by their age and does not necessarily have teachings or specific wisdom, but they have not been recognized as Elders in the Indigenous community(ies).



ELDERS

Those individuals who are recognized by the community as having a specific gift, teaching or ceremonial practice that they are permitted to share. Elders may not be elderly or considered seniors as per government definition. In some cases, an Elder may be someone quite young based on the teachings given to them. It is important to understand that the term Elder is a colonial term and has a different context in Indigenous languages.



KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

Individuals who are not Elders, although they may be elderly. Knowledge Keepers have cultural knowledge and experiences that authenticate their role as Knowledge Keepers. Their role is different as they may have historical knowledge, language or teachings that are validated by the community, but do not consider themselves as ceremonialists.



MEDICINE MEN/WOMEN

Individuals who provide specific traditional medicinal intervention to those with health issues. Often their knowledge is specific to certain medicines or healing practices. They are specifically sought out for healing.



SACRED TEACHERS

Individuals who are highly respected as ceremonialists and are often connected to sacred societies, bundles, or other ceremonies that require specific knowledge and teachings. These teachers are not necessarily those in the urban centre and invitation is required to approach and participate within the ceremonies they are conducting.



ORAL CULTURE

is extremely important in removing the academic perspectives and to get to the heart of the culture through experiential learning, observing and listening. This needs to be considered in programming and case management approaches as many of our people have forgotten this skill and it is one that shapes our culture along with language.



FOOTNOTES:

Footnote 1.0 page 2 - Direct and indirect effects of residential schools have caused institutionalization that continues to have a persistent effect on Indigenous Canadians. Intergenerational institutionalization continues to have an effect on the overrepresentation of modern day institutions such as homeless shelters, correctional systems and child protection/foster care systems.

Footnote 1.1 page 2 – Indigenous worldviews are those that are rooted in one's personal cultural code and interpretation of shared values, customs and belief systems. An Indigenous worldview includes a deep connection to Indigenous spirituality that is closely linked to Indigenous culture, therefore it is important to use approaches that support reconnecting to the land. The resources of the land are integral to living harmoniously with nature and all living things. Additionally, Indigenous worldviews are relationship based and are focused on collective values rather than individualistic ones, this includes focuses on strengthening family and community connections.

Footnote 2.0 page 3 – Indigenous ways of thinking/knowing refers to the traditional and cultural knowledge that guides survival and how to live harmoniously within the environment. Ways of knowing are those teachings and the intrinsic connection to the land based in truth vs. science. An example of staffing support would be reflected through practices such as connection to ceremonies, teachings, and in particular land-based teachings that support a reconnection to culture and cultural values.

Footnote 2.1 page 3 – Protocols vary within the diversity of Indigenous cultures, ceremonies and teachings. Therefore, protocol is an ongoing learning process. Individuals need to learn to be open to learning from Elders and respecting the protocol they are shown, but respect that another Elder may provide different teachings on protocol that should always be respected. The protocol participated and being taught is the manner in which the individual should follow. Protocol teachings should not be corrected and they need to be conducted as guided by the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Sacred Teacher in the context of the specific ceremony or cultural practice.

Footnote 3.0 page 4 – Trauma-informed care reflects awareness of the impact of trauma on the person or the community. This is an important factor in understanding the intergenerational impacts of colonization and assimilation policies on Indigenous peoples and how this trauma affects their progress and more importantly the complexity of the issues that affect their well-being.

