

# Diversity & Inclusion: Exploring, Expanding & Implementing Inclusivity In Our Practices During Investigations of Child Abuse

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Recognizing and honouring the different Indigenous territories we're all on - In Kamloops, acknowledging the territory of the Secwépemc Nation



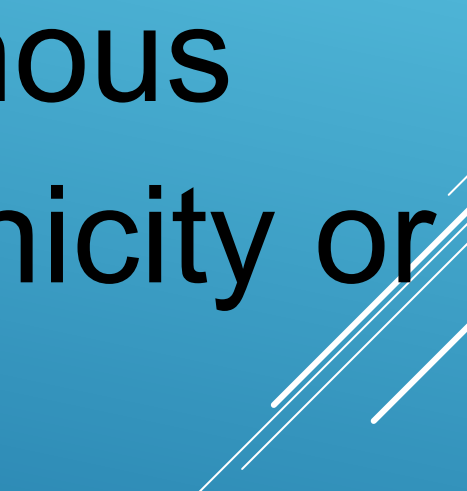
“Cultural, linguistic and socially inclusive services are available to all children, youth and their families at a CAC/CYAC... An inclusive attitude and approach is essential to the CYAC philosophy.”

**National Guidelines for Canadian Child Advocacy Centres/Child & Youth Advocacy Centres (2021)**

*The intent of this presentation is to generate further discussion and thinking regarding culturally safe and inclusive practices with the diverse populations we work with*

This presentation can apply to all populations that may face inequities based on their identity

i.e.: race or skin colour, Indigenous Identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or culture, age, gender, disability.

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▶ In discussing Inclusion & Diversity in the work we do, we have to talk about trauma



## Traumatic events such as child maltreatment affects a child's:

- Development
- Behavioural, physical and mental health
- Self identity/image of the world and their future
- Ability to trust others • Sense of safety
- Self-regulation skills
- Attachments (41.2 X more likely to have attachment problems)
- Interpersonal functioning
- Learning skills
- Navigational skills for life changes

In Canada, the majority of youth who are homeless reported that they experienced childhood trauma and abuse; therefore, most chose to leave an unsafe, abusive or neglectful situation.



**Our job....  
Is to not make it worse**



## The impact of the traumatic event depends on multiple factors:

- Individual characteristics (i.e: age, temperament and personality)the quality of the services provided
- child's perception of the danger faced
- If the child was the victim or a witness
- child's relationship to offender
- child's past experience with trauma or additional challenges following the trauma
- presence/availability of adults who can offer help and protection
- \* AND the quality of the services provided

# ▶ Being trauma-informed means we have to consider culture

## Culture represents the vast structure of

- behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, expressions of distress and grief, history, perceptions, ceremonies and practices that are particular to a group of people

# Culture is a very deeply rooted with multiple layers.

“The evidence from history and the study of thousands of diverse cultures around the world are testament to the overwhelming and coercive power of culture to mold who we are and what we believe.”

# The Cultural Iceberg



The 'whole iceberg' produces the Individual's cultural perspective

**“It is important to realize that each family may be a member of multiple cultural or ethnic groups, therefore, each their own unique blend of values and beliefs...”**

**A family’s values, beliefs, traditions and codes of conduct may inhibit the child’s willingness to disclose and the witness’ willingness to report, believe and/or protect the child.”**

Being Culturally Aware or Culturally Informed will help us be inclusive in practice


i.e.: When we know...we will do

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**How do we enhance being trauma-informed, inclusive and culturally safe in our practices?**




**It starts with learning & being more aware of what's happening in Canada so we become more aware for what our clients are experiencing ....**





The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the pre-existing inequities that are faced by several groups of Canadians based on their identity.




Significant association between  
experiences of discrimination and trust  
in institutions



Our First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations; we have a long history of understandable mistrust.

There is an overall lack of trust for Government programs and services that is felt by Indigenous professionals, families and youth.

*It is so important to understand our history and the traumas that have disrupted the harmony, balance and mutual cooperation for Indigenous Communities that has been passed on from generation to generation*



We know how the European ideology behind our *system has an* impact on minority populations.

&

How dominant influences in service delivery can prevent the unique needs of minority population service users from being met.

i.e.:

- interpretations of classification systems

We need to question who developed these tools and what cultural lens is it being interpreted by.



Even the term *best interests of the child* -  
we need to ask who *may be asking*.



- **Best interests must include culture**





Collectivist and individualist  
cultures for example



Traditionally, Indigenous cultures, viewed child abuse (specifically sexual abuse) as an illness that needed the community's help in healing both the abuser and victim so balance and harmony could be repaired within the community

“Victims often don't want to disclose patterns of abuse if it means that their relatives will have to go to jail...

Communities do not believe that a legal solution is really a solution at all. Many Aboriginal people believe that the legal system of the dominant society does not address the root causes of the imbalances that allowed [the abuse] to occur in the first place.” (Government of Canada, 2018)

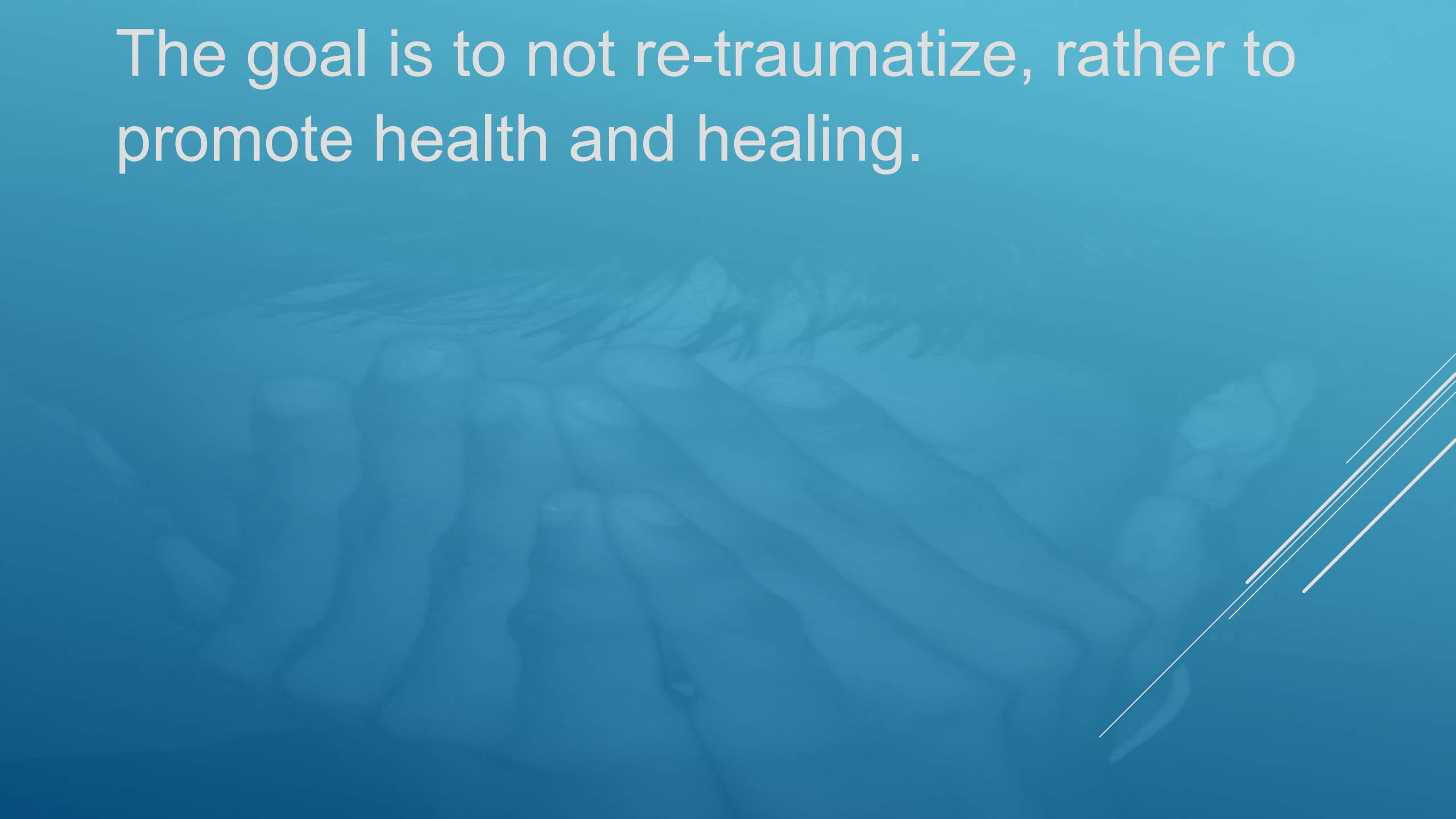


# Culturally-Safe Practice

the need to decolonize our professional  
practice - the need to decolonize our *lenses*

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The goal is to not re-traumatize, rather to promote health and healing.



-incorporating the understanding of past  
and current experiences of trauma into all  
service delivery models.

-encompass a victim-centered practice.

Understanding that not everyone should be treated the same or implementing a standard approach to care.



- **Rather, it is acknowledging individual differences and perspectives so determining and addressing unique needs can be achieved.**

(Ball, 2008; Thompson & Taylor, 2021).




Should we see an outcome that is explicitly determined by the recipient.

\*We need to ask: Who is determining what is culturally safe?

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How do we learn enough about our clients in order to be culturally safe, inclusive and to determine if accommodations are needed?



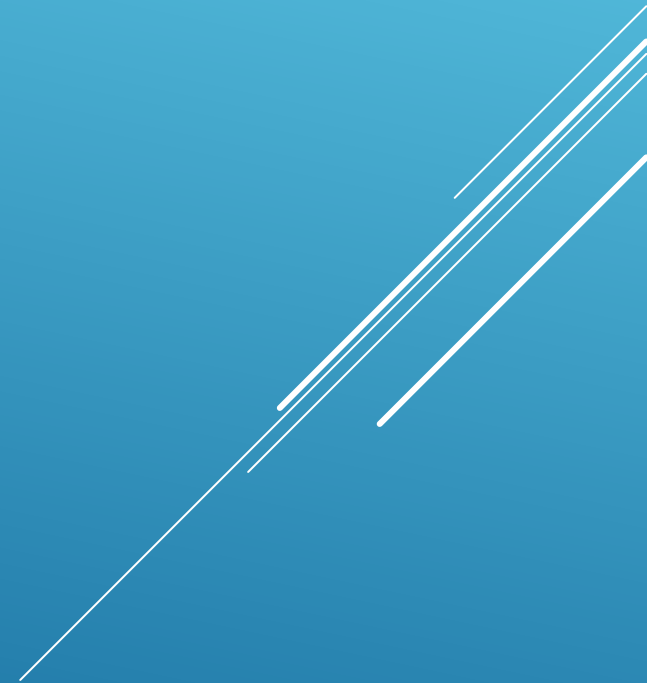


**Be aware of your own  
beliefs, biases or  
preconceived notions**

**(\*Thanksgiving turkey story)**




Reflexive Practice is the commitment to reflecting on what you have learned and considering how the implications of your learnings can impact the broader context in which you work.



**Examining our own practice and our beliefs,  
assumptions and reasons for our methods.**

**Faithfully implementing this routine will  
heighten our awareness for what individuals  
need and enhance our ability to provide a  
service where the clients themselves will  
consider culturally safe.**

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**Be committed in learning and  
understanding**



**There are hundreds of bands and reserves in Canada. Each one has a distinct history that has shaped their particular cultural identity.**

**(Statistics Canada, 2018)**

**Many options to learn our histories (Refer to Appendix A)**

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Be **RESPECTFULLY CURIOUS** regarding  
all the qualities of our clients.





**Respectfully means doing it Appropriately.**

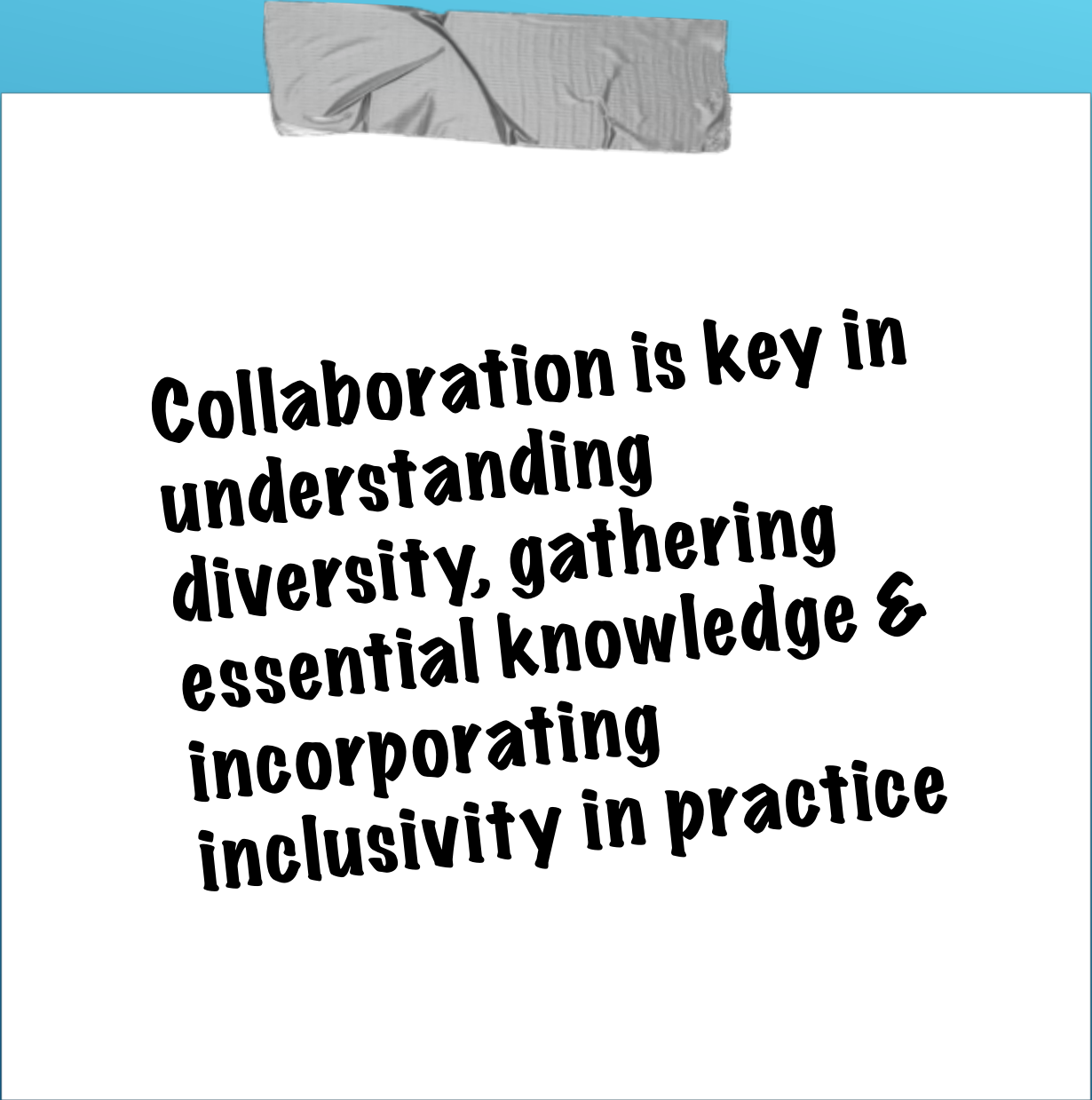
**-Thinking about: Is this the right time?**

**-Asking or interacting without assumption**

**I like to use: “Tell me about....” (e.g., “Your culture”,  
or “Your family”, or “Your experience with ADHD”,  
or “Where you’re from”...)**

**It's importance for professionals to understand diverse world views, and to recognize that every child they encounter is a unique cultural being with a distinct assembly of norms.**

**Efficient work with children means practice needs to adapt to who this child is and what they need.**



**Collaboration is key in  
understanding  
diversity, gathering  
essential knowledge &  
incorporating  
inclusivity in practice**

**Utilizing the guidance of Indigenous professionals and Elders to understand values and processes for effective approaches.**


Gillespie & Whitford (2010)

**Familiarity with a culture through “consultation with professionals who come from the culture in question.”**

**This “alerts us to some of the unique issues that may be important for people from that group and can help us design interventions.”**

(Fontes, 2005, p. 71 & 11).

**- What is best for Indigenous children and families, Indigenous culture needs to be at the forefront of practice through active and effective engagement with Indigenous Peoples and in creating culturally safe relationships.**



# Best Practices for Indigenous Engagement

Identify

Learn/Research

Plan

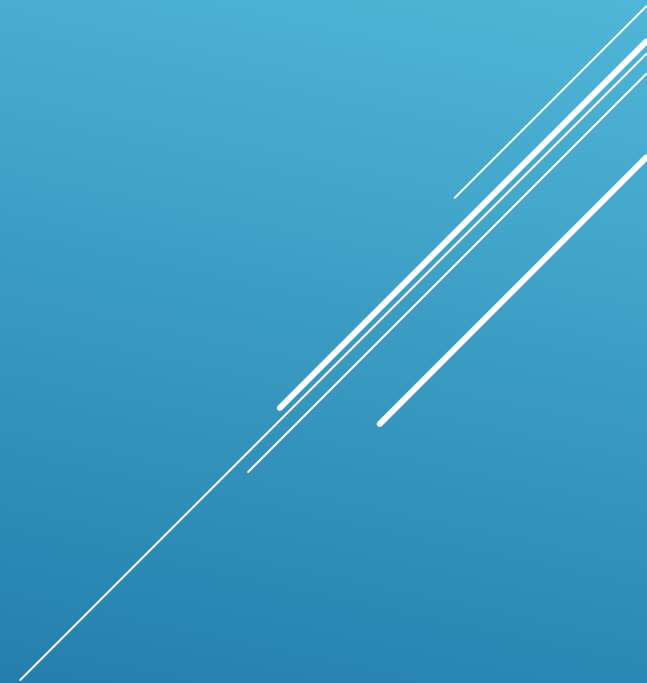
Engage

Maintain

“Do you want answers,  
or do you want to understand?”

A question I was asked many years ago by an Elder

# Incorporating our partners within our multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) in CYAC practices





# 1. MDT Planning Meetings

The background of the slide is a photograph of a group of people in a meeting, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The people are seated around a table, looking at documents and laptops. In the bottom right corner, there are several white diagonal lines of varying lengths, creating a modern, abstract design element.



## 2. Partnership Advocate Program



### 3. Mental Health/Wellness & Referral Team

4. Applying this level of care and inclusivity with our colleagues is so important



Food always helps sends an inclusive message



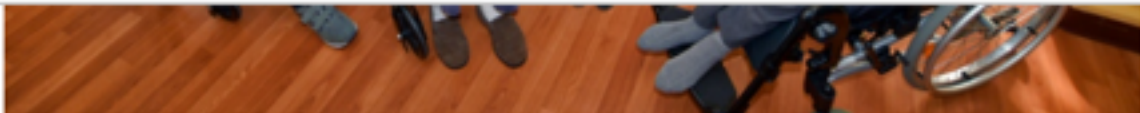
# Knitting for youth in need

Kamloops This Week

OCTOBER 24, 2019 04:07 PM



**KTW** KAMLOOPS  
**THIS WEEK**



Some of the beautiful seniors that figured out a way in how to be included in helping the children and youth that come to Big Bear.




Family Room at Big Bear CYAC

## 5. Working, Sharing & Understanding Each other as a Team

i.e.: MDT/Family Team  
Circles

▶ Partnerships and Team work helps to makes everyone who's a part of the Centre to feel a real sense of ownership within it - this encourages working together, sharing of ideas - which enhances learning in how the services can continue to grow.







- ▶ Elders helped us to create an Elder space.



Helping clients to feel included and in charge of the process.

May 3 / 22 IN OUT

Advocate	Josanne	IN	
Advocate	Lucy		OUT
SCAN Nurse	Heather		OUT
Clinical Nurse Specialist	Tracy	IN	
SCAN S.W.	Jacelyn		OUT
Support Worker	Chelsea		OUT
Big Bear E.A.	Tara	IN	
Pediatrician	Deise		OUT
RAMP	Alex	IN	
RAMP	Char	IN	
Child Protection	Shauna	IN	
Child Protection	Lauren	IN	


Uvic Student	Kristia		IN
Interview Consultant	Heather	IN	
Police-board Liaison Service	Cheryl		OUT
MPD Student	Jayden		OUT
Mental Health Clinician	Katherine		IN

**PRESTIGE**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
200-274-1774

Everyone knows who is at Big Bear.

A message from the children & youth themselves:

*“We want to know we aren’t the only ones who have gone through this - that we’re not alone.”*

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Welcome to Big Bear

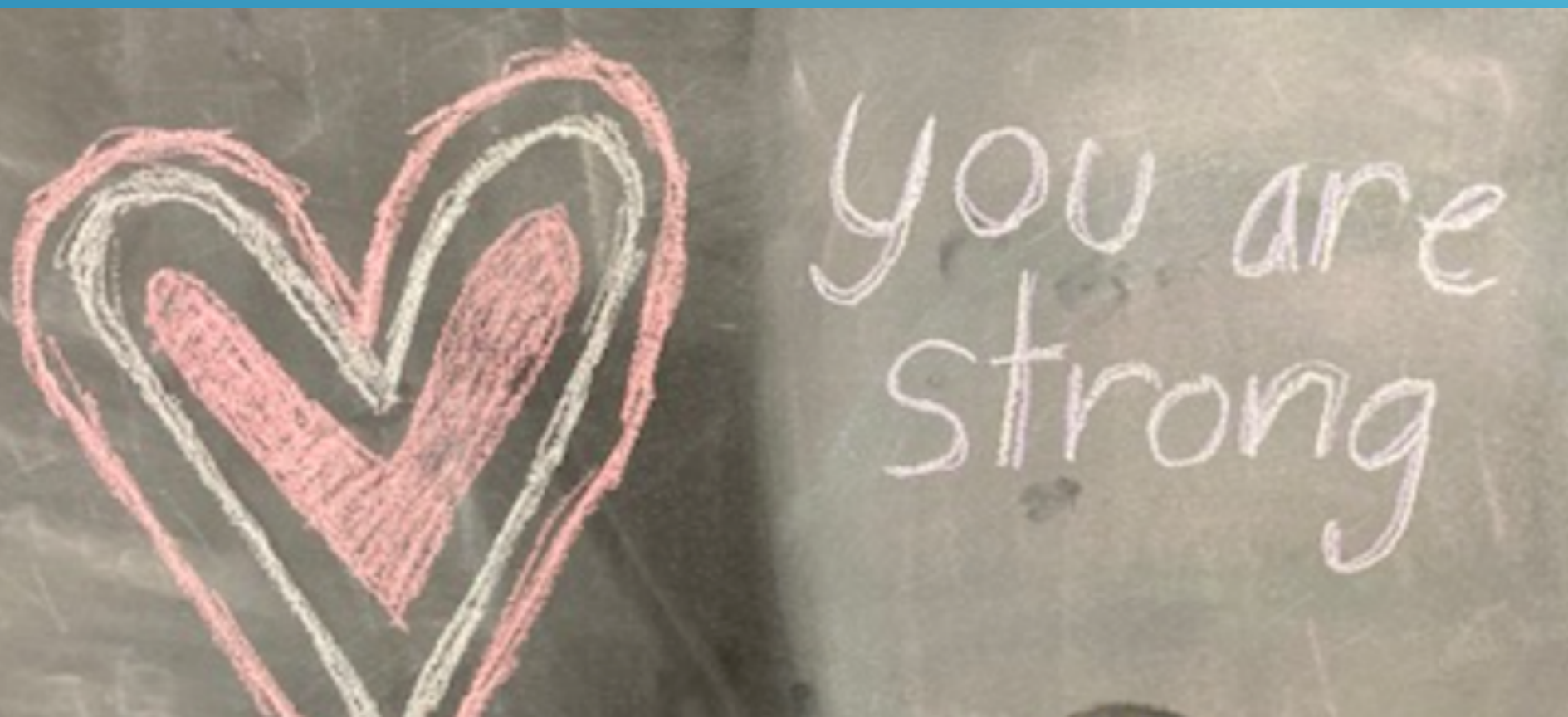
Child/Youth Room at Big Bear CYAC

your not  
alone



I know  
that  
it can  
be hard  
but  
you  
got  
this!!

you are loved



you are  
strong



**Thank you!**





## Appendix A

University of Alberta. Indigenous Canada [Online Course]. University of Alberta, Faculty of Native Studies [https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada?](https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada?utm_source=gg&utm_medium=sem&campaignid=13440968592&utm_campaign=12-Indigenous-Canada-Alberta-CA&utm_content=B2C&adgroupid=130160700384&device=c&keyword=indigenous%20canada%20course&matchtype=b&network=g&devicemodel=&adpostion=&creativeid=526533617725&hide_mobile_promo&gclid=CjwKCAiA1JGRBhBSEiwAxXblwQhgBv6qrQJusCKVOH3m8BSfyq3OHnP-eqINcOOZ2PqT9ge56HiJ5xoCizYQAvD_BwE)

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[San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Online Training https://sanyas.ca](https://sanyas.ca)

Indigenous Awareness Canada-The World Leader in Indigenous Awareness Training <https://indigenousawarenesscanada.com>

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. <https://www.ictinc.ca>

Government of Canada (2021) website. Indigenous Peoples and Lands (First Nations, Metis & Inuit) <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1605796533652/1605796625692#sec1>

Consult with your local First Nations Child and Family Services - Interactive Map of all First Nations Child & Family Services in Canada- <https://geo.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/FNCFSS-SEFPN/>

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