



Learning From the Sharing Circles

Métis Community Services Society of BC



This document summarizes insights from the Sharing Circles conducted for Métis Community Services Society of BC's Programs 1 and 2, held in Spring and Fall 2023. The purpose of these Sharing Circles was to gather the wisdom of youth and young adults who participated in the programs.

The summary highlights the main themes (recurring ideas throughout the Sharing Circle discussions), sub-themes (specific ideas, experiences, and insights within each theme), and select quotes that directly reflect the voices of the youth and young adults, organized according to the research questions.

What does Indigenous identity mean to you?

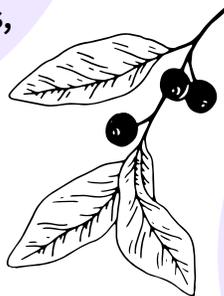
Connection to Community

- Youth-to-youth connections
- Sharing spaces together
- Strong sense of community
- Reclaiming culture through community connection
 - Connections with plants, animals, ancestors

"Being Indigenous means having connection to community, but also beyond our human relations as well, and being truly accountable to that and think about that in every decision we make in our life."

Traditional Knowledge

- Connection to culture
- Learning from Elders
- Plants and medicines (food and medicinal sovereignty)
 - Sharing Stories



Connection to Land

- Strengthening relationship with the land through traditional harvesting
- Participating in land-based activities
- Interconnectivity with the land
- Relational responsibility and accountability to the land

"I think connecting with traditional knowledge... things that were lost along the way."

What is your current understanding of gender?

Relationships with Moon Time (Menstruation)

- Feminine power
- Navigating and reframing power associated with Moon Time
- Protocols with Ceremony during one's Moon Time

"Gender made me think about, especially being on the land, how fluid it is and learning about the different genders of plants as well and how they express themselves."



Inclusivity

- Welcoming spaces were created within programs
- Connecting and sharing culture in a safe space
- Desire for more gender diversity within programs

Colonial Impacts on Gender

- Patriarchy
- Colonial views on Moon Time



Two-Spirit

- Navigating unwelcoming spaces
- Adapting protocols to accommodate Two-Spirited people

Indigenous Perspectives of Gender

- Spiritual relationship with gender
- Gender fluidity
- Freedom in gender expression
- Learning from the land about gender
 - Matriarch teachings

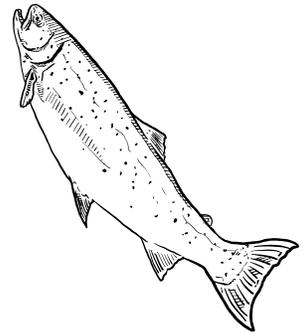
"I think that gender is important to continue to talk about and how we're affected by it."

How did this activity impact your overall wellness?

Feeling Connected



- Sharing laughter with others
- Easygoing atmosphere, naturally connecting with others
- Connecting to culture and traditional ways
- Accessibility to learning
- Identity and wellness are rooted in community
 - Social connections improve wellbeing



Connecting to the Land

- Finding balance from being on the land
- Learning about the land through nature walks
- Reciprocal relationship with the land
 - Feeling grounded and rooted

Elder's Sharing Knowledge

- Traditional knowledge to care for yourself shared by Elders
- Expanding one's knowledge through teachings from Elders
- Building relationships with Elders



"It impacted my overall wellness in a positive way, even if Sundays maybe I was tired or something, leaving here I always felt pumped and excited to share a tea or something, whatever I made. It's nice to find a way to connect with my culture."

What would you like to learn from Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Traditional Healers about identity, gender, wellness and self-determination?

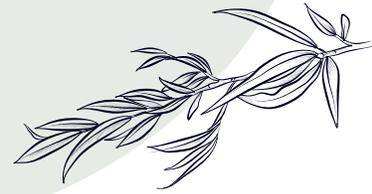
Stories

- Traditional stories
- Personal stories from Elders



Lessons from the Land

- Traditional harvesting as a form of cultural revitalization
- Perspectives of gender and identity from the land
- Smudging and medicinal knowledge
- Land knowledge as an act of resistance
- Agency and knowledge to live off the land
- Sharing knowledge with others
- Self-determination



Connecting to Identity

- Métis self-determination
- Indigenous languages and their connection to identity
- Traditional ways

Ceremony

- Protocols during specific times of the year

Perspectives of gender

- Creating space for conversations
- Supporting LGBTQ2S+ people through traditional teachings

Wanting to Learn Everything

- Cultural dislocation
- Traditional Knowledge from Elders/Knowledge Keepers
- Desire to learn
- Lacking access for opportunities to learn

Inter-Indigenous Relationships

- Métis-syilx relational protocols
- Métis accountability to First Nation communities