



Learning From the Sharing Circles

Lillooet Friendship Centre Society



This document summarizes insights from the Sharing Circles conducted for Lillooet Friendship Centre Society (LFCS) Programs 1 and 2, held in Spring and Summer 2023. The purpose of these Sharing Circles was to gather the wisdom of youth and young adults who participated in the programs.

This 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

- Contributing to community
- Learning from Elders in order to uplift community
- Elders teaching younger generations community-building skills
- Visiting together

“It was cool to learn how to make nets, my ancestors probably had to make nets too.”

Connection to Ancestors & Resistance

- Connecting to ancestors through cultural practices
- Indigenous identity as resistance to continued attempts of colonization

“My Indigenous identity is a form of resistance.”

Connection to Land

- Our roots are in the land
- Returning back to and reconnecting with the land
- Connecting to the medicines and animals
- Unplugging and reconnecting with Spirit on the land
- Following protocols on the land
- Protecting the land



What is your current understanding of gender?

Gender Identity

- Gender is an individual and personal experience
- Request for more female and Two-Spirit representation within programs
- Appreciating gender fluidity as opposed to putting people into categories



Colonial Impacts on Gender

- Resistance to colonialism
- Patriarchy's effect on women's roles



Relationships with Moon Time

Respecting protocols surrounding moon time

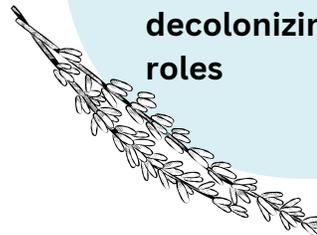
"Because years ago...everybody pitched in to help, otherwise everybody was going to die because if nobody gathered wood, nobody went to pick berries, nobody hunted... So, everybody had to work together to make it happen, to be able to live."

Traditional Ways of Sharing Collective Tasks

- Traditional ways of labour sharing
- Everyone sharing in labour within community regardless of gender identity
- Impact of gendered labour

Cultural Reclamation and Understandings of Gender

- Barriers to accessing cultural teachings
- Program impacts on decolonizing gender roles



How did this activity impact your overall wellness?

Spiritual Wellness

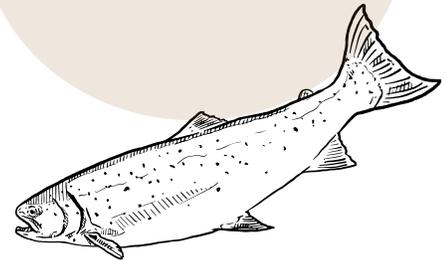
- Slowing down and feeling calmer
- Learning from mentors and being able to ask questions
- Learning about medicines and cultural teachings



"It feels like you're being a part of a community when you can see that in the future, what you're doing now, is going to have a direct impact on whether or not someone gets fish or not."

Feeling Connected to Community

Interconnectivity and interdependency



Mental Wellness

- Self-acceptance
- Feeling a sense of purpose

"It feels good to know that I learned something really important, like where I come from as an Indigenous person. And now that I know it, I can teach other people."

Overall Positive Impact on Wellness

Programs positively impact wellness

Reconnecting with Traditional Teachings

- Learning so you can teach others
- Eliminating barriers to accessing knowledge
- Feeling good about learning

Connecting to the Land

- Moving your body on the land
- Being close to plants and medicines



"We grew up not being taught medicinal and cultural teachings. I felt detached spiritually as well. In a way, this program is the start of a willingness to learn."



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

Learning About Medicines

- Protocols for harvesting medicines
- Medicines and ceremonies



Language

- Receiving traditional name in language
- Learning language and becoming fluent

Ancestors and Family

- Ancestral teachings about family
- Curiosity to learn ancestors' advice for the younger generations today



For more information, visit www.urbanindigenuswellbeing.com/iyw

Emotional Wellness

- Being true to self
- How to be content with life
- Learning from others for support in growth and healing
- Healing from trauma & better life for future generations

Spiritual Wellness

- Learning about ceremonies
- Connection with ancestors

Community Safe Spaces

Understanding the impacts of cultural disconnection and knowledge disruption

Harvesting, Hunting and Gathering

Fishing, hunting, picking, traditional foods, and living in pithouses



Learning from Mentors

- Asking Elders questions
- Benefits of place-based learning experiences
- Asserting who we have always been as Indigenous Peoples
- Unconditional and non-judgemental acceptance



Connections

- Feeling accepted for who you are within community
- Space within community with no judgement

"If I could ask my elders a question... I would ask them what is the best way to develop a community with all of the modern advancements that we have today."