



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 Program 3, held in Summer 2024. The purpose of the Sharing Circle 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 did you like best about the program?

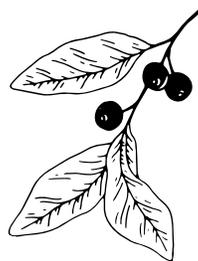
Building Relationships

- Making friendships and building community
- Connecting through shared experience
 - Sharing laughter and visiting together

"I loved the relationships that we built in this. And the friends that we make and even the familiar faces that come back every time. It feels like we have an instant connection and there's no awkward getting to know each other"

Culture and land-based learning

- Plant walks and learning from elders
- Learning about protocols and ways of this land
- Furthering relationships with plant and each other
- Learning how to fish



"I liked the sense of community that we have. It's nice having like-minded people doing activities together, learning about culture things that you wouldn't learn about otherwise"

Connecting to community

- Building community
- Learning about culture with community and sharing experiences
- Safe spaces and importance for regular programming

Mental wellness

- Reducing feelings of anxiety
- Positive impacts on mental health

What would you change or add for the next program?

Room set up

- Setting up activities so that we are sitting in circle

“Being more intentional about the arrangement of everyone could be helpful in the aspect of us communicating and connecting more”

Inclusion of Ceremony

- Learning more about Ceremony
- Smudging each activity

Culture and land relations

- Learning on the land

Additional activity ideas

- Additional day/activity for visiting and reflecting

Increasing number and diversity of youth and young adults

- Need for recruiting boys/men
- Increasing LGBTQ2SIA+ representation
- Increasing Afro-Indigenous representation
- Increasing participation



Ability to bring a friend or support person

“I think it would be cool if we took group photos of the activities and stuff... showing our art or showing our fish.”

Take group photos



Recruitment

- Greater advertisement and accessibility
- Youth and young adults sharing (recruiting) about the program
- Building trust increases comfort and safety for youth to join
- Information session day

“I think we really need to start questioning how do we reach out and make it either more accessible or better advertised to other people”

Anything else you want to share?

Staying connected after/outside the programs

- Attending community events
- Group chat to stay connected
- Getting together outside of the programs
- Carrying relationships forward

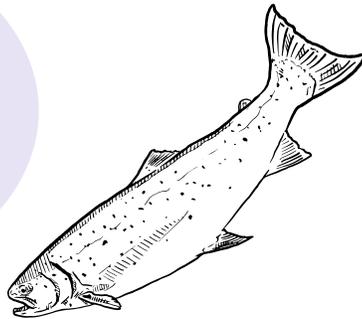
Different styles of learning

- Natural way of learning (Learning through listening)
- Learning through writing things down

“learn best when I can listen, but I also need something physically to do or else my brain wanders and I stop listening. The [Elder said] it’s okay if you work on your medicine pouch while I talk about this.”

Expanding programming beyond youth

- Culture-based programming for adults
- Age limit of participants



Increasing visibility of program, activities and culture

- Pride for culture and identity / don’t need to hide

“I think that we need more spaces like this for adults... people who have aged out. Within so many Indigenous cultures, so many people are so new and young within their learning of the culture that you could be 40 and 50 years old and still be kind of a youth within that learning”

Building community

“I think you guys have really done something amazing here. You’ve built a community here. And you know, just by recruiting folks in, you’ve built it even more. And that’s powerful because what COVID took away from us was that. And I think you guys are doing some powerful work, so I hold my hands up to all you”



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