

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations

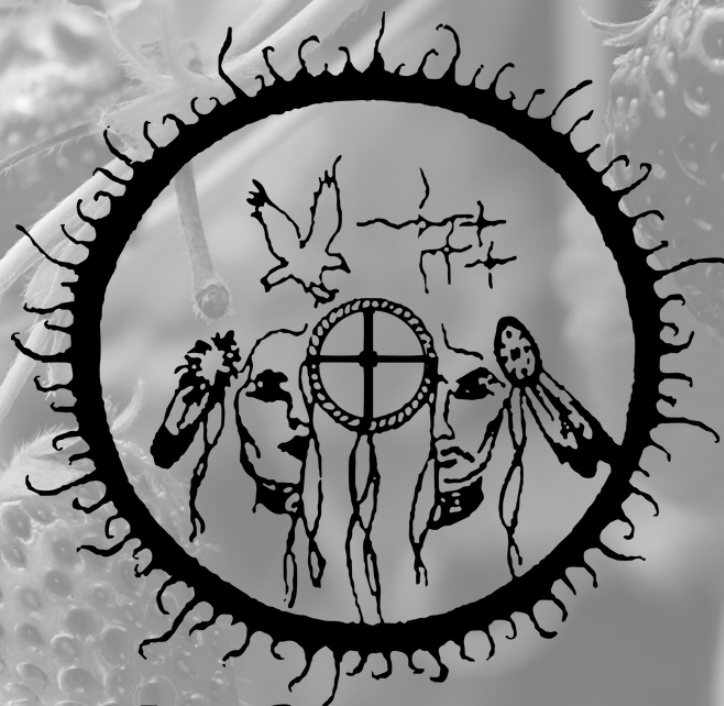


**RECLAIMING POWER AND
SPACE:**

**Community Consultation on
Missing and Murdered 2-Spirited
Indigenous Women and Girls
(MM2SIWG) in Ontario**

March 31, 2022

MM2SIWG Report



2-Spirits

Table of Contents

Honouring our Stolen Sisters	2
Acknowledgement	5
Operational Definitions	6
Executive Summary	7
1. Background	11
2. Project Descriptions	15
3. Methodology	17
3.1. <i>Participants Recruitment</i>	18
3.2. <i>Research Questions</i>	19
3.3. <i>Limitations</i>	20
4. Findings	21
4.1. <i>Demographic Information</i>	22
4.2. <i>Experiences of Abuse, Missing and Murdered</i>	23
4.3. <i>Barriers</i>	26
4.4. <i>How Can We Break Colonial Barriers?</i>	37
4.5. <i>Program and Services Our Community Needs</i>	40
4.6. <i>Skills and Knowledge, We Hold</i>	44
4.7. <i>Program, and Services We Need to Materialize Truth and Reconciliation</i>	49
4.8. <i>Creating Enabling Environment to Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities</i>	60
5. Discussion	66
5.1. <i>Barriers</i>	67
5.2. <i>Eliminating the Barriers</i>	71
6. Conclusion	73
7. Annex: Research Team	74

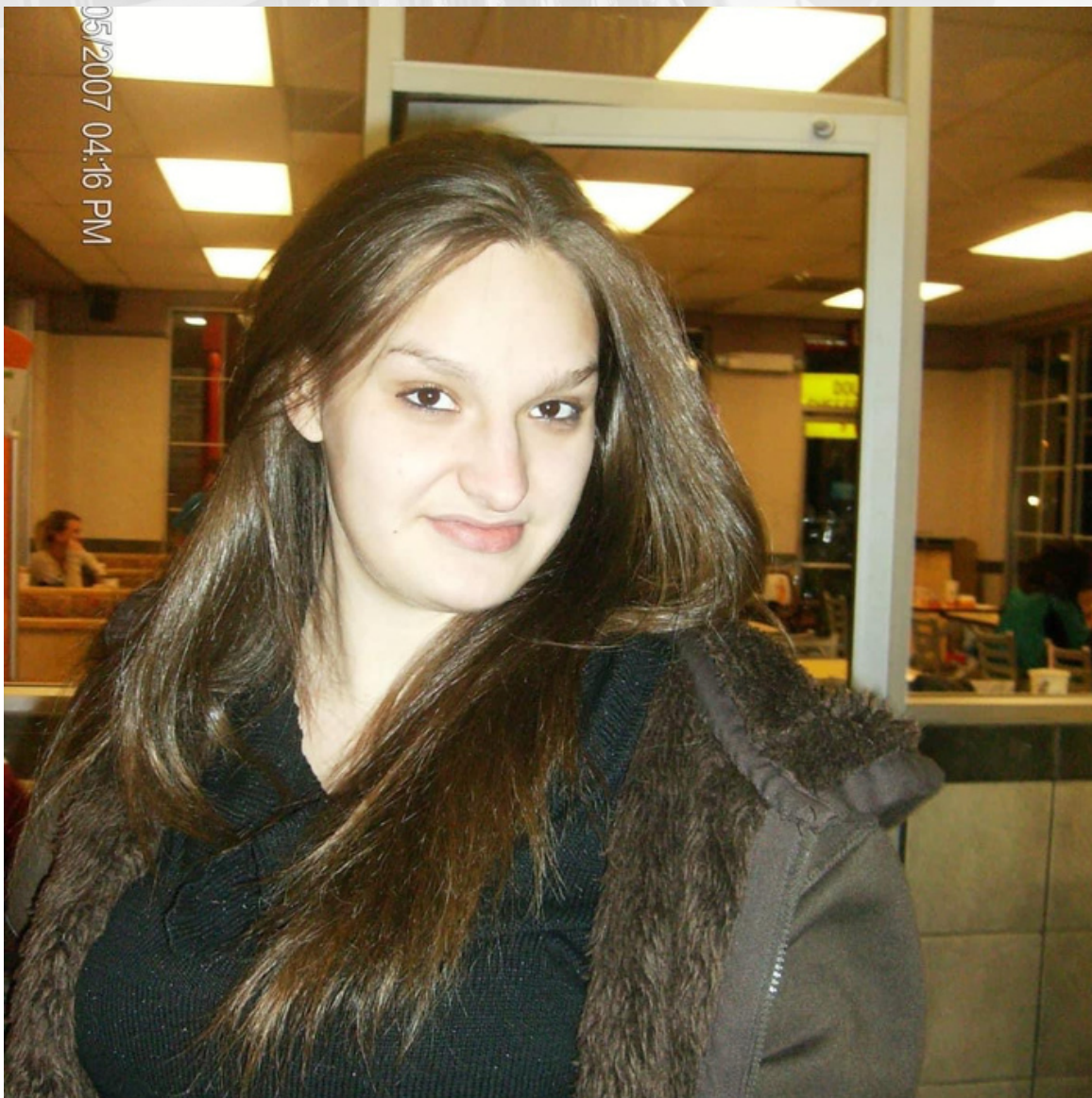
HONOURING OUR STOLEN SISTERS



Glenda Desnee Trevena

Photo submitted by family member

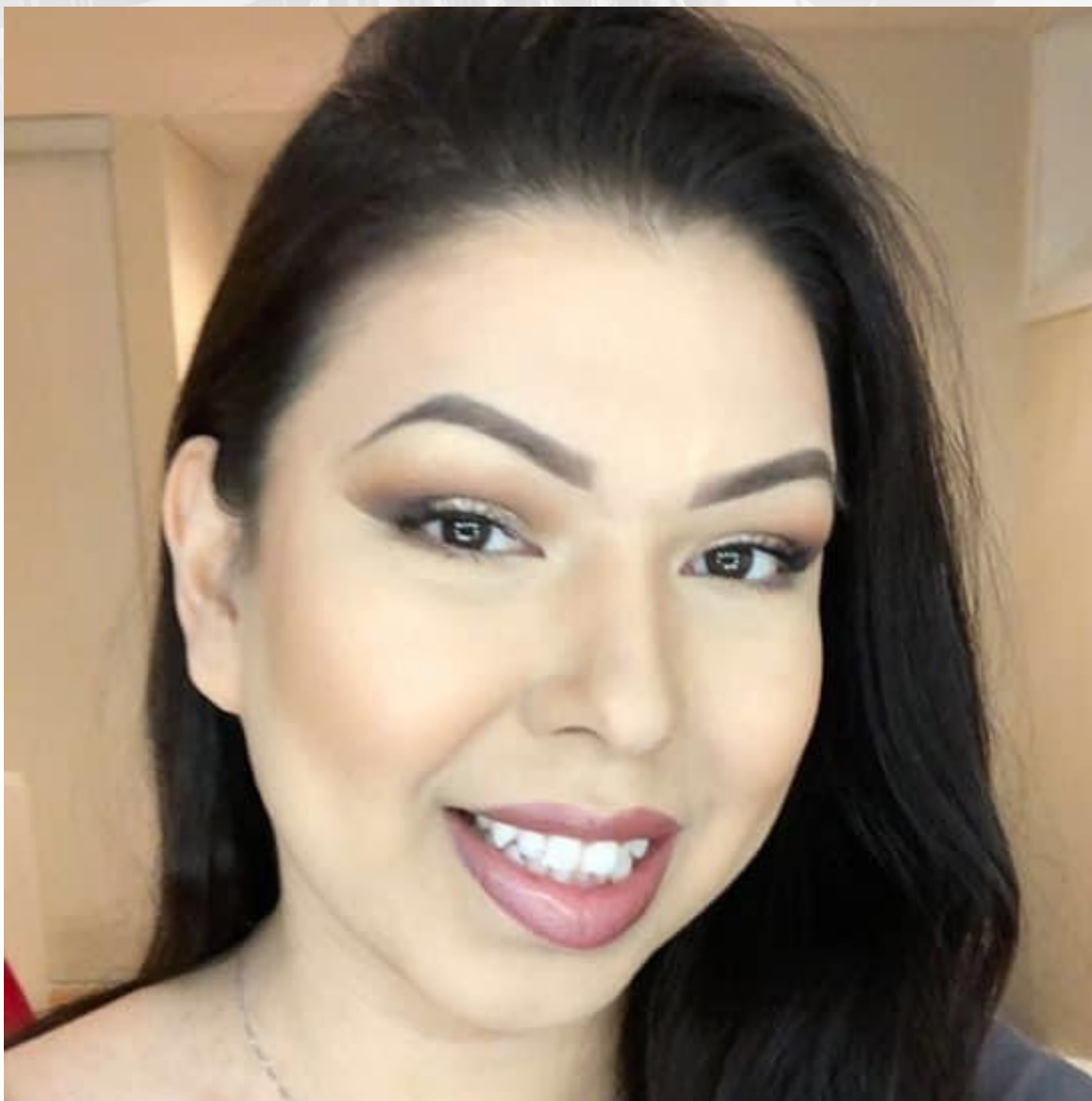
HONOURING OUR STOLEN SISTERS



Megan Crant

Photo submitted by family member

HONOURING OUR STOLEN SISTERS



Kristen Shawanda

Photo submitted by family member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledgement

First, we would like to thank Creator and Mother Earth for providing us with the space and resources to conduct a Talking Circle and Community Consultation on Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited Indigenous Women and Girls (MM2SIWG) at 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations. Secondly, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to those community members who attended the talking circles and consultation to provided their lived experiences and testimonies of being abused, missing, and murdered on their land over periods.

Thirdly, we would like to thank Elder Blu Waters, Elder Pat Green, Elder Dana Pegahmagabow and Elder Marlyn Sutherland for facilitating the Talking Circles and providing trauma healing and emotional support to the community participants and peer navigators throughout the process. We want to extend our sincere thanks to Keith McCrady - Executive Director, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations and Saige McMahan - Director of Crisis Response Pilot, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, for their leadership and guidance. We want to extend our sincere thanks to Amanda Lomas for coordinating the process. We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to our peer navigators – Chantel Copenace, Charnele Sondezi, Aaron Jacobs, Anmol Budhiraja, Robin Pegahmagabow, Pam Lapointe-Stead, Brooke Bowman and Tracy Barker for their dedication and contribution. This project would not be possible without their support.

We would like to thank the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs for the valuable funding to facilitate this project.

Sincerely,
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March 31, 2022

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

2SLGBTQIA+: Acronym for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and the countless affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify.

Millennium Scoop: Term to describe the alarming rate at which Indigenous children continue to be brought into the child welfare system and spans the early 1980s to today.

MM2SIWG: The abbreviations stand for Missing and Murdered 2-Spirited Indigenous Women and Girls

Residential School: Government-sponsored religious schools that were established to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture in Canada.

Sixties Scoop: It refers to the mass removal of Aboriginal children from their families into the child welfare system, in most cases without the consent of their families or bands

Two Spirits: A term used within Indigenous communities, encompassing social cultural, spiritual role and responsibilities along with sexual and gender identity.

Two-Spirited female: A woman who holds both masculine and feminine spirits and embraces assigned social, cultural and spiritual roles in the North American Indigenous communities.

Two-Spirited male: A man who holds both masculine and feminine spirits and embraces assigned social, cultural and spiritual roles in the North American Indigenous communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations is a community-led organization of the Two-Spirited People of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit communities, who are living with or are at risk for HIV and related co-infections in Ontario. 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations have envisioned seeing strong, healthy, and independent Two-Spirit communities where HIV is rare, and Two-Spirit People live with pride in their Indigenous heritage. The term "Two-Spirit" is an English translation of the Anishinaabemowin word "niizh manidoowag," which refers to a "person who embodies both masculine and feminine spirits." In Colonial Canada, this term is being used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people of the Indigenous communities, which overlook the cultural, social, and spiritual roles and responsibilities of the Two-Spirited people and limits to the same-sex behaviour.

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations conducted five community talking circles on Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited Indigenous Women and Girls (MM2SIWG), where 67 MM2SIWG family members participated. Out of 67, a total of 50 participants testimonies were collected from the MM2SIWG's families on the barriers they face in their day-to-day lives. We collected community input and suggestions to eliminate those barriers and create an enabling and equitable environment to reintegrate those families into the community in a dignified way. The consultation focused on identifying the gaps in understanding the needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in Ontario and understanding the performance measures, outcomes, and accountability measures that would be meaningful to those communities. The Ministry of Indigenous Affairs funded this project.

This report is written using Indigenous storytelling methods. We have used the exact spoken words of the community members to depict the actual thoughts and feelings of the person experiencing intergenerational trauma induced by the residential school and missing and murdered incidents within their family. Hence, there could be informal and slang language in the report.

During the community consultations, respondents identified the following issues as significant barriers they are facing in everyday life: the biased criminal justice system, child welfare system, colonialism, systematic racism, stigma and discrimination, along with the unavailability of adequate programs and services to the MM2SIWG families and Two-Spirited communities, difficulties in accessing cultural ceremonies and traditional teaching, lack of basic survival skills, access to housing and employment, access to education and capacity building activities. Colonial Canada has treated Indigenous people, particularly the Two-Spirited and gender-diverse community, as criminals from a western biblical perspective. They have ignored the respected roles and positions of Two-Spirited

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

people in the Indigenous communities as Medicine Keepers, Knowledge Keepers, Healers, community teachers, Ceremony Conductors, Spiritual Seekers, caretakers of women and children, and decision-makers in the Indigenous Criminal Justice System. Those roles were very dignified and highly acknowledged in the Indigenous communities. From the western biblical perspective, the Two-Spirited respected roles and positions were limited to a focus on sexual behaviours and labelled as immoral and sinful activities, creating trauma and confusion. The hostile colonial relationship with the Indigenous communities contributed to factors resulting in the higher proportion of Indigenous people in the Criminal Justice System. It has negatively affected the social determinants of health of the Indigenous communities, but it has also limited the ability to access housing, education, employment, and social assistance in general.

Most of the community members had faced false charges and police harassment that has badly affected the community members' ability to navigate day-to-day life in general. Community members reiterate that settlers have not only colonized Indigenous land and resources, but they have also colonized Indigenous minds and spirits by dismantling and replacing Indigenous Worldviews with christianity and biblical worldviews. Members commented that, over the years, Indigenous culture and practices had been primarily christianized.

The colonial governance system has always created barriers to Indigenous communities' access to employment, housing, social assistance and resources in day-to-day living. The child welfare system has targeted Indigenous families and never misses an opportunity to dismantle Indigenous families by taking away their children for their own reasons. Once the child welfare is involved with your family, they never leave you without totally overtaking your family.

Stigma and discrimination have created additional barriers in day-to-day life. Access to Ceremonies, housing, employment, food security, stigma and discrimination are other obstacles that affect the holistic lives of the Indigenous communities. Many Two-Spirited and Transgender community members expressed their experiences of being excluded from participating in Indigenous Ceremonies due to their sexual orientation and gender identity despite historically having held very high importance in Indigenous culture.

During the community consultation, respondents also elaborately explained the solutions to eliminating the obstacles that Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities face. Participants affirmed that to create an enabling environment which materializes the Spirit of Truth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

and Reconciliation. First, the government needs to reform the current colonial Child Welfare and Criminal Justice Systems. The biased Criminal Justice System deliberately criminalizes Two-Spirited and Indigenous people with false accusations and by putting them in custody. Child Welfare is talking to their children for so-called health and safety reasons and then handing them over to unknown families. Participants also pointed out the education system needs to be reformed. The catholic schools never teach students about Indigenous history, the residential schools, the harm they did to the Indigenous communities, and their spiritual worldview. Participants also demand a relocation of the catholic schools and convert their excessive land base into a place for Indigenous Ceremonies.

Participants also suggested educating Indigenous communities about their own culture, ceremonies, language, and rituals. Two-Spirited people to teach mainstream communities, public service workers, immigrants, and refugees. Many new young Indigenous generations have no teachings about their own culture, language and spiritual worldview. As of now, government and catholic schools are passing falsified information about Indigenous culture, Two-Spirited people and their identity, Indigenous world views, and history. Once people get truthful and consistent information, the barriers will eliminate slowly and surely. The schools and training institutes must employ Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to teach about Indigenous people and culture; they know our history, culture, ceremonies, rituals, and life coping skills. Knowledge of Indigenous wisdom will help us learn about ourselves and will better empower us to eliminate those barriers posed by the colonial system. Land-based skills, training, and equitable opportunities for education, employment, and housing will significantly reduce the current level of barriers Two-Spirited communities face; as well as adequate and easy availability of traditional harm reduction supplies, Indigenous land-based healing, mental health supports, and land-based teaching. Education on Two-Spirited identity, sexual orientation & gender identity, cultural connection with Indigenous land and spiritual worldview, addictions, mental health, and trauma healing supports is imperative. Settlers and Indigenous communities need to work together to repair the harm the colonial system/immigrants has done to Indigenous people, their land, and culture. These are recommended to help eliminate those barriers. "We want to tell them; Let's work together to repair the harms," said the Elder who conducted the Circle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended to provide comprehensive training on MM2SIWG, Indigenous Cultural Competency, and Two-Spirited Identity & Cultural World view to the executive and front-line workers of the Criminal Justice and the Child Welfare System across Canada by the Two-Spirited, Indigenous Communities.
2. Educate the public service workers about Indigenous culture, history, Two-Spirited Identities, and Indigenous Spiritual Worldviews across Canada.
3. Harness the skills, knowledge, and expertise Two-Spirited and Indigenous people hold and support them to develop employment and entrepreneurship.
4. Establish a Two-Spirited Child and Family Welfare System that provides comprehensive services under one roof.
5. Offer complete and wholistic rituals and ceremonies to those impacted by Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited and Indigenous Women and Girls.
6. Provide land-based trauma and mental health healing, ceremonies to support the immediate families and friends of Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited and Indigenous Women and Girls.
7. Build a dedicated Two-Spirited cultural resource center with adequate space and resources for ceremonies and gatherings.
8. Support Two-Spirited agencies to develop a land-based curriculum on Two-Spirited Identities, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identities and educate the public service agencies.
9. Develop adequate comprehensive Indigenous Housing with the provision of land-based Teachings, Ceremonies, Rituals, Elders, and Medicines.
10. Support Two-Spirited and Indigenous agencies to develop Indigenous land-based child welfare strategies and policies.
11. Provide adequate funding and programs to the Two-Spirited serving agencies to provide programs and services to the Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities in a community center environment.
12. Support Two-Spirited agencies to develop a comprehensive curriculum on Two-Spirited Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identities (SOGI) and educate new Canadians in cultural competency training.
13. Support to create an self-determined environment to practice and promote Indigenous Wisdom and Teachings.
14. Recognize and commemorate a Two-Spirited Awareness Day.
15. Develop gender neutral facilities across the city.



BACKGROUND



BACKGROUND

Two-Spirited, Indigenous Women and Girls are experiencing violence, abuse, murder and/or are going missing for several years or never being found. “Two-Spirited, Women and Girls started missing and murder in an early 15th century along with the western wâpaskâw settler arrived in Canada. The early batch of settlers were predominantly men who came to explore the Northern American territory. When erotic wâpaskâw saw the simple and honest indigenous women, they started to be objectifying them as a sexual commodity. The origin of the Métis during the French and Scottish fur trading era result of the white men’s abuse and exploitation of the Indigenous women”, an Elder commented.

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations is a community-led organization that serves the Two-Spirited People of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit, who are living with or at risk for HIV and related co-infections in Ontario. 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations have envisioned seeing strong healthy and independent Two-Spirit communities where HIV is rare and Two-Spirit people live with pride in their Indigenous heritage. The term Two-Spirit is an English translation of the Anishinaabemowin word "niizh manidoowag," which refers to a “person who embodies both masculine and feminine spirits”. This term is used to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (2SLGBTQ) people of the Indigenous communities who claimed this identity. 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations takes it as a “colonial” translation of the Two-Spirited identity, cultural roles, and rituals associated with us which are the major factors that fuel stigma, discrimination, and racism towards the Two-Spirited people and their cultural identities. The colonial linguistic translation has failed to translate the social, cultural, and spiritual values of the Two-Spirited role and identities. This translation has fuelled stigma and discrimination, as well, created systematic barriers to access everyday services. Already stigmatized, HIV and related STBBI services have remained beyond the reach for Two-Spirited people due to multiple layers of barriers laid by the colonial system. Two-Spirited people are working on reclaiming our historical identity, social role, and cultural responsibilities.

In the past 500 years, european nations have colonized upper and lower Canadian villages and settlements. Along with the colonial encroachment on Turtle Island, Two-Spirited First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities have been mistreated and abused for ages. Systematic racism, violence, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia against Two-Spirited people, women and girls has become embedded in everyday life – whether this is through interpersonal forms of violence, through institutions such as health care systems and the child welfare system, as well as laws, policies, and structures of Canadian society. As a result, Indigenous people normalized this violence and abuse.

According to the 2-Spirited Knowledge Keepers and community advocates, european

BACKGROUND

people not only colonized and displaced the Indigenous land and resources, but they have also crippled Indigenous worldviews that include Indigenous culture, ceremonies, social roles in harmful ways. Settlers modified/eliminated Indigenous ways of living including political, social, and spiritual systems and imposed their own. Westerners destroyed the Indigenous economic system, means of production and distribution, and forced Indigenous populations to become economically dependent on their colonizers. These colonizers created stigma and discriminations toward the Indigenous ceremonies. As well, they sought out ways to impose their educational systems by forcing their western beliefs and systems on the Indigenous people. The accumulated effect creates social divisions between colonizer and colonized that is determined by race. This promotes and reinforces institutional racism. We will talk about this in greater detail further on throughout this report.

After years of abuse and inhuman treatment, recently the government has formed a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls commenced in 2016 culminating in a final report released in June 2019. The final report revealed persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuse as key factors that are contributing to the high rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Indigenous women have been facing life-threatening, gender-based violence, and disproportionately experiencing abuse and discrimination due to systematic racism and stereotypes. The colonial system is extremely biased and hateful, in that once Indigenous women and girls go missing or are found dead under suspicious circumstances, the investigation process and sentencing process often fails to give equal justice and treatment. The system also does not offer adequate responsive justice as well as healing resources for Indigenous victims, survivors, families, and communities.

The inquiry called for transformative legal and social change to effectively end violence faced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The report contains 231 calls for justice directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians. But during various community consultations and talking circles within 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, members are claiming that Two-Spirited individuals were not adequately represented during the National Inquiry's cross-county round of meetings.

The National Inquiry's guiding principle is that "Our Women and Girls are Sacred." This vision may build the foundation upon which First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people will reclaim their power and place. For that, the inputs, suggestions, and teachings of the Two-Spirited Elders, Knowledge Holders, Medicine Carrier will be vital to carve the pathways for reconciliations and to reclaim the lost social, cultural, and linguistic heritage. 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations is leading this community engagement to collect the inputs, suggestions, and

BACKGROUND

contributions and to reiterate this guiding principle of national inquiry - Our Women and Girls are Sacred. This consultation is designed to ensure that the unique needs of Two-Spirited people include pathways to safety that outline the need for a better access to ceremonies, medicine, traditional teaching, elders, families, water, land along with the accessible, and stable housing, education, and employment. This must be reflected in Ontario's response to the National Inquiry.

Partnering with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO), the 2 Spirited Peoples of the 1st Nations have conducted engagement and consultation with 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals and collected their integral input to ensure Pathways to Safety is responsive to the unique circumstances of the community and guide the implementation of Ontario's response to the National Inquiry. The consultation mainly focused on identifying the:

- Gaps in understanding the needs of 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities in Ontario.
- Understanding performance measures, outcomes, and accountability measures that would be meaningful to communities.
- Guidelines to implement Ontario's Pathways to Safety response more broadly.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) has identified some key areas that need to be understood and addressed to end violence against Two-Spirited people, Indigenous women, and girls. The report documented, the testimonies of oppression against MMIWG families were primarily based on colonialism, racism, and gender, along with other factors, such as education, income, and ability, sometimes coming into play. Families and survivors consistently referred to four general ways that their experiences were rooted in colonialism across First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and from the standpoint of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The national inquiry identified the following four pathways that maintain colonial violence:

- Historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma.
- Social and economic marginalization.
- Maintaining the status quo and institutional lack of will, and
- Ignoring the agency and expertise of Two-Spirited Indigenous women and girls

Elders further commented that “the primary roots of violence, abuse and being missing, and murdered are the colonialism, related racism, and sexual objectification of Two-Spirited People, Indigenous women, and girls for hundreds of years. Those causes have increased systematic risk factors for experiencing violence and abuse among indigenous women and girls. The high involvement of police, the criminal justice system and their racial profiling and false accusation of indigenous communities paralyze life in general. The high involvement of the child welfare system, domestic violence experiences, and unemployment that force to being the involvement of prostitution and being trafficked are the outcome of the systematic barriers and colonial impact”.

To eliminate barriers faced by the Urban Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations conducted five Talking Circles and community consultations among its Two-Spirited members across the province. Communities shared their thoughts, issues that they are facing and the recommendations to address those barriers chronologically. The lead question of consultation was:

- What program, policy, and activities will help Two-Spirited People of the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities to Reclaim their Historical Power and Cultural Space in the Post- Colonial Canada?

METHODOLOGY



METHODOLOGY

The study predominantly used qualitative and limited quantitative research methodology. Unstructured one on one interview methods were used to collect community testimonies, feedback, inputs, and recommendations.

3.1 Participants Recruitment

A total of five (5) Talking Circles, including Four (4) virtual and one (1) in-person, were conducted. A total of sixty-seven (67) MM2SIWG family members were recruited voluntarily through the 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations Facebook page across Ontario. Out of 67, only 50 participants were interviewed.

Four (4) Two-Spirited Elders and Knowledge Keepers facilitated the Talking Circle, where different topics like experiences and impact of Residential Schools, the ongoing cases of Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited and Indigenous Women and Girls (MM2SIWG) across Canada, as well as the subjective attitudes of law enforcement agencies in the justice system, barriers and challenges faced by the Two-Spirited Urban Indigenous communities and MM2SIWG families facing in everyday life, along with vital aspects missing from the Truth and Reconciliation Process, were discussed.

In the Talking Circle, Facilitators talked about the importance of these consultations, community feedback, and suggestions to draft the pathway to eliminating those barriers Two-Spirited and Indigenous people are facing in everyday life and design effective programs and services. The Elders also expressed thoughts that might help stop the obstacles communities face in everyday life. The lead researcher -the writer- developed the facilitator's guidelines and trained Community Peer Navigators on research methodologies, interviewing skills, and the project's expected outcome. The research probing questions were tested and contextualized. Before starting fieldwork, the facilitator's guide was shared with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.

Each interview was up to one hour long. With the consent of the participants, the zoom interviews were recorded, and the recordings were transcribed into the word file using the Otter Ai transcription tool. The 2-Spirited Peer Navigators reviewed the transcriptions to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the content before submitting it to the Lead Researcher. Using the qualitative data analysis tool – MAXQDA, transcripts were coded based on the theme, picked the essential segments, and assigned the code and memos for the narratives. The draft report was shared among the Community Peer Navigators to review and validate as per their interviews. Comments, inputs, and suggestions were incorporated. A second draft was shared with a Two-Spirited Knowledge Holder for the culture reading to ensure that the language, terminologies, contents, and context are accurately represented through an Indigenous lens. The final report was shared among

METHODOLOGY

the team to review and submitted to the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs before the final deadline. Five community Elders and Knowledge Keepers were available throughout the process to provide immediate mental health and emotional support if any community responder and peer navigators were triggered and felt traumatized and in need of cultural and emotional support. This report is written using Indigenous storytelling methods. We have used the exact spoken words of the community members to depict the actual thoughts and feelings of the person experiencing intergenerational trauma induced by the residential school and missing and murdered incidents within their family. Hence, there could be informal and slang language in the report.

3.2 Research Questions

The research questions were designed as per the input of the MM2SIWG families and 2-Spirited Peer Navigators. Peer Navigators conducted one-on-one consultations based on the following probing questions that took about 30 minutes to an hour over the Zoom. These zoom interviews were recorded. All the recordings were transcribed into a word document using Otter Ai software. Finally, those worlds documents were analyzed using MAXQDA software. Each community member received a \$200 Honorarium for their contributions.

1. Being a Two-Spirited Person, what are the barriers you face in everyday life? (i.e., accessing employment, housing, health, school, or using public transit, practicing your language, culture, ceremonies, etc.)
2. What kind of program and policy will help you eliminate these everyday barriers?
3. In your opinion, how can we break the colonial status quo and institutional lack of will to accommodate Two-Spirited people and indigenous women and children in colonial Canada's social, economic, and political sphere?
4. What will help you improve your social, economic, and psychological health?
5. Mostly Two-Spirited People of the 1st Nations members have unique skills, expertise, and traditional knowledge that will help us reclaim our power and cultural space in modern Canada; what kinds of skills do you and your family/ friends have? Please tell us how those skills and knowledge help us reclaim our history and culture.
6. What kind of programs and services at the National level would support the families and the survival of the Residential School & Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited Indigenous Women, Girls to smoothen the process of Truth and Reconciliation?
7. Are there some suggestions you want to make that will help to materialize the truth and reconciliation process with adequate dignity and honour to the two-spirited communities affected by residential school and Western Colonial Biblical Worldview?

METHODOLOGY

3.3 Limitations

This study recruited the community participants virtually and voluntarily. Hence the findings presented here are based on the response of the self-recruited Two-Spirit community members. This report may not reflect the voice of all MM2SIWG families and Indigenous people across Turtle Island. Second, about half of the Peer Navigators dropped the assignment due to excessive triggers and flashbacks during the data collection process. We had to recruit an additional set of numerators to complete the study that created diversity in narratives. Third, there are no citations and references to any academic book, journal, or report. Our Indigenous communities believe that knowledge and teachings have been passed from one generation to another in the form of oral stories and songs among the Indigenous communities for ages. None of the individuals or agencies hold the authorship of that knowledge and practices.



FINDINGS



FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Information

Out of 67 community participants who attended the 2-Spirited Talking Circle, 50 community members were interviewed voluntarily using the Zoom platform. Among them, more than half identified themselves as female, followed by Two-Spirited female and Two-Spirited male. Regarding age, most of the (34) participants were between 21- 30 years followed by 31- 50 years and 50 plus years. One participant identified their age as 80 years. Twelve (12) participants identified themselves as survivors of either Residential School, Indian School, the Sixty or Millennium Scoop. More than 60% of participants reported that they have experienced being falsely charged by the police at some point of their life. Most importantly, all the participants had at least one close family member who was either a missing person and/or murdered or were missing themselves previously; or a Survivor of Residential School, Indian School, Sixties and the Millennium Scoop.

Sex	Female	Male	Others	Total
Frequency#	27	8	15	50
Gender	Two-Spirit	Female	Male	
Frequency#	13	33	4	50
Age	21-30	31-50	50 +	
Frequency#	34	12	4	50
Survivors	Yes	No	Does not remember	
Frequency#	12	34	4	50
Falsely charged by Police	Yes	No	Does not remember	
Frequency#	30	16	4	50

FINDINGS

4.2 Experiences of Abuse, Missing and Murdered

All the community respondents had a lived experience of harassment, abuse, rape and/or abduction as well as having a missing and murdered family member. A total of twenty plus cases recorded during the consultation have occurred within the last year. It means, despite the National Inquiry and Government commitment to protecting Two-Spirited people, Indigenous women, and children, it has not materialized yet. Almost all the participants reported that their close family members were abducted, raped, hit, and/or run down by cars or murdered by their close friends. The police and law enforcement agencies have never provided them justice. The following testimonies given by the participants show the biased colonial attitude of criminal justice systems towards the Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities in Canada:

- *"...My granddaughter's mother was murdered like two years ago. So, five years apart, both husband and wife murdered, and this little child is six years old, my granddaughter with no parents. So, when she's 13, how do I explain that to her and all the police abuse that my son went through because he was native? She must be my rock she has to be my one that's going to fight for justice and, and for her mom, who was murdered for no reason, just because of the work that she did. Yeah,"*
- *"... friend that we went to school with got hit by a car. And it was a hit and run. The lady came out notice he wasn't breathing and drove off. When the police came. Yeah, like it was crazy was forming and is most and it was crazy. When the police came it was it was like they weren't trying to listen to me and my sister who saw everything is listening to start with the Caucasian people that you know happened to maybe hear one thing or be around, but we like salt from beginning to end. And it's like they didn't want to hear from us. And it's like, the school that this guy like I could tell you about him maybe you guys don't want to hear. So that was very frustrating."*
- *"...o my daughter, she's 13. And in December, the 15th, December, the fifth of last year, she, she got abducted, and she got raped, and she was very close to being one of murdered and missing indigenous little girls. And it was the scariest time of my life"*
- *"Yeah, a woman who was in the hotel in Edmonton, who was murdered by somebody while she was like, working, but she was murdered by him and stabbed, like, by the vagina several times. And his lawyer said that they were just having rough sex, and he barely got any time. And so now they're going back into court again. But without even consent of the family are the people that love this woman that cut out her torso part and brought it into the courtroom as evidence for the guy that"*

FINDINGS

- "I also lost my daughter Aman. She's, um, was murdered because she's a sex worker. This February the 24th it'll be two years. "Police told me like, she was a hooker. She was a prostitute who worked on the street. She had drug problems. She has a bunch of kids, they got taken away. That's where they go with the actual person who did like the assault or the murder. They're like talking about them like that. It's so backwards.....".
- "...My cousin murdered him in thunder bay for that \$13,000 of his residential school money. My dad was an alcoholic, but he, he never, like, claimed he was an alcoholic. He was always like, on and off, but at the same time, my dad was like, I guess a functional alcoholic, because he went to school and he that was his main focus of, of his residential school healing, I'm pretty sure because he always had a job as long as I know, and I heard, you know, my dad did guiding in on the reserve, like fishing guiding"
- "My mother was murdered in Thunder Bay in 1988. So, her boyfriend murdered my father for that money. So that was very, very hard on me. I was eight years old. They told; my dad had some money. My dad, I'm pretty sure he wouldn't got murdered. If he had no money" And her case is still unsolved. So, she's on the list of the missing and murdered indigenous women. I'm still suffering from trauma and in addiction, drugs and alcohol."
- "...So, missing I did have an uncle that went missing just over 20 years ago, he went out west, and we've never been able to find him. We hired a private investigator. But we were never ever able to find him. Oh, wow." "It was over 20 years ago."
- " ...My son was killed by police. He was younger. I can't. remember his age. I'm getting so old. I can't remember everything. But he was in a mall. And they said that he had a weapon, but he didn't have a weapon. And he was shot by the police. back then. It was so long ago that I think at that time that, that my mother didn't pursue anything about it or go into any type of investigation, because I mean, back then, I mean, things happen to Native people. And they, you know, they didn't necessarily, you know, the question because they felt I mean, they didn't, you know, fell they didn't have that comfort, you know, to go ahead and investigate things back in the day. Yeah. And that's one reason why my mother never pursued it."
- "...My mother was survivor of residential school. She murdered outside of Allen gardens, or Chevrolet's were in 1981. The residential school in them murder of Indigenous women and girls, Two Spirit people. kind of gets me angry with having to bring up this topic because there's a lot of racism around all that. The anger, the hatred, no. So why us? Why Aboriginal should get more attention than the rest of us. Nothing is like Aboriginal lives matter."

FINDINGS

- "That's why we're all going through all this. And especially with the residential my dad was in school he died because my family died because of their spirits. There's nothing there because there's no support. It's always for me to the drugs the alcohol because the way our self-esteem is like no one's basically here they keep asking."
- "Recently, during the pandemic, a friend, her daughter was murdered, and she was just a baby. I dreamt it before it happened. And I was mentioning it to a mutual friend. And I was like, I don't know, I feel like there's going to be a sacred fire for a little one. And if you can find out because I feel like it's gonna be happening at East view. And I just feel this little one and I just like I just had what I call verbal diarrhea, sometimes from spirit world, and I just kind of gave her everything."
- "...o my daughter, she's 13. And in December, the 15th, December, the fifth of last year, she, she got abducted, and she got raped, and she was very close to being one of murdered and missing indigenous little girls. And it was the scariest time of my life"
- "Ah, well, my mom was missing for in and out. It wasn't. She was just on the streets because she didn't want to be found and so she she's been missing like three times we get to fall apart. So, my mom was on Yeah, my mom was homeless on the streets. Mm hmm."
- "...My mother was murdered in Thunder Bay in 2006. And her case is still unsolved. So, she's on the list of the missing and murdered indigenous women."
- "...I am Millennial skip survivors. Um, I was trafficked as a teenager. But I kind of grew up in the foster care system. So, nobody really cared where it was." In 2021 lost several people in my family. And then in November, I became homeless. I'm staying with a friend"

All the participants of the community consultation have at least one or more lived experiences of being abused, harassed, missing and murdered family members. Participants explicitly explained how the colonial criminal justice system deliberately ignored justice for the Indigenous communities. Participants stated that they have been waiting for justice for years and years, but they are left with no further information. "Delaying Justice is Justice denied." Hence, many Indigenous people are missing and murdered, and the colonial justice system has denied justice to the Indigenous communities in Canada. It is atrocious.

FINDINGS

4.3 Barriers

The biggest barrier? "...the biggest barrier is the deeply rooted colonized mindset. The White narrative kills me sometimes. Yeah, we are not treated as a people in our land," -one of the participants commented. Most community members identified the "dominance of White Male attitude as one of the most significant barriers The Colonial Justice System has been reported as another dominant barrier among the Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities. Not having the availability of adequate resources for the Two-Spirited and Urban Indigenous communities, stigma and discrimination are other vital barriers the community is facing." The following respondents have given a very particular anecdote of a biased justice system explaining how those false accusations and incarceration destroyed the simple life of an Indigenous person and their families as follows:

- "...You know, I can name a handful of male abusers that have abused some of my female youth that I work with. And the women are the ones they're getting charges on them. Because they you know, they're White man and, that are, you know. They're living with them, they get beaten up by the guy, they get put in a shelter for, you know, a couple of weeks, and the women can't handle being in the shelter. So, they go back to their abuser because it's a safer, you know, there is a house over their head, roof over their head. And then you know, they get arrested, because they they're in contact with a person they're supposed to be away from, well make things better for them so that they could flee that area and have a safer place to live. So now, the victims become, you know, they become criminals. That's wrong".
- "...The Crown was a white man. I'm like, how was this native court? How was this indigenous? The judge doesn't look native to me. The Crown don't look native to me. And the only thing they had in there and you couldn't say nothing, you know, because they treat you like, you know, they don't like it when you go to the court like when the cops and the crowd. They stereotype us even when you're not even charged with anything. I am a mother trying to get my son out. There was so rude to me. Then you go into college and the only thing in there that's native is an eagle feather in a frame.



FINDINGS

- *“... Let me tell an incident that how the colonial system devastates a beautiful family and make them vulnerable and homeless. One of my girlfriends and their partner used to live in River Terrace in Thunder Bay. They had a beautiful baby girl and cute dog. She told me couple of time some time they had an issue with their neighbor due to dog. But one day, her partner has some verbal altercation with their neighbor for their dog. Neighbor called police, they took her partner and put in the custody for a week. After week, they released him in the condition that their dog would not bother their neighbor and he would stay away from them. Next day when he went to his work, he was already fired from job for not showing up for a week. Same week, their landlord gave them notice for eviction for their alteration with neighbor and police involvement. After a month, they forcefully evict them from house. They lived in a motel for a week and search apartment, but they failed. Later they moved to Toronto ended up in the shelter. Now my friend is telling that her partner is being abusive and drinking a lot. She is saying she may be braking up with him. You never know what is going next”.*
- *“From the day one when Western Setter arrived at Turtle Island, the White colonizers treated Two-Spirited, Indigenous women and girls as a sexual object still rooted deeply in Canadian society,” Elder stated. The settlers and immigrants always treat Two-Spirited Indigenous women and girls as sexual objects due to their vulnerability, poverty, and mental health issues. Mostly Two-Spirited and Indigenous people fail to secure employment and have a reliable source of income due to various systematic barriers and racial discrimination that put them in utter poverty and scarcity. This poverty and unemployment have made them more vulnerable, which led to human trafficking. It is all due to the systematic racism and colonial hegemony that always keeps the Indigenous community away from having social-economic security. Participants gave several testimonies listed below as to how biased and judgmental the justice system is, which is destroying the lives of the Indigenous communities*



FINDINGS

Police Harassment

Almost all the participants reported brutal police harassment as one of the significant challenges the Two-Spirited and Urban Indigenous people face in Ontario. Participants gave several testimonies about how police and law enforcement agencies treated Indigenous people as criminals.

- *"...She cried. She cried. She cried. I hugged her I cried with her. She said that the police officer kicked her in her private markets to try to get her in a cruiser. And she says it hurts down there that she thinks they did something to her. She's still his he lives in one of the cities run shelters. And they falsely accused her for things that other people in the same shelters have done and kept him for days on end without letting any of us know what's going on. And she went two years ago just went through brain surgery open brain surgery like they, so she's got you know, some problems himself because of that stuff. And yeah, my family's been hit hard by the by the police force, unfortunately."*
- *"...Like, when I got arrested, I just felt like being indigenous was like, I don't know, I don't know. They put pity on me or anything like that. But I just felt like they were treating me different. ...your ethnicity and your cultural background became a barrier when, when just even being around police. Yeah. Yeah. So that that must have been very difficult. And like, is this the only barrier you faced was with the police force? Or has it been with employment, housing."*
- *"...Um, so I live in a Brampton and then as well as you Sainte Marie, I had been just detained by police for sorry, that's my notifications. I've been kept by police for being a suspicious person or being someone who looks like a suspect, but they're looking for now."*
- *"...I would just look suspicious because I was wearing oversized clothing and because I'm Native i I'm doing something bad type of thing. So, these are the only times I was like cutting up study or question and then released just right after once I called their kind of bluff."*
- *"...This friend that we went to school with got hit by a car. And it was a hit and run. The lady came out notice he wasn't breathing and drove off. When the police came. Yeah, like it was crazy was forming and is most and it was crazy. When the police came it was it was like they weren't trying to listen to me and my sister who saw everything is listening to start with the Caucasian people that you know happened to maybe hear one thing or be around, but we like salt from beginning to end. And it's like they didn't want to hear from us. And it's like, the school that this guy like I could tell you about him maybe you guys don't want to hear. So that was very frustrating. ...you've always faced prejudice from the police, especially if you are visible two-spirited"*

FINDINGS

- *"...I go to my reserve every year, every summer, my mom lives out, but I don't have my status. It is so unfortunate that system has dehumanized indigenous woman and their social cultural role. For the thousands of years, indigenous women lead the indigenous society by taking the leadership, but those recent White settlers flipped the rule. Today thousands of women and girls are without status card. It is so sad..."*

Microaggression

- *"...I was standing in line at a grocery store. Someone other than me might get preferential treatment. And it's happened before where I've been in line, and people have taken the customer behind me. And so those types of things happen. Public transit, I was never comfortable taking that. It's strange, because I've always sort of been not always but I think a target just for whatever like microaggressions I guess some people would call it you know, like to be new, rolling the eyes or whatever."*
- *"just my boss is very discriminatory against me. And the fact that I was more feminine than manly, and they didn't like that aspect, but I could still get the job done. But it was just a very toxic work environment. For me. There was a few instances where they just gave me like, like, like, crap and everything, and I never had really good issues with her."*
- *"You know, and so there is always an attitude about I find that a lot of older white, hetero males are micro aggressive, I guess, working in like, the medical field. Or like, I don't know, if they if they have a religious Christian, we find out that you're an indigenous person. That's gay, you know? Yeah. They'll do some kind of like, weird. I don't know"*

Westernized Child Welfare System

- *"All the teachings that I have is that woman and two spirited people raised the children since time immemorial, and I feel as though that that relationship and that tradition needs to carry on and that there needs to be proper supports facilitated to reignite and *remaitri* that time immemorial child's children like traditional practice, because most often when the family was killed, and there was no one else to watch the children would get the two spirits that would, you know, be there for the children, raise them in a good way. There has to be a recognition of that, and, you know, funding put in place so that there can be healing ceremonies, insurance circles Whoa. Yeah, sorry, I just had to take a break."*

FINDINGS

- *And if you're on that banned list, it's very difficult to get off of that list. I know because I was on that banned list for speaking up for myself and my child, when our white manager did not understand a traditional practice and felt offended when I told her that as a white woman, maybe she shouldn't be working at the organization, if she doesn't understand or is willing to listen, to return additional ways of parenting, and that it takes a community to raise a child I trusted my friend who was a Two Spirit person to you know, look over my son because they gave me very traditional, sacred, ceremonial ashes."*
- *Another respondent further explains, "...colonial child welfare system is a kind of holocaust. This system is not only taking away our children from us, but they are also taking away the safety measure of a mother. Their child could support to heal them mentally and could protect by possible unpleasant situation like harassment, abuse, rape ..., you know what I mean. But when you take away her child, this woman is more vulnerable. It is very easy to go on addiction, mental health, and street behaviors. The government know it well, but they are promoting it because they want to kill all the indigenous people. It is disgusting.*

Westernized Adolescent and Youth Programs

- *"You cannot access services once you cross 30 but you have not acquired all the skills and knowledge you need to survive in the mainstream community.*
- *Yeah, for sure. I think aging out is a really, really hard time for people who utilize youth systems. So well, most of them have gone up to 29. But like just not being able to access those funds after 30. Right, exactly those agencies and those supports like yes, I don't doubt that they'll still support you a little bit into your 30s. But their program and their funding is for a specific age bracket. And my partner and myself are both aging out of that age bracket into a whole new chapter of life."*
- *"Colonials came over to different countries and change things and decided that this is what was going to happen. So like I just recently learned the other day, a bunch of the paint used in like the Renaissance"*

FINDINGS

Limited Program and Services for Urban Two-Spirited Communities

- *As a two-spirited person, there are so many social, cultural and economic needs in day-to-day life in urban living. And I often feel unwelcome and uncomfortable at settlers and immigrants serving agencies to access these services. Of course, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations is the most comfortable place to access services. Still, staff often tell that they have limited resources and can only offer limited help for urgently needy families. There is no dedicated and consistent programming and support for the urban Two-Spirited communities and their families. We want all the culturally supported programs and services under a single roof, so we should go and knock the multiple doors to fulfil our basic requirements. Personally, it would help me a lot if I could access all my services at the 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations.*

Colonial Impression on Two-Spirited Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The biblical worldview on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) has significantly damaged Two-Spirited people's traditional roles and cultural values. It has ignored the cultural role and stratifications and solely focused on sexual orientation and gender identity, which has created this considerable stigma and discrimination and self-induced shame among the Two-Spirited people. The dominance of churches running residential schools on the Indigenous lands and their biblical notion of immorality and the sinful act of homosexuality has promoted self-guilt, shame, and self-hatred. Being a Two-Spirited person was a matter of honour in the Indigenous community. Still, the catholic church portrayed being Two-Spirited as a sinful act and immoral behaviour that has created confusion and shame. The Europeans colonized Indigenous lands, resources, and ceremonies. They also occupied our traditional Two-Spirited identity and associated cultural role and social status. To this day, the term "Two Spirited" refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community of the Indigenous community, which hugely devalues the Indigenous culture and creates social stratification. A participant commented during the Talking Circle that:

- *"My grandmother used to tell us the stories - two spirited people were gifted among all beings because they carried two spirits: that of male and female. She told me that women engaged in tribal warfare and married other women as there were men who married other men. These individuals were looked upon as a third gender in many cases and almost every culture, they were honoured and rewarded. They used to take care of children and elders of the communities as per the teaching and guidance of great grandfathers and spirits. Two Spirited people were often visionaries, medicine person, spiritual leaders, and healers who were respected and treated as a fundamental component of ancient culture and society. The colonial translation has failed to translate the social, cultural, and spiritual values of the Two-Spirited role and identities". My grandmother also told that "When European settlers controlled the local aboriginal communities, they colonized Indigenous bodies, minds, and lands by disrupting traditional systems of governance, supply chain management, production of food and means of livelihood as well as obliterating timeless institutions which are responsible to present increase indigenous homeless and social displacement"*

FINDINGS

- *"...another significant barrier is the so-called native knowledge holders who are more colonial than the white. Well, you can't participate in ceremony unless you wear a skirt. Right? And if you're not comfortable wearing a skirt, and you don't really want to attend a ceremony, because they have that requirement. how I appear to them more than being a woman. I'm not sure."*
- *"If you were a lesbian, you're going to be banned from the community, they'll ban you for the community, or if you're gay, they'll ban you from the community. Like, those are the kinds of things I've heard growing up, right. Yeah. It wasn't, again, until I started my own healing path and my own research around our culture and our historical ways of life that, you know, that I've learned about how, how they were referred in our communities, how they were held in such high regard and, and that they were gifted, and you know, they have those special gifts..."*
- *"It sounds crazy, but I let go. As I drove away, I let go. I said, you know, I'm leaving this in creator's hands like, everything happens for a reason. And maybe I needed to cleanse my life with all that clutter, and all that was there, because it was holding me back."*
- *"Women drumming. I'm a hand drummer, myself. So, there has been some, you know, a little bit of discrimination around women who are drumming or drumming onto big drum. Because I've also done the big drum myself. And I've been told in the past that you should I shouldn't be jumping on a big drop because I'm female. Female presenting. And just not as that's not true, you know, because it all began with a woman with a female. So, I don't know, I still drove. But I like I said, like, I've had some negative talk around that. About that, but"*
- *"One of the biggest suggestions that I have is that we start breaking down that barrier of The Western colonial biblical worldview and mixing it in with indigenous knowledge. Because we all need to have that too, I've seen. And I think that's something that's really big and too, I'd seen, if you don't know what it is, it's just being able to look, it's like looking through a pair of binoculars, if you look through one side, and it's just the indigenous, our indigenous knowledge and our values and everything, you're not looking through the other side, which is our western side, and you're not seeing the to meld together and work harmoniously, rather than against each other. And I think that's something that's really important, because you need to look through binoculars together to be able to see the whole picture. And I think we need to start putting that together and being able to meld the two, so that we can all live like, just together as a community rather than against each other. So I think that's a really big thing. And if that's like, you know, getting like getting everyone to sit around and just talk, then we can just talk and there doesn't need to be anything about like, race or you know, the color of our skins or who's getting what money. It just needs to be like, people being able to treat people with dignity and understanding that we all have our own struggles. It's not a competition Yeah, but that can."*

FINDINGS

- *"...ouu, know. I think in like gum because I feel like when a person is under the influence is It's like, they're it's like, um, there's something hurting them. Mm hmm. And they need that ceremony to help them not hurt, you know, even if it was just for that moment, you know. But then having them get told or shunned away, like, you know, you can't come here because you're drunk, or you know, because you smell of booze or no, you look high, or you're just coming down or no, that's when we were asked, What do we more needed? Like, um, every time I like, every time I feel like, like, my own family is hurting, I tell him, pray smudge. You know, that's a ceremony right there itself. You know, you're but I but I haven't been I haven't been sober. You don't need to be. You know, when you want creator to help you, he's gonna help you whether you're under the influence or not."*

Two-Spirited and Transgender respondents reported that they were often discouraged from attending the ceremonies by the Elders and Knowledge Holders in Toronto due to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Participants further stated that there is such a rigid code and conduct regarding dress-up, selection of songs, and set of roles; the Two-spirited and transgender individuals failed to fit into those rules. As a result, many of them were discouraged and ejected from participation.

- *"I think what's most fitting for me is when it comes to like singing, and like drumming and dancing, those are my biggest barriers, having those ceremonial practices. I used to drum on a big drum, which is in most nations, it tends to be gendered. It's usually seen as the men's drum and that belong strictly with the men."*
- *"...the biggest barrier is practicing ceremonies for sure. I feel like it all really depends on which, like, agency or ceremony I'm accessing, or like elder and their teachings, because some embrace to spirit, and then you find your place in the circle. But like someone who, like my grandmother is a residential school survivor, so she was very ashamed of being an indigenous"*
- *"...ah. Because that's what's created such a division in our communities. It's, you know, the Christianity in the, in the traditional ways of being in communities. You know, I even tell our own people at the longhouse, like, what you're doing is wrong. Like, it's just the opposite, hey, you know, you guys have these little cliques. And if you don't belong in your little clique, and you don't know enough about the ceremonies and stuff, then you kind of shun people over your little clique. And that's not right, either. So, to be more inclusive and welcoming to everyone, you know, not just certain people. So, it's just, you know, people have to get away from that kind of behaviours. That's, that's the thing, you know, we're meant to be, like I said, have good minds and good hearts, and we're supposed to be kind to one another, and change. And we need to get back to those basic teachings of being that way, and be..."*

FINDINGS

Stigma, Discrimination, and Stereotypes

- "Indigenous people are always linked to alcoholism, addiction, and mental health issues as well as crime, gage, robbery, and prostitution. These kinds of stereotype always create barriers to find job to me".
- "I'm indigenous, and I had a person, like, the nurse asked me if I was drinking, and I was like, okay, like, like, if you look at my pupils and stuff like that, it's like you tell him not drinking, but I don't know if he did it as like, kind of like a stereotype or she did it because she was asking the right questions you could say. Yeah."

Trauma and Mental Health Issues

- "...My childhood Trauma is my biggest barrier. So, a lot of my trauma, I guess it would be, like, is a barrier for my education part, I guess. And I would probably pretty sure it would be, for a lot of other people, too, is a lot of traumas that's already planted in their head, and then you wanting to go back to school? And then if that makes sense to you,"
- "Well, I know that addictions have been passed on through a lot of traumas through my family. And I know that those how certain traumas get passed down and everything. And I'm, I grew up in a system as well, after my family, in the residential school like I was in the welfare system as well."
- "But like, you know what I mean, I just still had a lot of, I don't know, traumas and stuff. So yeah, in dealing with my daughter stuff. It's been pretty hard throughout the years, but you know, I know she's in a better place. Yep, and even my dad because just before my dad was murdered in 2014, he put somebody on the TTC tracks and on Main Station, and I think it was 2013 or was 14. I'm not sure. I think it was early 2014 And my dad was on what do you call it? You went to jail and everything for that. And he was on charges still pending charges. So my dad was basically suffer suffering from dementia pretty bad. And he just wasn't happy anymore. You want to go we want him to die. And he kept saying to me like about two three years before he was killed that he just wants to go and like meaning die."
- "I almost got killed myself. And it's and then coming to the city. Then coming with, like, just with the not street smart and all that kind of stuff to come in. Because of very vulnerable. There needs to be more supports out there for free spirited people. Prevention of, you know, trafficking and all that stuff."

FINDINGS

I Always Carry Shame

- *"And so, she always told me, like, you know, you're late enough to pass, like, tell anyone you're like, Greek, Italian, Spanish, like anything, just don't be native, like, you know. I always hide my identity to avoid possible stigma, discrimination, and abuse. I always carry that shame for this..."*
- *I feel ashamed I feel guilty I feel sad, you know, those kinds of things and I tell them like I don't do this work to make you feel shameful to make you feel guilty. I do this work to change your perspective and who we are as indigenous People guide us and in to help us and to pick up your responsibilities as you know,..."*
- *"All the teachings that I have is that woman and two spirited people raised the children since time immemorial, and I feel as though that that relationship and that tradition needs to carry on and that there needs to be proper supports facilitated to reignite and re **Maitri** that time immemorial child's children like traditional practice, because most often when the family was killed, and there was no one else to watch the children would get the two spirits that would, you know, be there for the children, raise them in a good way. There must be a recognition of that, and, you know, funding put in place so that there can be healing ceremonies, insurance circles Whoa. Yeah, sorry, I just had to take a break."*

Discrimination Within the Healthcare System

- *"These horribly abusive nurses and doctors, when someone comes to a hospital says I'm in pain, and they're and they automatically assume about what your pain is and what like that. "No. All I need is my medication. My antibiotics, my foot care stuff. I said home care. Send me home. That's it. The next day? They said, well, we're discharging you, you can go home. Alright, thank you. Guess what? I still got my 10 toes. You know, and I prove to them that I did quit drinking. I proved to them. I did quit my drugs"*

Difficulties to Find Indigenous Mental Health Worker

- *"I'd say the biggest thing for me is finding an indigenous mental health worker. It's been really difficult just to find a therapist in general, let alone finding someone who is not only indigenous, but also to spirit because it's a very particular thing with its own sets of trauma. Thankfully, I was able to find one, but I've had to do a lot of waiting. And it didn't, I found that in the meantime, the Talking Circle was a really great interim. But it's finding the accessibility and finding the groups that I think is initially the hardest thing for people. Because resources are so limited. And also, with ceremonies like I've never been to an in-person ceremony myself, because I didn't have any resources at all. It wasn't until my sister found and indigenous summer school program that we were actually able to find out, our family and really start to reconnect. And so, finding ceremonies in the city, it's almost impossible."*

FINDINGS

Challenges: Daily Banking

- "...Mm hmm. And then also to like, the discrimination that we face like with banks. Just the other day my mom tried to go take some money out of her bank her money. And they asked her all these questions want to talk to the manager asked to see her ID and it's like, this is my home bank. I come here all the time and because of the amount of money that I want to take out, now you guys want to question me, like, right? If I'm not visibly native person, she's Yeah."

Harassment on Public Transit

- "...Okay, so, obviously, the biggest barrier is that we don't fit into the norm of logistic, female or male. I often face difficulty while travelling on public transit. People use to give me strange looks. You know, people do not know about trans people, right? So, I feel like there's no one no one even understands what two spirit it is. Especially with outside the indigenous community. So just trying to explain that to people all the time, not just the stigma, you know, like, oh, like, oh, so you want to be a man, all that kind of stuff you don't I mean, the thing that does bother me quite a bit also isn't within ceremony. There're so many roles that are just dedicated to either male or female, which isn't really the way it should be. There's also supposed to be, you know, roles that are geared towards to spirit of people because we are special. So I wish that there was other ways that we could learn more about that within our community. Because everything I feel like everything is just kind of focused. There's not people try to focus within educating on too spirited, but I think there has to be more personally".

Gender Neutral Washrooms

- "Oh, wait, sorry. I did forget with school, and I guess like just public access. I'm happy to access to gender neutral washrooms. I know one of the buildings in my school just has like a washroom it's like, a gender-neutral washroom like anyone can use. It doesn't matter your gender your like anything. But we still have genderized washrooms and I think that's a really big thing because I don't like walking into a female washroom somedays because I obviously like there's some days where I don't dress super girly or feminine and I dress a lot more masculine and I think that's a really big barrier as a T spirit person because I also some days I just don't feel comfortable walking into a woman's washroom like I want to be able to walk into a gender neutral washroom that isn't also the family washroom, or a handicap washroom."

FINDINGS

- *"...every time I went into a washroom, a women's washroom, I would get, we would get people saying things to me, like you're in the wrong washroom, or you don't belong here "there are not many services or access accessible services for, you know, people who are disabled, mentally ill homeless, or just trying to figure stuff out for the most part.*

Non-Indigenous Person Using Two-Spirited Identity

- *"...I think just the I think one of the barriers is just the ongoing like, non-Indigenous people using Two Spirit identities. And then, as well as not like grasping the fact grasping what, a Two Spirit person, or grasping what Two Spirit is. And that's a really big barrier. Because a lot of my time in school is like, telling people what to spirit means, rather than just being accepted and not being questioned every corner. Um,"*

4.3 How Can We Break Colonial Barriers?

Participants were very optimistic about breaking these colonial barriers to create an enabling environment to ensure the rights of the Two-Spirited people and Indigenous communities in Canada. Most community members pointed out that the western biblical world views have ignored the traditional Indigenous culture, their Spiritual world views, governance system and social structure. All the social-cultural issues we are facing today – from Residential schools to the Millennial Scoop, problems of Missing and Murdered Women, Girls and Two-Spirited People, to child welfare involvement- are the byproduct of defining Indigenous society from western biblical worldviews. Following are some of the testimonies given by the communities:

Decolonize Biblical Notions of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

- *"...No, I can't think of anything directly. I got maybe more knowledge about the fact that residential schools almost completely eradicated the practice of two spirited people amongst many indigenous communities. By so strongly enforcing a gender role and for years prior to residential schools being in effect, attempting to enforce extreme gender roles on male and females, whereas the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island had accepted to spirited people. From long before Colin colonialism had come over, they had seen as long as the member of the community is able to provide and do that job with honor and do it properly, then that is the job that they're designated to. And if they want to wear pants, or wear a skirt, they can wear whatever they want to wear. So just having a lot more knowledge about that, that was an accepted practice amongst all indigenous peoples, everywhere, where there are roles, but those roles aren't 100% defined by gender. And there's, you know, fluidity in gender, and the way the human ages, there's different stages of that, that we go through different phases of our lives."*

FINDINGS

- "...And so being able to learn those things and share that knowledge with other Two Spirit kin is really important to me. And I've been taught by Two Spirit kin to about that. So, it's like, kind of like, perpetuating that like intergenerational knowledge. I'm also like, in school right now to be a therapist, and like learning from how to do that from our own, like cultural practice. And to me that also is like really tied to, to wellness in our community, and being able to support each other"
- "...specially gifted people, and I think through colonialization, they, it became like a shameful thing in our communities in, in a lot of people who, you know, were forced to go to residential school and who went to churches and, and became Christian through that those processes, you know, ones who brought those beliefs in that it that it was wrong,"

Honour Our Land and People

- *"...And by making, making all these rules and stipulations, and you know, making, this is just, it's more westernizing our indigenous heritage, it's like, you know, how can we put a bandaid over this so that it looks like we're fixing things, it's not working, it's not helping. So first, acknowledge us people, as indigenous people, we have the right to self-identify, however we need or want to. I believe I have the right to my way of life, my way of living, culturally, I have cultural practices that are very, they're rooted in the very, in my very soul. So, for me, you know, I do I use land-based medicines, and they work"*

Reform the Child Welfare System

- *"Yeah, it is, especially with the child welfare system on its own is like modern day residential school, you know, our kids are taken out of the environment, they're known, they're getting placed into with families that have no knowledge of know being indigenous and really put, it really displaces a lot of our youth, a lot of our children and we grow up with those with those issues and having to overcome those barriers."*

Reform the School System

- *"..... the Catholic schools and making them into indigenous based schools."*

FINDINGS

Practice and Promote Indigenous Wisdom

- *"...my grandmother used to say, churches manmade, you can go out into the forest and pray to creator, and that is acceptable. And I said, you know what, that's what I will do. I do not like church, I will not go to church"*

Make the Government Accountable

- *"...Yeah. Yeah, you know, and, you know, I'm thinking of reserves, you go there, you try to buy a loaf of bread, and it costs like, you know, 10 or \$20, for a loaf of bread. You have food banks here, and I know people who, you know, they've got their whole list of food banks that they will go to on a weekly basis. Why don't we have food banks in, in, you know, up north or in remote areas? How hard would it be for grocery stores to send shipments of you know, items, you know, food that is still good, they need to get off their shelves or whatever, you know, send them to those, those remote areas have food banks, where people can just walk in, and you know, walk in and the grocery shop for free. Why not? You've got second harvest that comes through Toronto every week with lots of food, while Second Harvest, drive a truck up to a reserve, you know, once a month drive a few trucks up with food. How hard is that? You know, they save water issues with water. If the army can dump, train, not train plane loads of water on forest fires, okay? You think of the gallons and gallons and gallons of water that they use, you know, whether it's from the lake or whatever. Why can't they have why can't they put that into like some kind of system where you know, reserves can just, you know, go get water from the big water. Not a barrel. I'm just I'm looking at, you know, those big filling station things. Filling jugs. How hard would that be?"*
- *"...I just feel like there's a bandaid to cover us up again. Because again, we're just junk natives who cares about us. So just barely. So, we're gonna fix it now. So that the society, you know, mostly like, you know, colonized society, white society, white Europe, society, you know what I mean? They think everything's okay. But they don't know what's actually happening, that we're being ignored again."*
- *"...There's no joke and misogyny. I mean, no, it's sick. Like, yeah, like I don't it's just, like, women are sacred in our culture. And I was taught that growing up, like women are sacred. And just some men in that culture would say the opposite. And, like, you know, I'm, I'm only 21 the opposite. Actually,"*

FINDINGS

- *"And, you know, my parents are survivors of the sixties scoops, and are like, Yeah, my parents might, you know, my parent or my grandparent just got money thrown at them. It upsets me because there's no amount of money that can replace a child a child A childhood. Like there's no money that can replace that there's no money that can replace an innocence that was stolen and traded in for a lifetime of guilt for being a just being a child. Yeah, because I think the government really missed the mark of just throwing money at the problem. Because how can you hate a child? Just based on their skin color. How can you hate a person just based on their skin color? Because they're different from what you have grown up with your whole life. And I think that's absolutely disgusting. And money being thrown at just one person. It doesn't make sense, either. Because, yes, this one family was affected, but it also affected like multiple others, like, my uncle went to residential school, like a day school, which was just equally as bad as some of the residential schools."*
- *"...instead of giving them all that money go build them up a big condo like the way you're doing all over the city and you know, like healing lodges and ceremonial grounds like instead of and instead of handing out these checks to people with full blown addictions and making them Odeon ended up end up dying and all this, like, treatment centers, like stuff like that. I would, I would love to see like, you know, especially cultural components into that, like putting that into that treatment center. Mm hmm. You know, learning the language again learning"*

Teach New Canadians Indigenous Culture and History.

- *"...these days, you can see refugee everywhere in Canada who knows nothing about Indigenous Canada and its history. They all came with full of misinformation and stereotypical notions taught by the European settlers. When they are totally misinformed and misguided with full of negative information, how can you expect them to treat you with respect and dignity? My suggestion is to make a mandatory provision to provide indigenous history and cultural competency trainings to all the immigrants before they start work and live here."*

4.5 Programs and Services Our Community Needs

During the consultation, all the participants and Elders asked about the very fundamental needs of human beings. They demanded basic Universal Human Rights of the Individuals. Canada has already adopted the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But unfortunately, it has not ensured those rights to the people of its land (i.e., Two-Spirited and Indigenous People). Every single day, Indigenous People are abused and are going missing. Every day, Indigenous people are falsely charged and incarcerated. When our sisters and brothers are imprisoned and murdered, the investigation, prosecution, and sentencing processes have failed to provide equal and fair justice. It is atrocious.

FINDINGS

- *"...There are so many things we needed right now. But let me prioritize and tell you one by one. First, we need safe and reliable place to sleep where we feel protected and should not have to compromise our health and safety. We need our community around us to help us to feel safe. Second, we need reliable source of income so that we should not worry about our livelihood. Third, we want our teachings and ceremonies that embrace our two spirited culture and identity. Fourth, we need access to correct and consistent information so that we should not be a prey colonial justice system. Fifth, we want our children safe and comfortable. We want child welfare system stay away from our children. We know how to raise our kids in indigenous way. Sixth, we want designated place to perform our ceremonies freely and uninterrupted. Within city, if thousands of dam church available, why not an indigenous ceremony places and longhouse? Seventh, we need our elders, our medicine, and ceremonies. we need to be healed from these past trauma and nightmares. Eights, we need powwow and culturally supported recreational activities to heal the traumatized communities. Nineth, we want culturally supported indigenous housing, employment, and financial assistance to start our life safety and securely. There are so many things we need Shiva; I can count till 100 or more ... "*
- *"...We want to be served by the Two Spirited People for the Two-Spirited People. We want one stop services. It is too hard and embracing to knock every single door and tell them your story every time to those people who has no clue about us at all. It is literally traumatizing. Since the Two Spirited People of the 1st Nations is doing so great and providing wide ranges of programs, why not develop this agency as a one stop service center for all the Two Spirited Urban Indigenous populations? If government provides them adequate funding, they are totally able to provide two spirited friendly housing, shelter, social assistance harm reduction, crisis response as well as cultural teachings and ceremonies. We want to be served by our own community. Only lacking is government commitment and accountability."*
- *"...I feel that the government should give Two Spirited funding to create housing, for families and to spirited and our trans community. I also feel that health is a place where community is lacking, as our healthcare systems in place are not being represented by our people. There's a huge lack of indigenous doctors and nurses,"*
- *"...and so, in relation to residential school, the recent announcements of ancestors like Kamloops Indian residential school that brought up a lot of feelings of grief, loss and stress, individually and collectively, throughout communities and nations from province to province to province, and I feel is also that there are gaps in supports. I feel as though Two Spirit People of the First Nation Toronto is doing the good work in order to address the ramifications of the residential school and the child welfare system. Government must provide additional support and funding assurance to ensure continuity of the great work they are doing."*

FINDINGS

More Space to Practice Our Culture and Ceremonies to Repair the Harms

- *"... the bottom line is we want to acknowledge that indigenous people, we were the first people here, we are the keepers of the Earth, right. You know, our lands have been taken over our culture has been taken over lots of misappropriation all over the place. Bottom line, I think the government, the City of Toronto, you know, all other agencies, if we want to make things right, then we need to start listening"*
- *"Stop ignoring us. Like, I feel like everything is ignored." "Our teachings are the seven generations, right? So seven generations from now, if we don't fix it now, it could get worse. You don't need so. Absolutely. But we're gonna sacrifice a little bit for the greater good"*
- *"...people need to be more open minded and and teach us about our own culture. But yet I knew absolutely nothing about my own culture and ceremonies. Once I know my own culture, then I would tell people that they were wrong"*
- *"...And there should be a lot of teaching on the residential school, all the teaching about the instead attended and bring it to the Board of Education and whatnot and right you mean in like the public school system? Correct? Yeah. And I don't know, I don't need some of the native traditional teachings for the Aboriginal kids that attend school"*

Teach us from Elders not from Textbooks

- *"...Maybe they have to be treated, like be trained by actual elders from the community, and not from a textbook. I think that might help significantly. Maybe having more accessibility to elders in the healthcare environment would be beneficial as well. Yeah. And also, in the educational, like in colleges and universities, maybe if more people, if they had more mandated teachings from elders to Canadians, in general, maybe they would pick up more and retain more knowledge and information on how to approach people in a more holistic way. I guess, I don't know. Just thinking about nice to gesture. Um,"*
- *"...I think there should be a standard National Teaching for Indigenous Studies. I think because all of the there's so many different provinces and territories that each curriculum is different, especially when you go into suburbs and cities and stuff like that. I think there should be a national standard that has been approved by a committee."*
- *"...lack of information sharing within our two spirited and within our entire community, specific to education, employment, training, opportunities, entrepreneurial supports, funding opportunities, training that, you know, can incorporate other skills, for example, proposal writings, how to access a grant, how to access funding to start a business, I see that that could be something that we could work, I feel like there's a lack of affordable, safe housing, for families and to spirited."*

FINDINGS

Creating Safe Havens for Two-Spirited and Women Affected by Gender Based Violence

- *"...cuz that's how it originally was even though it was women, indigenous women who were the leaders in the very beginning, right, I think we that's what we need to go back to her. And that's, you know, that would be the strongest way to break that colonial mindset? We need a save space for people Two-Spirited people affected by Gender Based Violence and reduce violence against women"*
- *"And so, I really appreciate Two Spirits because they, they let me know, like, and appreciate myself because growing up, I only knew about being, you know, a lesbian and, you know, from going to the 519. And, and two spirits, you know, they kind of just open the doors and kind of just like, you know, how to me with being who I am and appreciating who I was"*

Deconstruction of the Colonial Mindset

- *"And the road to deconstructing that mindset is very long. And it's anything that comes up as a program to support with that also has its own bureaucracy that you need to go through"*
- *Next, they don't have to keep like questioning you after questioning and questioning the answer that you just gave. It's just it's too ridiculous. It makes us feel like we're constant criminals in our own land, land base and where we're from. It's ridiculous. So when you get these inquiries into missing and murdered women, they're always blaming the woman. Well, what did she do? And backwards, the system's backward"*
- *"There's no joke and misogyny. I mean, no, it's sick. Like, yeah, like I don't it's just, like, women are sacred in our culture. And I was taught that growing up, like women are sacred. And just some men in that culture would say the opposite. And, like, you know, I'm, I'm only 21 the opposite. Actually,"*
- *"Something within that has to be had to happen. Because it's everywhere you go people like, I get like, what was yesterday was ribbon skirt. I went to the bakery, and everyone's looking at me again, like I'm a clown. And so, I just started glaring at them back like what? Like, I've just discovered some ribbons on it. It's not that crazy, but we're looking at like, you know, like, oh, my gosh, it's a unicorn, you know, and it's not right. Like, it's not right. Like, if you haven't asked me to come up and say something to me, but don't stare at me like, but I just like to think that everything we have to educate society, because they don't know"*

FINDINGS

Educate Immigrants and Refugees

- "...We must be opened to share our certain teachings and culture to immigrant and refugee. Since they are sharing our land, they must be aware about the teaching of this land and its history. Now you need people need to have awareness around all kinds of cultures and different practices and people and disabilities and sexual orientations and all those things. So maybe sensitivity training like that might be able to eliminate those barriers."

4.6 Skills and Knowledge, We Hold

In the survey, all the community members reported having at least one or many skill sets that can support them in promoting Indigenous knowledge, skills, and tradition. While developing the 2-Spirited Strategic Plan (2022 -2025), 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations conducted a community consultation and survey where 175 community members participated. The study found that 100% of community members had a unique set of skills, and 85% of community members expressed their interest in running education sessions to share their talents. This finding shows that significant numbers of the members hold transferable skills and knowledge.

- *"...we as First Nations people have a unique Like skills and traditional knowledge that should help us reclaim our power. Canada wants Canada wants to know what kind of skills you and your family have that will help us to reclaim our history and culture. I am a First Nations person who works in healthcare, sexual assault and crisis, frontline work. And I am involved in this questioning so that we can provide services so that I can be educated and how I can support and break down barriers for to spirit, persons looking for support in healthcare in crisis. So what I have seen in my practice is that there are two tiered levels of service for Two Spirit First Nations people. Inadequate Housing, there is no affordable adequate housing, which leads to all other kinds of vulnerabilities that we see. There is higher intimate partner violence, it seems to be with Two Spirit folks. We seem to see high levels of that. I am practicing in ceremony and lodge and have for over 30 years and I've seen barriers and obstacles to First Nations people expressing themselves and launching ceremony in the way that they see fit in the sense of for me, in Sundance and seeing that Sundance progress that we now have two spirit folks that are coming in and dancing around the male side or the female side, whatever they choose or identify with. Whereas some people within our lodge are saying it's strict adherence to male, female, we're opening and breaking down those barriers and creating safe space"*

FINDINGS

- *"...like you said, a lot of indigenous are very have a, an exceptional skill set, as far as, you know, artistry, like, we have many artists like, you know, that can branch out too many things. I mean, it doesn't, it can be whether it's indigenous art or non-Indigenous with that skill set. They can be, you know, artists, architects, anything like, you know, to do with the drawing, you know, artists as far as tattooing, I mean, that's something that, you know, also that art can branch out to so many different, you know, occupations and skills, but, but they don't know, they're not aware and have not been provided, again, that education or those, you know, those more or less somehow provisions on how to use those skills right."*
- *"I would do the teaching. I used to run the native Learning Center in a high school, and I changed the whole code of conduct. I didn't have a code of conduct I had, instead of rules for learning or rules for the school,"*
- *"...reciting cultural teachings. "I bring in elders for naming ceremonies. I also teach crafts, like drum making rattle making medicines."*
- *"I have family who can speak fluent Cree and fluent Ojibwe"*
- *"I think mental health and emotional support services, cultural support, like learning the language of traditional healings, ceremonies, teachings, like that. Counts, counseling, maybe talking one on one. Professional? Yeah. And maybe some transportation to get to the support."*
- *"Mayan fuckin weaving, we're making scarves and stuff." "And just coming across. skills. It's like, she was like, both grandmothers who was with like, like knitting sewing type of like, arts and stuff like that. Yeah. But it's like to like with mine is this like, it's like that kind of like? Always said, um, information is always like that storytelling, always that kind of traditional knowledge that was always like, passed down."*
- *"Like maybe music, art. Dancing. Music. Yeah, like, I mean, I feel that's food for your soul. And I think that's a good way of reaching each other and touching each other. Without any judgment. Like say, the voice you see, you hear the voice, but you don't see the face. Until you know, so work with me from my soul and from my beliefs. And I think just understanding each other's people."*
- *"...cook and I believe bring into our community is food traditional foods. I put a twist on Indian tacos. I make jerk chicken tacos. Yeah, they're amazing. I think cooking and skills of music drumming, like social, like, I'm a social person. My spirit's name is woman of song."*

FINDINGS

- *"Ah, I'm a, I'm a former grass dancer. Ah, I think that when we know our heart, discipline in a very strong matter that we can actually Keep on continually sharing we keep on sharing our element of our art. We are putting, we're sending out a signal and a message about our culture to everyone else. Yes, we are, we're not only reinvigorating. But we're reinventing it. Like for me with my dance, I'm always constantly reinvigorating that, that flame to show to signal out to everyone that this is our territory. This is traditions that 1000s of years"*
- *"...think as Two Spirit people, we have such a great connection to both the physical and the spiritual world. And I think what we really need to do is foster that relationship to the spiritual world. And, you know, I personally, am really good with talking to spirits and to spirit and to creator."*
- *"...that I know that is First Nation. They're really good at creating things with their hands. Very skilled, very good crafters, and very calm because it takes a lot of patience to sit there and create things like I personally am trying to. I too would love to share my skills and traditional knowledge to my community members that will help them to heal and get connected with our land*
- *"...but a lot of them like, one of the skills, definitely I remember, like my uncles, they could build a house from, you know, top to bottom and I know my brother, honestly, like, I would just like give him a list. And believe me, I see what he does. I see him strip down a house and, and flip it, and it was like, absolutely beautiful. But you know what, he couldn't get a lot."*
- *"Should I put my family they've been raised in the longhouse and no, know who they are. So some of them are old teachings, I have a grandson who's a teacher in the community, and as a teacher, and teaching our culture and our history and our language, which is go when we decided to do that was to bring our language back. So, and my granddad is dance, no, they know on polo or something, not those ceremonies that we go to, so they teach the younger ones that are coming up. Our family has been like that for quite a while, we've long when I decided to go back to LA."*
- *"I'm also reclaiming our history and culture by turning to durational medicines, and I'm doing my own research, and trying to create a new path for indigenous people who want to go study ethnobotany. And, like, have the study of traditional plants and medicines in their back pocket wherever they are."*
- *"And the knowledge that I'm able to give is a lot in like traditional medicines and plants. And I think what a lot of my friends have, because like I said, my family isn't really doing anything to reclaim the culture, and they don't really have any skills in it. But a lot of my friends, I see that they're, they're really taking in, like the whole, just being present"*
- *So, I'm a long-standing indigenous helper, here in the Toronto community for over 18 years. I'm also a mom, I have five children identify as two spirited, I love my community. I love my people. And I love us."*

FINDINGS

In this survey, the community has listed the following skills, expertise and some fantastic resources to reclaim Indigenous culture and rituals.

Indigenous Knowledge Keepers

- Spiritual healing
- Healing and spiritual support

Growing and harvesting

- Medicine harvesting
- Identify traditional plants and Medicine growing
- Mentoring Our Youth
- Hunting and Skin Harvesting
- Harvesting Cedar and preparing Cedar Tea
- Harvesting and cleaning, and making various recipes for wild rice
- Coffee making

Social Work

- Trauma counsellor and healer
- Addiction counselling
- Harm Reduction Worker
- Indigenous construction and housebuilding
- Operate sweat lodge and sacred fire
- Personal Support Worker (PSW)
- Mental Health and Addiction support

Indigenous Core Skills

- Drum making
- Beading
- Indigenous culinary
- Two-Spirited socializer
- Relationship coach
- Fundraising and money management
- Human Resource Management
- Personal Support Worker

FINDINGS

Indigenous Art, Music, and Fashion

- Painting and crafting
- Hoop Dancing
- Grass dancing
- Women's drumming
- Jingle dress dancing
- Chicken dancing
- Fancy Shawl
- Northern traditional dancing
- Regalia making
- Acting and performance
- Indigenous art
- Weaving
- Knitting and sewing

Traditional Sacred Ceremonies

- Naming ceremony
- Fire Keeping
- Shake Tent ceremony
- Sweat Lodge
- Round Dance
- Gatherings at Pow Wow's
- Full Moon ceremonies
- Berry Fast Teaching
- Indigenous oral teaching
- Indigenous storytelling
- Ability to recite Indigenous stories that had passed to me by my grandmother
- Longhouse teaching and ceremonies
- Pow-wow Teachings
- Language teachings (Cree and Ojibwe)
- Fluent Cree and Ojibwe speaker

FINDINGS

4.7 Program, and Services We Need to Materialize Truth and Reconciliation

Truth and Reconciliation is a healing process. It requires commitment, accountability, and honesty. At the same time, it requires integrity, and truthfulness in their commitment to support the healing process. Unfortunately, many participants commented that the Government of Canada is not following the natural Spirit of Truth and Reconciliation. In the name of Truth and Reconciliation, the government is distributing some money like a bandaid, rather than providing culturally supportive healing, fair justice, basic survival supports, reliable housing, education, employment opportunities, access to Indigenous views on health, body, mind, spirit and emotions as well as equal access to social services.

Following are the frequently suggested programs and services during the Talking Circle as well as community consultation:

- Acknowledge who “We are and What we are Going through”
- Adequate and affordable mental health, addiction treatment, cultural care & support programs
- Adequate financial support for daily living
- Affordable Housing
- Better Child Care Support
- Cultural Protection
- Decolonized and sensitized media
- Decolonized law enforcement agency
- De-stigmatize and normalize Indigenous communities
- Direct funding to Indigenous agencies and programs
- Elimination of biblical worldview on Two-Spirited people, women, and girls
- Indigenous housing and family reintegration program
- Well informed and culturally sensitized Justice system
- Unbiased police and court systems
- Indigenous child welfare system - community take care of children and women
- Indigenous language promotion
- Make Indigenous cultural competency trainings available to all public workers
- More talk about MMI2SWG
- Nobody should endure the pain; We need to honour children and families of MMWG
- Promote and harness Indigenous culture and ceremonies
- Social, economic, and spiritual protection
- Provide information on Truth and Reconciliation to all immigrants and public workers

FINDINGS

- Respect Treaties and treat people respectfully
- Space to practice and promote ceremonies
- Stop creating western cargo boxes like shelter for the Indigenous people. Build community houses in accordance with the Indigenous world view of community
- Stop westernizing Indigenous culture and people
- Support and create an enabling environment
- Teach immigrants and newcomers about Indigenous languages, cultures, and the history of Canada
- Teach the truth (current realities of Two-Spirit and Indigenous People) at school and colleges
- Teach truth and accurate Indigenous history at schools, colleges and universities
- Support to raise Indigenous children according to the Indigenous worldview
- Ensure well-trained and sensitized community services workers

The following testimonies show that community members know exactly what they need and what is lacking to improve the life of Two-Spirited Urban Indigenous communities. Now the only thing missing is the government's commitment and honesty to fulfill it:

- *"...I think the calls to action. I think a lot of people have the tools in front of them, and are spelled out clearly, of how to take action and addressing some of the deficiencies that indigenous people are facing within mainstream society. Even in first nations where there is a lack of services and programs for people who are not, I guess, in healthier environments where they can access services such as health care, or, or access to ceremony. I think it's it. Yeah, it's all spelled out there and in the calls to action, right. And I think people need to take ownership and responsibility for themselves. To, to acknowledge them to learn them and to find solutions to move the initiative forward."*
- *"...Listen to the elders, knowledge holders and community leader before designing any program and services to the indigenous communities that will helps to repair the harms".*
- *"...I think that would help to eliminate a lot of those barriers, haven't been able to have a program that has more stable funding."*
- *"...And then I don't know where their funding the funding will get cut. I know sometimes it's not in their hands. But I think to have more stability in that area, as opposed to Yes, definitely. Yeah."*

Adequate Social Assistance

- *"...like, I feel like she needs like to be a part of like, like a community that like, nurtures and empowers her like, like identity. And just like it's just like, okay, she falls under the umbrella of being a youth indigenous do but like, I would like to see like so that like, all of her needs, like mental, emotional, spiritual and physical needs, like met like, not just like one because then you're off balance, right? Like, it's just, it would be nice to like, know that. There's like she's getting that support she needs like that stare for her. And like, um, yeah."*

FINDINGS

- *"...So maybe if there's a way to get more money to help to help these young, like, indigenous youth get into those roles, then that's I feel like that's literally the only way to do it. And then also educate make people have maybe yearly trainings instead of one time Training and you're done".*

More Survival Skills

- *"...Just again, more education, support, more resources, maybe trying to create more opportunities for jobs. I'm not sure how that would be done. But I think that would help a lot. Help with more mental health resources, because right now there is mental health resources. However, it's like, you get six sessions, and you're done. Nobody I know, personally, and myself included, is going to be healed up and ready to go in succession. You know what I'm saying? Right? So it's just, I think, maybe more"*

Create Indigenous Housing not Cargo Bins

- *"...So, it would be good to see more to spirit people, indigenous women, in positions of authority and in positions of power, right from the top down and, and have and being able to be role models for younger to spirit of people into just women as they're growing into careers, that they can also step in and do those kinds of jobs. So, I don't know if there's, you know, there's obviously, hiring, hiring policies like human rights policies versus around hiring and non-discriminatory hiring practices and things like that"*
- *"...Those shelters, I don't even want to call them how shelters, create homes. Homes for youth, not just shelters that they you know, they've got for two months. You know, you look on television, and you see those shows with you know, little house nation where people are taking, like cargo bins and creating them into beautiful homes"*
- *"... I mean, the subsidized housing is ridiculous. It's a 10-year waiting list like by then, you know, people have given up Yeah, injured people. Don't even get to the top of the waiting list because they've, you know, everything's fallen through the cracks after 10 years."*
- *"...Um, yeah, I think there really isn't really a housing focus for two spirited people at all. Um, so I think that you need there needs to be like, perhaps a focus. So that there are places where to spirit and people can feel welcome"*

Cultural Renaissance: Reclaim our Culture and Ceremonies

- *"Again, just getting everybody together, like and sharing information. And telling people from residential schools telling their stories so that the younger generation can understand what they've been through and where they're coming from. And hopefully, that can help us get past some of the traumas that are going on now. Yeah, that'*

FINDINGS

Access to Ceremonies

- *"I think being able to access ceremony and cultural teachings that are explicitly to the Two-Spirit inclusive, meaning that they're also like, inclusive, like they're gender neutral, and they're inclusive of like, different families, and different people who are in different relationships, and all of those things. I know that that would increase my, like, mental health significantly, if I even just had that, if I actually like, didn't have to feel like afraid or worried or anxious, that if I enter into a space that someone's going to tell me that I don't belong there, or that, you know, all of a sudden, the teachings are"*

Honour the Missing and Murdered Spirits by conducting Ceremonies

- *"...Give proper ceremonies and release the soul of the missing and murdered Two spirited People, indigenous women, and children. It is very essential to release their soul from the pain and agony they have gone through"*

Ensure a Self-Determined Indigenous Child Welfare System

- *"...and so, the catalyst for a lot of the colonial violence and Neo-colonial violence that indigenous and spirit are facing is directly related to the current Child Welfare situation with the over representation of Indigenous children and foster group and residential custody placements"*
- *"I can probably tell you know, somebody that some the do's and don'ts of if you, you know, if your children are lost in the system, I know the do's and the don'ts. You know when I, you know, I was very hardheaded. And like I said, I had all this trauma in me, and I didn't even know how to parent my own children."*

We want a Proactive Child Welfare System NOT the current Reactive System

- *"...I think we must sort of think about also the, the child welfare system, you know, I think the police and the child welfare system have to focus more on preventing taking away children and be more proactive, instead of reactive"*
- *"...weird that a woman that gets her kids taken away, was supposed to live on welfare. That was like, two times less than what someone gets paid to take care of her kids when they're in care. Mm hmm. Like, money. So, it's like, just give them mothers that need that money, give it to them? Why are you taking their kids away and giving it to somebody else?"*

FINDINGS

- *"Well, I think we need to acknowledge the past to look to the future and heal. For instance, like, well, the residential school, the last residential school just closed in 1996. Right, and their children were not being taken care of properly. They're being ignored and treated like they weren't being treated like babies or kids. They're treated like animals. Yeah, right. And I guess acknowledged what was done within our call, culture ah, Yeah, they try to have like our culture taken away from must. So I think if we just, we need to acknowledge the past to look to the future and heal, right so that our children can grow and carry on our traditions."*
- *"And then there are also CAS survivors, who were taken from their families at a very young age, instead of going to the residential schools, and that is still happening. I wonder how many like sons and daughters of MMI W women, you know, that there are in the city and other ones, you know, and yeah, it would be nice to be actually, it's like out, like that was already calling when families have like, alcoholics, addiction or something. Oh, yeah, yeah. There should be something like that for mmm W people."*
- *"...Stop stealing our kids in the name of child welfare. We know how to raise our kids. Give us better house and resources rather than taking our kids away"*

Money Management Skills

- *"...and you're like living the big life. And it's like, no, a lot of people don't have money management skills, because it wasn't taught to us. Because we just watched, you know, we have this intergenerational trauma of watching people spend it on booze or drugs and, or, like, you know, just spending it to get something fixed in the house or get water and it's just, you know, some people don't realize that the money being thrown at us is not okay."*
- *"You know, I remember some young girls, we had a workshop years ago, and they were so proud of their budget, they were like, oh, you know, I have this much money for my food, this much, you know, for their diapers and wipes. And, you know, what, Connie, even though I have \$100, for my entertainment for the whole month, but I know how much I have. And yeah, you know, they were proud to learn those skills, that was something that they didn't have. And, you know, when it's provided also into a more setting that they're comfortable with, you know, you don't want to feel uncomfortable, I think that's something that these skills need to be provided and provided in a setting that people feel comfortable, you know, if it is another indigenous person, but it, that's the hardest thing is to get them out there. Right? If they're not comfortable, they're not going they're not yarn. Right? Yeah. Not, they have to believe that is positive, and, and to get them out there."*

FINDINGS

- *"Yeah, so I, I like I honestly struggle that like, I do, because, like, I'm terrible at, like, managing money. Like, it's like a really poor thing. Like, because for one, like, I grew up in care, so no one taught me like, how to manage money. And like, Yes, I'm an adult, and I can find new ways of doing things. But it's like, like, sometimes, like, I get triggered. And then like, I become, like, that little girl that needs nurturing. And then I go back to like, I just fall back on like, like gambling or something. Because like, I'm focusing my mind totally elsewhere to avoid, like, like dealing with the issue, and like, falling apart."*
- *"...Even like the, you know, your basic skills, some people, especially if they're on, you know, a set income, and they don't know how to budget and they haven't ever been taught how to budget, how do they make it from one month to the next, right. You know, there's times like, I mean, just as, as one of our board members from one of the indigenous boards that I belong to, I'm like, that's one of the programs that I've, you know, put out there offer them, like, some type of budgeting, like, teach them how to budget."*
- *"... And if you think, you know, what, we're going back generations where were, you know, they're put on these reserves, and, and not given these skills and taken from homes and, and treated like, you know, that they weren't the and you're expecting them to learn and know how to survive out there. You know, that's just, you know, it's ludicrous. Yeah, right. Yeah. Yeah, for sure. definitely agree with that. Um, what"*
- *"Oh, yeah. Money management, you guys should definitely teach money management. Up, you know, what they had, when I was working at Nami rise, they had a financial literacy person come once a week to help them with budgeting and stuff. And then they had a nutrition person come and teach them how to like properly to shop for groceries. Where's the coffee? Oh, cool. You know what I mean? And like, really good ideas. Yeah, so like, just those two simple things like would help somebody out. Because I have to learn all of this on my own mind. Yeah. From a child."*
- *"...So, like, for example, I just got a new job, but it's going to take literally almost 100% of my income to pay the rent. So, then you end up having to eat off your child tax"*
- *"... while they're giving money to homeless people like that, or have addictions, full blown addictions and still haven't dealt with none of their trauma, nothing. Because, you know, obviously you can see they haven't because they're still on the street or you know, it blew my mind like oh, it's like wow I don't know I think it's I think I think I see a lot clearer because my mind is clear"*

FINDINGS

Financial Security

- *"... , it's crazy, like, it's crazy, like, I literally work, a decent job, and all of my money you have to have insurance, right? And you have to pay utilities. So like, that, like, insurance, like \$500 Plus, like, or like a one and a half pitch and like, just like crammed in there, because I can't afford to pay anything more like, you know, and, yeah, like, I was living in it with lemon."*
- *"...Prime Minister Justin Trudeau mentioned that basic income would be about \$2,000 a month, it's probably gone up since COVID. So basically, give us enough money, like especially people on assistance, that need that amount of money to just survive, like that's basic, basic living costs, and a lot of us are far below that line right now"*

More Food Banks

- *"More food banks like just some human things, you know, basic human necessities."*

Support for the Two-Spirited Aging Population

- *"Well, concern of mine is, it is a aging population. You know, unfortunate. I mean, it's just it's really sad to think but soon, survivors will have moved on to the spirit world. And what happens, then, you know, does it mean that we stop having those conversations? Does it mean that the government's like, well, you know, we're, you know, I'm hoping that I guess they invest a lot of time and money into the, into thinking about this, but then, you know, 10 years, 1520 years down the road, that they just stop investing in something like this, because I think I'd want to ensure that they're still thinking that that those historical traumas are still here today with you know, with people that are just being born. I mean, there's a lot of the residential school trauma that's still there. So I guess I'm, I'm hoping that you know, in the future, the government doesn't just think that the issue is aged out, for lack of a better term, I guess. And yeah. Yeah, I guess I'll just leave it at that."*

School Curriculums based on Indigenous World View

- *"...Maybe more of more indigenous schools for sure. With indigent like indigenous run schools. Like, instead of like these western schools, like, bring everyone back together, you know, that's definitely they don't want money when people want to know that they're being heard and people like that, that people care, like, you know? Yeah, money is great, but it's not going to fix the trauma and everything else that comes behind it."*

FINDINGS

- *"...just like a flashback, I guess our memories of like, being in, in school and being and being teased and bullied by the white kids because I was, we are my siblings, my myself and my siblings went to an all-white school."*
- *"...Maybe more of more indigenous schools for sure. With indigent like indigenous run schools. Like, instead of like these western schools, like, bring everyone back together, you know, that's definitely they don't want money when people want to know that they're being heard and people like that, that people care, like, you know? Yeah, money is great, but it's not going to fix the trauma and everything else that comes behind it."*

No Judgement: Open Minded Clear Space to Heal

- *"...just don't want to bring up that trauma and that history and you know, yeah, so just getting people to just, you know, open up. Yeah. And even acknowledge that they, you know, yeah, their sister went missing or, you know, it just, it's, it's hard on people. So just having that open mind and that clear space, and, you know, where people can feel comfortable."*
- *"...those resources to our communities to be able to provide support around those intersections between what is cultural safety look like in the context of providing care for Two Spirit folks with this variety of lived experience, because we you know, you put 50 of us in a room, and we all identify differently, and that's awesome."*
- *"I said, that triggered me and I worry about other people. With drug and alcohol issues. If you ask a native person, if they have a problem with drugs or alcohol, that's racist."*
- *"I need to do other things. Well, no, I know that this is what helps me this is what helps my family. So, allow me to decide on my health care as an indigenous person. I will go out in my backyard. I know what to pick. I know what I can use. I know what to use, to help me with my health or teaching my children. I was actually reprimanded did over the summer for something that I had done, my children and, you know, their friends were out doing something with an agency. They were arguing, I was called I was told about it. I put a note on my door that those kids"*

FINDINGS

Decolonize and De-Christianize Indigenous Culture and Ceremonies

- *"...one of the biggest suggestions that I have is that we start breaking down that barrier of The Western colonial biblical worldview and mixing it in with indigenous knowledge. Because we all need to have that too, I've seen. And I think that's something that's really big and too, I'd seen, if you don't know what it is, it's just being able to look, it's like looking through a pair of binoculars, if you look through one side, and it's just the indigenous, our indigenous knowledge and our values and everything, you're not looking through the other side, which is our western side, and you're not seeing the to meld together and work harmoniously, rather than against each other. And I think that's something that's really important, because you need to look through binoculars together to be able to see the whole picture. And I think we need to start putting that together and being able to meld the two, so that we can all live like, just together as a community rather than against each other. So, I think that's a really big thing. And if that's like, you know, getting like getting everyone to sit around and just talk, then we can just talk and there doesn't need to be anything about like, race or you know, the color of our skins or who's getting what money. It just needs to be like, people being able to treat people with dignity and understanding that we all have our own struggles. It's not a competition Yeah, but that can".*

A Fair Justice System

- *"Then yeah, that it is frustrating for, for cases to just spend time in, in front of judges just for the just for things to be remand and your RE Hooray, all it is, is just another number. It's just another number that another case number that they don't want to be taking the time to look at. Close. Yeah. So sorry, you've experienced this, sir. I do appreciate you sharing this episode with us. And I hope that by sharing your story that we can somehow you know, push for some institutional changes that that are really going to help, you know, frame this a little better, so that situations like this don't happen anymore. And that we're not sitting here kind of in limbo, wondering if we can close that wound to heal. Right?"*
- *"I think that process should focus on achieving simplicity."*

Treat US Fairly to Honour US

- *"..know, we need to honour their survival. You know, nobody should endure what they did. Yeah, nobody, and, and for them to survive, and to be strong and positive about that survival, and continue to teach us and give us the teachings. And that we have and give us the skills that we have, we need to honour them, we need to honour them, the survivals as the ones that didn't survive, just like we have honour to other people that that have, you know, I get so passionate about this, you know, that have taken those for our country, just like our veterans, you know,..."*

FINDINGS

Mental Health and Healing Supports

- *"I said about the intergenerational trauma that gets passed down, I think there needs to be programs put in place to help those people heal from that past trauma. And like, like my grandma said, like, the history is still being recovered. So, like, even when they started finding those bodies at the sites of children, it was like retriggering for a lot of people. So yeah, I just think there needs to be programs in place to help people get over the emotional trauma of that stuff happening."*
- *"... exactly. It's just undoable, I don't know, maybe how there's all these recognition for people with I don't want to say like mental disabilities, but people that have, say, anxiety, it's just starting to get recognized that that's something that needs to be taken more seriously. And so, I feel like this is a lot of trauma. And it's creating a lot of underlying mental health conditions, like, anxiety, depression. And I just think it needs to be taken more seriously and more resources need to be put in place for people who want them. And then also for the people that don't even want them. Like they need to have resources to, that they're educated about, so that they will be able to get the help that they need or want in the future. Know, and more teachings and more access to elders, like I said before, yeah, would be super beneficial. And no, I want to mention, too, that in the last year and a half, like I've been trying to reclaim my heritage or whatever, but I've been accessing more elders, but I haven't really been able to access any two spirited elders. I actually haven't even met one or you know,"*
- *"...it would help a lot. And yeah, just the same things I just mentioned before, just having more access to spirit of elders, having more access to mental health services, basically, and maybe even having more access to mental health services that specialize like in helping to spirited people or LGBTQ tea people I don't know. That would make a big difference to us.*
- *"Just having some supports like psychiatrist psychiatry, counselling programs outreach, I guess. Yeah. Just having someone there like a sister brother"*
- *"Um, I come from a lot of tragedy. I'm born into it raised into it. Um, I am a recovering alcoholic and addict, who spent most of my life on drugs and alcohol out there running. I am sober now, I just celebrated 14 years in December. And my mother was fine. I am a counsellor for abused women and children. And I also help people get sober and clean. You know, I, I just tried to help where I can I mean, I I've experienced so much. I'm currently writing my book. I've experienced so much where I know I can help a lot of people and I am helping a lot of people know. And in the interim, I'm still learning to be my best friend. You know, coming from the trauma that I come from, it'll take years, probably I'll be healing for the rest of my life. So, I'm just someone who is learning and recovering and discovering."*

FINDINGS

- *"Um, well, like I said about the intergenerational trauma that gets passed down, I think there needs to be programs put in place to help those people heal from that past trauma. And like, like my grandma said, like, the history is still being recovered. So, like, even when they started finding those bodies at the sites of children, it was like retriggering for a lot of people. So yeah, I just think there needs to be programs in place to help people get over the emotional trauma of that stuff happening."*

Two-Spirited Mental Health

- *"...even though my mental health is different, in a sense of rather than just struggling with being biologically female, there's other things going on as a Two Spirited person"*
- *"...Okay, so in regard to the barriers I face in which I've observed, woman and two spirits facing in everyday life within the Native community here in Toronto, as an overall lack of trauma informed service delivery from different organizations"*
- *"...So, these hotlines, I mean continue to, to have access to these hotlines or this counselling. You know, sometimes the hotlines Are you know, sometimes because us, we're on a more personal, the ceremonies having ceremonies for, you know, unfortunately, yes, we are learned, we've learned that, you know, it's a certain time that we have to have these ceremonies, but, I mean, if there's more access and something available, that, you know, we can go to even just to gather, you know,"*

Community Empowerment

- *"...empower the victims, take them out, teach them, teach them to be better people, teach them to be entrepreneurs, teach them to, you know, make a living somehow on their own. So, they don't have to rely on those abusive relationships that they're, they're actually stuck in, they're stuck in out of sort of necessity, they feel that's a better place. It's not."*

Educate New Canadians about Indigenous History

- *"...Um I think educating people about like the history of residential school and what happened there I think the truth needs to be told and acknowledged Yeah."*
- *"...I just think it just comes down to educating people more, which I know, is being done. And it's everyone's trying. But just most people aren't ever going to understand because they're Caucasian. And they've never experienced racism, they've never experienced being treated differently because of who they are as a person because of who they love, or because of their skin colour or the way that they talk"*

FINDINGS

4.8 Creating Enabling Environments for Two-Spirited People and Indigenous communities

Working Together to Repair the Harms

- *"...working together more like, openly without judgment, and all that kind of stuff, and trying to make it easier for our people to get through these systems. They will be better, but we're not like that. We're so like, colonized and brainwashed, most of the time that we're like, we're by the book, everything has to be hard for everybody. Where I'm from reserve still sends you checks. Who the hell checks this anymore? And then if you're going to go get your like distribution or whatever money, that's your right and owed to you, you better have every single piece of ID or you're not getting it"*
- *"it brings to light that that there's also a lot of Two Spirit people miss that are being murdered and going missing, but then also a lot of Indigenous men. You know, I don't want to overshadow Indigenous women getting mistreated, going missing being murdered. But I think all of our people, I think there's high numbers in all communities. So, I do really want to, I'm hoping that, you know, this will also bring to light that in, in general, indigenous people are mistreated and murdered and go missing at higher rates."*

No invasive procedures from Child Welfare System

- *"...class action lawsuit, community support and development, mainstream respect for traditional teachings, recognition of MMIWG as a crisis, protection for children, no invasive procedures from CAS, CAS stop taking voluntary support funding, child support organization that is not a corporation, consideration should go towards grassroots agencies that work for the community and not for funding, a change in distribution, services to make their intentions known".*

Police Reform

- *"...Police force needs to be acceptable of actions, more willing to help and not be biased, respect for those they deem criminal, to be less dismissive. Police must lose their prejudice. College must be more accepting of cultural background, police should not get aggressive about smudging, re-educate the general public in a better way to remove the lack of respect and hatred, build a sense of respect towards our culture, education for the general public is essential and language centers are needed, need access to community teachings and the culture, government needs to start working on the 94 calls to action, the general public needs to see something happening, we should not have to live in fear of being ourselves and need to see results of promises, and concrete action must happen, government must take accountability, make sure the media covers the truth."*

FINDINGS

Mental Health, Trauma Healing, Addiction Treatment and Counselling Services

- *"...Counselling services for abuse victims, accessible housing services, spread awareness supports in the city, support for Indigenous people without an ID, respect and support for non-status community members, prefers to see indigenous led institutions for community services, ID clinics, outreach for people who do not know how to connect with their community, 2-spirited education, free counselling, more shelters for the homeless, affordable childcare, help people become more aware of the harm from the institutions, more indigenous-led schools, running water, access to food, companies should give back to communities, more subsidized housing, basic human necessities".*

Protect and Practice Our Ceremonies

- *"Because we're trying to protect our ceremonies. I think that that, but if we let people see the amazing things that we're doing, and that we're not these stereotypes, things will change. And we'll educate them in a different way, instead of just, you know, braiding them and just like, like, like, you know, going off, you know, they'll actually see the peace and the love. And, you know, we're not these people that you think we are. And if you do see those people that, you know, unfortunately, have a battle with addictions, you'll understand why. And it's because of its Kootenays colonization, and, you know, the residential schools and the missing and murdered indigenous, you know, it's because of all this and if we have more allies behind us there, things will change. Sorry,"*
- *"Well, I think a lot of our elders hold a lot of that knowledge. And luckily, my grandmother has gone to longhouse and powwow, so I was brought up going to ceremonies and dancing piles and stuff like that. So yeah, some of my family members, like they know how to dance, and my grandma makes for us. My brother, as my grandma mentioned, he sings You know, a lot of like, the traditional songs and stuff, so. Yeah,"*

Teachings on Two Spirited identity, Traditional Roles, and Cultural Responsibilities

- *"...Education is a key. Emphasized a lot on educational services and programs to reconnect with culture".*
- *"...Well, there's the systemic break. Um, I've been so into understanding indigenous and understanding exactly what two spirit it is. Because, you know, to myself, this is also new to spirit as a version of, I mean, as related to gay because I remember it being gay, you know, I never heard two- spirit it until I started practicing my culture. So, there was not enough information out there on what the meaning of Two-Spirit really means. And in our culture, and the indigenous, that it's a gift to have Two Spirits"*

FINDINGS

Re-Establish Cultural Connections

- "...those connections with spirit and nature and understanding the circle from birth to death and everything in between, and how it all flows within everything around it. So just bringing a lot more of that knowledge back that understanding back and broadening it up. It's not just about the indigenous people of Turtle Island, you know, the indigenous people of the Amazon, the indigenous people of Australia. They all have very similar beliefs, practices and understandings that are in a sense being attacked and you know, trying to be destroyed every single day within this 21st century, modern bullshit computers and, you know, pollution and oil, fracking and all that crap going down So, sadly a lot more"
- "...I think staying connected to my culture would help with all of those, you know, just because I find a lot of power of my culture. That's where I find a lot of my strength because they previously like, I'm a recovering addict, right. And yeah, I've been in recovery on my journey for 13 years. And before this, I had no connection to my culture, because I was part of the Sixties Scoop. So having that loss is kind of where I got lost. And when I finally became reconnected to my culture, that was where I started to, that's when I began to turn my life around, my life improved. And I was able to stay on this journey for 13 years now because of the connection. Yeah. So yeah, that's what I think would help, like, just stay connected to culture and having those strong connections with community."

Commemoration of Two-Spirited Day

- "...Yeah, learn about it, and to not to label like, oh, the gay people are having their day in June. You know, why not a two spirited weekend, or month or, you know, embrace it more often have more programs out there that are that are mixed where, you know, to spirited people can explain to, to society and community, what they're going through and where they're coming from. So, we can totally understand it. Because if you don't know what they're going through, then you can't understand it, or you can help them right. And you can have the programs out there that's geared towards their needs, if you don't know what their needs are. Right?"
- "...yeah, I would suggest maybe learning that history of Two Spirit of people. learning and learning the true history of tear spirit, people are remembering that Two Spirit of people were once seen as sacred. And that we should we need to get back to that."
- "... I think, number one, a program is what I just said is about acceptance and loving oneself this way. Because, again, being new to coming out, so to speak as that. And you know, regarding policies, my thing would be everyone's accepted."

FINDINGS

- *"...And our people didn't experience it, we wouldn't have as many runaways, or losses to drugs and alcohol, or abductions. I honestly think, a sense of respect towards our culture and our people like a deep sense of respect for their culture, and people would help the numbers go down drastically. And I'm not saying I think it would be an easy fix because it definitely would not be but I think it would be a great place to start."*
- *"...Need for reliability to be indigenous without having to prove it through paperwork, to not be seen as a liar when you try to access services, no intrusive systems, to not lay blame on victims, be more communal, government needs to just listen and respect us."*

Cultural Teachings on Two-Spirited Identity and SOGI

- *"... I feel like there's a miscommunication between what two spirit it is, there's not a clear idea of what it is, I still don't know what it is, internally, because there's different views on it. So, I feel like there needs to be a clearer, like, clear way of like, telling people who what two spirit it is or what it is in because growing up, like I always felt like I was lost in identities because I felt like, you know, lost either through multiple spirits, like, like, I don't know how to describe it."*
- *"I think one of the big ones being a future educator in high schools is having like education, but in place where you get taught about indigenous things like just having a indigenous knowledge in classroom"*
- *"...I like to think that a lot of the questions and biases that are put in place, they're not coming from a place of hatred, they're just coming from a place of unknown, something unknown, and something that's scary, because we haven't been taught it from a young age"*
- *"...And I think that's something we need to really break down of just making trades, education and like, showing people that cheese period isn't something new that was created, you know, in the past decade, it's something that has been here prior to contact. And I think that's super, super important to a lot of Two Spirit people and including indigenous women and children."*
- *"...I don't know. Like I said, I'm 80 years old now and show truly I mean, I have my son. Okay, I didn't get help from Indian Affairs, often in relation with my education or anything at this, my mother's wanted, that really doesn't pay for education in me sure that we were educated so that we can survive in this society."*

FINDINGS

Traditional Harm Reduction and Mental Health Supports

- *"I also think maybe more land-based land base addiction programs, I think, focused on indigenous culture and food sovereignty and living off the land"*
- *"...think, having a have a programming that's harm reduction based, and I'm not judgmental towards mental health problems and having people that are trained professionally, to deal with people that have mental health problems and addictions, because there's too many people in, in all these organizations that they face challenges themselves helping people and they're, they're unable to help them and provide them the proper resources that their clients need"*
- *"...More helping professional"*
- *"...Well, we need more healthy people in helping professionals in healthy professions that can be impactful and influential. Bring in trauma counselling, bring in support groups that address the trauma, I say bringing psychological support to do like psychotherapy, and make an impact to heal the past intergenerational traumas that affect our community from being oppressed."*

Educate the All: Talk about Indigenous Canada and Colonial Impacts

- *"...Nationality, I don't know. Like you said it's things that you're happening in more refugees being found. And that has to be known right across Canada. So, I think that there has to be the big push to ensure that educate that isn't that is in the history books. Then when you're educating cloning colonialists and they need in order to history"*
- *"...Again, just getting everybody together, like and sharing information. And telling people from residential schools telling their stories so that the younger generation can understand what they've been through and where they're coming from. And hopefully, that can help us get past some of the traumas that are going on now. Yeah, that's" experiencing having your culture and your, your identity stripped from residential school."*
- *"...So, I think just educating the world or, you know, Turtle Island on these issues that we're facing everyday awareness, awareness, and education. I don't know how we'll ever stop, because I'm, you know, you lose faith in that, but there's a stigma about Native people that were just like, you know, dirty natives or were drunks. Right. So, people don't care. So, I don't know how to fix all this. But I do know it has to stop because I don't know."*

FINDINGS

- *"... just, I just like educating, educating, educating, making it mandatory in schools making it mandatory within you know, when you go to work, and there's like, those hate or sexual, whatever, you know, classes you have to take, you don't I mean, I think that should also be in within that as well like, like, hate crime, like labor hate, you know, actions"*

On top of the above-mentioned testimonies, participants also focused on the following issues:

- Acknowledgement of the MMIWG
- Addiction Treatment Center
- Advocacy work and support groups, treatment center with cultural learning and teachings
- Indigenous Healing and Treatment Facilities,
- More Language
- Education for non-Indigenous folks about Indigenous culture
- More support groups specific for survivors.
- More Sweat Lodge and talking circles
- More visibility & new programs for healing
- School curriculum to have information about Two-Spirit identities and cultural roles
- Two-Spirit specific ceremonies





DISCUSSION



DISCUSSION

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations conducted these Talking Circles as a community consultation to better understand barriers and challenges that community members face in everyday life, particularly by the families of the Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited Indigenous Women and Girls in Ontario. This consultation was focused on collecting community inputs and suggestions on "how we can eliminate these barriers to create an enabling environment to ensure the rights of the urban Indigenous communities. A welcoming environment is vital for equal access to employment opportunities, education, housing, health, and social services without being judged, discriminated, and ostracized for being a Two-Spirited and Indigenous person." This consultation also focused on the identity and the expertise Two-Spirited and urban Indigenous communities hold. This expertise could be harnessed and utilized to enhance the individual's psychosocial, social, and economic disposition. It could be resourceful to reclaim and revive the Indigenous Worldview including teachings, ceremonies, culture, rituals, language, art, crafts, and music.

5.1 Barriers

All the participants were families of the Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited Indigenous Women and Girls. Everyone had a familiar story of their families and themselves being abused, abducted, raped, discriminated as well as being a witness to the murder of their family members and friends. Almost all the participants pointed out the biased Criminal Justice System, Westernized Child Welfare System, and biblical influence on Indigenous culture and ceremonies. Strong stigma and discrimination, micro-aggressions and stereotypes toward Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities were significant barriers. On top of this, limited programs and services, intergenerational vicarious trauma and mental health issues, unavailability of space and teachings for Indigenous ceremonies, lack of adequate skills in money management, survival skills, housing, education and shame associated with sexual orientation and gender identity were reported as additional barriers participants faced in everyday life.

Community members were also aware that they could break all those colonial barriers and reclaim their Indigenous identity, power, and space by practicing the Traditional Knowledge and skills they inherited from their Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Community members believe that the government is aware of the problems Indigenous people are going through, but the issue is that the government is not honest and accountable. Because it has not addressed the issues that have been already well documented, once the government is truthful and responsible to the Indigenous communities, the healing process will be smoother and quicker. Community members reported that they possess a considerable range of unique Indigenous skills and knowledge and modern industrial skills and expertise. These skills could be harnessed and transferred among the wider Indigenous communities and could be used to obtain employment opportunities and revive Indigenous teachings. Adequate funding for the Indigenous agencies to work with Indigenous communities on

DISCUSSION

capacity building and life enhancement programs to ensure employment, education, training, and childcare in an enabling environment would help essentially heal those wounds and the harm done by the colonial system for years. Acknowledging Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited People and Indigenous Women and Girls and offering them full rituals and ceremonies would free their souls. Unfortunately, the government has not released the exact numbers and details of the people who were missing and murdered over the period the time. Almost every month, group burial sites are being found. Thousands of people are on the missing people list, but none of the practical actions are being taken to address and acknowledge it. It is regrettable.

The subjective criminal justice system was reported as one of the significant barriers among the Two-Spirited and MM2SIWG families. All the participants unanimously agreed that substantial numbers of indigenous people are incarcerated and imprisoned with prejudice. As a result, the proportion of indigenous people in the criminal justice system increases day by day. The criminal justice system dashboard also supports the claim of the participants. As per the 2016/17 figures, Indigenous adults accounted for about 30% of all custody admissions while representing 4.1% of the Canadian adult population. At the same time, it has been reported Indigenous youth accounted for 50% of custody admissions while representing 8% of the Canadian youth population. 3 in 1 adults and 2 in 1 youth in custody are Indigenous, despite significantly low demographic representation. On top of that, many Indigenous people do not disclose their Indigenous Identity due to possible stigma and discrimination. As per the participants, these proportions have been trending upwards for over ten years. Indigenous communities have their worldviews, own cultural norms, and practices to handle the justice system and maintain social integrity. Canada's Justice System was developed by the settler European in a Western colonial context that has failed to acknowledge the Indigenous justice system practiced among the Indigenous society for thousands of years.

Similarly, Colonial Child Welfare System reported other barriers to the Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities. Child Welfare takes Indigenous children by force, creating various scenarios instead of supporting Indigenous parents with skills and financial support. As a result, a significantly higher number of Indigenous children are under foster care. As per the Canadian census 2016, 52.2% of children in foster care are Indigenous but account for only 7.7% of the child population. This means 14,970 out of 28,665 foster children in private homes under 15 are Indigenous. At the same time, as per the 2011 National Household Survey, 38% of Indigenous children in Canada live in poverty, compared to 7% of non-Indigenous children. This fact is connected with the higher proportion of Indigenous people's involvement in the justice system. Community respondents commented that, even though the government is aware of this situation and promises to affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child welfare, it has not been materialized in practice yet. The prejudiced police investigation, false criminal charges, and lifelong criminal records on police files hinder access to employment, housing, and financial assistance, resulting in poor living conditions for Indigenous communities. The colonial child welfare system encourages these poor living conditions by taking away our children.

DISCUSSION

The colonial mindset in day-to-day life has been identified as another significant barrier. Colonial Canada has treated Indigenous people, particularly Two-Spirited and gender-diverse communities, as criminals. They have ignored the traditional roles and positions of Two-Spirited people in the Indigenous communities as a Medicine keeper, Healers, Teacher, Ceremonies conductor, Spiritual Seeker, Caretaker of Women and Children and Decision-makers in the Criminal Justice System. Those roles were very dignified and highly acknowledged in the Indigenous society. When those respectable roles and positions are limited to sexual behaviours and labelled as immoral and unreligious activities from the western biblical perspective, it creates trauma and confusion. The hostile colonial relationship between the Indigenous communities and white privileged is the contributing factor behind the higher proportion of Indigenous people in the Criminal Justice System and Child welfare. It has negatively impacted the social determinants of health of the Indigenous communities. Still, it has also limited access to housing, education, employment, and social assistance in general. The majority of the community members have faced false charges and police harassment that has badly affected the community members' ability to navigate the day-to-day life effectively. Community members reiterate that settlers have not only colonized Indigenous land and resources, but they have also colonized Indigenous minds and spirits by dismantling and replacing Indigenous worldviews with European worldviews. Many Two-Spirited and Transgender community members expressed their experiences of excluding them from participating in Indigenous ceremonies due to their sexual orientation and gender identity despite having very high values of Two-Spirited people in Indigenous culture.

According to an Elder, to be a Two-Spirited person in Indigenous culture was a matter of prestige. Indigenous communities used to consider Two-Spirited people as gifted ones. They used to offer prestigious social roles like - Medicine Keeper, Healer, Knowledge Keeper, Ceremony Conductor, FireKeepers, and caretakers of Women and Children during the war and crisis. Two-Spirited people have taken care of their communities for ages. They were allowed to choose either their sexual partner or both and live respectfully in society. But when Western settlers came to North America, they demoralized Indigenous history, rituals, culture, ceremonies, and social strata. They imposed their colonial and biblical values on the Indigenous communities and limited Two-Spirited identities as same sex behaviours. As per the orthodox bible, it is immoral and unethical. Since then, Two-Spirited people are always living in shame and have stopped applauding their rich cultural role as the social vanguard. We need to reclaim our cultural role and social responsibility. During the talking circle, almost all the participants unanimously agreed that it is the right time to harness that lost knowledge and teachings and practice the cultural role of Two-Spirited people in the Indigenous community.

DISCUSSION

Access to housing, employment and food was another barrier the community identified during the consultation. According to the Homeless Hub, Canada, an average of 50% of those experiencing homelessness are Indigenous. In Toronto, Indigenous people constitute around 15% of those experiencing homelessness, where they make up only 0.5% total population. Studies also found that 1 in 15 Indigenous people in urban centers is experiencing homelessness compared to 1 in 128 for the general population. In short, Indigenous people are eight times more likely to experience homelessness. The data on Two-Spirited homelessness is not available yet, but the proportion of them being homeless is significantly high due to the various barriers, including not having correct identity documents, early eviction from family and related stigma and stereotypes. The community further reiterates that criminal records, unemployment, high involvement in child welfare systems, lack of money managing skills and lower credit scores, addiction, mental health issues and lack of social support navigating skills are significant barriers to accessing housing. On top of that, different notions of home among the settler system and Indigenous community also promote homelessness among Indigenous communities. For the settlers, one 10x10 room can be a house, but for the Indigenous communities, there must be their Medicine, culture, ceremonies, Elders, Knowledge Holders, water, land, sky, and plants to be a house. As a result, most Indigenous homeless communities prefer to live in an encampment rather than in a small room.

Settler and Post-colonial Government systems have created strong stereotypical notions about Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities. There is a strong perception of Indigenous people as having an addiction, always being intoxicated and addicted to substances and alcohol, getting everything free from the government, and never needing to pay taxes. The government provides everything, so they do not need to work. At the same time, if they work, they are not punctual, come to work under the influence of substances, are troublesome and violent, and so on. This is false and baseless. As a result, none of the employers are ready to offer them employment. On top of this, inter-generational trauma, mental health issues, police records, lack of training and skills, and lack of permanent housing, sexual orientation, and gender identity are some of the self-reported barriers to employment among the Two-Spirited communities.

Other barriers participants identified during the consultation were a lack of money management and survival skills. Participants reiterate that they cannot retain housing and buy food and essential foods and medicine due to a lack of those survival skills. There are many resources and services agencies for the other settler communities, but there are very limited and few supports for the Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities. Not having adequate programming and resources for Two-Spirited people is another significant barrier. Two-Spirited People of the 1st Nations are providing some of the support, but due to limited resources and funding sources, it cannot meet the community demand and requirements.

DISCUSSION

5.2 Eliminating the Barriers

During the community consultation, respondents pointed out the barriers they are facing in everyday life and elaborately listed the measure to eliminate those barriers that Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities are facing. Participants affirmed that to create an enabling environment to materialize the Spirit of Truth and Reconciliation. First, the government needs to reform the current Colonial Child Welfare and Criminal Justice System. The biased Justice System deliberately criminalizes Two-Spirited and Indigenous people by false criminal charges and putting them in custody. Child Welfare is talking to their kids for so-called health and safety reasons and handing them over to unknown families. Participants also pointed out the education system that needs to reform as soon as possible. The catholic schools never teach students about the Residential schools, their harm to the Indigenous communities, and their spiritual worldview. Participants also demanded to relocate those Catholic schools and convert those massive land into a place for Indigenous ceremonies.

Participants focused on “Educating All” to eliminate the barriers. They focused on educating Indigenous communities about their culture, ceremonies, language, rituals, and Two-Spirited identities and teaching these to the New Canadians. Government and catholic schools are disseminating falsified information about Indigenous people, their culture, Two-Spirited people and their identity, Indigenous world views, and history. Once people get correct and consistent information, the barriers will eliminate slowly and surely. The schools and training institutes must deploy Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to teach about Indigenous people and culture. They know our history, culture, ceremonies, rituals, and life coping skills. Knowledge of Indigenous wisdom will help us learn about ourselves and will better empower us to eliminate those barriers posed by the Colonial System.

Participants expressed their concerns about providing proper rituals and ceremonies to those Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited, Indigenous Women and Girls. Referring to their family members and relatives who have been Missing and were Murdered, participants informed that most of them have not received the ceremonies and rituals necessary. It is imperative to release their Spirit to rest in peace. Participants also discussed the need for adequate space and a designated place to perform their ceremonies. Due to various regulatory issues like fire and noise in a metropolitan city like Toronto, Indigenous people cannot practice their daily rituals like smudging, drumming, and singing and are identified as a significant barrier. To eliminate it, the government needs to allocate adequate space and a designated place to practice and promote our culture and ceremonies. At the same time, Indigenous communities also need to decolonize themselves.

DISCUSSION

Some of the Knowledge Keepers and Elders are so colonial that they create barriers to attending ceremonies for the Two-Spirited and Transgender communities. Our ancestors always cherish our Spirits, and we have the full right to practice and embrace them.

Adequate funding and programs to the Indigenous agencies to provide Two-Spirited focused social programs and services are other recommendations to eliminate the current barriers. Despite having a significant Indigenous population living in GTA, a handful of programs and services are solely committed to the Two-Spirited Indigenous communities and the available programs are limited due to limited funding. If there is adequate funding and support for the programs and services Two-Spirited Indigenous community's needs, it could help us. Evidence also suggested that most Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities don't feel welcome at the non-Indigenous agencies while accessing the services due to various stigma and stereotypes. Comprehensive programs and services under one single agency would support the Two-Spirited community to access programs and services in an enabling environment. For that, a sustainable funding commitment and accountability of the government are needed. Without government commitment and support, this would be impossible.

Two-Spirited Indigenous community members reported that they have a wide range of skills and expertise. Furthermore, they suggested that if the government supported Indigenous agencies to harness those skills, many Two-Spirited and urban Indigenous communities could be self-employed and would develop entrepreneurship and employment. Those skills and knowledge also would support enhancing Indigenous art, language, literature, and culture. This would support in the elimination of barriers the Two-Spirited and Indigenous people face in everyday life. Other skills and services respond to the demand for financial literacy and money managing skills. Due to various reasons, Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities are suffering from a high rate of unemployment and are living with limited financial resources. Unfortunately, many participants reported that they never had an opportunity to learn financial literacy and money managing skills. As a result, they are suffering from bad credit scores, unpleasant banking relationships, and a tight financial situation that has created significant barriers in everyday life. Having adequate financial literacy and money managing skills would reduce the many barriers related to money matters.

On top of this, the availability of traditional harm reduction supplies, land-based teaching and mental health supports would play a vital role in connecting people with Indigenous land and spiritual worldview.



CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

Over the past hundreds of years, Indigenous people have been abused, harassed, mistreated, and displaced. Indigenous culture and worldview were dismantled, altered, and eventually eradicated one by one. Indigenous children were stolen, families were fragmented, and culture and ceremonies were destroyed. Systematic racism, violence, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia against Two-Spirited people, women and girls, have become embedded in everyday life. After years of abuse and mistreatment, the Government of Canada recently formed a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). The committee released its final report in June 2019. The final report revealed that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuse are key factors contributing to the high rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations conducted this community engagement on Missing and Murdered Two-Spirited, Indigenous Women and Girl (MM2SIWG) across Ontario with the support of the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs. This consultation collected the testimonies of the MM2SIWG families on the barriers they face in their day-to-day lives. At the same time, we collected community inputs and suggestions to eliminate those barriers and create enabling, equitable environment to reintegrate those families into the community in a dignified way. The consultation mainly focused on identifying the gaps in understanding the needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in Ontario and the performance measures, outcomes, and accountability measures that would be meaningful to communities.

A total of five talking circles, including four virtual and one in-person, were organized to onboard community respondents. A total of 67 (Sixty-Seven) Two-Spirited and Urban Indigenous community members participated in the talking circles voluntarily, where everyone had an experience of either being abused, raped, harassed, falsely charged, or being discriminated against due to their Indigenous identities, sexual orientation, and gender identity in everyday life. Each participant has at least one or more incidents of family members missing and murdered. Out of 67, 50 participants participated in the one-to-one interview. The minimum age of the participants was 23 years of age, while the maximum age was 82 years of age. About 25% of the respondents were Residential School Survivors, Sixties Scoop, or the Millennium Scoop.

Almost all the respondents identified Colonial Criminal Justice Systems, Policing and Child Welfare Systems, and micro-aggressions as significant barriers that Two-Spirited, Indigenous Women and Girls face in their day-to-day life. All the respondents shared their bitter experiences of being racially profiled, physically and emotionally abused, harassed, apprehended by Child Welfare, falsely charged by police, bitter experiences of custody, and many more.

CONCLUSION

Respondents further elaborated on the impact of those subjective criminal justice systems and policing in their life, including eviction from housing, job termination, a financial crisis that leads to criminal records on file, lousy credit, family breakdown and involvement in child welfare. Ultimately, people end up on the street with addictions, poor mental health, and vulnerability. Limited programs and services, lack of designated space for ceremonies, intense stigma discrimination and stereotypes, intergenerational trauma, shame associated with bodies, sexual orientation, gender identities and unavailability of gender-neutral washrooms frequently incur barriers..

On top of that, the colonized and gender-biased mindset of some Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and ceremonies conductors are reported as other barriers faced by Two-Spirited communities. Many gender-fluid and transgender respondents reported gender-based barriers like clothing, protocols, and songs; these prevent them from joining those ceremonies. They shared many testimonies of being removed from ceremonies due to their sexuality. Unemployment, lack of survival and money managing skills, and inadequate mental health and healing supports are additional barriers.

Respondents not only pointed out the barriers they were facing but also suggested straightforward ways to eliminate them. They also pointed out the programs and services they need and what services and skills they can contribute to society. All the participants demanded decolonizing the colonial criminal justice system, reforming the child welfare system, and government accountability towards the Indigenous people and their commitment.

Availability of adequate programs and services for the Two-Spirited people, availability of space to practice Indigenous ceremonies and rituals, acknowledging Indigenous land, people, and history, and honouring the culture and ceremonies and Indigenous world views will help eliminate those barriers. The adequate space and resources to practice and promote the Indigenous culture and ceremonies will support repairing damages the colonial system has made. Many respondents said that they hold unique Indigenous teachings, skills, and expertise that they could harvest and use to promote and protect and enhance the quality of life of urban Two-Spirited and Indigenous communities. Adequate financial support, support to acquire sustainable housing, skills to acquire employment, support to go to school, and having survival skills will help eliminate significant barriers. Participants focused on the need to work together with the government to repair the harm the colonial system made over the years. Re-establishing the traditional knowledge, culture, and support to heal in a dignified way is the best way to acknowledge the people and land.

Over the past four hundred years, the colonial settler's system has harmed to Indigenous communities, particularly Two-Spirited Indigenous Women and Girls (MM2SIWG). Rampant stigma, discrimination, and systematic barriers have created a massive gap in the communities from accessing day-to-day services and means of survival. Families are suffering, traumatized and going through the vicious circle of inter-generational trauma and addiction and mental health. Services are promised but have not materialized yet. Honesty and accountability from the government could address those issues. *"We want to tell them; Let us work together to repair the harm,"* a community member who conducted the talking circle.



Annex: Research Team

SN	Name	Role
1	Blu Waters	Knowledge Keeper, Talking Circle Facilitatory and Wellness Support to Participants
2	Pat Green	Knowledge Keeper, Talking Circle Facilitatory and Wellness Support to Participants
3	Dana Pegahmagabow	Knowledge Keeper, Talking Circle Facilitatory and Wellness Support to Participants
4	Marlyn Sutherland	Knowledge Keeper, Talking Circle Facilitatory and Wellness Support to Participants
5	Keith McCrady	Mentor and Executive Director
6	Saige McMahan	Mentor and Program Manager
7	Shiva Acharya	Research Lead
8	Amanda Lomas	Coordinator
9	Anmol Budhiraja	Community Peer Navigator



Annex: Research Team continued

11	Chantel Copenace	Community Peer Navigator
12	Aaron Jacobs	Community Peer Navigator
13	Robin Pegahmagabow	Community Peer Navigator
14	Pam Lapointe-Stead	Community Peer Navigator
15	Brooke Bowman	Community Peer Navigator
16	Tracy Barker	Community Peer Navigator

