



*Dene ā'nezen*  
**Youth For Safety  
 Program Model**  
 DRAFT



## Executive Summary

Youth for Safety is a three-year Youth empowerment project, initiated by the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS), designed to foster community safety and justice for young women and girls centered on the town of Watson Lake, Yukon and nearby Kaska First Nations populations in Two Mile area, Upper Liard and Lower Post, BC. This program was developed in collaboration with Watson Lake community organisations committed to improving community safety. The project is intended to increase safety of Youth and community members in Watson Lake by helping male and female Youth learn ways of restoring and preserving dignity of those who experience violence, while also learning new skills to increase safety.

This project responds to the grim statistics around violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, especially grave in the North, and acutely felt in Watson Lake where Youth have a lack of access to programs and services that address the issue. The Youth for Safety program aims to respond to the need for:

- a community-based collaboration to fight violence against women and girls
- a program that helps Youth and community members understand the root causes of violence
- specific supports for Watson Lake Youth and victims of violence to become empowered
- opportunities for Youth to take leadership roles in building a safer community<sup>1</sup>

To respond to these needs, the Youth for Safety program was based on a philosophical foundation of **response-based practice, Youth empowerment, interagency collaboration, peer support, strengths based practice and Dene ā' nezen<sup>2</sup>**.

The overall program model will be delivered over 3 years in 4 parts. The model is designed to have Youth take on more and more responsibility and ownership of the program as it progresses, ultimately leading to Youth playing a role in monitoring and evaluating the program, and serving as mentors to younger Youth.

A performance measurement plan was crafted to track results on our 4 anticipated results with 6 indicators<sup>3</sup>. Figure 1 provides an overall summary of the Youth for Safety model including 6 philosophical pillars, 4-part program, 4 planned results and 6 indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> See Needs Assessment report for more complete exploration of project needs

<sup>2</sup> Kaska word that describes the concept of dignity and respect

<sup>3</sup> See Evaluation Report full monitoring and evaluation plan and early results



## Youth for Safety Program Model

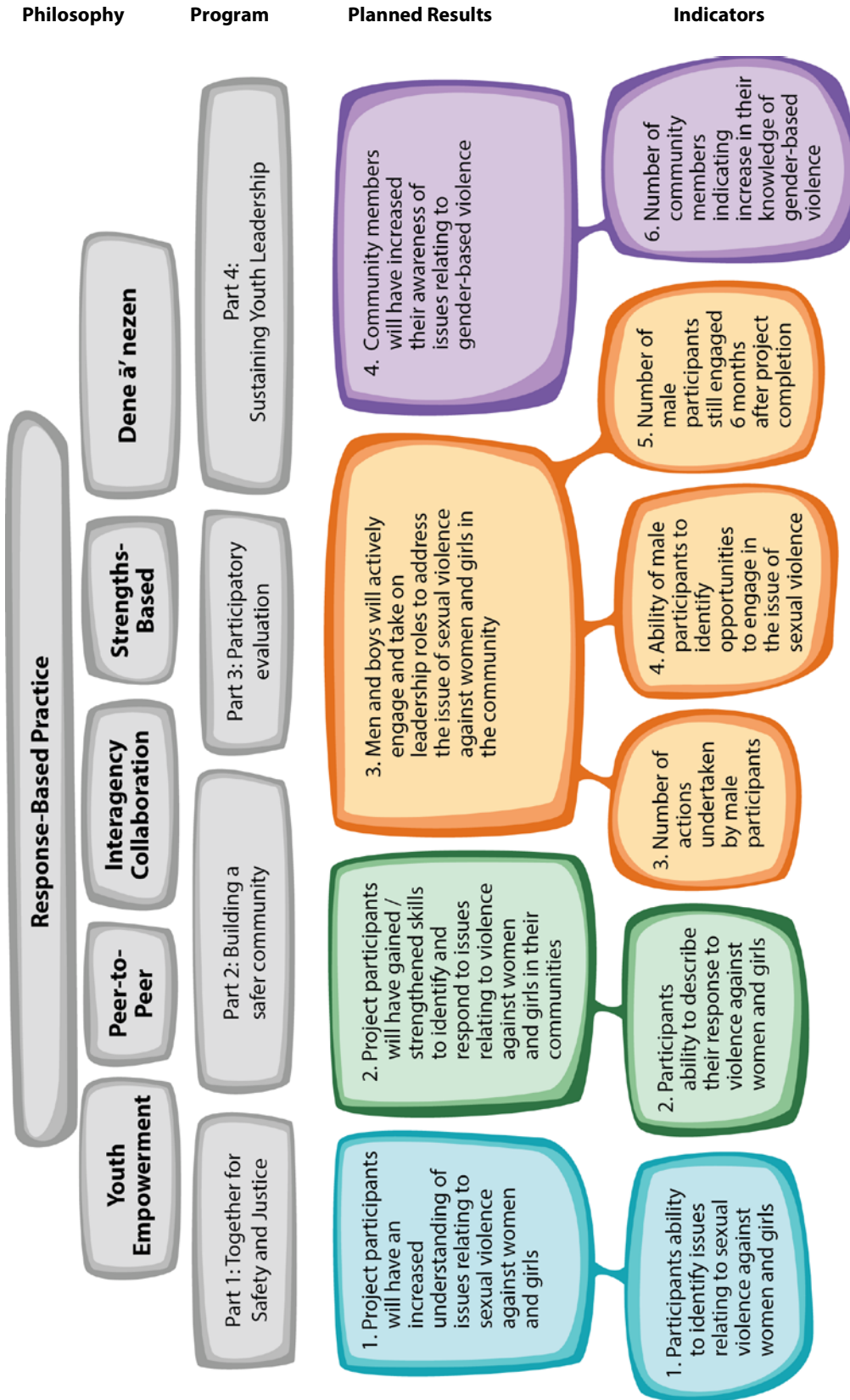


FIGURE 1: YOUTH FOR SAFETY PROGRAM MODEL





The delivery of the program in it's first year involved 25 Youth participants and was delivered with the following basic elements:

1. Interagency design
2. Youth recruitment
3. Youth orientation
4. Workshop delivery
5. Youth campaign development
6. Community presentation

Reflections on each of these elements, on next steps and on how the program model could be replicated conclude:

- It is important to incorporate local Indigenous culture into the program model
- There is a need to find ways to keep Youth engaged and connected to each other between program cycles, and find ways to keep participants engaged in leadership roles when welcoming new participants
- If housed in a school, there is a need for buy-in and collaboration from school teachers and staff to ensure ongoing program success
- There is an opportunity to further mobilize members of a local supporting interagency group in terms of program delivery
- It is important to find opportunities to consistently connect the broader community with the work of the participating Youth and start a community conversation about sexualized violence and mobilize community resources to deliver a diverse and varied program





## Acknowledgements

Thank you for the leadership, creativity, commitment, courage and knowledge of the 25 Youth who participated in this project launch:

Piper Allan	Zoey Germaine	Hope Papineau
Julie Allen-Sernes	Tony Goia	Brianna Pete
Rebecca Allen-Sernes	Gabriel Goupil	Ekko Porter
Hanna Brunet	Cian Hobbis	Jolene Spencer
Kaylee Caesar	Mairead Hotson	Eric Stewart
Vanessa Chaput	Sabrina Jensen	Kindra Stewart
Daniel Doctor	Jennifer Kroeker	Charlayne Walker
Kalem Frank	Anna Lund	Hunter Wolfe
		Katelyn Wolftail

We also acknowledge the 64 Youth who participated in one of our introductory sessions.

Thank you to the following organizers and supporters of this project:

Ann Maje-Raider (Liard Aboriginal Women's Society)  
Linda Macdonald (Kaska language teacher WWSL)  
Lionel Bridgestone (Principal WLSS)  
Renee-Claude Carrier and Julie Laliberte (Facilitators)  
Kristel Vance (Cultural/Justice Coordinator)  
Dr. Allan Wade (Project Consultant)  
Jeff Cook (Project planner, evaluator and facilitator)  
Crystal Stewart (Kaska Women's Advocate- LAWS)  
Travis Stewart (Office Manager)

Thank you to the Kaska Elders who supported this project:

Mary Maje	Fannie Vance
Dorothy Smith	Mary Charlie
Rose Caesar	

Thank you to the team of Community Partners involved in this project:

Liard Aboriginal Women's Society	Many Rivers
Liard First Nations Justice	Probation Services
Daylu Dena Council Justice	C.A.T.S
RCMP Watson Lake Detachment	Ganhada Management
Help & Hope for Families	Yukon Alcohol and Drug Services
Victim Services	Watson Lake Secondary School
Social Services	

Thank you to Status of Women Canada for the funding for this project.



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## Introduction

Youth for Safety is a three-year Youth empowerment project designed to foster community safety and justice for young women and girls centered on the town of Watson Lake, Yukon and nearby Kaska First Nations populations in Two Mile area, Upper Liard and Lower Post, BC.

This project was initiated by the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS), a non-profit, charitable, community-based, aboriginal organization providing social development services to the Kaska Nation in the Yukon and northern British Columbia. LAWS worked in collaboration with Watson Lake community organisations, external facilitators and an evaluator to deliver Youth for Safety.

The project recognizes the need for active female and male Youth participation in addressing issues of violence against young women and girls, and is designed to provide Youth with the knowledge and skills needed to assume a leadership role in promoting safety and justice for Youth women and girls, Youth to Youth and within the community at large. The focus of the project is providing support to young women and girls (under 18) who are at risk of falling victim to sexualized/physical violence through empowerment and advocacy and engaging the community at large. The project is intended to increase safety of Youth and community members in Watson Lake by helping Youth learn ways of restoring and preserving dignity of those who experience violence, while also learning new skills to increase safety.

This report presents the program model used to deliver this project. It begins with a description of the context in which this project takes place followed by a description of the philosophical pillars of this project: response-based practice, Youth empowerment, interagency collaboration, peer support, strengths-based and cultural knowledge and protocol.

The report then describes how each of these philosophical pillars shaped the program design. The 4-part program model is described, including an overview of the specific modules undertaken in the first year. The performance measurement plan is presented. Next the steps involved in program delivery are presented with recommendations on next steps as well as considerations for program replication.





## Context

Violence against Aboriginal women and girls has been repeatedly identified as a National crisis in Canada. Consistent pressure from Aboriginal and Women advocates have led to the recent launch of a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The National statistics are grim. Aboriginal women and girls are three times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to report having been a victim of violent crime<sup>4</sup>. Not only do Indigenous women face more frequent incidence of violence, the violence is also much more severe. Most cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women (55%) involve women and girls under the age of 31, with 17% of these being 18 years of age and younger<sup>5</sup>.

A 2011 Statistics Canada report suggests that the national homicide rate for Indigenous women is at least seven times higher than for non-Indigenous women. The Native Women's Association of Canada estimates that roughly 600 Indigenous women and girls in Canada have gone missing or have been murdered over the last two decades. The majority of these cases remain unsolved<sup>6</sup>. The representation of Aboriginal women in the prison system has increased by nearly 90% over the last 10 years, making them the fastest-growing offender group<sup>7</sup>.

Rates of violence against women are particularly high in the Yukon. Compared to the provinces, rates of sexualized offences against women are 2-3 times higher in the Yukon than in the provinces<sup>8</sup>. Indigenous women experience spousal assault at rates more than three times higher than for non-Aboriginal women or for men<sup>9</sup>. The number of Indigenous women who accessed shelters to escape violence in Canada was 21 per 100,000 in 2008. In Yukon the rate was 234 per 100,000<sup>10</sup>.

A 2013 Human Rights Watch report explores the relationship between the RCMP and Indigenous women and girls in northern BC, and uncovered allegations of sexualized assault by police officers and a widely perceived failure of the police to protect women and girls from violence<sup>11</sup>. The report highlighted how fear of retaliation from police runs high in the north. "Those Who Take Us Away" the title of the Human Rights Watch report is a literal translation of the word for police in Carrier.

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. (2011). Violent victimization of Aboriginal women in the Canadian provinces, 2009. Ottawa: Minister of Industry

<sup>5</sup> Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) (2010) Fact Sheet: Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls. Retrieved from: [https://nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact\\_Sheet\\_Missing\\_and\\_Murdered\\_Aboriginal\\_Women\\_and\\_Girls](https://nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls)

<sup>6</sup> Assembly of First Nations (2013) A National Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Richardson, Cathy (2013) Indigenous Women, RCMP and Service Providers Work Together for Justice: A Response-based Safety Collaboration in the Yukon. Research to Practice Network

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Watch (2013) Those Who Take Us Away





Watson Lake has a population of about 800 people, approximately half self-identify as Aboriginal<sup>12</sup>. Reported crime rates historically have been significantly higher in Watson Lake than in other Yukon communities. Reported crime rates per 1000 residents were about 4x times higher in Watson Lake than in Whitehorse between 2003-2008<sup>13</sup>. As a small, remote community, Watson Lake has under-resourced and oversubscribed social development services. These social development services are generally geared toward providing services within an adult context, thus Youth are underserved.

In the Yukon, a series of incidents involving violence against First Nations by the police led to a Police Review which identified systemic issues that compromise the safety of First Nations women and girls. In concert with the RCMP, women's organizations and Kaska women, LAWS spearheaded a community-based collaborative movement, ***Together for Justice***, to restore the dignity of women who have been abused. In particular, to understand how language is used to conceal violence and to understand the impact of negative and positive social response on individuals who have been subjected to violence. This process led to the signing of a Safety Protocol Agreement between LAWS and the Watson Lake RCMP.

The Youth for Safety Project evolved as one element of the ***Together for Justice*** Project and aims to focus specifically on empowering Youth to be active participants in building safety and justice for women and girls in their community<sup>14</sup>.



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<sup>12</sup> Yukon Community Profiles (2013) Watson Lake. <http://www.yukoncommunities.yk.ca/watson-lake/watson-lake-population-labour-force>

<sup>13</sup> Liard First Nation (2010) Liard First Nation Community Profile. [http://www.eco.gov.yk.ca/pdf/FN\\_Com\\_Profile\\_LFN\\_LH\\_Ed.pdf](http://www.eco.gov.yk.ca/pdf/FN_Com_Profile_LFN_LH_Ed.pdf)

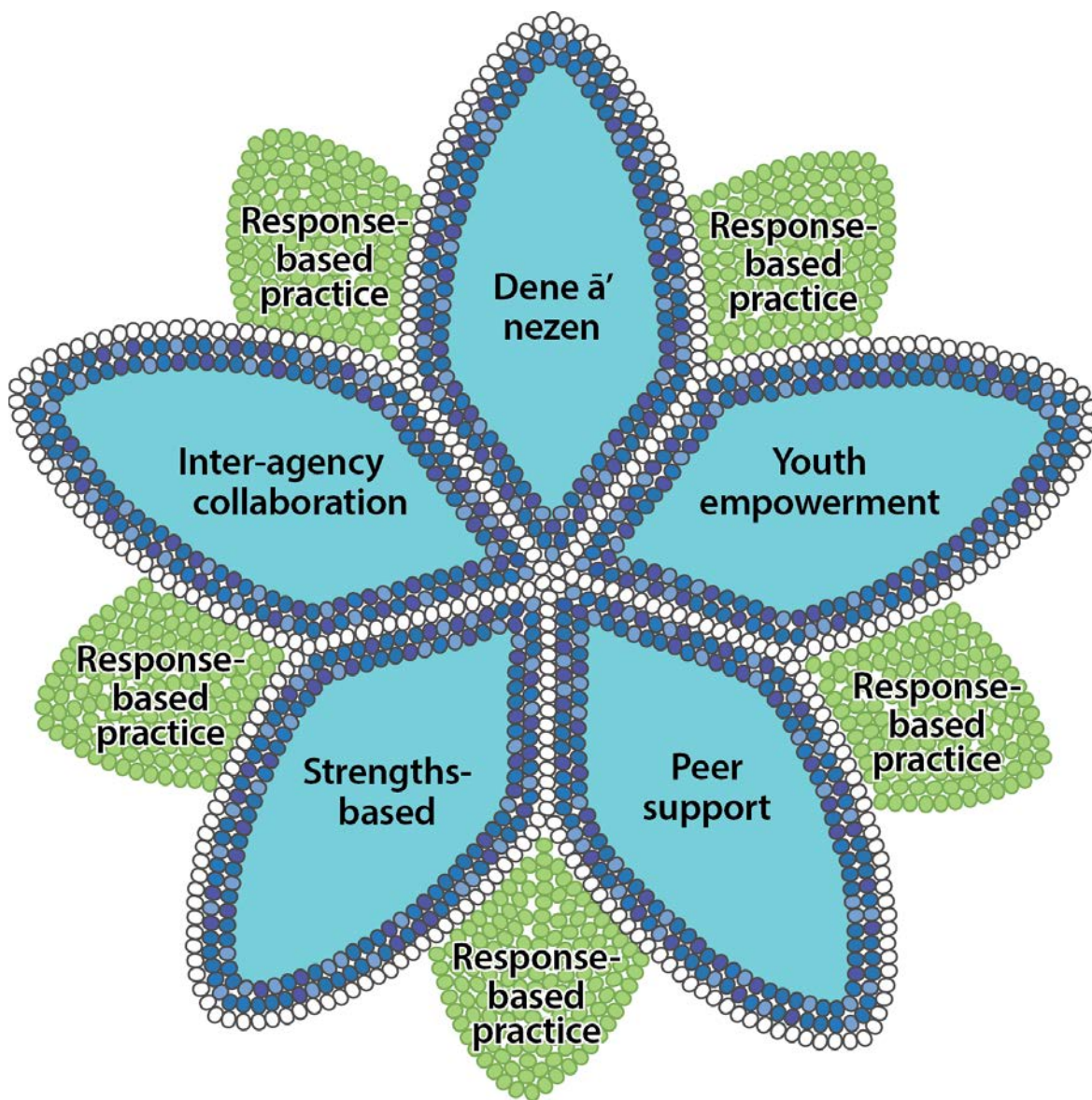
<sup>14</sup> See the Needs Assessment for a more complete description of this project's context and justification for the need.



## Philosophy

In order to meet the needs identified in the needs assessment, this project's approach was grounded in the philosophical pillars of response-based practice while also incorporating the advantages of Youth empowerment, peer-to-peer learning, inter-agency collaboration, a strengths-based approach and Dene ā' nezen (cultural knowledge and protocol). As summarized in Figure 2, the principles of response-based practice serve as the foundation of the program's philosophy. The other 5 pillars of the program model are the ways that this response-based practice was put into action. The following pages describe some of the theory that inspired the program's philosophy.

**FIGURE 2: PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF PROJECT**





## Pillar 1: Response-Based Practice

Response-based practice is a psychological approach to dealing with violence. It is based on a shift in focus from considering the effects or impacts of violence to the acts of resistance which are responses to violence<sup>15</sup>. Here is a summary of some of the principles of response-based practice:

- Response-based practice examines the **social responses** to violence<sup>16</sup>. The research shows that people who receive quick and effective responses that stop the violence and create safety tend to recover relatively quickly<sup>17</sup>.
- By focusing on victims' responses, it shifts to the attention to ways that victims **resist** violence. People are not passive and always respond to adversity in some ways. Response-based practice speaks to how individuals have agency, spirit, decision-making abilities, pre-existing capacity and knowledge of self preservation<sup>18</sup>.
- Central to response-based practice is the importance of **dignity**. Dignity is seen as central to social life and to individual and collective wellbeing. All forms of violence are an attack on the dignity of the person. Recovery from violence is largely a struggle for dignity<sup>19</sup>.
- The practice also highlights the importance of accurate information and accurate descriptions in forming effective social responses. **Language** can be a tool for liberation or oppression. Careful analysis of descriptions of violence is central to ethical and informed social responses<sup>20</sup>. Language can be used to conceal violence, obscure and mitigate offenders' responsibility, conceal victims' resistance and blame and pathologize victims. Alternatively, language can be used to expose violence, clarify offenders' responsibility, honour victims' resistance and contest the blaming and pathologizing of victims<sup>21</sup>.
- Violence is **deliberate** and **unilateral** in that it involves actions by one person against the will and well-being of another. Descriptions of violence should reflect the unilateral nature of violent crimes. Violent crimes, victims and offenders are often misrepresented in criminal justice and professional settings and in the media. Careful analysis of descriptions is central to ethical and informed social responses<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Richardson, Cathy (2013) Indigenous Women, RCMP and Service Providers Work Together for Justice: A Response-based Safety Collaboration in the Yukon. Research to Practice Network. Centre for Dialogue and Learning.

<sup>16</sup> Linda Coates and Allan Wade (2016) 'We're in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century After All': Analysis of Social Responses in Individual Support and Institutional Reform. In M.Hyden et al (eds.) Response Based Approaches to the Study of Interpersonal Violence.

<sup>17</sup> Carriere, Jeannine and Richardson, Cathy (2013) Relationship is Everything: Holistic Approaches to Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health. First Peoples Child & Family Review Vol 7 Number 2, 2013, pp. 8-26.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Richardson (2013) Indigenous Women, RCMP and Service Providers Work Together for Justice

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Coates, Linda and Wade, Allan (2007) Language and Violence: Analysis of Four Discursive Operations. J Fam Viol (2007) 22: 511-522.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*





## Pillar 2: Youth Empowerment

Youth engagement is defined as the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, with a focus outside of oneself. Youth empowerment is an extension of Youth engagement, and includes supporting Youth in the development of skills, competence and identity, but also supporting them in using these skills for social change<sup>23</sup>.

Central to this project's design is the belief in Youth empowerment. The philosophies that influenced this project were:

- The importance of celebrating and honouring existing Youth **strengths**, knowledge and strategies on how to stay safe
- The opportunity to mobilize Youth's unique **perspective** on what Youth need in their community<sup>24</sup>
- Recognition of **Youth rights** to participate and engage in efforts to build a safer and stronger community
- Providing opportunities for Youth to take **leadership** roles in promoting safety and justice for Youth women and girls
- The power Youth have to influence others **peer to peer** and to **impact adults** and capture the attention of the media<sup>25</sup>
- Recognizing the **unique role** Youth have to play in creating a safer community<sup>26</sup>. Research indicates that Youth engagement reduces the likelihood of interpersonal violence and delinquency while concurrently promoting community membership and the development of positive Youth competencies and emotional well-being<sup>27</sup>



<sup>23</sup> Crooks, C. Chiodo, D. Thomas, D (2009) Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A toolkit for service providers.

<sup>24</sup> Khanna, Nishad and McCart, Stoney (2007) Adult Allies in Action. Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

<sup>25</sup> ibid

<sup>26</sup> Zimmerman, Marc (2010) Youth Empowerment Solutions for Peaceful Communities: combining theory and practice in a community-level violence prevention curriculum. Health Promotion Practice 12(3):425-39 · October 2010

<sup>27</sup> Zeldin, Shepherd (2004) Preventing Youth Violence through the Promotion of Community Engagement and Membership. JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY, Vol. 32, No. 5, 623–641





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*Youth development methods must view young people as **competent citizens with rights**- to participate, to express themselves and to engage in efforts to create socially just communities.*

*Checkoway and Richards-Schuster (2001)<sup>28</sup>*

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***Connecting youth, organizational and community development goals** can produce generative and self-sustaining processes that serve to address key social issues and revitalize communities and the organizations and individuals within them.*

*London, Zimmerman & Erbstein (2003)<sup>29</sup>*

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<sup>28</sup> Checkoway, B., & Richards-Schuster, K. (2001b). Lifting New Voices for socially just Communities." CYD [Community Youth Development] Journal, 2001, 2(4), 32–37.

<sup>29</sup> London, J.K, Zimmerman, K & Erbstein, N (2003) Youth-Led Research and Evaluation: Tools for Youth, Organizational, and Community Development. New Directions for Evaluation Special Issue: Youth Participatory Evaluation: A Field in the Making. Volume 2003, Issue 98, pages 33–45, Summer 2003



### Pillar 3: Peer Support

Programs that encourage peer-to-peer learning have been shown to be a valuable and useful component of efforts to improve Youth's health and well-being. The mobilization of peers is important because Youth identify more readily with these role models<sup>30</sup>. Peer programs are designed to encourage attitudes, knowledge, behaviours and outcomes that a community considers desirable, and discourage attitudes, behaviours and outcomes that a community considers undesirable. Extensive research published in the last two decades has shown definitely and beyond question that peer programs can have statistically significant effects on attitudes, norms, knowledge, behaviors, and a wide range of health and achievement outcomes.<sup>31</sup>



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<sup>30</sup> Crooks, C. Chiodo, D. Thomas, D (2009) Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A toolkit for service providers.

<sup>31</sup> Advocates for Youth (2007) Peer Programs: Looking at the Evidence of Effectiveness, a Literature Review. Retrieved at: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/publications-a-z/1856-peer-programs-looking-at-the-evidence-of-effectiveness-a-literature-review>



## Pillar 4: Interagency Collaboration

Another core pillar of this program model is the collaboration between community safety agencies in Watson Lake. A team of representatives from a diversity of organizations met regularly to discuss the project, provide advice and offer observations. See Figure 3 for the list of players involved in this project. The intent is that this interagency collaboration helps build the support network for the participants. It also allows an opportunity to develop a shared understanding of response-based practice and issues around gender-based violence among the network of community members who play roles in responding to violence. A study examining lessons learned from successful collaborative practice for the prevention of family violence identified several concrete benefits to multi-sector collaboration on family violence:

- Concrete changes in policies, protocols and responses by member agencies as a result of joint initiatives and peer influence
- Greater policy influence and credibility through the presentation of a unified message by multiple agencies and institutions
- The achievement of large-scale projects that would not be possible within one agency
- Personal growth and learning from working with disciplines
- Improved services to shared clients, especially those previously under-served or marginalized
- A shared sense of ownership of the issues facing the community
- Collegial support and reduced personal isolation for those working in a very difficult field
- The opportunity to pool resources, knowledge and expertise
- Personal and professional connections<sup>32</sup>



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<sup>32</sup> Kinnon, Dianne and Jamieson, Wanda (2016) Lessons from the Field: Successful Collaborative Practice for the Prevention of Family Violence. Nextpoint Collaborative



## Relationship Map of Interagency Organizations & Groups



FIGURE 3: RELATIONSHIP MAP OF INTERAGENCY ORGANIZATIONS & GROUPS





## Pillar 5: Strengths-Based

A strengths-based approach focuses on developing assets that are known protective factors, such as strong relationships, life skills and school connectedness<sup>33</sup>. A strengths-based approach is critical for Aboriginal Youth because it takes the Canadian historical context into account. By placing the high rates of violence, substance abuse, and poverty experienced by Aboriginal families into the context of colonization and assimilation, this perspective shifts the perceived deficits away from the individual and allows us to focus instead on the resilience many of these Youth have demonstrated.

Strengths-based programming calls for an emphasis on mobilizing existing Youth strengths, and highlighting the importance of protective factors such as traditional culture and values and emphasis on healthy families and strong community networks.

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*Shifting from seeing youth 'at risk' to 'at promise' requires a fundamental shift in how we approach programming. It requires promoting strong youth within a holistic framework, rather than targeting single risk or problem behaviors in isolation.*

*Crooks et al- Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth*

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<sup>33</sup> Crooks, C. Chiodo, D. Thomas, D (2009) Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A toolkit for service providers.



## Pillar 6: Dene ā' nezen

The teachings around dignity and respect taught by Kaska Elders serve as the cultural grounding for this project. Dene ā' nezen describes the concept of dignity and respect in Kaska language. Kaska Elders teach of the connection of everyone to everything and the importance of treating oneself, others and the natural world with dignity.

Given the proportion of Aboriginal Youth in Watson Lake and in the group, the importance of incorporating local Indigenous culture into the program model was crucial. The Youth themselves highlighted the opportunity to further involve Elders, cultural activities and teachings and to acknowledge the impact of residential school/colonialism on sexualized violence against Indigenous women. In addition, research has show that lack of connection to culture has been identified as a clear risk factor for Aboriginal Youth in respect to violence<sup>34</sup>. In Crooks et al's comprehensive toolkit on engaging and empowering Aboriginal Youth, the author's identified through an extensive review of programming, literature and policy reports, four guiding principles for successful programming with Aboriginal Youth<sup>35</sup> (see Figure 4). Integrating cultural identity is crucial given the importance that cultural identity and values play as a protective factor against violence.

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*Lack of connection to culture has been identified as a clear risk factor in respect to violence. Thus, **promoting youth assets within a framework that emphasizes cultural connection** is a good fit for Aboriginal youth.*

*Crooks et al- Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth*

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<sup>34</sup> Crooks, C. Chiodo, D. Thomas, D (2009) Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A toolkit for service providers.

<sup>35</sup> ibid



**FIGURE 4: CROOKS, CHIDO & THOMAS (2009) GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH PROGRAMMING**

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***A cookie-cutter approach to enhancing services for Aboriginal youth will never succeed.** The path an organization travels will depend on the population of youth with whom they work, their pre-existing relationships with community members, and their particular mandate.*

*Crooks et al. 2009 Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth*

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## Application of Philosophical Pillars

Table 1 describes how these philosophical pillars were applied in practice as the program was delivered.

**TABLE 1: APPLICATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL PILLARS**

<b>Philosophical Foundation</b>	<b>Application</b>
<b>Response-based practice</b>	Participants learned about the concepts of dignity and social responses to violence. They examined the role of language in describing sexual violence, and considered the difference between positive and negative social responses to violence. Youth were engaged in examining a wide range of materials on the different forms of violence and resistance, language and public texts, such as social media and formal media.
<b>Youth empowerment</b>	Youth are taught communication and problem-solving skills. Curriculum is delivered using interactive, skill-base strategies that do not rely solely on information and lecturing, but opportunities to apply knowledge and practice using skills. Youth actively participate in making safety and justice a community priority by deciding on and working together on public awareness campaigns and presenting them to community members.
<b>Peer to peer learning</b>	Team building exercises built into curriculum and group agreement developed to help build a safe and supportive community. Youth work in teams on public awareness campaigns. Youth get opportunities through discussion based learning to share their experiences and knowledge, thus better getting to know their peers.
<b>Interagency collaboration</b>	Inter-agency representatives meet once at the beginning and once at the end of year 1 to inform the project design, evaluate project results and plan for project adaptations. Inter-agency representatives are aware of the project and its results, and are invested in the project's success. Youth access key adults, allowing them to become familiar with community organisations and supports.
<b>Strength-based programming</b>	Rather than a top-down expert-to-novice approach, facilitators build confidence by identifying already existing skills and awareness. As the program progresses, Youth will experience themselves as knowledgeable and capable of working together to develop community initiatives. Activities such as the community safety audit highlighted the knowledge Youth already have about how to stay safe in their community.
<b>Dene ā' nezen</b>	Community Elders were present during program delivery, as observers and to share stories and knowledge about respect and dignity. Each session started with a prayer from an Elder. Facilitators commented that their presence was calming for the group. Facilitators aimed to highlight how oppression of culture has impacted Indigenous women historically.





## Learning Objectives and Outcomes

### Learning Objectives

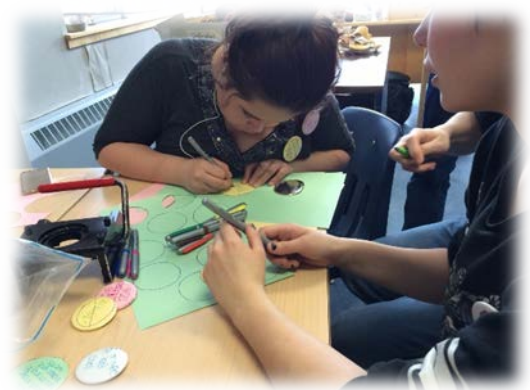
Participating Youth will learn:

- group management and process skills to create safety in small groups;
- the dynamics of violence and resistance from sexualized violence to structural violence (e.g., the connection between sexual assault, racism, poverty, gender, sexuality, geography);
- how to raise the subject of sexualized violence with peers of different ages;
- how to approach key adults to engage as “consultants” and allies;
- how to develop original materials as part of individual and collective initiatives to promote safety and justice in the school and community;

### Learning Outcomes

The curriculum was designed with the following outcomes in mind:

- As the program progresses, Youth will experience themselves as knowledgeable and capable of working together to develop an informed and well-planned initiative in the community.
- Because the program will include accessing key adults, Youth will become familiar with the operation of organizations such as Town Council, Watson Lake Secondary School council, Chamber of Commerce, Department of Justice (Territorial and Federal), R.C.M.P. and Victim Services, Crown Counsel, Women’s Directorate, and other services and organizations.
- The group facilitation style will reflect the intended learning outcomes. Rather than a top-down expert-to-novice approach, the facilitators will build safety and confidence by identifying already existing skills and awareness, creating enough safety to allow open discussion, and developing a consistent focus on safety and justice and related materials. Program facilitators will be well trained in democratic and safe leadership group facilitation skills and well versed in projects to promote safety and justice, generally, and freedom from violence, in particular.
- The Youth will find the program interesting, unique, engaging, challenging, supportive, responsive, and educational. Every effort will be made to acknowledge not only the Youth involved but those who support their involvement, from family members to friends and teachers.





## Program Model

The overall program model will be delivered over 3 years in 4 parts. The overall model is designed to have Youth take on more and more responsibility and ownership of the program as the program progresses, ultimately leading to Youth playing a role in monitoring and evaluating the program, and eventually graduating out of the program serving as mentors to younger Youth.

Figure 5 provides an overview of the objectives of each part of the overall program.



FIGURE 5: 4 PART CURRICULUM

## Project Launch Modules

Part 1, the project launch was delivered in 5 2-day modules between January-May 2016. There were also 2 introductory sessions held in November and December 2015. Figure 6 summarizes the content of each module. See the Program Delivery section of this report for a more detailed description of the content and learning tools used in the modules.

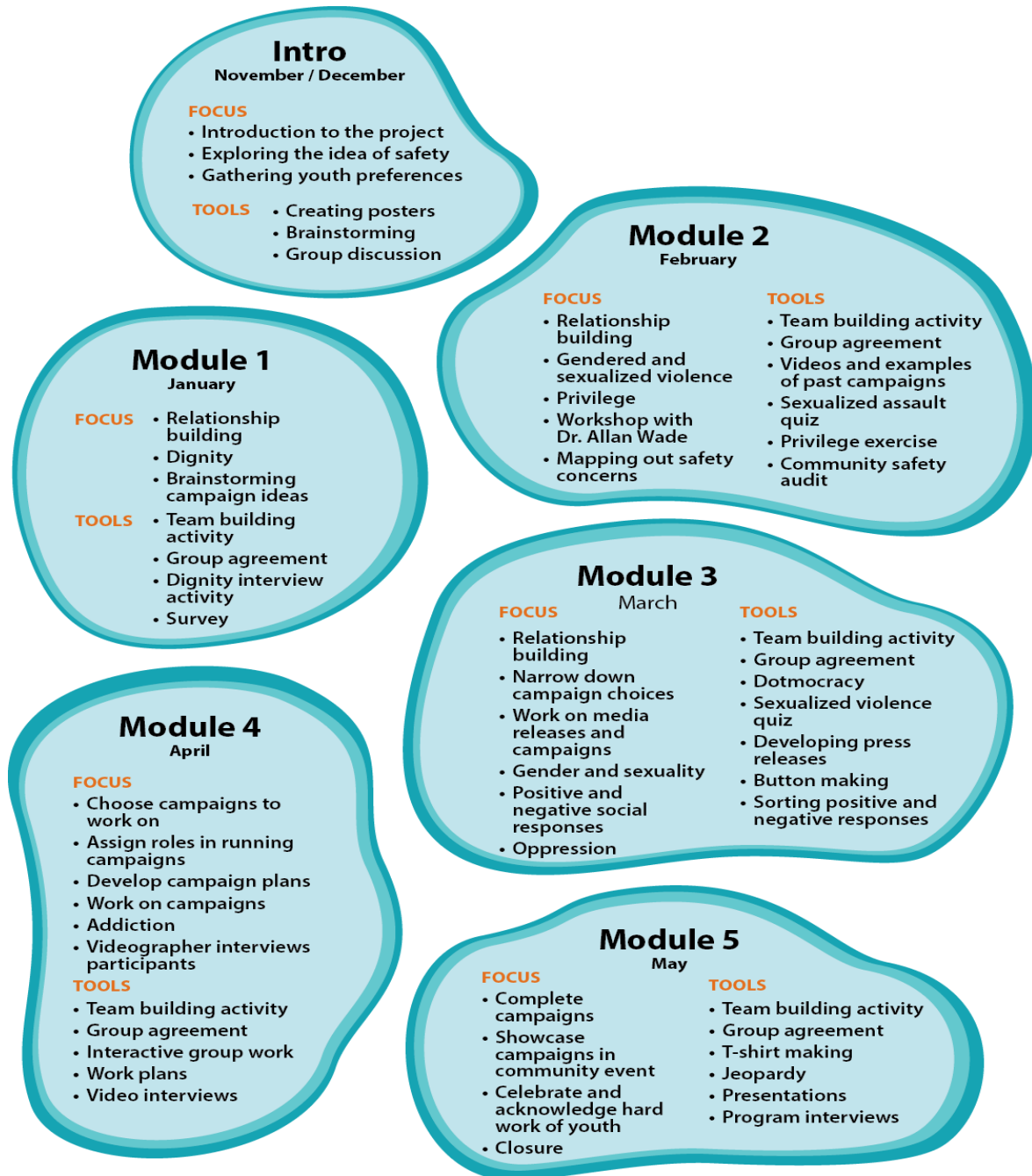


FIGURE 6: OVERVIEW OF PROJECT LAUNCH MODULES



## Performance Measurement Plan

For this project four planned results (short-term and medium-term) were identified at project start. These planned results are shown below in Figure 7. See full evaluation report for more details on the methods used to measure progress on these indicators and preliminary results.

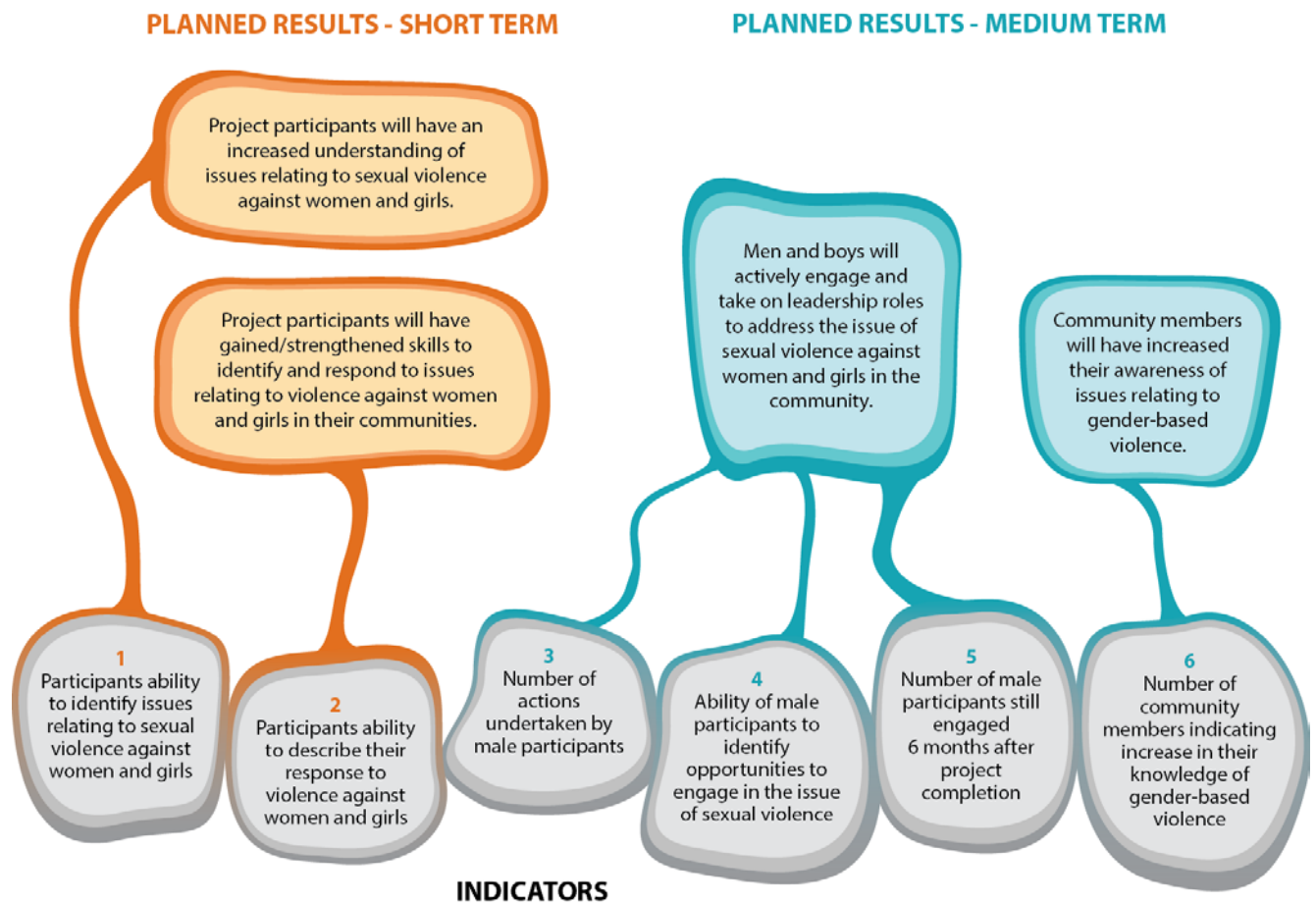


FIGURE 7: INDICATORS BY OBJECTIVE

In summary, Figure 8 demonstrates the philosophical pillars, program parts, planned results and indicators used to evaluate Youth for Safety.



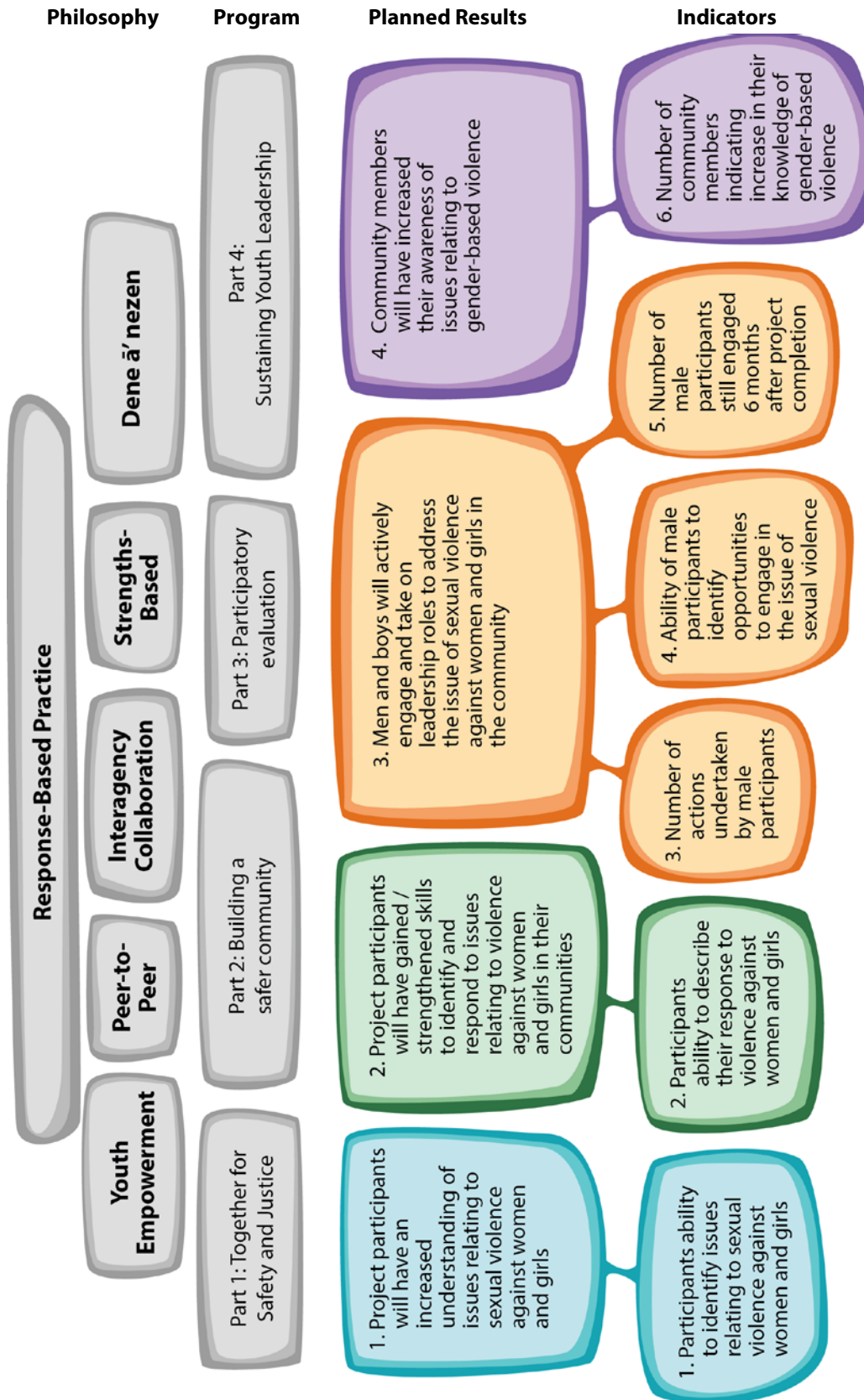


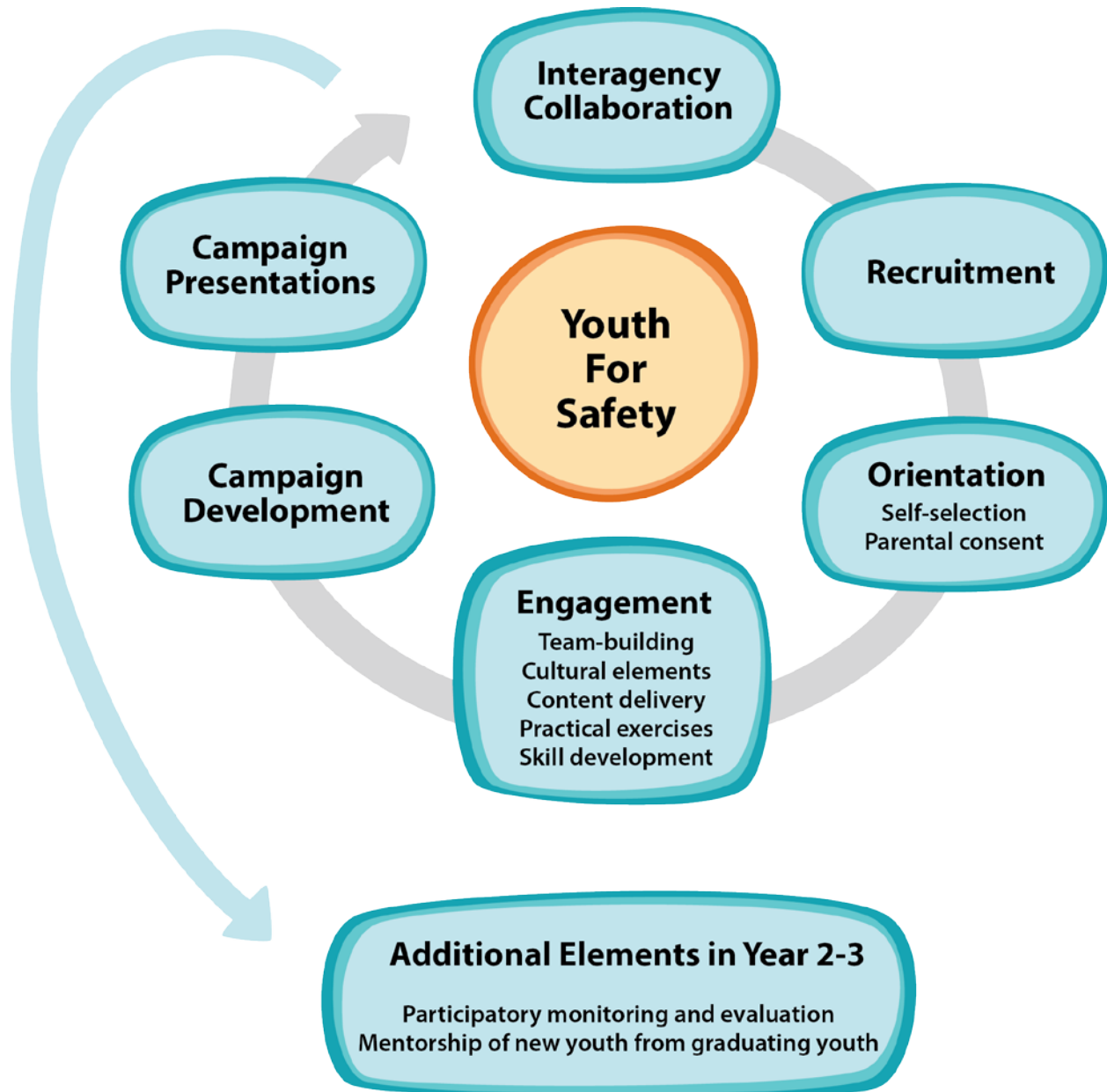
FIGURE 8: PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS, PROGRAM PARTS, PLANNED RESULTS AND INDICATORS



## Program Delivery

The next section of the report describes how the program was delivered with reflections from facilitators of challenges and successes. The elements of the program delivery are summarized in Figure 9 and described in the following pages.

**FIGURE 9: PROGRAM DELIVERY ELEMENTS**





## Interagency Collaboration

An interagency meeting was held at the beginning of the project and at the end. At the opening meeting, interagency members helped identify program needs (see Needs Assessment for full description of needs) based on their experience working with vulnerable Youth in Watson Lake. This group helped anticipate the risks of the project and strategies to address those risks (see Risk Management Plan). This network of people informed the program model design based on intimate knowledge of the challenges, needs and existing strengths in Watson Lake. At the end of year 1, interagency members reflected on the project's successes and challenges and identified opportunities to improve the project for next year.

## Youth Recruitment

Youth were recruited with the use of posters around the school and an introductory letter. Teachers helped spread the word about an information session open to all where Youth could learn more about the project. Youth being targeted were males and females currently attending Watson Lake Secondary School between the grades of 8-12.

## Youth Orientation

Two introductory workshops were held in November and December 2015. The purpose of these workshops were to introduce Youth to the project, generate trust and begin building relationships. The Youth discussed the following themes:

1. What does safety mean/look like to you?
2. Who should be involved in the YFS project?
3. How do we keep you involved in the project?
4. What are your ideas for safety initiatives?
5. What are the values, norm and principles that should guide YFS?

These discussions helped facilitators better understand Youth perspectives regarding safety within the community, and how Youth see safety issues being addressed. This session also allowed facilitators to understand Youth preferences on how the workshops were delivered.

Youth who attended these orientation sessions were asked to sign up if they wanted to be involved in the project launch, thus the participants in this project were self-selecting. Those who signed up received an introductory letter inviting them to join the group in January and asking for parental consent. Recognising the roles that both men and women play in keeping women safe, we intentionally aimed for a mixed gender group. The gender split of the group remained about 50/50 over the course of the first year.





## Engagement

Workshops were delivered at the school, during school hours. Every workshop session followed a similar skeletal structure to provide consistency and predictability for the Youth. We opened with a prayer done by an Elder in the room, followed by a check-in and then a short fun activity or game to engage the group and break the ice. Games and team building activities were strategically used throughout to create safety before exploring heavy topics. We felt it important to include cultural elements throughout the training, and had an Elder present whenever possible. We explored the role of colonisation in the oppression of Aboriginal women and residential school as a deliberate act of violence. We hope to increase the cultural elements in the next round of programming.

The rest of the session would be a mix of interactive lessons, quizzes, small or large group activities, and looking at examples in media. We always provided healthy and fun snacks throughout the day. We ended each session with a game, check-out, and a clean up of the room. Games or energizers were sprinkled throughout the workshop to engage the Youth, or pick up the energy in the room if participants were beginning to get bored. In addition, having fun together is a good way of building relationships within the group and between facilitators and participants.



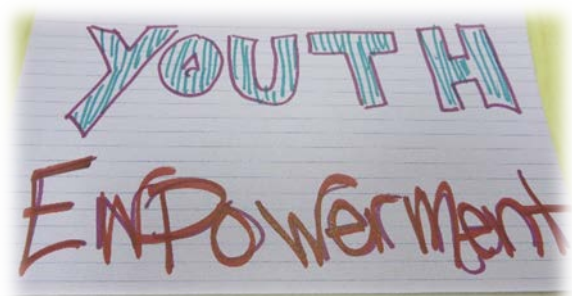




## LAWS Youth for Safety Program Model









### Keeping Youth Engaged

The engagement was varied throughout the workshops. Some Youth appeared comfortable with sharing verbally in a large group, while others seemed more comfortable to share in smaller groups. Facilitators acknowledged to the group that there are many ways to participate and that it is not expected that everyone is comfortable sharing in large groups. It was also noted that if the students do not appear to be engaged at all or if they do not want to be in the group they are welcome to go back to class.

One continued struggled was the disruption caused by the scheduled breaks in the student's timetable. Every time the students went on break, it was difficult to get them back in the room and engaged on time. To address this, we played games or activities right after break so that it would grab the students' attention and re-engage them. Occasionally some students would leave the workshop and go wander in the halls causing a disruption for some of the other teachers. Facilitators hope that putting an emphasis on choosing to be in the workshop or to be in class will limit future disruptions. A joint effort between teachers, Elders, and facilitators present in the room is needed to remind students that they cannot wander the halls.

The varied nature of the workshop's activities appeared to help in keeping the Youth motivated throughout the day, with a mixture of large and small group discussion, games, contests, videos and teambuilding exercises.

Having a looser structure for the Youth to work on campaigns had both positive and negative results. They were able to focus in on projects they were passionate about; however, it was also challenging to keep some Youth engaged who had less of a clear direction or focus. The button machine was a good place for Youth who wanted to be helpful but did not necessarily have a project they were developing.

Food has been an important part of the workshops thus far, with Youth reporting that food was a factor in keeping them motivated to stay in YFS and also one of their favourite parts of the program (based on the November and December Introductory sessions). We provided a mixture of healthy foods and treats at the breaks and throughout the day.





Maintaining participation rates was a challenge. Participants reported having many competing priorities (school work, travel, other extra curricula activities) and not all participants had the full support for their families.

One of the challenges so far has been setting up a system of communication in between the monthly sessions. We got permission to have the private Facebook page and asked all the students to sign up for the page and the email list in hopes that it will increase communication in between sessions. Youth express a desire to stay engaged between sessions but acknowledge the difficulty in doing so.

### Teaching Content

Content was presented using a variety of formats to honour different learning styles. The main approaches used in all the workshops are interactive, collaborative, and experiential. Learning modules included a mix of large and small group discussions, games and teambuilding exercises. Youth reported enjoying the fun, games, art, food and teamwork. Outside resources such as online campaigns and YouTube videos were used to communicate issues. Participants really appreciated the incorporation of video and art in the workshops, and see an opportunity to incorporate music in the future.

Guest speaker Alan Wade from the Center for Response Based Practice was able to share field stories and his personal practice experience.

Youth were often presented with material, but then immediately given an opportunity to apply their knowledge whether it be through a quiz, a practical exercise or working on a group project. For example, after learning about positive social responses, Youth were asked to classify different social responses as positive or negative. Material was presented through a mix of lecture style, discussion based, use of video and visual tools. Some content was presented through experiential exercises, for example when the facilitator asked the group to do a number of random tasks until someone said “no”, leading to a discussion about privilege and what gives people a position of power in the group.

### Empowering Youth

The process was designed to be designed by Youth from the beginning. The overall goal is to create ownership for the project, so giving Youth the power to make decisions about where the project was

## Teaching Tools

- Check-Ins
- Ice-breakers
- T-shirt contest
- Group agreement
- Quizzes
- Prizes
- Videos
- Ted Talk
- Community safety audit
- Privilege activity
- Sorting positive and negative responses
- Lectures
- Discussions
- Guest speaker
- Brainstorming
- Games
- Dotmocracy
- Making buttons
- Developing media releases
- Campaign work
- Video and radio interviews





going was key. The need to keep the Youth in class and committed to the project, while also preserving their power to choose to be there and take more ownership is a delicate balance.

In the orientation session Youth were asked for their input on how we could keep them involved. The focus of each session was to help Youth develop specific skills that would help them take leadership roles such as group decision making, developing press releases, work planning, budgeting and talking to the media. Activities were designed to highlight existing knowledge and skills among Youth. For example, the community safety audit helped Youth see the knowledge they already have about how to stay safe in their community. Facilitators mobilized opportunities for the Youth to talk to the media about their experience. One Youth participant was interviewed by the CBC. A number of Youth's were interviewed for a short video about the Youth for Safety project. This video was shown at the community event.

Going forward, facilitators hope to continue to build more and more opportunities for the Youth to take on leadership roles and feel ownership of the program.

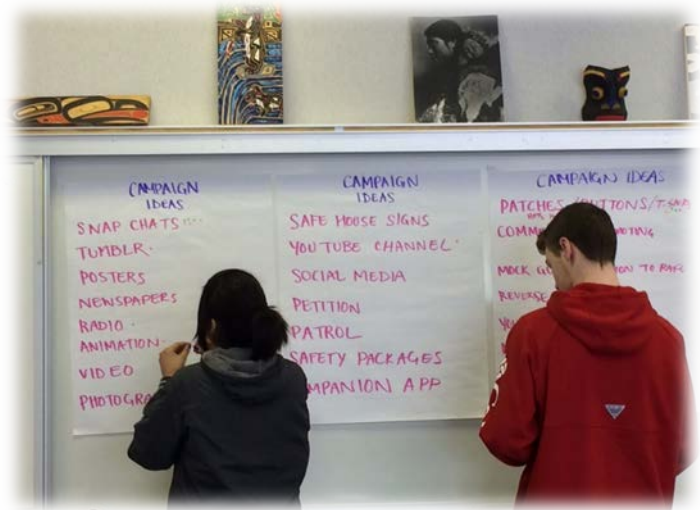
### Campaign Development

The choice of which campaigns to pursue and the work on each campaign was led by the Youth. Youth were asked to brainstorm campaign ideas and then voted on their favourite ideas with a dotmocracy in which every Youth received 3 stickers to indicate their votes. Of the 4 campaign ideas that received the most votes, Youth self-selected which campaign they would like to work on. Youth were given designated time during workshop delivery to work in teams on their campaigns. The campaigns selected were:

- 1) A petition to change the language in the criminal code
- 2) An art awareness campaign
- 3) Button making
- 4) Stop-motion animation

#### Petition

After learning about some of the mutualizing language in the criminal code to describe sexualized violence against children, two students took it upon themselves to create an online petition to change the language into more accurate descriptions of violence<sup>36</sup>. As of the writing of this report, there are 120 signatures on the petition. The students hope that the momentum



<sup>36</sup> <https://www.change.org/p/leader-liberal-party-of-canada-chef-parti-lib-ral-du-canada-justin-trudeau-change-the-wording-language-used-in-the-canadian-criminal-code>



created by the petition will lead to further actions such as writing letters to members of government, which will help shift the mindset in obscuring violence with language.

### Art Awareness Campaign

This campaign had the most Youth working on it. It involved a number of different art projects sharing provocative or educational messages around sexualized violence. Youth had full creativity to create what they wanted. One project included spray painting a tarp with the message “Anything less than a yes is a no”. Another project involved spray painting ceiling tiles with consent messaging and the Youth for safety logo. Another project involved getting a stop sign made that said “Stop Rape” and putting it up in the signpost forest<sup>37</sup>. Photos and videos were captured of the campaign work, workshops and program launch by Matthias Purdon.

### Button Making

The facilitators borrowed a button machine from the Victoria Faulkner Women’s Center and gave Youth the chance to create their own buttons. Many of the designs and slogans developed in the art awareness campaign were used on buttons. An example of a message developed for a button was “don’t get raped” but with the “get” and the “d” on raped crossed off, so that the button reads “Don’t get raped”. Button making proved to be a popular activity and very impactful. Many teachers came to the group and asked for more buttons. The buttons with their “in your face” messages opened up conversations with different people. One teacher reported that while wearing his button, he spoke to around 50 people in the community about the subject of sexualized violence and rape.



<sup>37</sup> The sign post forest is a Watson Lake landmark. Travelers from around the world have been bringing signposts from their hometowns to the Sign Post Forest since 1942 and continue to do so today.  
<http://www.yukoninfo.com/watson-lake-signpost-forest/>





### *Stop-motion Animation*

This project involved creating a short stop-animation video with a message about sexualized violence. The video told the story of a bunny who is the victim of a sexualized attack by the wolf, and of the fox, who was a bystander. The storyline allowed the Youth the opportunity to explore how a different social response from the bystander could affect how the story turns out for the bunny. The storyline was created, and the set and some of the characters were modeled out of clay, but it was not feasible for the student to finish an entire video. This project proved to be very labour intensive and will be continued next year.



### *Campaign Presentation*

The first year of the project ended with a presentation of the Youth campaigns by the Youth to community members. This event allowed community members to learn about sexualized violence and the work that Youth were doing to address it. The Youth received overwhelmingly positive feedback from community members who attended the final presentation, they expressed a clear desire for more. The final presentation has created some momentum and inter-agency excitement and commitment to the project's continuation.





## Next Steps

### *Youth Mentorship*

- In the next phase of this program, there is an opportunity to engage current participants as mentors to younger participants, giving them an opportunity to apply group management and process skills for creating safety in small groups, and building Youth ownership, a key ingredient to sustaining the project long term. Having current participants play roles in facilitating future sessions that revisit material already covered will keep the sessions interesting and relevant for them.

### *Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation*

- The other key opportunity in the next phase is to involve Youth in the monitoring and evaluation of the project, thus increasing their responsibility and leadership of the project. Participatory monitoring and evaluation could have Youth involved in articulating their ideas for planned results of the project and brainstorming indicators to measure success. They could also think through how to collect data on those indicators, and be involved in collecting the data themselves.





## Reflections on Model Development and Replication

The Youth for Safety Program Model was created to address the need for action on the issue of sexualized violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, particularly acute in the North. Based on the needs identified in the literature and in working with an interagency committee of local organizations who serve women in Watson Lake, this program aims to respond to the need for:

- a community-based collaboration to fight violence against women and girls
- a program that helps Youth and community members understand the root causes of violence
- specific supports for Watson Lake Youth and victims of violence to become empowered
- opportunities for Youth to take leadership roles in building a safer community

Although this project was designed for and developed in the specific Northern, remote, Watson Lake context, there is potential for it to be replicated in other communities that face similar challenges. The following are a series of things to consider when replicating this program in another context.

- Given the proportion of Aboriginal Youth in Watson Lake and in the group, the importance of incorporating local Indigenous culture into the program model was crucial. The Youth themselves highlighted the opportunity to further involve Elders, cultural activities and teachings and to acknowledge the impact of residential school/colonialism on sexualized violence against Indigenous women. In addition, research has shown that lack of connection to culture has been identified as a clear risk factor in respect to violence<sup>38</sup>.

Specific opportunities to consider include:

- Having Elders share stories, legends and teach skills
- Inviting guest speaker to discuss traditional Kaska gender roles, traditional Kaska teachings around dignity
- Acknowledging the historical role of Indigenous women in resistance to residential school, racist policies<sup>39</sup>
- Inviting a guest speaker to talk about the role of residential school in destabilizing Indigenous people<sup>40</sup>



<sup>38</sup> Crooks, C. Chiodo, D. Thomas, D (2009) Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A toolkit for service providers.

<sup>39</sup> See examples in Carriere, Jeannine and Richardson, Cathy (2013) Relationship is Everything: Holistic Approaches to Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health. First Peoples Child and Family Review. Volume 7, Number 2, 2013. Pp 8-26

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*



- There is a need to find ways to keep Youth engaged and connected to each other between program cycles whether through online communication or opportunities to meet face to face.
- One challenge is addressing potential declining enrolment. There may also be a need to accommodate new participants as word of the program gets out, and more Youth become interested. Either scenario creates a situation where it will be necessary to orientate and welcome new participants while keeping existing participants engaged. The heavy emphasis on discussion-based learning provides the more experienced Youth to share their ideas with new Youth as the program revisits key concepts. One strategy is to have first year participants play leadership roles in facilitating, mentoring and orientating new participants. This opportunity to further apply their leadership skills also helps to build in the likelihood of Youth continuing to play this role in keeping initiatives going beyond the formal program cycle.
- As a school based project, the project really hinges on cooperation from school staff and teachers. It is important to think through how to build buy in among teachers and staff, and how to keep them informed and involved throughout the process. Without a strong connection to the school, it might be better to distance the project from the school completely as to not be reliant on teacher support.
- One option would be to incorporate YFS modules in school curriculum, or offer course credit for work relating to this project. Partnering with educators has the added benefit of increased awareness of response-based principles among the teachers who work with Youth everyday.
- Due to the workload and amount of energy needed to keep the Youth engaged, it is definitely recommended to have two facilitators at all times, in addition to other adults in the room such as teachers, Elders, and/or community members/filmmakers.
- Keep school calendars in mind when designing the project as not to compete with school holidays, exams, or other school events.
- There is an opportunity to further involve members of the interagency group as speakers, resource people and mentors to the Youth. This helps Youth become more familiar with the network of people who can support them and the services that all of their organizations provide.
- There is also an opportunity to further involve and update community members of the group's work. A certain amount of momentum was created at the Youth's







community presentation. Attendees seemed eager to attend more events and continue the community conversation about sexualized violence. Identifying opportunities to connect with the broader community should be built into the program implementation.

- Consider how local resources can be mobilized to create a varied and engaging program that incorporates music, storytelling, theatre, video, guest speakers, food, art and games.

