

**Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Youth for Safety Project (DRAFT)**

January 30, 31 2017

Watson Lake, Yukon



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Executive Summary

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 organizations, 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 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.

The main focus points of the January session were to continue to build relationships, explore the topics of privilege and gender, and begin planning an event for International Women's Day on March 8th.



Participants

Of the 22 youth that are signed up for the workshops, 17 (77%) have been showing up consistently for all or part of a workshop. 8 youth (47%) came for the entirety of the two days. 6 youth (35%) came for a part of the 2-day workshop. 3 of the 17 consistent youth (18%) did not show up for any of the workshops, and a total of 8 of the 22 youth signed up did not. A total of 14 youth (compared with 15 from the previous month) participated in all or part of the workshop. Absent youth are marked with an 'A' in the chart below.

NAME	GRADE
1. Austin Nolan	8
2. Jamie Dennis	8
3. Brianna Pete (A)	9
4. Daniel Doctor	9
5. Faith Papineau	9
6. Gabriel Goupil (A)	9
7. Hope Papineau	9
8. Ian McLeod	9
9. Jenny Kroeker	9
10. Julian McDonald	9
11. Maximus Johnson	9

NAME	GRADE
12. Sabrina Jansen	9
13. Trynaty Thompson	9
14. Hunter Wolfe (A)	10
15. Jasmine Johnson (A)	10
16. Kolby Schmidt (A)	10
17. Nathaniel McMillan	10
18. Piper Allen	10
19. Zoe Wolfe (A)	10
20. Cian Hobbis	11
21. Tony Gioia (A)	11
22. Kiera Stubenberg (A)	12

In addition, the following elders and community members were in the room:

Crystal Stewart (LAWS)
 Kristel Vance (LAWS)
 Leda Jules (LAWS)
 Fanny Vance (LAWS)

Mida Donnessey (Kaska elder)
 Linda McDonald (Kaska Teacher)
 Martina Volfova (Kaska Language facilitator)



Focus Topics

The main focus points of the January session were to continue to build relationships, explore the topics of privilege of gender, and begin planning an event for International Women's Day on March 8th.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the 14 youth who participated in the workshop and the 22 youth who signed up for the project!



Thank you to the following community/school partners for assisting in the project!

Mary Maje (LAWS)
 Fannie Vance (LAWS)
 Ann M. Raider (LAWS)
 Mary Charlie (LAWS)
 Crystal Stewart (LAWS)
 Kristel Vance (LAWS)
 Dorothy Smith (RRDC/LAWS)
 Allan Wade (Centre for Response Based Practice)
 Cathy Richardson (Centre for Response Based Practice)
 Justin Brown (Mayor of Watson Lake)

Linda McDonald (WLSS)
 Jean Maclean (WLSS)
 Sanjini Philips (Regional Social Worker)
 May Stewart (LFN Justice)
 Cam Lockwood (RCMP)
 Julie Laliberté (LAWS facilitator)
 Renée-Claude Carrier (LAWS facilitator)
 Martina Volfova (Kaska Language facilitator)
 Sarah Gillett (Beringia Community Planning)
 Jeff Cook (Beringia Community Planning)

1. Introduction

Watson Lake Secondary School (WLSS) in partnership with community agencies have embarked on a three-year Youth-led learning project called “*Youth for Safety*” (YFS). YFS is based on learning topics of safety, dignity, justice, violence against girls and women, and activism; it explores how men keep women safe and how women stay safe. An introductory session was offered to educate and recruit Youth for the project in October of 2016.

The project will celebrate and honour existing Youth strengths, knowledge, and strategies on how to stay safe. Youth will also learn new tools and skills to increase safety in the community. This year, there will be a total of five (5) two-day workshops from November to March 2017. All workshops will be in the class room and will explore topics in an interactive way, using youth-led projects to address different aspects of safety and social justice in Watson Lake.

This report summarizes the January workshop and main topics explored, looks at content of material covered, and offers some practical reflection and ways to improve the future workshops.



2. Agenda

MONDAY

Time	Activity
950	Opening prayer
	Check-in (1-10; highlight from past month; weather system)
	Ice-breaker
	Go over plan for the days -begin planning March 8 event -privilege
	Debrief vigil and last sessions
	Teambuilding and DEBRIEF : Draw what I see
10:50	Break
	Clip: Helen Knott spoken word
	Privilege
11:55-12:53	Lunch
	Brainstorm March 8 ideas. -petition -animation -arts and creative activism -movie screening -feast with men serving women -buttons? -tshirts again? Hoodies?
	Game: Splat
1:53	Break
	Break into March 8. Groups
	Game
2:55	Check out
3:05	Clean up room
3:10	dismissal

TUESDAY

Time	Activity
9:50	Opening prayer
	Check-in (1-10, something we're grateful for)
	Ice-breaker
	Go over plan for the day -planning March 8 event -privilege
	Teambuilding and DEBRIEF continue draw what I see
10:50	Break
	Clip: Cian's speech and montage
	Privilege checklist
11:55-12:53	Lunch
	Clip or game?
	Quotes in groups: Why do we celebrate International Women's day?
	Work on March 8
1:53	Break
	Work on March 8
	Game
2:55	Check out
3:05	Clean up room
3:10	dismissal

The agenda was flexible due to the changing nature of the school environment and for any unexpected delays. It also allowed for facilitators to customize activities for the energy levels of the group. The agenda was structured in an arc, meaning the beginning and ends were scheduled with lighter material, such as teambuilding or games, and the middle was scheduled for more in-depth conversations or activities about the topics. Because of the potentially emotional nature of the topics of safety and violence, this arc can help with containment so that youth leave the room in a positive headspace.

2. Focus topics and content

The main focus points of the January session were to continue to build relationships, explore the topics of privilege and gender, and begin planning an event for International Women's Day on March 8th.

Building Relationship

To continue to build relationship, below is a breakdown of the agenda, focusing on activities that promote and build respect, trust, and relationships between students, facilitators, elders, and community members present in the room.

Opening prayer

Every YFS workshop opens with an opening prayer in Kaska by an elder in the room. Linda McDonald typically translates the prayer into English.

Introductions and Check-in/out

This gives an opportunity for everyone in the room to introduce themselves and let the group know how they are doing that day. By doing a "check-out" after every day, it provides a sense of whether or not the youth's day has improved, worsened, or stayed the same. It also provides a chance for the youth to reflect on the day's learning. We do check ins and check outs every session to provide consistent structure for the youth to know what to expect from the beginning and end of the days.

For the January 30 session, participants were asked to give a number from 1-10 (1 =not doing well, 10= doing very well) about how they were doing, about a highlight from the past month, and to name a weather system that fit their current mood. The "weather system" check in allowed youth an opportunity to draw on natural metaphors and explain how they feel in a non-traditional way. Youth gave examples such as "clear, sunny day", "blizzard, dark and stormy but looks cool", or even a "rainbow tornado" or "sunshine and hurricane". The youth's numbers are consistently higher at the end of the day after the workshop. For a check out, they were asked about something they were proud of.

I am proud of...

- That I didn't stutter while talking on the phone to the hoodie company
- Coming up with ideas for International Women's Day X
- My creative ideas
- Talking even though I felt really bad today
- Organizing the hoodies

For the second day check-in, students were asked about something they were grateful for:



For a second day check out, the students were asked to identify something in someone else that they were proud of



Games

Games have been a popular activity with the youth since the beginning of the project. Games are also a way to re-capture a groups' attention if the energy is feeling stagnant or stale. The group played several games during the workshop, such as consistent favourites "Splat", and "Move your butt".

Teambuilding

Teambuilding is an important way to build trust, communication, respect, friendship, and teamwork within a group. It is also a great way to bond and have a fun time together. The teambuilding activity the group did for the January session was called "draw what I see". The group is asked to find a partner and sit in two parallel lines that are close together so the partners can sit back to back. One line of partners is facing the whiteboard, while the other line cannot see the whiteboard. The partner who has their back to the whiteboard gets a piece of paper and a pen. A simple image is drawn on the board once the partners are back to back, so that only one of the partners can see the board. The partner who can see the board must describe the shape exactly how it appears on the board while the other partner draws it only from the verbal description. Once finished, the group can see how well they copied the image. The group did this activity at the beginning of both days as we ran out of time to finish on the first day.

Debriefing questions were asked between partner switches and after the activity. In the first round facilitators asked the questions "What worked well?" "What did not work as well?". The second round on second day youth who had decided not to participate in the activity were asked to provide observations of what worked well after the fact. Some observations included "no one got angry with each other", and "it seemed easier the second time". Facilitators then asked the group if any of the aspects of this activity transfer over to the real world, and replied with answers such as "the teamwork needed", "it's easier to work with someone after you've worked with them before", and "it's easier to work when it is quiet and you can communicate better".

After this discussion, group members were asked to describe the activity in one word. They were then given the task of coming up with a song, poem, or rap using the words provided. This appeared to be a challenging activity for the youth, evidenced by the group splitting off into two, and then some members feeling frustrated and handing off the task to other group members.



Group Agreements

Group agreements can be an important way to establish safety in a group and to set some expectations for the entire group. The youth were asked in the October orientation what *they* want in the group agreements to enhance the student's autonomy, responsibility and ownership.

Participants finalized and signed a "group contract" in November showing that they will respect and uphold the agreements in the sessions. These group agreements can be referenced anytime a group member is breaking the group norms.

To take the group agreements a step further, In December we asked the youth about what kinds of outcomes they think should happen if a group member breaks the norms. These are some of the ideas that they came up with:



Phones -----> 3 warnings and then taken away for the rest of the block

Verbal violence----->kicked out?

Physical Violence----->kicked out

Leaving the room and wandering the halls ----->>warnings x 3 after that back to class for whole day.

Racism / other isms /phobias -----> 10 push ups/sit ups



Privilege

To explore the topic of privilege, on the first day of the workshop participants were shown a YouTube video of a group of diverse people taking a “Privilege Quiz”. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UmowwMivyU>. The people in the video were from differing identities of race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, class, and education. They all took the quiz, and then tallied their results. While watching the video, facilitators encouraged the students to raise their hand if they had any questions. This led to a great discussion on gender detailed below.

The second day the clip was shown again to any participants who missed it the first time, and then the quiz was distributed. Facilitators emphasized that students do it completely on their own without the input of their classmates due to the sensitivity of the quiz. While taking it, again the students were encouraged to raise their hand if they had any questions. There were a lot of questions during the quiz and it seemed to provide a lot of learning. It was an interesting experiential exercise to see how much or how little privilege some of the participants had, and what effects that had on their lives.

Some debriefing questions included: “any surprises from the list?”, “Who got higher than they were expecting?”, and “Who got lower than they were expecting?”. One youth reported feeling really “bummed out” at her number, and the facilitators validated and empathized with her. Facilitators also connected privilege to social justice, making the point that often times the people who are most marginalized by an issue are also the people on the front lines trying to change that issue and that people can use their privilege to help with issues that do not effect them as violently. Examples of this include the high numbers of women who are fighting for equal gender rights, and the high numbers of Indigenous people fighting for equal rights and decolonization.

Some limitations of the quiz were that some of the questions were only applicable to an adult, and that the double negative nature of the quiz was confusing to some participants. Some identities that the group felt were left out of the video were those from people of differing weights and abilities. It was also a sample of U.S. citizens, and perhaps not as applicable to a Canadian demographic or a primarily Indigenous population.

Privilege checklist

1. I am white.
2. I have never been discriminated against because of my skin color.
3. I have never been the only person of my race in a room.
4. I have never been mocked for my accent.
5. I have never been told I am attractive “for my race.”
6. I have never been a victim of violence because of my race.
7. I have never been called a racial slur.
8. I have never been told I “sound white.”
9. A stranger has never asked to touch my hair, or asked if it is real.
10. I am heterosexual.
11. I have never lied about my sexuality
12. I never had to “come out.”
13. I never doubted my parents’ acceptance of my sexuality.
14. I have never been called “fag.”
15. I have never been called “dyke.”
16. I have never been called a “fairy,” or any other derogatory slur for homosexuals.
17. I have never tried to hide my sexuality.
18. I am always comfortable with P.D.A. with my partner in public.
19. I have never pretended to be “just friends” with my significant other.
20. I have never been ostracized by my religion for my sexual orientation.
21. I have never been told I would “burn in hell” for my sexual orientation.
22. I have never been told that my sexuality is “just a phase.”
23. I have never been violently threatened because of my sexuality.
24. I am a man.

25. I feel comfortable in the gender I was born as.
26. I still identify as the gender I was born in.
27. I have never tried to change my gender.
28. I have never been denied an opportunity because of my gender.
29. I make more money than my professional counterparts of a different gender.
30. I have never felt unsafe because of my gender.
31. I have never been catcalled.
32. I have never been sexually harassed or assaulted.
33. I have never been raped.
34. I work in a salaried job.
35. My family and I have never lived below the poverty line.
36. I don't have any student loans.
37. I have never gone to bed hungry.
38. I have never been homeless.
39. My parents pay some of my bills.
40. My parents pay all of my bills.
41. I don't rely on public transportation.
42. I buy new clothes at least once a month.
43. I have never done my taxes myself.
44. I have never felt poor.
45. I have never had to worry about making rent.
46. I have never worked as a waiter, barista, bartender, or salesperson.
47. I have had an unpaid internship.
48. I have had multiple unpaid internships.
49. I went to summer camp.
50. I went to private school.
51. I graduated high school.
52. I went to an elite college.
53. I graduated college.
54. My parents paid (at least some of) my tuition.
55. I had a car in high school.
56. I've never had a roommate.
57. I've always had cable.
58. I have traveled internationally.
59. I travel internationally at least once a year.
60. I studied abroad.
61. I've never skipped a meal to save money.
62. I don't know what "Sallie Mae" is.
63. I spent Spring Breaks abroad.
64. I have frequent flier miles.
65. My parents are heterosexual.
66. My parents are both alive.
67. My parents are still married.
68. I do not have any physical disabilities.
69. I do not have any social disabilities.
70. I do not have any learning disabilities.
71. I have never had an eating disorder.
72. I have never been depressed.
73. I have never considered suicide.
74. I have never attempted suicide.
75. I have never taken medication for my mental health.
76. I can afford medication if/when I need it.
77. I have never been told I'm overweight or "too skinny."
78. I have never felt overweight or underweight or "too skinny."
79. I have never been shamed for my body type.
80. I consider myself to be physically attractive.
81. I can afford a therapist.
82. I've used prescription drugs recreationally.
83. I have never had an addiction.
84. I have never been shamed for my religious beliefs.
85. I have never been violently threatened for my religious beliefs.
86. I have never been violently attacked for my religious beliefs.
87. There is a place of worship for my religion in my town.
88. I have never lied about my ethnicity as self-defense.
89. I have never lied about my religion as self-defense.
90. All my jobs have been accommodating of my religious practices.
91. I am not nervous in airport security lines.
92. I have never heard this statement: "You have been randomly selected for secondary passport control."
93. I have never been called a terrorist.
94. Nobody has ever tried to "save" me for my religious beliefs.
95. I have never been cyber-bullied for any of my identities.
96. I was not bullied as a child for any of my identities.
97. I have never tried to distance myself from any of my identities.
98. I have never been self-conscious about any of my identities.
99. I have never questioned any of my identities.
100. I feel privileged because of the identities I was born with.

Gender

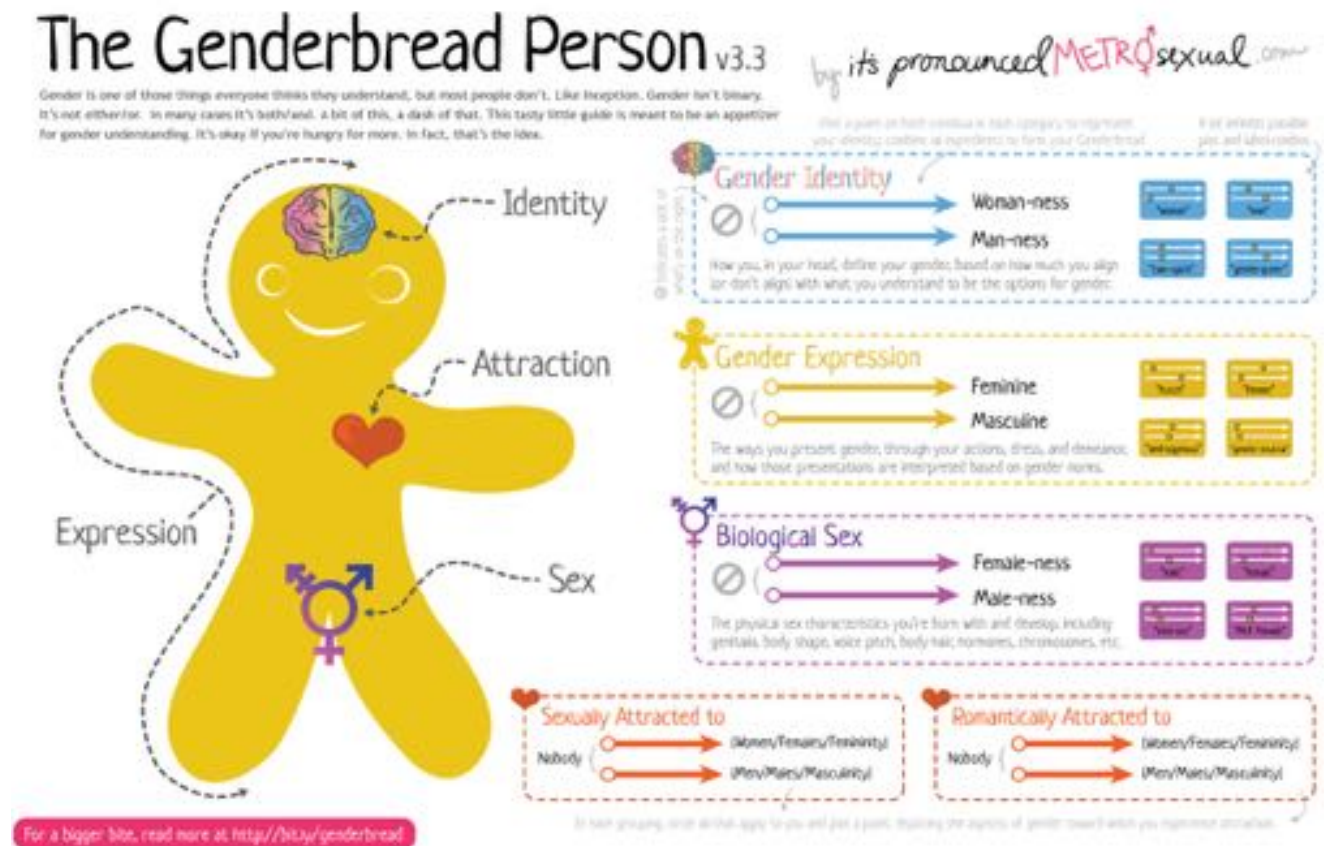
The video on privilege sparked a great conversation around gender based on some questions the youth had about trans identities. The facilitators encouraged honest questions and answered them as they came up, and validated any confusion the youth were feeling. The “pants” theory was used to explain the fluidity of and differences between gender, sex, and sexuality in a simple manner.

Gender: What *kind* of pants you feel like wearing in that particular moment (I.e. how you represent your gender)

Sex: What is inside your pants (physical reproductive organs)

Sexuality: Whose pants you want to take off in that particular moment (who you are attracted to at that time, accounting for fluidity)

We also looked at the “Gender bread Person” tool to give a visual example:



Planning International Women's Day Event

Vigil Event feedback

We began the planning stage of International Women's Day by reviewing the feedback from the vigil to see if there was any learning we wanted to take away and apply to this second event. We also showed a short video that Martina Volfova put together of the December 6th Vigil highlighting the speech done by YFS participant Cian Hobbs. This was to remind them what a great job they did, and also give an example of what is possible to present at their event.

- More advertising x 3 maybe on a truck?
- More people in attendance
- More speakers
- More male speakers
- More rehearsal
- Different location
- More food
- Contact parents to attend
- More visuals
- Confirm speakers
- Make the vigil in the afternoon

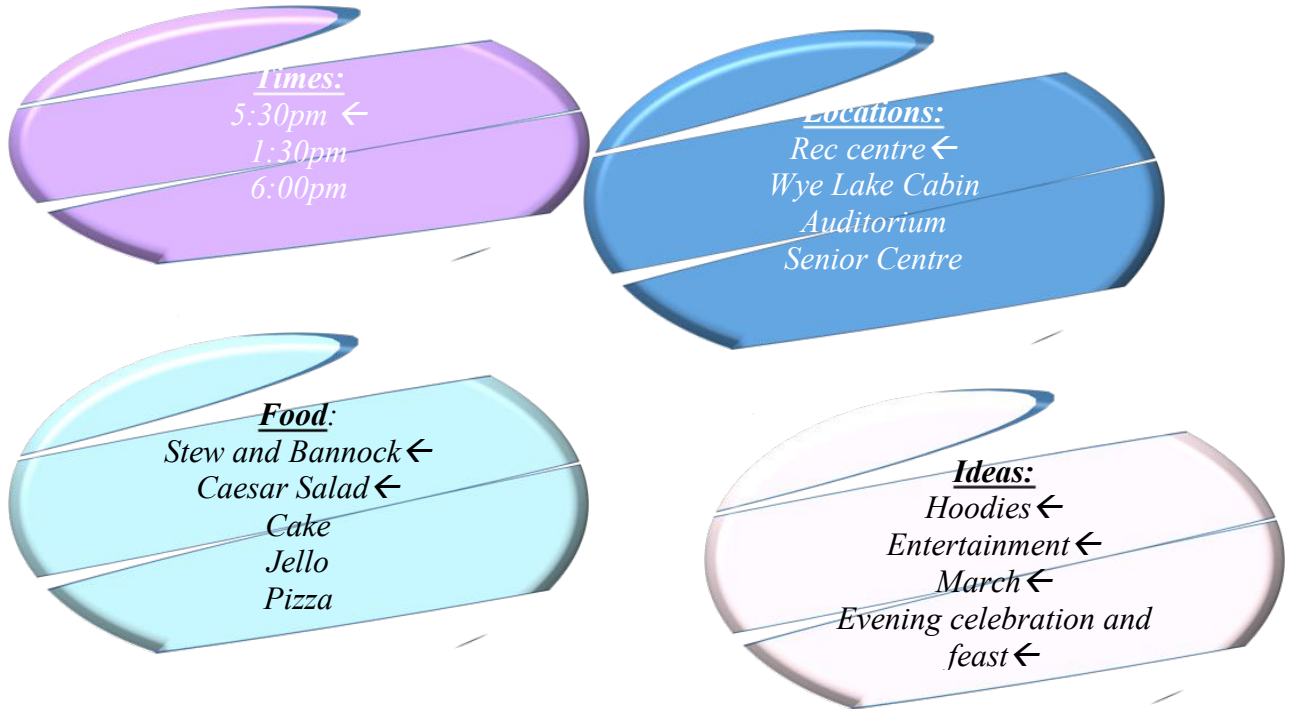
Helen Knott Spoken Word and We Matter

To give an example of something the youth could do facilitators showed them a clip of a young Indigenous female spoken word poet Helen Knott performing a poem for the We Matter Campaign. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7NeaMadw0w> The We Matter Campaign is a collection of videos aimed at Indigenous youth addressing mental health and suicide.



Brainstorming ideas

To brainstorm different ideas for International Women's day, the youth were split up into small working groups and came up with the following ideas. The group then voted and chose what they wanted to do as a group.



Why do we celebrate International Women's Day?

One of the youth came up with an idea to create a video featuring the youth saying short quotes of why we celebrate International Women's Day. To gather material for this project, the group was split into small groups to come up with quotes.

Why do we celebrate International Womens Day?

- ❖ *Women face more violence than men*
- ❖ *Women face inequalities*
- ❖ *The north has the highest rate of sexualized violence in Canada*
- ❖ *Celebrate women for their contributions to society*
- ❖ *Because out of every 1000 sexualized assaults, only 3 get convictions*
- ❖ *Because violence is happening in our community*

Working Groups

After this brainstorm, the group split off into committee groups to work on what they felt passionate about.

Hoodies

A group of students priced out a few different companies that made hoodies by calling and emailing and found a company that fit best. They put together a list of people that wanted hoodies, what size, colour, and what name they wanted on the back.

Event/entertainment

- ❖ Short video
- ❖ Warrior Song
- ❖ Speakers: Cian, Ann, Piper, Ian
- ❖ Kaska dancers
- ❖ DJ: Julian?

Speeches

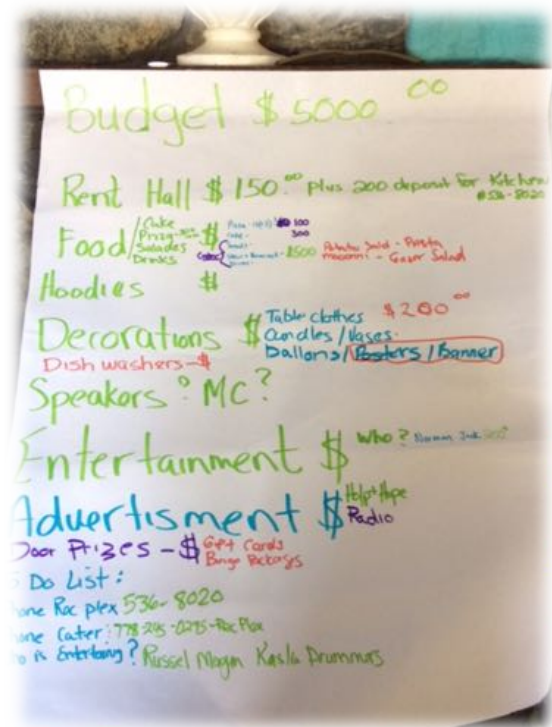
A few students began to prepare potential speeches for the event.

Food/budget/to-dos

This group worked on a poster (right) to organize the budget and event

Video

A few students began gathering clips of different youth saying short quotes about why we have International Men's day.



4. Reflections

Engagement

Similar to last year, the general 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. Some students did not seem to be engaged much during the workshop. 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. Overall, it seemed the returning students were able to stay engaged with the material and agenda, perhaps as a result of being more used to it. The varied nature of the workshop's activities appear to help in keeping the youth motivated throughout the days, with a mixture of large and small group discussion, games, contests, videos and teambuilding exercises.

The strategy of the facilitators communicating directly with teachers when a student wished to attend a class to do work or take a test seemed to work well again this session. A hope will be that the students will become accustomed to this practice and it will become clearer where students are at for the teachers and facilitators.

Many of the students seemed keen to work on tasks for preparing for the March 8th event. Some students appeared to benefit from the facilitators giving them a specific task, while some seemed to take initiative on what they wanted to work on. Planning the vigil and for this next event provides practice in event planning and organizing skills which the students will be able to apply in other facets of their lives. Finding tasks that fit well with every student will be important in having everyone participate. Next month the facilitators will be bringing down the button machine from Whitehorse, which is always a great task for students who struggle to find tasks.

Food

Food continues to play an important role in keeping the youth engaged with the program. We provided a mixture of healthy foods and treats at the breaks and throughout the day. The food table gives the youth a chance to have a small self-administered break during the workshops to get a snack and return to the group.

Space

The workshops were held in the Kaska Language room. The youth also had access to their laptops and the computer lab next door. The space works well for accommodating the elders as well as the students. The youth also work in the art room when creating posters.

Looking ahead...

The February workshop will be primarily focused on reviewing why we have International Women's day, planning events for International Women's day, and positive and negative social responses. Interest in a drum making workshop will be gathered in hopes of a workshop being scheduled in the upcoming month.

THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR ANOTHER AMAZING WORKSHOP!

