



PEHDZEH KI FIRST NATION (WRIGLEY) HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLAN 2018



This plan summarizes the Wrigley community's thoughts on a health and wellness program; our suggestions as to what to the community needs; suggestions for what is included in the program; and ideas for reconnecting with our culture.

The Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide evidence as to why the implementation of a community health and wellness program is important to the Wrigley community. Additionally, the report explains the various ways in which a health and wellness program can appeal to all ages of the community and strengthen our ties to our indigenous heritage.

The plan summarizes the Wrigley community's thoughts on a health and wellness program; our suggestions as to what to the community needs; suggestions for what is included in the program; and ideas for reconnecting with our culture.

As a community, we have always identified the importance of healthy and culturally-strong families and believe that to achieve this is a joint effort. The community needs to support it; resources to fund it are required, and professional support to ensure the plan responds to our community needs is also needed.

The sentiment expressed by the community members was that a health and wellness program would be well-supported. One of the survey respondents commented that "you can't raise a child alone, it takes a whole community to raise healthy children". The same respondent also shared her belief that the community "should stand as one". With the community willing to help, all we need now is external support and the financial backing to bring the program to life.

We have an opportunity to help create a Wrigley that is full of community activities, culture and traditional encouragement.

The Collection Method Used

To collect the community's feedback on health and wellness initiatives, we conducted one-on-one interviews with questions put together by Rose Moses, who led this initiative in the community. Eighteen questions were designed to encourage open ended honest conversations about the current state of the community and the ideal future state. The topics touched on the health and wellness impact on youth, elders, men, women and the homeless population. The questions also sought feedback on how the initiatives suggested could maintain Wrigley's unique culture and heritage.

A full list of the questions asked during the interviews can be found in the appendix of this report.

Themes and Priorities Identified in the Research

1. Culture and Traditional Values

As Aboriginal people we are losing our traditional ways and our language. This was apparent in the research we carried out. We need to make this a priority; for the benefit of our youth and for our elders. Elders want to see their history being passed through the generations and our youth will benefit from knowing what their ancestors endured to make their lives possible and meaningful. Elder, Tim Lennie said it best:



“You want to know our Culture and Traditional ways, you need to walk the path of our ancestors”

A comment that was echoed by another respondent:

“You got to walk the path of our ancestors to get the feel of our history.”

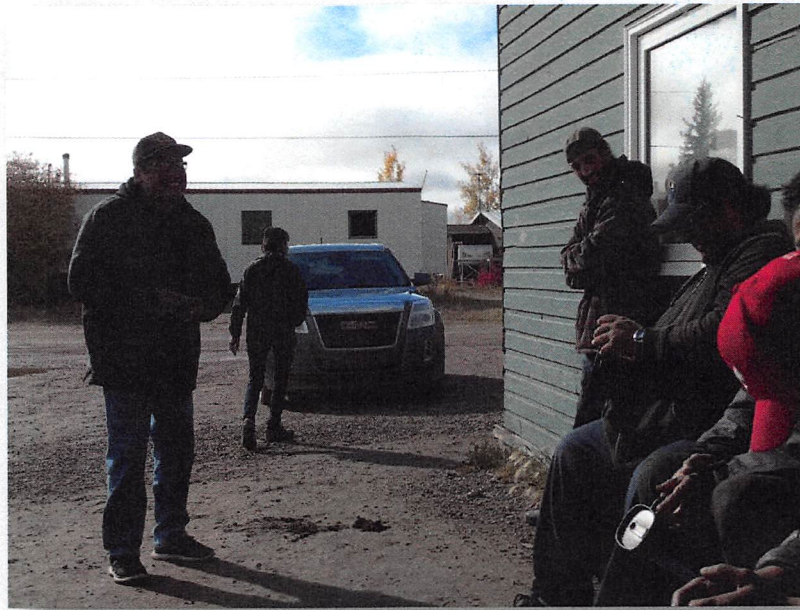
This priority also supports the youth and elder sections outline in parts 5,6 and 7.

2. Addiction and Crime

One of the more easily identified themes was the reference to the drug and alcohol problem within the community. Or at least, the acknowledgement that addiction can derail the youth and set them on a downward spiral and lead to jail.

It was also an area where suggestions on how to fix the problem were volunteered the most. The following suggestions were given to help curb alcoholism and drug abuse:

- The establishment of a Justice Committee;
- The Jones Landing retreat facility to curb addiction and implement a zero-tolerance policy.
- Increased awareness on the importance of sobriety; and
- More community activities to keep youth busy, engaged with the community and aware of the region’s history and culture.



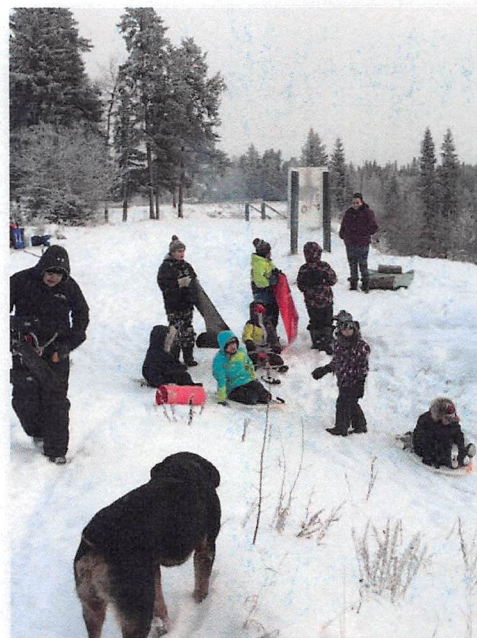
Interestingly, the final point was one that was also made to help community elders. A program that encourages elders and youths to come together to participate in activities that focus on the history of Wrigley is worth exploring. Activities could include: bannock making, dry meat and dry fish making, sewing, moose hide making, berry picking, hand games.

3. Youth Support & Trained Professionals

Every single one of the respondents recognized the need for trained professionals and counsellors to assist in delivering a community health and wellness plan. It was repeated by respondents of all ages that, “youth find it easier to talk about their feelings with strangers than their parents”.

The community’s intent to help one another needs to be complemented with access to certified professionals. The burden on non-trained community participants to implement specialized programs without the appropriate professional support are too great.

Professionals are required to help ease the strain and deliver better results for our youth. Having trained professionals



to give guidance, support and the education community members need to be empowered to carry out the programs diligently. The combination of community support and trained professionals is what will ultimately help our youth conquer their own barriers.

Only the youths with a legitimate education, job training and addiction support will become the leaders of the future.

4. Partnerships

Respondents highlighted the importance of involving local organizations and institutional partners to carry out the community wellness program.

Suggestions included involving the school, Dehcho Health, Renewable Resources and Environment and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The more groups invested in the program the higher likelihood we can create a healthy community that is inclusive, supportive and successful. Partnerships don't always need to be monetary. We'll also seek out individuals that can share their health and wellness experience with us and the community in person, and finally, we'll also look joint opportunities to develop Fish Lake, Blacker Water, Old Town Camp and other local icons that are well-suited to hosting healing camps, activities or events.

Partnerships can also take the form of information sharing and planning workshops. One respondent remembered the importance of sharing the learnings of each committee, plan, activity, program put in place from their work for the community in 1991 and 1992. We intend to regularly evaluate our plans and partnerships to make sure they are delivering the intended results for our youth.

5. Diversity in Education

Reinforced throughout the feedback received was the requirement for a diverse range of education options for our youths. Not every youth responds to school in the same way. Therefore, courses, workshops, hands-on training and scholarships need to be incorporated into the education program.

A range of education options will engage youths more than the status quo, keep them busy,



help them learn a wider set of skills and remove the temptation for crime and other distracting influencers. A new set of education standards could also include traditional on-the-land programming and indigenous language lessons to ignite the connection between our youth and elders.

Establishing a youth committee responsible for contributing to the community's program will help us further community support. This includes the establishment of partnerships with educational institutions. For example, we could partner with Aurora College or others that can provide our youth with access to information from universities, colleges and trade schools.

Lastly, upgrading programs or bridging programs should be established to help fill the gaps where a student hasn't managed to graduate, hasn't been accepted to further education or might otherwise slip through the cracks of the education system.

6. Elder Support

Elders play an important role in both our community and in helping us uphold our culture and tradition. They are educators, supporters and cultural teachers. They carry information vital to the preservation of our cultural and traditional ways. For that reason, we must recognize them for the work they do, support them in the times that they need it and show compassion and love towards them in their trying times. Because our Elders have been ingrained in the community for such a long time, it's easy to take them for granted, rather than celebrate them and include them in community decisions and activities.



This is especially true as Elders' friends and acquaintances pass away, their lives can become increasingly lonely, and it's much harder for them to share the lessons of their youth and the lessons of Wrigley. We need to re-engage this group and include them in activities and education. Keeping them active contributes positively to mental and physical wellbeing and helps restore our culture. Activities like tea visits, weekly walks and hunting trips should feature regularly in our program.

7. On-the-Land Training



Many respondents outlined their wish that on-the-land teachings be included in the community health and wellness plan. Ensuring that the younger generation is raised and educated in a way that respects the history of Wrigley and guarantee its survival in future generations.

On-the-land initiatives such as sports activities (including appointing a local community member to lead this initiative as a Recreation Coordinator), traditional games, drum and square dancing, snowshoe making, fiddling and will also help to connect generations, especially the youth and elder segments that are the most vulnerable. Traditional language plays a role in on-the-land activities too - it proves that in order to make something of yourself, you need to know where you've come from and what your people have had to endure.

Actions Required to Support the Priorities

A community wellness plan is only as strong as the community's willingness to support it. The feedback we gained from the community is that the Wrigley community agrees that an action plan is required for the wellness of the community and will overwhelmingly endorse it. Moreover, there was an undercurrent of willingness to be involved in facilitating the new wellness plans and activities.

The following actions have been identified as being crucial to responding to the themes identified in the research and improving the community's future:

1. Establishment of a Health and Wellness Committee to develop a community wellness framework and plan, raise funds for the implementation the program and promote it within the community. This could include sub-committees for Justice, Heritage, Youth and Elders.
2. Restoring local icons such as Blackwater, Fish Lake and Jones Landing and use them in the program for activities and healing camps. All three of them were all mentioned by respondents as being integral parts of the community, and all require investment to truly bring their potential to the surface.
3. Researching how to create a dedicated location for the Committee / program which will give it more structure, credibility and make sure the health and wellness program doesn't fall by the wayside once funding runs out. I.e. A hub will help make the program front of mind for community members and increase its ability to transform lives well into the future.
4. Upskilling local community members to help support the health and wellness professionals. We need a huge number of volunteers to make this project a success. While the community has indicated that they will be available, we need to make sure we have plans in place to train them and help them.
5. Restoring Aboriginal language by only delivering certain programs in our native language. We will invite language specialists from our region - Mary Jane and Gilbert Cazon - to help deliver these.
6. Emphasizing the importance of mental health for the youth in our community through the establishment of a Youth Committee or Circle which allows our youth to express their ideas and concerns in a safe and supportive environment. This engagement will boost mental health awareness, encourages development and increase their social skills.

Appendix.

The Community Wellness 5 year Plan Questionnaire

1. What does community wellness mean to you?
2. Where would you like to see Community Wellness in the next 5 years?
3. Is Health and Wellness essential to the well being of both the community and as an individual?
4. Should we have more wellness programs running with qualified counsellors and addictions workers?
5. What would you like to see wellness do for our youth to have healthy lifestyles?
6. How should we as a community bring our youth and elders together; for their wisdom, respect, guidance and teachings?
7. How do you think Wellness can support and maintain traditional values and knowledge?
8. Jones Landing is our priority this year to refurbish as a healing camp, what do you want to see as part of our healing camp?
9. Should “Jones Landing” healing camp be used seasonally or should it be made available for all our on-the-land programs?
10. Engaging high school students in programs to conquer barriers to further their education, how do you think Wellness can assist in conquering these barriers?
11. How would you like to see the Development of the Justice Program? So that we can have a safe and healthy community?
12. Because Recreation is a big part of mental health and leading a healthy lifestyle, what would you like to see for programming in recreation?
13. Would like to see the Nutrition Program continue? And do you think it is a benefit to our members?
14. Should Suicide Prevention workshops be hosted in Wrigley? At the community level or invite other communities?
15. Mental Health support for children and youth, do you think this is important and needed in our community?

16. What kind of groups do you see developing and how do you think it will help our members?
17. How should Wellness develop programs to strengthen our aboriginal language?
18. What kind of programs should Wellness implement for our elders? Social activities, story telling, etc.