



Aklavik Community Wellness Plan

2024-2029

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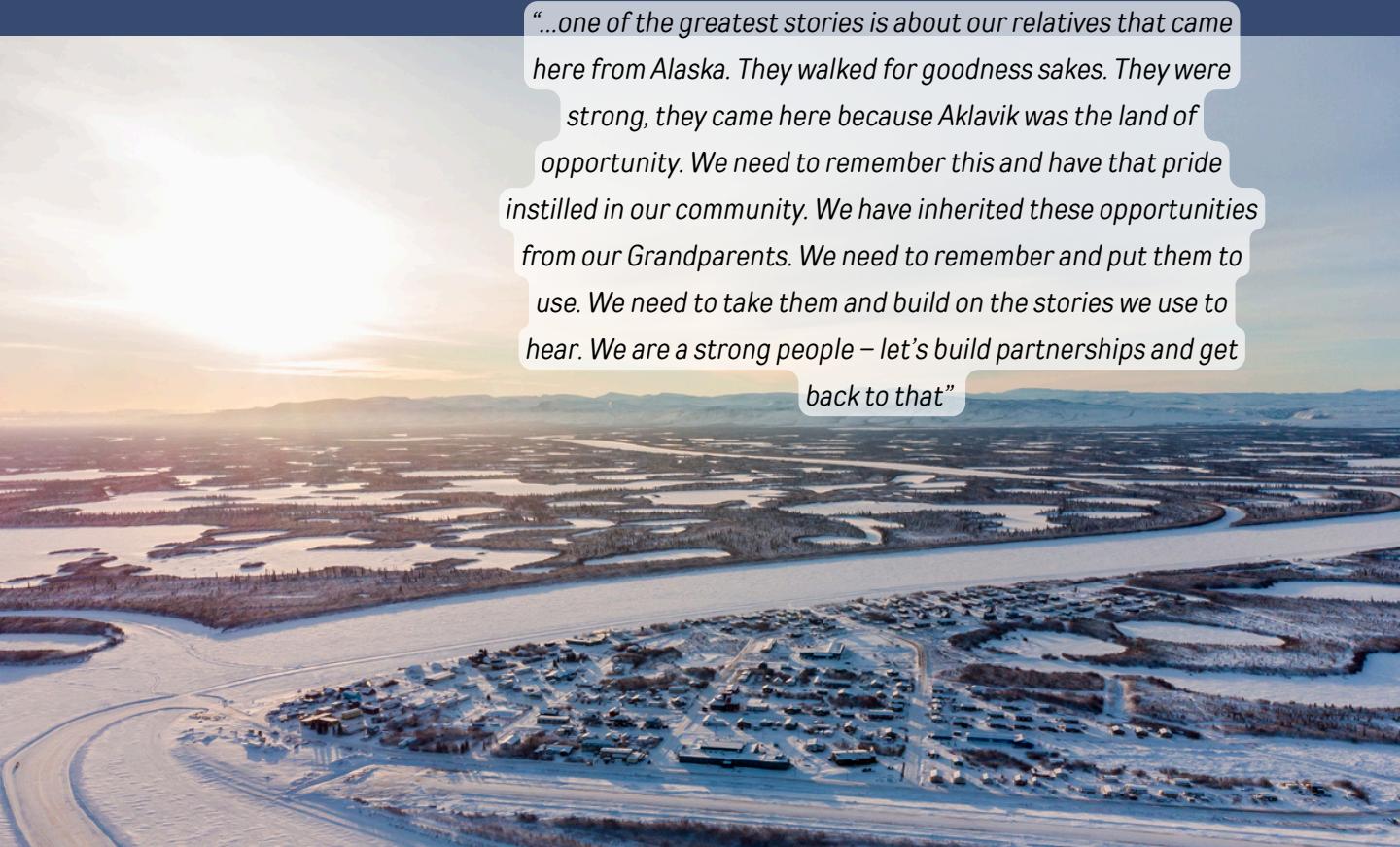
Aklavik

Aklavik is close to the Richardson Mountains and translates to “Barren ground Grizzly Place”.

Situated on the western edge of the Mackenzie Delta, just 1.6 degrees above the Arctic Circle. For much of the 20th century, this was a major centre of the Arctic, in the past it was considered a hub to trade, gather and celebrate. Today, Aklavik is a community of approximately 700 Gwich'in, Inuvialuit and non-Indigenous residents, many of whom still harvest from the land with plenty of fish, muskrat and caribou.

Charlie Furlong shared what he considers to be one of Aklavik's biggest strengths:

“...one of the greatest stories is about our relatives that came here from Alaska. They walked for goodness sakes. They were strong, they came here because Aklavik was the land of opportunity. We need to remember this and have that pride instilled in our community. We have inherited these opportunities from our Grandparents. We need to remember and put them to use. We need to take them and build on the stories we use to hear. We are a strong people – let's build partnerships and get back to that”



Aklavik began in the early 1900's with the Hudson's Bay Company opening a trading post in 1912 and the Roman Catholic Church establishing a mission in 1926. At that time the community of Aklavik was considered the economic hub of the western Arctic. In those days federal government employees believed the flooding would continue and eventually disseminate the community, so in 1955 the decision was made to forcibly move families to the newly created town of Inuvik. Despite this many people who lived in Aklavik at that time did not believe what these “experts” described that it would one day be under water and refused to leave. Today Aklavik's motto is “never say die”.

photo from Eighty-One Images



Self Determination

Several comments indicating the need for self-determination were expressed throughout the gathering. This also includes aspects of self-governance, sovereignty and the inherent right of self-determination. This approach allows the people to decide, determine and action their futures. This is about community, territorial and individual recognition. For planning, this includes the inclusion of culture, values, land and methods that are inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing.



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This approach aligns with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which asserts Indigenous Nations in the protection and preservation of their land, language, culture, and way of life. Work is being done in Indigenous communities, Governments and organizations throughout the NWT to implement the principles of UNDRIP. Indigenous communities are at an advantage in this process because they have always ensured that these core principles show up in community polices, programs and initiatives.

Communities are developing innovative culturally relevant forms of governing themselves. They are moving beyond Canadian legislation where they are often encouraged to self-administer and self-manage Government policies and programs to a place of policy making, and program development that supports Indigenous values. This has been demonstrated through stories and practices of resistance that involve the inclusion of Indigenous voices in this plan. Through the development and implementation of this plan it is hoped that all levels of government will engage and contribute to community wellness.

Governance

During the engagement the community created principles for the newly formed Community Wellness Committee. These seven principles will ensure program development reflects the desires of the community. It should be emphasized that this Community Wellness Plan falls under the jurisdiction of all organizations and community groups. No one organization is responsible for the success of this plan. This will happen through strong partnerships, open communication and a willingness for change. Wellness can be experienced from both an individual and community perspective. However, individual and community wellness do not exist in isolation of each other. None of us can reach our fullest potential without a supportive community. A supportive community, at the same time, is built upon supportive individuals coming together for the wellness of the whole.

The committee consists of a representative by both Indigenous governing organizations as well as three volunteer community members. This collaborative effort ensures shared commitment, ownership and responsibility for improving overall health and wellness. There are many opportunities to strengthen partnerships and increase collaborative action to improve wellness.

The committee will be guided by seven principles:

- 1. We will create programs that are grounded in cultural values**
- 2. Community programs will be guided by the community**
- 3. Our aim is to have representation from community and regional groups and create strategic partnerships**
- 4. We will set our own measures of success**
- 5. We will take a systems approach to our programs, services and reporting**
- 6. We will create and utilize tools and processes to ensure community feedback is considered and incorporated in our work**
- 7. We will ensure access to all community members**

photo from Eighty-One Images

The committee will assist by creating an integrated service approach which aligns planning and service delivery more effectively using existing resources. It can also identify gaps in services, and creates opportunities to take creative approaches to developing and delivering services.

Building on Past Programming



The Aklavik Community Wellness team is governed by the Aklavik Indian Band. The wellness team is passionate about providing the needs and desires of the community. They work hard towards bridging gaps and providing services that will bring people together and address some of the day-to-day challenges. Past programming reports highlighted that from 2018 to 2023 programming expanded to include all ages and took what was considered a more inclusive approach. Previously programs had been exclusive to youth and Elders and the team wanted to ensure they were creating spaces that would bring people together. This pivot created an approach that is still considered in program development today.

The Covid pandemic affected all aspects of life. One area that was critically impacted was individual and community mental health. Wellness planning and program decisions were held up by restrictions, uncertainty and lack of support and resources. The community of Aklavik was creative and considered covid impacts to be a test of community resilience. Organizations and agencies worked together to provide online programming, safety information and materials, food hampers and self-care kits.

The need for building collaborative partnerships to deliver community wellness programs was amplified during the covid pandemic. The community wellness team saw this as an opportunity to strengthen community relations. This is a continued theme that was apparent during community engagement.

photo from Eighty-One Images

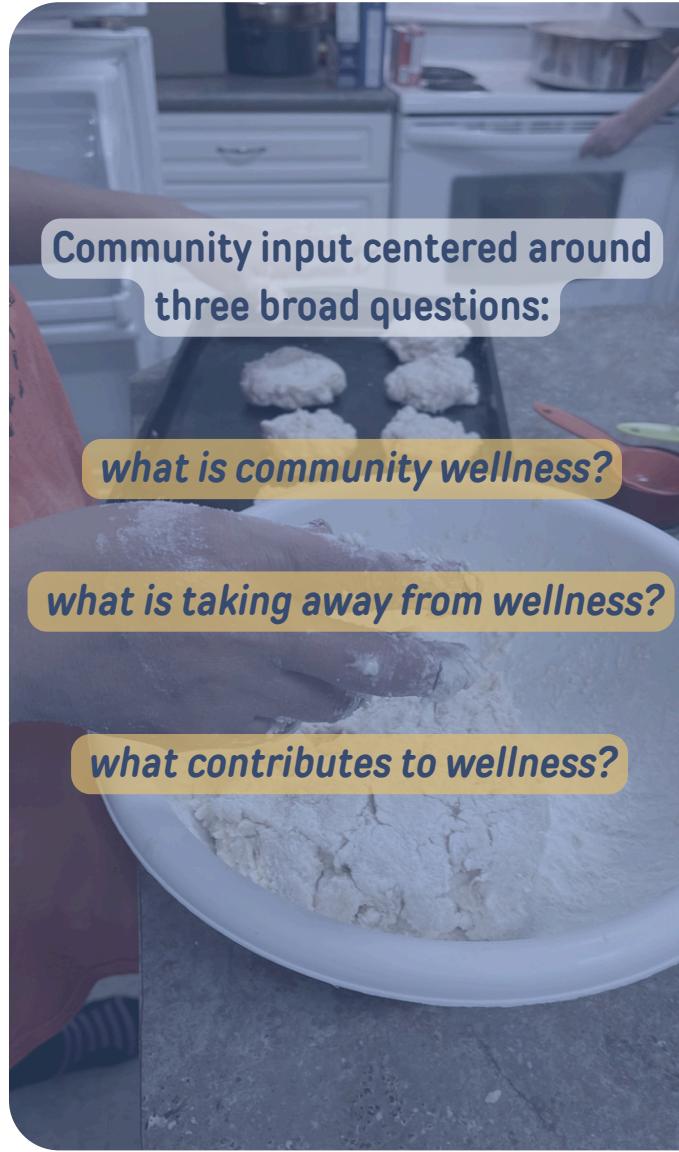


Community Engagement

Indigenous communities have been planning for the health and wellness of their communities since time immemorial, which is and always has been grounded in culture and tradition. The Aklavik Indian Band hosted a public engagement meeting on June 19 & 20, 2023 to gather input for this plan. In total we had 45 participants sharing knowledge. An online survey was created for those individuals that felt more comfortable contributing individually or for those that had more to share and didn't feel comfortable speaking in a larger group. Community members had the option of completing it online or having a meeting with the Wellness Coordinator to fill it out on paper. There were 6 surveys completed.

The engagement strategy was developed by the community, the GNWT (Community, Culture and Innovation division) with help from professional facilitators and researchers to ensure the community values were incorporated into the process following the OCAP (ownership, control, access and protection) principles which align Indigenous interests with data by ensuring priorities, values, culture and worldview are considered.

Systems mapping was used as a starting point to get people together, this method helped the community make sense of the “mess” of how to tackle community wellness. The mapping process provided a visual of the complex relationships that exists in the community. It helped the community identify partnerships and showed them how collaborative efforts create a more holistic approach to community wellness.



above and bottom photo from Community Wellness Team





Next potential drivers were considered and discussion around the relationship between the key issues and drivers occurred. An example of this is addiction which takes away from community wellness, drivers of addiction range from trauma, lack of support and mental health. The relationship between these factors are interconnected and it's complicated to talk about one without the other. In order to tackle a problem like addiction it needs to be a holistic approach and not one organization can address addiction, it's multidimensional and requires a systems approach. This allowed the community to see the importance of collaboration, connection and partnerships.

Next, we explored questions related to moving forward with wellness these included:



above photo from Eighty-One Images

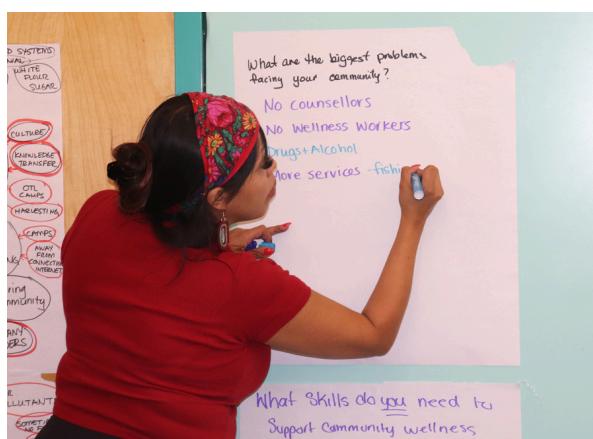
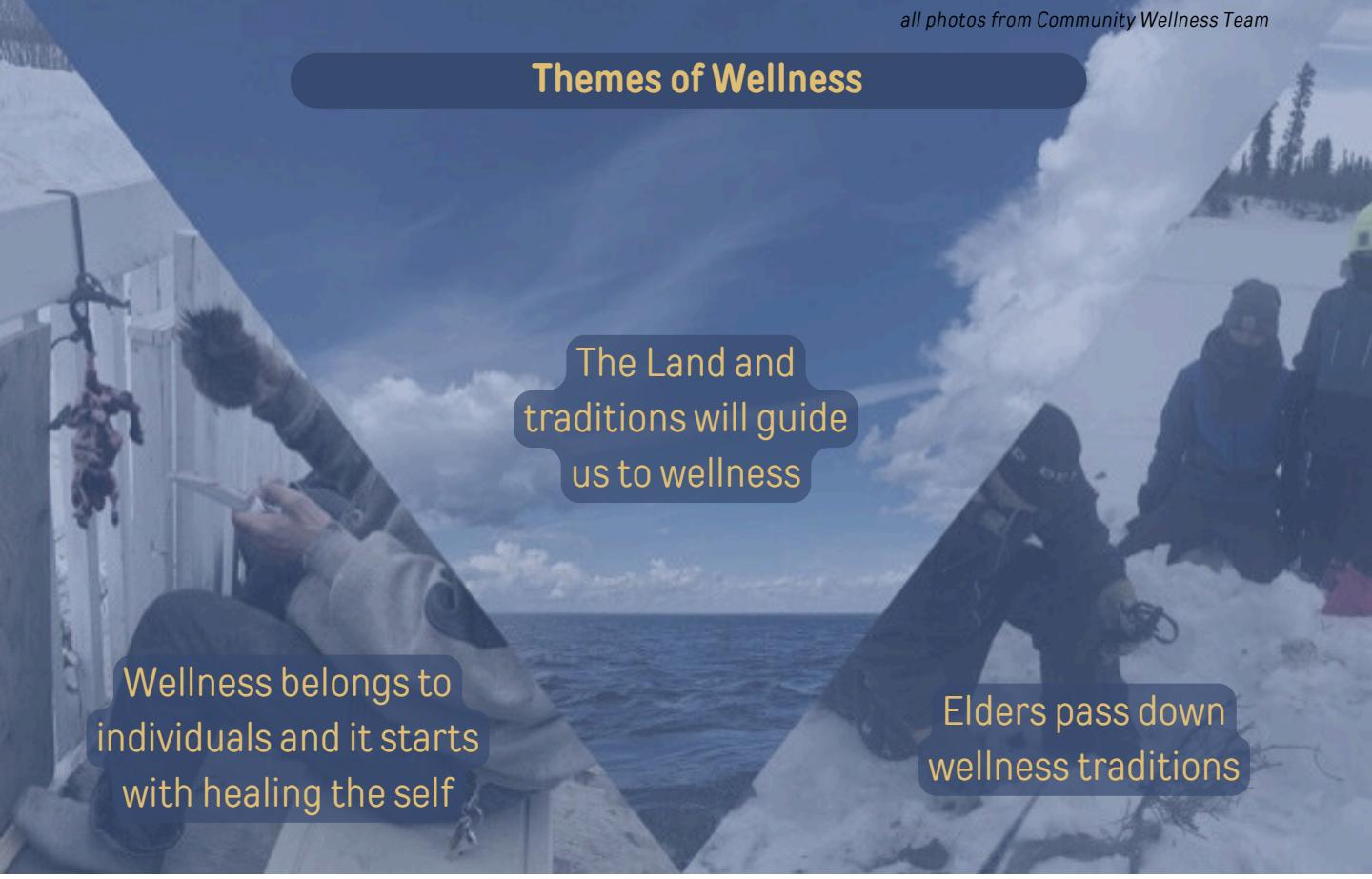


photo from Community Wellness Team

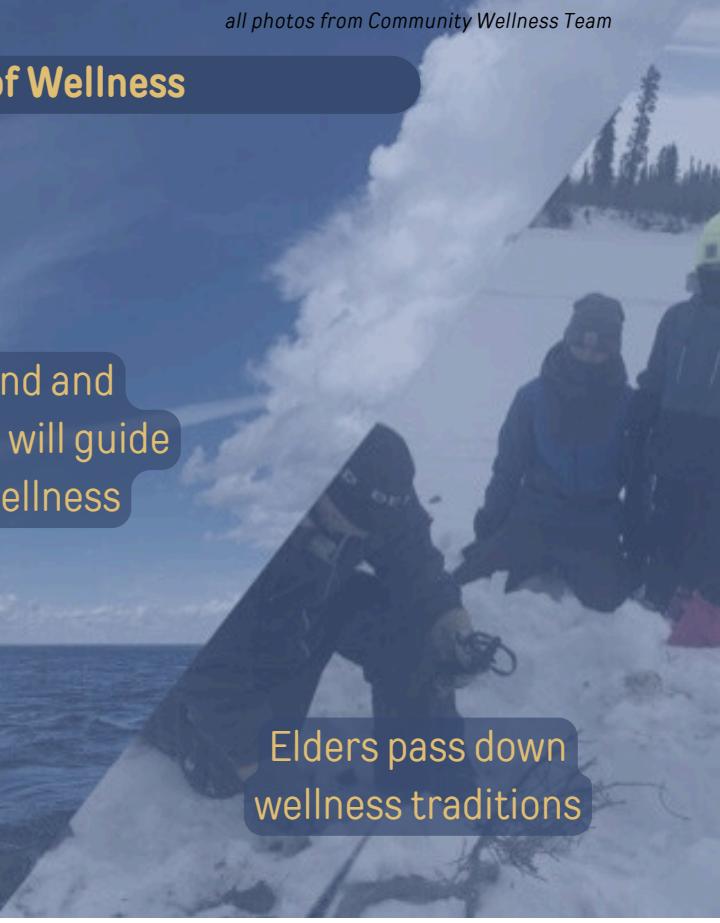
This resulted in expressions of community values and passion for culture as starting points. This plan includes community perspectives on past programming, opportunities to move forward, barriers that need to be overcome and priorities for future planning.

Themes of Wellness



Wellness belongs to individuals and it starts with healing the self

The Land and traditions will guide us to wellness



Elders pass down wellness traditions

Vision

Build on the strengths of the community to ensure that programs are collaborative and grounded in cultural values

Building on the legacy of “never say die” the Aklavik community wellness plan is grounded in unity and resilience, built by the people for the people

Values

Community approach, pride, resilience, trust, respect, tradition, culture, diversity, youth and elders

Mission

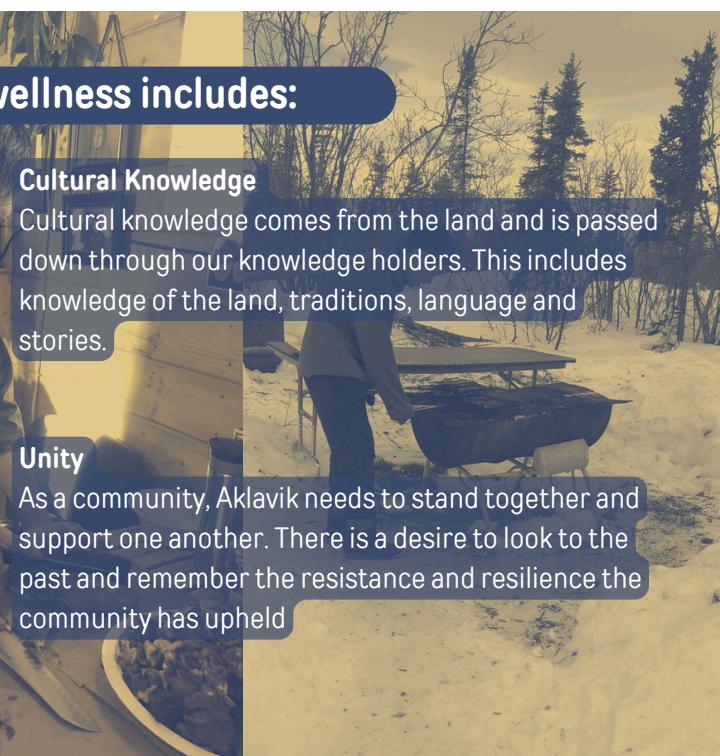
Core aspects of wellness includes:

Respect



Being proud of where you come from is essential wellbeing. Respecting your culture, history, land and traditions is an individual responsibility. Having this respect ensures a high standard of care and appreciation of self and others.

Cultural Knowledge



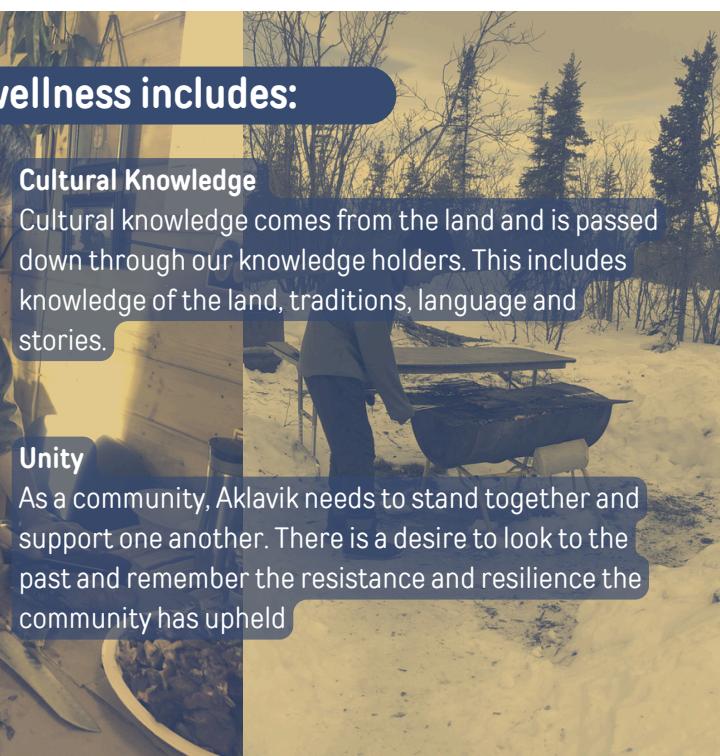
Cultural knowledge comes from the land and is passed down through our knowledge holders. This includes knowledge of the land, traditions, language and stories.

Relationships



Relationships with family and community support us. Healthy relationships are grounded in the concepts of accountability and reciprocity. From a community health perspective, it is vital to form relationships to build capacity, nurture the community and build stronger wellness networks.

Unity



As a community, Aklavik needs to stand together and support one another. There is a desire to look to the past and remember the resistance and resilience the community has upheld

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The information from the in-person engagement and survey informed the SWOT analysis. This tool helps with strategic planning and helped determine the communities' internal strengths and weaknesses, threats from the outside and opportunities to expand on. It also directed the conversation to explore how the communities' weaknesses could easily be changed to opportunities and identify where change was possible.

The strength of the community is in their ability, determination and passion for change; participants shared examples of coming together in times of need. One participant shared their experience with a family member attending a treatment facility and expressed the threat of coming back to the community without any formal aftercare support. The conversation eventually turned into what strengths and opportunities they had as a community to come together to address this concern.

The land was used as an example of aftercare support, people often go on seasonal work trips as a form of solitude and self-work. Creating a facility that would approach addiction in a holistic manner including aftercare, family support, life skills and community integration.

Weaknesses were easily identified and focused on the need for individual healing and community unity, however these weaknesses also encouraged community members to look at areas to expand current programs and possible resource development to create opportunities. Threats were expressed as lacking appropriate resources including funding, limited and inaccessible space and drugs & alcohol.

Environmental Scan

An environmental scan supports the SWOT analysis by identifying the scope and control of areas that may impact community planning, it also allows for informed and decisive decisions. The scan includes political, economical, social, cultural, technological and environmental factors that impact community wellness. The community expressed the desire to advance economic opportunities and also equip themselves with reliable technology.

Some questions to consider when executing plans are:

What trends are continuing to be experienced positively or negativity?

What developments in technology can be used to advance programming?

What political impacts need to be acknowledged before the execution of programming?

Inclusive, Innovative, Capacity Building

Program development and capacity building will be informed by lived experiences, tradition, Indigenous knowledge and relationships. The approach is innovative, drawing on the strengths of the community and promoting inclusive growth.

Relationships have been identified as a key driver of success, with the understanding that innovation is not always about creating something new, there is a need to look to the past and draw on the power that has always been there.

Investing in the promotion of intercultural, interpersonal, and intergenerational relationships to develop programming and

build capacity will ensure the values of Aklavik are maintained. Community members expressed that outreach needs to occur to ensure marginalized groups and individuals in need access programs.

Wellness is a shared responsibility which relies on creating partnerships, including governing departments, regional governments, community organizations and individuals. This will occur through defining roles and responsibilities, establishing leadership, creating networks, identifying leaders for projects and raising awareness.



photo from Community Wellness Team

Bringing new people into the community in a good way was a concern. New comers need to know the history of Aklavik and appreciate the diversity in cultures. This involves building relationships and learning about our shared past. A program initiative that was shared was creating an annual Aklavik Amazing Race – this version of the amazing race would include a scavenger hunt, bringing community members together to visit all of the organizations and programs in town to gather information and learn about the services offered. Promoting team building, relationships, adventure and fun though problem solving.

Indigenous Nations have been working towards the recognition of treaty rights, self-determination, self-government and equal opportunities to benefit from their land and resources. Indigenous communities have been resisting pressure within the legal and political landscape of Canada. It is critical to ensure the unique trends, identities and needs of Indigenous peoples are reflected in their governance approach. Often discussions on self-determination become generalized across scales and this doesn't meet the realities of the communities. The community wants to develop programing that

will build internal capacity and knowledge of lands claims, negotiations and self-government.

Healthcare concerns were expressed specifically around wait times, inaccessible dental services and poor community health services. Participants expressed they had been waiting several months and in some cases years because of the lack of services and wait times for appointments. A need to improve the system and create change through advocacy was considered the way for improvement.



photo from Community Wellness Team

Program space and housing were identified as critical components of community wellness. Not only are people experiencing homelessness and overcrowding there are limited and exclusive places to meet and distribute programming. One idea shared was to look for partnerships and sharing cost mechanisms to create a gym space for people to work out in, this would require space and equipment for a fitness center.

With high turnover rates in program areas and multiple organizations working towards the same goal, the community identified the challenge of reporting and communicating.

Having a standardized reporting system with the capability of communicating success was noted as an important factor for programming. Some ideas shared were creating a community bulletin board, using social media to share messages, having an online system of recording success with the ability to easily share information.

Concerns relating to GNWT unreasonable hiring policies were expressed. One example shared was in relation to the graduates of the Rhodes University program, this was initiated through Dene Wellness. This program intended to fill the gap of providing care close to

home and employing Indigenous counsellors. Graduates of this program receive certification from the Professional Counsellors Association of Canada, which intended to give the graduates a wide array of job opportunities. However, they are not eligible for GNWT counsellor positions and do not qualify to work with the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program. Eliminating barriers and inconsistencies that create obstacles is vital to ensure relevant community grounded service delivery. Community members need to fully participate in these solutions.

photo from Community Wellness Team



Creating employment opportunities and providing support to benefit from economic opportunities at the local level is important. The land is rich in resources and the community needs to ensure they are benefiting from these opportunities. Promoting an entrepreneur mindset to youth and supporting local businesses is a priority. This all adds to the health and wellness of

the community. Adequate funding was a concern, to address restrictive funding policies and reduce barriers to accessing funding initiatives, communities need the internal capacity to write grants, applications and proposals.

Inclusive, Innovative, Capacity Building:

1.1: Be inclusive in planning and implementation of wellness programs

Key Activities:

- Inclusive programming for all ages
- Create programs that target vulnerable populations
- Seek advice and direction from Community Wellness Planning Committee
- Develop a reporting and communication strategy (community bulletin board, online presence, email list)
- Ensure a decolonized lens is used in program development
- Ensure a gender-based lens is used in program development

1.2: Fundraise: to build a new gathering space for community wellness programming

Key Activities:

- Identify locations for the development of community gathering spaces
- Collaborate to find “on the land” spaces for programs
- Research potential cost share options
- Seek partnership assistance to develop child care facility
- Explore options to develop a soccer field
- Collaborate to develop a Youth Centre
- Advocate for accessible application processes in the GNWT
- Enhance internal proposal writing skills
- Research multi-year funding opportunities for community-led health and wellness initiatives.
- Continue to explore ways for the community to access under utilized space
- Collaborate with other organizations delivering community wellness programs

1.3: Develop resources and support for community members to engage in economic development opportunities

Key Activities:

- Partner with EntrepreNorth to have business development training
- Work with ECE & ITI to encourage business development support
- Encourage opportunities with outside developers to create employment programs
- Provide supports and services for equitable employment opportunities

1.4 Accountability through the development of the Community Wellness Committee

Key Activities:

- Develop vision, mission and values
- Develop Implementation Plan
- Develop and agree on measures of success
- Develop a decision-making process
- Regularly update partners through communication strategy
- Commit to quality standards that align with wellness direction
- Centralized forum for knowledge sharing

1.5: Access culturally safe and equitable care

Key Activities:

- Promote mandatory cultural awareness training
- Promote integrated service approach
- Create a Aklavik Amazing Race – orientation program for new people to the community
- Improve linkages between primary care and community wellness programs
- Work across sectors to address jurisdictional issues
- Advocate for adequate medical and dental care

1.6: Build internal capacity and knowledge on land claims, negotiations and self-government

Key Activities:

- Develop training that promotes community and individual self determination
- Develop training on land claims
- Utilize the current Indigenous Community Capacity Building Program

1.7: Work with community agencies to create emergency housing

Key Activities:

- Create partnerships to work toward providing those that need safe, affordable housing alternatives
- Approach housing as a coordinated approach (all levels of government)
- Advocate for change in GNWT processes and policies as it relates to housing and homelessness



photos from Community Wellness Team



Addiction, Healing & Land-based Learning

The community identified mental health programming which targets all age levels as an important path forward. Land-based programming including wellness camps, with traditional and practical teachings about mental health and wellness were emphasized. There are unique needs to be met, that should be reflective of culture, history and language. The community is adamant that culture must be respected, included and valued when developing programming.

The Mind and Spirit Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Framework supports and encourages recovery, taking a

balanced approach to healing, including opportunities for traditional healing modalities alongside the clinical system. The report indicates that “alcohol and drug issues were involved in the majority of mental health hospitalizations. They made up 68% of the patients and 49% of the costs to the system. The NWT has higher rates of hospitalizations in relation to mental health and wellness. This is felt and understood at the community level, programming needs to be tailored to meet these unique challenges.

Land-based healing is focused on reconnecting to the land as a

form of reclaiming and relearning land-based wellness practices. This specific knowledge is held in the community. For the community of Aklavik the land is connected to identity. This approach is grounded in cultural values and Indigenous language. The need for culturally relevant and close to home healing was agreed to be of great importance. Culture and tradition are integral as the community develops programming and service delivery. Restoring roles of traditional practices and protocols is a critical goal of the community wellness plan. The interrelation between knowledge and land is explained through kinship systems, identity, territory and governance structures; through these structures a sense of belonging is achieved. The opportunities to include land-based learning initiatives are endless, some areas shared by the community were places to share stories, integrated learning with schools and Elders and traditional skills such as tanning hides.



photos from Gailann Raddi



The community identified that tragic loss of loved ones by suicide remains to be a concern. There were discussions that every person in the North has been impacted by suicide, it's a community problem and mental health impacts everyone. Culturally safe and trauma informed care is essential to addressing the health of the community. Instead of focusing on western prevention strategies the community wants to ensure that community specific care is used.

Other land-based learning needed includes safety and practical concerns. Training in the following areas was brought up: gun safety, boat safety, first aid and on the land survival skills. There is also the desire to develop and enhance programming that will build knowledge, skills and opportunities. The idea of creating a small motors course was considered a priority. Individuals rely on snowmobiles and quads for transportation and getting out on the land, this course would enhance the overall success of land-based learning initiatives.



photo from Gailann Raddi



top left and right photos from Community Wellness Team, bottom photo from Gailann Raddi

2.1: Create Programming for Land healing Initiatives

Key Activities:

- Encourage an integrated approach to programs
- Ensure a decolonization lens is used for healing initiatives
- Look at ways to use seasonal changes in programming
- Create innovative programming targeting men, women and families on their healing journey
- Create space for circles and storytelling
- Ensure treatment content is culturally relevant and close to home
- Support the work and enhance capacity of community Elders to fulfill their roles as experts in the community

2.2: Integrate trauma informed and culturally relevant suicide prevention activities

Key Activities:

- Strengthen collaborations across territorial, federal and community agencies to advance suicide prevention in programming
- Increase communication efforts conducted online and within the community
- Create resource hub with supports
- Support safe crisis intervention strategies
- Increase knowledge of the warning signs for suicide and of how to connect individuals in crisis with assistance and care
- Normalize hard conversation around mental wellness and addiction

2.3: Increase understanding of the history of the land, and the importance of the land by connecting youth with Elders who can pass on this knowledge

Key Activities:

- Seek opportunities for integrated approach to learning
- Look for ways to encourage the use of scientific knowledge braided with traditional knowledge (bringing Elders into science class)
- Use current programming and blend with online approach
- Develop and learn from the success of hide tanning camp
- Empower youth to develop connection to the Land and understand their rights to the Land

2.4: Develop Land Safety Resources

Key Activities:

- Safety courses (life jacket safety, boat safety, first aid, on the land first aid, gun safety)
- On the land emergency courses
- Survival skills
- Small engines course

Traditional Knowledge

Language revitalization refers to the efforts of community to create language-learning programs and services to keep their language alive and flourishing. The community hopes to utilize internal strengths of Elders and knowledge holders to find innovative ways of passing on this gift. Language revitalization depends on the commitment, dedication and protection from everyone, there needs to be a multidimensional approach to language revitalization.

Food security and food sovereignty are concepts that are widely discussed; however, this idea is not new to Indigenous communities. The living reality is that Indigenous Nations have been practicing values of respect, reciprocity and transferring knowledge about local food systems since time immemorial. Recently the community, like the rest of Canada has experienced an increase in food prices. The need to rely on local systems was stressed as critically important. Food is culture and will have different meanings and teachings depending on where you are. The community wants to work towards building food systems which are resilient, sustainable and include the knowledge, skills and respect from cultural practices.

Colonization did not erase Indigenous relationship to land. This relationship has been shared through stories, ceremonies and reclaiming space in historical narratives. The connection to territory has been demonstrated through the resilience of community members refusing to leave Aklavik. Through stories, shared place can be understood as an interrelated circle of relationships between family, teachings, ceremony and work which shape our identity.

Traditional knowledge is often referred to as Indigenous knowledge and at times cultural knowledge.

of their learning and knowing from the places where they have lived, hunted, explored and raised families, built communities, and survived for centuries. Elders are assets within communities and have the experience and skills to teach these processes. The community agreed that Traditional Knowledge is a core value of community wellness. The process of tanning hides, sewing, tufting, hunting and harvesting involves restoring the value of traditional practices through sharing knowledge and stories. This involves remembering, restoring and reclaiming Indigenous wisdom. Program development that ensures the passing on of these unique skills is vitally important to community wellness.



*top and bottom left photo from Gailann Raddi
bottom right photo from Community Wellness Team*

Traditional Knowledge:

3.1: Increase food security through programming

Key Activities:

- Promote healthy eating and food production through provision of cooking classes, gardening classes, harvesting skills and hunting programs
- Encourage community hunting program
- Create a hunting mentorship program
- Create a harvesting program
- Continue with food preparation workshops
- Develop fish program (dry fish, smoked fish)

3.2: Increase the transfer of Traditional Knowledge

Key Activities:

- Create supports for Elders to attend programming
- Develop Traditional knowledge working paper
- Develop community-based set of “wise practices”
- Continue with sewing, beading, parka making programs
- Develop working with fur program
- Develop a plant medicine guide with Elder teachings
- Have informal gatherings to share stories

3.3: Create diverse and creative language revitalization channels

Key Activities:

- Incorporate language into daily practices
- Find creative ways to use language in all programming
- Have language champions in community that are available to support
- Identify language mentors
- Help community members access GNWT language mentorship program
- Use language on radio and social media
- Create videos and resources that can be shared online
- Advocate for the presence and visibility of language in public services



photo from Gailann Raddi

Innovative Programming

Programming needs to be innovative explicitly targeting social and political change. This requires control and power over decision making based on community needs. Innovation has always been a skill set of Indigenous peoples. Innovation is seen through the dynamic relationships with the land, water, animals and systems. These relationships have allowed for responsive, flexible and iterative approaches to problems rooted in relationality. Throughout engagement the community discussed solutions to current problems with an emphasis that the approach should be grounded in lived experience, tradition and Indigenous knowledge.

Aklavik youth are impacted by intergenerational trauma which is rooted in the effects of collective traumas experienced by previous generations. Colonization has impacted Indigenous health and communities continue to experience inequities throughout the North. Due to these circumstances, there is a desire from the community to create innovative programming that will enhance cultural pride and a sense of identity. The community discussed creating a set of wise practices that are grounded in the history, culture and values of Aklavik, which could serve as a guide to developing programs.

Programming should be trauma informed and include culturally specific content. Trauma is defined as an experience that overwhelms an individual's capacity to cope. This is something that needs to be considered when developing programming. Elders were identified as being a major component of community wellness. The community discussed the need for programming that utilizes and builds on Elder involvement. This should also be a lens in which programming is developed.

"Youth empowerment programs are a great way to help young people develop the skills, confidence, and support they need to succeed in life"
Velma Illisiak



photo from Community Wellness Team



"We need to be proud of who we are, we are strong people. We need to instill that sense of identity in our youth because right now they are lost. It's up to us". Billie Archie

photo from Community Wellness Team



The community reflected on past gatherings and used them as examples of success. Ideas to have more gatherings focusing on drum dancing, fiddle music, jigging and community talent shows were expressed. This supports the desire to normalize sobriety and find ways to connect without substances.

A comment shared during engagement, “*we need to show these kids how to have fun and rely on our local talent for entertainment*”.

Men’s health was a concern and the need to move away from damage centred methods of wellness was highlighted. Recognizing history, culture and resilience as a people is one way

to move from damage to desire. Stigma related to seeking help and the need to raise awareness and understanding around family violence are areas that programs will focus on. Finding culturally relevant and power-based ways for men to come together. “*meet men where they are at*” (*Community Engagement, 2023*)

There is a disconnection for a lot of men in the community “a lot of men don’t have the opportunities to hunt, go on the land and provide for their family, our culture is getting expensive. How do we get those men to see the value in learning these skills and provide a space for them to know who they are”. Billie Archie

Having gender specific programming is an opportunity to individualize programs to meet people where they are. In 2019, the Calls for Justice challenged jurisdictions across Canada to acknowledge that colonialism is not only a discrete event in the past but that it built systems, institutions, practices and ways of thinking that are still around today.

Indigenous women and girls experience higher rates of violence than non-Indigenous Canadians, research confirm that Indigenous women are five more times likely to die than other Canadian women (MMIW, 2019). The community wants to ensure that programs are in place to address the unique challenges that women face.



photo from Gailann Raddi



Photo from community wellness

Innovative Programming:

4.1: Encourage cultural events in Community

Key Activities:

- sober dances
- Cultural pride dances
- Fiddle and jigging events
- Talent shows

4.2: Develop culturally relevant innovative programs

Key Activities:

- Provide trauma informed training
- Develop a set of “wise practices” to guide programs and approach
- Target men’s programming to enhance skills and health
- Find ways to normalize sobriety

4.3: Provide interventions that focuses on individual readiness to change

Key Activities:

- Develop a course on understanding lateral violence
- Encourage emotional intelligence training
- Promote understanding bias through programming
- Support groups
- Anger Management Training



photo from Mindy Willet

Implementation Strategy

The community wellness committee will advise, advocate and work together to create an implementation roadmap. This includes agreeing on activities, assigning responsibilities and creating timelines for program goals. This plan is a starting point to further develop the actions associated with the themes, goals and activities.

top and centre photo from Gailann Raddi

Evaluation

Program evaluation is used to provide insight into program goals, target groups and activities, it allows you see the strength, weaknesses and cost-effectiveness of the initiative. Essentially, it's about asking those hard questions of whether or not the program is working. There are many dimensions to program evaluations and finding the right assessment that aligns with community and cultural values is important.



Some things to consider are:

- How to ensure the evaluation is grounded in cultural values specific to community
- How to ensuring Indigenous methodologies are upheld, valued and respected
- How will community protocols be included
- What does success look like from a community perspective

Having community values as a starting point of measuring success ensures you are measuring what communities care about. Quite often indicators of wellness measure from a deficit-based lens, rather than the presence of something positive. Aklavik is committed to changing the narrative from damage to desire and this includes how success is measured.

The engagement groups both identified that there needs to be accountability in the community wellness plan, it will create less political conflict. It was also expressed that there is a strong relationship between people, place, history and health which are all fundamental to our quality of life, therefore these components need to be considered when evaluating success.

Acknowledgments



photo from Community Wellness Team

The process of creating the Community Wellness Plan 2024-2029 for the community of Aklavik was made possible because of the passion, commitment and thoughtfulness of members of the community who participated in engagement and continue to advance programs that meet the needs of the community.

Appendix A: SWOT Analysis

Appendix B: Environmental Scan

Strengths	Weaknesses	Political	Economical
Government supports (GNWT, Federal & Regional) “Land of opportunities” Community pride Community Dedication Community Wellness Passion Diversity between GTC & IRC	Mens representations Addiction Dependency of social assistance programs Education rates Loss of traditional skills Loss of language Planning vs. Actioning Mental health Difficulty collaborating Lateral Violence Bullying Domestic Abuse	GNWT support Collaborative approach with different levels of government Partnerships between IRC & GTC	Conflicting objectives Resource development Space for programming Funding requirements Reporting requirements Lack of resources
		Social	Cultural
		High unemployment rates Capacity Community participation consistency Diversity among community Communication is inconsistent	Diversity among groups Spirituality conflicts Stakeholders vary in commitment Culturally grounded programming Elder availability and support
		Technological	Environmental
		Starlink Internet availability and access OCAP monitoring and control of data	Global Warming Protected Areas Cultural space Conflicting relationship with Land
		Threats	Drugs & Alcohol Unemployment Poverty Homelessness Diversity between GTC & IRC Child Care services Stigma
		Opportunities	Collaborating with other organizations Entrepreneur training Partnerships between IRC & GTC Akavik Amazing Race Prevention vs. Reaction Improving communication Community Wellness Committee Normalizing sobriety