



Council of Yukon First Nations

# Yukon First Nation Cultural Orientation and Protocols Toolkit



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The Health and Social Development Commission and the Project Management team including Lori Duncan, Jen Jones and Teresa Sidney would like to thank all those who contributed to the Yukon First Nation Cultural Orientation and Protocols Toolkit Project.

The Project team was led by Gaye Hanson of Hanson and Associates and team members included Kheyawk Louise Parker, Gladys Netro and Lisa Taylor. Team members worked actively with representatives from Yukon First Nations to gather information and work through drafts of both the Yukon wide and community specific sections.

The Project Advisory Committee had membership from First Nations, the Project Management team, Council of Yukon First Nations, the Project team, the Yukon Government, First Nation Health Programs (Yukon Hospital Corporation) and Health Canada. Each member contributed important information and advice, all of which made the project more successful in meeting the needs of those that will use the product in future.

First Nation representatives involved in community meetings and correspondence were from the Departments of Health and Social Development, Departments of Heritage and staff supporting Executive Council or Chief and Council.

The First Nation representatives (in alphabetical order) were from the following First Nations:

Carcross Tagish First Nation (CTFN) Champagne & Aishihik First Nations(CAFN) First Nation of Nacho Ny'ak Dun(NND) Kluane First Nation (KFN) Kwanlin Dun First Nation(KDFN) Liard First Nation (LFN) Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation(LSCFN)	Ross River Dena Council (RRDC) Selkirk First Nation (SFN) Ta'an Kwach'an Council(TKC) Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC) <u>Tr'ondek</u> Hwech'in(TH) White River First Nation (WRFN) Vuntut Gwichin First Nation (VGFN)
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On January 28, 2010 a Draft Toolkit Validation Workshop was held in Whitehorse. The participants included Elders, representatives of elected First Nation Councils and representatives from First Nation staff. First Nations represented at the Workshop are asterisked (\*) in the above list. The workshop was very productive in providing feedback and direction and the project sponsors are very grateful to all who participated in person and those that provided feedback through other mechanisms.

Below is the list indicating the dates and who accepted their Yukon First Nations Cultural Orientation Protocols – Toolkit.

TH	May 7/10	Health & Social Programs (Seimke MacIntyre)
VGFN	May 15/10	Health & Social Services (Kelly-Lynn Danyluk)
NND	May 31/10	Health & Social Dept. (Sandy Washburn) & Education & Heritage Dept. (Joella Hogan)
RRDC	Sept. 9/10	Council (Verna Nukon)
SFN	Sept. 15/10	Health Dept (Lucy McGinty) & A/Executive Director (Candice Menzi)
KFN	Dec. 10/10	Health & Social Dept. (Willie Blackwater) & A/Executive Director (Bob Dickson)
WRFN	Jan. 25/11	Health & Social Dept. (Rosemarie VanderMeer)
TTC	Feb. 7/11	Health & Social Programs (Kyle Keenan)
LFN	Mar. 3/11	Health & Social Dept. (Roberta Jules)
LSCFN	Mar. 15/11	Health & Social (Rachel Byers), Chief Skookum & Council
KDFN	June 14/11	Health Programs (Carmen Gibbons)
CAFN	January 4/12	Health & Social Director – Lynn Sparks
CTFN	March	

# MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW



The purpose of this toolkit is to provide information and learning experiences for health and social resource workers providing service to Yukon First Nation people in their communities and institutions throughout the Yukon. Individuals supervising or supporting frontline service providers will also benefit from working through the toolkit.

Module 1 provides an overview of the toolkit, sets out the objectives, describes the format and provides guidelines for using the toolkit. It also introduces the concept of relational cultural competence and the importance of cultural orientation in serving Yukon First Nation people.

## **1.1 Project and Toolkit Learning Objectives**

### **Project Objectives**

1. To provide a self-administered toolkit of basic information about Yukon First Nation people that is common for all communities.
2. To include Yukon First Nation or community specific information for participating Yukon First Nations.
3. To use written materials with curriculum elements to promote engagement supported by an electronic media (DVDs) to create an interesting learning experience for those using the toolkit.
4. To support the toolkit with a brief community profile and recommendations for further learning.

### **Toolkit Learning Objectives**

1. To learn about the pre-contact lifestyles of the Yukon First Nation people.
2. To understand the multiple effects of historical and current impacts on the individuals, families and communities of Yukon First Nations.
3. To develop an informed picture of the current community realities and dynamics related to governance, programs and services.
4. To begin learning and developing an understanding of First Nation cultural values, protocols and practices.
5. To further develop capacity for culturally competent relationships at the individual, family and community levels.
6. To assist in developing two-way relationships built on mutual respect.

## **1.2 Guidelines for Use**

- The format of the toolkit is a self-administered set of written and DVD based materials with questions and exercises built in to support active engagement in and reflection on the information.
- As there are 14 First Nations in the Yukon, there are community specific versions of the toolkits available.

- Each toolkit has a Yukon wide or common section that is the same in all toolkits. This is information developed at a Yukon wide level and is common to all First Nations.
- Most of the community specific toolkits will have, in addition to the Yukon wide section, a community specific section, appendices including a brief community profile, suggested resources for further learning, and written and DVD based materials.
- The Regional version of the toolkit will include one copy of the Yukon wide section and one copy of each of the completed community specific sections as well as the appendices.

### **1.3 Toolkit Format**

- The toolkits are developed in modules that will take from 30-90 minutes to complete, depending on the length of the DVD based materials included in some of the modules.
- Each module will also have questions for reflection and journaling and suggestions for further learning.
- A Toolkit Journal, available in both hard copy and electronic formats, will provide a place to record your thoughts and insights.

Overall, the toolkit has been designed in three levels.

Level 1 is described above and includes the Yukon wide section and community specific sections and community profiles. Level 1 has been developed at the most basic level, intended to be a first introduction to individuals interested in learning more about Yukon First Nation people in order to further develop the quality of relationships with the people to whom they provide programs and services.

Level 2 includes suggestions for further learning at the Yukon level – books, websites and instructions for seeking information face-to-face in communities and with First Nation people.

Level 3 provides suggestions for further learning at a national level, providing instructions on what websites or nationally relevant resource material might be of assistance in further learning. The Yukon First Nation cultures are unique within Canada and the self-government and land claim agreements developed here also provide a different working environment. Therefore, the interpretation of national material needs to be done with care, considering the fit of the material to the Yukon context.

### **1.4 Cultural Awareness, Knowledge and Understanding for Service Providers**

First Nation people have been in the Yukon for more than 50,000 years. The first people of the Yukon enjoyed a long period of undisturbed living in tune with the land prior to the many changes that have occurred in the last 150 years. First Nation individuals, families and communities have unique characteristics, histories

and program and service requirements. The delivery of culturally competent care is founded upon a base of good understanding and a commitment to keep learning. The adventure of developing high quality relationships with First Nation people in the Yukon is waiting for those resource workers willing to come to this learning experience with an open mind and keen interest.

Awareness of First Nation people, pre-contact and post contact history, current strengths, challenges and issues can be developed in a number of ways. Working through this independent study program is one way to begin. Engaging in the exercises and making a commitment to go further in learning more will bring immediate rewards. In order to continue your learning, new relationships may need to be built with colleagues and knowledgeable people in the community. You may want to seek advice on establishing relationships with mentors, colleagues and new friends that will support you in continuing your quest for information and learning experiences. Knowledge and understanding comes from checking out initial awareness and early information through communication with community members and knowledgeable individuals. Becoming engaged in First Nation community events, asking respectful questions and attending community training will all help in continuing to increase your level of awareness.

### **1.5 Introduction to Relational Cultural Competence**

Cultural awareness and sensitivity is only the first step. To provide excellent quality of care within well-developed relationships, cultural competence is necessary. Relational cultural competence is fundamentally important at the interface between service provider and those receiving service and throughout supervisory, management and organizational levels of the service agency.

Relational Cultural Competence is defined as “a human relational capacity to seek and find compassionate understanding within, between and among people of differing cultural background and perspectives” (Hanson, 2009).

#### **Module 1: Introduction and Overview**

##### **Exercise #1: Establishing Your Own Learning Objectives**

Reflect on the project and learning objectives and review the table of contents of this toolkit. Develop two or three learning objectives that you hope to meet through your work with this toolkit. Develop two or three additional objectives for your future learning in the area of First Nation culture and the further development of cultural competence.

Write the objectives in your Toolkit Journal.

**“A Different Way of Living” DVD** – view the DVD found in the back of toolkit.

## **Module 1: Introduction and Overview**

### **Exercise # 2: A Different Way of Living**

Think about the DVD that you have just viewed. Consider the questions: What did you learn about the Yukon that you did not know before? What was inspiring about the messages delivered? What difference do you hope to make for people in the Yukon?

Record your thoughts in your Toolkit Journal.



## MODULE 2: RELATIONAL CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



Module 2 provides a more comprehensive orientation to relational cultural competence and how it relates to cultural awareness, the concept of cultural safety and reflective practice. The module also provides a set of basic definitions to help in setting the stage for the remaining modules.

### **2.1 Cultural Awareness and Relational Cultural Competence**

Cultural awareness has been the focus of cross-cultural training for many years. The objective has been to provide the learners with information about a specific cultural group and with this information, it was expected better cultural competence would be witnessed in the relationships. Although there have been benefits to this approach, newer thinking has focused on the provision of information and other learning experiences with the intent of supporting reflective practice and improved relationships between health and social resource workers and the people they serve and support. As defined in Module 1, relational cultural competence is “a human relational capacity to seek and find compassionate understanding within, between and among people of differing cultural background and perspectives” (Hanson, 2009).

More specific information on each element of this definition is as follows:

**Human** – first and foremost, we are all human. The designation of cultural competence in human terms is at the heart of the definition. Our shared membership in the human race is the foundation of engaging in effective communication and building a relationship, no matter how brief. On the other side, we know that problems between cultural groups worsen when one group sees the other as less than or “other than” a full and equal member of the human race.

**Relational** – cultural competence is demonstrated in the ability to use human relationships to seek and find compassionate connection and engagement. This aspect of awareness and skills focuses on the relationship with self and the ability to self reflect. Coming to terms with your own culture and the multiple cultural lenses through which you relate to others is essential to building cultural competence.

**Seek and find** – the willingness to seek a connection that is more than purely instrumental is important and having the capacity to actually find that connection is what successful relationships are all about.

**Compassionate understanding** – the experience of human compassion is founded on human beings coming together in a relational space that provides for respect and dignity. Compassion combined with understanding ensures a willingness to connect and respond to the dynamics of the relationship. Even with profound differences in culture, compassionate understanding provides the connectivity to make relationships work.

***Within, between and among*** – the reference to “within” refers to the compassionate understanding of self – we need to compassionately understand ourselves to honour who we are and learn what we need to know. “Between” references a relationship with one other and “among” with more than one other human being.

***People of differing cultural backgrounds and perspectives*** – differing cultural backgrounds create the situation in which cultural competence becomes important. In some cases, individuals may have similar cultural backgrounds but very different perspectives.

## **2.2 Cultural Safety**

Cultural safety is another important concept that has emerged from New Zealand and is particularly important in understanding some of the unique requirements in developing care relationships with First Nation people with a history of colonization.

The idea of “cultural safety” has generated much debate in New Zealand and beyond. The premise is that by operating in a culturally safe way, health practitioners improve the health of Yukon First Nation people because issues such as access and communication are better addressed. “One of the major difficulties with this term [cultural safety] is there is no fixed definition of what culturally safe care constitutes,” said Sunita Kosaraju (2004) of the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO). “Rather cultural safety is defined by what it is not. For example, culturally unsafe care has been defined as any action that might demean or disempower the cultural identity and well-being of an individual.” Kosaraju continued, “Cultural safety is about attitude change, it deals with educating health practitioners about historical processes of colonization; the current social, economic, and political climate; and the impact this has on the health of First Nation Peoples.

The development of relational skills can be informed by knowledge developed through self-study. The next step in skill development is to work with role models, mentors and cultural advisors to further develop and refine communication and relational skills based on self-awareness, understanding and respect.

## **2.3 Reflective Practice**

Reflective practice is taught in a number of professional disciplines such as nursing and social work. The purpose is to provide a foundation for the worker to find methods of reflecting on their experiences related to their own practice and learn from those experiences. To share reflections with another co-worker provides an opportunity to use a sounding board. In areas of cultural competence or sorting through ethical dilemmas, deeply reflective practice that seeks understanding of the “rightness or goodness” of an interaction may be necessary. Toolkit users will have a variety of opportunities throughout the toolkit to further develop their skills in reflective practice.

## **2.4 Levels of Culturally Competent Practice**

Cultural competence requires a basic understanding of core concepts such as culture, race, ethnicity, gender, diversity, marginalization and minority. (Ravi Srivastava, *Clinical Cultural Competence*, 2007) Cultural competence goes beyond awareness, sensitivity, knowledge and skills to application of relational capacity. A basic level of knowledge about cultural groups you are working with, including in the case of Yukon First Nation groups, the history of colonization, acculturation, residential schools and related intergenerational effects is needed but is not enough to support culturally competent service provision.

The purpose of cultural competence is to build healthier relationships that engage and transcend culture and support responsive and respectful care. A trusting relationship helps to allay fears and helps the care provider learn more about the individual or family that you are working with. In return, that relational space allows the First Nation person to get to know you, your role and more about the service agency and system that you represent.

There are five levels or building blocks of cultural competence:

**Intrapersonal** - self-awareness of personal cultural identity and characteristics as well as deeply reflective practice. As human beings we increase our ability to predict human behaviour as we become more aware of our own behaviour which conveys our thoughts, feelings, personal history, stereotypes and other aspects of how we relate which act as triggers to others.

**Interpersonal** - active lifelong learning is needed to support building two-way cultural competence with clients, patients, co-workers and the community.

**Team** - mutually respectful team members that are committed to improvement and engage in observation, honest communication and building of team cultural competence across boundaries of personal and professional cultures.

**Organizational** - governance, structure, funding, policies, procedures, training, incentives, supports and resources that invest in building cultural competence at all levels. Organizational supports for caring include safety (physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually); cultural safety; responses to ethical distress compassion fatigue and personal "crisis of meaning"; personal "process literacy" and support for the development of a personal belief system that supports caring relationships; supportive dyads (pairs or people) to share skills, experiences and "witness" to lived experience.

**Systemic** - public awareness, legislation and regulatory environments that support cultural competence.

## **Module 2: Relational Cultural Competence and Reflective Practice**

### **Exercise # 1: Cultural Competence in Action**

Reflect on an experience that you have had observing communication between two individuals of differing cultural background or perspectives. What did you observe in the communication pattern that demonstrated cultural competence? What did you see that could lead to communication problems or disruption in the relationship? Record your reflections in your Toolkit Journal.

### **2.5 Definitions**

**Culture** – culture has been defined as the things we do every day, every week, every month and every year – it is embodied in our way of seeing the world, seeing other human beings, assessing “goodness” or risk and understanding our past, present and future – we all have a culture.

**Culture (as defined in Anthropology)** – culture is “the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours and artifacts (things) that the members of society use to cope with their world and one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning. (Plog, Fred, Bates, Daniel G., *Cultural Anthropology*, 1988)

**Culture (in the context of Cultural Safety)** – culture includes, but is not restricted to, age or generation; gender; sexual orientation; occupation and socio economic status; ethnic origin or migrant experience; religious or spiritual belief; and disability. (Dianne Wepa, *Cultural Safety in New Zealand*, 2005)

**Cultural Safety (in the context of New Zealand Maori nursing)** – cultural safety is the effective nursing or midwifery practice of a person or a family from another culture, and is determined by that person or family. The nurse or midwife delivering service will have undertaken a process of reflection on his or her own cultural identity and will recognize the impact that his or her own culture has on his or her professional practice. Unsafe cultural practice comprises any action which diminishes, demeans or disempowers the cultural identity or well-being of an individual. (Dianne Wepa, *Cultural Safety in New Zealand*, 2005)

**Cultural Competence** – the definition outlined above is one definition. In another definition of cultural competence, the defining characteristics are outlined as 1) developing awareness of one’s own experience, sensations, thoughts, and environment without letting it have an undue influence on those from other backgrounds; 2) demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the client’s culture; 3) accepting and respecting cultural differences; and 4) adapting care to be congruent (in line) with the clients culture. Cultural competence is a conscious process and not necessarily linear. (Purnell, L.D. and Paulanka, B.J., *Transcultural Health Care*, 1998)

**Cultural Safety as Differentiated from Cultural Competence** – the National Aboriginal Health Organization states that “although distinct by nature, cultural

competency and cultural safety are mutually interdependent. Whereas cultural competency is the application of skills that ensure the delivery of safe care to the client, cultural safety is how the client will perceive and feel safe within the care encounter.” (NAHO, undated)

**Traditional Knowledge (TK)** – traditional knowledge is defined internationally as “the content or substance of knowledge that is the result of intellectual activity and insight in a traditional context, and includes know-how, skills, innovations, practices and learning that form part of traditional knowledge systems and knowledge that is embodied in the traditional lifestyle of a community or people, or is contained in codified (written) knowledge systems passed between generations. (World Intellectual Property Organization, Glossary of Terms, accessed on January 10, 2010 <http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/glossary>)

**Traditional Knowledge Protection** – traditional knowledge is considered sacred by Yukon First Nations and is well protected. This principle must always be respected. The focus of this toolkit is **NOT** Traditional Knowledge as the toolkits will be openly used and distributed broadly. This toolkit only contains information offered by the Yukon First Nation for this purpose or previously published.

**Protocol** – in mainstream Canadian society the definition of protocol in this context refers to a code of conduct, manners, courtesies or customs that dictate what is seen as proper or acceptable behaviour in specific situations. In a First Nation context, it is similar and protocols are rules that govern human behaviour and ways of relating to one another that are “right or wrong”. Some are based in cultural traditions and others established more recently.

**First Nation** – First Nation is the term adopted by individuals that were identified under the Indian Act as status or non status Indians. In the Yukon, First Nation citizenship and membership is defined by the First Nations.

**Inuit** – the Inuit people of Canada are those that live in the north and northeastern part of Canada previously identified as “Eskimo” people.

**Métis** – Métis people are individuals of mixed blood (First Nation and other) that are eligible to be accepted as a member of a Métis organization in Canada.

## **Module 2: Relational Cultural Competence and Reflective Practice**

### **Exercise # 2: Personal History with Protocols**

Think of protocols that you have encountered in your own family or work setting. What was the expected behaviour? How was the protocol taught or communicated within the group to which it applied? What sanctions (negative consequences) were in place if the protocol was not followed? Would you have defined the protocol as part of a code of conduct, appropriate manners or expected courtesies or customs? Record your reflections in your Toolkit Journal.



## MODULE 3: THE CANADIAN CONTEXT AND YUKON AGREEMENTS



Module 3 provides Canadian historical and legal context for the information that will be provided on the Yukon. In addition, the module includes an orientation to the Yukon Land Claims and Self Government Agreements.

### 3.1 Relevant Canadian Historical Events

**Royal Proclamation** – the *Royal Proclamation* (RP) of 1763 set out the foundation for the relationship between the British Crown and the indigenous people of what is now Canada. The RP sets out a number of principles applying to North American First Nation people. The document remains as an important basis for Land Claims as it recognizes First Nations’ prior rights to land as well as providing for the administration and disposition of those lands.

**BNA Act** – the *British North America Act* which established Canada in 1867 gives the federal government authority to make laws about “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” in section 91(24). Of note, this has limited application in the Yukon as there are only a couple established reserves.

**Order of Canada** – the *Order of Canada* of 1870 created the Yukon Territory as part of Rupert’s Land which later became part of Canada under the provisions of the 1870 Order which was later entrenched in the *Constitution Act* of 1982.

**First Nation Rights and Title** – First Nation people believe they have indigenous rights and title to land under international law related to use and occupancy of the land now known as Canada.

**Numbered Treaties and Land Claims** – by 1871, Canada had begun a systematic process of “treating” with the First Nations which resulted in the treaties numbered 1 (1871) to 11 (1921). The Yukon has a small section in the most southeast corner that is part of Treaty 11, but it is not occupied by people. The remainder of the Yukon was never subject to a treaty until the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) was signed in 1990. The UFA is considered a comprehensive land claim based on First Nation title and the self government agreements are separate agreements without specific Constitutional protection.

**Indian Act** – passed in 1876, the *Indian Act* gave Canada authority to make laws for Indian people regarding band membership, land and local government. By 1880, the Government of Canada had decided to apply its broad *Indian Act* powers to assimilating the First Nation peoples of Canada into the mainstream.

**Bill C-31** – from 1876 to 1985 under the *Indian Act*, if an Indian woman married a non-Indian man, she and the children of the marriage were denied Indian status. Conversely if an Indian man married a non-Indian woman she gained status along with their children. Bill C-31 corrected the situation and allowed Indian women to be reinstated along with their children and grandchildren. The rights of their great grandchildren are currently being dealt with through new legislation.

**Outlawing Ceremonies and Traditional Practices** – from 1884 to 1951, the *Indian Act* prohibited Indians from participating in the Potlatch, the Sundance and all other similar cultural ceremonies across Canada. This has since been amended and no longer applies.

**Right to Vote** – status Indian people obtained the right to vote in elections in 1961. Prior to that Indian people had to enfranchise, thus giving up their federal Indian status to get a job, join the army or vote.

**Status and non Status Indians** – “Indian” people with rights under the *Indian Act* are considered status Indians and have access to programs and services funded by the federal government and directed toward Indian people. Non status Indians as defined by the government, have no rights under the *Indian Act*.

**1969 White Paper** – in 1969 the Federal government introduced the White Paper on Indian Policy to support the eventual elimination of the various “privileges” of Indian people with the ultimate goal of “normalizing” their integration into Canadian society. Confronted with opposition from across the country, the paper was withdrawn although many believe the intent remains.

**Canada Act 1982** – the inclusion of Section 35 & 37 in the *Constitution Act* and the constitutional protections it set out (not all of which have been realized), is probably the most profound change in public policy. Section 35 recognized First Nation rights and Section 37 established a process by which the First Nation rights could be entrenched in the constitution. This has made it possible for the courts to decide post-1982 rights cases in favour of First Nation people as evidenced in the recent Taku River Tlingit case and Haida Nation case.

**Royal Commission on First Nation Peoples (RCAP)** – the RCAP process was launched in 1991 to “help restore justice to the relationship between First Nation and non-First Nation people in Canada and to propose practical solutions” (RCAP Highlights, 1996). It concluded in 1995 after Canada-wide hearings and consultations. Their main conclusion can be summarized as “the policy direction has been wrong”. Ultimately Canada ‘shelved’ the more-substantive RCAP recommendations and no legislation and new policy recognizing First Nations special place in Canada was undertaken. “Gathering Strength-Canada’s First Nation Action Plan” came out of the process and was considered a medium-term plan and early investment in healing and reconciliation.

**First Nations Governance Initiative, 2001** – the federal government initiated a major overhaul of the *Indian Act* with the introduction of *The First Nations Governance Act*. Central to the new Act was the requirement that First Nation bands develop a system by which to choose their leaders, as well as clear rules regarding how band money is spent. There was much opposition to the Act for different reasons and it has never been passed.

## **Module 3: The Canadian Context and Yukon Agreements**

### **Exercise # 1: Legal and Political Context for First Nation Relations**

What other legal or historical events have you studied during your education or read about in the newspaper/on the web that you see as significant to the study of the relevant historical and legal context? How does that event affect the legal or political context for Yukon First Nation relations broadly as well as community and family relationships specifically? Record your observations in your Toolkit Journal.

### **3.2 Yukon Land Claims and Self Government**

Land Claims and self government agreement negotiation has been an important and integral part of Yukon history. Recent Yukon history is shaped by the development and implementation of those agreements. The process has meant important changes not just for First Nation people but for all Yukon people.

#### **Land Claims Concepts**

The land claims process is based on the concept of ownership of land. This concept is foreign to traditional First Nations' thought. In the First Nation view, the people belong to the land and therefore have stewardship responsibilities for the land. This concept is at odds with the concept of land ownership which implies rights rather than responsibilities. If the concept of ownership applies at all, it is that the land owns man, rather than man owning land. However foreign the concept may be to First Nations, they were obliged to enter into some form of negotiations with the government to protect their way of life, which was intimately related to the land.

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British common law, one of the foundations of the Canadian legal system, stipulates that ownership of land can come about in several ways:

- by transfer of ownership through purchase
- taking the land by defeating the previous owner in a war
- by entering into a treaty that defines transfer of ownership
- through prior use and occupancy

If a group can demonstrate it has occupied and used land for a number of years and none of the other provisions apply, there are legal principles that state that this group has an interest in the land. First Nation people assume they own their land that has not otherwise been transferred to other parties. As such, all traditional territories they have used and lived on for generations are considered First Nation land. Three of the fourteen First Nations in the Yukon without final land claims or self-government agreements rely on First Nation rights and title to protect their interests. In other places in Canada and in law, the term used is aboriginal rights and title. The concept of "aboriginal rights and title" is fundamental to international law related to the rights of indigenous people who have not surrendered those rights through war or treaties.

It is interesting to note that the government needed to enter into some form of negotiations to clarify title to the land, and hence to determine who should control how it is used. If there had been no compelling legal reason to do so, government would have simply used the land as it wished with little regard for the needs and rights of First Nation people. They were obliged to enter into some form of negotiation because of basic principles of British common law. A simplified way of describing these principles relates to the manner in which a person can come to own land.

### **Module 3: The Canadian Context and Yukon Agreements**

#### **Exercise # 2: Land Claims Concepts**

How do you think the concept that land owns people and those people are charged with the responsibility for stewardship of the land rather than the concept of "land ownership" have affected the land claims process? Record your thoughts in your Toolkit Journal.

### **3.3 History of Yukon Land Claims**

The Yukon Land Claims process was underway long before the 1960s when it was commonly believed to have started. In 1902, Jim Boss' letter to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs clearly articulated concerns of Yukon First Nation people: "Tell the King very hard we want something for our Indians because they take our land and game." Jim Boss was a member of the present day Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation. In 1973 the Council for Yukon Indians (CYI) was formed by the coming together of status and non-status Indian organizations in the Yukon for the express purpose of negotiating Land Claims. In 1980, these organizations amalgamated to form the Council of Yukon Indians. CYI became the Council of Yukon First Nations in 1995.

In 1973, Elijah Smith, head of Yukon Native Brotherhood (YNB), presented a Yukon Land Claims document to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau entitled *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow (TTFOCT): A Statement of Grievances and an Approach to Settlement by the Yukon Indian People*. This event is generally viewed as the beginning of the Land Claims process in the Yukon. Negotiations were sporadic from 1974 to 1979. Intense negotiations from 1979 to 1984 resulted in an Agreement in Principle which failed at CYI ratification. A new federal Comprehensive Land Claims Policy in 1986 addressed many of the earlier problems and the federal government received a new negotiating mandate in 1988. An Agreement in-Principle was reached in 1988 and the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) was concluded in 1989.

The first four Yukon First Nations (4 of the total 14) concluded negotiations and signed land claim and self-government agreements on May 29, 1993. The first four First Nation Final Agreements and Self-Government Agreements were then completed with First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Vuntut Gwitch'in First Nation and Teslin Tlingit Council. The agreements

were proclaimed into effect by legislation on February 14, 1995.

By 1998, an additional three First Nations had ratified agreements; the additional First Nations were Selkirk First Nation on July 21, 1997, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation on July 21, 1997 and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in on July 16, 1998. This was followed by the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council agreement signed on January 13, 2002 and becoming effective on April 1, 2002. Next the Kluane First Nation agreement was signed on October 18, 2003 with an effective date of February 2, 2004. The two most recently signed agreements are the Kwanlin Dün First Nation on February 19, 2005, effective April 1, 2005 and Carcross Tagish First Nation signed on October 22, 2005 and became effective on January 9, 2006. The Liard First Nation, the Ross River Dena Council and the White River First Nation do not have agreements.

### **3.4 Highlights of the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) and First Nation Final Agreements**

The Umbrella Final Agreement forms the foundation of all eleven completed First Nation final agreements. Three First Nations remain without agreements. The final agreements are made up of a set which is specific for each settled First Nation. There is a land claim agreement and a self-government agreement. The financial arrangements are captured in a Financial Transfer Agreement or FTA. The self-government agreements make provisions for the First Nation to pull down powers in a variety of jurisdictional areas through the negotiation of Programs and Services Transfer Agreements or PSTAs. Through the PSTA process, the self-government can develop their specific governments guided by their own priorities and optimal pace.

Highlights of the Umbrella Final Agreement include:

**Constitutional Protection** - constitutional protection as a land claim under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act* 1982 (the Self-Government Agreements negotiated under Chapter 24 are not protected).

**Certainty** - certainty refers to the clarity of the agreement and the agreement provides certainty regarding First Nation rights and title in the Yukon which continue to exist in relation to all settlement land (to the extent they are consistent with the YFN Final Agreement) and released on non-settlement land.

**Application of Laws** - application of federal, territorial laws and municipal laws to First Nation people will continue unless they are in conflict with the Yukon First Nation Final Agreement in which case the Agreement takes precedence (is the more powerful). As well, in the absence of Yukon First Nation's own laws, territorial and federal laws would still apply.

**Eligibility for Enrollment as a Beneficiary** - eligibility or the requirements that a person has to meet in order to be enrolled under one of the Yukon First Nation Agreements and be registered as a beneficiary are set by the First Nation. *Indian Act* membership establishes that status under the *Indian Act* does not automatically mean that a person is eligible for enrollment under a Final Agreement.

Approximately 25% of First Nation beneficiaries are non-status Indians and not eligible for the programs and services offered to status Indians by the federal government.

**Land Types** - the types of Settlement Land Yukon First Nations own and manage include: Category A where a Yukon First Nation has complete ownership of the surface and sub-surface (minerals, oil and gas etc.); Category B where a Yukon First Nation has complete ownership or equivalent to fee simple on the surface but no ownership of sub-surface such as mines and minerals; Fee Simple – settlement land owned under the same form as commonly held by individuals who own land.

**Land Allotments** - Settlement Land Amount for all Yukon First Nations: 16,000 square miles or 41,439 square kilometres; approx. 6% of the Yukon land base.

**Waterfront Right of Way** - a person has right of access without consent to use the Waterfront Right-of-Way for travel and for non-commercial recreation and to use dead firewood. This does not include the harvesting of wildlife or birds.

**Financial Compensation** - the Financial Compensation chapter sets out the amount of money that the Government will pay Yukon First Nations. It also sets out how loans made to Yukon First Nations will be paid back to Government.

**Economic Development** - the objectives of the Economic Development chapter are: (a) to provide Yukon Indian People with opportunities to participate in the Yukon economy; (b) to develop economic self-reliance for Yukon Indian People; and (c) to make sure that Yukon Indian People obtain benefits that arise from their Yukon First Nation Final Agreements. The benefits include government employment opportunities, contracting opportunities and representation on public corporations.

**Yukon Self-Government Agreements** - the Yukon Self-Government chapter of the UFA assures Yukon First Nations that Government will negotiate Self-Government Agreements with Yukon First Nations, to accompany their Final Agreements. Self-Government means Yukon First Nation people control and direct their own affairs in accordance with their First Nation rights as recognized in their Yukon First Nation Final Agreement and Self-Government Agreements. This chapter sets out how Self-Government will be exercised to work toward Yukon First Nation communities being self-sufficient and healthy. The chapter sets out the guidelines within which each Yukon First Nation will be able to negotiate its government powers, rights and responsibilities; and the process by which Yukon First Nations' powers, rights and responsibilities will be established within Canadian law. Devolution of programs and services through negotiation of Programs and Services Transfer Agreements (PSTAs) is also set out in the agreement. The principles for establishing self-governing First Nations include commitments to renewing partnership; establishing an equitable and sustainable fiscal relationship; recognizing and strengthening First Nation Governments; supporting stronger First Nation communities and people. The First Nation law making powers include 45 powers under three heads including internal management of affairs and rights realized under the Agreements; citizen based powers exercised throughout the Yukon – primarily with respect to programs and services; settlement land based powers to make laws of a local or private nature; provides for delegation of powers; ensures that First Nations with Agreements receive Claims, Self-Government and Indian and Inuit Affairs funding on the Effective Date and establishes that First Nations are responsible for allocating funds and delivering First Nation programs and services.

## **Common Myths Regarding the Agreements**

**Access to Land** – the myth is that First Nation land cannot be accessed by other Yukoners and visitors. This is not true as there are provisions for access and travel across First Nation land.

**Land Allocation** – the myth is that First Nations now have the majority of Yukon land under First Nation control. The reality is that all of the allocations add up to 6% of the whole Yukon land base.

**Financial Payments to Individuals** – the myth is that individual Yukon First Nation citizens receive large financial compensation payments as part of the agreements. The reality is that financial compensation payments are made to the First Nation as a whole.

**Balance of Influence** – the myth is that non-First Nation people are going to have less power and control over local matters now that self-government is being implemented. The truth is that some of the provisions in the agreements provide more decision making authorities to local bodies made up of all Yukoners.

**Economic Opportunities** – the myth is that there will be fewer jobs and economic opportunities for non-First Nation Yukon people. The reality is that land claims and self-government agreements provide increased certainty for investors and more opportunities for all.

### **Module 3: The Canadian Context and Yukon Agreements**

#### **Exercise #1: Review of Chapter 24 of the UFA**

Using the Green Book "Understanding the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement: A Land Claim Settlement Information Package" provided in the toolkit in DVD format, review the section on Chapter 24 Yukon Indian Self-Government (page 68), specifically section 5 "Subjects for Negotiations" and section 6 "Devolution of Programs and Services". Ask yourself what implications these sections might have on the work you do with Yukon First Nations. Record your reflections in your Toolkit Journal and identify a supervisor or colleague with whom you could discuss your questions about implementation of the agreements.

### **3.5 Yukon First Nations Without Final Agreements**

Three First Nations are not involved in the implementation of land claim and self-government agreements. Liard First Nation (Watson Lake), Ross River Dena Council (Ross River) and White River First Nation (Beaver Creek) do not have agreements and are not negotiating at this time (2010). These three First Nations rely on First Nation rights and title to define the foundation of their governments. The *Indian Act* remains in place and applies to these three First Nations. The term "Indian Act" First Nations is sometimes used to describe these First Nations but this term is not acceptable to Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council.

The differences between those with agreements and those without are many. There is less funding available for government operations and government programs and services. The financial flexibility enjoyed by First Nations with agreements is not in place with the First Nations without agreements and therefore, they have more funding agreements in place and more detailed and demanding accountability arrangements – monitoring, reporting, compliance audits etc. The investment in heritage and culture made by some of the First Nations with agreements is not possible for these First Nations due to limited capacity – both staff and financial resources. The financial compensation payments possible under the land claim have not been made and the possibility of pulling down authorities under a self-government agreement are also not possible. It is important to understand that the fundamental belief is that all First Nations have always had the right to self determination and that they are inherently self governing nations and therefore, these First Nations are designated as “without agreements” not without the right to self govern.

### **3.6 Jurisdictions and Government Responsibilities for Programs and Services**

Yukon has four “corners” to their government and intergovernmental structures – Canada, Yukon, First Nations and municipalities (city, town, village). Many of the jurisdictional authorities and responsibilities held by these governments are defined in legislation but many are not – programs and services are offered and supported by policy or precedent (what has been done in the past). Yukon as a jurisdiction continues to take on more responsibility from the federal government in certain areas – this process is called devolution. First Nations, through self-government agreements are also taking on areas of jurisdiction previously occupied by Canada or Yukon. First Nations work with local municipal governments in some areas. Therefore, working with First Nation families, some members of which may have “Indian status” and others not, or may be citizens of different Yukon First Nations and be eligible for a range of programs and services offered by three or four governments, can be complex and frustrating at times. On the upside, there may be various ways of solving problems and accessing necessary services.

## **Module 3: The Canadian Context and Yukon Agreements**

### **Exercise #2: Land Claims DVD Segments**

View the DVD on land claims with two of the four segments “Settlement and Governance”; “Rebuilding Our Communities”; “Providing for our Future” and “Caring for Our Land”. What are your most significant observations of the Yukon Land Claim and Self Government environment? What difference does it make to how you deliver the programs and services for which you are responsible? What are some questions that you have after having viewed the segments? Take the questions to your supervisor, colleague or other knowledgeable person and document the discussion in your Toolkit Journal.



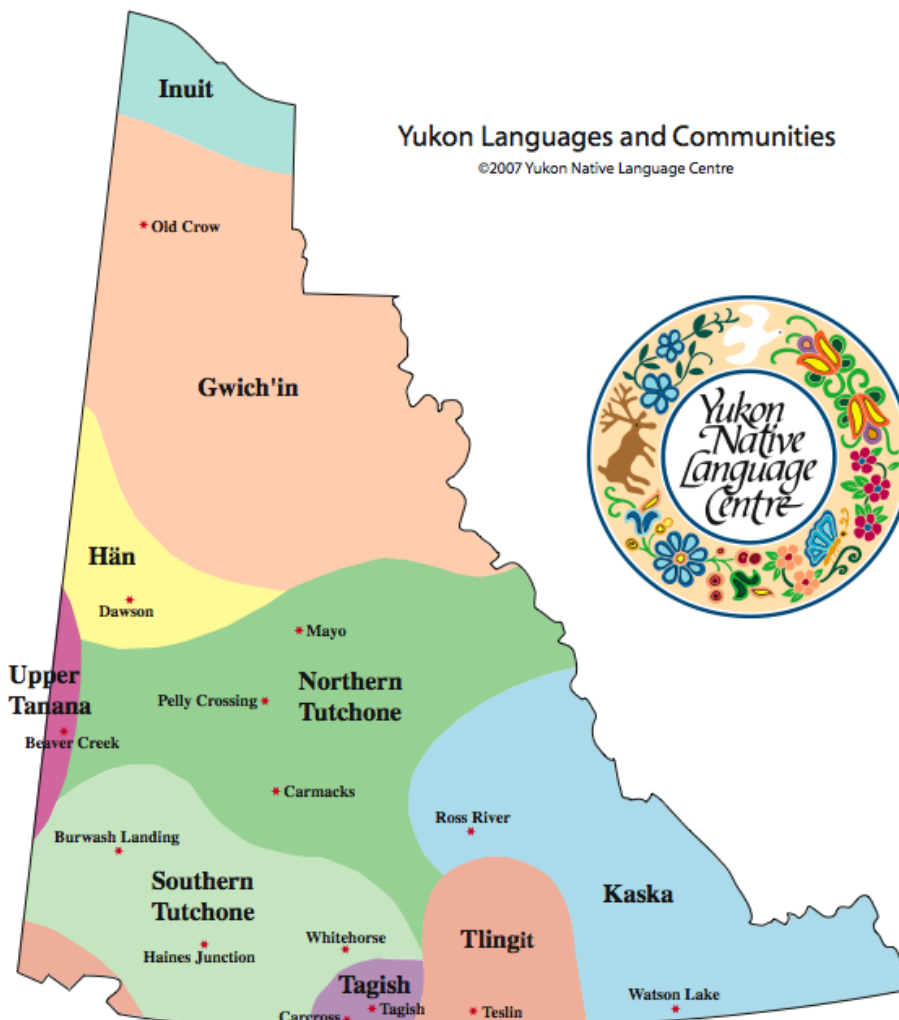
# MODULE 4: FIRST NATION LINGUISTIC GROUPS, TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES AND PRE-CONTACT LIFE WAYS



Module 4 provides an outline of the eight language groups, and the fourteen traditional territories occupied by Yukon First Nations. Language is an important carrier of culture and the preservation of traditional languages essential to cultural continuity. Traditional territories are foundational to the land claim agreements as they help to describe traditional use and occupancy. The concept is captured in the structure of the land claim agreements. Pre-contact life ways describe a few details of First Nation life prior to contact with other people travelling to the Yukon for the Gold Rush, World War II and other purposes.

## First Nation Languages in the Yukon

### 4.1 Linguistic Groups



There are eight language groups and two major language families amongst Yukon First Nations – Athabaskan and Inland Tlingit. Athabaskan is divided into seven dialects: Gwich'in, Han or Tr'ondëk Hwech'in, Upper Tanana, Northern and Southern Tutchone, Tagish and Kaska. Athabaskan extends over an immense area of North America and is the largest language family. The Tlingit people and language originate from Southeast Alaska. They made their way into the Yukon at least 300 years ago to trade with the Athabaskan people of the Interior. Many of our people in the Southern areas have both Athabaskan and Tlingit ancestry. (Council of Yukon First Nations)

**Gwich'in** - The Vuntut Gwich'in live in the northern Yukon, with their traditional territory extending 10,000 square miles including parts of the Crow, Porcupine and Yukon Rivers and part of the range of the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Today they are centred in Old Crow.

**Han** - The Han live in traditional territories in northwest Yukon and Alaska along the Yukon River and its tributaries northwest of Dawson City. Today many Han people belong to the Tr'ondëk Hwech'in.

**Tutchone** - The Tutchone occupied central southwestern Yukon. At Lake Laberge, a major division in dialect separates the Tutchone into Northern and Southern peoples. Northern Tutchone members belong to the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Selkirk First Nation and First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun living in the areas of Carmacks, Mayo, and Pelly. Southern Tutchone members belong to Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kluane First Nation. They live in the areas of Whitehorse, Haines Junction, and Kluane.

**Upper Tanana** - Only a small part of the lands originally held by the Upper Tanana remain in the Yukon. Traditionally, their lands included the headwaters of the Tanana River in Alaska and part of the White River in Yukon. Members of the Upper Tanana belong to the White River First Nation.

**Kaska** - The Kaska territory includes the headwaters of the Pelly and Liard Rivers and covers much of eastern Yukon. Today most Kaska live in Ross River (Ross River Dena Council), Upper Liard, Lower Post and Watson Lake (Liard First Nation).

**Tagish** - The Tagish are the original peoples who lived in the area of the southern lakes which include Marsh, Tagish, and Bennett. Today they live in the communities of Carcross and Tagish.

**Tlingit** - The inland Tlingit migrated into southern Yukon from the Taku River area to trade with the Athapaskans. Over time many Athapaskan people learned the Tlingit language leading to permanent settlements of Tlingit people in southwestern Yukon and northern BC. These communities include Teslin, Carcross and Atlin.

#### **4.2 Preservation of Language and Link to Culture**

All Yukon First Nations are committed to the preservation of the Yukon First Nation languages. The language is seen as fundamental to understanding, honouring and preserving the culture. The efforts of the First Nations are supported by the Yukon and federal governments in funding school based language programs, the development of First Nation language teachers and the ongoing community work on language preservation and revitalization.

First Nations also provide incentives and support for the use of First Nation language within the First Nation administration and in the provision of programs and services.

### 4.3 Traditional Territories of the Yukon First Nations

Traditional territories in the Yukon overlap as traditional activities included the sharing of bordering lands. The Yukon land claims and self government agreements recognize traditional territories. Below is a map of the Yukon First Nation Traditional Territories:



Map provided courtesy of Environment Yukon

#### **4.4 Pre -Contact Life Ways**

The traditional life ways of Yukon First Nation people supported a sense of well being and community solidarity that was closely tied to the land and the seasons. The depth of understanding of the natural world supported survival in a sometime harsh and unforgiving environment. Families and communities worked together and shared everything as a method of ensuring there was enough food to sustain the people during hard times.

Children were deeply valued as the most important asset of the family and community. The more children in the family, the richer the family was considered by the community. With more children there was increased assurance of ease later in life. With a larger number of children, there were more children to care for the older people in their elderhood. Elders were deeply respected. The values and beliefs that supported successful living were embedded in stories, legends and myths and passed down through the generations. The foundation of traditional life was respect for other human beings, the Creator and all of creation.

The historical and traditional way of life was focused on fishing, hunting, gathering and trapping. Many of these activities continue today. Families moved seasonally to specific areas within their territory to harvest the various resources.

Spring being the time to harvest grayling, burbot and small game such as grouse and gophers. Moose and caribou were sometimes taken. Small mammals such as rabbits, beaver, porcupine and gopher were harvested in early spring, throughout the summer and into early fall, as were geese, ducks, swans and grouse.

In the summer, chinook and chum salmon were fished from salmon-bearing waters and various berries and medicinal plants were gathered in their appropriate season.

During the fall sheep, caribou and moose were hunted and in the late fall people went to the lakes for the whitefish spawn.

Throughout the winter First Nation people trapped for fur bearing animals to meet their shelter and clothing needs. Burbot was fished through the ice in winter.

### **Module 4: First Nation Linguistic Groups, Traditional Territories and Pre Contact Lifeways**

#### **Exercise #1: First Nation Life Prior to Contact**

Reflect on what life was like before contact with the newcomers to the Yukon. What are the most significant strengths of pre-contact life that would have helped the First Nation people survive in the harsh natural environment and climate of the Yukon? What aspects of the seasonal way of life might still impact community life today? What was the importance of intergenerational oral transmission of cultural knowledge and stories? Record your observations in your Toolkit Journal.



## MODULE 5: IMPACTS OF CONTACT AND COLONIZATION



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Module 5 presents information on the impact of selected events and contact with outsiders coming to the Yukon. Although Yukon First Nation people had a long history of trade with neighbouring First Nations, the effect of contact with non-First Nation people brought new opportunities and threats.

### **5.1 Early Exploration and Trade**

Life before contact with outsiders was rich and challenging. There was travel over long distances in all seasons and a great deal of visiting or connection within the community and between communities. Trade was conducted and intermarriage in some case supported. Many of the Elders could speak three or four First Nation languages, learned through many years of connecting with neighbouring First Nations. The generosity and hospitality shown to neighbours was the spirit with which First Nation people encountered the newcomers.

In the early 1800's the fur traders arrived in the north, bringing manufactured goods, which were blended with the goods First Nation traders already supplied. As the economy grew, posts were built and trading became widely available. The First Nation lifestyle changed, still harvesting traditional foods from the land, trading between the outside traders and northern peoples became prominent.

### **5.2 Gold Rush**

The big gold discovery that sparked the Klondike gold rush was found along the Klondike River at Rabbit Creek (later renamed Bonanza Creek) in August of 1896. However, the actual gold rush began in 1898 after word reached southern Canada and into the US. Dawson City sprang up almost overnight in response to the rapid influx of gold seekers. It grew to a population of 40,000, but was down to about 5,000 by 1902 – the gold rush was over.

Although short lived, the gold rush changed life forever for First Nation people. The people still made much of their living on the land, but they now came to town to trade fur and find work in the new labour economy. It also brought with it impacts to their traditional lands and way of life whether it be displacement or over hunting. In the Dawson City area in particular, First Nation people found that their balance of living on the land was dramatically affected due to the slaughter of game to support the very large influx of people into the region in a very short period of time. Their self determination was also affected. The First Nation people were asked for their information about the land and resources – the people were seen as something to be used and extracted along with the land. The people of the region around Dawson City either had to move further away from the small city or join the wage economy. This trend carried on with economic activities throughout the Yukon that followed the Gold Rush.

In 1900, Chief Jim Boss (Kishxóot) of the Ta'an Kwäch'än recognized that his people needed protection for their land and hunting grounds in the wake of a growing non First Nation population. Chief Boss petitioned the Commissioner of the Yukon, William Ogilvie, for a 1,600-acre reserve at Ta'an Män, which he had already surveyed. Instead, a reserve of only 320 acres was granted. Not satisfied with this outcome, in 1902 Chief Boss wrote to the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, demanding that over-hunting by newcomers be controlled and that his people be compensated for lost land and the impacts on wildlife. The exchange of these letters represents the first attempt at land claims negotiations by a Yukon First Nation.

After the Gold Rush, the federal government continued to ignore similar pleas from Yukon First Nations. During this time the First Nations were repeatedly displaced from land they had used and occupied for centuries, with neither consultation nor compensation.

In the 1950s the sternwheeler traffic on the Yukon River and Lake Laberge ended which profoundly changed how the people made their living on the land. Gradually, the communities along the route were abandoned and people began to move to settlements along the highway and to Whitehorse.

### **5.3 World War II and the Alaska Highway**

In 1942-43 the US government built the Alaska Highway to connect Alaska to the rest of the United States in response to the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor in 1941. The US army brought 34,000 army personnel to the Yukon to transport war supplies to Alaska. Some First Nation people were hired to establish the route and much of the highway was built on old First nation trails and over First Nation homes. The construction caused a decline in wildlife populations along the highway corridor through uncontrolled hunting by army personnel. As well, the army left behind environmental damage in hunting areas used for generations and toxic waste areas some of which have yet to be cleaned up. The huge numbers of men led to suffering for some First Nation women. The highway also opened up a new travel corridor making way for more non First Nation people to settle in the north bringing with them more change and disruption.

### **5.4 Mining and Industrial Development**

There have been a series of mining booms in the history of the Yukon. First Nation communities and their traditional territories have been impacted by exploration camps, road construction, mine development and operation and mine closures. First Nation people have received few jobs, contracts or other benefits from mining or other industrial development. The First Nation people watched the development, felt the environmental and social impacts and never saw significant benefits. That is beginning to change in recent times with the implementation of land claim and self-government agreements as well as the negotiation of socio-economic participation agreements (SEPA) or impact and benefits agreements (IBAs).

## **5.5 Residential Schools**

Between 1800s-1990s, over 130 government-funded church-run industrial schools, boarding schools and northern hostels operated in Canada for First Nation children. In the Yukon, children were taken from their families and put in residential schools in Dawson City (St. Paul's Hostel), Whitehorse (Yukon Hall), Carcross (Choutla) and Lower Post, BC. Many children attending residential schools suffered physical, sexual and other abuses (loss of childhood, family, community, language and culture).

In recent years, individuals from different communities began challenging the government and churches for the abuse they endured while they were at residential school and they have been successful. They are known as Trail Blazers and are responsible for initiating the healing process for Yukon First Nation people.

In 2001, 87% of First Nation adults living in the Yukon reported that at least one family member had attended a federal residential school or industrial school. Almost 25% of First Nation adults had attended a residential school, and among those aged 45 to 75, the proportion climbed to more than 50%. This speaks to the depth of impact within Yukon First Nation communities.

The report of the Royal Commission on First Nation Peoples stressed the urgency of addressing the impacts of residential schools. On 7 January 1998, Indian Affairs and Northern Development issued a 'Statement of Reconciliation' and unveiled *Gathering Strength – Canada's First Nation Action Plan* which established a \$350 million dollar fund to support community healing – Aboriginal Healing Foundation. As well it provided an apology for physical and sexual abuse in the schools. The apology however did not address the loss of language, loss of cultural and oral teachings and the intergenerational effects of residential school.

In May 2006 the federal government announced the approval of all parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement which was approved by the Courts on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

The settlement provided for a common experience lump sum payment (\$10,000) to former students for the first school year plus \$3,000 for each year after, as well as an independent assessment process for former students who suffered sexual or physical abuses, to apply for further compensation. To receive this settlement, former students had to reveal and relive the abuse as part of the application process. As well, there is no compensation for deceased survivors. Other measures to address the legacy of the residential school system included the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and support for the Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program. The mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to inform Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools and document the truth of survivors, families, and communities.

Research conducted through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation has highlighted the devastating effects of residential school on survivors, their children and their children's children. They include enduring psychological and economic effects,

parenting models based on institutional experiences, repetition of physical and sexual abuse, devaluing First Nation identity, undermining individual self-esteem, disruption of family and kinship networks and destruction of communities, nations and peoples.

## **Module 5: Impacts of Contact and Colonization**

### **Exercise #1: Canadian Residential School Impact**

View the DVD "Where Are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools" provided in the Toolkit. Reflect on the experience of viewing the DVD on the national experience of residential schools. What new facts did you learn? What difference does your enhanced awareness of the impacts of residential schools on generations of First Nation people make to your practice? Use reflective practice to look at your own practice of service delivery and how you may want to modify it to take into account the impact depicted. Record your reflections in your Toolkit Journal.

### **5.6 Yukon Impacts of Contact and Colonization**

The multiple negative impacts of contact and colonization and the intergenerational effects cannot be measured. First Nation people admit that there were some positive benefits of education and employment opportunities but on balance, the focus remains on the loss and devastation.

Contact brought with it severe disease that took the lives of many people. In some cases whole villages were wiped out by diseases for which the First Nation people had no resistance. Contact also brought people with different belief systems and cultural attitudes that were disrespectful of the people and their way of life. Yukon First Nation people have lived here for thousands of years, know the land and have a rich culture deeply embedded in everyday life and the challenges of living in this land.

The mainstream wage economy worked over time to erode the traditional livelihood of First Nation people. Development impacted traditional activities and wildlife populations. The building of the Alaska Highway led to the relocation of people from traditional villages to permanent communities along the highway corridor making the continuation of traditional lifestyles more difficult. It also brought an influx of people to the north which included the arrival of missionaries and residential schools.

Residential schools and the mandate of assimilation had very significant impacts on all First Nation people and communities. The forced removal of children from communities and the sexual, emotional and physical abuse experienced by some students devastated families and communities. Food was scarce and the children often hungry. They were punished for stealing food, speaking their own language or

talking to their sibling of a different gender as the boys and girls were strictly separated. The most precious resource of the First Nation families and communities were their children and they were taken away at 5 and 6 years of age, sometimes for years at a stretch. Many died in residential school and families were not always notified of the death.

The treatment of the First Nation people through the *Indian Act* took away their lands, traditional lifestyles and rights of self-determination. The land claim process has been the major vehicle by which the First Nation people are healing, restoring their way of life and establishing their rightful place as major economic, social and political forces in the Yukon.

The legacy of the multiple impacts includes loss of cultural identity and family/community integrity, addictions, social problems, dependency and poverty. The lack of parental nurturing while in residential school and the loss of parenting skills has resulted in more loss to communities. As child welfare agencies intervene to remove children at risk, the communities are left with the grief related to losing yet another generation of children.

## **Module 5: Impacts of Contact and Colonization**

### **Exercise #2: Significance of Yukon Impacts**

View the DVD "Strangers in Our Own Land" provided in the Toolkit. Reflect on the impacts identified in the written material and the DVDs. How might these impacts affect First Nation family and community life today? What can be done to address the negative results of the impacts that still affect individuals, families and communities? What commitment do you have to making a difference in the quality of community life? Record your reflections in your Toolkit Journal. Initiate a conversation with your supervisor, colleague or knowledgeable person about what you have learned and debrief how you are feeling about the information.

### **5.7 Intergenerational Health and Healing**

First Nations within the Yukon and throughout Canada have been actively addressing the impacts of contact and colonization. Initiatives funded by the federal government like the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the Yukon government have helped in beginning to reverse the legacy.

The evaluations of healing initiatives and programs throughout Canada have proven that cultural approaches and cultural revival make a strong contribution to the healing of individuals, families and communities. The reliance on culture as therapy requires a parallel commitment to ensuring that community members have access to the traditions and the teachings including language instruction and opportunities for land based cultural experiences.



## MODULE 6: YUKON FIRST NATION CULTURES AND VALUES



Module 6 provides a Yukon wide overview of cultural characteristics and values that are, to some extent, shared among all Yukon First Nations and to some extent with other First Nations across Canada.

### 6.1 *Diversity of Lifestyles*

Throughout Canada and in the Yukon, First Nation people blend the traditional and the modern in their lifestyles. In the Yukon, there is easy access to the land for hunting, fishing and other gathering activities. Cultural practices and traditional approaches to food gathering, seasonal activities, health and healing co-exist alongside more modern lifestyles, often within the same person or family.

#### *Similarities and Differences*

Each individual and family has a unique set of values that guide their everyday life and therefore, it is important that no assumptions are made about how individuals use or rely on common First Nation values in their lives. Each person and family needs to be assessed and understood as individuals within a relational context.

### 6.2 *Highlighted First Nation Values*

Effective communication is fundamental to good relationships. In order to establish and maintain effective communication with First Nation people and communities, it is important to recognize the traditional values that may be at play in the way First Nation people see the world. Perceptions and attitudes flowing from values have a powerful effect on behaviour. Values may operate more strongly in one culture or another but many of them have roots in our shared humanity. Some of the values that are often associated with traditional First Nation culture which remain a guiding force in many contemporary First Nation lives are as follows:

**Respect** - respect in a traditional First Nation sense is about holding other people, animals, plants and other offerings of Mother Earth as sacred. Respect demonstrates a deeply felt gratitude and compassion for natural things that a person comes into contact with. Elders of the community are held in high regard and respected for the experience in life they have gained. They are honoured. As a result, the relative age of individuals in communication makes a difference in how respect operates – a person is expected to defer to, and respect, someone older than them.

**Truth and Honesty** - telling the truth and ensuring honesty is seen as important. It is understood that in order to tell the truth to others, we need to be telling the truth to ourselves. For example, if you are at a community cultural gathering and are asked if you are comfortable, in order to be 'polite' you may answer yes. If you are not comfortable, your discomfort may be communicated through body language

and other nonverbal signals. Therefore, your words and behaviour may be seen as “not fitting together” which could impact your credibility and undermine trust. It is best to “walk your talk”.

**Humility** - connected to truth telling, is the value of humility. Traditionally, it was seen as rude to speak of your accomplishments. Also, in receiving compliments, it was important to downplay them. In mainstream society, people are urged to ‘network and sell themselves’ which is difficult to do in a competitive arena while remaining humble and totally honest.

**Hospitality and Generosity** - First Nation people hold hospitality as a high ideal. Traditionally, visitors were welcomed into homes and offered food and shelter if needed. The offer was always made generously and without expectation of repayment. Historically, even a camp far into the wilderness was made ready for visitors that may seek the safety of the camp when not occupied. Firewood and food was left, if possible. When the visitor left, they were expected to make the camp ready for the owner or next visitor. It was also expected that when the visitor and the owner next met, gratitude was expressed and a thank you offered. Hospitality and generosity remains a strong value in community life.

**Connection with the Land** - land is seen as a gift from Mother Nature. It is ‘on loan’ to human beings and we are expected to take good care of it for future generations. This is a concept of the responsibility for stewardship of the land. Traditional people live out their spirituality through ‘living life in a good way’. This includes time on the land and the expression of respect and spiritual connection to the land in daily activities.

**Spirituality** - spirituality was, and for some First Nation people remains, a very practical and fundamental part of daily living. The connection to spiritual support is provided by direct dialogue with Creator, Great Spirit, God or other helpers such as animals, birds and spirit helpers which may take the form of ancestors. Gratitude is expressed for the gifts of the day and guidance sought about the tasks of the day. Many people have become involved with organized religions and others have maintained more traditional beliefs. Some have found a comfortable way of integrating the two.

**Prayer** - prayer has been and remains an important part of First Nation life. Prayer was traditionally integrated into everyday life. This remains currently as prayer is often part of meetings and gatherings and individuals are respectfully invited to “pray in their own way”.

**Conservation** - “take only what we need and use all that we take” is a statement that sums up the traditional view to harvesting from the land. By contrast mainstream values and the media in particular, provide a picture of “success’ that is materialistic and in order to live it, a person has to consume a lot of resources. Many First Nation people live a life in between these two poles.

**Future Generations** - First Nation people living within a traditional perspective feel a strong connection to their ancestors and thank the ancestors for spiritual support and guidance. In addition, there is also a strong sense of the meaning of “being a good person,” which will translate into being a respected ancestor for future

generations. Children and youth are seen as the new generation and are connected to the Elders for their cultural education. Childrearing is seen as an honour and a serious responsibility.

**Interconnectedness** - all things of the earth including plants, animals and other inanimate natural parts of the earth are seen as connected. It is thought that the true nature of our existence can only be seen through understanding connections. This is in direct contrast to scientific theory and contemporary techniques for analysis that stress 'breaking things down'. Frameworks for understanding connections used by people connected to historical and traditional teachings include the four directions (north, east, south, west), four aspects of self (mind, body, spirit and heart) four stages of life (infant/child, youth, adult, elder) and the elements (earth, water, sky/air, and fire).

**Equality** - people are seen as equal to other living creatures and each other. As a result, it is not appropriate to 'put yourself above' others. Leadership is often demonstrated within certain situations or circumstances and then a person 'returns to the group'.

**Harmony and Balance** - harmony and balance are highly valued as conflict is seen as a threat to the survival and well-being of the community. Conflict or illness is seen as the result of imbalance within the person, family, clan or community. In order to restore harmony, balance must be restored. Traditional medicine practices are directed toward the restoration of balance.

**Extended Family** - the extended family is a basic unit of social organization and extends far beyond the limits of the nuclear family. Membership in the family has rights associated with it in terms of asking for help or support and also has responsibilities in being expected to fulfil the duty to help others within the family if you are in a position to do so.

**Collective** - traditional First Nation society is a collective society and traditionally, the survival and interests of the whole society were held above the interests of the individual members. Within the collective, every person had their place and their contribution to make. All contributions made by individuals were seen as valuable and as good as the contributions made by others. Decisions were made on consensus with the support of strong leadership.

**Open-mindedness and Commitment to Mutual Understanding** - high value is placed on being open-minded and non-judgmental. It is understood that only through open communication without pre-judgment can true mutual understanding be achieved.

**Sharing and Caring** - fundamental to the success of a collective society is the concept of sharing what you have and making contributions to the well-being of other members of the group. The caring flows out of a concern for all and is the basis for the sharing.

**Humour** - humour is valued as an important element in relationships, having fun and relieving tension. In traditional First Nation culture the humour is more likely to be self-deprecating (making jokes about yourself rather than making jokes about others).

**Gender Specific Roles and Responsibilities** - traditionally, the extended family and clan had very important responsibilities in raising girls to be women and boys to be men. Specific aunts or uncles as directed by the Elders played important roles within some linguistic groups. The 'coming of age' was marked by ceremony and was very important to the whole community. Some tasks were usually gender specific although men and women did what was needed for the benefit of the children and other community members.

**Gratitude** - the expression of gratitude for all that is offered by Mother Earth everyday is seen as a fundamental requirement for ongoing abundance. If there is no gratitude, there will be no food. Gratitude is connected to respect and together they ensure relationships between people and the natural world are not disrupted.

**Attention to the Day and the Season** - as a human being is considered most balanced, respectful and grateful if they live in harmony with the natural world and their own spiritual guidance, one is considered as taking risks in planning for the future. It is a much simpler matter to listen and understand what the Creator wants you to do today, than one year from now. There is also the right time of year for doing certain things depending on the season.

**Shame and Social Control** - shame is traditionally used as a powerful tool for social control. If someone breeches a law, they are seen to bring shame on themselves, their families, their clan and community. In the clan system, wrongdoers were brought before the clan leaders. Clan leaders made a decision about compensation by the person, their family and clan. The compensation was paid to the person who was the victim of the offence and their clan. These were very strict rules that were obeyed without question. Systems of First Nation community justice were based on the principle of shame and follow traditional laws of compensation in order to restore balance. If all else failed or if the offence was particularly serious, the person may have been banished.

**Cultural Activities** - each linguistic group has its own traditions of songs, dances, drumming, ceremonies, designs, skills (carpenters, boat builders etc.), art including carving, peacekeeping practices and medicine. The cultural activities may differ between families. Within the value set of most First Nation citizens, families and communities, the values expressed are a mix of traditional and mainstream. Traditional values are conveyed through oral tradition so it is often difficult to access the traditional knowledge in any written form. It is important not to make assumptions about what values are at play. It is appropriate to inquire about interests, priorities or 'what is the best way to proceed'.

## **Module 6: Yukon First Nation Cultures and Values**

### **Exercise #1: Human Values**

Review the values as described above and identify one value that is in alignment with what you have been taught in your culture and one value that is different from what you know to be true for you and your family. Record your insights in your Toolkit Journal.

### **6.3 Applying What You Know to Practice**

In working with the toolkit so far you have learned about Yukon First Nation people both historically and now, Yukon land claims and self government agreements, values and cultural competence. This section is to provide guidance on how to use this knowledge in your practice.

#### **Relationship Development**

In developing a relationship with individuals or families, it is important that you bring with you what you have learned. Without relying on potentially dangerous stereotypes, some of the challenges you may face in developing relationships are:

***Mistrust of institutions and authority*** – due to the impacts and the historical relationship between First Nation people and individuals representing institutions, the development of trust may be more challenging than usual. Understanding the history and current legacy patterns, the advice is to be patient and to not take the mistrust personally. The problem may be with the “faceless institution or authority” that you represent, not with you as a person. Allowing people to get to know you and a little about your personal side may help overcome the situation as you are seen as less of an “instrument of the government or agency” and more as a human being that wants to provide assistance in some form.

***Anger*** – anger comes from all of the history as well as more current experiences of racism and judgment, abuse of power and victimization. Individuals with a history of abuse or intergenerational effects of residential school or alcoholism may express high levels of anger, specifically if they feel threatened. Once again, the advice is to not take it personally, realize it may have nothing to do with the realities or ‘facts’ of the situation - be patient and caring.

***Avoidance*** – a survival mechanism that has worked for First Nation people for a long time is to avoid confrontation and situations they do not want to deal with. This pattern is reinforced by the legacy that has been described. Acknowledge that you may have to be creative or innovative and always patient in waiting for the right opportunity. The key words are respect, honesty and patience.

#### **Permission to Use Cultural Information**

Although cultural information is written and published in various ways, it is important to ask permission to use the information if it is to be included in other documents or educational materials, for example. Advice may be needed to ensure the information is being used within the intended context and that the meaning has not been confused in the way the information has been presented.

#### **Understanding Diversity in Assessment and Service Delivery**

A family for the purpose of this section is considered two or more individuals that consider themselves a family. Family roles include protection, support, collective economic unit, passing on cultural and historical knowledge, sharing beliefs, teaching values, keeping the family stories, etc.

The diversity within and between families should be fully considered during the assessment and service delivery phases of relationship development. The degree of acculturation is an important aspect of assessment in beginning to understand a family and family dynamics. This diversity also plays out on a community level. Some individuals and families are aligned with a traditional way of life and struggle to keep alive their unique identity and continuity with the centuries-old holistic way of life given to them by their hunting-gathering ancestors. Others have adopted a way of life more aligned with mainstream, market oriented, industrial economy.

The fundamental assessment question is “where is this individual / family / community on the spectrum of acculturation?” Dimensions to be considered are: level of formal education; knowledge and use of their First Nation language; planning horizon (a day, a week a season or 25 years etc.); time they have spent away from community and purpose (education, employment, incarceration, street involved lifestyle etc.); number of siblings they have in or out of the community; standard of living, housing, nature of employment and source of income and access to community power bases. Other aspects of assessment include size and structure of family including transient ‘members’; use of traditional food / medicine (depends on access); wholistic perspective (mind, body, spirit, heart) and connection to nature; formal or informal social support and health / social knowledge and sources (professionals, Elders etc.). Values, beliefs and tradition need to be included in learning about the family including values around family and traditional land base; family gatherings; traditional practices; knowledge and medicine; and access to sources of cultural knowledge (grandparents, aunts and uncles).

Understanding how decisions are made and the prevailing priorities in the family often come down to whether economic considerations (job and income) are more important than social, cultural and community roles and responsibilities. Time with the family will provide information on economic versus socio-cultural values as primary; family roles and responsibilities; matriarchal / patriarchal lineage; roles of mother, father, nuclear family, extended family, aunts and uncles; on the land roles and responsibilities; community roles and responsibilities; gender roles; child care arrangements and formal or informal employment; and sharing of economic base and food. It is not uncommon to see grandparents very engaged in parenting grandchildren. Understanding the social and cultural context of family issues and problems is fundamental to being able to provide relevant assistance.

Families may experience feelings of poverty related to loss of culture, identity, land base etc. that worsen the economic poverty. Extended family demands often put more pressure on families. Addictions and related problems (disorganization, abuse, neglect etc.) are often linked to intergenerational issues related to residential school, colonization, alcohol, violence and other trauma. There are also many community strengths and sources of family, community, cultural and land based wealth even in the face of economic need. More traditional families are usually less mobile than those who are more acculturated. Community dynamics also need to be studied and understood. There may be social distance or divisions between sub-groups, sometimes longstanding fights or feuds that affect how you might want to ask people to come together in groups. Some individuals and families find

innovative balance in gaining access to economic opportunities offered in the mainstream economy while remaining connected to culture, community and land.

The degree of acculturation and where an individual and family sits in relation to the dimensions identified is important to understand because it helps to determine: the degree of comfort with hospitals, institutions, agencies and professionals; real and perceived access to institutionally based programs and services and related trust; access to health or social information and resources; access to social support; functional level of family; and appropriateness of written material, one to one teaching and groups.

### **Conflict Resolution and Preserving Relationships**

In culturally competent relational practice the primary focus is on the quality and capacity of the relationship and the development of mutual understanding and trust. Conflict or disruption in the relationship is considered within the context of a mutual commitment to preserving and building relationships. It is important to identify the relevant personal and professional values and beliefs active in producing or potentially resolving tension or problems. Assess the quality of relationships and identify the degree of consensus or divergence on the issue.

Develop the principles and process for resolution with full engagement of those involved and set realistic goals for resolution ensuring the people most affected are honoured in the process and final resolution. Provide time for individuals to reflect on the process and share their insights. Remember that we all have a history and with that history we bring issues, vulnerabilities and emotional and spiritual wounds that call out for gentle and kind responses. Define ways of identifying the 'end of the process' in terms of a solution or lack of progress.

#### **6.4 Respect in Action**

In reviewing the First Nation values "respect" is always placed first and foremost. In cross-cultural situations, it is often confusing to know what others think is respectful or disrespectful behaviour. This section provides some guidelines of what kinds of behaviour or actions would be viewed as respectful within a First Nation context:

**Dress Code** – modest clothing that is appropriate for the work you are doing and still looks clean and presentable is seen as respectful. In particular, when visiting Elders or attending community events where Elders and children are present, modest dress is most appropriate. In traditional First Nation society, women always wore long dresses with modest necklines and there are stories of women out trapping in dresses. When women began wearing pants for outdoor work, they would hide if visitors came to camp. Men were rarely seen in public with no shirt or even short-sleeved shirts and did not usually wear short pants. The influence of the Christian churches reinforced this sense of modesty in the dress of both men and women dress. Although the young people today are seen wearing a variety of dress reflecting modern fashion trends, in the smaller communities particularly, the Elders still value modesty.

**Offering Food** – offering food to a visitor is a sign of respect and hospitality. It is important to accept food and make sure it is eaten or taken home for consumption later. Not wasting food is seen as honouring the source of the food and an insurance against hungry times in the future. If food is not respected, then the Creator may not provide more. If you are a vegetarian or have other food related restrictions, it is important you share that information and accept the food you can eat.

**Use Everything** – the more modern view of ‘take what you need and use what you take’ sums up how traditional society used everything taken from the land. If an animal was hunted or food gathered, it was all used – there was no waste. It was a way of honoring or respecting the land and ensuring abundance in the future.

**Communication** – in traditional society, communication between men and women had many rules and protocols about who could speak to one another and who could not. Women speaking to men that were not related to them was not always acceptable in some situations and linguistic groups. That translated into current times in that the gender of the person offering services is sometimes a help or a hindrance in delivering services. When you first meet community people, in particular Elders, it is important not to be too loud or gregarious. Give yourself, and them, time to get to know you. Understand that it is acceptable to have periods of silence during communication. Talking too much can be overwhelming to people who have spent a lot of time on the land and quietly pursuing a traditional life.

**Public Use of Alcohol and Drugs** – particularly in the small communities but even in Whitehorse, public use of alcohol and drugs where consumption can be observed by people you provide service to can be a problem. To refrain from public use is a sign of respect for all of the pain and dysfunction these substances have brought to First Nation life over the years. In addition, many of your co-workers have family experience with intergenerational effects of substance use or may be actively using or in recovery. In some cases, depending on the purpose of the gathering, refraining from public use is seen as the most respectful action and the best investment in your reputation and credibility in the community.

**Social Life** – managing your social life in a small community is a challenge. It is important you not isolate yourself or only relate to a small group of co-workers. Attend community events, join groups and meet people. Small communities have their unique social dynamics and it may be helpful to seek the advice of well-respected colleagues and friends in navigating the world of work and social life.

## **Module 6: Yukon First Nation Cultures and Values**

### **Exercise #2: Application to Service Delivery Practice**

How do you plan to integrate what you have learned to your practice and how you contribute to the design and delivery of programs and services? What questions will guide your further learning? What sources of information and guidance do you plan to seek to learn more? Record your insights in your Toolkit Journal.

## MODULE 7: APPLICATION IN PALLIATIVE CARE AND INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS



Knowledge and skills related to cultural orientation and protocols are called upon in different ways depending on the setting. The Pallium program set out to strengthen palliative care throughout Canada and had a stream of activities linked to palliative care in First Nation or Aboriginal populations. One project undertaken and completed was a set of video segments on Aboriginal palliative care. The video segments were developed with the help of Yukon based expertise and under the guidance of a Yukon Elder. They are included here as additional material and will be particularly relevant to those working in an institutional setting or those supporting families experiencing the loss of a loved one. The full curriculum and workshops based on the curriculum are available through the Yukon Palliative Care program or Gaye Hanson, Whitehorse.

The list of video segments (2–7 minutes in length) all contained in “In Our Own Voices – Aboriginal Perspectives on Hospice Palliative Care” which is included in your toolkit are as follows:

***Connecting with Self and Others*** - reflective practice and “stop, look & listen”

***Institutional Dynamics in Communication*** - a doctor and an Elder communicate in a way that connects and engages each other

***Responding to Aboriginal Diversity*** - a doctor and an educated Aboriginal woman talk about illness

***Appropriate Family Support*** - two different approaches to providing family support to a mother with an ill child

***Compassion in Less Than a Minute*** - a brief segment that speaks to how a care provider can connect to a patient or client in a compassionate way without spending a lot of extra time

***Historical Impacts of Contact Manifested in a Care Situation*** - a counsellor works with a family to talk about palliative care options for their loved one

***A Journey to Our Roots*** - a look at a person finding her way back to more traditional beliefs after a serious accident

***Communication Within the Family*** - a family uses a talking circle with support from a guide to look at options for a loved one and the family at end-of-life

***Planning Care: Involving a Patient in End-of-Life Decisions*** - a care team has a case conference to discuss how to engage a patient in end-of-life decision making

***Planning Care: Responding to a Request to Die at Home*** - a care team has a case conference to look at options for supporting a home death

**Planning Care: Working with Local Authority Figures** - a care team does some problem solving around a request for information from an elected leader of an Aboriginal community that is not a member of the immediate family

### **Module 7: Application in Palliative Care and Institutional Settings**

#### **Exercise # 1: Connecting With Self and Others**

View the first segment "Connecting with Self and Others" and when the segment comes to "pause for discussion", write down the answers to the reflective questions outlined at the beginning of the segment in your Toolkit Journal. Listen to the summary of teaching points and record any additional thoughts.

### **Module 7: Application in Palliative Care and Institutional Settings**

#### **Exercise # 2: Learning a Little More**

Select one additional video segment. View the segment and when the segment comes to "pause for discussion", write down the answers to the reflective questions outlined at the beginning of the segment in your Toolkit Journal. Listen to the summary of teaching points and record any additional thoughts.



## MODULE 8: APPLICATION IN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH



Mental Health is a challenging area for the application of the principles and practices of cultural competence. The way in which individual mental health issues surface may be different in First Nation, Métis or Inuit communities. This is due, in part, to the unique historical experiences and the family and community cultural contexts. Mental health services may be limited in rural and remote areas and there may be gaps in specialist services even in Whitehorse. There is a growing awareness that the pattern in which an individual has both addictions and mental health issues at the same time is very common among Aboriginal populations. Therefore, the design and delivery of community and residential treatment programs and services need to take into account co-occurring disorders as the rule rather than the exception to the rule.

In order to provide a module on applications in community mental health, we have drawn upon the resources of the Cultural Safety Committee of the First Nation, Inuit, Métis Advisory Committee (FNIMAC) of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). The Advisory Committee work has been underway for three years. The Committee works from the foundational premise that many mental health problems co-occur with addictions issues. One of the initiatives of the FNIMAC is the result of a collaborative partnership with the Native Mental Health Association and Mood Disorders Association of Canada in the production of the DVD *"Glimpses of Light"*. Interior Health (British Columbia) was also a funding contributor to the production of the film.

*"Glimpses of Light"* is introduced on screen at the beginning of the film in the following way: "This film brings together voices from diverse cultural backgrounds sharing life stories about the paths travelled while navigating their life experience of mental illness. These messages are meant to act as a catalyst for ongoing discussion to deepen our understanding of the needs and resilience of people who experience mental illness and in particular Aboriginal people and their families."

None of the individuals you will see on screen are actors - they are volunteers with lived experience.

## **Module 8: Application in Community Mental Health**

### **Exercise # 1: *Glimpses of Light***

View the 15 minute film and reflect on the following questions:

1. How are the concepts of “disconnection” and “reconnection” helpful in care provision, given the historical context of residential school, child welfare interventions, intergenerational effects and loss of cultural identity?
2. What suggestions were made for alternatives to the biomedical model?
3. How can service providers provide care for the whole person, including honouring spiritual beliefs and practices?
4. How can a need for a safe place, sanctuary or refuge be met in the community or institutional setting?
5. What is particularly “culturally competent” about the way in which the service providers thought about or provided care?
6. What mistakes were made by service providers?
7. What is most memorable about the stories?

Record your reflections in your journal; share the film and your reflections with a colleague and discuss your thought related to your practice in future.



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