

Weaving Themes from the Conference

Gathering on the unceded territory of the Musqueam and Tsawwassen
Checking in with our hearts: who you are, what you're doing here, where you're going
A space for connecting, learning, reflecting on our practice
Lending each other courage
As we navigate complexity and break down silos
To serve children and youth

Beginning with truth
With voices that were not welcomed for a long time, and who never left
Shouts to close that door
And bringing us to the opening of the Big House door
Where there isn't just smoke but prayer
And the figures that teach us about good and bad and right and wrong
Surround by cedar, surrounded by hope
Grasping the slender threads of language
And the reminder in the midst of despair
That we are mountains

The four pillars that become teachings:
Honesty, trust, respect, and integrity
Stories of cultural resurgence and rebuilding
Coming back to our circles and our fires
And our connection to Mother Earth
Humanity in the centre. Child in the centre.
Coming back to who you are,
And the reminder we can't do it alone.

Learning from the adaptive and resilience of
Indigenous cultures and ways of being and knowing
From buffalo robes to star blankets
Of doing innovation since time immemorial

Being responsible to the next generations of youth
Young people trying to ceremonialize their own lives
(often with risky behaviour)
Instead of focusing on their deficits and labels
Asserting that they are sacred and wise
From the invisible to the profoundness of being seen
How do we tell them they belong?

Working with the tools that we have
And connecting with other networks

The little one holding up the diamond
The reminder of the children in the centre
The why we do this work

The need for kinship and connection is universal
Maslow had the Blackfoot teachings wrong
Before all comes connection
In the workplace too
Modeling vulnerability based trust
Doing good conflict instead of lateral violence
Needing lateral accountability that will carry us
To lateral liberation
Remembering nothing about us without us
For policies too

Learning about a Métis cultural understanding
And the role of culture in the
Health and wellbeing of Indigenous youth
Gathering around the kitchen table to
Explore quality of life
And diving into mental health services
For children and youth

Getting curious about anxiety disorders
In children with autism
Where anxiety is present but not universal
We can look at the exact same thing and
See something different
Looking not just at the child
But also the family
Where the fear stops the child in their tracks
What to be careful of for kids on the spectrum
If we figure out the anxieties
We can do something about it

Beginning again by shaking hands with our hearts
Asking what could be
There is more to you than you can see
Actions + inspiration – roadblocks = possibility
Pushing for change
And collapsing stigma by really seeing them
Did you know you can't walk across Canada
Without encountering winter?
When we're connected to our purpose
We can walk through any storm
And what makes it incredible are the relationships
Remembering the words of wisdom from Walter
"Don't quit"

Learning about strategies for residential settings
And the relationship between trauma and addiction

Centering the voices and expertise of lived experience
The powerful impact of being seen
The struggle of the funding stopping at 20
But autism doesn't stop at 20
Getting in the canoe together
Creating a sense of place and belonging
And doing culture together
In community you are never an orphan
Addressing the systems gap
On reserve, off reserve jurisdictions
A soccer team as family in the urban setting
The need to create "place" and help find your people

Closing with head hands hearts
Ending with story
With connection
With song
Lending each other courage
Sending each other off in a good way
As we navigate complexity and break down silos
To serve children and youth