

A Landscape of Community Change

Strengthening our response
to the Truth & Reconciliation
Calls to Action and the
Reclaiming Power & Place
Calls for Justice



About This Work

The Women and HIV/AIDS Initiative (WHAI) is a community response to HIV and AIDS among cis and Trans women, 2-Spirit and Non-Binary people in Ontario* with a focus on the structural and societal factors that increase these populations' risk factors for HIV. Through a collective impact model, WHAI aims to collaborate with Indigenous communities, among others, to reduce HIV transmission, enhance local capacity to address HIV and AIDS, including systemic risk factors for HIV, and foster environments that support these populations in their HIV and AIDS-related realities.

As an Initiative, we are committed to reconciliation work with Indigenous communities. We believe that reconciliation is an ongoing individual and collective process that requires commitment and active participation.

We seek to ensure that our practices of community development and community change are rooted in understanding the legacy of colonialism and disrupting systems that have been created and rooted in colonial practices. Outlined below are examples from the **94 Calls to Action** from the [*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*](#) and the **231 Calls for Justice** from [*Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*](#). These examples were selected due to their alignment with WHAI work; however, there are many more that are not included here. The intention of this document is to draw attention to specific Calls to Action and Calls for Justice, strengthen our commitment to reconciliation work, and identify steps we can take to build our work in communities across Ontario.

* WHAI seeks to be informed by and amplify the experiences of those who face structural discrimination and exclusion, impacting HIV risk and the health outcomes of those living with HIV. As such, our work focuses on engagement with cis and Trans women, 2-Spirit and Non-Binary people who are living with HIV, and / or who are African, Caribbean and Black, Indigenous, newcomers, people who use drugs or substances, people who have experiences with violence and / or have been / are incarcerated. Within these communities, our work includes those who are pregnant or parenting, living with different abilities and represent an age range spanning from young adult to seniors.



How to Use These Resources



This booklet has an accompanying poster. Our hope is that these resources will ignite conversation, raise awareness and strengthen our commitment to the recommendations through WHAI's work to build community capacity with AIDS Service Organizations and their community partners. By strengthening our understanding of the recommendations and seeking ways to build them into our work, we seek to address the realities that impact the health and well-being of Indigenous communities. WHAI's commitment to rupturing systems of white supremacy and colonization is deepened with the intersection of our work and the **Calls to Action** and the **Calls for Justice**.

ACCOMPANYING POSTER: A LANDSCAPE OF COMMUNITY CHANGE

This booklet can be used alongside the **accompanying poster** which includes a landscape illustration of the earth, water, sky, various plants and creatures. The illustration was created by visual artist Stephanie Babji in collaboration with WHAI. Stephanie met with WHAI multiple times, reviewed the drafted resources, and reflected on how her art could be used to bring a visual display to strengthen the community capacity-building work at hand. The elements in the poster were selected to help symbolize and provide analogies to the **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice**. This symbolism integrates Indigenous teachings but also leaves space for participants to share connections they find based on their work and experience.

There is a series of questions on the poster intended to help foster dialogue, as well as a "Deeper Meaning" section which offers connections between the elements in the poster and the **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice**.

As you review these, consider the work you do, ways you already weave in the Calls, and strategies you may draw on to strengthen your work.



Download the
accompanying poster
at whai.ca.



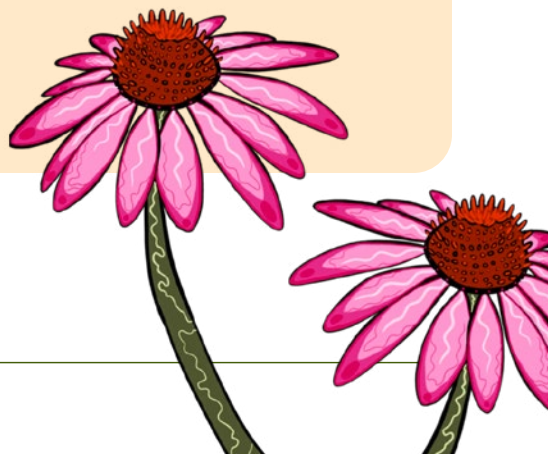
Facilitating With Community



Consider facilitating a discussion with colleagues, community partners or other community members by selecting various elements within the poster to review alongside the corresponding calls in the booklet. Conversation may focus on the symbolism proposed, the underlying factors that led to the recommendation, as well as reflection on current realities and how it impacts the health and well-being of Indigenous communities. Further discussion could encourage learning more about the calls in question and the role individuals and communities have in enacting meaningful change. Consider revisiting this resource on an ongoing basis to reflect on how the work you've done impacts your view of the image and its relation to the **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice**.

TIPS FOR BEFORE FACILITATING:

- **Review this booklet and poster before facilitating** so you are familiar with the context they were created within, the content, and ideas for building the work. This will help you to hold space for shared conversation with more familiarity with the content.
- **Connect with Indigenous groups locally** to understand local practices (i.e., circle directions, medicines, or even their own symbolism for the elements on the poster). Share these learnings at the beginning of your workshop.
- **Provide participants with access to the booklet and poster**, as well as the **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice** before the workshop so that they can familiarize themselves and begin thinking about how they may relate to their work.
- **Be creative.** Integrate your own facilitation style. If you're comfortable, use arts-based or participatory-based approaches that foster the group's connection to learning and change-making.
- If you are facilitating online, **consider using the annotation function on Zoom.**
- If you are facilitating in person **consider using sticky notes of various colours** so the group can identify aspects of the poster that resonate with them or ones they would like to learn more about.



Facilitation Outline

Below is an example of a facilitation outline you can adapt to fit your local needs:

- 1** Welcome participants:
 - Provide a local land acknowledgement and any other remarks about shared values through the session.
 - If you have consulted with local Indigenous groups, also provide some information about that work and how it is being woven into this session.
 - You may also want to invite people to introduce themselves if they don't know each other.
- 2** Provide an agenda and background about the work:
 - Provide background information about WHAI, the resource, and the process undertaken to create it.
 - Provide a brief overview of the Reclaiming Power and Place and the Truth and Reconciliation reports.
 - Provide some background about the artist who created the visuals (Stephanie Babij) and how the visual was created.
 - Ensure everyone is familiar with both the booklet and poster.
- 3** Facilitate the discussion:
 - Decide whether to begin with the discussion questions on the poster, or a selection of various elements in the “Deeper Dive” section and the related Calls.
 - Encourage people to both connect with the symbolism provided, but to also explore other possible connections between the visual and the **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice**.
 - Encourage participants to draw on their work and experience as they move through this process.
- 4** Wrap up with identifying next steps to strengthen the work collectively and individually.
- 5** Evaluate how the session went so you can work to improve each session as you go.

Remember to adapt your facilitation based on your personal style and comfort, local Indigenous practices and teachings, as well as the community you're working with.



THE LEADERSHIP OF INDIGENOUS ALLIES IN THIS WORK:

Keep in mind that the intention behind this tool is not to serve as an expert guide of Indigenous realities, or to teach participants about Indigenous symbolism or culture. Rather it is to hold a space for shared dialogue in our collective accountability to respond to the **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice**. The **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice** are a road map for all of us to be familiar with, and find ways to weave into our work. The poster is intended to be a visual way of conceptualizing the **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice** within the context of our work. Facilitators and participants should understand the importance of taking leadership in their own anti-Indigenous racism work and walking alongside Indigenous communities to respond to the **Calls** within these reports. **We welcome any feedback you have as you draw on these resources in your community.**

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Reconciliation work is decolonizing work, and centers the use of Indigenous ways of knowing.

SMUDGING

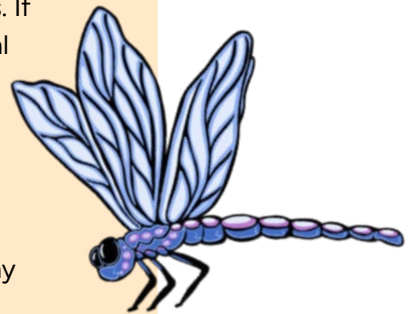
This may include smudging, which involves the burning of Indigenous medicines as a means of cleansing. Facilitators should familiarize themselves with the smudging practices that are unique to the territories in which they live and work, as different medicines may be used in different territories. If smudging is being offered, facilitators should explore local sourcing and purchasing of medicines and seek the guidance of local Indigenous leaders.

FACILITATION STYLES

The use of Indigenous gathering and facilitation styles may also be explored. For example, Sharing Circles promote equality, respect, honesty, dialogue, and a sense of community¹. An important consideration when facilitating a Sharing Circle will be the direction to begin, either clockwise or counter-clockwise, which is determined by the traditions of the territory of which you reside or work².

OTHER TEACHINGS & WISDOM

Local Indigenous organizations and leaders may have other teachings and wisdom to offer about facilitation that can be woven into your work. Seeking the wisdom and leadership of local Indigenous teachers is an invaluable part of reconciliation work.




¹ Sharing Circles - Pass The Feather passthefeather.ca/sharing-circles/

² Native-Land.ca - Our home on native land native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/

Our Commitments



The following sections outline firstly, the **Calls to Action** and secondly, the **Calls for Justice**. We have selected and highlighted the calls that align with WHAI work and commitments, along with calls that are relevant and important for all of us to consider. We have also included tools for further learning  and strategies to continue **practicing reconciliation work**. When reviewing these sections, we encourage the reader to do a more fulsome review of both reports, and identify next steps to further learning and to deepen local community work.

Calls to Action

Examples of commitments WHAI has made based on **Calls to Action** from the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's** final report that align with WHAI work.

- 1

In alignment with **Call to Action 18**, we aim to ensure our work acknowledges that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of Canadian policies (i.e., residential schools) and to recognize and integrate health-care rights of Aboriginal people identified in international law, constitutional law and under the Treaties.



ARTICLE


[Confronting Racism within the Canadian Healthcare System: Systemic Exclusion of First Nations from Quality and Consistent Care](#)

FILM

[The Unforgotten](#)

- 2

In alignment with **Call to Action 19**, we aim to look toward published measurable goals and evaluation of progress that closes the gaps in health equity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, including such indicators as infant mortality, maternal health, infant and child health issues, disease and more, along with the availability of appropriate health services.



ARTICLE

[Confronting medical colonialism and obstetric violence in Canada](#)

VIDEO

[Returning Birthing Practices to Indigenous Communities](#)



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- 3 In alignment with **Call to Action 20**, we aim to ensure our work recognizes, respects and addresses the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit and off-reserve Aboriginal Peoples.



ARTICLE

[Access to Health Services as a Social Determinant of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Health](#)

VIDEO

[Breaking down the barriers Indigenous people face in Canada's health-care system](#)

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- 4 In alignment with **Call to Action 21**, we aim to integrate work that supports and advocates for sustainable funding to support existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual harms caused by residential schools.



RESOURCE

[Healing Lodges across Ontario](#)

VIDEO

[Where are the Children: Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools](#)

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- 5 In alignment with **Call to Action 22**, we aim to ensure our work reflects, honours and uplifts the value of Aboriginal healing practices, and uses these practices in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders requested by Aboriginal patients.



RESOURCE

[Local Aboriginal Health Access Centres](#)

WEBINAR

[Traditional Indigenous Medicine in North America](#)

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- 6 In alignment with **Call to Action 23**, we aim to support and advocate for the meaningful employment of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field in a way that treats them with respect, retains them and supports them, including by offering access to cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.



ARTICLE

[A Journey We Walk Together: Strengthening Indigenous Cultural Competency in Health Organizations](#)

PODCAST

[Interior Voices, Episode 13: Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention](#)

- 7 In alignment with **Call to Action 24**, we aim to support medical and nursing students to build cultural competency by taking relevant training for Aboriginal health-care issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous teaching practices, intercultural competency training, conflict resolution training, human rights and anti-racism training.



RESOURCE

[San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training](#)

VIDEO

[Indigenous Knowledge to Close Gaps in Indigenous Health](#)

- 8 In alignment with **Call to Action 55**, we encourage all levels of government to provide annual reports and current data to demonstrate progress toward reconciliation. Examples include information about the health and well-being of Aboriginal children – including Métis and Inuit children – child welfare involvement, education and income rates, health indicators, legal system involvement, experiences of violence and discrimination, and the availability of appropriate health services.



VIDEO

[Indigenous Identity, Race, and Ethnicity Data Collection in Healthcare](#)



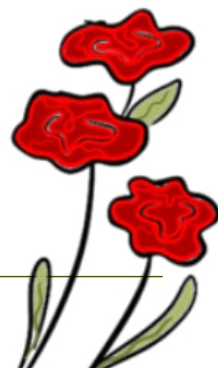
Calls for Justice

Examples of commitments WHAI has made based on **Calls for Justice** from the **Reclaiming Power and Place** report that align with WHAI work.

We have worked to summarize these, with the hope that the reader will consult the fulsome **Reclaiming Power and Place** report for more information. In addition to these **Calls for Justice** that are most relevant to our work, we encourage all allies in the work to review all sections of the **Calls for Justice**, with a focus on the sections about ensuring “access to their cultures and languages in order to restore, reclaim and revitalize their cultures and identities;” the rights to health and wellness, including holistic, accessible, wraparound and trauma-informed services on an equitable basis; the establishment of community-based programs to support survivors and healing programs that are led by Elders, grandmothers and other Knowledge Keepers; and the rights and leadership of Indigenous communities in child welfare practices. We also note the intersectional identification of addressing realities of poverty and economic inequity, housing needs, the employment of Indigenous people as leaders in health, wellness and safety work and the critical role of training everyone who works in health, social, legal and extractive industries in order for lasting and fulsome change to happen. We hope the following examples are useful as you journey through the report.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICE PROVIDERS

- 1 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.1**, we aim to work to ensure we collaborate with Indigenous people as experts in caring for and healing themselves, knowing that health and wellness services are most effective when they are grounded in the practices, culture and values of the groups they're for, and are designed and delivered by the Indigenous people they are serving.
- 2 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.2**, we aim to work to integrate and foster practices that honour healing from trauma including intergenerational, multigenerational and complex trauma, led by (or in partnership with) Indigenous people.
- 3 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.3**, we aim to integrate and foster prevention practices for health and community awareness, including programming related to suicide prevention, sex work safety and rights, sexual health, mental health and 2SLGBTQQIA sex positivity.
- 4 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.4**, we aim to foster practices and provide necessary support for programs that revitalize Indigenous health and wellness including land-based practices, ceremony and health-focused practices. Specific programs may include but are not limited to those within prison systems and legal systems, healing centres, hospitals and rehabilitation centres.



5 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.5**, we support work that provides specialized and intentional programming for Indigenous people offered in Indigenous languages.

6 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.6**, we aim to support Indigenous led education for anyone involved in providing service to Indigenous people about colonial history, structures of power, systemic oppression, and local cultures and practices to inform proper and appropriate care.

7 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.7**, we aim to support the equitable funding of Indigenous Peoples to train and work in the area of health and wellness.

8 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.8**, we commit to creating well-funded opportunities and socio-economic incentives that support and encourage Indigenous people to work within the health and wellness fields within their communities.

9 In alignment with **Call for Justice 7.9**, we commit to developing and implementing awareness and education programs for Indigenous children and youth on grooming and sexual exploitation.



CALLS FOR ALL CANADIANS

As the **Reclaiming Power and Place** report has shown, each person has a role to play in order to combat violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Beyond those Calls aimed at governments or at specific industries or service providers, we encourage every Canadian to consider how they can give life to these **Calls for Justice**.

- 10 In alignment with **Call for Justice 15.1**, we call on all Canadians to commit to being active, in condemning hate and violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.
- 11 In alignment with **Call for Justice 15.2**, we call on all Canadians to be active in decolonization efforts by learning and spreading the true history of Canada and Indigenous people in your region, and beyond.
- 12 In alignment with **Call for Justice 15.3**, we call on all Canadians to read the Reclaiming Power and Place report and use it to help understand and acknowledge the violation of human and Indigenous rights.
- 13 In alignment with **Call for Justice 15.4**, we call on all Canadians to become strong allies by actively working to dismantle systems of oppression in every interaction.
- 14 In alignment with **Call for Justice 15.5**, we call on all Canadians to identify and speak out against racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia and transphobia, and encourage communities of care that do to same.
- 15 In alignment with **Call for Justice 15.6**, we call on all Canadians to prioritize the safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people through supporting their independent creation of self-determined solutions.
- 16 In alignment with **Call for Justice 15.7**, we call on all Canadians to honour, learn about and practise Indigenous principles of relationship specific to those Nations or communities in your local area and work, to help foster kindness, love and respect in every area of our lives, in particular, in all of your relationships with Indigenous Peoples.
- 17 In alignment with **Call for Justice 15.8**, we call on all Canadians to insist that all levels of government act on the Calls for Justice in a way that follows the important principles set out in the report.



Practising Reconciliation



WHA! is committed to responding to the **Calls to Action** and **Calls for Justice**. As a network, we can do the work of reconciliation in many ways. This includes unpacking our own personal reflections related to reconciliation, as well as thinking about our WHA! work with allies, partners and Elders. Below are some examples of how we can strengthen our commitment to this work.

READ...

- And familiarize yourself with **relevant and important documents**. These include but are not limited to the National Inquiry's Final Report and the TRC Calls to Action and Executive Summary, which you can even listen to online. Review all of the sections in the Calls for Justice and then focus on those that are relevant to your community.
- **Stories and articles by Indigenous writers** to learn more about history and reconciliation. Many reading lists are available online for you to look through.



READING LIST

[Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund Recommended Resources](#)

LEARN...

- **About treaties and territories of Indigenous Peoples**, including First Nations people, Métis and Inuit people, regardless of status. Read treaties relevant to the region you're working in to learn about the land you are gathered on, its colonial history and the ways communities are benefitting from it.
- **From Indigenous organizations** about ways to acknowledge the land you are gathered on and practices that work in your community. Learn about Indigenous openings, land acknowledgments, tobacco offerings and other Indigenous practices used locally. Different communities have different practices. Building relationships, connecting with local leaders and ensuring you're adapting your work based on local teachings, context and learning is important.

PARTICIPATE...

- **In national and local Indigenous awareness events**, such as Orange Shirt Day/National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Secret Path Week.
 - **In ongoing reconciliation**. Keep up to date with local and national reports, keep in communication with your community about gaps in services and community practices, and engage in ongoing training, education and awareness of anti-Indigenous racism, local language and culture, and local health and healing practices.
- **To build your understanding**. Be willing to be vulnerable and uncomfortable in your learning. Ask questions and be open to feedback. Discomfort is part of the process. Invite Indigenous people to lead in this process.
 - **About thoughtful and appropriate compensation** (i.e., honorariums, payment, gifts for knowledge sharing, teachings, speaking, etc.)

HAVE CONVERSATIONS...

- **With people who hold local Indigenous community gatherings and events** and ask about attending or participating. Be present with the teachings being offered. Create space for meaningful engagement, connection and conversation in this process.
- **Within your community about ways to actively foster reconciliation.** Invite Indigenous partners, healers and Elders to lead this conversation. Discuss the ways that social and health injustice is interwoven with HIV rates and risk factors, as well as the strengths, determination and resilience of Indigenous Peoples and communities.

LEARN ABOUT AND CREATE SPACE TO TALK IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS ABOUT...

- **The disproportionate number of Indigenous children,** including Métis and Inuit children, regardless of status, **in child welfare,** the structural and systemic factors that contribute to this over-representation, strategies to increase awareness, and practices that honour the strengths of Indigenous families and communities.
- **The victimization of Indigenous women and girls and 2-Spirit people,** including missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls regardless of whether they are status or non-status, Metis, Inuit or First Nations, and to strengthen strategies to increase community capacity in response.
- **The ways health and social disparities impact Indigenous women and children** in your community, as well as the perseverance and survival of Indigenous families. Ensure Indigenous women are integral in the leadership of this process.

BUILD AWARENESS FOR YOURSELF AND IN YOUR COMMUNITY...

- **About Indigenous health inequities** such as HIV rates, infant mortality, maternal health, suicide rates, mental health, drug use, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health, chronic diseases, illness and injury. Follow the government's progress in closing the gap to these health disparities through the annual reports that were called for in the TRC.
- **About the health realities and health-based rights of Indigenous communities.** You can do this by sharing some facts and figures related to Indigenous communities, inviting Indigenous leaders to share experiences and healing practices and opening up space for shared dialogue. Honour the strengths and resiliency of Indigenous people in this work.
- **About Indigenous healing practices and spaces.** Learn about local Indigenous healing practices and spaces. Learn about local Indigenous healing centers, friendship centres and other culturally relevant spaces. Recognize the value of Indigenous healing practices. Create space to talk with Indigenous leaders about practices to create change that honour Indigenous Peoples' health practices.
- **About the role of Canadian policies and practices in creating over-representation of Indigenous communities in the legal system** and the impact on Indigenous communities. Learn about strategies to foster the strengths and resilience of Indigenous communities.



About the Artist

Stephanie Babij (she/her) is a visual artist of Ojibwe and Ukrainian/ other mixed-settler heritage. Originally from Sudbury, and a member of Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation/Territory, she now makes her home in Unceded Algonquin Territory (Ottawa). Stephanie grew up off-reserve and in urban spaces, where access to teachings, community, and the land were not readily available. In adulthood she is making her way back to culture, community, and identity.

Stephanie's visual arts practice includes both solo and community-engaged murals, acrylic paintings, illustration, wood-burned art, and beading. Stephanie's self-taught visual storytelling is guided by her dreams and awareness of her subconscious. In her work you'll find elements of our connections to the land, waters, animals, plants, cycles, and more. Through her art, Steph tries to blend her background in environmental science with her deep love of the natural world. The pieces that she creates aim to call people into honouring their relationship with the land and welcoming dialogues about climate justice and living ethically with creation.

See more of Stephanie's work at stephbabij-art.com



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

WHA! acknowledges that we operate on the various unceded, occupied lands, traditionally belonging to the many First Peoples across Ontario, including the ancestral and current lands of a diverse range of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. We honour the many treaties, views, and practices of First People living on this land and we ground our ongoing work in listening, reflection and actions of solidarity in support of movements of justice and self-determination for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Ontario. We bridge our immigrant experiences and histories on the land with feminist transnational movements seeking freedom from settler occupation and colonialism.





Thank you.

Thank you for supporting local reconciliation work,
and examining how to bring the **Calls to Action**
and **Calls for Justice** to your communities to
strengthen our collective work.

