

## Cedar Blankets Project

### Pilot Site Implementation Guide: Section 4. Three Day In Person/Virtual Engagement: Individual and Program Engagement regarding Allyship, Decolonization & Cultural Safety

#### Hello Cedar Blankets Pilot Site,

Welcome to the next step in this journey together. As noted in the Cedar Blankets Pilot Site Implementation Guide, there are seven sections or steps to our journey. Step three was the online training that you have been engaged in as a community and now we find ourselves at Step four, which is the three day in person/virtual engagement that includes individual and program engagement regarding allyship, decolonization & cultural safety. This document is an introduction to Section or Step four.

Over the three days, as part of the Cedar Blankets Pilot Site work we will gather, virtually or in person, to engage in a process of self-reflection and engagement. In this process, we begin collaboratively the journey of decolonization and reconciliation necessary for us to create cultural safety. As we have learned from the training we have taken so far, one of the key components of cultural safety is cultural humility.

Cultural humility is defined as a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic conditioned perspectives and biases, and to develop and maintain respectful practices and relationships based on mutual trust. It calls on us to see ourselves as life-long learners, particularly when it comes to understanding another person's experience. In this three day engagement, we will explore the practice of cultural humility through self-reflection, sharing and how we as members of groups approach our work supporting women, children and youth who have experienced violence.

#### **Cedar Blankets Project's Objective**

The objective of Cedar Blankets is to reduce the barriers for Indigenous women and their children accessing transition houses and safe homes by assisting transition houses and safe homes to develop culturally safe practices and to decrease barriers to access for Indigenous women and their children. Once sheltered, the objective is to provide culturally safe, effective wraparound supports for Indigenous women and children that foster longer stays at the houses and safety and healing for gender based violence survivors.

The need for access to culturally safe and responsive transition houses and safe homes for Indigenous women and girls cannot be understated given the disproportionate gender-based violence they experience compared to other Canadian women and girls. Indigenous women and girls make up only 4% of the female population in Canada (Statistics Canada 2016) while Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to be murdered or go

missing than any other women in Canada and 16 times more likely than Caucasian women (Pearce, 2016). Indigenous women are 3 times more likely to report spousal abuse than non-Indigenous women (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016). According to the RCMP, between 1980 and 2012, the number of solved and unsolved murders of Indigenous girls and women across Canada was 1,017, with 20% (n = 205) of those murders occurring in BC. This rate is higher than would be expected given only 16% of the Indigenous population in Canada resides in BC, and BC has only 13% of Canada's population overall. Of the 582 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls documented in the Native Women's Association of Canada's database that covers two decades (ending March 2010), 28% of the cases occurred in BC.

Violence against Indigenous women is linked to colonial policies and attitudes. Since the time of first contact, colonizing forces have enacted strategies of assimilation, dispossession, and removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands and resources for the purpose of capital gain. Historically, these strategies have targeted Indigenous women, the life givers of their nations. Gendered Canadian government policies, such as the Indian Act, have had far-reaching material and psychological impacts on Indigenous women. Through the discriminatory regulation of Indian status, the Indian Act displaced thousands of Indigenous women and their children from their home communities. For a long time, the Indian Act denied Indigenous women the right to participate in community governance, severed the ability of Indigenous mothers to parent their children, and until very recently, distributed matrimonial property to men in the event of marital breakup. Such policies have shaped social and cultural norms and attitudes in complex and harmful ways.

Despite being disproportionately victimized by violence, BCSTH research demonstrates that Indigenous women and their children are under-served by transition houses and safe homes. Data reported by transition houses indicates that Indigenous women do access these services frequently but leave them earlier than non-Indigenous women. Research into this phenomenon, including that conducted by BCSTH, indicates that there are several key barriers to accessing transition houses. Barriers to Indigenous women accessing transition houses are rooted in the ongoing legacy of colonization and the residential school system. These include fear of overt and/or covert racism; fear that entering a transition house will result in apprehension of children; and fear that confidentiality and personal agency will not be respected.

In partnership with Reciprocal Consulting, BCSTH has gathered input from Indigenous survivors of gender-based violence through multiple sharing circles, conducted an extensive literature review, and interviewed service providers to assess service gaps and build a responsive service delivery framework. Evidence from multiple data sources points to service gaps associated with cultural inclusivity, cultural safety, housing, healing, and access to information about services.

Cultural safety is strongly linked to emotional safety and increasing cultural competency of the transition house and safe home staff to foster supportive environments. In terms of physical safety, areas for improvement include offering transportation, 24-hour staffing, and ensuring confidentiality of location and support service delivery. Housing barriers include capacity issues at transition houses and affordable permanent housing afterwards. Service gaps associated with healing are linked to overall cultural safety and

inclusivity at transition houses and safe homes, as well as access to peripheral services (mental wellness counselling, substance use treatment, etc.) and holistic wellness. Service gaps increase when connections to key external networks and culturally safe community partners are limited or unavailable.

Transition house and safe home staff throughout BC were asked specifically what challenges they have faced in reducing barriers for Indigenous women to access their service in a 2019 survey. Most frequently, BCSTH member program staff indicated: 1) a lack of cultural resources, funding, time and Indigenous staff; 2) the need to build trust and relationships with Indigenous women, children and communities; 3) a lack of outreach and awareness in Indigenous communities about the services offered; 4) geographic barriers including lack of transportation and isolated communities; and 5) policy barriers that make transition houses and safe homes not culturally safe and inclusive.

The 2019 input from transition house and safe home staff reiterates that improving access for Indigenous women and their children is important to the mission of anti-violence service providers. The following priorities were identified at transition houses across BC: 1) building relationships with Indigenous community agencies and organizations (74%); 2) improving the continuum of care for Indigenous clients (72%); and 3) revising policies or procedures to reduce barriers (53%). All of these priorities are addressed in the Cedar Blankets' Service Delivery Model.

The Cedar Blankets Service Delivery Model weaves together promising practices to cultivate cultural safety in transition houses and safe homes. The inclusive service delivery model is rooted in a women-centered approach, and reinforced by cultural identity, GBA+ analysis, and fosters engagement and empowerment, safety, partnerships, and a wraparound continuum of support. The model includes partnership stakeholder oversight, staff training and education, policy and practice templates, physical space modification suggestions, community outreach to local Indigenous communities and the incorporation of cultural practice, with knowledge keepers, Elder support and healing activities.

To address centuries of trauma and loss, cultural identity is a crucial part of the Reducing Barriers service delivery model for Indigenous women. The service delivery model highlights how transition houses and safe homes can honour cultural identity as a protective factor through programming, access to Elders and knowledge keepers, holistic wellness and language. Fostering empowerment and engagement in the model is inclusive of governance and policy, programming, and access to peripheral services; as well, it includes the work of leadership and governance structures. Promising practices in creating safety are organized into rules and policies, staff supports, physical security, confidentiality measures, access sustainable funding and linkages to permanent housing and community. As the anti-violence sector is consistently underfunded and services are often at or over capacity, another key piece of the service delivery model is to establish and maintain partnerships in the respective communities. Collaboration is necessary, in order to maximize the reach, efficacy and sustainability of services. Finally, the continuum of wraparound supports that surround the model includes all aspects of a women's journey to and through a transition house and safe home from intake,

to shelter and support services, to culturally safe referrals, wellness based exiting, follow up and outreach once in the community.

There is both a need and desire from BCSTH member programs to increase cultural safety and trauma- and violence- informed practice for Indigenous women and children across the province. The four Cedar Blankets pilot sites will provide rich learning, informed adaptation and an appreciation of local contexts and communities in the project implementation that will be shared in the project blueprint.

BCSTH and the Cedar Blankets Project thank you for your commitment to this transformative work.

### **Our Three Days Together in our Journey**

#### **❖ This engagement is different from a webinar.**

Over the next three days, our Pilot Site Cedar Blankets engagement will focus on self-reflection, reflection on your work, your community and our shared world and experiences. During the next three days, Cedar Blankets asks you to think about the course work you have already done and the objective and history of the Cedar Blankets Project described above. We will engage in conversations and activities in a circle aimed at getting to know more about yourself and your colleagues with time to consider how the Cedar Blankets Service Delivery Model can become part of your community moving forward.

#### **❖ This engagement might also feel different from anything you have experienced so far in the Cedar Blankets Project.**

Over the next three days, you will have the opportunity through individual and group sharing, to explore decolonization, reconciliation and allyship and how these elements can be incorporated into your daily work and the work of your organizations.

It is important to know that for some people exploring these topics along with cultural safety and cultural humility may be a confusing or uncertain work. If you are feeling unease exploring these topics, please know that we are all finding our way on this journey together exploring how to incorporate cultural safety and cultural humility in our lives, work and community.

Throughout this engagement, please remember you are the essential women in the women centered care you practice every day. We ask that you be kind to yourself. Practice caring for yourself in whichever way works for you throughout the three days and if you need to step away feel free to do so.

We would recommend that if possible find a comfortable spot to engage and particularly with a virtual engagement and as the days roll on stretch, move, sustain yourself with food, hydration and fresh air. For some people, the impact of this type of engagement over multiple days may be draining or tiring. Be gentle with yourself.

❖ **We will be working almost exclusively in a Circle over the three days.**

Our engagement over the next three days, whether in person or virtual will involve working in a Circle. Since forever, it has been an Indigenous practice that important topics are discussed and decided in a Circle. As part of these traditions, when you are in a Circle everyone's voice is equal and the Circle etiquette states that there is "A Leader in Every Chair". Cedar Blankets has structured this important engagement using this Circle practice.

For the virtual engagements, we have designed it as if we were together in a room in a circle. When you come to the first day, you will notice on your screen there is a virtual Circle. Please "take a seat" by putting your first name and initial of your last name.

There are a number of benefits found in Circle work.

- There are no leaders, or hierarchy in a Circle. All voices are equally important. Each voice has the opportunity to be heard and we will be creating and holding space for everyone.
- Working in a Circle gives us the opportunity to practice the important skill of listening, witnessing and being present. In the Circle, you will be asked to listen until it is your turn to share. Listening without interruption, comments or attempts at solving is a respectful process that supports reflection and can build connection, safety and community. Establishing and maintaining respectful partnerships within this Circle is a way to practice allyship.
- A word on sharing and comfort. In order to build safety in the Circle, Circle participants may choose to share as much or as little as they want with the larger group without judgement. Most importantly, if you do not wish to share simply pass to the next person.


❖ **Circle Agreements**

Once we gather in our circle, we will create Circle Agreements as a group. Some examples of these agreements might include confidentiality within the Circle, or speaking from or listening from the heart where we try to let go of "stories" that make it hard to hear others.

We know connectivity can be challenging for many locations. If you need to, feel free to shut off your camera to preserve bandwidth, but please check in occasionally so we know you are there and getting the support and engagement you need. We understand the programs are full and are often short staffed and that you may need to step away and just let us or your supervisor know so we know you are getting the time and support you need.

Throughout the three days, we will engage in a number of activities, some in small Circles in break out rooms and some in large Circles. Please remember the learning is your own and in your time and is built on listening, engagement and curiosity. Here are the Circle Guidelines that we will discuss again at our engagement together.

# Circle Guidelines

**SPEAK FROM THE HEART** 


Your truth, your experiences, your perspective



**LISTEN FROM THE HEART**

Let go of stories that make it hard to hear others

**TRUST THAT YOU'LL KNOW**

**WHAT TO SAY** 

No need to rehearse



**SAY JUST ENOUGH**

Without feeling rushed, be concise and considerate  
of the time of others

## Overview of the Three Days

This engagement has been organized into three parts, the first two parts are led by BCSTH, the third part is co-facilitated by BCSTH, and the Cedar Blankets evaluation partners, Reciprocal Consulting Inc.

- ❖ Day One: Who am I as an individual?
- ❖ Day Two: Who am I as a part of a group?
- ❖ Day Three: Ethical Data Collection, Evaluation Work and the Connection to the Cedar Blankets Service Delivery Model

### **The longest journey is from the head to the heart.**

In heart work such as this Cedar Blankets engagement, you may notice below in the agendas that there is some repetition and time built in for reflection in our Circle. Good eye! This repetition is intentional and designed to allow participants the time and space to focus on their reflective process and how those reflections will guide you on this collaborative journey with your colleagues and the Cedar Blankets community.

## Welcome and Learning Expectations: Day 1

### Workshop Day 1 - Who am I?



8:45	Room opens	
9:00 – 10:15	Welcome and Workshop Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Expectations of today and forward</li> <li>• The Journey so Far</li> <li>• Circle Etiquette</li> <li>• Taking Care of Ourselves – Women Centered Care applies to us too!</li> <li>• Round of Introductions with Ice Breaker – Who am I?</li> </ul>
10:15 – 10:30	Break	
10:30 – 12:00	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who am I in this Circle</li> <li>• Locating Ourselves - Activity</li> <li>• Debrief Cultural Identity Ice Breaker</li> </ul>
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch Break	
12:30 – 1:45	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your Privilege is Showing:</li> <li>• Privilege and Power Flower</li> <li>• Privilege and Power Activity</li> </ul>
1:45 – 2:00	Break	
2:00 – 3:00	Workshop and Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debriefing Privilege</li> <li>• Gentle strength-based self-examination as an Ongoing Practice</li> <li>• Closing Round</li> <li>• Reflections to take Away</li> </ul>



## Welcome and Learning Expectations: Day 2

### Who am I as Part of the We?



8:45	Room opens	
9:00 – 10:15	Welcome  Housekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Circle and Debrief Reflections from the Days End</li> <li>• Heartfelt Gratitude and Acknowledgements</li> <li>• Who am I Individually and as a Community Member</li> </ul>
10:15 – 10:30	Break	
10:30 – 12:00	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debrief who am I as an individual part of a community activity</li> <li>• Who am I as a Community Member</li> <li>• Debrief who am I as a community member activity</li> <li>• Stereotyping and Systemic Racism</li> <li>• Lateral Violence, Microaggressions</li> </ul>
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch Break	
12:30 – 1:45	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reciprocal Relationships: Relational Care as a Practice</li> <li>• Allyship</li> <li>• 13 Steps to Resistance</li> <li>• Reciprocal Relationships and Allyship Reflection</li> </ul>
1:45 – 2:00	Break	
2:00 – 3:00	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reciprocal Relationships and Allyship Activity Debrief</li> <li>• Closing Round</li> <li>• Share link to Survey Monkey</li> </ul>

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## Welcome and Learning Expectations: Day 3

### Data Collection, Evaluation and Connecting Practices to Service Delivery



8:45	Room opens	
9:00 – 10:15	Welcome  Housekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Circle</li> <li>• Introductions and Special Guests</li> <li>• Individual Experiences and Reflections</li> </ul>
10:15 – 10:30	Break	
10:30 – 12:00	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Collection with Reciprocal Consulting</li> </ul>
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch Break	
12:30 – 1:45	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Collection with Reciprocal Consulting debrief</li> </ul>
1:45 – 2:00	Break	
2:00 – 3:00	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting Practices to CB SDM</li> <li>• Closing Round</li> <li>• Share link to Survey Monkey</li> </ul>

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On Day Three, we will spend time with our partners, Reciprocal Consulting Inc. As described in the Cedar Blankets Project Objective and history, Reciprocal has been our partner on this journey since 2016. They supported BCSTH with the original research and focus groups and sharing circles that informed the Cedar Blankets' Service Delivery Model which is the promising practice that we are implementing, testing and evaluating with you and the other Pilot Sites. Reciprocal is now supporting the Project through ethical data collection and evaluation and they will share their approach and work with you. The purpose of Reciprocal's current work is:

- ❖ To highlight how the Cedar Blankets project contributes to well-being and self-determination of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women through culturally relevant and responsive methods.
- ❖ To learn from the experience of four pilot sites and the advice of a stakeholder advisory committee how the service delivery model can increase the accessibility of transition house.
- ❖ To highlight the value of investment in transition house policy and practice to increase the safety and well-being Indigenous women and their families.
- ❖ To create a blueprint of wise practices and lessons learned to share with others in the sectors as well as other service sectors.

On Day Three, the last piece of work we will do together is to tie all the work you have done and connect it to the wise practices of the Cedar Blankets Service Delivery Model and the Model is included below. We will have time to reflect on the Model and there will be time and space for your team to talk about the opportunities it presents as well as challenges you foresee implementing the Model and the impact it might have on staff, Indigenous women, children and youth and your community. Our journey together will be guided by your Implementation Plan which includes the consideration of the Model and the adoption and adaption of the Cedar Blankets Service Delivery Model for your community with support from the Cedar Blankets Team, BCSTH, Reciprocal Consulting Inc., the other Pilot Sites and Community of Practice, your Indigenous Women's Councils and the Partnership Stakeholder Community.

BCSTH thanks you sincerely for your dedication to the Cedar Blankets Project. With gratitude, we look forward to seeing you soon for our three days together.

