



NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT REPORT

Following Our Peoples' Way: Building a Circle of Dignity and Justice
Gūdené' K'éh Gūs'ānī: Dene 'Á Nezen Gedí' Gūtīe Sū'āī dege



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CONFIDENTIAL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2019, *Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS)* was awarded funding for an advocacy-focused project- *Following Our Peoples' Way: Building a Circle of Dignity* (referred to in this Report as the *Advocacy project*). The project launched on June 20th, 2019 and will run to June 19th, 2024. The project aims to address gender-based and relationship violence in Watson Lake, Yukon and surrounding areas by training a team of community Advocates to become anti-violence leaders in their communities.

As part of the planning phase of the project, LAWS worked with Beringia Community Planning Inc. to conduct a needs and asset assessment. The assessment was conducted with project participants and partners and focused on identifying needs as well as community strengths that can be leveraged in the project. The assessment was conducted in two phases: Phase 1: Review of Academic and Grey Literature and Phase 2: Consultations and Stakeholder engagement.



The **objectives** of the needs and asset assessment were to:

1. Understand the root causes of violence against women and contributing factors at the national, territorial and community levels.
2. Support project partners and participants (e.g. Advocates, survivors of violence, elders, service providers, community members) in identifying concerns, gaps in services, access barriers, community resources and strengths, and priorities relating to GBV prevention and survivor support.
3. Engage survivors of gender-based violence in the project design to ensure the program reflects survivor needs, strengths and priorities.
4. Honor past local initiatives addressing gender-based violence and explore their promising practices and lessons learned.



The needs and asset assessment included stakeholder engagement through focus groups, sharing circles and questionnaires with a diverse range of community partners (e.g. survivors of violence, family members, elders, consultants with subject matter expertise, and service providers). This multi-pronged approach to data collection allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the needs, gaps, priorities, and strengths from a range of perspectives.

The **literature review** highlighted the pervasiveness of violence amongst Indigenous women at national, territorial and community levels. Colonization, residential schools and sixties scoop were identified as deeply rooted causes of violence. Inadequate resources and limited access to programs and services, including culturally relevant services and programs, and barriers to accessing health services were emphasized as contributing factors.

Promising practices to address GBV highlighted across the literature included local ownership and community driven solutions in program development and delivery, properly resourced and culturally sensitive services for victims and families, greater collaboration and innovation between agencies and services, more approaches using advocacy, education, peers support and awareness raising, addressing discrimination in the justice system, and understanding violence from response-based practice lens.

The needs and asset assessment included three methods of data collection through focus groups, sharing circles and questionnaires with a diverse range of community partners, including survivors of violence, family members, elders, consultants with subject matter expertise, and service providers. This multi-pronged approach to data collection allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the needs, gaps, priorities, and assets from a diverse range of stakeholder perspectives. The three methods of consultation were:

1. Advocate Focus Group- March 14th, 2019
2. Tu Cho Gathering- July 4-5th, 2019
3. Service provider Questionnaire- August 2019

10 questions that guided the consultations and explored topics ranging from root causes, contributing factors and challenges, to strengths, cultural safety, and measures of success.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What are the root causes and contributing factors to gender-based violence in Watson Lake and region?
2. What challenges are survivors in the community facing in regard to violence and safety?
3. What are the gaps in services and supports for violence prevention and survivor support?
4. What are the strengths from past LAWS initiatives and assets in the community for supporting survivors and working to end violence?
5. How can this Project help to fill a need in the community around violence prevention and survivor support?
6. What is the role of an Advocate?
7. What supports and learning needs might Advocates need?
8. What cultural principles, teachings, and protocols can help guide the project?
9. What does a healthy, safe and violence free community look like?
10. How will we know if the Project is successful?

KEY THEMES FROM THE NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT

Results of the consultations and guiding questions are summarized into three key thematic areas: 1) Challenges and Needs; 2) Solutions and Approaches; 3) Measures of Success. Highlights are noted in the table below and are informing and guiding the program design, delivery and evaluation activities.

CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

Root causes of gender-based violence, needs and challenges facing survivors

- Systemic oppression and structural racism
- Justice system is failing survivors
- Inadequately resourced services and programs
- Lack of collaboration between community, agencies, and services
- Lack of culturally relevant service and supports
- Need for appropriate training for service providers
- Lack of culturally-based, violence prevention and intervention programs
- Lack of available safe spaces and supports for survivors

SOLUTIONS AND APPROACHES

How the Project will help

- ✓ Design and deliver awareness raising and social justice activities
- ✓ Document the limitations of the justice system and explore alternatives
- ✓ Provide confidential and supportive spaces for survivors
- ✓ Build an alliance of partners to support collaboration
- ✓ Embed Kaska culture and prioritize Elder involvement
- ✓ Undertake education activities, research and documentation
- ✓ Encourage the involvement of Kaska men
- ✓ Facilitate peer support and relationship building

MEASURING SUCCESS

How will we know the Project is successful

- Increased community education and social justice activities
- Enhanced women's agency in the community and leadership in the Project
- Increased access for survivors to peer supports, services and resources
- Improved collaboration and coordination between services, agencies and Advocates
- Strengthened Kaska cultural systems of support available to survivors
- Increased understanding and capacity of service providers to support survivors
- Increased opportunities for men and women to work together to create safety
- Enhanced skills and knowledge among Advocates

The needs and asset assessment process provided opportunities to bring together diverse group of partners and community members, each with their own experiences and wisdom, to work together. The work ahead of us is to weave the learnings, ideas and results together into a program model that will help to support, respond to and restore dignity and safety amongst survivors of gender-based violence. The assessment findings are to be shared with assessment participants and partners and to be integrated into the design and delivery of the program model, in particular the partnership protocol, training curriculum model, and monitoring and evaluation plan. This dissemination of the report findings will be supported with ongoing opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	3
PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	3
WATSON LAKE AND KASKA NATION CONTEXT	6
A HISTORY OF LAWS' KEY INITIATIVES	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
METHODOLOGY	9
RESULTS: KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE LITERATURE.....	11
NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT: SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT	19
NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT RESULTS.....	20
REFERENCES	29
APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENTS AND METHODOLOGY	33
APPENDIX B: ADVOCATE FOCUS GROUP AGENDA	37
APPENDIX C: TU CHO GATHERING AGENDA	37
APPENDIX D: SERVICE PROVIDER QUESTIONNAIRE	40
APPENDIX E: NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT RESULTS	43



INTRODUCTION

In May 2019, *Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS)* was awarded funding for a new project- *Following Our Peoples' Way: Building a Circle of Dignity* (referred to in this Report as the *Advocacy project*). This project aims to address gender-based and relationship violence in Watson Lake, Yukon and surrounding areas by training a team of community Advocates to become anti-violence leaders in their communities.

As part of the project's planning process, a needs and asset assessment was conducted with project partners and participants. The needs assessment focused on identifying needs as well as community strengths (e.g. organizations, people, partnerships, facilities, funding, policies, etc.) that can be leveraged in the project. This Report may act as a tool for LAWS and project partners as we collaborate to develop, evaluate, and report on the community-based and culturally grounded program model for increasing safety and supports for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

Objectives

The objectives of the needs and asset assessment were to:

1. Understand the root causes of violence against women and contributing factors at the national, territorial and community levels.
2. Support project partners and participants (e.g. Advocates, survivors of violence, elders, service providers, community members) in identifying concerns, gaps in services, access barriers, community resources and strengths, and priorities relating to GBV prevention and survivor support.
3. Engage survivors of gender-based violence in the project design to ensure the program reflects survivor needs, strengths and priorities.
4. Honor past local initiatives addressing gender-based violence and explore their promising practices and lessons learned.

Phases

The assessment was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1: Review of Academic and Grey Literature: A literature review was performed that included a review of academic and grey literature, as well as community, territorial and national statistical data. The aim of the review was to identify research to both validate and inform project and evaluation design, as well as to provide a contextual and historical understanding of gender-based violence amongst Indigenous women and children in northern Canada.

Phase 2: Consultations and stakeholder engagement: The needs and asset assessment included stakeholder engagement through focus groups, sharing circles and questionnaires with a diverse range of community partners (e.g. survivors of violence, family members, elders, consultants with subject matter

expertise, and service providers). This multi-pronged approach to data collection allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the needs, gaps, priorities, and strengths from a diverse range of perspectives.

Report Structure

The report is organized into 5 sections:

1. The **Background** gives context for the project and needs/asset assessment and provides an overview Watson Lake and Kaska Nation context, the history of key LAWS initiatives, and an overview of the Advocacy project’s objectives, outcomes and program model framework.
2. The **Literature Review** provides a summary of the review process and summarizes the re-occurring themes in the literature.
3. The **Summary of Engagement** consists of an overview of the approach, methodology, and summarizes the key themes from the engagements, organized by the 10 guiding questions. Common themes are highlighted for each guiding question, as well as the discussion points specific to each of the groups consulted are presented.
4. The **Considerations for Next Steps** discusses suggested actions to be taken by partners over the coming months.
5. The **Conclusion** wraps up the report with final commentary.



BACKGROUND

At national, territorial and local levels, Indigenous women and youth face high levels of violence, particularly relationship violence. *It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence, commenced in 2017 and* is the Government of Canada's response to the crisis of gender-based violence (GBV). The Strategy involves initiatives and investments from multiple agencies, including the Status of Women Canada (SWC). In 2018, SWC released a Call for Concept Applications for a *Gender-Based Violence: Promising Practices to Support Survivors and their Families* funding program.

The Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS) submitted a concept application and on December 2018, was selected to move forward to the next phase of the application process. Beringia Community Planning Inc. worked closely with LAWS to develop the proposal and received confirmation on May 22nd, 2019 that LAWS was successful in securing funding to implement the project.

The 5- year project titled- *Following Our Peoples' Way: Building a Circle of Dignity and Justice*, will run from June 20th, 2019 to June 19th, 2024. This opportunity intends to develop promising practices to support survivors of GBV and their families. The planned results, as outlined by SWC, of the promising practices are as follows:

1. Support gaps are identified for survivors of violence;
2. Promising practices are identified and tested;
3. Evidence is generated demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness of promising practices; and
4. Blueprint(s) are developed and available for other organizations to replicate and adapt to their local context.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Advocacy project intends to demonstrate the efficacy of a community-based, culturally relevant advocacy model and program that supports the community safety needs of Indigenous women in Watson Lake and surrounding areas. This will be done by training a team of community Advocates, who are survivors of violence, to become anti-violence leaders in their communities.

Advocates will engage in a range of training and capacity-building activities based on two distinct strengths-based and culturally appropriate approaches: 1) Kaska Dena cultural principles, protocols and teachings of dignity, justice and healing; and 2) Response-Based Practice (RBP)¹.

The training curriculum will include foundational learning about GBV issues, prevention and response, as well as a large component of the training will be hands-on learning (the testing of the service delivery component of the project²). Ultimately, the project aims to build a core foundation of community capacity to support, respond to, and restore dignity and safety among survivors of GBV. There are six pillars that are foundational to the Promising Practice model, as demonstrated in Diagram 1:

1. Community Champions
2. Kaska Culture and Dene ā'nezen
3. Capacity Building
4. Circle of Support
5. Partnerships and Systems Change
6. Advocacy and Knowledge Dissemination



¹ Response-based practice (RBP) is an evidence-based methodology with a foundation in social justice and human rights. It has been proven to be effective in diverse situations as it acknowledges the systematic nature of violence and provides an alternative to diagnostic and pathology-oriented practices. It works to preserve dignity, moving beyond traditional victimizing language and acknowledges an individual's physical and emotional resistance to violent assault. (Centre for Response-Based Practice, 2019; BC Society of Transition Houses, 2015)

² A key component to the Advocate training will be applied learning which is referred to as the service delivery component of the Promising Practice model. The activities that the Advocates may undertake were explored at Tu Cho and include initial activities such as leading campaigns, documenting their role, accompanying survivors to agencies, and providing mentorship to women and youth in the community. These activities will be designed with the Advocates as survivors of violence.

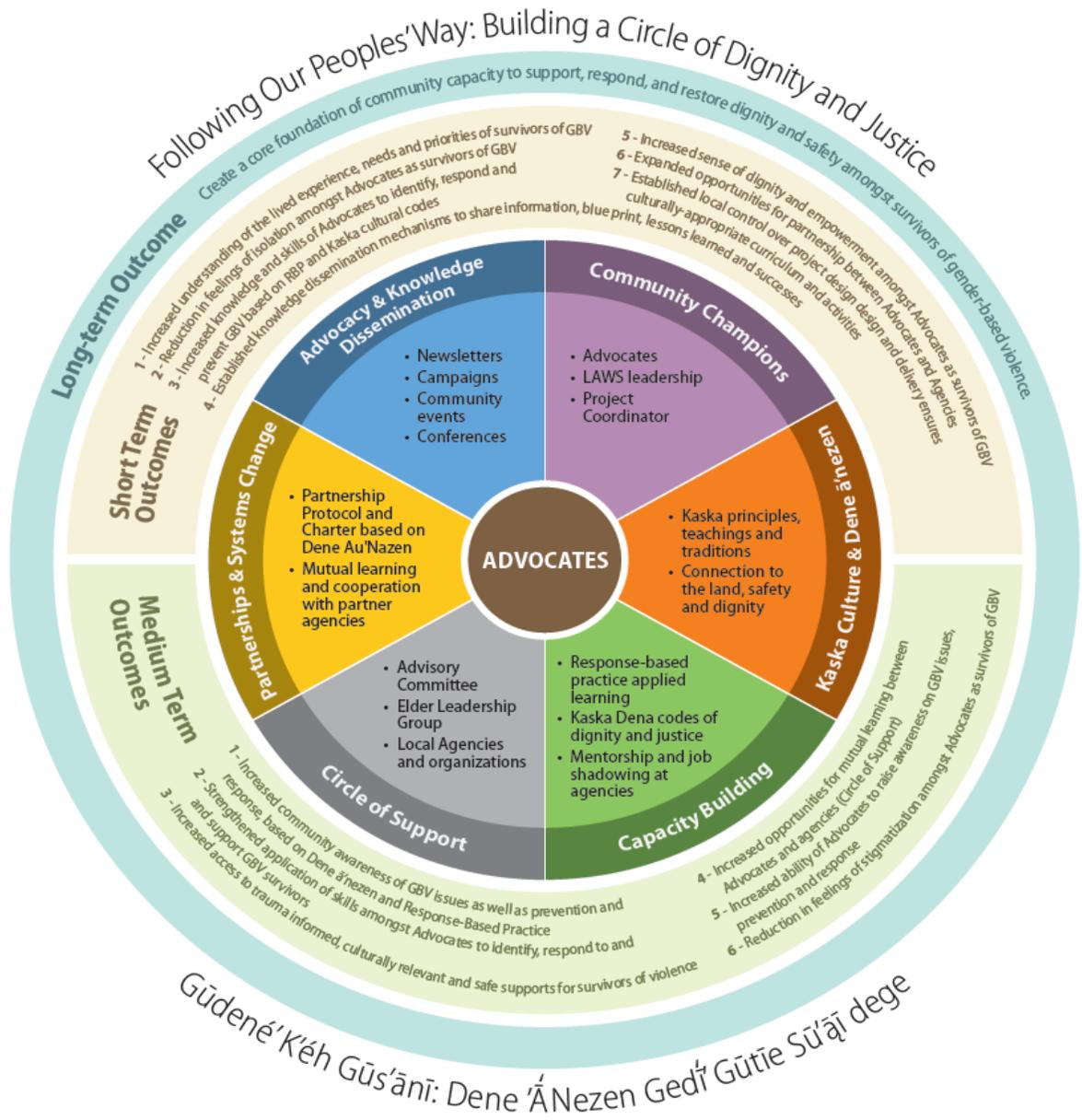


Diagram 1: The Pillars of Advocacy - Following Our Peoples' Way: Building a Circle of Dignity and Justice

WATSON LAKE AND KASKA NATION CONTEXT

Watson Lake, Yukon, is the home of the Liard First Nation and four other Kaska Nations that occupy territories in both southeast Yukon and northern British Columbia are the communities of Ross River, Lower Post, Good Hope Lake and Fort Ware.

Kaska Dena have existed from time immemorial and have occupied and used the lands, waters, and resources of our traditional territory throughout history. Kaska Dena share a common culture based on their clan system, a common language with distinct dialects, a common history tied to stories, myths, the oral traditions of Elders, and traditional laws. Before Europeans arrived they occupied and hunted in an area of approximately 240,000 km² in parts of what today is known as Northwest Territories and Yukon.

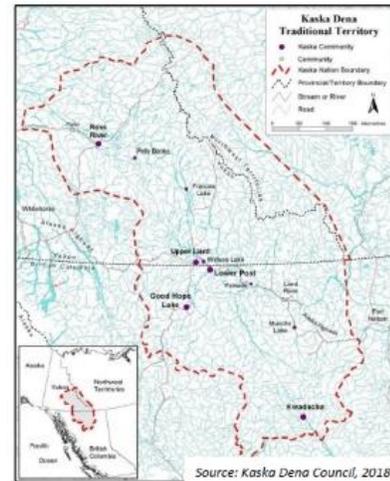


Figure 1: Kaska Dena Council, 2018 and British Columbia.

Community health and wellness has been influenced by colonization, the Indian Act and the residential school system, among other factors. While Kaska Dena communities still struggle with the impacts of colonization and residential school, they continue to find strength in their culture, traditions, language, and connection to the land.

When we look closely at Watson Lake, we see a small, relatively remote community of 790 people (as of the 2016 Census), of which 135 are school age between 5 to 19 years. Of those 790 community members, 300 (38%) self-identify as Indigenous. Specific to Youth, 31.7% of the community younger than 14 and 23.3% of those between 15 to 34 identify as Indigenous – compared with 10.2% and 16.3% respectively, who do not identify as Indigenous (Liard First Nation Community Profile, 2010).

A HISTORY OF LIARD ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S SOCIETY'S (LAWS) KEY INITIATIVES

LAWS was established and registered in the Yukon in 1998, when a small circle of women from our Kaska Nation concerned with their community began fundraising for social and recreational purposes. The organization offers a variety of 'trail breaking' social development programs and services, restorative healing and gender-based empowerment programs that address the intergenerational impacts of Residential School including addictions and violence (LAWS Strategic Plan, 2018). Diagram 2 outlines a timeline of LAWS key initiatives since its inception in 1998, that this project will build upon.

There are 6 key programs led by LAWS since 2011 that have addressed gender-based violence and that will contribute to a foundation for the Advocacy project.

- **2011: Bridging the Gap.** With Justice Canada and RCMP funding, LAWS held two workshops to promote a dialogue between women and the RCMP. The dialogue focused on how to stop the serious

abuse of women in Yukon communities; creating safety for women to both retain their dignity and report violent crimes; and developing an effective plan of action to address this abuse with the full participation of RCMP and community members.

- **2013: Together for Justice.** LAWS and the Watson Lake RCMP broke new ground with a unique community safety initiative following a series of workshops that took place from 2011 to 2013 in both Watson Lake and Whitehorse. The Together for Justice Project evolved as a response to various violence-related community concerns in and around Watson Lake and was designed to improve community policing and to develop better relationships between RCMP and Indigenous women.



- **2015-2018: Youth for Safety (YFS) Program.** The Youth for Safety Project evolved as one element of the Together for Justice Project and aims to focus specifically on empowering Youth to be active participants in building safety and justice for women and girls in their community.



- **2015-2017: Women's Advocate.** Women's Advocate position supported the social justice needs of young Kaska women and girls who are, or could be, at risk of

being victims of violence in Watson Lake and surrounding areas. The Advocate fulfilled a variety of much-needed roles in the community, including supporting young Indigenous women and girls in navigating the justice system and accessing relevant services, while working to strengthen the responsiveness of these systems, and providing public education and training to enhance awareness of violence prevention.

- **2017: Data Inventory.** With funding from the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) Trust Fund, LAWS undertook an inventory of current data being collected by relevant agencies on mental wellness, addictions, violence against women, and child welfare specific to the Liard First Nation—Kaska specific where possible.
- **2019: Youth for Dignity in Relationships.** In February 2019, LAWS awarded funding over 60 months, running from February 14th, 2019 to December 31st, 2023. The *Youth for Dignity* project focuses on knowledge and skill development among youth in Grades 8 to 12 at Watson Lake Secondary School (WLSS) in order to increase understanding and prevention of gender-based violence and to mobilize youth as anti-violence leaders in their community.



“The education and awareness provided by the [LAWS] initiatives inspires and provides the primary step required to increase safety for women/ girls...By combining the personal support with the education the position captures the critical necessities to help keep women safe. By providing knowledge you empower, by providing support you give someone a voice. Nothing can be more important in keeping women and girls safe” - Probation Office, Watson

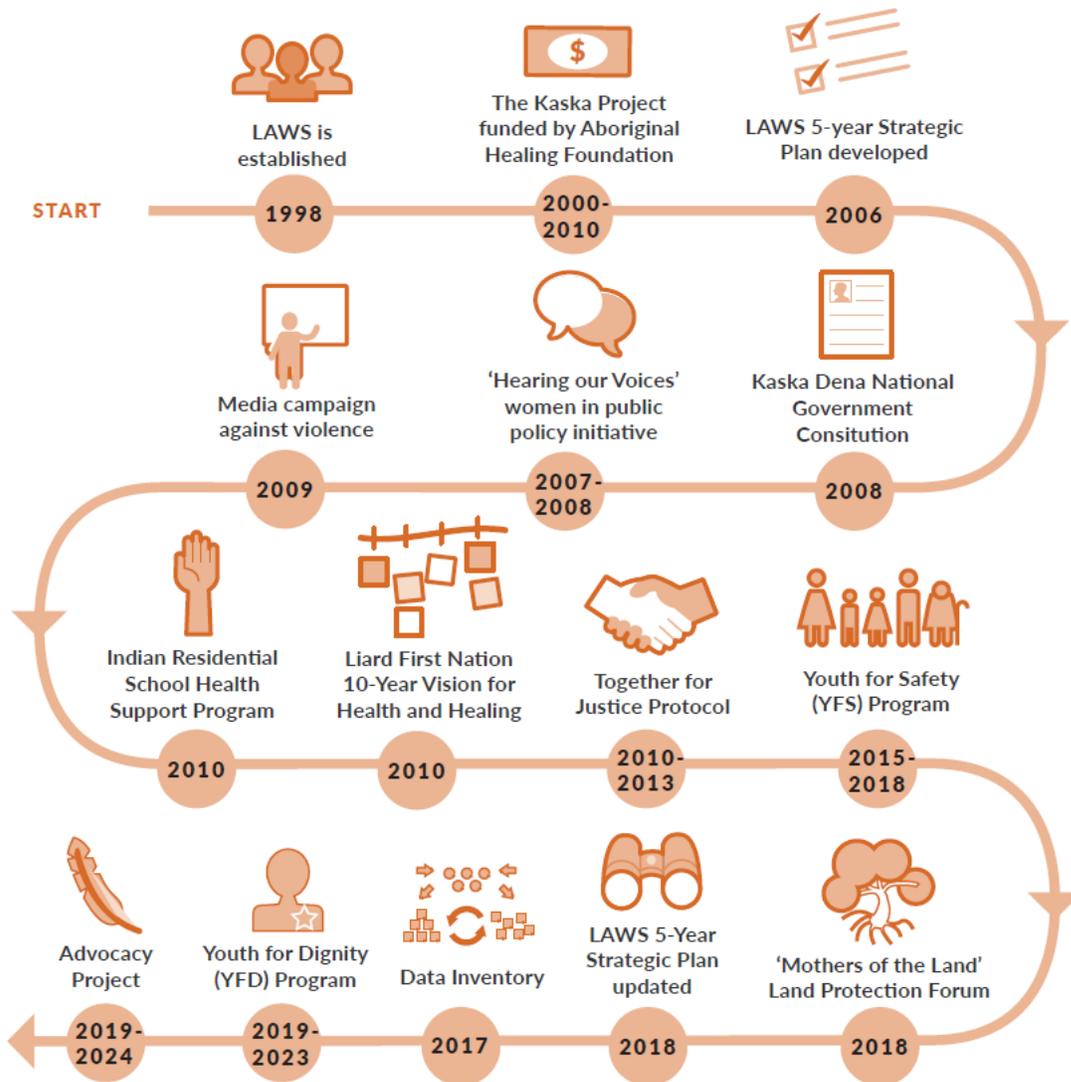


Diagram 2: LAWS Milestones, LAWS Strategic Plan, 2018

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was performed that included a review of academic and grey literature, as well as community, territorial and national statistical data. The aim of the literature was to identify research to both validate and inform project and evaluation design, as well as to provide a contextual and historical understanding of gender-based violence amongst Indigenous women and children in northern Canada.

The literature review will help to ensure that the program development is informed by evidence-based research and allow for existing promising practices in this field to be applied to this new model. Moreover, the research performed will help to align the project with national and territorial priorities as well as recommendations put forward through Indigenous-led research and inquiries.

METHODOLOGY

The literature review was conducted with the following analysis questions in mind:

1. What are the root causes of violence against Indigenous women and children in the region, and associated challenges (e.g. geographic, political, historic, economic)?
2. What are the recommended actions, leading research and promising practices for addressing gender-based violence amongst Indigenous women and girls in northern, remote locations?
3. What statistical data exists on sexualized violence and sexual assault offences at the national, territorial and community levels?

As far as criteria for which documents to include or exclude in the review, focus was put on reports and articles from 2010 onward, addressing gender-based violence amongst Indigenous women. The review also focused on research that is relevant to the Yukon context and that includes recommendations to address violence against Indigenous women.



The literature review methodology consisted of the following steps:

No.	Literature Review Methodology
1	<p>Academic and Grey Literature Review</p> <p>Review of academic and grey literature and studies through research portals and government sites. This included research in Canada as well as internationally (e.g. Australia), articles examining response-based practice as a framework for understanding and addressing violence, and the application of peer-support models. Supporting search terms included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence against Indigenous women statistics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-based violence (GBV) Indigenous promising practices • Indigenous approaches to GBV prevention • Response-Based Practice • Peer Support and Education in the Prevention of Gender-based Violence • Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) National Inquiry
2	<p>Data on Safety and Sexualized Violence</p> <p>The final report from LAWS past data Inventory project was reviewed as well as statistical data available on government sites. Communications with agencies and service providers for data on safety and sexualized violence specific to the region and community of Watson Lake. Data was from the Watson Lake RCMP and Yukon Council for First Nations was included in the review. Data from Yukon Government, Victim Services is still being compiled to be shared in October 2019.</p>
3	<p>Review of LAWS organizational strategic plans and past project reports</p> <p>LAWS has many years of experience developing and delivering programming addressing violence and safety in the community. The following reports were included in the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAWS Women’s Advocacy Project: Evaluation Report • Together for Justice Booklet • Data Inventory Final Report • LAWS 5-year Strategic Plan (2018-2023) • Youth for Safety Evaluation Report
4	<p>Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) National Inquiry</p> <p>A review was conducted of the MMIWG final report executive summary as well as consolidated literature review that was conducted as part of the inquiry. The consolidated literature review included over 100 reports relating to Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA People (MMIWG, 2019) that were developed by government and Indigenous-led organizing bodies in Yukon and throughout Canada. Nine relevant reports were selected from the consolidated review to be used in this literature review.</p>

RESULTS: KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE LITERATURE

The following section provides a summary of the re-occurring themes were identified in the literature. The findings have been divided into three sections: 1. *Prevalence of violence against Indigenous women and children*; 2. *Root causes and factors that contribute to violence against Indigenous women and girls*; and 3. *Promising Practices and Recommendations to addressing gender-based violence and increase safety amongst Indigenous women*.

Overall, while there is significant research examining the root causes of violence against Indigenous women and children, there is limited research available on promising practice models to address violence and increase safety in northern, remote and Indigenous communities.

1. Indigenous women and children are disproportionately affected by violence in Canada, Yukon and Watson Lake and Kaska territories

Nationally: Violence against Indigenous women and children has been repeatedly identified as a national crisis in Canada. Available statistics consistently point to a greatly disproportionate incidence of violence against Indigenous women in Canada. Data from Statistics Canada (2013) demonstrate that Indigenous women were nearly three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to have reported experiencing violent victimization than non-Indigenous women. Not only do Indigenous women face more frequent incidence of violence, the violence is also much more severe (Statistics Canada, 2013).

A 2011 Statistics Canada report suggests that the national homicide rate for Indigenous women is at least seven times higher than for non-Indigenous women. Moreover, the number of Indigenous female victims of homicide has increased over the past several decades, while the number of non-Indigenous female victims has declined. As a result, Indigenous females account for an increasing proportion of female homicide victims, rising from one-tenth (9%) of all female homicide victims in 1980 to one-quarter (24%) in 2015 (Status of Women Canada and Statistics Canada, 2014). Although the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) inquiry said the true number may be impossible to establish, some estimates have suggested roughly 4,000 In of women who have been missing or have disappeared over the past few decades (MMIWG, 2019).

Violence within the domestic context is the most pervasive form of victimization experienced by Indigenous women. Nearly one-quarter of Indigenous women in Canada reported having been assaulted by a current or former spouse, compared to 7% of non-Indigenous women (Brzozowski et al. 2006). The literature also shows that Indigenous women consistently report a much higher rate of partner violence than their non-Indigenous



counterparts. For instance, while living common law is associated with a 13% greater risk of victimization for non-Indigenous women, the associated risk for Indigenous women is 217% higher (Brownridge, 2008).

Research also shows that violent incidents are two and a half times more likely to be committed against Indigenous Canadians aged 15-34 than against those 35 years and older (Brzozowski et al. 2006). Specifically, sexual abuse against Indigenous children was found to be prevalent. Studies show that on average 25% to 50% of Indigenous women were victims of sexual abuse as children compared to a 20% to 25% average rate within the non-Indigenous population (Collin-Vézina et al 2009). Among the Indigenous population, this abuse is often committed by someone in the victim's immediate or extended family (Bopp and Bopp, 1997). Finally, victims of self-reported spousal violence in the territories, like elsewhere in Canada, tend to be young. Women under the age of 35 were more than three times as likely than those 35 and over to have experienced violence by a current or former spouse in the last five years (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2013).

Yukon: At a territorial level, the rate of police-reported violent crime against women is higher in the territories than elsewhere in Canada. In 2011, the rate in the Yukon was four times higher than the national average. The rate of sexual offences against women in Yukon was more than 3.5 times the provincial average (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2013). Geographically, a 2008 Statistics Canada report on family and spousal violence in Canada showed that the highest proportion of spousal violence was in northern Canada; it also showed that the Yukon was one of the jurisdictions with the highest rates of charges for spousal abuse, and women continued to be the most likely victims in police-reported spousal violence, accounting for 83% of victims (compared to 17% of victims who were men).



Watson Lake and Kaska Territories: Gender-based violence (GBV) is crippling the health of the individuals, families and communities in the Kaska territory. Although statistical data provides some insight into the national and regional crisis of GBV, data at the local, community level is limited and hard to obtain. The crisis is anecdotally discussed in our program surveys, during focus groups and LAWS Board meeting, at the local schools, and at our kitchen tables.

Reported crime rates historically have been significantly higher in Watson Lake than in other Yukon communities. Reported crime rates per 1000 residents were about 4x times higher in Watson Lake than in Whitehorse between 2003-2008 (Liard First Nation Community Profile, 2010).

Of the Liard First Nations members who responded to the Regional Health Survey (2016), 97% indicated physical and verbal abuse as negative impacts and 72% indicated sexual abuse. According to the General Social Survey (2009), 15% of Indigenous women who had a spouse or partner reported that they had

experienced spousal violence in the previous five years (compared to 6% of non-Indigenous women), including sexual assault and physical violence. In a community survey delivered to 61 Kaska and non-Kaska members (Watson Lake, 2017), 24% ranked safety levels as “low”, citing continued violence against women and girls.

Statistical data received from the Watson Lake RCMP indicate from 2013 to 2018, there were 119 sexual offenses reported, of which 22 were unfounded³, and 59 received clearance by charge (Watson Lake RCMP Detachment, 2019).

As a small, remote community, Watson Lake has under-resourced and oversubscribed social development services. LAWS identified several systemic issues that influence gender-based roles and power relationships that factor into sexual violence against girls and young women in the community including:

- (a) the intergenerational effects of residential school and colonialism;
- (b) popular culture and youth sub-culture, media, and virtual technology influences;
- (c) social isolation (separation/exclusion) including isolation due to age and gender, isolation from family and community, isolation from appropriate community support services and life-style alternatives, and the isolation effects of virtual technology.

2. Root Causes and factors that contribute to violence against Indigenous women and girls

Theme 1: Systemic discrimination against Indigenous people through residential schools and colonization.

The MMIWG National Inquiry’s Final Report reveals that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada’s staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people (2019). This includes the impacts of systemic discrimination against Indigenous people through residential schools and colonization. Colonialism is furthered through the devaluation of Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, languages, and lives and the normalization of western hierarchies of race, gender,



³ For a criminal incident to be considered unfounded, it must be "determined through police investigation that the offence reported did not occur, nor was it attempted" ([Greenland and Cotter- Statistics Canada, 2016](#)).

class and other axes of power. Research indicates that social systems have failed to protect women from complex factors of racism, sexism and marginalization.

Colonialism, racism, heterosexism, and sexism are embedded in systems of health care, justice, education and child welfare, contributing to the levels of violence experienced by Indigenous women, children and families. Decolonial approaches call for the examination of the colonial legacy within educational, health care, justice and other systems, such as the lack of culturally appropriate curricula, racism, and links to residential school histories, as the impact of these factors on cycles of violence (Holmes, C. & Hunt, S. 2017).

Exacerbating factors identified in the literature include: sexual exploitation; gang violence; homelessness and housing shortage on reserves; poverty; alcohol and drug addictions; lack of police assistance in addressing violence against Indigenous women; high rates of suicide in Indigenous communities; child welfare and justice systems; negative social responses towards survivors; the concealing of violence, obfuscating of perpetrators' responsibility, concealing of victims' resistance, and blaming and pathologizing of victims in the justice system.

Theme 2: Inadequate resources and lack of access to programs and services, including culturally relevant services and programs

Inadequate resources and limited access to programs and services is a re-occurring barrier in the literature. This includes funding towards early childhood development, education, employment and job security, food security, health services, housing and income, and social safety nets.

More specifically, access to culturally relevant services is also an identified challenge. Despite the obvious and positive role culture plays in health and social programming, and specifically the resounding successes LAWS has achieved in its culturally grounded health and social programming, very few existing social and health services in Watson Lake incorporate culture into their programming when working with Indigenous people.

Theme 3: Barriers to Accessing Health Services

Indigenous women who are survivors of GBV often face unique or enhanced barriers in accessing health services related to language, health literacy, values, and culture; fear of experiencing racism, victim blaming, prejudice or other unfair treatment, and loss of children to authorities; and geographic isolation (Du Mont, J. Kosa, D. Macdonald, S. Benoit, A. Forte, T., 2017). Even when they are able to and do access services, providers must be cognizant that Indigenous women experience



sexual assault and other forms of abuse disproportionately or differently due to social and historical factors that may impact the ways in which services should be offered and delivered. Such factors include racism, cultural devaluation, social and economic exclusion, and colonization (Amnesty International Canada, 2014).

3. Promising practices and recommendations to address gender-based violence and to increase safety amongst Indigenous women.

There are seven re-occurring themes from the literature reviewed:

Theme 1: Local ownership and community driven solutions to support Indigenous involvement in program development and delivery

The literature emphasized the need for Indigenous peoples to be involved in creating mechanisms to counter violence. This supports Indigenous knowledge and teachings being included in the process of responding to violence against Indigenous women. Additional themes included the need for Indigenous peoples' involvement in decision-making processes and programming to address the violence, including ceremony, as well as supporting Indigenous communities to develop their own safety initiatives.

There is no singular solution to ending GBV and solutions must come from Indigenous place-based, cultural practices and teachings. Local approaches allow for the deepening of individual agency, as community members look to one another rather than to outside actors to create change. For example, the work of Pauktiitit Inuit Women of Canada (2019) provides incredible resources which utilize Inuit cultural values within the Inuit language, identifying how these values can inform violence prevention in alignment with ancestral, localized knowledge systems. Traditional knowledge as a foundation for efforts to address structural and interpersonal violence have the potential to transform community wellbeing and build safer and more responsive communities.

Theme 2: Properly resourced and culturally sensitive services for victims and families

Culture and traditional knowledge is discussed as a foundation for efforts to address structural and interpersonal violence and crucial to transforming community wellbeing and building safer and more responsive communities. This priority requires appropriate funding amounts and timelines.

LAWS has long recognized the power of culturally grounded programming and in fact, it is the foundation upon which LAWS was created. Every program LAWS undertakes is grounded in the system of



Dene ā'nezen (dignity and respect), which calls on us to foster empowerment, dignity and respect among women and promote socially just, culturally appropriate and effective responses to violence (LAWS Strategic Plan, 2018).

Theme 3: Greater collaboration and innovation between federal and provincial government agencies and services, non-government organisations, and other local and community-based initiatives.

Relationship building and sustaining relationships were common themes in the literature. Core skills for success in this context include listening, relationship-building, flexibility, and the ability and preparedness to leverage resources. The literature also highlights the need for innovative collaborations between community agencies to respond to and prevent family sexualized violence.

Theme 4: Capacity building through advocacy, education and awareness raising

Awareness raising through education and advocacy were re-occurring themes in the literature. These approaches support local capacity building and apply a strengths-based lens. In the Watson lake context specifically, a key challenge identified in past projects reports is limited awareness around GBV and of appropriate responses and services to address it.



Theme 5: Addressing discrimination in the justice system and improving relationships between police and Indigenous communities

Repeatedly the literature discussed measures to improve cultural responsiveness of police services, improving policing, investigations and prosecution processes, and building better relationships between families and the RCMP. This included discussions on innovations in court practices.

Theme 6: Understanding and responding to violence from response-based practice lens

The literature calls for programs that offer supports to victims and community-based education that explores the root causes of violence. Response-based practice (RBP) offers a framework that analyzes power and context, acknowledges state oppression and focuses on positive outcomes in a context of addressing social injustice. It is attentive to issues of inequality related to class, race, gender and ability, and emphasizes that an analysis of social issues is crucial.

RBP is explored as a framework that asks us to identify acts of resistance and to support victims of violence to view themselves as being strong and adaptive in the face of suffering. The term “social responses” refers to the responses of others to the individuals faced with adversity including violence. Researchers show that victims who receive positive social responses are more likely to have positive healing outcomes for example experience improvement in their recovery, feel more connected to others, feel a sense of

belonging and hope. RBP asks us to think about the way we use language to talk about and to victims of violence; the way we consider and manage the power we hold; and the way we give a person every opportunity to participate and make decisions about their lives (Coates and Wade, 2016).

The key tenets to Response-Based Practice are:

- Self-determination is the foundation of dignity
- Language is central to the work of giving dignity
- Attend to power in each moment

Theme 7: Peer support as a model for GBV prevention and response

The literature explored how women often rely on sources other than the criminal justice system for assistance following an experience with violence. This wariness stems from their perceptions that such professionals failed to understand the impact of their lived experience of domestic violence; that such experiences would be interpreted as mental illness; and, the consequences of such misunderstandings might impact on the outcome of legal proceedings related to access and custody of their children. Instead, they preferred to draw on less formal supports, such as peer support, to rebuild their lives (Campbell, 2012).

Regardless of the type of perpetrator, female survivors in the territories most often turned to family members and/or friends or neighbours for support or guidance. In 2009, 79% of women victimized by their spouse confided in a family member and 64% told a friend or neighbour. Similarly, when women were victimized by a non-spouse, more than half turned to family (59%) and/or friends or neighbours (55%) (Statistics Canada, 2015; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2013).

Significant research is available demonstrating the importance and deep impact peer to peer support can have on survivors as an alternative and accompaniment to government and community services. Salzer et al. (2002) identified a range of theories underpinning peer support including social support, experiential knowledge, help therapy principle, and social learning.



Indigenous Approaches to Addressing Gender-Based Violence

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Response-Based Practice

Wade, A. and Richardson, C. (2010) Islands of Safety: Restoring dignity in violence prevention work with Indigenous Families.

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A Literature Map

Following Our People's Way: Building a Circle of Dignity and Justice



Gūdené' K'éh Gū's'ānī:
Dene 'A' Nezen Gedf'
Gūffe Su'ā dege

Reports from Indigenous and Allied Organizations- National Context

Assembly of First Nations (2013) A National Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls.

Justice Framework to Address Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls. (2016). Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety

National Inquiry into MMIWG. (2019). Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG.

Reports from Indigenous and Allied Organizations- Yukon and BC Context

Summary Report: Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit 2 (2012). Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues and the Yukon Women's Directorate.

A Framework for Action in Education, Economic Development and Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls. (2010). BC Aboriginal Affairs Working Group.

Executive Summary: Connecting Our Spirits, Family Gathering of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2015). Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle.

Sharing Common Ground: Review of Yukon's Police Force, Final Report. (2011). Yukon Government.

Understanding Gender-Based Violence in Indigenous Communities

Du Mont, J., Kosa, D. Macdonald, S. Benoit, A. Forte, T. (2017). A comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous survivors of sexual assault and their receipt of and satisfaction with specialized health care services.

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NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT: SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT

The needs and asset assessment included the following three methods of engagement and data collection. This multi-pronged approach to data collection allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the needs, gaps, priorities, and assets from a diverse range of stakeholder perspectives.



1. Advocate Focus Group- March 14th, 2019
2. Tu Cho Gathering- July 4-5th, 2019
3. Service provider Questionnaire- August 2019

The following 10 questions guided the needs assessment process and provided parameters for the research methodology and type of data collected:

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- A. What are the root causes and contributing factors to gender-based violence in Watson Lake and region?
- B. What challenges are survivors in the community facing in regard to violence and safety?
- C. What are the gaps in services and supports for violence prevention and survivor support?
- D. What are the strengths from past LAWS initiatives and assets in the community for supporting survivors and working to end violence?
- E. How can this Project help to fill a need in the community around violence prevention and survivor support?
- F. What is the role of an Advocate?
- G. What supports and learning needs might Advocates need?
- H. What cultural principles, teachings, and protocols can help guide the project?
- I. What does a healthy, safe and violence free community look like?
- J. How will we know if the Project is successful?

A more detailed description of the methodology can be found in **Appendices A – D**, and records of the discussions from each of the three engagements in **Appendix E**.

NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The engagements resulted in a valuable information from a diverse range of partners, including survivors of violence. The results from the engagements have been grouped according to the guiding questions, with the common themes from the engagements summarized below:

A. What are the root causes and contributing factors to gender-based violence in Watson Lake and region?

1. **Colonialism, residential schools and sixties scoop** are deeply rooted causes of violence
2. Cycles of violence and **intergenerational violence**
3. High levels of sexualized violence contribute to **normalization of violence**
4. **Prevalence of addictions and substance abuse**
5. **Structural racism and systemic oppression** experienced by Indigenous peoples
6. **Language used to conceal violence**
7. Violence associated with **survival sex industry and human trafficking**
8. Connection between poverty and lack of safe **transportation and geography**

“I see so many arrows pointed at Native women.”
- Advocate

B. What challenges are survivors facing in regard to violence and safety?

“Our justice system is not working. The system that should have protected you, let you down.” – Project Partner

1. **Negative social responses**
2. **Justice system is failing survivors; Survivors erosion of trust** in system resulting in not using agencies and services
3. **Lack of availability of safe spaces in community** and not feeling safe
4. **Systemic racism and discrimination**
5. **Need for services outside of the 9-5**
6. **Need for service providers with training on how to work with survivors of violence** and with Indigenous communities





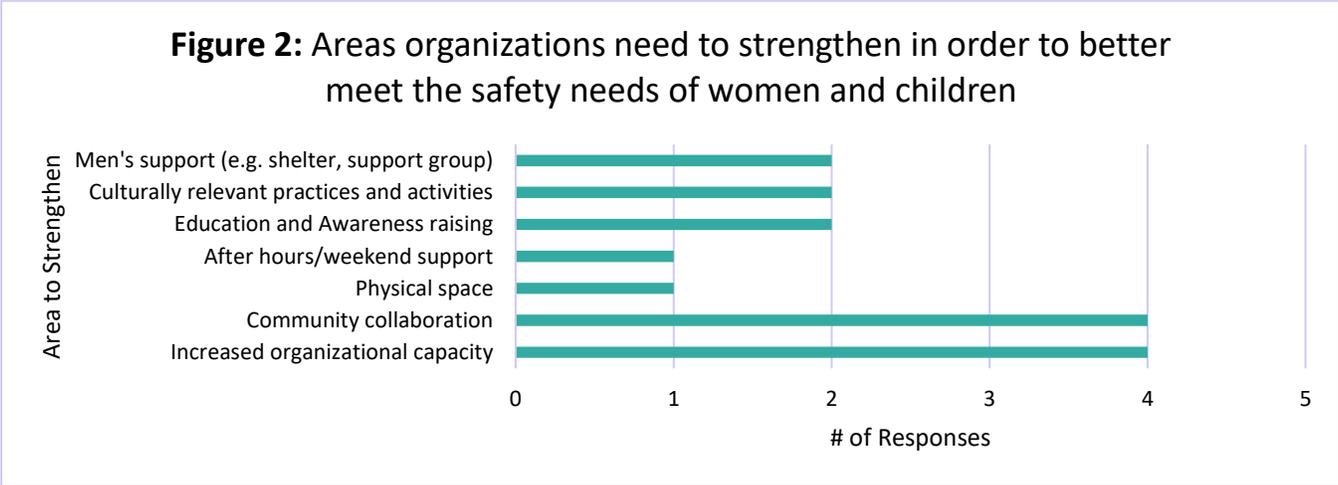
“Not deficits in people, but a deficit in the system and institutions.” - Project Partner

C. What are the gaps in services, supports and justice system for violence prevention and survivor support?

“Sometimes we don’t get it right, but we want to get it right more.” – Service Provider

1. Supports and services are **under-staffed and under-resourced**
2. **Limitations of the justice system**
3. **Revictimization and traumatization** of survivors by the justice system
4. **Training for service providers** in responding to reports of sexual assault and supporting survivors
5. More **community collaboration** required
6. Need for **culturally relevant** and **holistic** practices and services
7. Need for **programming for youth and children**
8. Need for **services outside of 9-5 hours**

Figure 2 categorizes the responses of local service providers and agencies to the question: *What areas do you think your organization could strengthen in order to better meet the safety needs of women and children?*



D. What are the strengths from past LAWS initiatives and assets in the community for supporting survivors and working to end violence?

Participants were asked to reflect on the successes of past LAWS initiatives addressing gender-based violence, what they were proudest of, and current community assets that can be leveraged in the Advocacy project.



1. **Relationship building** and treating people with dignity
2. **Courageous youth** and youth leaders teaching others
3. **Kaska culture** and Elder involvement
4. **Community involvement** and diverse groups, individuals and organizations **working together**
5. **Community members** who are dedicated to this work
6. **Flexibility in program design** to respond to participant needs and community context

“Culture makes it successful.” - Elder



“Strong women who are knowledgeable and leaders.” - Service provider

E. How can this Project help to fill a need in the community around violence prevention and survivor support?

“We are building a safety net...a base...a platoon.” - Advocate

1. Building **safety for survivors**
2. Advocates to take on **education, awareness raising, and social justice driven** activities

3. Understanding the **limitations of the justice system** and exploring **alternatives to the justice system**
4. **Encouraging the involvement of men**
5. **Working in collaboration** and building an **alliance of partners** (e.g. agencies, community members, etc.)
6. **Roles for local service providers:**
 1. Support knowledge sharing
 2. Receive training from Advocates
 3. Attend Advocate-led events and campaigns
 4. Deliver training to Advocates

“We are trying to prepare a context so women know where to turn for safety.” - LAWS

Figure 3 below categorized the responses of local service providers and agencies to the question: *What kind of role can you see your organization playing in the Project?*



Table 1 summarizes participant responses to the question: *What are some challenges that may arise in the Project? How might we address those challenges?*

Challenges	Potential Strategies
At the end of the 5-years, the program reverts to trauma informed program rather than response-based process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of model and curriculum based on Kaska culture and RBP and evidence-based data to support continuation of program
Staying connected to women in between session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-ins with Facilitators and LAWS • Connections with Youth for Dignity programming

Counselling support for Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing additional funding to hire counsellor
Duality in roles of Advocates and lateral violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering opportunities to Advocates to know, understand and create boundaries around multiple roles
Vicarious Trauma within professional/personal roles especially for women who are survivors (Advocates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for strong clinical supervision of the work and built in supported opportunities for group to participate in self-care

D. What is the role of an Advocate?

1. **Direct survivor support**
2. **Activism and social justice**
3. **Education and awareness raising**
4. **Research and documentation**

“Advocates can play diverse roles based on their strengths, interests, and skills.” – Project Partner

Participants at the Tu Cho gathering shared the qualities of an Advocate and the roles they may play in supporting survivors and building a safer community. Key words discussed at the Tu Cho Gathering are captured in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Roles and Qualities of an Advocate

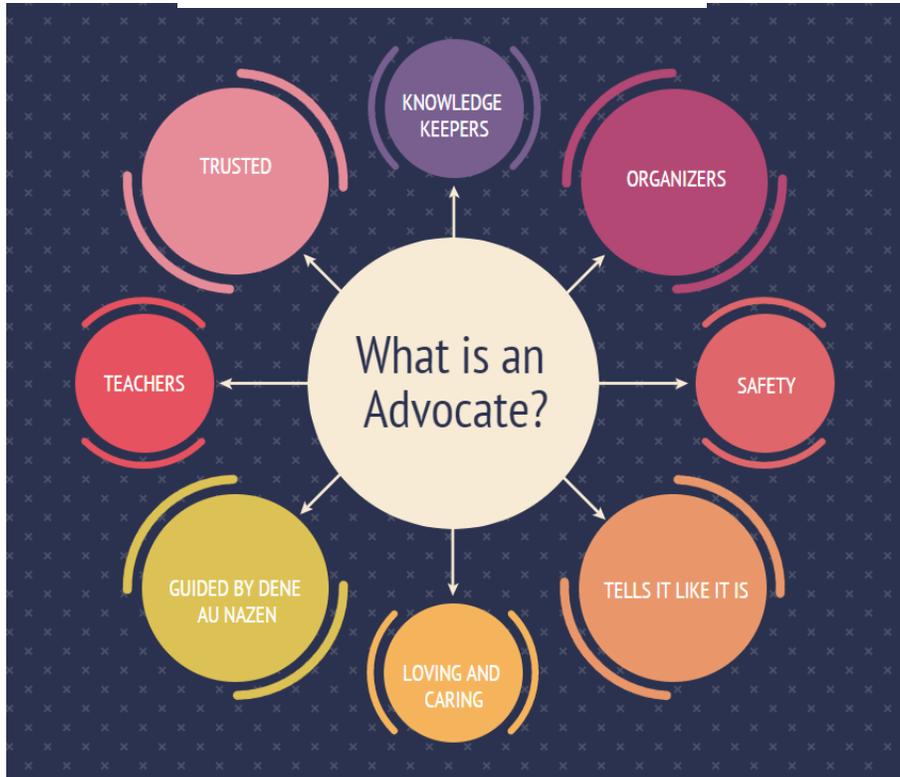
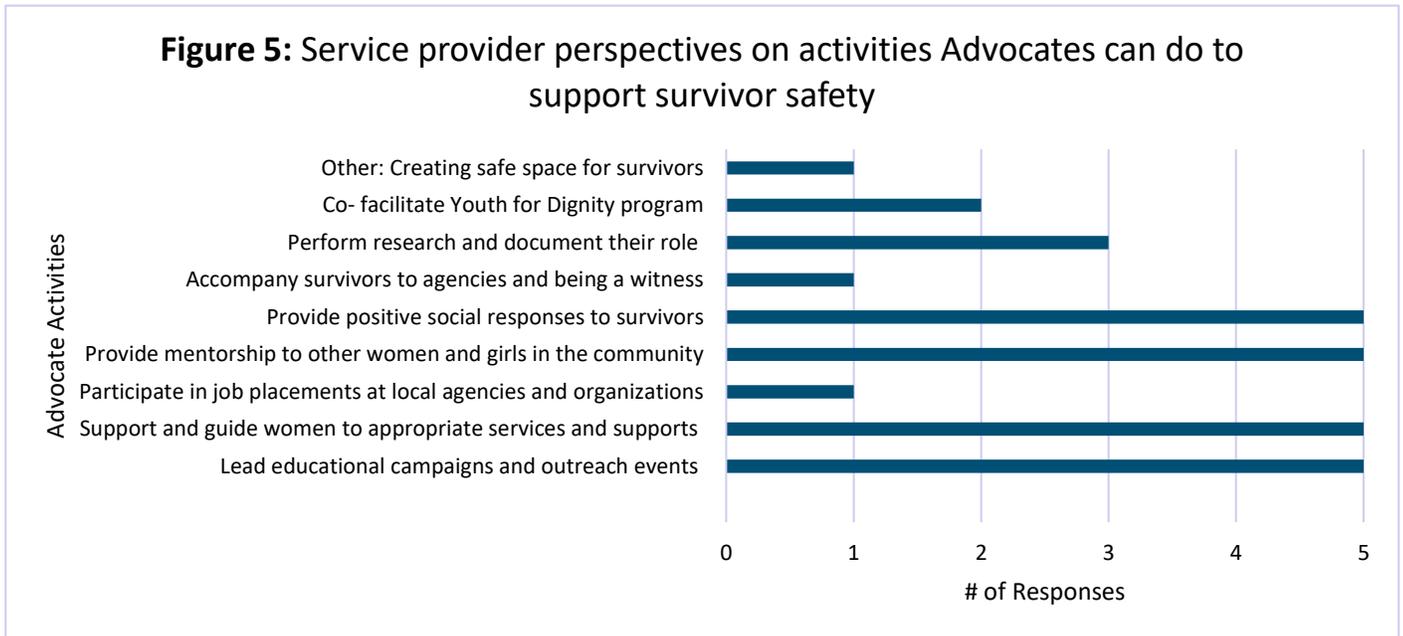


Figure 5 categorizes the responses of local service providers and agencies to the question: *What kind of role can you see your organization playing in the Project?*



E. What supports and learning needs might Advocates need?

“Helping women rise above it all, be who they are.” – Advocate

1. **Peer support and relationship building**
2. **Counselling supports** for their own for their own experiences with violence
3. **Communication skills** (e.g. speaking to peers, advocacy, public speaking)
4. **A confidential and safe space**
5. **Involve men in project**
6. **Cultural activities and Elder engagement**
7. **Understanding violence and response-based practice** (e.g. systems of response, reporting process, etc.)
8. **Maintaining momentum and Advocate supports between sessions**
9. **Range of trainings on RBP foundations and skills for survivor support** (e.g. suicide prevention, positive space training, mental health training)
10. Knowledge of **existing services, agencies and programs** for violence intervention and response



F. What cultural principles, teachings, and protocols can help guide the projects?

“We were all advocates traditionally.” – Elder

1. **Reclaiming identity** by supporting Advocates to learn about their lineage and ancestors
2. **Kaska cultural activities** (e.g. sewing, fishing, smoking fish)
3. **Engagement of Elders** in land-based gatherings and cultural activities
4. **Learning about Dene Au Nazen**
5. Increase in **culturally relevant practices and supports amongst service providers**



“You need to know who you are and where you come from.” – Elder

G. What does a healthy, safe and violence free community look like?



1. **Safe spaces**
2. People have **access to the services and resources** that they need (survivors, and those with abusive behaviours) need
3. Rebuilding **hope and trust**
4. **Kaska Culture** is strong
5. Raising the **agency of women** in the community
6. **Culturally sensitive approaches** being taken by service providers
7. **Men and women are working together** to create safety
8. **Systemic changes** in the justice system

H. How will we know if the project is successful?

- a. *What type of change will Advocates experience if the project is successful?*
- b. *How will we know Kaska culture is guiding the project?*
- c. *What type of changes might agencies experience?*
- d. *What kinds of changes might we see in the community?*

1. Advocates and Survivors of Violence

1. Increase in **community and peer supports**
2. **Agency of Advocates** and leadership in design and delivery
3. **Increase skills and knowledge**

2. Kaska Culture

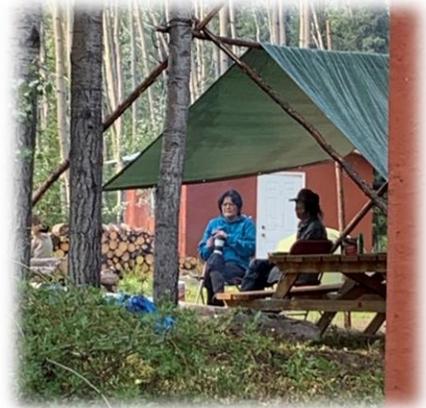
1. Stronger **cultural systems of support**
2. **Strengthened relationships** between Advocates and Elders
3. Increase in **passing on traditional knowledge**
4. Reclaiming **cultural identity**

3. Agencies and Service providers

1. Improved **collaboration and coordination between service providers**
2. Increase opportunities for **learning between Advocates and agencies**
3. Increase in **educational activities**
4. Increased **understanding and capacity of service providers to support survivors**
5. Increase in **resources and support programs**

4. Community

1. **Social Justice and activism**
2. Increase in **men's participation in addressing violence**
3. Increase in **education and prevention**
4. **Decrease in substance abuse**
5. Increase in **safe respectful community spaces**



“We need a paradigm shift.” – Partner

CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

This Report may be shared with participants of the needs/asset assessment and key project partners to act as a tool to develop, evaluate, and report on the community-based and culturally grounded program model for increasing safety and supports for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). The next steps in the Project's development and implementation, associated with the deliverables, include:

1. **Partnership Protocol:** LAWS to utilize the needs and asset assessment results to inform the development of a partnership protocol.
2. **Advocacy Training Curriculum and Service Delivery Model:** LAWS and RBP Facilitators to draw from this report to design training curriculum and service delivery activities for Advocates.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan:** Beringia to further develop the M&E plan and associated tools, integrating findings from assessment.

CONCLUSION

The needs and asset assessment process provided opportunities to bring together diverse groups of partners and community members, each with their own experiences and wisdom, to work together. It helped to build a foundation of relationships and understanding for what the needs and gaps are in supporting survivors of violence, as well as learning from the rich history of work that LAWS has been doing from many years in regard to addressing gender-based violence. The work ahead of us is to weave the experience, teachings, resources, ideas, and learnings together into a program model that will help to support, respond to and restore dignity and safety amongst survivors of gender-based violence. This will be done by sharing the assessment results with participants and partners and supporting the integration of its findings into the design and delivery of the program model. This dissemination of the report findings will be supported with ongoing opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.



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APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENTS AND METHODOLOGY

The needs and asset assessment included three methods of data collection through focus groups, sharing circles and questionnaires with a diverse range of community partners, including survivors of violence, family members, elders, consultants with subject matter expertise, and service providers. This multi-pronged approach to data collection allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the needs, gaps, priorities, and assets from a diverse range of stakeholder perspectives.

1. Advocate Focus Group- March 14th, 2019
2. Tu Cho Gathering- July 4-5th, 2019
3. Service provider Questionnaire- August 2019

Below is an overview of the groups involved in the consultations and their roles in the project:

Partner Organization/Group	Role in Project
LAWS (Executive Director, Elders, Board Members and Support Staff)	LAWS is the lead organization of the project. LAWS Board members are Kaska Elders who will support project activities and will help to guide cultural practices and protocols in the project.
Advocates and Advocate Family Members	Advocates are positive social responders made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and allies, ages 18 year and older. Through this project, Advocates will become anti-violence leaders in their community.
Agency and Service Provider Staff	Project partners attended who will support the project design and implementation.
Centre for Response Based Practice	Facilitators from the Centre for Response Based Practice will be leading the Advocate training and service delivery model
Beringia Community Planning Inc.	Consultants leading Advocacy project's monitoring and evaluation; Interim LAWS Project Manager role and duties until LAWS staff is hired.

The following 10 questions guided the needs assessment process and provided parameters for the research methodology and type of data collected:

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- A. What are the root causes and contributing factors to gender-based violence in Watson Lake and region?
- B. What challenges are survivors in the community facing in regard to violence and safety?
- C. What are the gaps in services and supports for violence prevention and survivor support?
- D. What are the strengths from past LAWS initiatives and assets in the community for supporting survivors and working to end violence?
- E. How can this Project help to fill a need in the community around violence prevention and survivor support?
- F. What is the role of an Advocate?
- G. What supports and learning needs might Advocates need?
- H. What cultural principles, teachings, and protocols can help guide the project?
- I. What does a healthy, safe and violence free community look like?
- J. How will we know if the Project is successful?

The consultations were guided by the following principles:

- **Culturally-responsive and relevant** – Respect for Kaska culture, values, knowledge, protocols and customs that support a culturally safe process
- **Holistic** – The interrelated nature of all aspects of violence were considered: mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health, social, cultural, economic, and environmental
- **Capacity-driven and empowering** – Honouring existing capacities and community self-determination
- **Strength-based** – Community assets and strengths, including the valuable work done by LAWS and partners up to this point, were honoured and celebrated
- **Collaborative and participatory** – A process that supported the opportunity for diverse partners who care deeply about this work to build relationships
- **Adaptive and reflective** – A continuous process for feedback, reflection, and learning

Moreover, the assessment used a culturally relevant, gender-based analysis (CRGBA). This is an analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. This included acknowledging and linking the roots of oppression, such as the effects of colonialism, racism and sexism; honoring a holistic approach that includes respect for self, others, and respecting traditions and a relationship to the land; and recognizing the unique needs, perspectives and rights of Indigenous women, including Indigenous women with disabilities and two-spirited Aboriginal women.

Methodology

The following section provides an overview of the 3 engagements conducted including details on the participants and activities.

1. Advocate Focus Group- March 14th, 2019 10AM-1PM

LAWS and Beringia Community Planning Inc. facilitated a focus group with 4 Indigenous women who are survivors of violence and are potential Advocates as well as 2 Elders. The aim of the focus group was to share information on the Project, build relationships with potential advocates, and collect feedback as part of the needs assessment process. The agenda for the session can be found in Appendix B.



The Focus Group was attended by:

Ann Maje Raider	LAWS Executive Director, Elder
Mary Charlie	LAWS Board of Directors Member, Elder
Robin Groat	Potential Advocate
Julie Allen Sernes	Potential Advocate
Jodie Dick	Potential Advocate
Angel	Potential Advocate

2. Tu Cho Gathering- July 4th- 5th 2019

LAWS hosted a 2-day Gathering, July 4th - 5th 2019, at Tu Cho on traditional Kaska land, to support collaborative and culturally grounded project planning activities, including needs assessment dialogue. The Gathering brought together a diversity of project partners to draw upon the experience and knowledge amongst the group, and as a collective identify barriers, gaps, assets and priority areas. The agenda can be found in Appendix C.

It was attended by the following 19 partners:

Ann Maje Raider	LAWS Executive Director
Mary (Rose) Caesar	Liard First Nation Leader
Mary Charlie	LAWS Board of Directors Member
Jody Dick	Advocate
Maryann Dick	Mother of Advocate, Community Member
Michelle Wolftail	Advocate
Rosemary Rowlands	Executive Director- Help and Hope for Families

Kyla Greene Beaulieu
Linda MacDonald
Renee Claude Carrier
Julie Laliberte
Martina Volfova
Miranda Lane
Joey Mitchel
Allan Wade
Shelly Bonnah
Jeff Cook
Naomi Schatz
Paula Hay

Staff- Help and Hope for Families
Kaska Language Teacher/School Liaison
Service Provider Kaushee's Women's Shelter
Project Partner
Project Partner
LAWS Support Staff
LAWS Support Staff
Centre for Response Based Practice
Centre for Response Based Practice
Beringia Community Planning Inc. Principal
Beringia Community Planning Inc.
Beringia Community Planning Inc.

The Gathering used a sharing circle method to support the process.⁴ Guiding questions were posed to the group which supported storytelling and important sharing from the diverse perspectives present. Discussions were documented by Beringia Community Planning staff. Kaska cultural practices were embedded throughout the Gathering, through prayer, smudging ceremony, a communal fire area for listening and sharing, walks around the land, and fishing in Frances Lake.



⁴ Sharing circles are a discussion process in which participants share their feelings, experiences, and insights in response to guiding topics and questions. They are loosely structured, promote the goals of the process, and support cooperation, effective communication, trust, and confidentiality. (Innerchoice Publishing, 2012)

3. Service Provider Questionnaire- August 2019

In August 2019, Beringia with LAWS leadership identified key service providers in the region to complete a questionnaire (Appendix D). The questionnaire was sent to 9 service providers and agency staff with the option given to complete the questionnaire electronically, or to arrange a semi-structured interview with Beringia staff member. There was a 56% response rate, with 4 service providers submitting the questionnaire and 1 conducting an interview with Beringia staff.



The aim of the questionnaire was to collect feedback from the perspectives of service delivery and agency staff on existing institutional mechanisms and supports as well as the needs, gaps, strengths that can help to build community capacity to support, respond and restore safety amongst survivors of GBV.

The following agencies and organizations participated in the questionnaire:

- Victim Services- Yukon Government
- Watson Lake RCMP
- Regional Services- Yukon Government
- Health and Social Services- Yukon Territorial Government
- Liard First Nation

APPENDIX B: ADVOCATE FOCUS GROUP AGENDA

Agenda Item	Guiding Themes
1. Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions of attendees
2. Overview of Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide overview of YFD (1 pager)
3. Discussion #1	What are the community needs and current gaps in relation to supporting survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and prevention of GBV?
4. Discussion #2	What are the ways we can design the Project to address these needs and gaps?
5. Discussion #3	What skills will Youth need/want to gain? What types of activities would you like to see in the Project around GBV prevention and response?
6. Closing and Reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go around of what they are taking away from Focus Group
7. Contact information, photos and Appreciation Gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect contact information, group photos and give gift card to participants

APPENDIX C: TU CHO GATHERING AGENDA

Day 1- Thursday, July 4th, 9AM-5PM

Time	Activity	Topics
8:30-9AM	Breakfast	
9 – 9:30AM	Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opening Prayer and Welcome ○ Introductions
9:30 – 10AM	Gathering Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review agenda ○ Goals for Tu Cho Gathering
10-10:45AM	Project Overviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of YFD and Advocacy projects ○ Themes from March meetings
10:45-11AM	Break	
11AM – 12PM	Project Overviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Response- based practice Introduction
12 – 1PM	Lunch	
1-2:30PM	Design Advocacy Program Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energizer/Trust Activity ○ Sharing circle with Advocates and Elders (Needs assessment)
2:30-3PM	Break	
3-4:30PM	Design Advocacy Program Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussion/activities to design Advocacy Program model
4:30-5PM	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Closing circle
5PM-Onward	Supper and Evening Activities	

Day 2 - Friday, July 5th, 9AM-5PM

Time	Activity	Topics
8:30-9AM	Breakfast	
9 – 9:30AM	Day 2 Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review/reflections on Day 1 ○ Day 2 Agenda Review

9:30 – 10AM	Past LAWS initiatives	○ Successes and Lessons Learned
10-11AM	Kaska Culture in projects	○ How can Kaska culture and Dene Au Nezen guide the projects?
11-11:15AM	Break	
11:15 – 12PM	Kaska Culture in projects	○ How can Kaska culture and Dene Au Nezen guide the projects?
12 – 1PM	Lunch	
1-2PM	Design Advocacy Program Model	○ Activities/discussion to support design of Advocacy curriculum and model
2-2:15PM	Break	
2:15-4PM	Project Results (Evaluation)	○ Discussion- What does a successful project look like? What are the results?
4-5PM	Closing	○ Closing Circle ○ Acknowledgements

APPENDIX D: SERVICE PROVIDER QUESTIONNAIRE

Your organization:

1. What organization do you work with? What is the mandate of your organization?
2. What types of services or programs does your organization provide towards violence prevention, intervention or survivor support?
3. What areas do you think your organization could strengthen in order to better meet the safety needs of women and children?

Understanding gender-based violence in Watson Lake and surrounding areas:

4. From your point of view, what concerns you the most in terms of violence in the community? What is most challenging?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the current levels of violence and safety concerns in Watson Lake?

Not a problem

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Extreme Crisis

9

10

6. What do you think are the key gaps in services, supports and justice system for responding to violence and supporting survivors?
7. What services, people and places do survivors turn to currently for support locally? What are the strengths in the community currently for supporting survivors and preventing violence?
8. What would you say are the unique needs of women with disabilities, LGBTQ and two-spirited people?
9. What does a healthy, safe, violence free community look like?

Partnerships: An important part of the project is working in collaboration with local partners and bringing together a circle of support- an alliance of local agencies, organizations, services and community members.

10. What kind of role can you see your organization playing in the Project? Check all that apply:
 - Participate as an Advisory Committee member (1 meeting/year)
 - Provide direct support to Advocates as survivors of violence
 - Deliver trainings to Advocates on your organization and services
 - Contribute to the development of a Partnership protocol
 - Attend Advocate-led events and campaigns
 - Receive training from Advocates about the safety needs of Indigenous women

-
- Support knowledge sharing of Project progress and results
 - Offer a job shadowing/placement for an Advocate at your organization
 - Other opportunities for partnership? _____

11. What are some key individuals, agencies and organizations should be involved in this project and how might they be involved?

Project Design:

12. Here are some preliminary ideas of the types of activities Advocates can do to support survivor safety. Check/highlight the top 5 activities you think most important and relevant:

- Lead educational campaigns and outreach events
- Support informed decision-making and guide women to appropriate services and supports
- Participate in job placements at local agencies and organizations
- Provide mentorship to other women and girls in the community
- Provide positive social responses to survivors
- Accompany survivors to agencies and being a witness
- Perform research and document their role supporting survivors and contributing to a safer community
- Co- facilitate Youth for Dignity program
- Other: _____

13. Given your experience in this field, what are some challenges that may arise in the Project? How might we address those challenges?

Project Impact:

14. What is the biggest change you would like to see in the community in 5 years, in regard to survivor support and violence prevention?

15. If the project is successful, what kind of change might we see amongst organizations and agencies involved in the projects?

16. Below is a list of outcomes of the Project. Please check/highlight the top 3 most important outcomes from your perspective:

Community/Public:

- Increased community awareness of violence prevention and response

Advocates and Survivors of Violence:

- Increased ability of Advocates to raise awareness on gender-based violence issues, prevention and response
- Increased knowledge and skills of Advocates to identify, respond and support survivors
- Reduction in feelings of stigmatization amongst survivors

-
- Increased sense of dignity and empowerment amongst survivors
 - Increased sense of connection and peer support amongst survivors
 - Increase in positive social responses towards those who have been harmed by violence

Agencies and Service Providers:

- Increased opportunities for mutual learning between Advocates, agencies and service providers
- Increased access to culturally relevant, trauma-informed and safe supports for survivors of violence
- Expanded opportunities for partnership between Advocates and Agencies

APPENDIX E: NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The engagements resulted in a valuable information from a diverse range of partners, including survivors of violence. Summaries of the discussion results from each of the three engagements are included here below according to the guiding questions.

A. What are the root causes and contributing factors to gender-based violence in Watson Lake and region?

SUMMARY OF RESULTS	
<p>ADVOCATE FOCUS GROUP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycles of residential school, sexual abuse and violence • The trauma and evasion of boundaries has a ripple effect • Racism experiences at agencies and services- lack of understanding or compassion • Community members experiencing it on a regular basis • Racism towards Native women • The systems is flawed • Crisis in Watson Lake affecting all ages 	<p>TU CHO GATHERING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism and discrimination from RCMP • Cycles of violence • Intergenerational violence passed down • Normalized violence is learned • No trust in the system- charged for defending myself • Language is used to conceal things • Comes from the message “We don’t believe you.” • The system that should be protecting, let you down • Not deficits in people, but a deficit in the system
<p>SERVICE PROVIDERS QUESTIONNAIRE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of violence and recidivism • That violence has become “normalized” • The interplay of historical trauma with colonialism, residential schools, sixties scoop etc. • Violence associated with addictions, and increasing levels and severities of violence • Some victims are not willing to report or see investigations through • Hidden violence- known but unreported • Systemic oppression/violence- how this deepens/broadens the scope of our view of violence • Challenges in addressing violence issues in LGBTQ2S communities • Violence associated with involvement in survival sex industry and the impacts of human trafficking in this community • Female to female violence- how do we recognize, identify and respond • Bullying in schools as some of the roots of gender-based violence • Connecting the lack of safe transportation, poverty, geography and gender-based violence 	

B. What challenges are survivors facing in regard to violence and safety?

SUMMARY OF RESULTS	
ADVOCATE FOCUS GROUP: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negative social responses• Not feeling safe to go out any more• Loss of sense of self, became violent• Not knowing boundaries• Not knowing rights• Not reporting because didn't want to go through with that• Can't approach police because of fear they might be put on trial and have to defend themselves• Racism at services and lack of compassion• Isolation as a protecting oneself	TU CHO GATHERING: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No trust in the system• Experiences of racism and discrimination• Lack of trust to turn to RCMP as an institution for help and reporting process• A justice system that is failing survivors• No access to justice• The context and story of each individual is important- the effects don't get to the story behind the person
SERVICE PROVIDERS QUESTIONNAIRE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negative social response re-victimizes people• Individuals lack of faith in the RCMP and justice system• Some victims are not willing to report or see investigations through- unreported physical assaults• No safe place to go• Victim services only available 9 to 5 weekdays only• Shouldn't have to call a 1-800 number need community supports here• Need for additional Mental Health and Wellness Supports- especially community-based counsellors who are available outside of 9-5• Need for additional female RCMP members trained in sexual assault response	

C. What are the gaps in services, supports and justice system for violence prevention and survivor support?

SUMMARY OF RESULTS	
<p>ADVOCATE FOCUS GROUP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivors of violence chose not to report as they didn't want to go through with that difficult process • Not having connection to group of adults and Elders they can go to and feel safe • The system is flawed, Native women get negative social responses and it allows people to do this • Needing a gathering together to tell stories-a confidential space • Involving men and boys 	<p>TU CHO GATHERING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The justice system is not healing the perpetrator • Perpetrators getting away with too much • Systemic discrimination and assault on Indigenous peoples • How the justice system fails people • Colonial language that conceals violence and injustice (i.e. residential schools are prison camps) • Lack of understanding of how violence works and root causes • Lack of positive social response system in Watson Lake • Need to expose what people are caught in (e.g. reporting to police may invoke child protection) • Confusing sex with violence • New teaching strategies needed to understand the system • Violence problems get treated as alcohol problems or sexual problems • Lack of capacity to support prevention and keeping public informed • Young women aging out of care have different needs
<p>SERVICE PROVIDERS QUESTIONNAIRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity for education and prevention- focus is reactive not proactive • Need for afterhours/ weekend support for victims, outside of the regular 9-5pm • Mandatory training needed for service providers in responding to reports of sexual assault and supporting survivors • Lack of cultural practices and approaches in services • The criminal code and justice system is offender based • Erosion of trust in the police and the justice system • Service providers in the area are stretched past capacity and have limited time and resources to deliver educational initiatives and campaigns • Discrimination, lack of education of individuals and service providers • Educational training for service providers on how to be inclusive and understanding terminology (e.g. LGBTQ2S and people with disabilities) around identities and how to create safe spaces • Need for outreach (street level- crisis response) • Need for programming to children and teens re: gender-based violence • Need for additional female RCMP members trained in sexual assault response • Programming which considers holistic approaches to supporting survivors of violence 	

D. What are the strengths from past LAWS initiatives and assets in the community for supporting survivors and working to end violence?

SUMMARY OF RESULTS	
ADVOCATE FOCUS GROUP: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Campaigns• Circle time to check in and check out• Making posters and being creative• Building a safe zone• Cultural activities• Elders involvement	TU CHO GATHERING: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for youth, elders, community members and service providers to work together• A community of people who are dedicated to helping and there is real potential for partnership and collaboration• Kaska cultural activities and involvement of Elders• Facilitators having the flexibility to adjust the program and meet the needs of the youth and community• RCMP officers who are allies in this work• Investing time to build trust and relationships• Some RCMP officer are allies in this work• Different groups joining together
SERVICE PROVIDERS QUESTIONNAIRE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community champions who are dedicated to helping• Real potential for partnership and collaboration• Relationship building as key to success• Agencies and organizations working together• Relationships with people at services• Family members	

E. How can this Project help to fill a need in the community around violence prevention and survivor support?

SUMMARY OF RESULTS	
<p>ADVOCATE FOCUS GROUP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping youth and women feel safe • Advocates coming up with recommendations for services and systems change • Stopping the cycle of violence • A group of adults and Elders people can come to and feel safe • Helping women find something they love 	<p>TU CHO GATHERING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying attention to language and challenging colonial language that conceals violence and injustice • Create alternatives to the justice system currently • Addressing racist tools and government collusion • Create a cycle of justice to help frame action • Helping survivors to see they do not need to be fixed • Bringing attention to acts of racism and violence • Giving Advocates and youth the language to confront the system • Engaging safe and honorable men- approach men as knowledgeable and ask them how men can help to make it safer for women? • Inviting Elders to teach and mentor young men and boys • Creating a cycle of (social) that includes resistance and exposing the systemic barriers that people are facing (i.e. reporting violence to the RCMP might invoke child protection) • Confronting government collusion with violence • Advocates to work in partnership with local agencies • Putting onus on governments and public system for change

F. What is the role of an Advocate?

SUMMARY OF RESULTS	
<p>DIRECT SURVIVOR SUPPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening ear • Advocates being called in as supports in the hospital • A place for women to phone anytime and a safety net of people to come with them (court, hospital, talk, etc.) • Summer gathering on the land- fishing, camping, connecting to culture • Accompany survivors to agencies • Being there for a person, to hold their hand sometimes not talking • Provide supportive positive social responses • Walking alongside (not in front or behind) and supporting informed choice • Accompanying survivors to agencies (i.e. reporting) and being a witness • Ability to stand up to public institutions • Support for survivors to make informed decisions 	<p>ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making this issue visible through campaigns • Start a systems safety net • Work in partnership with RCMP to: Build working relationships; Deliver training to RCMP (e.g. Crash course on Do's and Don'ts for RCMP); • Look at the gaps in the justice system and the implications of a failing justice system • Developing alternatives, another way, towards justice • Promoting a system of positive social response in Watson Lake • Critical analysis by unpacking legislation as a means of resistance and accountability • Bring back the Stop Rape sign- confronting the town of Watson lake for the circumstances and decision to pull sign down • Dignity preserving actions- Demonstrating we can show just as much dignity for the perpetrator as the victim
<p>EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of youth • Involve young men- open their eyes to hear from victims and learn about consent and boundaries • Social media campaign- Using Snap Chat • Advocates can help fill a gap, by pushing forward the conversation through campaigns and initiatives to raise awareness of the issue • Building up a system of positive social response in Watson Lake • Encouraging the involvement of men and boys • Training agency staff (i.e. RCMP) • Building relationships with agencies (e.g. RCMP) • Co- facilitate Youth for Dignity program • Art as tool for awareness raising • Build off of past initiatives (e.g. community pledge) 	<p>RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates to accompany survivors, act as a witness to document the process. • Advocates do a review of RCMP training materials and apply a Kaska lens to justice • Critical analysis by unpacking legislation as a means of resistance and accountability • Documenting their role in supporting survivors and contributing to a safer community • Advocates identify men who have resisted violence, interview them, and ask how they decided to become and stay non-violent • Advocates can be the historians of the dignity process and keep records of change • Helping Advocates access information and resources

G. What supports and learning needs might Advocates need?

ADVOCATE SUPPORTS AND LEARNING NEEDS

- Peer support
- Educational process and healing circle
- Communication skills with peers and for advocacy
- Gathering together to tell stories- Making sure there is confidentiality and safety
- Learning boundaries and how to love one another and respect
- Separate group for boys/men (Overlap sometimes (i.e. Training); Train the men to train other men)
- Fun events (i.e. curling; badminton; hiking; hot springs)
- Counselling and supports for their own experiences with violence
- A lead advocate who serves as a mentor to the other advocates
- Training on the reporting process, complaints process, rights of survivors, and how not to corrupt evidence
- Opportunities to participate in cultural activities on the land (E.g. working with moose hide) with Elders
- Knowledge of services, agencies and programs for violence intervention and response
- Learning about ancestry, facilitation, research, project management skill development
- Maintaining momentum between sessions
- Opportunities for leadership in the project and fulfill a role they feel most interested in (i.e. facilitation) to grow their unique skills sets and interests
- Transportation- budget for gas to enable participation
- Positive space training, Mental health training, Suicide prevention and intervention training
- Critical analysis
- Understanding resistance, response vs. effects, power of language, social responses

H. What cultural principles, teachings, and protocols can help guide the projects?

<p>ADVOCATE FOCUS GROUP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural gatherings on the land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Smoke fish ○ Chainsaw training ○ Fire smarts ○ Porcupine quills • Fishing, camping, connecting to culture • Gathering together to tell stories- a confidential space • Elder involvement • Cultural activities 	<p>TU CHO GATHERING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement of Elders, land based gatherings and cultural activities (e.g. sewing, fishing, birch baskets, porcupine quills, caribou tufting). • Providing financial compensation to community members who teach traditional activities • Deep importance of culture in the project • Supporting Advocates to learn about their personal lineage and ancestors • Central role of Elders in the project to teach about Dene Au Nazen • Embedding culturally grounded approaches to responding and healing from violence • Bringing cultural learning and activities into the project • Personal cultural research • Foundational law- identify relations and understanding how to connect
<p>SERVICE PROVIDERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing increasingly culturally relevant case management practices • Increase in culturally relevant supports and practices • Increase in understanding of service providers of Kaska culture 	

I.

J. What does a healthy, safe and violence free community look like?

TU CHO GATHERING

- Justice, helping hands, respect
- Leaders who are not criminals
- Respectful, Lineage, knowledge development
- Our community is a violence free environment
- Men and women united to create safety
- Kaska dene a nazen training for all services professionals
- Stronger cultural systems of support
- Get men involved to advocate young guys, boys
- Youth who know about respect and consent
- More Kaska speakers
- Laws to change for sexual predators
- Protect our community from violence
- Rebuilding hope and strength

SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Naming it- it is reaching epidemic proportions for such a small community
- Holistic health and wellbeing
- Culturally sensitive approaches being taken by service providers
- Engaging people who are struggling with coping strategies
- Systemic changes in the justice system
- Create connection- having time to have space with someone (for them to speak or not speak)
- Awareness from service providers on the power difference and how can service providers provide safer spaces
- Community members and service providers taking responsibility to play their part.
- No courts
- Trust in the community
- Supports easily available
- Proper housing
- Lack of substance abuse
- Safe spaces for those who need them
- People have access to all services
- Individuals with abusive behaviours are supported to get help
- Kaska Culture is strong
- Raising the status of women in community

K. How will we know if the project is successful?

<p>ADVOCATES AND SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased connection • More survivors getting more positive social responses • No negative gossip • Advocates feel supported • The type and quality of the relationships they have developed with other youth, with the team, and themselves • Women stop blaming women • Survivors have access to the services and supports they need to heal • Stronger and empowered • Advocates have ownership over the program and guide it • Advocates become leaders and role models • Advocates are in leadership roles • They are still there- retention of advocates • They are comfortable saying what they need/want to see • They are able to describe clearly what they are doing to create safety • Increased negotiating skills • More language that creates safety • Young women knowing their rights and what consent is 	<p>KASKA CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaska dene a nazen training for all services professionals • Learning about lineage • More Kaska speakers • Advocates are building relationships with Elders • Elders are less isolated as a result of being involved in program • Nurturing more relationships between elders and youth • Elders are teaching what they learned growing up • Respect for family • Singing Kaska songs • More kaska speakers • Advocates knowing their roots and who they are • The starting point is grounding in a culture- who are you? • Genogram (family lineage)- response to systemic assault • Non-native can also explore where they come from and their family lineage
<p>AGENCIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved collaboration between service providers • Increase engagement and opportunities for learning between Advocates and agencies • That they know about the program/resources • They try to engage with Advocates and refer to Advocate services • Paradigm shift- accountability of agencies • Increase in education and prevention • Increased capacity of service providers • All service providers using response-based practice 	<p>COMMUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are unhappy and angry with injustice • Changing the narrative in Watson lake • Increase in community voices • Interrupting negative perceptions of Watson lake and first nation • Leaders who are not criminals • Laws to change for sexual predators

-
- Service providers are providing trauma informed care
 - Culturally sensitive care
 - Support programs
 - Stronger cultural systems of support
 - Ongoing continuing care from service providers-continual contact
 - Less clients
 - Greater understanding and appreciation for the lived experience of women in our communities
 - Services which are able to respond individually and collectively to the needs of women in community

- Increase in men's role in addressing violence
- Men and women united to create safety
- Decrease in substance abuse
- Increase in safe respectful community spaces
- Increase in safer spaces for survivors
- Place to mix and mingle
- Respectful spaces
- Men and women united to create safety
- Protect our community from violence
- Rebuilding hope and strength