

**Liard Aboriginal Women's Society
Youth for Safety Project (DRAFT)**
*December 2016
Watson Lake, Yukon*



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Executive Summary

Youth for Safety is a three-year Youth empowerment project designed to foster community safety and justice for young women and girls centered on the town of Watson Lake, Yukon and nearby Kaska First Nations populations in Two Mile area, Upper Liard and Lower Post, BC.

This project was initiated by the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS), a non-profit, charitable, community-based, aboriginal organization providing social development services to the Kaska Nation in the Yukon and northern British Columbia. LAWS worked in collaboration with Watson Lake community organizations, external facilitators and an evaluator to deliver Youth for Safety.

The project recognizes the need for active female and male Youth participation in addressing issues of violence against young women and girls, and is designed to provide Youth with the knowledge and skills needed to assume a leadership role in promoting safety and justice for Youth women and girls, Youth to Youth and within the community at large. The focus of the project is providing support to young women and girls (under 18) who are at risk of falling victim to sexualized/physical violence through empowerment and advocacy and engaging the community at large. The project is intended to increase safety of youth and community members in Watson Lake by helping Youth learn ways of restoring and preserving dignity of those who experience violence, while also learning new skills to increase safety.

The main focus points of the December session were to continue to build relationship, and executing the vigil for the December 6th National day of Remembrance and Action against Violence against Women. In addition, we explored the topic of comfort zones.



Participants

22 youth total are signed up for the workshops. 9 youth came for the entirety of the two days. 6 youth came for a part of the 2-day workshop. 3 youth did not show up for any of the workshops. A total of 15 youth participated in all or part of the workshop. Of the 22 youth, 18 have been showing up consistently.

NAME	GRADE	NAME	GRADE
1. Austin Nolan	8	12. Sabrina Jansen	9
2. Jamie Dennis	8	13. Trynaty Thompson	9
3. Brianna Pete	9	14. Hunter Wolfe	10
4. Daniel Doctor	9	15. Jasmine Johnson	10
5. Faith Papineau	9	16. Kolby Schmidt	10
6. Gabriel Goupil	9	17. Nathaniel McMillan	10
7. Hope Papineau	9	18. Piper Allen	10
8. Ian McLeod	9	19. Zoe Wolfe	10
9. Jenny Kroeker	9	20. Cian Hobbis	11
10. Julian McDonald	9	21. Tony Gioia	11
11. Maximus Johnson	9	22. Kiera Stubenberg	12

In addition, the following elders and community members were in the room:

Ann Maje Raider (LAWS)

Crystal Stewart (LAWS)

Kristel Vance (LAWS)

Leda Jules (LAWS)

Rose Caesar (LAWS)

Fanny Vance (LAWS)

Mida Donnessey (Kaska elder)

Linda McDonald (Kaska Teacher)

Martina Volfova (Kaska Language facilitator)



Focus Topics

The main focus points of the December session were to continue to build relationship, and executing the vigil for the December 6th National day of Remembrance and Action against Violence against Women. In addition, we explored the topic of comfort zones.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the 15 youth who participated in the workshop and the 22 youth who signed up for the project!



Thank you to the Women's Directorate for donating the roses, Martina Volfova for facilitating the videography, and Klondike Cakes for baking the cake. In addition, thank you to the following community/school partners for assisting in the project!

Mary Maje (LAWS)
 Fannie Vance (LAWS)
 Ann M. Raider (LAWS)
 Mary Charlie (LAWS)
 Crystal Stewart (LAWS)
 Kristel Vance (LAWS)
 Dorothy Smith (RRDC/LAWS)
 Allan Wade (Centre for Response Based Practice)
 Cathy Richardson (Centre for Response Based Practice)
 Justin Brown (Mayor of Watson Lake)

Linda McDonald (WLSS)
 Jean Maclean (WLSS)
 Sanjini Philips (Regional Social Worker)
 May Stewart (LFN Justice)
 Cam Lockwood (RCMP)
 Julie Laliberté (LAWS facilitator)
 Renée-Claude Carrier (LAWS facilitator)
 Martina Volfova (Kaska Language facilitator)
 Sarah Gillett (Beringia Community Planning)
 Jeff Cook (Beringia Community Planning)

1. Introduction

Watson Lake Secondary School (WLSS) in partnership with community agencies have embarked on a three-year Youth-led learning project called “*Youth for Safety*” (YFS). YFS is based on learning topics of safety, dignity, justice, violence against girls and women, and activism; it explores how men keep women safe and how women stay safe. An introductory session was offered to educate and recruit Youth for the project in October of 2016.

The project will celebrate and honour existing Youth strengths, knowledge, and strategies on how to stay safe. Youth will also learn new tools and skills to increase safety in the community. This year, there will be a total of five (5) two-day workshops from November to March 2017. All workshops will be in the class room and will explore topics in an interactive way, using youth-led projects to address different aspects of safety and social justice in Watson Lake.

This report summarizes the December workshop and main topics explored, the vigil, looks at content of material covered, and offers some practical reflection and ways to improve the future workshops.



2. Agenda

MONDAY

Time	Activity
10:00	Opening prayer
	Check-in and introductions (1-10, what are you grateful for)
	Ice-breaker: comfort zones activity
	Go over plan for the two days.
	Revision from last time Corrections on stats
	Housekeeping
	Check in about the vigil
	Teambuilding/GTKY activity
	Practice drumming the women's warrior song.
11:00-11:10	Break
	Clip
	QUIZ
	Second step of group norms->outcomes
	Game
11:55-12:53	Lunch
	Working on vigil plans
	Teambuilding
	Break
	Work on vigil
	Game
	Check-out (1-10)
3:00	Clean up room
3:10	dismissal

TUESDAY

Time	Activity
950	Opening prayer
	Ice-breaker
	Go over plan for the day
	Plan vigil
10:50	Break
	Vigil
11:55-12:53	Lunch
	Check-in
	Game
	Feedback post-its from vigil
1:53	Break
	Clip
	Celebratory games and team building
2:55	Check out (1-10, something you're proud of)
3:05	Clean up room
3:10	dismissal

The agenda was flexible due to the changing nature of the school environment and for any unexpected delays. It also allowed for facilitators to customize activities for the energy levels of the group. The agenda was structured in an arc, meaning the beginning and ends were scheduled with lighter material, such as teambuilding or games, and the middle was scheduled for more in-depth conversations or activities about the topics. Because of the potentially emotional nature of the topics of safety and violence, this arc can help with containment so that youth leave the room in a positive headspace.

2. Focus topics and content

The main focus points of the December session were to continue to build relationship, and executing the vigil for the December 6th National day of Remembrance and Action against Violence against Women. In addition, we explored the topic of comfort zones.

Building Relationship

To continue to build relationship, below is a breakdown of the agenda, focusing on activities that promote and build respect, trust, and relationships between students, facilitators, elders, and community members present in the room. A main focus of the celebration after the vigil was to build a sense of community and foster positive relationships.

Opening prayer

Every YFS workshop opens with an opening prayer in Kaska by an elder in the room. Linda McDonald typically translates the prayer into English.

Introductions and Check-in/out

This gives an opportunity for everyone in the room to introduce themselves and let the group know how they are doing that day. For the November session, participants were asked to give a number from 1-10 (1 =not doing well, 10= doing very well) about how they were doing. This gives facilitators and group members a chance to get a small glimpse of how everyone is feeling that day. The youth were also asked to give a highlight from the past few weeks.

By doing a “check-out” after every day, it provides a sense of whether or not the youth’s day has improved, worsened, or stayed the same. It also provides a chance for the youth to reflect on the day’s learning. After the vigil, the group was asked how they were from 1-10, something they think should be different for next year’s vigil, and something they were proud of. Below is a list of what the students were proud of:



Games

Games have been a popular activity with the youth since the beginning of the project. Games are also a way to re-capture a groups' attention if the energy is feeling stagnant or stale. The group played several games during the workshop, such as "Splat", "Move your butt", and "Team red-light green light".

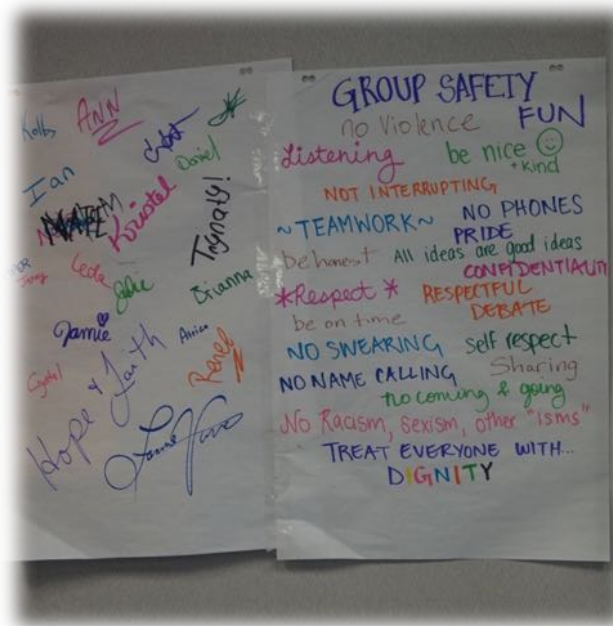


Group Agreements

Group agreements can be an important way to establish safety in a group and to set some expectations for the entire group. The youth were asked in the October orientation what *they* want in the group agreements to enhance the student's autonomy, responsibility and ownership.

Participants finalized and signed a "group contract" in November showing that they will respect and uphold the agreements in the sessions. These group agreements can be referenced anytime a group member is breaking the group norms.

To take the group agreements a step further, we asked the youth about what kinds of outcomes they think should happen if a group member breaks the norms. These are some of the ideas that they came up with:



Phones -----> 3 warnings

Verbal violence----->kicked out?

Physical Violence----->kicked out

Leaving the room and wandering the halls ----->>warnings x 3 after that back to class for whole day.

Racism / other isms /phobias -----> 10 push ups/sit ups

Comfort zones activity

To prepare for the vigil and to give some language to what the youth may be experiencing in the group when they go outside their comfort zones, we did an activity called the comfort donut. The facilitator drew an image on the board of the comfort zones similar to the image below.



One's comfort zone can be explained using a donut analogy. In the middle of a donut, in the donut hole is where the comfort zone is. It includes activities and things that are in our comfort zones, and everyone's is different. This can include things such as brushing your teeth, playing a game of soccer, talking to friends. When one begins to go outside their comfort zone, they begin to "eat" the donut and it is where a lot of learning happens. It is also often uncomfortable and one can feel nervous. However, if one pushes themselves too far, they run out of donut and enter their panic or danger zone. At this point they have stopped benefitting from "eating" the donut and can do harm to themselves and experience a lot of anxiety.

To demonstrate these different zones and how everyone is different, two large concentric circles were laid out on the floor, mimicking a donut shape. Then the facilitators listed different activities and the students were to place themselves on the donut in whatever zone demonstrated their comfort level for the activity. Numerous activities or actions were explored such as speaking in front of people, asking for help, rock climbing, swimming, talking to a teacher about a personal problem. The youth would then shift around either putting themselves in the middle circle (comfort zone), in the "donut" or learning zone, or in the panic or danger zone. This was a way to visually represent how everyone is different. Some people showed that they were comfortable speaking in front of people, and others showed that they were not.



The hopes of this activity were that it would give some language to the youth as they work their way through this program and the challenges it presents and also build respect for others' comfort zones. When a challenge arises such as speaking in front of the school or being filmed for a campaign, hopefully the youth will be able to identify where in the comfort donut the challenge is located and if it is something they would like to push themselves for, therefore expanding their comfort zones and gaining new skills.

Post-vigil celebration

To celebrate the hard work done by the youth for the vigil, most of the afternoon was spent playing games and having fun as a group. We had a few treats for the youth, had a more relaxed format going from game to game, and also discussed what went well and what the group would change for next year's vigil.

Other activities

Quiz

To see where the youth were at in terms of remembering some important statistics about gendered violence and to refresh their memories, we did a quiz on the first day. The youth were very engaged in the quiz, all seeming to care about getting the questions right. There were prizes for the winning team to incentivize the youth.

1. How many women are murdered by their partners every year?
 - a. 30
 - b. 20
 - c. 40
 - d. 59
2. How much more likely are Indigenous women to experience violence?
 - a. 1-2 times more
 - b. 3-4 times more
 - c. 4-5
 - d. 5-6
3. How many women are victims of sexualized violence in their lifetimes?
 - a. 1 in 5
 - b. 1 in 6
 - c. 1 in 3
 - d. 1 in 4
4. How many missing or murdered Indigenous women are there in the Yukon?
 - a. 39
 - b. 34
 - c. 33
 - d. 36
5. What is the percentage of victims of sexualized assault that are male?
 - a. 10%
 - b. 15%
 - c. 20%
 - d. 25%
6. What is the percentage of perpetrators of sexualized assault that are male?
 - a. 75%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 99%
 - d. 80%

Drumming

The youth were taught the “Women’s Warrior Song” and the group practiced drumming and singing it the day before and day of the vigil. This song had been taught to one of the facilitators and is often sung at December 6th vigils, and Women Memorial Marches (to commemorate the 1200 murdered or missing Indigenous women across Canada). The group performed the song during the vigil. There was an expressed interest from the youth of having a drum making workshop.

Vigil

Planning

The first day of the December session was mostly spent planning and preparing for the vigil. Students grouped together and came up with an agenda, wrote and practiced speeches, and made signs and decorations for the event.

Event

The vigil was held before lunch during school hours and all classes attended in an assembly-style event. YFS student volunteers were at the door greeting community members and other attendees, giving them an agenda of the event, and also a White Ribbon from the “White Ribbon Campaign”. The white ribbon campaign is a campaign led by men to end violence against women. After the ceremony, audience members were invited to lunch and cake hosted by the school.

The youth came up with the following agenda:



MC- Piper Allen: Student at WLSS and Youth for Safety Advocate

Videography/Photography: Julian McDonald (student at WLSS and Youth for Safety advocate) and Martina Volfova (Kaska Language facilitator)

Speakers:

Opening Prayer: Elder Mida Donnelly and Linda Macdonald

Ann Maje Raider: Executive Director of LAWS, Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society



Rose Rowlands (did not attend): Executive director of Help and Hope for Families

Justin Brown: Mayor of Watson Lake

Rollie Comeau (did not attend, Linda McDonald spoke instead): Math and French teacher at WLSS

Cian Hobbis: Student at WLSS and Youth for Safety advocate

White Rose Ceremony (14 victims of the Montreal Massacre):

Women from the audience were pre-chosen to come down and place a white rose to honour the fourteen victims of the Montreal Massacre in 1989. The MC read out the name of each victim, and the audience member would place a white rose down on the designated shawl.

Genevieve Bergeron | Age 21

Helene Colgan | Age 23

Nathalie Croteau | Age 23

Barbara Daigneault | Age 22

Anne-Marie Edward | Age 21

Maud Haviernick | Age 29

Barbara Maria Klucznik | Age 31

Maryse Laganier | Age 25

Maryse Leclair | Age 23

Anne-Marie Lemay | Age 27

Sonia Pelletier | Age 28

Michele Richard | Age 21

Annie St-Arneault | Age 23

Annie Turcotte | Age 21

Red Rose Ceremony

Twelve roses to honour the 1200 murdered or missing Indigenous women across Canada. One rose = 100 murdered or missing Indigenous women across Canada.

Female audience members (mostly Indigenous) were pre-chosen to place a rose on the designated shawl to honour the murdered or missing Indigenous women across Canada.

Women's Warrior Song and Drumming

Performed by Youth for Safety participants, elders, any audience members wanting to participate.

Event feedback

The vigil went very well and the youth did an amazing job of organizing it. Everyone had a role in planning or running the vigil; from making posters, being the M.C., handing out agendas, handing out the food, being a part of the rose ceremony, attending the vigil, making a speech, or writing a speech. There was a great sense of pride from the youth following the vigil. After the vigil, the group came up with the following ideas for feedback:

- More advertising x 3 maybe on a truck?
- More people in attendance
- More speakers
- More male speakers
- More rehearsal
- Different location
- More food
- Contact parents to attend
- More visuals
- Confirm speakers
- Make the vigil in the afternoon

Photos from the vigil









4. Reflections

Engagement

Similar to last year, the engagement was varied throughout the workshops. Some youth appeared comfortable with sharing verbally in a large group, while others seemed more comfortable to share in smaller groups. Some students did not seem to be engaged much during the workshop. Facilitators acknowledged to the group that there are many ways to participate and that it is not expected that everyone is comfortable sharing in large groups. It was also noted that if the students do not appear to be engaged at all or if they do not want to be in the group they are welcome to go back to class. Overall, it seemed the returning students were able to stay engaged with the material and agenda, perhaps as a result of being more used to it.

The strategy of the facilitators communicating directly with teachers when a student wished to attend a class to do work or take a test seemed to work well this session. A hope will be that the students will become accustomed to this practice and it will become clearer where students are at for the teachers and facilitators.

Many of the students seemed keen to work on tasks for preparing for the vigil. Some students appeared to benefit from the facilitators giving them a specific task, while some seemed to take initiative on what they wanted to work on. Planning the vigil provided practice in event planning and organizing skills which the students will be able to apply in other facets of their lives.

The sense of pride felt by the students who attended the celebration after the vigil will hopefully provide motivation to participate and plan future events and initiatives.

The varied nature of the workshop's activities appear to help in keeping the youth motivated throughout the days, with a mixture of large and small group discussion, games, contests, videos and teambuilding exercises.



Food

By providing a lunch of stew, bannock, and cake, it allowed for further discussion after the vigil between attendees, teachers, facilitators, and students and provided a time to have an informal debrief. Providing lunch was an added incentive for community members to attend the vigil.

Food continues to play an important role in keeping the youth engaged with the program. We provided a mixture of healthy foods and treats at the breaks and throughout the day. The food table gives the youth a chance to have a small self-administered break during the workshops to get a snack and return to the group.

Space

The workshops were held in the Kaska Language room. The youth also had access to their laptops and the computer lab next door. The space works well for accommodating the elders as well as the students. The vigil was held in the auditorium. It provided a large enough space to accommodate students and community members

Looking ahead...

The January workshop will be primarily focused on reconnecting with the youth after almost two months apart, beginning to plan an event for International Women's day on March 8th, and exploring the topic of privilege.

THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR ANOTHER AMAZING WORKSHOP!

