

Re: Open Letter of Invitation to Collaborate

Introduction

Supporting Wellbeing is an emerging training program based out of Somba K'e/Yellowknife. Our work focuses on providing tools and resources for people who deliver land-based programming that will better prepare them to mitigate and respond to mental health challenges on the land. We envision a future where Northern residents have access to on the land programs that are culturally affirming and trauma-informed, supporting and strengthening Indigenous cultures, languages, and ways of life throughout the North.

The Supporting Wellbeing Training was developed by land-based leaders from across the NWT. The experiences and knowledges of these experts is the foundation of the curriculum. Supporting Wellbeing is guided by a steering committee and advisory council with members from Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Sahtú Secretariat, Dene Nahjo, GNWT Health and Social Services, Dehcho First Nations, Tłı̨chǫ Government, and South Slave.

Project Background

Supporting Wellbeing was born out of a community-identified need. In 2018, on the land leaders were brought together to discuss challenges in delivering land-based programs. While the land is vital to wellbeing, on the land programs are led and attended by people who have experienced historical trauma and it is not uncommon for people leading these programs to have to respond to distressing emotions. The group agreed that a made-in-the-North training program to enhance the capacity of land-based programmers to respond to these situations was critical.

In 2020, a call out for steering committee applications was announced and brought together an amazing team of on the land leaders who worked together for two years to develop this training. In 2021 we hosted a pilot training in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and trained land-based programmers from each region of the NWT. In 2022, we hosted a facilitator training where we trained nine Northern facilitators from different regions. Today, we are working towards delivering Supporting Wellbeing in every community and having at least one facilitator in every region.

Intention

We have received overwhelming feedback from land-based leaders that a trauma-informed, mental health training for on the land programs is needed in the North. Our training is working to provide these tools and resources for communities to better respond to these issues. We hope that this training leads to creating more helpers who can support each other.



The Supporting Wellbeing training is 30-hours (not including breaks or land-based activities). The training is designed for people who have some level of experience planning and delivering on the land programs, but who have little-to-no formal or clinical training in mental health support. Learners will be introduced to several topics to consider when planning and delivering trauma-informed on the land programs, including:

- Creating Community On The Land (3.5 hours)
- Setting Up Camp For Wellbeing (3.5 hours)
- Intergenerational Trauma & Resiliency (6.5 hours)
- Conflict Resolution & Communication Skills (5.5 hours)
- Suicide Intervention & Prevention (6.5 hours)
- Supporting Wellbeing When The Program Ends (4.5 hours)

Supporting Wellbeing can facilitate a maximum of 12 participants and the suggested minimum is 3 participants. There must be at least two facilitators and one emotional support person at each training. The training has countless benefits for participants and communities:

- More access to culturally affirming, trauma-informed on the land training programs
- Enhanced wellbeing of Northern residents
- Resurgence of connection to Indigenous cultures, languages, and land.
- Increased capacity of community members to support their own and others mental wellbeing.
- Normalizing the use of mental health supports.

Invitation to Partner

Supporting Wellbeing is seeking partnerships to deliver Supporting Wellbeing training with interested communities, regions, and/or organizations. Supporting Wellbeing can contribute the following to a Supporting Wellbeing training partnership:

- Supporting Wellbeing can provide financial contributions to catering, venue rental, and land-based activities.
- Supporting Wellbeing can provide two facilitators to deliver the training and cover all their travel expenses (if necessary).
- Supporting Wellbeing can provide funding to hire a local emotional support person for the training,
- Supporting Wellbeing can support the organization of training logistics.

In order to partner to deliver this training, Supporting Wellbeing requires:

- A letter of invitation from your community, regional government or organization indicating that you are interested in partnering or collaborating to deliver a Supporting Wellbeing training in your community,
- Ongoing guidance and advice from a designated point of contact person in your community,
- At least one emotional support person from your community should be identified and hired,



- Potential camp sites or venues should be identified
- Potential dates should be identified to avoid overlapping with important community or regional events,
- The community partner to coordinate the land-based activities, including selecting local knowledge holders to hire, making a financial contribution to land-based activities, and assisting in the scheduling,
- In some cases, a local coordinator to assist with logistics on the ground may be required.

If you are interested in having a discussion about this training, please contact Supporting Wellbeing's Project Director, Rachel Cluderay at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards,



Rachel Cluderay
Project Director
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