

## WCWRC's Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation 2018-19 Report

West Central Women's Resource Centre is committed to being an active partner in the work of reconciliation between settlers and Indigenous people. Hundreds of years of colonization and destructive policies such as residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the child welfare system have had – and continue to have – a devastating impact on our community.

We are moving forward in our journey towards reconciliation through a commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. In July 2017 we declared that every July will be Reconciliation Month at the Centre. At which time we committed to dedicating resources and taking action on five identified Calls that most directly impact our work:

#5. "We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families."

**WCWRC commits to ensuring our parenting programs attended by Aboriginal families are culturally appropriate.**

#43. "We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement [UNDRIP] as the framework for reconciliation."

**WCWRC commits to educating ourselves on UNDRIP and using it as a guide for our reconciliation work.**

#57. "We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, [UNDRIP], Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism."

**WCWRC commits to educating ourselves and providing educational opportunities on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, UNDRIP, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations.**

#62. "We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms..."

**WCWRC commits to developing and delivering curriculum in our programs that integrates Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods.**

#93. "We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools."

**WCWRC commits to ensuring our newcomer settlement work reflects a more inclusive history of the diverse Indigenous peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.**



**Within the past year, we upheld our commitments in the following ways:**

ACTION	CALLS TO ACTION
<p><b>Ways of Working:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of Indigenous staff members, including an Elder.</li> <li>• We are community-led, Indigenous participants are regularly consulted in the development of our programs and events.</li> <li>• We take what we learn from our Indigenous participants and coworkers every day and apply that knowledge and power in our interactions with other participants.</li> <li>• When discussing LGBTQ issues, we now acknowledge Two-Spirited peoples first (2SLGBTQ+).</li> <li>• Our email signatures acknowledge the territory we work on.</li> <li>• Included Indigenous land acknowledgment, prayer, and/or drumming at the beginning of staff events and presentations.</li> <li>• There are two position on the Board of Directors reserved for Indigenous women and other marginalized identities.</li> <li>• We added two vacation days to take part in Indigenous ceremony to our policies.</li> <li>• We publicly supported the passing of bill B-C262.</li> <li>• Promoted the work of Indigenous organizations across Winnipeg on our social media</li> <li>• Our hiring policy prioritizes Indigenous peoples, visible and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, persons of minority sexual orientations and gender identities.</li> <li>• Honoured two Indigenous women for our Women of Distinction Awards.</li> <li>• Our Executive Director co-wrote an Op-Ed for Make Poverty Manitoba that called for “funding community-based mental health services and other services that improve access for people living with low incomes, particularly Indigenous Peoples” <a href="https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/meth-is-a-symptom-poverty-is-the-crisis-489958701.html">https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/meth-is-a-symptom-poverty-is-the-crisis-489958701.html</a></li> <li>• Staff have read the UNDRIP report and understand the international human rights of Indigenous people and communities.</li> <li>• Staff share information about the TRC with families, friends, and external community members.</li> <li>• Staff are trained in anti-oppression.</li> <li>• Some staff are trained in First Nations Mental Health First Aid.</li> </ul>	57, 93
<p><b>Restoring the Balance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secured funding to expand our Indigenous programming in 2019-20 through reclamation of culture and ending family violence. Includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delivered two groups of Red Road to Healing, a federally recognized and ground-breaking program that was developed at our Centre. Each of the 10 weekly sessions comes with a gift of a bundle teaching and item to add to women’s bundles.</li> <li>○ Traditional Ceremonies and Teachings: Pipe ceremony, Berry ceremony, monthly Full Moon ceremonies</li> <li>○ Cultural workshops and activities: weekly drumming, weekly beading, medicine picking.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	5, 57
<p><b>MMIWG2S: Learning about and Committing to the Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported the release of the National Inquiry into MMIWG and encouraged all staff to read it and commit to its Calls to Justice</li> <li>• Staff have committed to reading this report and actioning the Calls to Justice in the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S.</li> </ul>	57, 62, 93



ACTION	CALLS TO ACTION
<p><b>Childminding Space:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Centre programming offers access to WCWRC’s inclusive childminding space, staffed by Early Childhood Educators and childminders trained in our Taking Root program.</li> <li>We ensure there is diversity in the types of toys and books available to children and families in our childminding space.</li> </ul>	5, 62
<p><b>Taking Root Childminding Training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The facilitator spent time discussing inclusion, diversity, and how childminders could encourage children’s positive feelings about themselves while helping them to understand, respect, and accept different beliefs, values, and traditions.</li> <li>An Elder attended a day of training to share teachings and information on Indigenous history. Many of the childminders are newcomers and they expressed gratitude for this as they haven’t had the opportunity to learn about Indigenous history or culture before.</li> </ul>	57, 62, 93
<p><b>Drop-in, Kitchen, &amp; Garden:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displayed red dresses in our Drop-in space to bring awareness to the MMIWG2S crisis in Canada. Participants are encouraged to read the report, there are also calls to action from that report posted in a Drop-in binder for participants to read.</li> <li>Drop-in regularly refers Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples, internally and externally, who are needing help with housing, identification, navigation through the child welfare system, employment, and training opportunities.</li> <li>Provide a safe space for Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples who are experiencing poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, or housing insecurity</li> <li>Drop-in staff has assisted Sixties Scoop survivors with their settlement applications, including submitting the paperwork via fax.</li> <li>Shared traditional Indigenous stories in the space, such as “The Canoe.”</li> <li>Our Drop-In displays Indigenous art.</li> <li>All Drop-In participants have access to our smudge room.</li> <li>The kitchen supported the Inclusion Committee to prepare a feast of stew and bannock for National Indigenous People’s Day</li> <li>Secured funding to provide an honourarium to an Elder to provide teachings on traditional medicines in our community garden</li> <li>Engaging an Elder to help us grow the 3 sisters in our community garden</li> </ul>	62
<p><b>Special Events:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We led a pan-Canadian symposium on women’s housing that included a sharing circle on the release of the National Inquiry into MMIWG, hung a red dress in the room to keep MMIWG in present in our work, incorporated Indigenous prayer and smudging, and had locally-made beaded key chains and a Jackie Traverse colouring book in the welcome bag for participants.</li> <li>Promoted the message of honouring Two-Spirit people at 2019 Pride.</li> <li>Organized a panel at the 2018 CCEDNet Gathering on including the voices of lived experience in research.</li> <li>Participated in the launch of the Winnipeg Street Census report, bringing the voice of our Indigenous colleague with lived experience of homelessness to the podium to share her story.</li> </ul>	57, 62, 93
<p><b>Indigenous Programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All community members have access to smudging and medicines within the Centre.</li> <li>Provides informal educational opportunities to discuss prayer and medicines.</li> </ul>	57



ACTION	CALLS TO ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drumming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Weekly Indigenous ceremony</li> <li>○ Provides an opportunity for women to learn Indigenous languages, traditional and sacred teachings, grandmother teachings, and grandfather teachings.</li> <li>○ Our drum group Dancing Spirit participated in vigils, rallies, parades, and opened the Ellice Street Festival.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Beading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Weekly Indigenous craft</li> <li>○ Provides opportunities for women from a variety of cultures to come together and share cultural, craft, and historical knowledge and stories.</li> <li>○ Beading group is led by a community volunteer to honour community-based talent and leadership.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ceremonies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We now lead Full Moon Ceremonies every month.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Medicine Picking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Annual medicine picking trip.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Celebrated National Indigenous People’s Day with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Beading Circle</li> <li>○ Solstice Teaching</li> <li>○ Feast of Bannock and Stew</li> <li>○ Drum group</li> <li>○ Indigenous teachings at our English Conversation Circle</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Gender-based Strategy to End Homelessness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centred and led by Indigenous voices through our First Voice Advisory Committee; Indigenous women with lived experience guide the work of the Steering Committee and strategy development.</li> <li>• Working on ending homelessness for women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people, being constantly mindful of the highly disproportionate number of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>• Partnered with Indigenous organizations to share knowledge and expertise.</li> <li>• Offer supports during community consultations through the form of Knowledge Keepers, Elders, medicines, and smudging.</li> <li>• Strategy report is embedded in Indigenous knowledge, as taught by Indigenous First Voice Advisory and Steering Committee members.</li> <li>• Medicine Wheel teachings provide the framework for understanding the stories of people experiencing gender-based homelessness and to create a vision for a better way of supporting them.</li> <li>• The Truth and Reconciliation Report provides a framework to understand how oppressive systems of colonialism and racism in Canada have shaped the experiences of Indigenous women, trans, Two-Spirit and gender non-conforming people who are living in homelessness.</li> </ul>	57, 62
<p><b>Project Manitouwabi:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing our partnership with Indigenous Women’s Healing Centre, Eagle Urban Transition Centre and John Howard Society to provide supports for women exiting provincial corrections.</li> </ul>	62
<p><b>Community Meetings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an opportunity for direct consultation with community members about the Centre, programming, and knowledge of Indigenous teaching methods.</li> </ul>	57



ACTION	CALLS TO ACTION
<p><b>Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program &amp; Healing Together:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last year we organized two conversation circle classes dedicated to learning about Indigenous history and culture</li> <li>• Participation and presentation at Immigration and Integration Summit fall 2018- presentation about bridge building initiatives at our centre and in particular within our settlement program.</li> <li>• Settlement Staff accompanied newcomer participants to be part of last year’s Full Moon Ceremony.</li> <li>• Settlement Staff through the work of the inclusion committee organized a conversation about Fasting that reflected on the common element of fasting in the Indigenous and Muslim traditional spiritualities.</li> <li>• Settlement Staff through the work of the inclusion committee organized a Day of the Dead celebration in remembrance of the Canadian and Latin American MMIWG.</li> <li>• Settlement Staff continued to do Independent learning on Indigenous history and issues while utilizing our Indigenous library and connection with our Indigenous Program Coordinator.</li> <li>• The creation of the Healing Together, violence recovery group curriculum that was inspired by the beautiful Red Road to Healing curriculum and after this we were able to create a program that was inspired by the spirit of Indigenous Knowledge to support newcomer women in their journey of healing from violence.</li> <li>• Settlement Staff dispel myths and stereotypes newcomers may have heard about Indigenous peoples. Through the relationship, staff are given the opportunity to provide further information.</li> <li>• Settlement Staff participated in the Mother’s Day Walk in honour of MMIWG</li> </ul>	57, 62, 93
<p><b>Mentorship, WE WIL, and Volunteer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women Empowering Women Into Leadership (WE WIL): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Includes education of the history of Indigenous people and residential schools through its curriculum</li> <li>○ Curriculum focused on anti-oppression and empowerment and integrates and refers to Indigenous history throughout</li> <li>○ Session dedicated solely to Indigenous teachings, facilitated by an Elder from our community, and works to unpack the systemic impacts of colonization of Indigenous peoples past, present, and future</li> <li>○ Includes Indigenous facilitators who incorporate their own learnings, teachings, and experience throughout sessional content</li> <li>○ Incorporated books from local Indigenous authors (eg. Katherena Vermette)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Each WCWRC volunteer participates in an orientation process that reviews the centre’s values, ways of working, and procedures. This includes reference to the centre’s reconciliation work, Indigenous programs, and provides participants with conflict resolution skills.</li> <li>• Approximately half of our active mentors and volunteers are Indigenous.</li> <li>• The Volunteer &amp; Events Coordinator supports volunteers to further their understanding of Indigenous histories, and connects volunteers to programs that enhance understanding through education and healing.</li> <li>• The Volunteer Program provides space for volunteers to develop and facilitate educational events, supporting Indigenous women to share their knowledge, passions, and expertise. The Volunteer Program strives to create more space for volunteer-led initiatives and events.</li> </ul>	57, 62, 93



ACTION	CALLS TO ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Mentorship and Volunteer Program is invested in the empowerment of Indigenous women by supporting them to regain their agency and independence through providing them work experience and internship opportunities that value their lived experience, and where they are able to work with and within the community they belong to. At its core, the Mentorship program aims to increase the economic and social security of Indigenous women in Winnipeg.</li> <li>WE WIL, the Mentorship Program, and the Volunteer Program work towards building relationships and common ground between newcomer and Indigenous participants.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Housing Programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The housing team's (HOMES and MT4W) case management work is participant led and rooted in a harm reduction approach. This is consistent with UNDRIP article 3: <i>Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination...</i></li> <li>The housing team supports participants to reunify with their children when they have been apprehended by Child and Family Services. This is consistent with UNDRIP article 7 - #2: <i>Indigenous peoples... shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.</i></li> <li>The housing team's case management work is done "with" participants rather than "for" or "on behalf." For instance, More Than Four Walls hosted a luncheon meet and greet with participants and asked for input on how the program could better support the cultural needs of participants. This is consistent with UNDRIP article 18: <i>Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights....</i></li> <li>Our housing programs work to improve the economic and social conditions of our participants, in particular in the areas of housing and income security. This is consistent with UNDRIP article 21 - #1: <i>Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions...</i></li> <li>The housing team supports participants who are at risk of experiencing or who experience violence to develop safety plans and access gender-based violence shelters and our Red Road to Healing gender-based violence program. This is consistent with UNDRIP article 22 - #2: <i>... that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.</i></li> <li>The housing team supports participants to access the services they need to address their physical and mental health issues. This is consistent with UNDRIP article 24 - #2: <i>Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health...</i></li> <li>The housing team supports participants to navigate the provincial government's Employment and Income Assistance program and access the income benefits they are entitled to. This is consistent with UNDRIP article 39: <i>Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States ... for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration.</i></li> </ul>	57, 62
<p><b>Public Policy Advocacy Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in public policy advocacy work to encourage various levels of government to take action that will improve economic and social conditions for Indigenous peoples and other Manitobans. For example, we participate in the Right to Housing Coalition, Make Poverty History Manitoba, Winnipeg Safe Cities Steering Committee, Winnipeg Street Health Advisory Committee, and the EIA advocates Network.</li> </ul>	57, 62
<p><b>Reconciliation Month every July: 2018:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poster about Indigenous names for Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in the front window.</li> </ul>	57, 62, 93



ACTION	CALLS TO ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held a traditional Women’s Full Moon Ceremony. The event and ceremony was attended by upwards of 40 diverse community women, including newcomers.</li> <li>• Staff participated in a KAIROS Blanket Exercise. This activity was developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and educators. It fosters truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.</li> <li>• Hosted a map activity where people told us about what parts of Manitoba they come from, the proper names, and meanings behind their Indigenous communities, and what their community traditions are</li> </ul> <p><b>2019:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poster about Indigenous names for Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in the front window.</li> <li>• Held a Full Moon Ceremony.</li> <li>• Community members and staff went medicine picking with an Elder for traditional Indigenous medicines.</li> <li>• Staff and community members participated in a KAIROS Blanket Exercise, as well as a Communal Flower Exercise (originated by the Indigenous Peoples of Mexico).</li> <li>• Staff members supported a community volunteer to host a flash mob/dance to raise awareness of MMIWG2S.</li> <li>• Responding to the National Inquiry into MMIWG Report and commit to 31 of the Calls to Justice.</li> <li>• Reporting back on our commitment to TRC Calls to Action in the previous year.</li> <li>• Created and shared a series of posts for International Non-Binary People’s Day, with a focus on Two-Spirit people.</li> <li>• Staff participated in a Sweat Lodge Ceremony.</li> </ul>	



**Next steps:**

WCWRC will continue to address these Calls to Action in a meaningful way throughout our organization and report on our progress next Reconciliation Month (July 2020). Our goals moving forward include, but are not limited to:

1. Connecting the Circle: A Gender-based Strategy to End Homelessness in Winnipeg will continue to work with the TRC and UNDRIP; point to examples of how the TRC and UNDRIP are embedded within the Connecting the Circle Strategy and how we are decolonizing our work as a gender-based community-driven collective.
2. Departments will identify opportunities within programming to integrate Indigenous knowledge, teaching methods, and will consult with our participants on what they would like to see.
3. We will continue to strive for increased Indigenous representation on our staff team.
4. We will recommend to various committees within our staff team that the Centre provide educational workshops for staff and/or participants on one or more of the following:
  - The history and legacy of residential schools
  - The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*
  - Treaties and Indigenous rights
  - Indigenous law
  - Indigenous-Crown relations.
5. We will recommend to various committees within our staff team that the Centre provide skills-based training for staff and/or participants on one or more of the following:
  - a. Intercultural competency
  - b. Conflict resolution
  - c. Human rights
  - d. Anti-oppression
6. All staff will continue to learn and participate in any activities to increase awareness on this topic.
7. Include the information around land acknowledgement at the beginning of all NISW and Housing programs and take time to explain it and have a conversation about the significance of it.
8. Continue to run Conversation Circles that focus on learning and sharing about Indigenous people led by Indigenous people in order to find the areas of connection.
9. Continue to run programs like sewing that promote a safe space for relationship building and creating points of connection in a relaxed environment.
10. Participate in bridge-building opportunities as they arise and encourage and facilitate the access to such events for our participants.
11. Organize a workshop in which we invite Treaty Relations Manitoba to do a presentation on the history of the treaty relations.
12. Invite a group of newcomer participants to participate in our centre's drumming program.
13. All programs to regularly refer participants to our Indigenous programs.
14. Learn about 7 teachings and use more of the language when speaking with participants.
15. Explore expanding access to traditional medicines for housing participants.

