

FALL 2020 | NO. 7

LTOA

THE LISTENING TO ONE ANOTHER NEWSLETTER

In this issue...

The Threads That Connect Us - 2
Global Health Presentations - 4
Finding Our Power Together - 6
LTOA's Podcast Series - 9

The Threads That Connect Us...

VIRTUAL 2020 TESE GATHERING

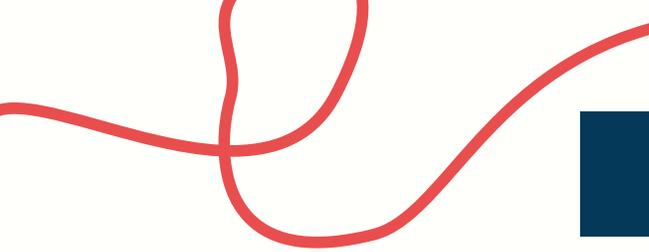
Every year LTOA hosts a Two Eyed Seeing Evaluation (TESE) gathering to bring together community partners from across Canada to Montreal. The TESE Gathering is integral to enhancing and growing our community of practice. We usually love to see everyone in Montreal for the meeting, but with this year's COVID-19 related travel restrictions, the TESE meeting was held over Zoom in late October. We were so happy to welcome back Tekwatonti Amelia McGregor to open our meeting, and as always appreciated the great wit and good spirits that she brings wherever goes (even over Zoom!). We also welcomed our funding partner, Martina Ulrichs, from the Pathy Family Foundation to share in the project updates from the LTOA program.

This TESE gathering provided us all the opportunity to connect, share, learn, and grow stronger together. Each LTOA partner had the chance to share their experiences and their upcoming plans for the LTOA program, as well as any successes and barriers that they have experienced since our last TESE gathering in 2019. Partners were also able to share the ways in which they have been able to adapt the program for youth and families on the ground, in light of the current reality of COVID-19. With face-to-face group programming halted, some partners have chosen to focus on training initiatives or on adapting the program to be delivered with smaller groups or individual families. Other partners are exploring ways to deliver the program remotely, through platforms such as Zoom or Facebook Live.

The LTOA research team shared updates on new initiatives that were developed during the pandemic, including a new Tree of Life Toolkit, virtual training options, and a new podcast series. It was so great to discuss these exciting new updates with LTOA partners from across Canada and we look forward to continuing these conversations during our monthly partner meetings. Momentum from the TESE gathering was harnessed to re-initiate these monthly meetings, and encourages us to continue connecting and learning together.



A screenshot of the 2020 TESE meeting!



VIRTUAL TRAINING

Virtual LTOA program training has taken off with staff from Anishinaabe Abinooji Family Services (AAFS). Members of the LTOA team and staff from AAFS, including Celina Blackhawk and Preston Copenace, have been working together to develop an online training series for AAFS Family Preservation and Niigoniikaapawitang Nanadaamowin Program Staff. The online training series begins with a brief introduction to the LTOA program, or in Aninishaabemowin, the Bii Zin Da De Dah Program. The training then builds on the knowledge staff have about the LTOA family and school program, and incorporates the new Tree of Life Toolkit. A basic facilitator “How To” guide, is also being developed in collaboration with the AAFS management team to ensure that participating staff have the skills and confidence to deliver the LTOA program, to foster program success and ensure its sustainability. We are looking forward to our virtual trainings in the new year.



VIRTUAL PARTNER MEETINGS

The LTOA team has initiated monthly partner meetings over Zoom to discuss LTOA program updates. In late November we held a meeting to discuss the Tree of Life Toolkit. Tristan, a Masters student from the LTOA team, introduced the Tree of Life Toolkit which he is currently developing. LTOA partners had the opportunity to share their perspective on the first version of the toolkit, giving valuable insights on ways to further enhance it. We're so excited to develop this toolkit and hope to continue these discussions early next year. Our December partner meeting took place on December 17th, 2020 where we had an end of year social gathering with art activities, and time to chat and connect over a warm drink and food.

At our December Partner Meeting & Social, Tekwatonti Amelia McGregor joined in, sharing the joy and light she carries with her. Amelia proudly presented one of her grand children to the team, who happily waved at her through the screen. Amelia has been keeping herself busy with the little ones around her, as she has a year old granddaughter and a 4 month old great-granddaughter as well. The team and Amelia chatted over tea about their lives, pets, and discussed their holiday plans. As always, it was a pleasure to chat with Amelia, and we hope to see her soon!



GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH NIGHT



GLOBAL
HEALTH
PROGRAMS

In early November, two of our LTOA team members presented some of the work being done in LTOA at **McGill's Global Health Night**. Global Health Night is an opportunity for students to showcase research and community-based work in global health. **Tristan**, a Masters' student in the LTOA program, presented the goals and objectives of developing the Tree of Life Toolkit. **Leah**, an undergraduate research assistant with LTOA, presented the lessons learned from the development of social medias by LTOA over the summer for the dual purpose of knowledge translation and virtual community of practice development. This year was the first time the event was held virtually, allowing attendees to join the presentations, using Zoom, from the comfort of their own homes. Let's hear a little more from Tristan and Leah about the event.

Tristan Supino



Over the past few months, discussions with LTOA partners have circled around virtual programming, but many partners voiced concerns about conducting sessions online. Indeed, unstable internet connections and availability of technological resources were mentioned as barriers. It was then decided to develop the Tree of Life Toolkit. In the LTOA program, the Tree of Life activity is a central component of the program that compliments the teachings of the 14 sessions of LTOA. The activity allows participants to visualize family strength's, culture, values, skills, and hopes for the future. As a toolkit, the Tree of Life becomes expanded into a stand-alone document. This toolkit can be delivered to each participant's home and gives youth participants an opportunity to learn more about the core components of the LTOA program despite the physical distancing measures of COVID-19. The toolkit does not require access to the internet to complete it, though internet access can be used to supplement activities.

For my presentation, conversations centred around the need to engage with youth during times of physical distancing, ways to connect youth and families with others in the community when in person gatherings are prohibited, and the importance of delivering culturally relevant program materials. Many expressed their interest in seeing a finalized version of this toolkit. Although I have presented posters in the past, presenting posters over Zoom was a new experience for me. Since participants who came to listen to my presentation did not turn their camera on, it was hard to present these ideas without seeing the faces of participants. Despite this barrier, I was happy to talk to others about what LTOA is trying to complete during the pandemic.

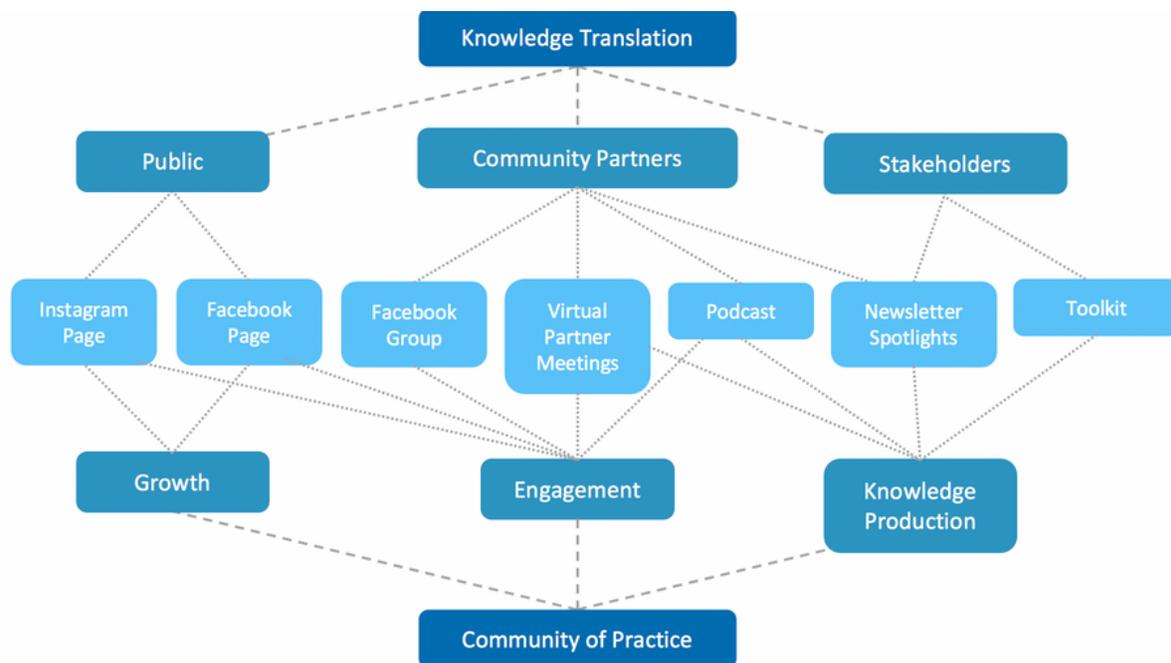
FIND TRISTAN'S POSTER HERE:





Leah Birch

Global Health Night was my first academic poster fair presentation, and needless to say, I was more than a little nervous. Guests listened as I described each of the virtual engagements that we initiated including the development of our social media presence, the creation of video resources, a podcast with community partners, as well as increased engagement with established Indigenous youth mental health organizations by featuring them in our newsletters. The LTOA team collaborated with the Institute for Human Development and Wellbeing at McGill to create a toolkit for community organizations to enhance connections through the use of digital technologies. This presentation allowed me to realize just how much we have achieved as a team over the summer despite working entirely online! In developing the virtual presence of LTOA through social media accounts, we discovered that knowledge translation activities that target different audiences can advance key goals for developing a strong virtual community of practice (VCoP).



The diagram above illustrates how knowledge translation and community of practice goals can be achieved by the same set of activities. Starting in the middle row of the diagram, you have all of the activities that LTOA has engaged in since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these emphasize virtual connections. Moving upwards from the centre row, you can follow how each of these activities is linked to one of three audiences key to knowledge translation: public, community partners, and stakeholders. By engaging each of these audiences through different initiatives, we contribute to multi-sectoral knowledge translation (top row). If you move downwards from the centre row, you discover how each of the central activities are linked to three goals of communities of practice being (1) growth of the community, (2) engagement of members, and (3) collaborative knowledge production. These three goals help to strengthen our community of practice (bottom row). When looking at this diagram as a whole, you begin to understand the complex ties that connect the virtual activities of LTOA to the strengthening of both knowledge translation and community of practice.

FIND LEAH'S POSTER HERE:



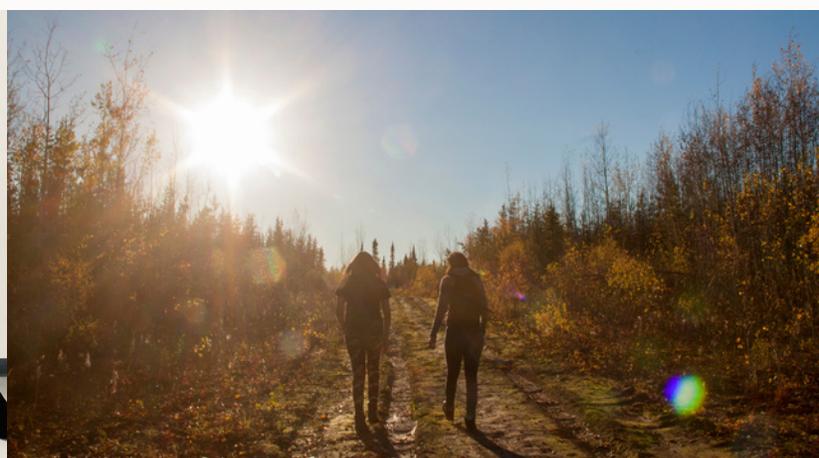
FINDING OUR POWER TOGETHER



*The LTOA team sat down with the Director of Finding Our Power Together (FOPT), **Nicole Ineese-Nash**, and Program Manager, **Lauren Akbar**, to learn more about FOPT and the amazing work they do supporting the wellbeing of Indigenous youth!*

What is Finding Our Power Together and how did it start?

Finding Our Power Together (FOPT) is an Indigenous non-profit organization, working to support Indigenous youth across Turtle Island. By sharing a message of hope and solidarity, FOPT aims to foster positive self-identity and leadership capacities in Indigenous youth through the development of mental health and educational programming. FOPT's hope is by supporting Indigenous youth, they can end preventable death and suicide in Indigenous communities. FOPT initially started as a youth based collective in Nibinamik First Nation, in partnership with Ryerson University. At the time, FOPT was developing a community wellness index to determine wellness priorities, as well as barriers to achieving wellness. Once identified, the team worked together with the community to reduce these barriers. The FOPT team also engaged with Indigenous youth, asking them what they needed to support their wellbeing. Young people responded with the need to help other youth who may be struggling with suicide, and ways in which they could help youth and communities grow strong. This response was a big wake up call for the FOPT team, and led to increased efforts to engage with Indigenous youth.



Adapting to the pandemic...

The team at FOPT felt passionately about offering continued support to youth, so the team quickly adapted to virtual programming. This past summer, they launched a program called Building Our Bundle, which focuses on supporting the mental and spiritual health of young people. The program incorporates self-reflexive activities, traditional teachings, and weekly challenges. Youth also have the opportunity to share their photo challenges to the FOPT social media pages to help the program grow.

FOPT's online methods have been successful, and the team has received an overwhelming positive response from youth. Their weekly videos receive anywhere from 3000 to 5000 views! In the new year, FOPT will be launching Building Our Bundle Live, which will include weekly virtual sessions that young people can drop in to. FOPT will continue to be responsive to the needs of Indigenous youth and ensure that any feedback and youth voice is incorporated as the program further develops!



About Building Our Bundle...

The FOPT has noticed over the years that the summer break results in a noticeably mental health downturn for young people due to the closure of school. With increased school closures due to COVID-19, FOPT looked to address this known concern with the Building Our Bundle program.

After many discussions concerning the design of the program and the ethics of online programming, the program started to almost build itself. As they developed the program, FOPT realized that they were essentially creating a bundle of knowledge, skills, and support. The concept of a bundle is especially meaningful, as building a bundle is a very spiritual and significant collection of skills, gifts, or items in Anishinaabe culture. With this program, FOPT wants to offer young people the opportunity to learn the necessary skills and tools to discover and develop their own bundle. To do this, the program includes a combination of both traditional teachings and skills development strategies that have been informed by child and youth care, as well as social work practice. The goal of the program is to bring together this mix of skill development and cultural teachings, which can enable youth to support their own wellbeing!





Youth at the heart of FOPT...

FOPT have initiated a Young Leaders Circle composed of youth that have either reached out to them through social media or had been part of the Building Our Bundle program. Members of the Young Leaders Circle act as key advisors to FOPT programming. Young Leaders also act as ambassadors for the program by role modelling participation in the program, and encouraging other young people to become involved. Youth who attended the Young Leaders Circle are committed to their own spiritual and mental health, and help support other young people as well! A lot of the amazing young people working with FOPT have their own trauma, but still show up and support other youths that are struggling in their community. FOPT wants to focus their efforts on alleviating this burden for the incredible young people supporting their peers on the front lines shoulder, so that they can attend to their own wellbeing and wellness.

A growing movement...

FOPT is extending their reach to other First Nations, Inuit, and Metis youth across Canada! They are continuing to nurture their strong relationships with Nibinamik First Nation and Neyaashiinigaaming First Nation, and have hired youth workers in each of these communities to further support young people. FOPT are also taking time to reflect on the Building Our Bundle program, and seeing how it can grow. Current feedback from young people and conversations within the team have led FOPT to think about developing a mentorship program as well. This mentorship program will be similar to Building Our Bundle Live, and would provide one-on-one mentorship support for Indigenous youth that utilizes spiritual and mental health principles. This mentorship is currently being offered to young people in Nibinamik First Nation, with hopes to extend to more communities. FOPT is truly a remarkable, youth-oriented organization, so if you are interested in learning more about them or their programming, be sure to reach out!

Thank you again to Nicole & Lauren from Finding Our Power Together for speaking with us! Don't forget to follow them using the links below!



LISTENING TO ONE ANOTHER PODCAST SERIES

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a challenge to the LTOA program by limiting our capability to engage on the ground with communities and our partners. In response to this challenge, we decided to continue to build the LTOA community of practice and to strengthen our current partnerships. In the Summer Newsletter, The LTOA team proudly announced the creation of a podcast series. With the upcoming release of our first episode, we have decided to provide a behind the scenes look at the process of creating a podcast and to answer some questions about the podcast itself.



Why a podcast series?

We decided to create a podcast series to talk about structures and processes related to the delivery of the LTOA program with the individuals and communities involved in the everyday implementation of it. In the discussions that form the basis of the podcast episodes, we engage in reflexive dialogue with community partners who share their lived experience and individual perspectives of the LTOA program. We wanted to create a medium that can be shared with people who are actively participating in the LTOA program, or are interested in learning more about the program process.

How are the podcast topics selected?

The first theme for the podcast series is on cultural adaptation. Cultural adaptation is an important tenant of the LTOA program, and is the process by which community partners adapt the language, stories, and materials, of the program to fit the local context and needs of the community. This theme was selected after a team discussion where we realized that people would like to know more about the cultural adaptation process in the LTOA program. Cultural adaptation is of also of special interest for the research team, as it underpins the initial process of making the LTOA program fit the needs and goals of the communities. The process is also something that is currently being researched in greater detail by especially Caroline Bec whose PhD will investigate is about the social back- and- forth aspect of cultural adaptation. The episodes comprise insights from community partners and Elders discussing the meaning, processes and stories behind cultural adaptation in their communities.

Future podcast will explore the cycle of implementation of the LTOA. New themes also will be chosen based on conversations with community partners to make sure that the podcast explores themes that reflect the interest of everyone involved in LTOA program!



How do we create the podcast?

The LTOA podcast is created in a series of steps that are collaborative throughout:

1) After drafting talking points on the topic, the LTOA team hosts virtual discussions with community partners, facilitators and Elders who have participated in some aspects of the cultural adaptation, design, delivery, and evaluation of the LTOA program.

2) Once the discussion is recorded, the LTOA team creates a podcast storyline. The storyline highlights several sections from the discussions that are used to structure the podcast episode. We then edit the discussion, put the sections together and tidy up the sound quality.

3) At this point, we write and record the narration for the episode by deciding which concepts or information need complementary information.

4) Then, several meetings and feedback sessions are organized within the LTOA team to get feedback from the people who were present for the discussions included in the episode. We make sure that every team member can provide feedback and we consult with participants at several stage throughout the production of the episode to make sure that everyone's voice is accurately represented.

5) Once the episode is put together, we then publish it on YouTube and Spotify channel and share it on our website and social medias.

When is the first episode airing?

We aim to air our first episode in January 2021. We aim to have subsequent episodes every month!

How can I participate in the podcast?

Do not hesitate to contact us if you are interested in participating in future episodes or if you would like to submit a theme to be discussed.

Please get in contact with us by email or via our social media accounts!

Can you provide us with a snippet of the podcast?

You can find a one-minute teaser [here!](#)

“

“Sometimes in mental health there is the Westernized view and our cultural view, and sometimes you need both in order to move forward in healing.”

A few holiday resources...

The holiday season is going to look a little different this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. The LTOA team decided to put together a few resources, activities, and even a few gift ideas for the holidays in the hopes of providing a bit of entertainment and to support wellness among yourself, your family and your community!

HOLIDAY READING

Strong Nations Books

https://www.strongnations.com/store/item_list.php?it=3&cat=1718

Reading Lists

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/5-more-books-holiday-reading-2016-1.3911362>

<https://www.kingstonist.com/news/thirty-mohawk-childrens-books-published-by-tsi-tyonnheht-onkwawenna/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/holiday-reading-list-5-great-books-by-indigenous-authors-1.2878338>

GIFT IDEAS

HerBraids

<https://www.herbraids.com/>

Colouring it Forward

https://colouritforward.myshopify.com/?utm_source=Mainsite&utm_medium=Website&utm_campaign=Menu

Indigenous Women Holiday Market

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/indigenouswomenholidaymarket/>

Luke Winson Art

<https://lukeswinsonart.com/>

WELLNESS & SUPPORT

Hope for Wellness Line

<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1576089519527/1576089566478>

Talk4Healing

<https://www.talk4healing.com/>

Wellness Together Canada

<https://ca.portal.gs/about/>

WINTER ACTIVITIES

TakeMeOutside

<https://takemeoutside.ca/resource-directory/covid-19-resources/>

Winter Crafts

<https://www.naturespath.com/en-ca/blog/20-must-try-winter-crafts/>

Outdoor Activities

<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/play/view/50-outdoor-things-to-do-with-your-kids-in-winter>

CONTEST

For the holidays, we are sharing the first four sessions of the Tree of Life Toolkit on both our Instagram and Facebook pages. Each week in December, we have been sharing a new session from the toolkit. In each post, you'll find a description of the session and the steps needed to start building your own Tree of Life at home, which will be filled with (1) your values; (2) your favourite activities; (3) your cultural activities; and (4) examples of resilience. At the end of all four sessions, you will have a completed Tree of Life!

We invite you to complete these sessions by yourself or with friends and family over the holidays. Once you complete your Tree of Life, don't forget to submit a picture to us to be entered in a draw to win an LTOA tote bag (winner will be selected on January 31). You can enter by sending us a private message on Facebook, Instagram or by email with the picture of your Tree of Life or by tagging us @ltoaprogram on Instagram.

We can't wait to see what you create!



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM



TWITTER



WEBSITE

UPCOMING EVENTS



LTOA Podcast Release

January 2021

The LTOA team proudly presents the Listening to One Another podcast! Stay tuned in January for our first discussion on cultural adaptation.

Contest Draw

31 January 2021

Look for our ongoing Tree of Life contest online. Check out our Facebook and Instagram pages for more details, and to submit your tree!

Partner Meeting

January 2021

The LTOA team will continue to host partner meetings. Keep an eye on your inbox for upcoming invitations!

Virtual Training

Ongoing Basis

We are developing alongside interested partners virtual training sessions to deliver the LTOA program. If you are interested, please reach out anytime!

The LTOA team would like to extend their warmest holiday wishes to all!

We hope everyone has the opportunity to rest, recharge, and focus on their wellbeing during this holiday season.

Stay safe, take care, and keep in touch!



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM



TWITTER



WEBSITE

See you in the New Year!

– The LTOA Team

