

LTOA

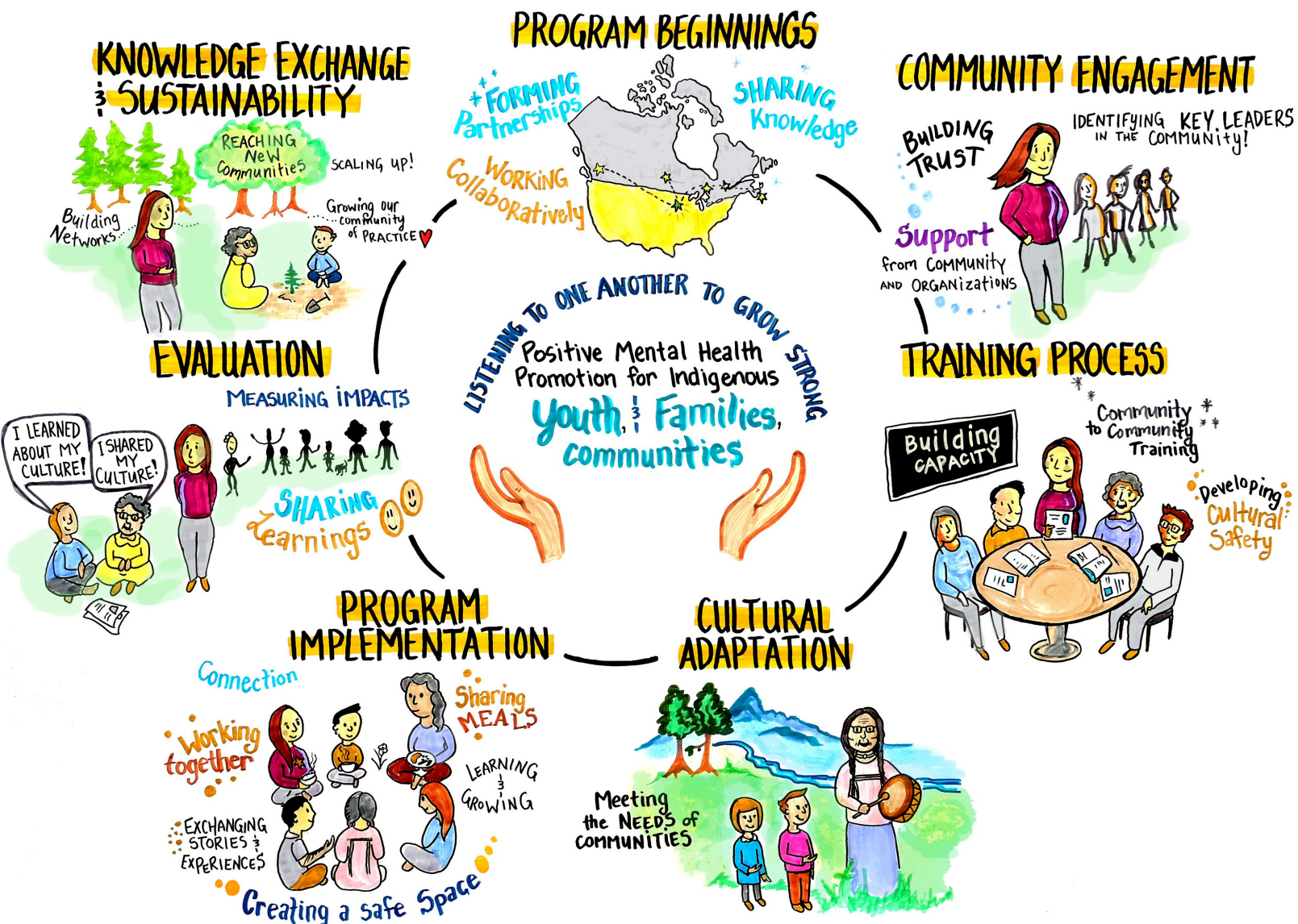
The Listening to One Another Newsletter

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The Story of Our Program

The story of the LTOA Program has many chapters. Each chapter, or piece of the program, contributes to the overall goal of growing strong by learning about our cultures and ourselves. The illustration was commissioned through Drawing for Change, and was brought to life by their amazing team member, Michelle Bucholtz. Michelle created an illustration of the LTOA Program that takes the reader through each step of the program cycle. The illustration also demonstrates the cyclical process from how the program began, to how the program continues to grow towards sustainability. This story also highlights the voices and experiences of community partners from across the years!



Training on the East Coast



The LTOA team enjoys a beautiful sunset at Rushtons Beach, Nova Scotia

In Fall 2019, LTOA National Program Coordinator, Michelle Kehoe, along with Research Coordinator, Nicole D'souza, and Research Assistant, Tristan Supino, visited Nova Scotia to deliver two training sessions in one intense week! Each training session was held over two days, resulting in jam-packed sessions looking at all aspects of the LTOA program from its content to its delivery.

Eskasoni Mental Health Services



The team travelled to Eskasoni, NS, to deliver the first training session with Eskasoni Mental Health Services (EMHS). The LTOA team was greeted by a familiar face, Mary Sylliboy, who had come to Montreal this past summer to LTOA's annual TESE meeting. Michelle saw a few more familiar faces, as she visited Eskasoni previously with Erin Aleck, a Regional Coordinator from B.C., while Nicole and Tristan had a chance to meet the rest of the EMHS team.

The LTOA team and Eskasoni Mental Health Services team posing with their "Tree of Life" drawings during a two-day training workshop

Walking into the Eskasoni ACCESS Open Minds center, we were amazed by the amount of upcoming activities and programs planned for the month, which were listed on a giant blackboard. The ACCESS centre has been transformed into a space that's open, accessible, and enjoyable to youth and families, with a beautiful red canopied mini cafe inviting visitors to sit and share a meal with friends. Upstairs, an entertainment nook is filled with books, toys and cozy spots to sit and read, while a busy computer station is used for completing homework or playing games. The ACCESS centre will become the home of the LTOA program in Eskasoni, and we look forward to hearing about the delivery of the program in this wonderful space!

During these two days, LTOA coordinator Michelle Kehoe led the program training, which covered the 14 sessions of the family program and also gave everyone a chance to play the LTOA board games. Together, we also had meaningful discussions and identified strategies to engage youth and families to participate in the program. Having already delivered the school program in Spring 2019, the EMHS team's previous experience with LTOA helped the training move along smoothly. We are looking forward to seeing how the EMHS team adapts the rest of the LTOA materials to their community and to hear about their experiences implementing the family program.



Program Coordinator, Michelle Kehoe demonstrating how to play the turtle game during a training session



Dr. Linda Liedenbergh (left), and Jeannine Faye Denny (right), from Eskasoni Mental Health Services listen keenly during LTOA training

Following our time in Eskasoni, the LTOA team had a nice, long day of travel between Sydney and Millbrook, before delivering the second training with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia (CMMNS). The drive from Sydney to Millbrook was beautiful, filled with the chanign colours of the Fall landscape, and opportunities to stop and take a few pictures at the many beaches and lakes we passed along the way. The team also stopped at a powerful REDress art exhibit dedicated to missing and murdered Indigenous women in Potlotek First Nation



Powerful REDress display in Potlotek First Nation, Nova Scotia commemorating missing and murdered Indigenous Women

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq Nova Scotia

The LTOA team gets close and personal with members from the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq Mental Health team in Nova Scotia



Our training session in Millbrook was hosted by Katie MacEachern and her team from the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. This training session, also led by Michelle Kehoe, was centered around the 14-session Family Program, and was filled with engaging conversations about how the CMMNS team could effectively and meaningfully adapt the program to their community. Suggestions included adding culturally relevant stories and teachings from the region, as well as incorporating additional games and activities into the LTOA program. The training session was filled with jokes and laughter, with the CMMNS team asking important questions in anticipation of their first implementation of the LTOA program in the upcoming Spring 2020.

The LTOA research team returned from Nova Scotia feeling inspired and grateful. It is always so amazing to work with individuals who are passionate and caring, and who want to make positive changes in their communities! The LTOA team is eager to hear about the implementation process and the creative elements each team brings to the program. We look forward to hearing some wonderful stories from both the EMHS and CMMNS as they continue to deliver the LTOA program in their communities!



CMMNS team members, Katelynn MacLeod (left) and Andrea Kingham (right) display their colourful Tree of Life drawings during LTOA training



The CMMNS team making their way through the 14-session LTOA Family Program in a training session

DEVELOPING AN LTOA TRAIN-THE TRAINER MODEL



What is the train-the-trainer model?

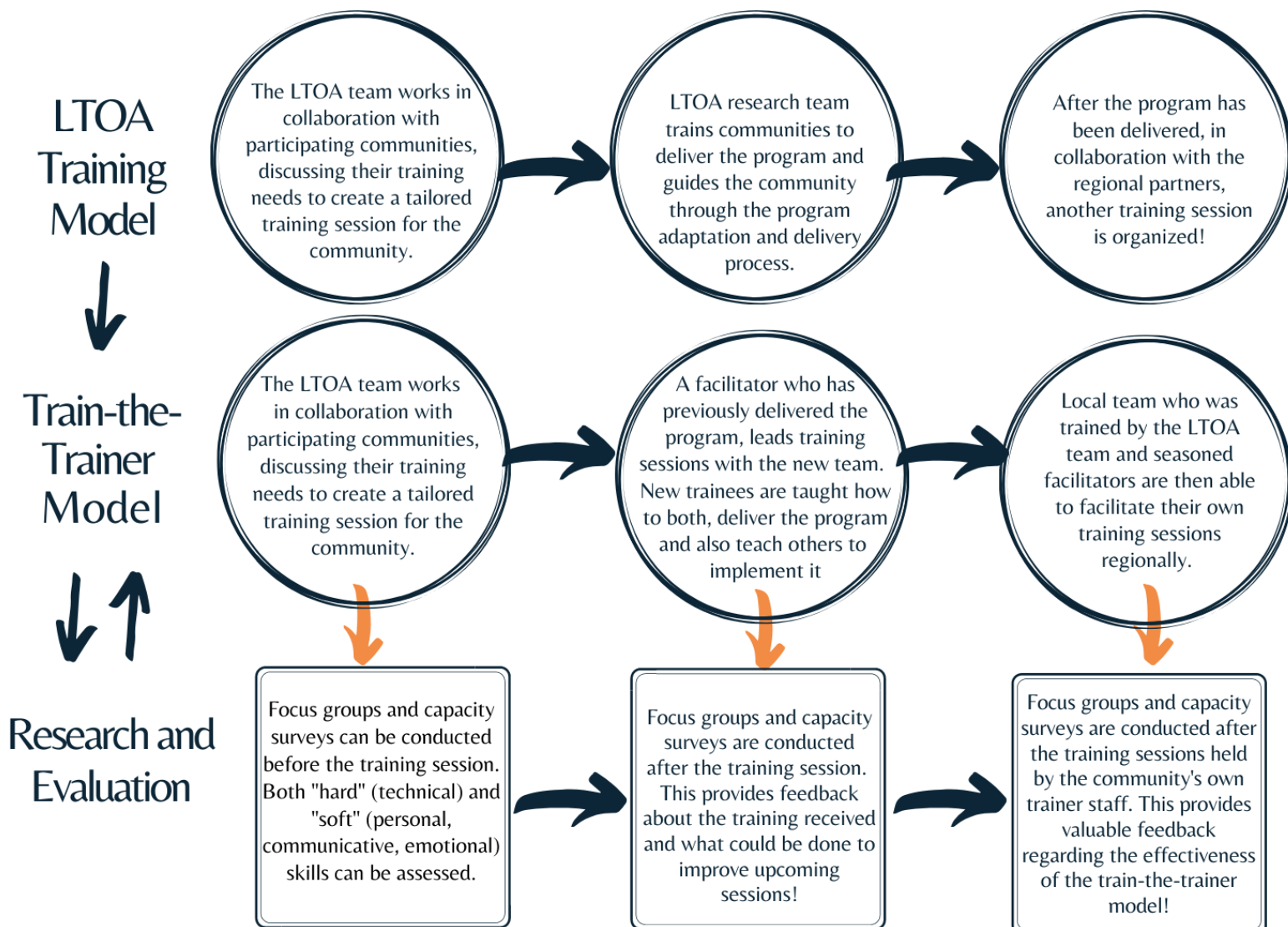
The basic idea of the TTT model is to initiate a **training cascade**: skills and knowledge are taught to a small group of facilitators who later become trainers and go on to transfer these skills to others!

What are the levels of training to consider?

Training can take place on **three different levels**: individually, organizationally, or through larger network exchanges.

What does the train-the-trainer model promote?

The model promotes long-term **sustainability** as it builds capacity by passing on simple skills and tools! LTOA facilitators, researchers and stakeholders can equitably engage in every aspect of the research and program process.




Further Sources:

Hinton, R., & Nagel, T. (2012). Evaluation of a culturally adapted training in indigenous mental health and wellbeing for the alcohol and other drug workforce. *Isrn Public Health*, 2012, 1-6. doi:10.5402/2012/380581
 Laker, D., & Powell, J. (2011). The differences between hard and soft skills and their relative impact on training transfer. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 22(1), 111-122.

ZU? ZU? TWU?XI

REGIONAL COORDINATOR ERIN ALECK SPEAKS ABOUT THE LTOA FAMILY PROGRAM




On a mid-December afternoon, we caught up with Erin Aleck, LTOA regional coordinator and program facilitator, to learn more about her experiences delivering the family program in Nicomen B.C. As we spoke, Erin was busy mixing up sage and juniper, with bits of leftover sweetgrass from her closing ceremony of Zu? Zu? Twu?ix program (LTOA program), a mixture for a smudge that gives a unique smell which Erin enjoys. Having finished up the last of her mixture she received from Standing Rock, it was the perfect time to make some more.

During the closing ceremony of the Zu? Zu? Twu?ix family program in Nicomen, Erin handed out strands of sweetgrass to program participants. The sweetgrass came from the East coast, where the Eskasoni team in Nova Scotia, harvested the sacred medicine that is commonly burnt for smudging and ceremonies. The two teams, on opposite sides of the country, have established a way of exchanging their sacred

Regional Facilitator, Erin Aleck's "Tree of Life" drawing from the Zu? Zu? Twu?ix program in Nicomen, B.C.

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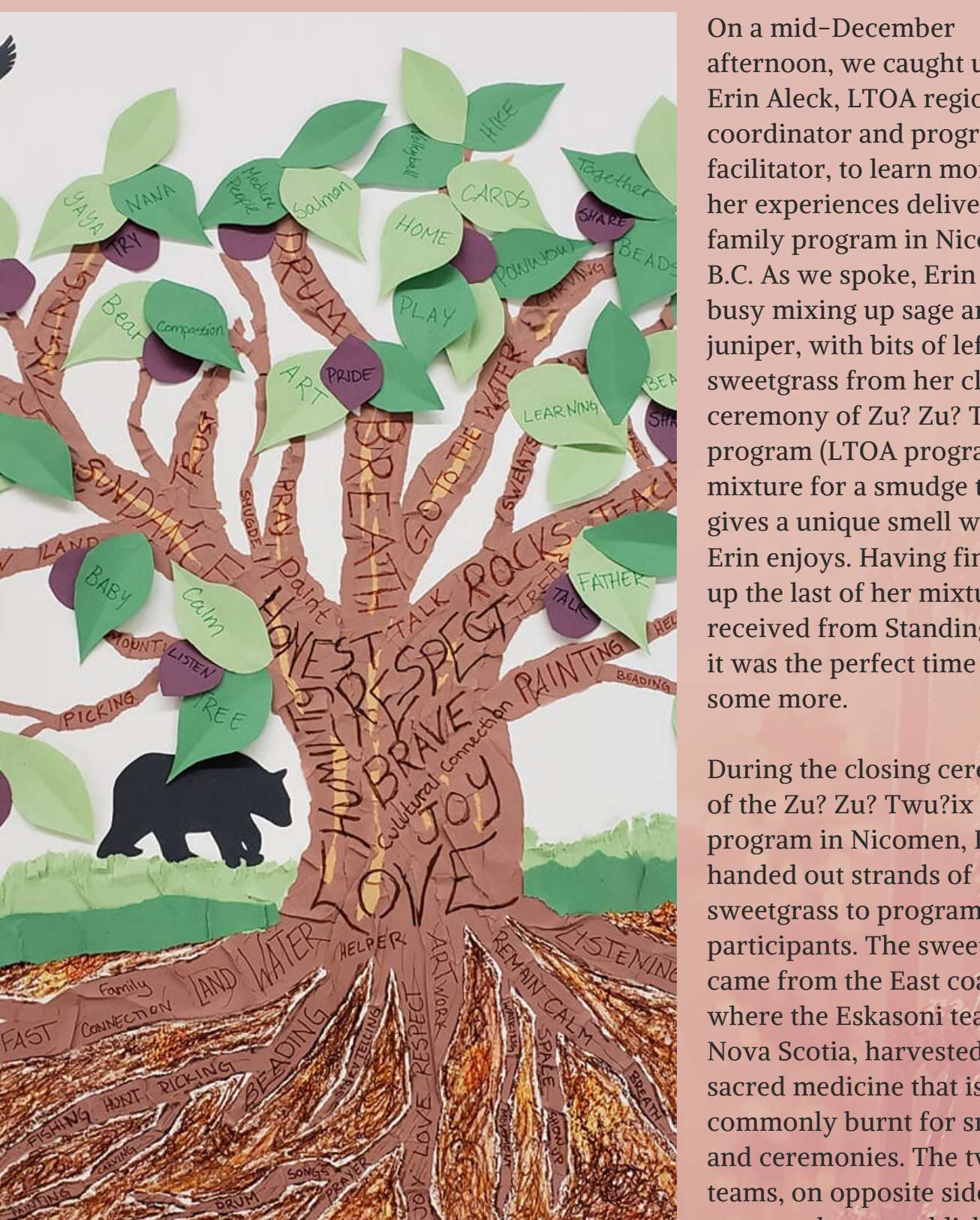
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knowledges and medicines, as traditional activities of braiding sweetgrass and picking sage in the Spring have been integrated into the family program.

It was Erin's first time delivering the Zu? Zu? Twu?ix family program in Nicomen, the second of the fourteen communities in Nlaka'pamux Nation to receive the program. The program was completed successfully earlier this month, although there were some challenges to work through at the start. Soccer is a popular activity in Nicomen, and its timing often interrupted the sessions. Not wanting the children to be forced into choosing between LTOA and soccer, Erin took a break from the program's implementation. By doing this, Erin showed the kids that things that are important to them are important to her as well. The families were happy to see that, and happily returned to the program following the end of the soccer season.



Regional Coordinator, Erin Aleck and Elder, Ina Dunstan celebrate the closing feast with participants of the Zu? Zu? Twu?ix program in Nicomen, B.C

The program had 13 participants attending more than half the session, and 55 participants attending the program in total- for Erin this turnout "is huge for Nicomen!". The program was attended by many different Elders, parents, and children as Erin encouraged intergenerational conversations. Elder, Ina Dunstan, played a big role in the program's implementation in Nicomen, even with the arrival of her newest great grandchild! Ina attended many of the sessions and her warm and stabilizing presence was well received by the participants. Ina was initially nervous to participate in the program because it was not her community, but over time, Nicomen became a home for her. The participants loved Ina, and her support helped create a bridge between Siska (her home community) and Nicomen that might not have been there before. It's great to hear that Erin and Ina were able to work together (yet again!) to facilitate a successful program.

Erin and Ina's ability to be vulnerable in front of participating families made a big difference for the Nicomen group. At first, the group was a little hesitant to open up to each other and it wasn't until the fifth or sixth session, after hearing stories and past experiences from Erin and Ina, that the families began to feel more comfortable. Erin believes that this change was based on the participants recognizing her and Ina's commitment to the families and the program. The biggest success of the program delivery in Nicomen was to witness the transformation of a young girl who participated in Zu? Zu? Twu?xi. At the start of the program, the young girl would say a prayer with her hands over her eyes and with her back to the rest of the participants. Erin noticed how this child blossomed over the course of the program, as during the final session's closing prayer, the young girl proudly and loudly stood up and recited the prayer for the entire group. For Erin, "that's the type of growth that can happen" in the LTOA program. The program was so successful in Nicomen, that the community would like Erin to return in six months to deliver the program again! The LTOA program continues to grow in Nlaka'pamux Nation, through word of mouth, and Erin thinks there will be a drive from other communities to participate in the program.

As Erin finished up yet another program delivery, she reminded us that although LTOA content found in the program manual is great, that's only one third of the magic that happens during the program. The energy of the facilitators, Elders, and participants, as well as the meals and the space of the room itself, comes together to create a culturally safe space which is key for program delivery. In Erin's words, "the manual is the ingredients, the meat and potatoes, but you have to cook it and mix it with spices. It's not just about the manual, but how the manual gets used".



Custom sweatshirts made for participants from the Zu? Zu? Twu?xi program in Nicomen, BC



Sweatgrass from the Eskasoni Mental Health Service team in Nova Scotia, offered to participants in the Zu? Zu? Twu?xi program in Nicomen, BC

Spotlight:

Katie MacEachern



In Fall 2019, the LTOA team visited Katie MacEachern in Truro, a charming town in central Nova Scotia, where she manages a team of mental wellness and resolution health workers at the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq Nova Scotia (SMMNS). CMMNS is a not-for-profit organization, built of a team of professional First Nation experts, who deliver community programs and services to First Nation communities in Nova Scotia. In her role as social worker and wellness manager, Katie and her team deliver health and mental health services across diverse communities of mainland Nova Scotia, from Pictou Landing to the port town of Yarmouth.

Katie enjoys working with people through their journey to mental wellness, getting to know each unique community, and being able to provide a two-eyed seeing approach to mental wellness. Her daily tasks consist of meeting clients weekly, on a one-to-one basis, traveling upwards of four hours, through some of the most scenic parts of the province. These meetings consist of checking in with clients and working on coping skills, stress management, and helping them navigate the mental health system both in the community and provincially. Katie and the rest of the CMMNS team strive to provide these services for communities despite ongoing challenges such as lack of resources and commitments of funding from provincial and federal sectors.

In February 2019, Katie braved the frigid, -50 C weather of "WINTER-peg" and joined the LTOA team to discuss cultural safety in research and program implementation. Having heard about LTOA in 2018, Katie used this meeting as an opportunity to learn more about the from other meeting attendees, and to hear about their experiences of rolling out the program in their communities. The conversations during this meeting yielded meaningful experiences for Katie and helped her envision the feasibility of rolling out the program in her own community. For Katie, the program presents an opportunity to improve community health and to empower community members to live good lives. Bringing this information to her organization and receiving their approval to proceed, her next goal was to begin the adaptation of the program to Mi'kmaq culture.

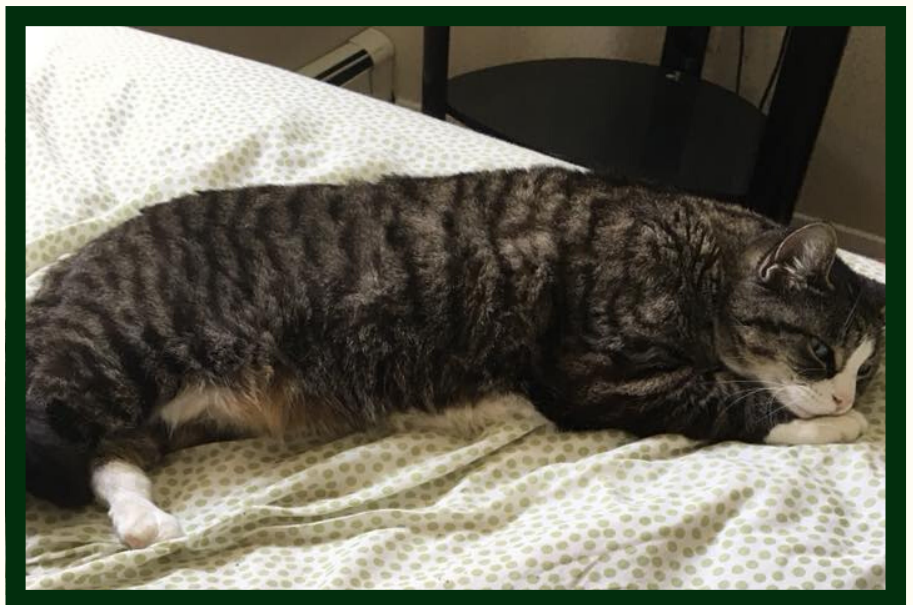
From years of experience as a social worker and working with other programs through CMMNS, Katie has developed strong skills managing community programs. She is able to highlight individuals' skills and delegate vital tasks accordingly. For instance, her team members, Andrea Kingham and Jenna Chisholm, are in the process of culturally adapting the LTOA program, by working on language translation and integrating stories into each program session. Another team member, Katelynn MacLeod has taken a lead on adjusting and developing activities that best suit the needs of the communities. Katie knows that while it is easy to get very excited about quickly implementing the program in the region, program delivery is not something that can be done quickly. Instead, Katie advises to take the time to plan it right, and then roll it out successfully.

Katie and her team will be preparing to deliver the program in the Spring of 2020. Since the communities CMMNS services are so far from each other, the best way to deliver the program is through a weekend retreat for families during the Victoria long weekend in May. The retreat will give the team an opportunity to deliver the program in a compressed timeframe and will also serve to identify leaders who will continue the program in each respective community. The location of the retreat, 20 minutes from Truro, will have plenty of rooms and townhouses, complete with a laser tag arena and a hot tub to keep participating families busy and entertained.

On top of her regular busy work schedule, Katie manages to find the time to swim three times a week, does yoga, and goes hiking in the Fall at the nearby Victoria Park, or on the beautiful trail behind her house. She also enjoys strolls across her favourite rocky beach, where her parents have a trailer. Beyond her daily activities, Katie spends lots of time with her family, attending Sunday dinners with her husband at her parents' place, or being a proud aunt of a very active 10-year old nephew who sometimes tags along on the hiking trips.

She also has an adorable cat named Mellow, who she claims is pretty mellow for the most part, but definitely has some fiery moments.

As the LTOA program continues to develop and grow in mainland Nova Scotia, we are excited to see what Katie and her team will do with the program in their region!



Katie's cat, Mellow having a snooze

Updating Our Hub

HAVE YOU VISITED THE LTOA WEBSITE RECENTLY? IF YOU HAVE, YOU WOULD HAVE NOTICED THAT IT HAS UNDERGONE A MAJOR FACELIFT!

Over the past few months, we have been adjusting and improving the LTOA website to better meet the needs of our stakeholders and community partners. As the face of the LTOA program and a resource for those involved, the website should be a user-friendly information hub. Over the summer, we consulted with community partners to understand what they look for in using a program website and have gotten some great feedback to reimagine the overall structure. Based on these discussions, we have organized the website according to types of viewers that may visit it, such as: (1) newcomers who want to learn more about the program; (2) community members interested in implementing the program; and (3) research findings from the program.



Format

We have improved the website aesthetically to make it more personal and welcoming to all our visitors. We worked with a team of graphic artists to add colourful imagery and have developed and incorporated a new LTOA logo. We have also added more photos and stories of the LTOA team across the country.



Content

All of the content on the website is in the process of being updated. In the coming months we plan to amend the documents and resources of the implementation, training, cultural adaptation, and program delivery sections of the website, with the goal of making these processes easier to follow.



Feedback

The LTOA team recommends everyone to visit the website to view the changes. The site was designed, in part, to ease the training, adaptation, and delivery of the program. The LTOA team encourages you to send any and all feedback about your experiences using the site, so that we can continue to improve the website for all users.

<https://www.mcgill.ca/mhp/>



UPCOMING EVENTS

WINTER 2020

Training in The Pas

January 16-17

LTOA National Coordinator, Michelle Kehoe and Research Assistant, Michaela Field will travel to The Pas to complete a two-day training on the LTOA Family Program. Six members, representing three First Nation communities under Cree National Tribal Health will take part in the training

Chiefs of Ontario Health Forum

February 25-27

LTOA National Coordinator, Michelle Kehoe and Regional Coordinator, Erin Aleck will travel to Toronto to present the LTOA programs at the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Health Forum

Program Advisory Circle

February 2020

The first LTOA Program Advisory Circle Meeting is set to take place this winter. Stay tuned for more updates!

**If you are interested in circulating your communities' events, please contact us at: ltoanationalcoordinator@gmail.com*

