

LTOA

The Listening to One Another Newsletter

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New Ways to Stay in Touch!

USING SOCIAL MEDIAS TO STAY CONNECTED & ENGAGED

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented us with unprecedented challenges, but has also led to new initiatives. While we are all staying safe at home, our team wanted to take the time to reflect on social interactions and continue to build and maintain our beautiful community of practice of the LTOA program. For this reason, over the course of the summer, we have developed new ways to stay connected in these times of social distancing. We are excited to introduce everyone to our Instagram, Facebook Page & Group, Website, Twitter, and Podcast Series!

Instagram

We created an Instagram Account for the program in the hopes of connecting with new people, communities, and organizations, as well as youth who might be interested in LTOA. Here, you'll find weekly updates on research, events, content from the LTOA Program, and more!

Facebook

If your preferred social media platform is Facebook, we have good news for you! We have both a Facebook Page and a Facebook Group. The LTOA Facebook Page is a great place to find weekly updates on the program, events, research and information. The LTOA Facebook Group is a space for people who want to engage with program material and join a community of practice to discuss all aspects of the program.

Website

The LTOA program website is a great place to find a wealth of information about the program. From the history of the program to specific details and videos covering each facet of the program, the website is updated regularly and is a fantastic place to learn about the program in depth.

Podcast Series

Voices have a strong meaning. They share what the eyes cannot see. Voices echo, encourage, empower, and support. We are very excited to embark on a new journey to communicate together by launching the LTOA podcast series. Based on exchanges with members of the LTOA community, we are hoping to share voices and reflections on themes related to the LTOA program. We will have discussions around cultural adaptation, training, program implementation, and more. We are delighted to bring forward and share the amazing work happening in the LTOA program.

We look forward to connecting with you virtually!



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM



TWITTER



WEBSITE

Several small triangles in orange, teal, and light grey are scattered across the top of the page.

MOBILIZING TECHNOLOGIES

DEVELOPING A TOOLKIT TO CONNECT COMMUNITIES DURING COVID-19

For many community organizations, the novel COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted programming and service delivery. Many organizations have had to rapidly adapt their program delivery to ensure the continuity of support services for communities and families. Although measures such as physical distancing are in place, mental health promotion and prevention efforts are still needed - including education and social programming. While operations continue in a new format, the adjustments necessitated by the pandemic have also exposed a gap in service delivery for vulnerable populations who normally access services in person.

CONNECTING DURING A PANDEMIC

One way to adapt to the current situation is to deliver programs remotely, which can include the use of virtual platforms. Specifically, one mode of technology that is readily available and accessible too many is the cellphone. Cellphones are everyday tools used by diverse members of a community on a regular basis. Progressing beyond its origins as a mobile phone, smartphones are now a primary means through which people document life events, share ideas and store information. They have the ability to create content like taking photos and videos as well as sharing content through social media software. With health and safety restrictions in place due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, cellphones have the ability to keep us connected.

ABOUT THE TEAM



With the intention to promote wellbeing in communities around the world, the LTOA program came together with the McGill Institute of Human Development and Wellbeing in May 2020, to brainstorm and collaborate on ideas of how we can mobilize online technologies to facilitate program activities for community organizations in the time of COVID-19.

The 15 members (pictured above) on this joint team brought together a variety of perspectives and talents to create a toolkit designed for community-based organizations.

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit provides activity suggestions through the use of cellphones with step-by-step guidelines, and provides guidance on how communities can maintain connection, foster communication and promote wellbeing.

In this toolkit, we present many types of photo-based activities like cellphilmaking and photovoice, movement-based activities like running, yoga and dance, art-based activities, food-based activities like , literature-based activities like storytelling, creative writing and story-boarding, as well as some general guidelines for storage and sharing on a variety of softwares and applications.

We are in the final stages of editing and can't wait to share this venture with you all!





The CommunityFirst Roadmap

SeeChange Initiative and Ilisaqsivik are supporting the Inuit community of Clyde River, Nunavut, to develop an emergency readiness plan for COVID-19. Now, they are making sure other communities have the practical tools and resources to organize, prepare, respond and recover in the face of COVID-19.

The CommunityFirst Roadmap is an adaptable and flexible planning tool intended to guide communities in developing a tailored COVID-19 response. The roadmap materials are technically accurate, practical, accessible in 5 languages, and consistent with World Health Organization (WHO) and Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) guidelines on COVID-19. Where possible, SeeChange Initiative showcases materials designed and developed by communities and that highlight innovative community-led approaches.

How do I use the COVID-19 CommunityFirst Roadmap?

- Create a CommunityFirst COVID-19 Emergency Committee, including a key community leader, community liaison, and a local health representative.
- Download the Checklist in the language of your choice to track your progress: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese or Inuktitut.
- Next, go through each of the steps:
 - * Step 1 - Organize
 - * Step 2 - Prepare
 - * Step 3 - Respond
 - * Step 4 - Recover
- Review the activities under each step and look through the available resources and case studies from other communities for guidance.
- Adopt or adapt the resources to your needs or develop your own resources (and share them with SeeChange Initiative through [this online form](#))
- The key to using this roadmap is to adapt, adapt, adapt. There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach in responding to COVID-19 at the community level. Every community is different and every plan needs to be tailored by you to your own reality.



SeeChange

Read more about the
CommunityFirst Roadmap [here!](#)
For more information, please email
**Jessica Farber, Community
Readiness Coordinator at
jessica@seechnageinitiative.org**

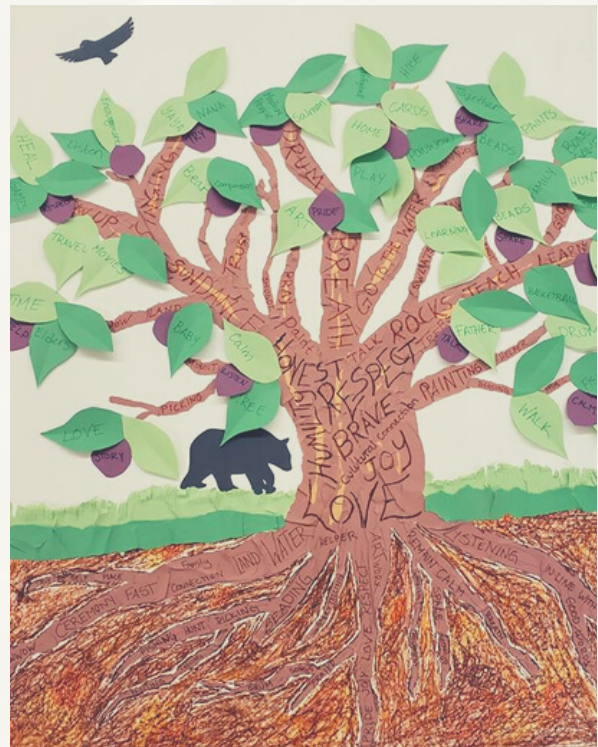
Introducing the...

TREE OF LIFE TOOLKIT

As physical distancing regulations remain in place, the LTOA Program is exploring new ways to implement programming. Meetings with community partners from across Canada provided us insight on how programs, like LTOA, could be implemented in their communities given the current circumstances. Discussions circled around virtual programming, but many community partners voiced concerns about the viability of conducting sessions over an online platform, such as Zoom. These discussions ultimately lead to the development of the Tree of Life Toolkit. Delivered to each participant's home, this activity will allow participants to learn about core components of the LTOA program without requiring internet access.

THE INSPIRATION...

For those who know the LTOA Program well, you'll know that the Tree of Life Activity is a central component of the program... And most likely a favourite activity of many! The Tree of Life activity brings together themes and teachings from all 14 sessions so youth and adult participants can visualize their family's strengths, as well as their culture, values, skills, helpers, and hopes for the future. Throughout the 14 sessions, participants sketch different parts of the tree. Each session allows participants to explore a strength related to the theme of that session.



During the Fall of 2019, Erin implemented the LTOA program in Nicomen, B.C. and showcased her beautiful artistic skills by making this Tree of Life.

ABOUT THE TREE OF LIFE TOOLKIT

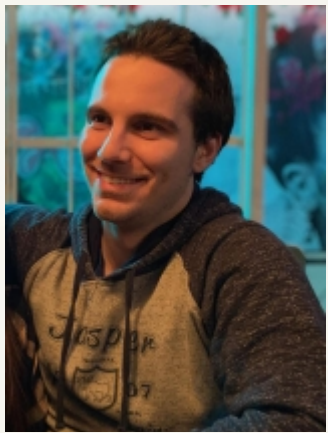


The goal of the Tree of Life Toolkit is designed to help connect youth participants with their culture, build life-skills, and strengthen coping mechanisms, especially given the current circumstances regarding COVID-19. For instance, the first four sessions of the toolkit covers Family Values, Favourite Activities, Cultural Activities, and Resilience. With a set of teachings and prompts given provided in each toolkit, participants draw their values within their trees. (See the next page for more information about making your own tree!)

Local program facilitators will be involved by guiding participants through the Tree of Life Toolkit. Facilitators will provide support through check-ins, will connect youth to Elders, and guide youth to additional resources in the community. Keeping with the fundamental components of the LTOA program, each participating community will also be able to culturally adapt this toolkit to their own culture and context, by integrating language, stories, and community specific resources.



MONITORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOOLKIT



Tristan began working on the LTOA project two years ago, when he got involved with the evaluation of the school-based program. Though the school-based program was the majority of his work, Tristan has had the pleasure to attend program trainings, updating the program website, and meeting members of the LTOA team from across the country, which make up some of his fondest memories on this project. To help with the development of this toolkit, Tristan, now a Master's student at McGill University, will dedicate his Master's project to the cultural adaptation of this component of the LTOA program.

He will reach out to interested participants to further discuss this element as the Tree of Life toolkit is further developed. Through group interviews with those involved, Tristan hopes that his research will uncover central elements of the adaptation process that can help future LTOA adaptations move forward. Findings from this study will provide further insight about the facilitators and barriers of culturally adapting activities of the LTOA program to the local context of each participating First Nation. The findings will serve as advice for new, potential partners interested in culturally adapting and implementing program activities.

INSIDE THE TREE OF LIFE

TOOLKIT...

To give our readers a chance to learn more about the activities in the LTOA program, we decided to give you a chance to complete your own Tree of Life over the course of the next few Newsletters. For this newsletter, you will be able to complete the first four sessions of the Tree of Life activity. On the next page, we have provided a sample Tree that you can print out and fill in with the corresponding values.



Feel free to design your own Trees and share them on our Instagram [@ltoaprogram](https://www.instagram.com/ltoaprogram) !

WANT TO IMPLEMENT THE

TREE OF LIFE ACTIVITY IN

YOUR COMMUNITY?

The toolkit is still in development, but we hope to get a pilot of this project going in the upcoming weeks. If you are interested in learning more about implementing this toolkit in your region, please contact National Program Coordinator, Michelle at ltoanationalcoordinator@gmail.com

Learn more about the Tree of Life Toolkit by visiting: mcgill.ca/mhp/tree-life

HOW TO MAKE YOUR TREE...

On the following page, you have the opportunity to create your own Tree of Life! Using the prompts below, fill in the blank tree. You can also create your own tree using any materials you have.

Session 1: **Important Family Values - Trunk**

In the Trunk of your Tree, think of values that are important to you and your family. What do these values mean to you? Why is this value important to you?

If you need some prompts, consider these values: Caring for Others, Communication, Equality, Openness, Respect, & Wellbeing.

Session 2: **Favourite Activities - Branches & Leaves**

In the branches of your tree, write in activities you like to do as well as new activities you would like to try.

Some prompts to consider: Seeing friends, drawing or painting, sports, talking to Elders, cooking, & music

Session 3: **Cultural Activities - Roots**

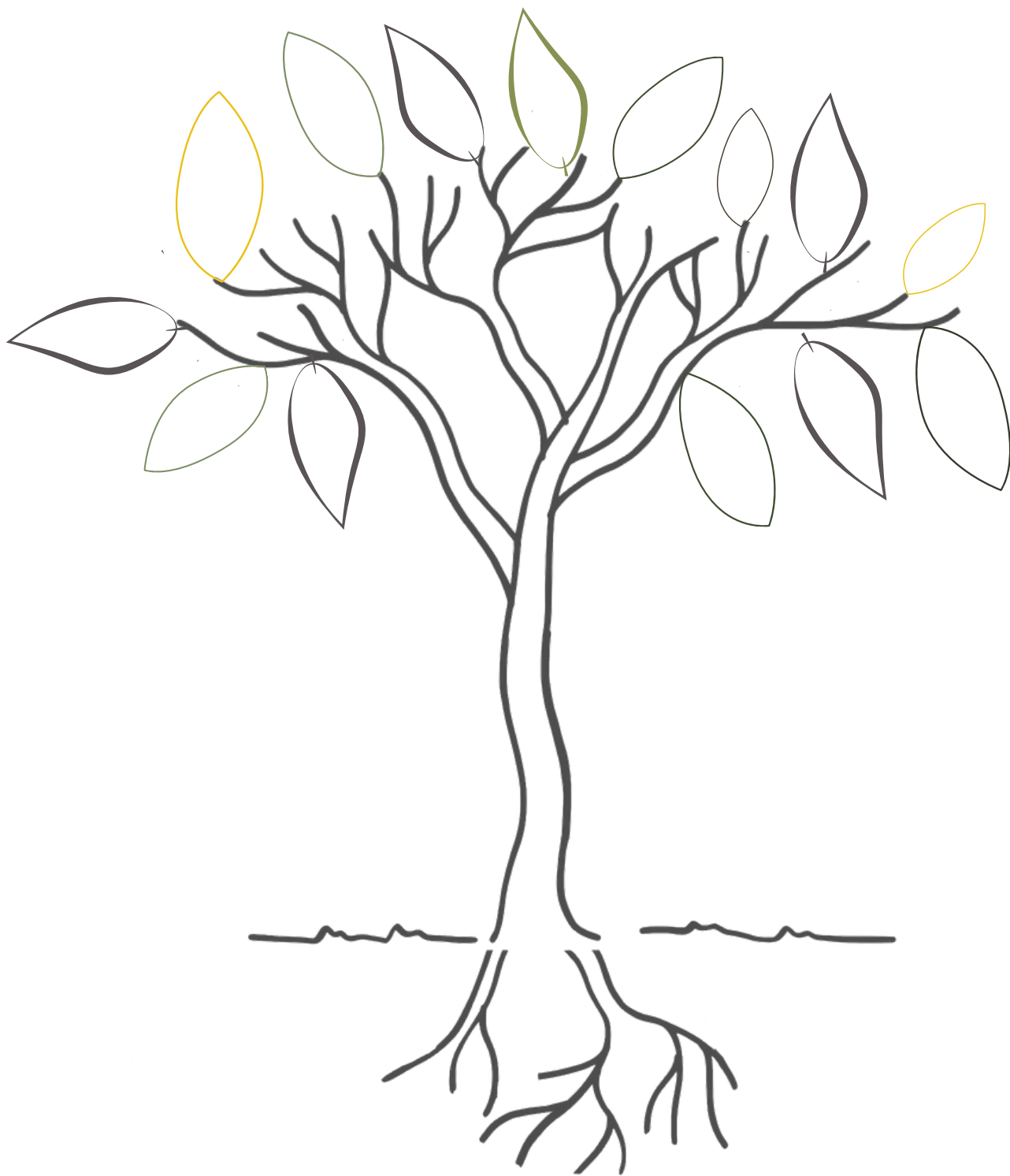
In the Roots of your Tree, write out activities you practice, and some activities or practices you would like to learn. Reflect upon what culture means to you.

Consider ways to strengthen your connection with your culture. Is there a connection between culture and wellness?

Session 4: **Resilience - Fruits, Acorns, Nuts, etc.**

In the fruits, acorns, and nuts of the Tree, write in examples of resilience and moments when you were strong.

Think about what resilience means to you. You can also add in words that make you feel strong and inspired.



A chat with Apathy is Boring about...



The RISE Program

The LTOA Team had the opportunity to chat with Francesca Désulmé, Outreach Coordinator from Apathy is Boring, to learn more about the RISE Program, a program that is strengthening youth engagement across Canada!

On Apathy is Boring...

Apathy is Boring is an organization that seeks to educate young people about democracy and encourages them to get involved in all aspects of the democratic process. Even though we are just one organization, we want to reach as many people as possible and encourage young people to be more involved in their community.

As Outreach Coordinator, my role is to identify organizations we can partner with and foster meaningful working relationships those partners. We truly believe in the power of partnerships. Each partnership we make targets a specific audience who are experts in their field. Partnering with them allows us to reach more people, while reaching the same goal!



Francesca Désulmé

What is the RISE program?

The RISE program is a youth engagement program that caters to marginalized youth aged 18 - 30. With hubs located across Canada, the RISE program is an opportunity for youth to have their voices heard and to build something meaningful together. Every year has a new theme and introduces a new cohort of ambassadors to the program. As these themes are broad, ambassadors can form groups, design projects with creative sub-themes, and gather weekly to work on their projects.



Afterwards, ambassadors present their ideas in a consultation session, which includes community leaders, partners, and other youth, who provide valuable feedback and direction. During the last two weeks of the program, ambassadors prepare to launch their project. The launch could be an event that brings youth and communities together or more of an artistic event that includes artists who use different mediums to help present the project. The possibilities are endless! You can learn more about past projects [here!](#)

➤➤➤➤➤ Being a RISE Ambassador

We strive to be an inclusive group that recruits youth from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous youth, people of colour, and youth with a mental or physical disability. We can reach a lot of interested youth through our partnerships, program alumni referring their friends, and through our social media following. Once an ambassador for the RISE Program, youth connect with the rest of their hub for their first hub night gathering play some icebreakers to get to know one another. At first, ambassadors are complete strangers, but they come together, form meaningful relationships and, over the course of 22 weeks, they lead a project from start to finish. You can hear from ambassadors and alumni themselves as they share with us **"Why I RISE."**

Theme Selection

Project themes are chosen from what we see going on and what youth are having conversations about. One year, the theme was the environment, which was broad enough to allow youth to take their projects in a variety of directions, creating their own sub-theme.

For example, in one of the hub cities, ambassadors spoke about the narratives of Black people and Indigenous people, the connections they have to the land, and the importance of that (re)connection. The theme, and the subsequent sub-theme identified by the ambassadors, directs and guides the conversations for that cohort

Adapting to COVID-19 <<<<<

The last cohort began in person, but the onset on the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to finish using virtual technologies. Most of the projects, however, were planned as in person gatherings. It was so amazing to see how quickly the ambassadors adapted their projects to online events. But one project in particular comes to mind. A group of ambassadors wanted to start a book club and had planned to meet every two weeks to discuss a book by a BIPOC author. As an unexpected side-effect of switching to virtual meetings, their book club reached more participants than originally anticipated. Transportation to meetings was no longer a barrier and participants could easily hop onto a Zoom call to participate. The ambassadors want to continue the book club even after the project ends. We always wish for ambassadors to find ways to continue and sustain their projects. To see the ambassadors take on that initiative to keep their projects going is so exciting. Those little success stories just make our day!

➤➤➤➤➤ How to apply for the RISE program?

Recruitment for the next cohort of RISE Program ambassadors starts October 12, 2020! This cohort runs for 22 weeks, from January 2021 to June 2021. Youth ambassadors are expected to commit to six (6) hours a week of volunteering: three (3) hours at an in-person hub night and three (3) hours online. Youth can apply here at: https://www.apathyisboring.com/join_rise

Thank you again for sharing with us Francesca!

Go follow Apathy is Boring below:



ARE YOU READY TO RISE?



JOIN OUR LTOA

YOUTH PROGRAM ADVISORY CIRCLE

Are you are seeking a dynamic opportunity to share your voice and experience by contributing to the growth and development the *Listening to One Another to Grow Strong* (LTOA) program? If so, we invite you to become a member of the LTOA Youth Program Advisory Circle! To Learn more about LTOA check out our website at: www.mcgill.ca/mhp

LTOA Youth Program Advisory Circle (PAC) applications are open to Indigenous youth, aged 14 - 25. Youth are encouraged to make a one-year commitment, with the possibility of renewal. The LTOA Youth PAC will gather 4 times per year over Zoom or conference call. Other informal meetings may be held throughout the year. If travel restrictions are lifted, one Youth PAC member will travel to Montreal, to participate in LTOA's annual Two Eyed Seeing Evaluation (TESE) Gathering in August 2021.

If you would like to contribute to the vision of the LTOA program, we invite you to [apply here](#)! Applications close November 30th, 2020. If you would like to complete the application by phone, or video, please reach out to Michelle at ltoanationalcoordinator@gmail.com to set that up!



Upcoming Events

FALL 2020



TESE MEETING

October 27, 2020

This year, due to physical distancing and travel restrictions, the meeting will take place virtually using Zoom! LTOA Partners from across Canada will come together over Zoom to connect, share and learn, while building our LTOA community of practice! For more information about the TESE Gathering, please contact Michelle at: ltoanationalcoordinator@gmail.com

VIRTUAL LTOA TRAINING

Interested in the bringing the LTOA Programs to your community? We are now offering virtual training opportunities. Reach out to us if you, your organization or community are interested in receiving LTOA Program!

Please contact Michelle at: ltoanationalcoordinator@gmail.com

TREE OF LIFE TOOLKIT

Coming soon!

Keep an eye on our website and social media platforms for more updates!

Stay in touch



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM



TWITTER



WEBSITE

...and take care of yourselves!