

# Aboriginal/Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program

## 2017 Western Door Meeting

November 20, 2017  
Treaty 7 Territory - Kananaskis, Alberta





## Overview

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On November 20th, 2017, members of the Western (Alberta and Saskatchewan) and Central Doors from the Aboriginal/Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program (A/IYMP) came together in Kananaskis, Alberta for the 2017 Western Door meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an interactive, participatory discussion where A/IYMP partners would have opportunities to share ideas and experiences, and make new connections.

The meeting was opened with prayer and ceremony led by Stoney Nakoda Elder Helmer Twoyoungmen.

The goal of this half-day Western Door meeting was achieved through icebreaker activities, 'virtual school bus community tours', participation in small and large group conversations, and open space discussions. After the icebreaker activities, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences implementing A/IYMP to date. The conversations provided space to discuss what is 'working well' (and why), what is 'on the way, but needs adjustment', and what is 'not working' (and why). Another key discussion involved questions and concerns regarding the Aboriginal Children's Health and Well-being Measure (ACHWM). The information discussed during the Western Door meeting regarding the ACHWM was subsequently used to inform discussions during the National ACHWM teleconference that occurred on January 8th and 9th, 2018.

Throughout the meeting, information conveyed by participants was written down on flip-chart paper by facilitators and summarized for this report. The information gleaned from this meeting will serve as a foundation for the A/IYMP team to direct next steps, and improve A/IYMP for the next year and years to come.

# Review of A/IYMP Implementation

In order to capture participants' experiences implementing A/IYMP in their community, the *Green-Yellow-Red Exercise* was used. This was a small group activity geared to *Harvesting Conversations* on what 'worked well' (Green), what is 'on the way, but needs adjustment' (Yellow), and what is 'not working' (Red). Participants were placed into three groups, each with a facilitator who guided and participated in the discussion, and wrote down participant comments on flip-chart paper. At the end of this exercise, each small group shared their reflections with the larger group. The table below identifies key themes drawn from analysis of all comments. Note that an asterisk\* indicates the item was placed in more than one colour category (green/yellow/red). These differences reflect the fact that each community has unique experiences and challenges

GREEN (What is working well)	
1. RESEARCH*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a control group model*</li> </ul>
2. PROGRAM DELIVERY/LOGISTICS*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation (Having dedicated busing for HS to arrive and going home)*</li> <li>• The program (discussion about if program plus research "too much" to start)</li> </ul>
3. COMMUNICATION*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular scheduled face-to-face meetings</li> <li>• Strong and quick responses to issues/items that come up (even when email-based)</li> </ul>
4. CURRICULAR/TEACHER CONNECTIONS*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum of PL in Phys Ed and Health – Curriculum connections*</li> </ul>
5. CHILD/YOUTH ENGAGEMENT/COMMITMENT*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lot of high school engagement (credits, incentives – out of school early)*</li> <li>• Child and youth engagement (new, curious, beneficial/outcomes)</li> <li>• Students who used to be in the school came back in a positive capacity as leaders</li> <li>• Major champions in school to push/build interest in school (Students)</li> <li>• High school students just own the program (great energy)</li> <li>• Something positive for kids after school</li> <li>• Elementary students going into high school and high school mentors being able to see elementary students' class</li> <li>• Kids sweating! Who normally aren't engaged in gym; active</li> <li>• Fun! More students are coming because their peers tell them it's fun</li> <li>• Feeling special (Friendship, places)</li> </ul>
6. PEOPLE SUPPORTS/RELATIONSHIPS*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meal with parents at beginning</li> <li>• Having community members host (e.g., Pow Lit)</li> <li>• YAHL involvement and commitment</li> <li>• Lots of adult support and partners (e.g., engineering students)</li> <li>• &lt;Name&gt; there every week</li> <li>• &lt;Name&gt; cooking + NS students</li> <li>• &lt;Names&gt; meets with students on Thursdays to prep or Tuesday training in SK</li> <li>• Good relationship between university-school</li> <li>• Having Master's students to help with sharing circles and evaluation</li> <li>• Having outsiders come in consistently (e.g., University students, partners)</li> </ul>
7. FLEXIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community flexibility</li> <li>• Tailoring the program to the community</li> <li>• Having flexibility to have it during school and after school in other communities</li> <li>• Adjusted timing of program to account for roads and now the program is consistent so we have more kids, momentum is there</li> <li>• Being able to use last year's funding rollover</li> </ul>
8. DIVERSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity of mentors and mentors as a strength (Newcomers to Canada, Newcomers get to hear Canada's history right away)</li> <li>• Diversity of team brings lots of experience and skill</li> <li>• Diversity of the serving group</li> </ul>

YELLOW (What is on the way, but needs adjustment)	
1. RESEARCH*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a control group model*</li> <li>• Pedometers*</li> <li>• Consent forms (too long, universities, return, filling with parents)</li> <li>• Doing research with new communities</li> </ul>
2. PROGRAM DELIVERY/LOGISTICS*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storage and purchasing of food for program</li> <li>• Lots of admin time to run program – calls, paperwork, meetings</li> </ul>
3. COMMUNICATION*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing the A/IYMP story in the community (communication/awareness/knowledge)</li> </ul>
4. CURRICULAR/TEACHER CONNECTIONS*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honor curricular time - work with teachers*</li> <li>• Roles - Teachers' involvement</li> </ul>
5. CHILD/YOUTH ENGAGEMENT/COMMITMENT*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need credit for HS – will create commitment*</li> <li>• Retention of mentors/mentees</li> <li>• Attaining/retaining consistent mentors and male mentors</li> </ul>
6. GIVE MENTORS TIME TO GROW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership opportunities - not overnight, takes time, roles have to get there (working together, tree analogy)</li> <li>• Bring out what's inherent in children and youth</li> <li>• Mentors don't have experience with kids. New mentors are being trained by university professors</li> <li>• Takes time for mentors to take on leadership role - we watch them grow</li> <li>• Cultural component enhancements – trouble with mentors doing it; bring in/invite elders</li> </ul>

RED (What is not working)	
1. RESEARCH*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedometers* (losing; lots of time and energy)</li> <li>• Logs</li> <li>• Evaluation is a lot of hectic scheduling, psychology on site</li> <li>• ACHWM (multiple aspects; survey incident)</li> <li>• Institutional colonization (i.e., money)</li> </ul>
2. PROGRAM DELIVERY/LOGISTICS*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation*</li> <li>• Gym supplies - using extra security room to keep supplies now (not enough, going missing)</li> <li>• Things not cleaned up, food left, equipment left out</li> <li>• Build in a spiritual belief box – for mind/body/self-awareness</li> </ul>
3. PEOPLE SUPPORTS/RELATIONSHIPS*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent involvement not worked at all</li> </ul>



## ACHWM Discussions

The Aboriginal Children's Health and Well-being Measure (ACHWM) is a research component of the A/IYMP. Over the past year, a number of questions have been raised by members of the A/IYMP Western Door partners in regards to the ACHWM. To facilitate conversation surrounding the use of the tool, a discussion started with a 'Walk & Talk'. This 'Walk & Talk' was meant to allow participants the opportunity to choose what would be discussed regarding the ACHWM during the 'Open Space Technology'. Five topics of interest were raised, and participants self-selected which topic they wanted to discuss. Each topic area had a facilitator, and participant comments were recorded on flip-chart paper. The five topic areas are summarized in the table below.

The information captured in this discussion has subsequently been used to guide discussions for the National ACHWM teleconference that occurred on January 8th and 9th, 2018.

ITEM 1: LANGUAGE IN THE SURVEY (CAN IT BE CHANGED?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we remove some questions?</li> <li>• The survey is worthwhile/has value</li> <li>• Not everyone is ready for language</li> <li>• Developmental level for 9/10 years - High School students more appropriate than younger</li> <li>• Safety for teens – who will see this?</li> <li>• Research Team needs to know history/context</li> <li>• YAHs and RCs get Safe Talk: Assist Training</li> <li>• Could threaten University/Community relationship</li> </ul>
ITEM 2: ALTERNATIVE SURVEYS (TO ASSESS HEALTH AND WELLBEING)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are we asking the questions we are asking?</li> <li>• Questions need to be relevant to: community, mentorship, and diabetes</li> <li>• Talk to communities to develop questions - can evolve over time as relationships grow; bring people together to ask/develop questions; community input/education</li> <li>• Need relationship to ask questions</li> <li>• Do this in phases/levels – not a survey</li> <li>• Benefits to community? What do they get out of it?</li> <li>• Working together "Ma Moo We Ah Stoos Kik"</li> <li>• Resiliency measure – Kate and Dave</li> </ul>
ITEM 3: HOW TO REALLY GET <u>INFORMED</u> CONSENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following principals of OCAP</li> <li>• Full transparency stops participation due to nature of questions</li> <li>• Simplifying language of survey and consent forms</li> <li>• Lots of community discussion upfront – parent open house; program and space to see and experience survey</li> <li>• Building trust: 1. Build relationship, 2. Implement program, 3. Then research</li> <li>• Flexible – community control over research and program</li> <li>• How do we know child comprehends survey and survey process? Can 8 year olds understand?</li> </ul>
ITEM 4: GROUND WORK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports needed in and outside of the school for participants and for mental health professional</li> <li>• Making sure community and A/IYMP partners understand what is being asked of others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o truly understanding the tool</li> <li>o what is being asked to implement tool (staffing, protocol, time, organization, etc.)</li> <li>o purpose (matches with intent of program and use of tool)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Need to build trust and give time to build relationships and trust before give tool</li> <li>• Reviewing questions and identifying word changes to be made (culturally appropriate, appropriate wording for age/context/community) and/or questions to be dropped (not appropriate for context, age, intent of tool for what info need tool to gather for program not matching up, etc.)</li> </ul>

## ITEM 5: BENEFITS VS. "IS IT WORTH IT"/DOES PURPOSE MATCH OUTCOME

- Who is the benefit for? – for children? For parents? For teachers? For mental health workers? For researchers? --> balance (for children and parents most important)
- Does ACHWM match what we are doing with A/IYMP?
- Is measure "with" NOT "on"?
- Cost/ time – is it worth it?
- Is there something else that requires less time or money?
- Consider benefit vs. risk
- Is the survey more "matched" with mentors rather than mentees?
- Does level of these questions match up with what we are doing?
- Some outputs not addressed (e.g., food security – AYMP can't do this?)
- Can we pick and choose?? Questions in the survey
- How can we tell if worth it if young children don't understand the questions?
- Risk of community/university partnership?
- Use "how are you feeling?" box – anonymous
- What can we say at the end? Can we say A/IYMP made the difference in changes measured by the ACHWM?
- Mentorship programs should drive funding. Funding should not be driven by the data.

## Sharing & Learning Activities

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During the meeting, participants had an opportunity to express one thing they wanted to share, and one thing they wanted to learn during the Western Door meeting. The summary of these comments is in the table below.

SHARE	LEARN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uniqueness of communities</li><li>• Feel lucky/privileged to be part of the group</li><li>• Experiences from our learnings</li><li>• I'm tired</li><li>• How powerful mentorship can be</li><li>• Grateful to work with people (knowledge/skills)</li><li>• Grateful to everyone for what doing for young people</li><li>• Honour-community partners</li><li>• Anything can</li><li>• Fun!</li><li>• Past experience. Mentor experience and what works</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HS engagement strut</li><li>• Worked in other communities/my role/main goals of mentorship/how get there</li><li>• How research/research tools working</li><li>• Unanswered questions? ACHWM</li><li>• Strengths of the Western Door</li><li>• Paul and Alexander and Saskatchewan</li><li>• IYMP and how use it in community</li><li>• New game for sharing</li><li>• How communities involve in development/evaluation/application</li><li>• How give program time</li><li>• More about people they/you/us/we</li></ul>

## Summary and Next Steps

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Thank you to the participants for your interest, dedication, and candor during the Western Door meeting. We believe we were able to provide an interactive, participatory discussion where A/IYMP partners would have opportunities to share ideas and experiences, and make new connections

The information gathered from our discussions has already been used in various other A/IYMP forums. We hope that documenting the work done in this meeting might also prove helpful to the broader A/IYMP community. We look forward to our next Western Door meeting, which might possibly occur in Saskatchewan in 2018.

## Appendix - Meeting Agenda

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***The Aboriginal/Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program  
Western Door Meeting  
November 20, 2017  
Delta Lodge at Kananaskis – Mt. Kidd Ballroom A  
Treaty 7 Territory – Kananaskis, AB***

### **What to Expect**

This meeting is meant to provide an interactive, participatory discussion where you will have many opportunities to share ideas and experiences, and make new connections. The format will encourage movement, and will utilize Open Space Technology and facilitated discussions.

### **Agenda**

- 12:30 p.m.    **Light Refreshments**
- 1:00 p.m.    **Opening Prayer and Ceremony led by Elder Helmer Twoyoungman**
- 1:30 p.m.    **Snowball Icebreaker**
- 1:40 p.m.    **Welcome and Setting the Stage for the Afternoon (Kate Storey)**
- 1:45 p.m.    **Virtual School Bus Community Tours**  
20 minutes per community including questions
- 2:45 p.m.    **Break**
- 3:00 p.m.    **It's a Ball! Group Activity**
- 3:15 p.m.    **Harvesting Conversations**  
Small Group Discussions/Sharing Experiences across communities
- 4:00 p.m.    **Walk & Talk**  
Prioritizing Topics for ACHWM Discussion
- 4:20 p.m.    **Open Space Discussion**  
ACHWM
- 4:50 p.m.    **Next Steps and Closing Circle**
- 5:00 p.m.    **Canapés and Mingling!**



## Appendix - Attendance List

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### Team Members:

#### MANITOBA DOOR

##### University of Manitoba

Jon McGavock – *AYMP Principal Investigator*

Jenna Stacey – *AYMP National Research Coordinator*

#### WESTERN DOOR

##### University of Saskatchewan

Leah Ferguson – *IYMP Co-Principal Investigator*

Carol Rodgers – *IYMP Co-Investigator*

Reed Thorstad – *IYMP Saskatoon Research Coordinator*

Kyra Ives – *IYMP Young Adult Health Leader*

##### Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Tammy Girolami – *Principal, Royal West Campus*

##### Paul Band First Nation

Keri Esau – *Principal, Paul First Nation School*

Jason Abotsway – *IYMP Teacher Lead, Paul First Nation School*

##### Alexander First Nation

Roy Arcand - *Elder*

\*Jody Kootenay – *Education Director, Kipohtakaw Education Centre*

\*Diamond Arcand – *AYMP Young Adult Health Leader*

\*Dan Arcand-Auigbelle – *AYMP High School Mentor*

##### Ever Active Schools

\*Brian Torrance - *Director*

Mac Walton – *Resiliency Coordinator*

Sissy Thiessen – *Resiliency Coordinator*

Melissa Tierney – *Resiliency Coordinator*

\*Kerri Murray – *Director of Projects*

##### University of Alberta

Kate Storey – *AYMP Co-Principal Investigator*

Tara Leigh McHugh – *AYMP Co-Investigator*

\*Noreen Willows – *AYMP Co-Investigator*

David DyckFehderau – *AYMP Western Door Research Coordinator*

Sabrina Lopresti – *Graduate Student*

Fernanda Torres – *Graduate Student*

\*Team members unable to attend the Western Door Meeting