

Women Leadership Toolkit

**Reclaiming, Redefining,
and Restoring Leadership
in Northern British
Columbia**

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Positive Living North



Women Leadership Toolkit - Participant Guide
Reclaiming, Redefining, and Restoring Leadership in Northern British Columbia

Developed by
Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society (PLN)

Research Consultant & Co-Author:
Dr. Júlia Campos Clímaco

Co-Project Leads & Co-Authors:
Vibusha Madanayake – Education Manager, Positive Living North
Dr. Ujunma Egbuawa – Support Services Manager, Positive Living North

Visual Design & Layout
Michelle Roberge

In partnership with:
• Takla Nation
• Afro-Caribbean Society of Northern BC
• Northern Women's Centre, University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)
• Foundry Prince George

A legacy of the project
Women Out of the Margins: Increasing Decision-Making Power of Women in Northern British Columbia

Funded by
Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada
through the Women's Economic and Leadership Opportunities Fund

© 2025 Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in
any form without prior written permission from Positive Living North.
Reproduction for educational or community purposes is welcomed with proper acknowledgement.

Suggested citation:
Positive Living North (2025). *Women Leadership Toolkit: Reclaiming, Redefining, and Restoring Leadership in Northern British Columbia*. Prince George, BC: Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society.

Contact:
Positive Living North
#1, 1563 2nd Avenue, Prince George, BC, V2L 3E4
(250) 562-1172 | www.positivelivingnorth.org

Copyright & Use Notice
© 2025 Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society. All rights reserved.

To support future group facilitation and mentorship programs, Positive Living North (PLN) will take
responsibility for developing and providing workshop manuals as needed. This ensures that all materials
remain original, culturally grounded, and compliant with copyright and ethical standards.

Reproduction of content for educational or community purposes is welcomed with
appropriate citation and acknowledgement of PLN as the source.

Printed in Canada.

Table of Content

Table of Content	iii
Foreword	v
Land Acknowledgement	vii
Personal Reflections	viii
Fund Acknowledgement	xi
Acknowledgements	xi
About the Project	xii
How to Use This Toolkit	xiii
Technology	xiv
Module 1: What are we talking about? Foundational Concepts: GBA+	1.1
Module 2: Leadership to a decolonized Intersectional Indigenous Feminist Framework	2.1
Module 3: Training & Mentorship in Fundraising and Feminist Grant Making	3.1
Module 4: Creating a Safe Space: Practices for Safety, Consent, and Cultural Respect	4.1
Module 5: Creating Allyship & Comm,unity Support Networks	5.1
Module 6: Leading from Where You Are: Navigating Workplaces and Building Systemic Change	6.1
Activity Worksheets	I
Glossary of Terms	X

Foreword

Leadership, to us, has never been about titles or corner offices. It is the grandma who feeds her neighbours before herself. It is the young mother who speaks up at a council meeting for the first time. It is the Two-Spirit youth who chooses to stay visible in a world that often tries to erase them. It is the quiet work of survivors of residential schools, family violence and intergenerational trauma who gather in circles to share stories, tears, and laughter. It is mostly about building collective courage, one truth at a time.

At Positive Living North (PLN), we have spent more than three decades walking alongside Indigenous, racialized and marginalized communities in Northern British Columbia. In these lands of rivers, mountains, and memory, we've witnessed the brilliance and resilience of women and gender-diverse people who carry the weight of systems not built for them. Yet, they still lead with heart, care, and fire.

This Leadership Toolkit is our solidarity with them.

It was born not in office boardrooms, but in living rooms, talking circles, healing fires, frontline shelters, drop-in centres, powwows, and grant-writing tables. It was shaped by lived and living experiences, carried by voices who have been too often pushed to the margins, but never stopped organizing, healing, and imagining better worlds.

Each module reflects a shared truth: leadership already exists in our communities. What we need are safer spaces to recognize it, tools to strengthen it, and systems that honour it.

Together with our sisters, matriarchs, 2SLGBTIQQIA+ kin, immigrant women, disabled women, and racialized women, we built this toolkit to:

- Reclaim leadership as relational, collective, and grounded in culture.
- Redefine power through equity, intersectionality, and GBA Plus.
- Resist colonial models of authority that silence or tokenize.
- Restore the conditions for care, belonging, and transformation.

You will find in these pages reflections, stories, frameworks, and activities that challenge and inspire. Some will comfort. Some will provoke. All will invite you to pause, ground, and step forward with intention, with others, and with your whole self.

This is not a manual for becoming someone else. It is a mirror to see the leader you already are, and a map to journey with those rising beside you.

In deep respect and solidarity,
Alexandria West
The Executive Leadership of Positive Living North

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge, with deep respect and gratitude, that this work was created on the unceded, ancestral, and continuously occupied lands of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation, whose name means "The People Where the Two Rivers Flow Together."

Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society is privileged to walk, learn, and serve across the vast and diverse territories of Northern British Columbia — the traditional and unceded lands of the Dakelh (Carrier), Wet'suwet'en, Gitxsan, Tahltan, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Nisga'a, Dane zaa (Beaver), Cree, and Sekani Peoples. These lands, rich in stories, languages, and teachings, continue to sustain our collective work toward healing, justice, and equity.

We honour the matriarchs, Elders, knowledge keepers, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse leaders, and women across these Nations whose wisdom, care, and courage guide us. Their leadership reminds us that power is relational, that governance is rooted in responsibility, and that true leadership begins with listening — to the land, to each other, and to the generations yet to come.

This Women Leadership Toolkit is carried in gratitude to these lands and waters, and in deep solidarity with all Indigenous Peoples who continue to protect and nurture them.

Personal Reflections

Dr. Júlia Campos Clímaco

Olá a todas e todos, com o grito que nos une e nos move: a luta continua! (English translation: Hello to all, with the cry that unites and moves us: the struggle continues!)

I am a Brazilian woman, born and raised in Brasília, a city inaugurated in 1960 to relocate Brazil's political center from the coast and stimulate development in the country's interior: a project that, like many others, displaced Indigenous communities. My family and I have lived in Prince George for the past years, where our youngest son was born. As a racialized settler, I recognize the complexities of coming from a territory shaped by colonial aspirations, with roots that stretch across many places yet belong fully to none. Living, working, and raising my family on the unceded, ancestral, and continuously occupied lands of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, I strive to stand as an ally in the ongoing struggles of Indigenous peoples. I bring a Latin American, Brazilian, feminist, and critical lens to my work, grounded in my activism with the World March of Women and my commitment to global gender equality and social justice.

Alexandria West

Hadih (English translation: Welcome!)

I was born into a bloodline of strong, resilient, indigenous women from the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation (located at the confluence of the two rivers that run through Prince George). I am the oldest daughter in my family and the third generation to work in the HIV field through the work we do at Positive Living North Society. I hold gratitude close to my heart to have the privilege of growing up and working on the lands from which my ancestors are from; having this tie to the land and all-living things in this territory grounds my practice and has shaped my career as a woman in leadership. Advocacy and creating safe spaces have been cornerstones in my practice from working with youth in and from care to supporting people living with HIV (PLWHIV), I have held these ideals close to my heart and actions.

Vibusha Madanayake

Ayu-bo-wan! (English translation: May you live long!)

I was born and raised on the island now known as Sri Lanka — a land of ocean, monsoon, and memory — where storytelling, food, and community are woven into everyday life. As a cisgender woman of South Asian descent immigrating to Canada, I have found a new home on the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation, where I now live, work, and grow. I hold deep gratitude and humility toward the Indigenous Peoples who continue to care for this land, recognizing that I am here as an uninvited guest. My journey from the Global South to Northern British Columbia has profoundly shaped my identity and practice as a feminist educator, advocate, and community leader. My research and advocacy are rooted in sexual health, migration, postcolonial feminisms, and peacebuilding, reflecting my commitment to bridging lived experience with decolonial and feminist perspectives. This path continues to remind me that meaningful change begins with listening, walking gently, and honouring the lands that hold us.

Dr. Ujunma Egbuawa

Nde wo nu (English translation: I greet you all)

As a Nigerian born in the Igbo ethnic region, located in the southeastern part of Nigeria—the giant of Africa in West Africa—I bring with me the rich cultural heritage, resilience, and communal spirit of my people. Coming to Canada as an immigrant, a cisgender woman, and a mother of three, I found a new home on the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation, where I now live, work, and play. I hold a deep and abiding respect for the Indigenous peoples, their lands, and their cultures, recognizing that I live and work here as an uninvited guest. My transcontinental journey has deeply shaped my identity and worldview as an African feminist and researcher. It has inspired me to explore the intersections of migration, gender, culture, and belonging, while centering decolonial and feminist perspectives in my work.

Fund Acknowledgement

This initiative — *Women Out of the Margins: Increasing Decision-Making Power of Women in Northern British Columbia* — is funded by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada through the Women's Economic and Leadership Opportunities Fund.

We express our heartfelt appreciation to WAGE Canada for its commitment to advancing equity and inclusion across rural and remote communities. Their support has enabled Positive Living North and our community partners — including the Takla Nation, the Afro-Caribbean Society of Northern BC, the Northern Women's Centre at UNBC, Foundry Prince George, and many grassroots leaders to co-create a transformative space for women's leadership grounded in culture, care, and collective power.

This Toolkit stands as a testament to what is possible when lived experience, community wisdom, and systemic change come together; when women lead from where they are, and when funders believe in the leadership already rooted in our communities.

Acknowledgements

This Women Leadership Toolkit was created through the shared efforts, stories, and leadership of many women and gender-diverse people across Northern British Columbia.

We thank the community members, Elders, peer leaders, and frontline workers whose lived and living experiences shaped every page.

This project was co-led and co-authored by Vibusha Madanayake, Education Manager at Positive Living North, and Dr. Ujunma Egbuawa, Support Services Manager at Positive Living North. Dr. Júlia Campos Clímaco served as Co-Author and Research Consultant, guiding the research process and analysis.

Our gratitude extends to Michelle Roberge, whose thoughtful graphic design and visual storytelling helped bring this toolkit's vision to life.

We also acknowledge our partners and advisors: Takla Nation, Afro-Caribbean Society of Northern BC, Northern Women's Centre at UNBC, and Foundry Prince George — for their collaboration and continued commitment to equity and leadership across the North.

This initiative was funded by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada through the Women's Economic and Leadership Opportunities Fund, with the steadfast support of Positive Living North's leadership, staff, and members.

To every woman, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse person who continues to lead from the margins — this work is for you.

About the Project

Women Out of the Margins: Increasing Decision-Making Power of Women in Northern British Columbia is a three-year systemic change initiative led by Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society (PLN), funded by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada under the Women's Economic and Leadership Opportunities Fund. This project responds to ongoing systemic barriers that Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTIQQIA+, immigrant, disabled, and low-income women face in accessing leadership roles and participating fully in political and public life—particularly across rural and remote communities in Northern British Columbia.

At its core, the project aims to shift who holds decision-making power by building inclusive, culturally grounded, and community-led leadership pathways. Through a Train-the-Trainer model, twenty women leaders from Northern BC communities will be supported to lead and mentor women in their own communities. The initiative unfolds in three phases: a community-driven needs assessment, the development of leadership training and this co-created Toolkit, and a final stage focused on knowledge mobilization, storytelling, and advocacy, including the release of a publication titled *“Calls for Action: A Collection of Community Voices of Women in Northern BC.”*

This project uses a decolonial, intersectional, and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) lens to centre lived and living experiences, particularly of women living with chronic diseases, substance use histories, diverse gender identities, migrant experiences, disabilities, or intergenerational trauma. Leadership, here, is not defined by titles, but by care, community work, storytelling, and survival. In partnership with our members, allies, friends and organizations such as the Takla Nation, the Afro-Caribbean Society of Northern BC, the Northern Women's Centre at UNBC, and Foundry Prince George, the project builds on decades of grassroots resilience to reimagine power, voice, and representation in our communities.

This Toolkit is one of its legacies. It is a resource created with and for those who have always led, even when they were never seen as leaders.

How to Use This Toolkit

This Women Leadership Toolkit is not meant to be read in one sitting or followed like a step-by-step manual. It is a living, breathing resource that grows with every conversation, story, and circle you hold. You are invited to use it in ways that reflect your community, your context, your lived experience and your own way of leading.

There is no single right way to move through these pages. You might:

- **Read it alone** to reflect, journal, or reconnect with your own leadership journey.
- **Facilitate a group session** using the activities and guiding questions in each module to spark dialogue and learning.
- **Adapt it for your community** translating, expanding, or reshaping the content to fit your cultural, linguistic, or local realities.
- **Integrate it into workshops or mentorship programs** to support other women, 2SLGBTIQQIA+ and gender-diverse leaders to rise together.

Each module offers a blend of stories, reflections, and practical tools. Some sections may challenge you to unlearn; others may provide comfort and affirmation. Move at your own pace. Pause when you need to. Return when you're ready.

To support your journey, we've also included a glossary with key terms and ideas to help orient you along the way. This glossary can evolve as you move through the toolkit: feel free to add your own words, translations, or definitions in the language and meaning that make sense for you, your community, and your peers. It's meant to be a living resource, shaped by your context and voice.

The activities in this toolkit are flexible: they can be adapted for both in-person and virtual settings, depending on what works best for your group or community. Think of them not as fixed instructions, but as invitations to start conversations and spark reflection. You are encouraged to adjust, reshape, or re-imagine them to fit your local realities, cultural ways of life, and the rhythms of your own work. Just as every leadership journey is unique, each module can, and should, become its own version of that journey.

We encourage facilitators and participants alike to open each session with a moment of grounding — through breath, gratitude, or acknowledgement of the lands and peoples who hold you.

Leadership begins in relationship, and every page of this toolkit is an invitation to nurture that relationship — with self, with others, and with community.

Above all, let this resource be what you need it to be: a mirror, a map, a conversation starter, or a companion on your journey toward collective leadership and transformation.

To support future group facilitation and mentorship programs, Positive Living North (PLN) will take responsibility for developing and providing workshop manuals as needed. This ensures that all materials remain original, culturally grounded, and compliant with copyright and ethical standards.

Technology

Below is an outline of the various tech tools this course will utilize. Always remember:

- You have the right to pass
- Being on camera is optional
- In-place of your name, pseudonyms are welcome
- The focus of this work is on patterns, not people (share stories, but only share what you are comfortable with sharing)

Zoom

- **Breakout Rooms:** Breakout rooms allow participants to be in a smaller group space to discuss/share based on the assigned work. Breakout rooms are used in most modules at least once. You always have the right to pass if you do not want to share or speak.
- **Chat:** The Chat function in Zoom is a space where participants can share without speaking, where notes and information will be shared to participants from the facilitator, and will be used in some activities during the course.
- **Polls:** Polls may be used during the course to gather thoughts and understanding from the participants in an anonymous way.

Mentimeter

- **Free Account:** Mentimeter is an online platform that allows multiple users to share information in a common space. Participants will need to create a free account to be able to use the platform.
- **Whiteboard:** The whiteboard function will be used occasionally. The instructions on how to use will be explained when used, however this function allows participants to write thoughts down on virtual sticky notes, and also read other participant thoughts.
- **Word Cloud:** The word cloud function will be used several times throughout this course. Participants will be prompted to write words or phrases and the group's responses are shown in a virtual word cloud. Participant contributions are anonymous.

Quiet Waters Wellness Space

- This space is a separate breakout room in Zoom that is a quiet room to take a break during the course.
- Participants are welcome to ask to be placed in this space if and when they feel overwhelmed or need a personal break to breath and get re-grounded.

MODULE 1

**What are we
talking about?
Foundational
concepts: GBA+**

*Organization / Affiliation:
Positive Living North*

Outline

1. Land and language acknowledgement

Use the space on [page 1.3](#) to write notes if you prefer.

2. Safety cues and cultural grounding

Cultural grounding practices on [page 1.4](#).

3. Session overview and learning objectives

Session overview and learning objectives of the module found on [page 1.6](#).

4. Warm-up: Five-word grounding

See [page 1.6](#).

5. Glossary in plain language - Key themes and talking points

Themes outlined on [page 1.8](#). At the end of the learning, you will be put into [breakout rooms](#) for a small group discussion.

6. Privilege Walk Game

Game board on [page 1.12](#) - you will need a playing piece (eg. an eraser, coin, stone, playing piece, etc.), or click [here](#) to get to the [virtual board](#).

7. Conclusion & Key Takeaways

Key takeaways listed on [page 1.14](#), and space for notes on the following pages.

8. Closing the Session: Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles

See [page 1.15](#).

9. Resources and Tools

Explore the additional resources found on [page 1.16](#).

Land and language acknowledgement

Name the local Nations whose lands you are on, the place they call home, and their mother tongue.

Having to prove it to the other person, so the person sees you beyond that stereotyping is where the problem is. Having to convince people to take a chance on you, to give you that platform, that agency, to prove what you've got.

Opening Ceremony

Start with land and language acknowledgement. Name the local Nations and each of participants mother tongue. Share how we would greet each other if we were in our own homes.

Relational Circle

We sit in a circle, whether in person or on Zoom. There are no hierarchies; everyone is equal. We learn from each other by sharing stories and working on changes together.

Cultural Grounding and Community Wisdom

Learning from each other

Our elders are also our teachers. Grandmothers, aunties, and (other) mothers, as well as Two-Spirit and queer individuals guide us through storytelling, beadwork, cooking, and community support, which are all valuable forms of leadership. Reciprocity: It's important to compensate people for their time and to avoid taking without giving back. Make sure to get permission for each step we take together.

Accessibility as Culture

We create a welcoming space that is family-friendly, providing breaks, language support, and clear confidentiality to ensure everyone feels included.

Notes:

Session Overview

As we move into this training, this introduction sets a shared foundation so we're on the same page, while honouring that we are each writing different books. Some of us use these terms daily; others might be hearing them for the first time. Either way, if you're here, you've experienced parts of this in your life, perhaps with different names, maybe as "life itself." We'll walk together and compare meanings. We'll also use story as a tool for leadership: by revisiting and reclaiming lived experience, we can recover and reframe what's happened to guide shared action.

In plain language, we'll introduce five key concepts that will guide us throughout the toolkit: GBA+, Intersectionality, Power & Privilege, Decolonization (including Indigenous and other feminisms), and Cultural Safety (with a trauma-informed lens). We'll connect each concept to everyday examples, such as policies, meetings, budgets, grant management, and programs, and encourage you to recognize them in real-life situations.

They're the map and compass for everything that follows; the lenses we'll use in every activity and discussion. This will be our shared language, keeping us aligned as the topics deepen. We want this to be a safe space to learn, unlearn, and ask questions. You'll leave with a common vocabulary, a few simple tools, and the confidence to use them, and the assurance that you can pause, clarify, or push back as we go.

Session Objectives

By the end, participants will be able to:

- Explain each concept in plain language and why it matters in leadership work.
- Identify overlaps among the five concepts when analyzing real situations.
- Apply the concepts to simple scenarios (e.g., program design, meetings, budgets).
- Name at least one practice that increases cultural safety and reduces harm.

Five-Word Grounding Exercise

Use the chat function for this exercise.

Notes:

Key Themes and Talking Points

GBA+ (Gender-Based Analysis Plus)

A practical impact check that refuses a single answer or proposed solution to every woman. GBA+ asks: "Who benefits?", "Who's left out?" and then looks past gender alone to the plus: Indigeneity, race, class, age, disability, sexuality, migration, language, rural/remote location, caregiving, and more. It treats gender as something socially organized (not biologically determined), so we can understand numbers with lived experience, and redesign policies, budgets, and programs until the people most affected can actually use them.

Intersectionality

We don't live single-issue lives. Our realities sit at many crossroads: gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, language and migration status... Those crossings create specific patterns of privileges and disadvantages. Think of a woven basket: each strand matters, but it is the weave that holds it together. Intersectionality helps us see the weave, not just the strands, including how colonial, heteronormative norms got layered onto Indigenous gender systems that once had space for balance and gender diversity.

Power & Privilege

Power isn't just a title; it's who gets the benefit of the doubt, the second chance, the big chair at the big tables, the keys, the ride, the mic. It shows up when a resume with an "easier" name gets the callback; when a meeting runs past daycare pickup; when only English is welcomed; when someone's story lands as "data" and someone else's as "opinion." Some of us start on a smoother road (because of things like skin colour, passport, income, education, able-bodiedness, cis or straight identity, or being "from here"); others hit bumps we didn't build but still feel every day.

Decolonization

Decolonization aims to change the rules and centre Indigenous laws, languages, lands, and leadership, refusing colonial, patriarchal logics that split bodies from land and authority from care. Indigenous, Black, queer, and other feminisms tell us that leadership is relational. Decolonization isn't a word to sprinkle into meetings, and it's not another way to tell Indigenous peoples and women to "fix" themselves inside systems built to exclude them. It's structural work: recognize storytelling, matriarchal leaderships, ceremony, mothering, mutual aid, and resistance as political leadership; shift budgets, seats, and decision rights; return authority and lands where they belong; and build real accountability so communities set the terms.

Cultural Safety (Trauma-Informed)

Cultural safety means the people in the room, especially those most affected, decide what "safe enough" looks and feels like, and hosts adjust to meet it. It's spiritual, emotional, physical, and cultural. In practice: ensuring consent and choice, clear confidentiality, and access to food and childcare; respecting pronouns and names; using plain language; offering options to opt in or pass, along with content notes and privacy; creating accessible, elder- and youth-friendly spaces; including ceremony when appropriate; and recognizing colonial trauma. Trauma-informed pacing (grounding, breaks) prevents re-harm. "Nothing about us without us" is the baseline, not the bonus.

How They Work Together

We use GBA+ to spot the gaps; intersectionality to understand the weave; power & privilege to name who benefits from current systems and how to change it; decolonization to reset the rules and centre Indigenous ways; and cultural safety to ensure the work does no harm while we do it together.

Notes:

■■■ *I really feel that there is a need for women to come together, because we have that sense of being able to relate to the experiences that we're going through. Stories might be different because we come from different places. But as women, as parents, I'm sure there is something that ties us together.* ■■■

Privilege Walk Game Board

1	2	3	4	5
10	9	8	7	6
11	12	13	14	15
20	19	18	17	16
21	22	23	24	25
30	29	28	27	26

Online, playable version of this board: https://positivelivingnorth-my.sharepoint.com/:p/g/personal/jboquecosa_positivelivingnorth_org/EVU-lj8zIINHuxZ2eaeYA8wBIQXCK82qMiHi_we0pWGKng?rtime=efNU53AS3kg

Reflection Questions for after you finish you privilege walk:

- What did you feel like being in the front, back or middle of the group?
- What factors influenced your privileges that you have never thought of before?
- What statement made you think the most?
- If you could add a statement, what would it be?
- What do you wish people knew about one of the statements?

Key Takeaways

Shared concepts and language guide how we see power, patterns, and relationships in daily work.

Inequity is structural; change the rules, not the people.

Leadership is relational and care practices, storytelling, and mutual aid count and are not invisible side work.

Power can be shared through time, translation, childcare, and co-created agendas.

Safety is defined by participants through consent, choice, and trauma-aware pacing.

Closing the session

Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles | Opening the Bundle

In many Indigenous traditions, a bundle is a sacred pouch, basket, or collection of items that holds deep meaning. It is opened with care and used to guide life. Renée E. Mazinegiizhigo-kwe Bédard describes “laying down our bundles” as a powerful metaphor for renewal and resistance. Bundles carry medicines, teachings, and responsibilities passed through generations, and they represent many forms of leadership, including aunties, grannies, two-spirit, and Indigiqueer people. Connected to Grandmother Spider’s story and the Seven Grandmother Gifts, this teaching tells us that leadership is collective, intergenerational, and rooted in care. By the end of the training, participants will “throw down” their bundles as a way of claiming the strengths, responsibilities, and commitments they carry as leaders.

After we close this session, you will open your Bundle. Remember, you already carry bundles into leadership. You can use the “bundle” template provided on [page II at the back of this toolkit](#), or you may choose to create or find a physical bundle that feels meaningful to you (a pouch, basket, or object that represents your leadership journey).

- Write or draw two or three items that you already hold in your leadership bundle. These might be values, skills, teachings or life experiences that shape how you lead.

Reflection Questions

- How do these connect to intersectionality, cultural safety, or decolonization?
- Which ones feel most central to your leadership right now?

Resources and Tools

Adichie, C. N. (2015). *We should all be feminists. Vintage books.*

Crenshaw, K. W. (1990). *Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color.* *Stan. L. Rev.*, 43, 1241.

Hooks, B. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics.* **Pluto Press.**

Voyageur, C., Brearley, L., & Calliou, B. (2014). *Restorying Indigenous leadership.* **Banff Centre Press.**
<https://www.banffcentre.ca/articles/restorying-indigenous-leadership-wise-practices-community-development-2nd-edition>

Emma - you should've asked (website)

<https://english.emmaclit.com/2017/05/20/you-shouldve-asked/>

IndigiNews (website)

<https://indiginews.com/>

Integrating Indigenous Pedagogies into Online Learning (website)

<https://lddi.educ.ubc.ca/integrating-indigenous-pedagogies-into-online-learning/>

April 11, 2025: Canada Votes: How Indigenous people are finding power in the process (website)

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-105-unreserved>

Feminist Economics (website)

<https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/videos/feminist-economics>

Unwomen - Redistribute unpaid work (website)

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/redistribute-unpaid-work>

Jacey Firth-Hagen, Ep 2, Oral History, Voices From Here (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2O4lGlabbU>

8 Minutes with Silvia Federici - The People's Forum NYC (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cdf0NDNfWEQ>

Kimberlé Crenshaw: Intersectionality and Gender Equality (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DW4HLgYPIA>

AgroMarxist - #BlackLivesMatter (YouTube)

<https://youtu.be/QtNz0Zm6u9s?si=tcom2yQT0je9P7Q>

Campaña "Carga Mental" de ComunidadMujer (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOcboHe9dxs>

Ther matrix of domination: Using privilege to uplift communities, Dimpho Thepa (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unjOV6ULC8w>

A glass ceiling - or a broken ladder? - BBC News (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk1K1dHgXi4>

Angela Davis on Intersectional Feminism (YouTube)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GDjT3Fw_6w

Empower & Connect: Support Network for Indigenous Women & Women of Colour (website)

<https://www.sniwwoc.ca/>

MODULE 2

Leadership to a Decolonized Intersectional Indigenous Feminist Framework

*Organization / Affiliation:
Northern Women Centre -
University of Northern British Columbia*

Outline

1. Land and language acknowledgement

2. Ice breaker, introduction, safety cues & grounding activity

See Grounding & Cultural Safety on [page 2.4](#).

3. Session overview and learning objectives

Session overview and learning objectives of the module found on [page 2.6](#).

4. Activity 1: Leadership Journey Mapping

See [page 2.8](#).

5. Activity 2: What do the following words mean to you?

See [page 2.9](#).

6. Glossary in plain language - Key themes and talking points

Key concept are presented on [page 2.10](#). Use the table on [page 2.12](#) as a reference.

7. Activity 3: Applied Practice in Leadership Scenarios

You will work in small groups in [breakout rooms](#). See [page 2.14](#) for scenarios.

8. Skills for Transformative Leadership

See [page 2.15](#) for the empathy map.

9. Closing Reflection & Key Takeaways

Review key takeaways on [page 2.16](#).

10. Closing the Session: Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles

See [page 2.17](#) for further explanation.

11. Resources and Tools

Explore the additional resources and tools available on [page 2.18](#).

Land and language acknowledgement

“ We sit in circle as leaders in my community, as a leader I am not in front, behind, above or below. ”

Relational practice

We use a circle process and storytelling, where participants are knowledge-holders and learning flows in all directions.

Centering lived experience

We treat participants' stories and experience as valid expertise.

Cultural Grounding and Community Wisdom

Decolonial approach

Colonial hierarchies are challenged and culturally safe spaces encouraged.

Trauma-informed care

We recognize the impacts of colonialism, racism, and gender-based violence, and facilitating with pacing, grounding activities, and safety practices.

Reciprocity and accountability

We emphasize that learning is collective and requires giving back.

Ice breaker activity

Choose an object on their desk or a photo on their phone representing “leadership” to you.

Session Overview

How can we redefine leadership beyond colonial hierarchies and claim space in ways that reflect our values, lived experience, and community roots? From this question, this module focuses on redefining leadership, challenging colonial, racist, sexist, and hierarchical models, and recognizing that leadership already lives in care, community organizing, ceremonies, and advocacy.

Transformative Leadership journeys can be non-linear, not only developed through formal titles, but grounded in lived experience, cultural roots, and collective action. They often begin in kitchens, healing spaces, and grassroots efforts, not necessarily in boardrooms, elected roles, or institutional positions. This module validates informal and relational leadership and intergenerational knowledge, creating possibilities for women to step into their power, take up space, and lead authentically. Participants are invited to expand their understanding of leadership and to recognize themselves as leaders in their own ways, exploring how lived experience, cultural values, and informal roles contribute to leadership, particularly in non-hegemonic domains.

Participants will also engage with Indigenous frameworks that are intersectional, feminist, and decolonial, emphasizing horizontal decision-making, cultural and land-based connections, and inclusive spaces. Leadership will be examined as multidimensional, shaped by intersecting identities, histories, and systemic contexts. Also, as a reflexive practice that challenges biases, acknowledges positionality, and shifts power from individuals to the collective. Elders, matriarchs, and lived experiences are valued as essential sources of knowledge and guidance.

Session Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will:.

- Recognize leadership as relational, inclusive, intersectional, and culturally grounded across diverse contexts.
- Contrast colonial and decolonial leadership models, including how power is distributed and shared.
- Reflect on their own leadership experiences, values, cultural roots, and role models.
- Practice reflexivity by examining biases, positionality, and the impact of lived experience on leadership.
- Map their personal leadership journey through lived experience, values, and cultural identity.

Notes:

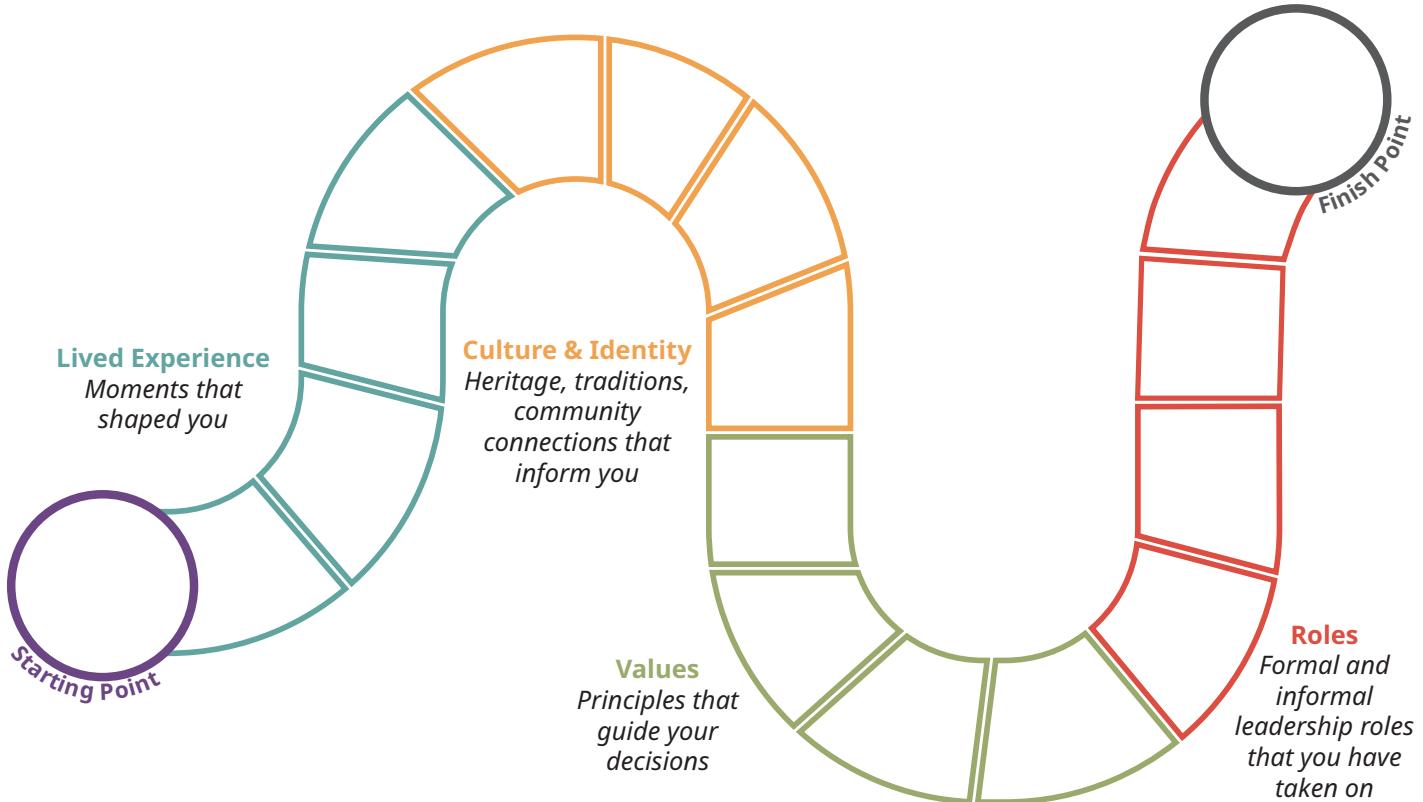
“ Over the years, I have learned that effective leadership is about empowering others and creating opportunities for growth. My goal is to continue building my leadership skills and to support other women in my community to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential. I believe that with the right resources and support, we can break down the challenges and create a more inclusive and equitable environment for everyone. ”

Activity 1: Leadership Journey Mapping

In this activity, be creative! Use words, drawings, doodles, or symbols. Remember: leadership journeys are cyclical, relational, and evolving.

Go to [page VII](#) for a full page version of the Leadership Journey Map.

- **Starting Point:** Write one word that describes how you felt at the beginning of your leadership journey.
- **Travel the Path:** Move along the board. At each colored milestone, add words, drawings, or symbols that reflect:
 1. **Lived Experience:** What key moments shaped you?
 2. **Culture & Identity:** What communities, traditions, or heritage inform your leadership?
 3. **Values:** What principles guide your choices and actions?
 4. **Roles:** What formal or informal leadership roles have you taken on?
- **Snakes/Chutes & Ladders:** Think about supports (ladders) that lifted you and barriers (snakes/chutes) that made the journey harder. Add them onto your path with doodles or short words.
- **Finish Point:** Write one word that represents your aspiration as a leader.
- **Future Horizons:** In the open space beyond the finish, sketch or imagine new directions for your leadership.



Activity 2: What do the following words mean to you?

This is a **private reflection** activity. You do not need to share what you write.

Key Themes and Talking Points

Colonial Leadership

Hierarchies, suits, and titles. Through this lens, leadership is imagined as the white man at the head of the table; power is concentrated in one person, and decisions are made and imposed top-down, reflecting patriarchal and capitalist traditions that equate leadership with domination and control, and where power is legitimized through exclusion. This model prioritizes authority, competition, and “objectivity” and often excludes women, especially Indigenous, racialized, or those who are part of the 2SLGBTIQQA+ community. Colonial leadership asks people to leave their culture, care work, and lived experience at the door to be considered “professional.”

Decolonial and Indigenous Feminist Leadership

Horizontal, relational, and community-grounded, valuing inclusion, care, and collective decision-making. It honours Elders, matriarchs, land, and lived experience as sources of knowledge to answer the question: “How do we share power, make space, and redistribute resources responsibly?” This perspective frames leadership as relational and not centred around titles but around responsibility to community, land, and interdependence, considering that leadership lives in ceremony, storytelling, mothering, diversity, organizing, and advocacy.

Lived Experience as Expertise

Feminist standpoint perspectives inform us that knowledge is situated; and that women’s and marginalized peoples’ lived experience produces ways of knowing that are too often dismissed as “less than.” Transformative leadership isn’t only learned in boardrooms or textbooks. It begins in kitchens, healing circles, and neighbourhood organizing. The skills we learn, like caring for children, resisting injustice, surviving systems, or passing down stories, are all part of our leadership journey.

Intersectionality and Power

Leadership challenges aren't one-dimensional, and the concept of intersectionality shows how overlapping structures of oppression create unique barriers and possibilities for leadership, which can't be explained by single categories alone. Gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, Indigeneity, migration, and language shape how leadership is lived and recognized. Colonial systems often dismiss these intersections, but a decolonial lens sees them as central to each leadership experience.

Reflexivity

Transformative leadership requires us to check our own biases, privileges, and positions by asking where we stand, where we hold power, and how we've internalized colonial logics. It's about recognizing who is centred and who is pushed to the margins, and committing to shifting those lines. Thus, is a form of accountability. It asks leaders to recognize how their own positionality shapes relationships, decisions and the reproduction of inequality.

How They Work Together

By contrasting colonial and decolonial models, participants can see that leadership is not about fitting into a rigid, patriarchal mould but about expanding what counts. A transformative leadership becomes a practice of care, inclusion, and community accountability. Lived experience, cultural knowledge, and relational ways of being are powerful forms of leadership, which are seen as a practice rooted in collective action, reflection, and transformation, not individual authority.

Decolonial Framework

Colonial Leadership	Decolonial Leadership
Hierarchical, top-down decision-making <i>Example:</i> CEO makes all key decisions without consulting staff.	Horizontal, shared decision-making <i>Example:</i> Community councils where decisions are made collectively with input from all members.
Individual authority and recognition <i>Example:</i> Leader's name and image are promoted as the "face" of the organization.	Collective recognition and responsibility <i>Example:</i> Group achievements celebrated without singling out one person as the sole leader.
Separation from community and culture <i>Example:</i> Policies and strategies designed without considering local traditions or values.	Deep connection to community and culture <i>Example:</i> Decisions guided by Elders' teachings and aligned with community cultural protocols.
Emphasis on control and efficiency <i>Example:</i> Prioritizing deadlines and output over relationships and well-being.	Emphasis on relationships and well-being <i>Example:</i> Taking time to build trust before starting a project, even if it delays timelines.
Power concentrated in few hands <i>Example:</i> Small executive group holds all decision-making power.	Power distributed and inclusive <i>Example:</i> Rotating leadership roles so more voices can influence decisions.

Notes:

Activity 3: Applied Practice in Leadership Scenarios

- You will go into a breakout room with a small group.
- Circle the scenario from below that your group is assigned to discuss.

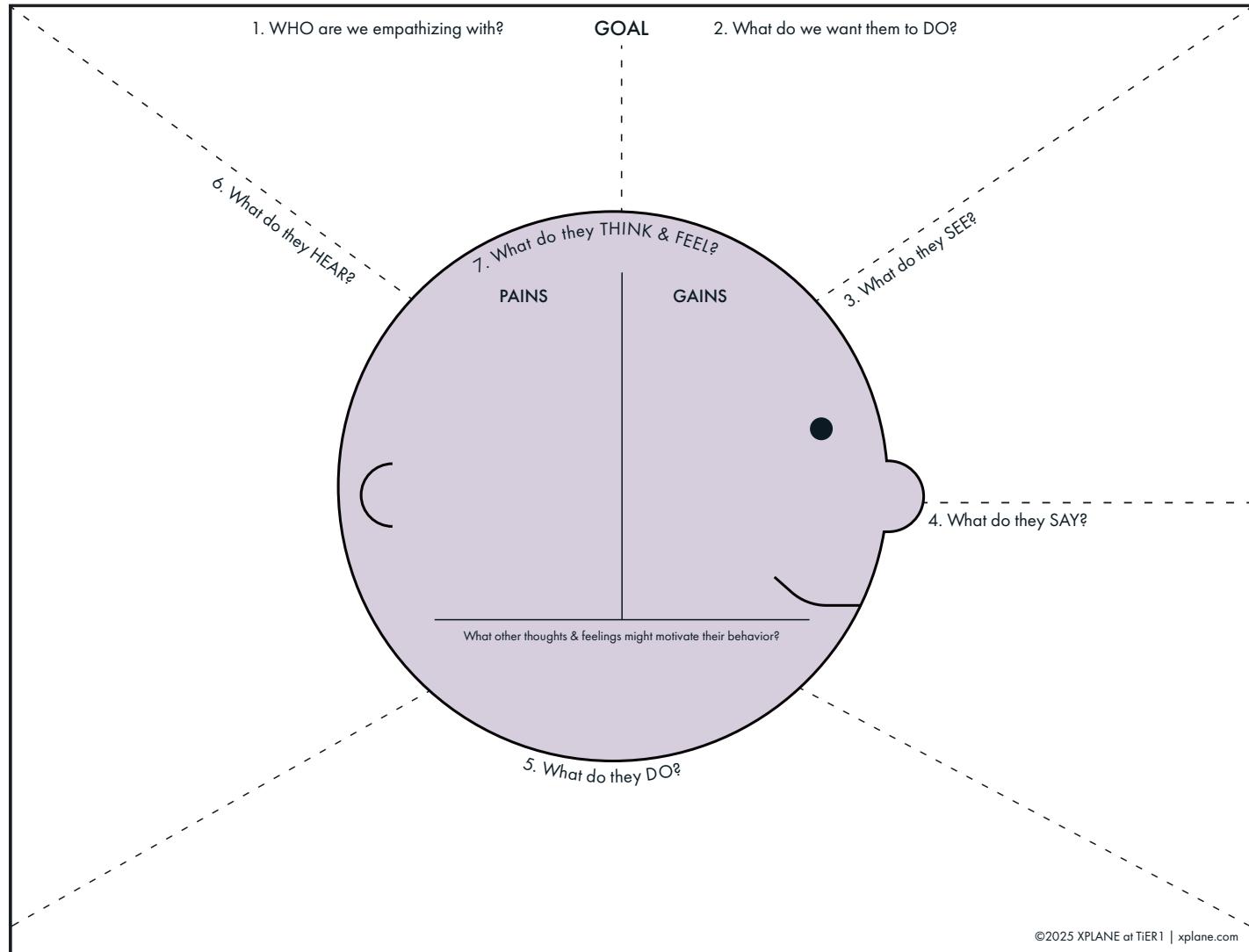
Scenarios:

1. You are in a workplace meeting where decisions are being made quickly. An Indigenous colleague's suggestions are dismissed or talked over, because they are making the process take too long.
2. In a grassroots women's group, one or two women (often mothers or Elders) are doing most of the unpaid organizing work, while others attend but rarely contribute.
3. A colleague insists that the group begin every event with a land acknowledgement, but treats it as a quick formality without meaningful connection.
4. A local organization is hiring for a leadership role. The posting requires a graduate degree and 10 years of "formal leadership experience." Several strong community leaders without formal education are excluded.
5. A city council organizes a consultation about housing, but it's scheduled during working hours, in English only, with no childcare, transportation or food provided.
6. During a planning session, a participant says, "We just need one strong leader to take charge," clearly referencing the stereotypical "white man in a suit."

- In your breakout room:
 - Brainstorm approaches using decolonial, intersectional, and community-based strategies as they apply in your scenario.
 - **What problem-solving actions can be taken?** *There is no right or wrong answer, nor do they need to be elaborated. The goal is to get you thinking about applying what you have learned.*

Skills for Transformative Leadership

Use this empathy map to understand the underlying motivations of your people, customers, or partners, so that you can design solutions that meet their true needs.



1. WHO are we empathizing with?

- Who is the person we want to understand?
- What is the situation they are in?
- What is their role in the situation?

2. What do we want them to DO?

- What do they need to do differently?
- What job(s) do they want or need to get done?
- What decision(s) do they need to make?
- How will we know they were successful?

3. What do they SEE?

- What do they see in the marketplace?
- What do they see in their immediate environment?
- What do they see others saying?
- What do they see others doing?
- What are they watching or reading?

4. What are they SAYING?

- What have we heard them say?
- What can we imagine them saying?

5. What do they DO?

- What do they do today?
- What behaviour have we observed?
- What can we imagine them doing?

6. What do they HEAR?

- What are they hearing others say?
- What are they hearing from friends?
- What are they hearing from colleagues?
- What are they hearing second-hand?

7. What do they THINK & FEEL?

PAINS: What are their fears, frustrations, and anxieties?

GAINS: What are their wants, needs, hopes, and dreams?

©2025 XPLANE at TiER1 | xplane.com

Key Takeaways

Leadership takes many forms and goes beyond titles or roles.

Each person's leadership journey is unique and worth recognizing.

Decolonial models guide more equitable ways of leading and relating.

Reflexivity is a practical tool for accountability and growth.

Closing the session

Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles - **Hidden or Buried Bundles**

Bédard tells how women sometimes had to hide or bury their bundles during colonization. Many of us have also felt pressure to hide parts of our leadership to fit in, such as our skills, voices, or cultural practices.

- Think about something you have had to hide. Write this on a new card and place it in your bundle.

Reflection Questions

- What patterns of silencing do you notice in your own life?
- What would it look like to reclaim these hidden parts of your leadership?

Resources and Tools

Enström, R. (2019). Indigenous collaboration for leadership development: a Canadian example. Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development.

Green, J. (Ed.). (2020). Making space for Indigenous feminism. Fernwood Publishing

Hardy, B. J., Lesperance, A., Foote, I., Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN), Firestone, M., & Smylie, J. (2020). Meeting Indigenous youth where they are at: knowing and doing with 2SLGBTQQIA and gender non-conforming Indigenous youth: a qualitative case study. BMC Public Health, 20(1), 1871.

Indigenous youth and international development: a decolonial analysis of Canada's International Aboriginal Youth Internship programme (article):

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/indigenous-youth-and-international-development-a-decolonial-analysis-of-canadas-621564/>

Learning resources about First Nations, Inuit and Métis across Canada (website):

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1621447127773/1621447157184>

Calls for justice (website)

https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf

Calls for TRC (document):

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf

Gender & Sexuality - Edugraphics (website):

<https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/edugraphics/>

Indigenous Women's Circle Members (website):

<https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/indigenous-peoples-gender-equality/indigenous-womens-circle.html>

'Elect Her!' The Northern BC Push to Get More Women on Councils (news article):

<https://thetyee.ca/News/2022/09/30/Elect-Her-Northern-BC-Push-Women-Councils/>

Kitimat and Smithers team up to attract more women to local governments in northwest B.C. (news article):

<https://www.thenorthernview.com/news/kitimat-and-smithers-team-up-to-attract-more-women-to-local-governments-in-northwest-b-c-5994898>

Considerations for developing a gender equity and inclusion municipal strategy (website):

<https://fcm.ca/en/resources/women-in-local-government/2022-research/municipal-strategies>

An Indigenous Feminist Commemoration of Canada 150 (YouTube):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hr90KOKD_bg

CBC documentaries - Indigenous Stories (YouTube Playlist):

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyBdAUI4LX9jeCbaI0PkxNuoYGPBLo_Sj

True North Aid (website):

https://truenorthaid.ca/project/moon-time-connections/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23032780283&gbraids=0AAAAAADAAcBUw9sY9vk88rFkFzumzp9oPI&gclid%20=Cj0KCQjwl5jHBhDHARIIsAB0YqjwZ5BUsUH76h_ZYLD_2HMXOI0bFAMXI8BMgJf-dywtf15MuTUfRLWEaAiZXEALw_wcB

Daring to be different as Indigenous entrepreneurs (Radio):

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/1.7089368>

MODULE 3

Training & Mentorship in Fundraising and Feminist Grant Making

*Organization / Affiliation:
Positive Living North*

Outline

1. Land and language acknowledgement

2. Safety cues and cultural grounding

See grounding & Cultural Safety on [page 3.4](#).

3. Session overview and learning objectives

Review the session overview and learning objectives of the module found on [page 3.5](#).

4. Glossary in plain language - Key themes and talking points

Key concepts outlined on [page 3.6](#).

- ▷ **Activity 1 - Community Mapping for Fundraising**
- ▷ **Activity 2 - Storytelling Circle for Proposals**

5. Conclusion & Key Takeaways

Review the key takeaways on [page 3.16](#).

6. Closing the Session: Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles

See [page 3.17](#) for further explanation.

7. Resource List

Review the resource list available on [page 3.18](#).

Land and language acknowledgement

“ This gave me the strength to be empathetic and compassionate and to still be curious and to ask questions. And rebellious. And to learn, to live the experiences of other people, and to be sort of, ‘this is my story, and I’d love to hear yours’. So that is the leader I want to be. ”

Decolonized evaluation

Using community-defined outcomes instead of only funder metrics.

Cultural Grounding and Community Wisdom

Indigenous concepts in reporting

Respecting knowledge protocols and recognizing data as relational.

Lived experience as expertise

Treating stories of poverty, migration, racism, sexism or resilience as leadership, with consent and reciprocity.

Care economy & gendered time

Budgeting for what is most relevant to insure participation.

Applying GBA+

Asking "Who benefits?
Who is excluded?"
across intersections.

Session Overview

This module will discuss and reframe fundraising and grant-making as practices of care and equity, social justice, and community resilience, not just technical skills. Fundraising and grants shape whose stories are heard, whose needs are met, and whose futures are funded. Yet women, especially Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, and 2SLGBTQIA+ women, often navigate barriers where their leadership and community work are undervalued or unpaid. Participants will learn how to identify fundraising opportunities and build networks among communities and organizations. They will explore how to use storytelling to create strong and ethical proposal narratives, and how to approach the techniques and technicalities of budgets and reporting with clarity and accountability.

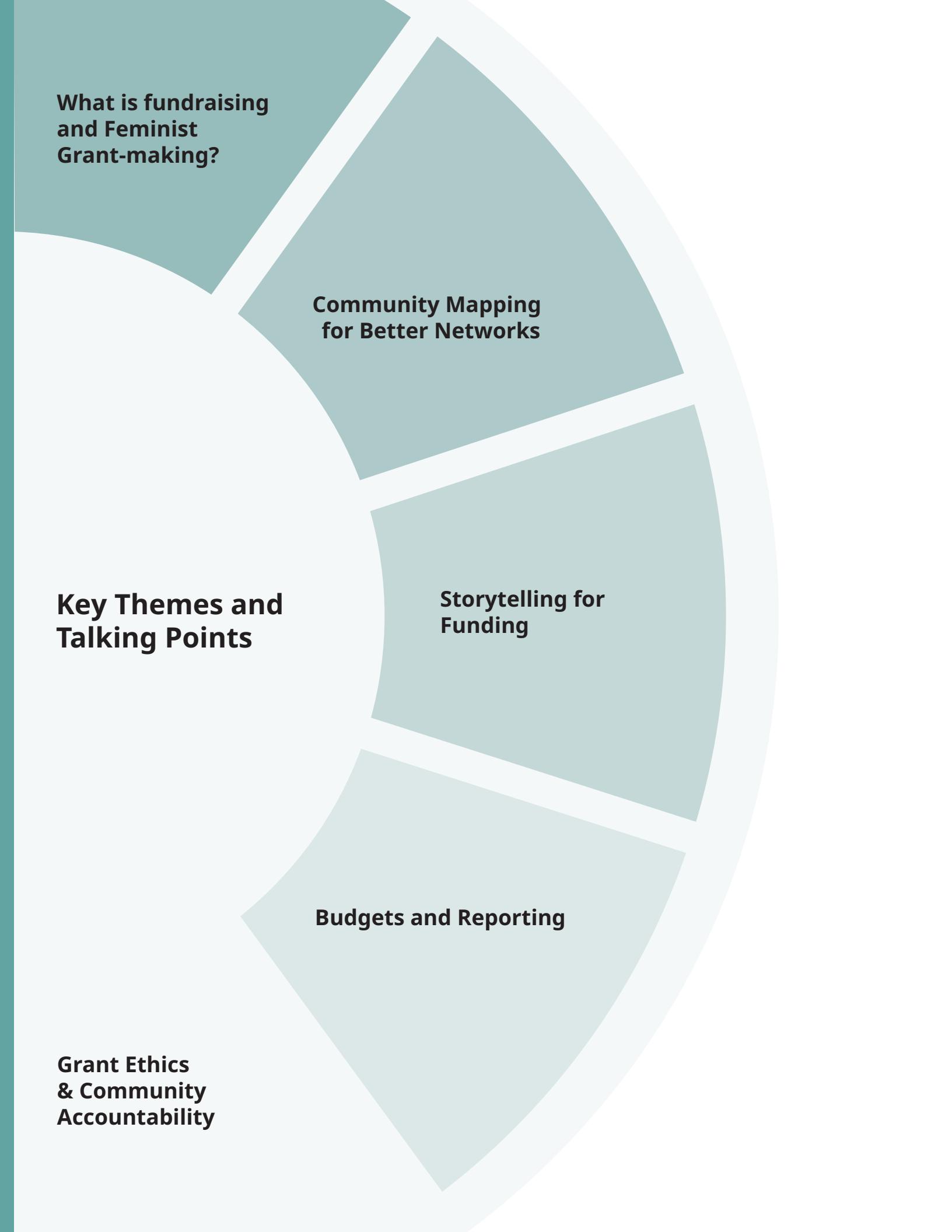
The session connects fundraising to broader structural issues such as the care economy, the feminization of poverty, and the gendered division of labour that undervalues women's work. It will also show how intersectional analysis identifies who is most excluded when funding systems remain patriarchal or colonial. Through feminist and decolonial frameworks, fundraising becomes a way to move resources ethically, centre lived and living experience as expertise, and build solidarity networks. Budgets and reports are treated as practical accountability tools that align values, activities, and resources; include real participation costs such as childcare, food, translation, and honoraria; and ensure transparency for both funders and communities.

By the end, participants will see how gender-responsive budgeting, attention to gendered time, and intersectional analysis help ensure that fundraising and grant-making redistribute power, strengthen community accountability, and support leadership that is already present in everyday spaces of care, organizing, and resistance. Grounded in grant ethics, transparency, and community feedback, this session will discuss how grant-making can be a site of transformation.

Session Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Map community support, networks, and funder databases to identify fundraising opportunities.
- Write proposal narratives that ethically use lived and living experience, with attention to consent, co-authorship, and respect to cultural protocol.
- Build simple, gender-responsive budgets and reports aligned with community needs and values.
- Strengthen transparency and grant ethics by designing community feedback and accountability systems.



What is fundraising and Feminist Grant-making?

Community Mapping for Better Networks

Storytelling for Funding

Budgets and Reporting

Key Themes and Talking Points

Grant Ethics & Community Accountability

a. What is Fundraising and Feminist Grant-making?

Fundraising reproduces privilege unless checked. Fundraising and feminist grant-making is not just “seeking money” but redirecting resources to where they are most needed: women’s leadership, caregiving, grassroots organizing, and community survival, attempting to redistribute power through transparency, shared authority, and ethical practice. To do that, it identifies where money currently is, and finds ways to shift it toward women, marginalized groups, and community-led initiatives. It challenges colonial and patriarchal systems by:

- Applying a gender lens to every line item by asking: Who benefits? Who is left out?
- Requiring equity, cultural safety, and accountability in both proposals and funder relationships;
- Ensuring priorities are defined by communities themselves, not external institutions;
- Funding activities that sustain well-being (care, cultural practices, mutual aid), not just quantitative results.

To do this, it must address the gendered division of labour and care economy so budgets and proposals recognize and value women’s unpaid or underpaid work in caregiving, community organizing, and cultural survival.

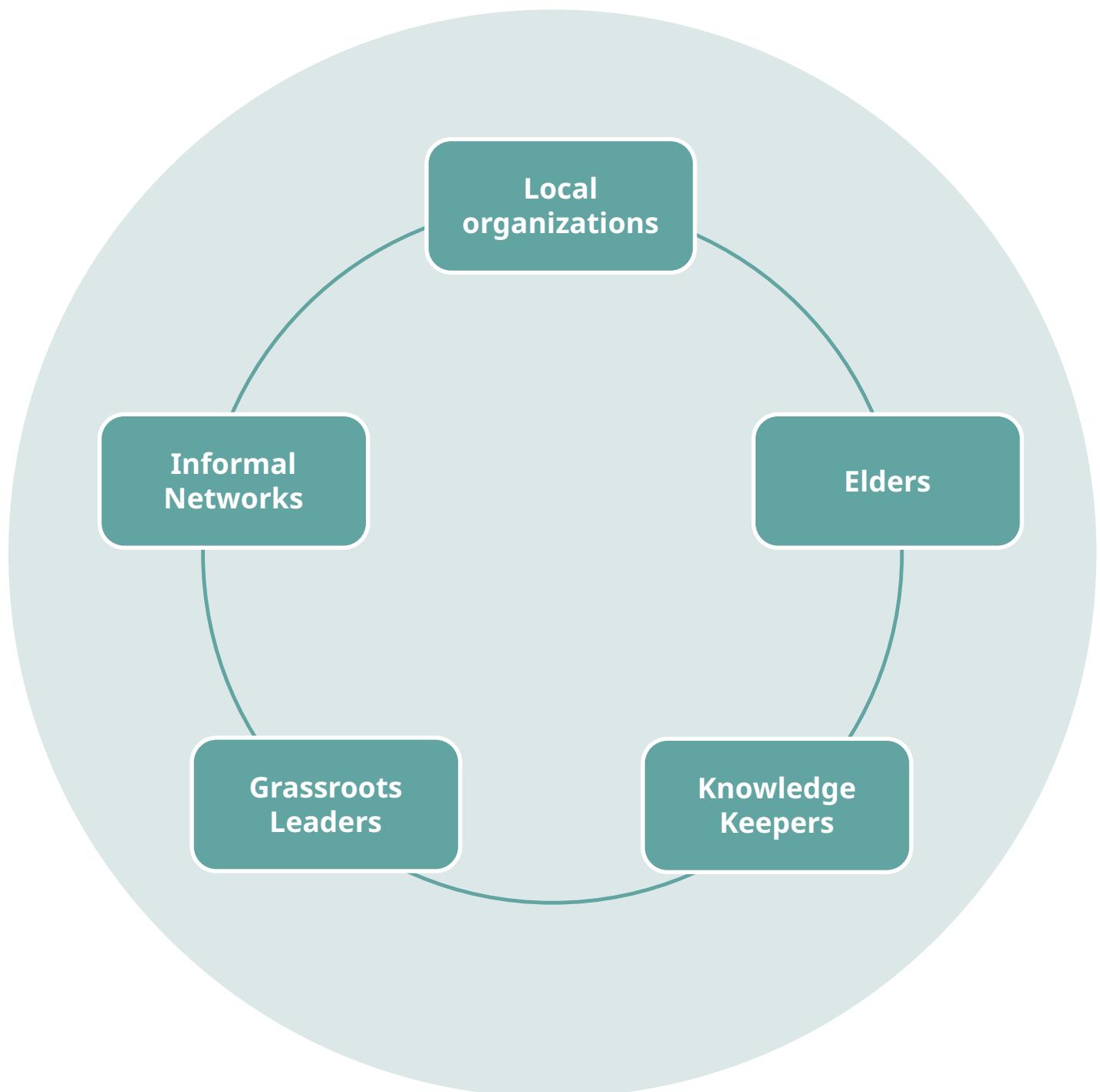
Proposals can budget for invisible labour, which means including resources for childcare, elder care, food, translation, accessibility, and honoraria. Refusing to separate these costs from “real project costs” highlights that they are essential for participation.

b. Community Mapping for Better Networks

The goal is to identify the people, organizations, Elders, knowledge keepers, and grassroots groups already contributing to community well-being and work on building relationships with them. This is done by mapping assets, gaps, and overlaps to strengthen community resilience and avoid duplication. This process shows where resources already flow, where gaps exist, and how to build stronger collaborations. Mapping also exposes the feminization of poverty and how care responsibilities limit access to traditional funding systems.

Practical step: create a simple visual map (names, roles, assets, connections) to include in proposals as evidence of capacity and partnership.

Activity 1: Community Mapping for Fundraising Mapping



Budget Comparison: Traditional vs. Feminist

Traditional Budget	Feminist/Inclusive Budget
Venue \$500	Venue \$500
Materials (printing, supplies) \$300	Materials (printing, supplies) \$300
Refreshments \$200	Refreshments & full meals \$600
Staff time \$1,000	Staff time \$1,000
-	Childcare staff during event \$400
-	Elder/Knowledge Keeper honoraria \$300
-	Translation/interpretation services \$500
-	Travel support (gas cards, bus tickets) for Highway 16 participants \$400
-	Accommodation support for remote/rural participants \$350
Total \$2,000	Total \$4,350

c. Storytelling for Funding

a. Using lived and living experiences in proposals:

Stories demonstrate real impact and community need. They make proposals powerful, but must be used ethically: asking consent, protecting confidentiality, and ensuring storytellers benefit from the process.

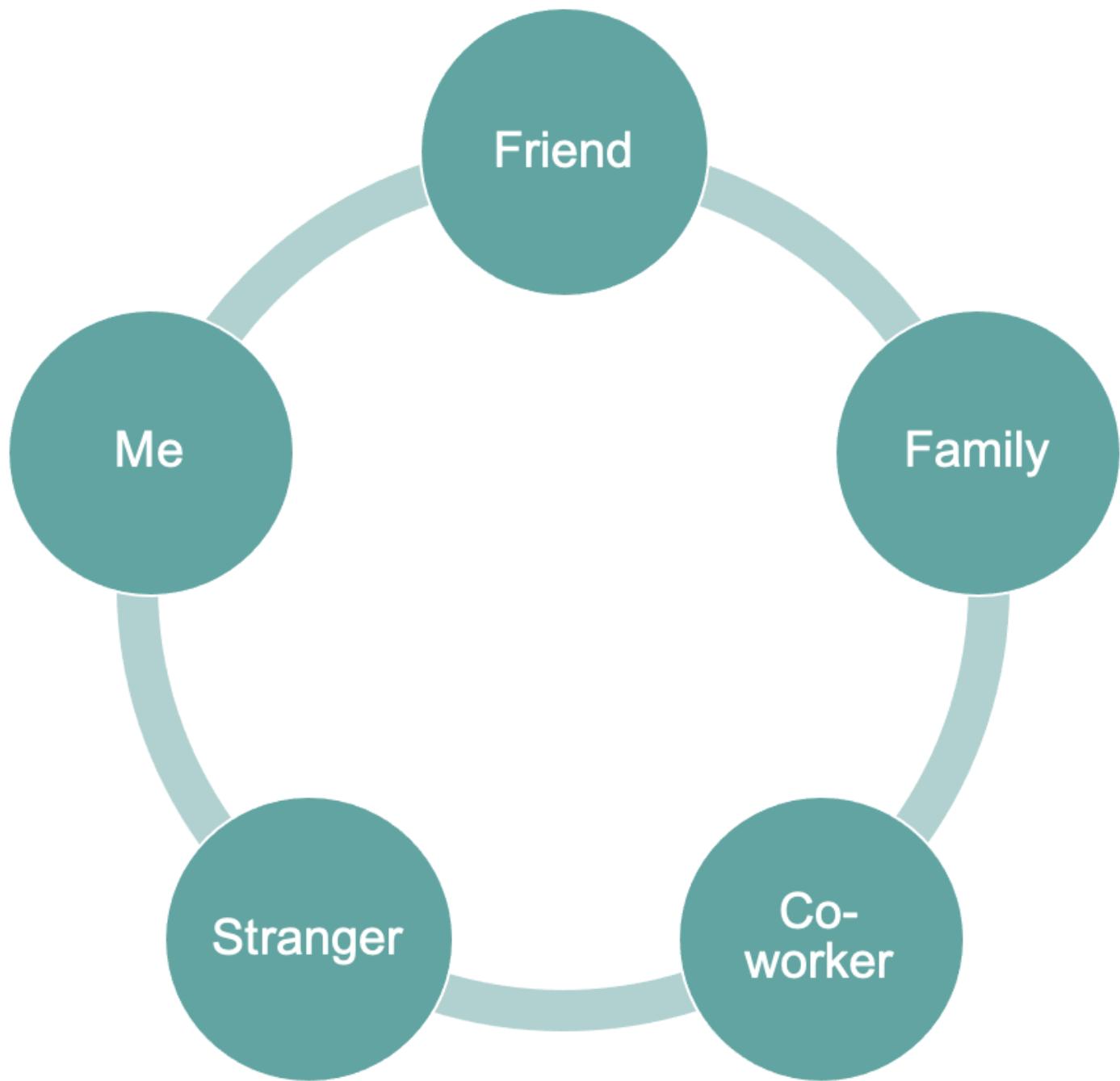
Stories should reflect intersectionality: show how overlapping factors (race, class, Indigeneity, migration, disability, sexuality) shape community needs.

b. Consultation and co-authorship:

Involving Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members as co-authors when their knowledge or stories are central.

Practical step: budget honoraria, credit co-authors, and include a section in the proposal that names consultation and shared authorship as part of the methodology. For example, instead of just pulling a quote from a woman's story, invite her to co-shape the narrative, review drafts, and decide how her words are represented.

Activity 2 - Storytelling Circle for Proposals to practice ethical storytelling for funding.



d. Budgets and Reporting

a. Budget as accountability tools:

Budgets must align with values, activities, and resources and include real participation costs. Gender-responsive budgeting reveals structural inequalities and helps reallocate resources to close gaps.

Practical step: be explicit about how funds will be used, who decides, and how accountability will flow back to communities. Grant proposals can include feedback loops (e.g., community meetings, surveys, circles) and positionality statements to show awareness of power and privilege, and how these will be mitigated.

Example from practice: At an international forum in an eastern African country, our group included women from many countries, so interpretation was provided in English, French, and Spanish. But local women spoke Swahili and other regional languages. We decided to budget for local translation and narrowed the topics to make interpretation into multiple languages manageable. Another women's group chose to hold sessions only in English, saying it was simpler, but this immediately excluded local women from participating. The difference showed how budgeting and planning directly shape who gets to be heard and who is silenced.

b. Reporting practices:

- Deliverables and timelines must be clear and realistic, but also culturally sensitive, respecting seasonal harvesting and hunting, salmon runs or fishing seasons, religious observances (e.g., Ramadan, Easter, powwows, solstice), and the practical limits of rural/remote contexts like weather or road conditions.
- Reports should balance funder requirements with accountability to communities. Outcomes, outputs, numbers, and metrics all matter, but budgets should also include knowledge translation, with plain language summaries, visuals, or community workshops that make results locally relevant and accessible.

Practical step: rigid metrics (e.g., number of participants) can be complemented by with relational ones (e.g., participants felt safe, cultural practices were respected).

- It is important to connect to the idea of gendered time: women's unpaid care work often limits availability, so reporting systems must account for this.

e. Grant Ethics & Community Accountability: Ensuring transparency and reciprocity with communities

a. Ethics and transparency:

- Community members must see direct benefits and be involved in decision-making.

Practical step: you can test your reporting format with a community member first; if it's unclear to them, it may not be accountable.

- Funding must be transparent, reciprocal, and accountable to the community, not just to funders. This means keeping information easy to understand: not everyone is comfortable with spreadsheets or large numbers, and some may feel embarrassed or too busy to ask questions.

Practical step: use plain language, visuals, and community-friendly formats so people can engage without barriers.

b. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E):

- Move beyond funder-imposed metrics; use decolonized and participatory evaluation frameworks that include community-defined outcomes.

Practical step: ask communities to define success, use participatory tools such as circles, storytelling, photovoice, or mapping instead of only surveys and spreadsheets.

- Report back results in accessible ways.

Practical step: use plain language, visuals, community gatherings so evaluation closes the loop.

- M&E should make space for trauma-informed reflection.

Practical step: allow anonymous feedback, offer options to "pass," and ensure evaluation activities don't re-trigger harm and extraction.

c. Cultural Sensitivity, Confidentiality and Consent

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Respect protocols around knowledge sharing. For example, some stories, ceremonies, or names cannot be published without permission or may only be shared in specific contexts.
Practical step: build these rules into proposals and agreements.
- **Confidentiality:** Protect community members from harm or exposure.
Practical step: anonymize data, when necessary; use secure storage for sensitive information; and be clear about who will see the information.
- **Consent:** Go beyond a one-time signature. Consent must be informed, ongoing, and revocable. People should be able to change their minds later about how their story, data, or image is used.
Practical step: instead of asking community members to sign a generic consent form, walk through what the project will involve, who will access their information, and how results will be shared.

Key Takeaways

Fundraising can redirect resources toward equity and justice.

Opportunities should be identified through community mapping and funder databases.

Story and lived experience are valid evidence in proposals when shared with consent and co-authorship.

Gender-responsive budgets must cover the real costs of participation.

Reporting should be transparent and accessible in community-friendly formats.

Evaluation is decolonized and culturally grounded when it centres community-defined outcomes, accountability, and reciprocity.

Closing the session

Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles | Adding Teachings

Our bundles also carry teachings that guide how we live and lead. Choose one of the Seven Grandmother Gifts described in the Annex (humility, honesty, respect, courage, wisdom, truth, love). This teaching can take any form that feels true to you: a written word, a drawing, a found object, a sound, a movement or a feeling.

- Add this to your bundle as a reminder of how you want to embody that teaching in your leadership.

Reflection

- Which teaching feels most urgent in your leadership right now?

- How could carrying this teaching change the way you share resources, mentor others, or tell stories?

Resources and Tools

Gillespie, E., & Fletcher, B. J. (2024). *Feminism, Foundations, and Social Change: Understanding Women's Philanthropic Nonprofits*. *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration*, 2(2), 103-135.

Feminist Philanthropy by Canadian Women's Foundation (website):

<https://canadianwomen.org/our-work/learn-about-funding/>

Canadian Women's Foundation: Principles for Feminist Funding (document):

<https://equalityfund.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Feminist-Philanthropy-EN.pdf>

A Guide to Gender-Responsive Budgeting (article):

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/rough-guide-to-gender-responsive-budgeting-620429/>

What is gender-responsive budgeting? (website):

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/what-is-gender-responsive-budgeting>

Feminist Economics (website):

<https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/videos/feminist-economics>

Feminist Economy as a Political Tool for the World March of Women (article):

<https://capiremov.org/en/analysis/feminist-economy-as-a-political-tool-for-the-world-march-of-women/>

Socialize Care, Change the Economy (article):

<https://capiremov.org/en/analysis/socialize-care-change-the-economy/>

A glass ceiling - or a broken ladder? (YouTube - BBC News):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk1K1dHgXi4>

Who Cares: Unpaid care work, poverty and women's / girl's human rights (YouTube - Institute of Development Studies):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWW858gQHoE>

Women's Budget Group (YouTube Channel):

www.youtube.com/@womensbudgetgroup

Fundraising Resources, Global Fund for Women (website):

<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/apply-for-a-grant/fundraising-resources/>

Feminist International Assistance Gender Equality Toolkit for Projects, Government of Canada (website):

https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/gender_equality_toolkit-trousse_outils_egalite_genres.aspx?lang=eng

Why Indigenous people are fighting for data sovereignty (article):

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/why-indigenous-people-are-fighting-for-data-sovereignty-1.7158508>

MODULE 4

Creating a Safe Space: Practices for Safety, Consent, and Cultural Respect

*Organization / Affiliation:
Takla Nation, Nak'azdli Whut'en,
and Positive Living North*

Outline

1. Land and language acknowledgement

2. Safety cues and cultural grounding

See Cultural Ground & Safety on [page 4.4](#).

3. Session overview and learning objectives

Review the session overview and learning objectives of the module found on [page 4.5](#).

4. Activity 1: Defining Safety and Belonging

See [page 4.6](#) for activity worksheet.

5. Glossary in plain language - Key themes and talking points

Key concepts are presented on [page 4.8](#).

6. Conclusion & Key Takeaways

Review the key takeaways on [page 4.18](#).

7. Closing the Session: Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles

See [page 4.19](#) for further explanation.

8. Resource List

Review the resources and tools available on [page 4.20](#).

Land and language acknowledgement

“ 100% of the Indigenous people we see in our organization were affected somehow by residential schools. So, when I move through my journey, I just try to think of creating safe spaces for people to heal, uplift each other and celebrate having survived such atrocities. And to keep talking about it so it does not happen again. ”

Cultural Grounding and Community Wisdom

This session is grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and being, guided by local Elders, land, language, and kinship systems.

Safety is understood through relational accountability, where knowledge is shared with respect for ways of life and lived experience is recognized as expertise.

Participants are invited to bring their own cultural teachings and practices, making the space collective rather than individual.

Cultural grounding also requires **honest reflection** on positionality in a settler colonial state. Even racialized newcomers can be settlers here, and acknowledging both where we are and where we come from ensures acknowledgements are embodied, not performative.

Session Overview

Creating a safe space is the foundation for sustainable leadership. Safety is not only about physical environments but about having a place to return to, heal, and regroup. This place can be emotional, cultural, or spiritual. Leadership becomes possible only when people feel grounded in trust, connection, and belonging. For Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, 2SLGBTQQIA+, disabled, and other marginalized women in Northern BC, this means spaces where trauma is acknowledged, care is prioritized, and structural barriers are addressed.

This session explores how safety, consent, and cultural respect make leadership possible by centring trauma-informed practices, meaningful land and language acknowledgements, and confidentiality protocols that protect and honour people's stories. It draws on Indigenous teachings of relational accountability, feminist practices of consent and collective care, and the lived realities of women balancing poverty, caregiving, while also confronting burnout or experiences of violence.

By linking safety to leadership, participants will reflect on how healing, cultural grounding, and accessibility are not "extras" but essential conditions for growth. Programs must build spaces that accommodate disability, language, and geography; promote intergenerational mentorship and peer support; and recognize that leadership is collective, not competitive. When safety is co-created, leadership grows stronger, more inclusive, and more sustainable, because leaders can and should bring others with them.

Session Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Define safety as cultural, emotional, spiritual, and structural, not only physical, and recognize why safety is essential for sustainable leadership.
- Apply trauma-informed principles to leadership spaces, avoiding re-traumatization and centring healing and care.
- Practice creating meaningful land and language acknowledgements that reflect respect, relationship, and community protocols.
- Implement consent and confidentiality practices that honour stories, protect identities, and prioritize participant dignity.
- Reflect on how to build inclusive and healing-centred environments of belonging and collective leadership that accommodate disability, language needs, and geographic barriers.

Activity 1: Defining Safety and Belonging

Group Activity

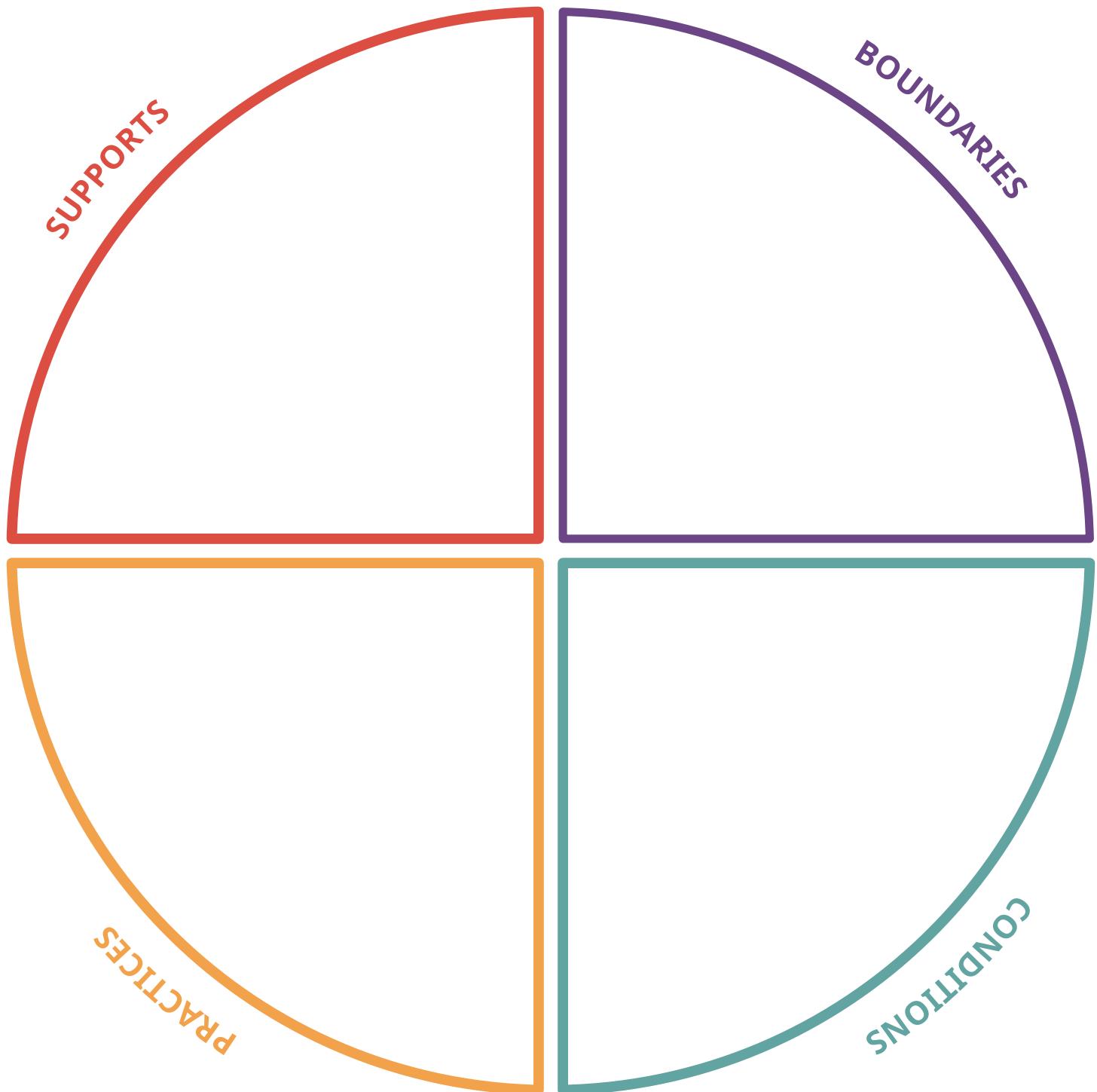
You will go into small group breakout rooms to discuss:

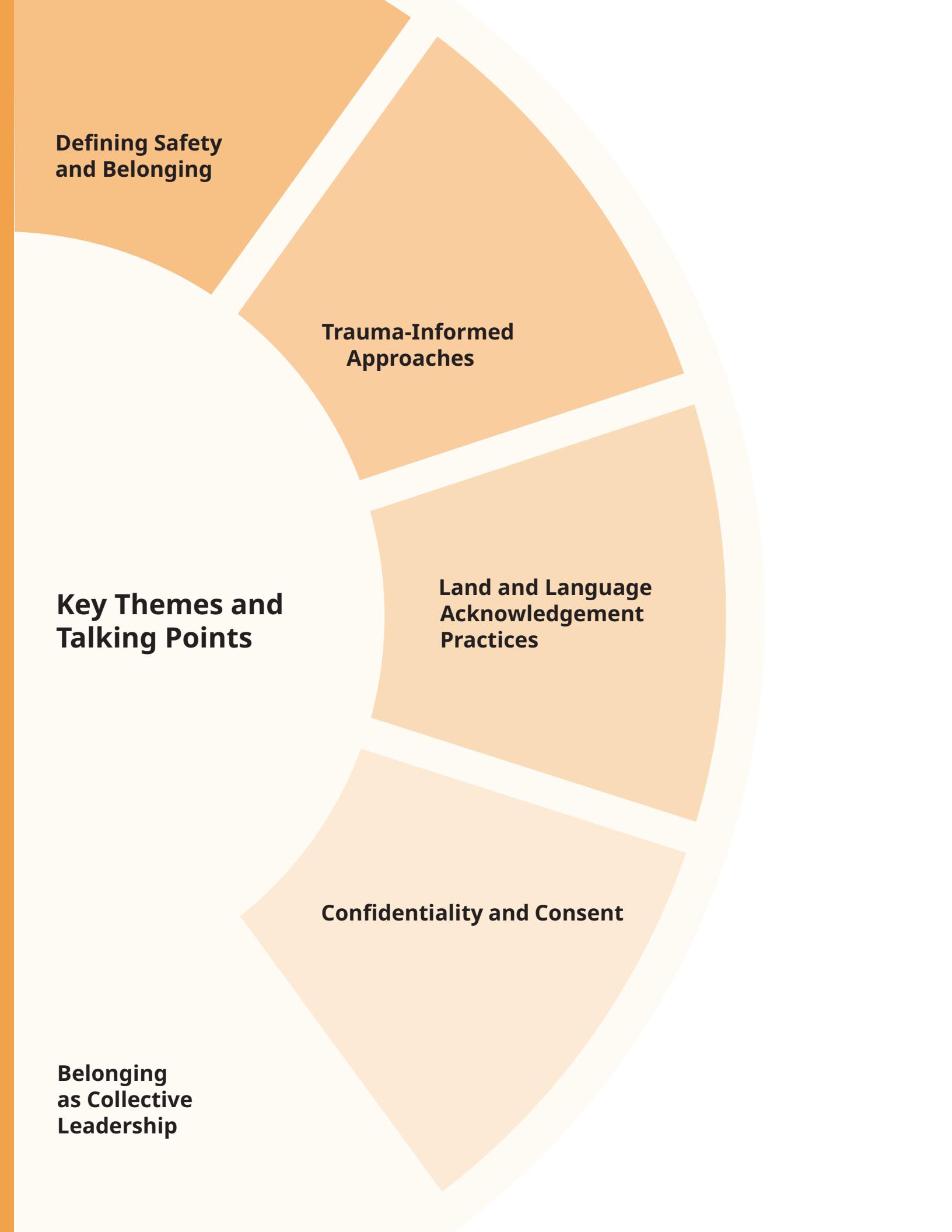
- “What does safety mean to me?”

My Safe Space Map

Instructions

1. In each quadrant, write or draw what you need to feel safe.
2. Be specific. This can include material supports (childcare, transportation), cultural practices (Elders present, ceremony), or boundaries (no photos, right to pass).
3. You may use words, symbols, or images.





**Defining Safety
and Belonging**

**Trauma-Informed
Approaches**

**Key Themes and
Talking Points**

**Land and Language
Acknowledgement
Practices**

Confidentiality and Consent

**Belonging
as Collective
Leadership**

a. Defining Safety and Belonging

Safety is multidimensional: cultural, spiritual, emotional, structural, and physical. For many Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and disabled women in Northern BC, safety means more than not being harmed. It includes having spaces to return where they can feel rooted, acknowledged, and supported. These are spaces that allow time for healing from trauma, for chosen family and community care, and for intergenerational safety. Leadership requires such spaces to “land and regroup,” because without belonging, leadership is unsustainable.

The dichotomous and colonial public and private divide helps us understand why women’s need for safe spaces has historically been ignored. Patriarchal systems devalue the so-called “private” domain of caregiving, healing, and community connection, treating it as outside politics and leadership. Yet it is precisely in these spaces that women’s leadership, as keepers of fires, often begins: around kitchen tables, in beading or healing circles, quilting together or through mutual aid. Recognizing safety and belonging as political and collective challenges this divide, recasting what has been dismissed as “private” as vital to leadership and social transformation.

Safe Space & Belonging: What It Looks Like in Practice

Barriers to Safety & Belonging	Ways to Build Belonging
Venue or session not accessible (stairs, no childcare, no online option).	Choose accessible spaces, provide childcare, food, and hybrid options.
Only dominant voices/languages used.	Budget for interpretation, translation, or plain-language materials.
Group agreements not clear.	Co-create ground rules (e.g., respect, confidentiality, right to pass).
Participants feel isolated or “the only one”.	Use small groups, peer support, or intergenerational mentorship.
Competition over leadership roles.	Emphasize collective growth, not individual advancement.

b. Trauma-Informed Approaches

Trauma can be understood as the emotional, psychological, spiritual, or physical response to events or conditions that overwhelm a person's ability to cope. It is not only an individual experience but also collective and intergenerational, passed down through families and communities. In Northern BC, trauma takes many forms: the legacy of residential schools, child apprehension policies, racism in institutions, violence in homes and workplaces, and the ongoing stress of poverty and isolation. The impacts of trauma are wide-ranging: difficulty trusting others, hypervigilance, withdrawal, exhaustion, and feelings of shame or disconnection. For many, trauma is also triggered by systemic conditions, like inaccessible services, being silenced in meetings, or having caregiving responsibilities disregarded. These impacts can prevent participation in leadership unless they are acknowledged and addressed.

Trauma-informed practice does not mean avoiding difficult topics; it means creating conditions where people can engage, while acknowledging these realities and seeking to prevent re-harm. This includes embedding choice, consent, and pacing into every activity, offering grounding practices, and respecting the right to pass. It also requires addressing structural issues that affect how safe and accessible leadership programs feel. This resonates with feminist pedagogy, a critique of education and leadership training models that reproduce oppressive dynamics, by emphasizing reflexivity, inclusion of lived experience, and the disruption of dominant norms about authority and performance. It transforms learning spaces from sites of extraction (where stories and knowledge are taken without reciprocity) to sites of empowerment and collective healing. Trauma-informed leadership training is therefore not only about individual coping but also about reshaping institutional practices that have historically silenced marginalized women.

Trauma-Informed Leadership: Spotting and Responding

Signs of Trauma's	Ways to Respond as a Facilitator or Peer
Withdrawal, silence, or avoiding participation.	Normalize the right to pass, offer multiple ways to contribute (writing, small groups).
Hypervigilance (appearing tense, anxious, jumpy).	Use grounding activities (breathing, noticing the room), keep clear agendas shared beforehand to avoid surprises.
Emotional flooding (crying, anger, shutdown).	Pause the activity, acknowledge emotions, provide breaks, and offer follow-up support.
Difficulty trusting or speaking up.	Build safety slowly: set group agreements, emphasize confidentiality, and follow through consistently.
Fatigue or burnout (missing sessions, exhaustion).	Adjust pace, reduce demands, validate competing responsibilities (caregiving, work).

Activity 2: Trauma-Informed Story Sharing

You will go into paired breakout rooms to share a brief lived experience of a time you felt supported in a difficult moment or wished support had been available.

Notes:

c. Land and Language Acknowledgement Practices

Land acknowledgements are often criticized as performative when reduced to standard phrases without accountability. Within a feminist and decolonial framework, acknowledgements must be relational: rooted in knowledge of local territories and languages, guided by Elders and matriarchs, and connected to structural commitments. This can include budgeting for translation, recognizing Indigenous governance systems, and supporting the return of decision-making power and authority to those historically excluded.

Embodied acknowledgement also requires honest reflexivity about positionality in a settler colonial state, posing the question: what do we bring as mostly uninvited guests, and how are we part of the problem? This reflection is not about guilt or defensiveness, but about recognizing complicity without taking offence or feeling attacked. Even as racialized or marginalized newcomers, immigrants, or refugees – who may be far from the figure of the white settler – we still exist as settlers on these lands. That reality is challenging and requires ongoing, honest conversations about living and leading responsibly here.

Land and language acknowledgements should go beyond simply stating where we are; they should also acknowledge where we come from, the languages, histories, and experiences each woman brings into the conversation, and how these shape relationships. By situating presence and histories, acknowledgements become a practice of accountability and relationship-building, not a performance.

The concept of decolonization helps us see acknowledgement as more than recognition, as a structural change. Decolonial practices insist on centring Indigenous epistemologies and ceremonies, disrupting settler colonial logics that separate land from people and leadership from care. By intentionally disrupting these scripts, whether about land, gender, or sexuality, we open space for inclusive, respectful, and accountable leadership rooted in cultural continuity rather than colonial authority.

Land & Language Acknowledgement: From Performative to Relational

Signs of Performative Acknowledgement	Ways to Make It Relational
Script read without context or feeling.	Learn Nation names, languages, and ways of life; speak with intention.
No involvement of Indigenous voices.	Invite Elders/Knowledge Keepers, include local languages.
No follow-up action.	Pair acknowledgement with commitments (budget, authority, governance).
Focus only on “where we are”.	Also reflect on where we come from and what languages/histories we bring.
Treated as “extra” or optional.	Make it part of how every meeting, event, or report begins.

Activity 3: Writing your own meaningful Land & Language Acknowledgement

Ask yourself:

- » Where am I?
- » Whose territory is this?
- » Who guides or has guided me here (Elders, teachers, community)?
- » Where do I come from and what languages, histories, or responsibilities do I bring with me?
- » What commitments can I make to live these words, not just say them?

Notes:

d. Confidentiality and Consent

Holding space with intention means recognizing that when people share their stories, they offer something deeply personal, often shaped by trauma, resilience, and cultural knowledge. The responsibility, then, extends beyond getting consent to creating an environment where consent and confidentiality are lived practices of respect and care. This may require slowing down, being transparent about how information will be used, and inviting others to set their own boundaries.

Consent in safe spaces must be more than a checkbox or a form. It is informed (participants clearly understand what they are agreeing to), ongoing (they can revisit and change their choice at any time), and revocable (they can withdraw consent without penalty). Confidentiality goes beyond protecting names on paper: it means safeguarding stories, data, and identities in ways that honour cultural ways of life, trauma-informed ethics, and relational accountability. This includes plain-language agreements, repeated check-ins, and options for anonymity or co-ownership of stories.

Within this perspective, storytelling is not simply “data.” Stories are gifts of lived knowledge and must be treated with reciprocity: when someone shares their experience, they should be able to see how it is valued, represented, and carried forward in the work. An empty idea of empowerment risks reducing consent to an individual responsibility (“she signed the form, so she consented”) without addressing systemic pressures that shape choice. For consent to be meaningful, structural supports may be required, such as translation, mental health resources, time for reflection, and clear boundaries.

A transformative leadership should not extract stories for institutional use but affirm women’s agency to decide how, when, and whether their voices shape decisions. Safe spaces embody this by treating confidentiality and consent as relational commitments, not legal loopholes. Holding space with intention ensures that participants are protected and respected as knowledge holders whose dignity, safety, and autonomy guide the process.

Consent & Confidentiality: Holding Space with Intention

Risks to Consent & Confidentiality	Ways to Develop Safer Practices
Long, jargon-filled consent forms.	Use plain-language agreements; explain verbally.
Consent asked only once at the start.	Revisit consent throughout; normalize revoking.
Stories treated as “data” to extract.	Treat stories as gifts; check how they can or can’t be shared.
Photos or reports risk identifying people or communities.	Ask community permission; anonymize carefully; avoid if risk persists.
Pressure to disclose personal trauma.	Shift focus to structures and patterns; give the right to pass.

Activity 4: Brainstorming - Practicing Consent and Confidentiality

You will go into small breakout rooms to discussion one of the following scenarios using these prompts to guide your conversation:

- » What felt safe?
- » What did not?
- » How could it be improved?

Scenario 1: A facilitator hands out a long, jargon-filled consent form and asks participants to sign quickly before moving on. One person hesitates, unsure what they're agreeing to.

How could this be handled differently?

Scenario 2: A participant shares a personal story in confidence during a circle. A funder requests personal stories with names and pictures to make the report more meaningful.

What should happen?

Scenario 3: An Elder shares sacred teachings that are not meant to be recorded. Later, another participant wants to include the story in a funding report.

How does the facilitator respond?

Scenario 4: A newcomer woman is asked to share her migration story. She agrees, but later feels uncomfortable with how much she revealed.

How can the facilitator honour her right to revoke consent?

Scenario 5: Anonymous photos of a small, remote community are taken to illustrate a report. No individuals are shown, and names are not used. However, the setting is so specific that people familiar with the area can easily identify the community.

What risks does this pose? How could photos be used in ways that respect community confidentiality?

e. Belonging as Collective Leadership

Leadership thrives when embedded in belonging, not competition, emphasizing the importance of peer support, intergenerational mentorship, and cultural networks in reducing isolation.

Belonging ensures continuity of leadership: Elders supporting youth, women supporting newcomers, and leaders bringing others with them rather than climbing alone. This requires intentional practices: accommodations for disability, translation for newcomers, scheduling around caregiving, and providing material supports like food, childcare, and transportation.

Women disproportionately carry the burdens of unpaid care, precarious work, and advocacy without adequate support, which can lead to isolation and burnout when leadership is treated as an individual responsibility. Belonging disrupts this pattern by redistributing responsibility across networks, recognizing caregiving as leadership, and ensuring that leadership pathways make space for time, resources, and collective well-being. In this way, safe spaces are not neutral, but political acts that challenge structural inequality by creating environments where leadership can be sustained.

Notes:

Key Takeaways

Safety is dynamic, multidimensional, and co-created.

Trauma-informed practice protects and empowers participants.

Land and language acknowledgements must link to ongoing commitments and structural change.

Ethical space-holding centres consent, confidentiality, and cultural respect as relational commitments.

Belonging sustains leadership: rooted and supported leaders build collective strength.

Closing the session

Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles | **Building Belonging**

Adding Teachings

Bundles also hold medicines and responsibilities for protection and care. Safety and belonging are not extras but they are the ground that makes leadership possible.

- Add something to your bundle that represents what makes you feel safe enough to lead. This could be trust, translation, peer support, a cultural space, a teaching, or a daily practice that helps you feel held. You may write it, draw it, or find an object that carries this meaning.

Reflection

- What conditions make leadership sustainable for you?
- How could you bring these practices into the spaces where you work or lead?

Resources and Tools

Sample Consent & Culturally Sensitive Language

Land Acknowledgement Writing Template

Biana, H. T. (2021). Love as an act of resistance: Bell hooks on love. Love and friendship across cultures: Perspectives from east and west, 127-137.

Linklater, R. (2020). Decolonizing trauma work: Indigenous stories and strategies. Fernwood Publishing.

Maranzan, K. A., Sabourin, A., & Simard-Chicago, C. (2013). A Community-Based Leadership Development Program for First Nations Women. International Indigenous Policy Journal, 4(2), 1-12.

Trauma and violence-informed approaches to policy and practice - Govt. of Canada (website):

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/health-risks-safety/trauma-violence-informed-approaches-policy-practice.html>

Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) – Resources - BC Government (website):

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health/trauma-informed-practice-resources>

Trauma-Informed Classroom Strategies (workbook):

<https://web.unbc.ca/~loneill/classroomstrategiesmanual.pdf>

Trauma-Informed Practice (website):

<https://mytrainingbc.ca/traumainformedpractice/>

Indigenous Cultural Safety: Trauma-Informed Care (document):

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/accessing-health-care/assisted-living-registry/indigenous_cultural_safety_-trauma-informed_care.pdf

Mental Health and Wellness Supports - First Nation Health Authority (website):

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substancse-use/mental-health-and-wellness-supports>

Cultural Safety and Humily - First Nations Health Authority (website):

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/cultural-safety-and-humility>

Mental Health Support - First Nations Health Authority (document):

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-mental-health-and-wellness-supports-for-indigenous-people.pdf>

Territory Acknowledgements - First Nations Health Authority (information booklet):

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Territory-Acknowledgements-Information-Booklet.pdf>

Advocating for Indigenous Women and Girls in All Their Gender Diversity (website):

https://nwac.ca/assets-knowledge-centre/Traditional_Self-care_FactSheet_MEDICINE_WHEEL-03.pdf

Creating safe spaces in unexpected places (CBC radio audio file):

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/9.6658202>

Balancing our lives with Indigenous wellness practices (CBC radio audio file):

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/9.6649665>

Changing the conervation around menstruation (CBC radio audio file):

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/9.6685312>

How to be a good ancestor (CBC radio audio file):

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/9.6899627>

Trauma Informed care for Immigrants and Refugees (website):

<https://trauma-informed.ca/what-is-trauma/tic-for-immigrants-and-refugees/>

TIP Webinar 6 - Leadership Commitment (YouTube):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdlKFijU0c8>

Indigenous Trauma & Equity Informed Practice Facilitated by Len Pierre (YouTube):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8l3PJHVKCY>

“ My cultural background has taught me the importance of community, respect, and collaboration, which I apply in my leadership approach. It helps me foster inclusivity and understanding while working with diverse groups. ”

MODULE 5

Creating Allyship & Community Support Networks

Organization / Affiliation:
**Afro Caribbean Society of Northern
British Columbia (AFCAS NBC)**

Outline

1. Land and language acknowledgement

2. Safety cues and cultural grounding

See cultural grounding practices on [page 5.4](#).

3. Session overview and learning objectives

Session overview and learning objectives of the module found on [page 5.3](#).

4. Guided Circle – Stories of Allyship

5. Glossary in plain language - Key themes and talking points

Key concepts are presented on [page 5.8](#).

6. Conclusion: Allyship Action Plan

Review key takeaways on [page 5.18](#).

7. Closing the Session: Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles

See [page 5.19](#) for explanation.

8. Resource List

Review the resource list available on [page 5.20](#).

Land and language acknowledgement

“ I am urged to grow and learn more but I don’t have mentors and connections. ”

Cultural Grounding and Community Wisdom

This session is rooted in Indigenous, Afro-Caribbean, and feminist traditions, where lived experience is treated as knowledge. Practices like storytelling, **Ubuntu** ("I am because we are"), and mutual care emphasize that leadership grows through reciprocity, collective strength, and accountability to community.

Session Overview

Allyship is a practice of relationship, accountability, and shared responsibility, not a slogan or a performance. For women in Northern BC – especially Indigenous, Afro-Caribbean, immigrant, racialized, disabled, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ – allyship and community support networks are the foundations that make leadership possible. Without networks of care, mutual aid, and solidarity, women's leadership risks being isolated, tokenized, or unsustainable.

This session reframes allyship as active and intentional, grounded in feminist, Indigenous, and Afro-Caribbean knowledge systems. From an intersectional perspective, allyship must address how race, gender, class, disability, and sexuality overlap to create specific barriers and privileges. From the South African philosophy of Ubuntu ("I am because we are"), allyship becomes collective: leadership thrives when nourished by community. From Indigenous perspectives, allyship means walking respectfully on the land, following protocols, and practicing relational accountability. From feminist traditions, allyship requires dismantling the public/private divide that devalues caregiving, emotional labour, and cultural leadership as "less political" when they are central to justice.

The session will also highlight the dangers of performative allyship, which reproduces inequality by focusing on optics over structural change. True allyship requires confronting privilege, recognizing power imbalances, and redistributing resources. Participants will explore concrete strategies: community mapping to identify care networks, GBA+ to reveal who is included or excluded, and grassroots mobilization tools such as petitions, mutual aid, and storytelling. Conflict will be reframed not as a threat but as an opportunity for growth when addressed through restorative and healing-centred approaches.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will understand allyship not as a temporary stance but as a long-term practice of solidarity, humility, and co-leadership. They will leave with tools to map and strengthen their own community networks, navigate conflicts with empathy, and sustain leadership through relationships of care and accountability.

Specifically, participants will be able to:

- Define allyship and distinguish between performative gestures and active, authentic practices in the context of culturally responsive women's leadership.
- Apply GBA+ and intersectional principles to identify barriers and opportunities for inclusion within their personal, professional, or community settings.
- Use grassroots tools to mobilize support, build peer networks, and sustain inclusive community structures.
- Demonstrate culturally safe, trauma-informed conflict resolution techniques that prioritize healing, empathy, and mutual respect.
- Reflect on their personal role in allyship and begin developing a community support map relevant to their context, outlining ways to enhance accessibility, equity, and collaboration.

Guided Circle - Stories of Allyship

Group activity: What is one example of allyship you have experienced, witnessed, or wished for?

“ I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own. And I am not free as long as one person of Color remains chained. Nor is anyone of you. ” Lorde, 2012, p.133

Notes:

Allyship

**Relational Accessibility &
Inclusion through GBA+**

**Key Themes
and Talking
Points**

Community Mobilization

**Conflict Resolution
in Diverse Spaces**

a. Allyship

Showing up in solidarity with those whose leadership has historically been marginalized or undermined. This includes Indigenous peoples and Nations, whose sovereignty and governance have been constrained by colonial systems; women and gender-diverse people, whose contributions are often devalued through capitalist patriarchy systems; racialized, immigrant communities and newcomers who navigate systemic and linguistical exclusion; 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, whose safety and leadership are challenged by cisgender normativity and bigotry; and disabled people, whose opportunities for leadership are limited by structural ableism and neglect of accessibility and care.

Performative allyship are gestures that look supportive but do not redistribute power and that can reinforce inequality. **Authentic allyship**, by contrast, means decentering oneself, amplifying marginalized voices, and acting in ways that dismantle oppressive systems. Drawing on feminist critiques of empowerment and Indigenous teachings on relational accountability, allyship is understood here as co-leadership instead of saviourism. This requires constant reflexivity: naming your own privilege, acknowledging complicity in systemic inequalities, and taking concrete steps to redistribute resources and opportunities. Authentic allyship also means respecting sovereignty and self-determination: marginalized communities define what support looks like, and allies follow their lead without appropriating or diluting cultural practices.

Allyship Do's & Don'ts

Do's: Practicing Authentic Allyship	Don'ts: Pitfalls of Performative Allyship
Listen first, act second. Prioritize lived experience over your own assumptions.	Don't make it about you. Avoid centring your feelings, guilt, or need for validation.
Take up less space. Use your privilege to amplify, not overshadow.	Don't tokenize. Including one marginalized person is not inclusion; it's exploitation.
Educate yourself. Learn about history, intersectionality, and systemic barriers without relying on marginalized people to teach you.	Don't stay silent. Bystanding reinforces harm; silence protects oppression.
Act with accountability. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it, apologize without defensiveness, and change behaviour.	Don't expect thanks. Allyship is about justice, not praise or comfort.
Redistribute resources. Share funding, platforms, and decision-making power with those excluded.	Don't confuse intent with impact. Good intentions can still harm; what matters is the effect.
Practice reflexivity. Ask: Where do I hold privilege? How does my positionality affect the space?	Don't "save" people. Allyship is co-leadership, not saviourism.
Step in when safe. Use your privilege to intervene against discrimination and protect those targeted.	Don't drop out when it gets hard. Real allyship means staying present through discomfort and conflict.
Commit long-term. Allyship is not a one-off gesture; it's daily solidarity.	Don't plan programs with short term results and for the sake of publicity.

Activity 1: Allyship Spectrum: Where Am I Right Now?

This spectrum describes different ways people “show up” in relation to Indigenous, racialized, gender-diverse, disabled, and other marginalized women and communities. Allyship is not an identity; it’s a practice. People may move between stages depending on the context.

Bystander (Passive): Staying silent when harm happens; not challenging exclusion; thinking “it’s not my role” while keeping the status quo in place. *Example: In a meeting, someone makes a racist or sexist comment. You notice but say nothing.*

Performative Ally: Public gestures or statements without meaningful change; speaking about communities instead of with them. It can even build a reputation for the ally, but leaves systemic barriers untouched. *Example: Posting a land acknowledgement or #MeToo post online, but not changing how your organization operates.*

Active Ally: Listening deeply, amplifying marginalized voices, sharing resources, and making space. Understanding this is not about you and can help shift power and open doors. Requires ongoing humility to avoid taking over. *Example: At work, you recommend funding for a grassroots women’s group and step back so they can lead.*

Co-Leader / Accomplice: Walking alongside communities, following their leadership, and redistributing resources and decision-making power. Focused on long-term solidarity, sharing risks, and transforming structures. *Example: You join a community coalition led by Indigenous women, follow their protocols, and use your position to redirect funding to their priorities. In demonstrations that risk clashes with police, those who hold race privilege (often white allies, less likely to be targeted) form protective safety chains around racialized participants, using their bodies to create a safer space.*

Real-life current examples to discuss with the group:

- In the United States, some white women have placed Mexico bumper stickers on their cars so that ICE agents stop them instead of undocumented drivers, deliberately using their privilege to waste ICE’s time and protect others.
- In 2025, when the Global Sumud Flotilla sailed to challenge the Israeli siege of Gaza, high-profile public figures used their privilege to help shield activists and draw global attention. More than 50 vessels departed to Gaza, carrying activists, physicians, lawyers, and humanitarian supplies from over 40 countries. Among them were Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg; Irish actor Liam Cunningham (from Game of Thrones); and Mandla Zwelivelile “Mandla” Mandela, grandson of Nelson Mandela, who publicly drew parallels between the experiences of Palestinians and South African apartheid. They were joined by members of the European and Brazilian parliaments, who used their diplomatic visibility, passports, and relative safety to amplify the call for justice in Gaza. These individuals knowingly stepped into risk, knowing that their skin colour, passports, and global recognition did not make them immune, but offered a degree of protection and a platform to help safeguard others and expose structural injustice.

b. Accessibility & Inclusion through GBA+

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is used here to reveal who is included, who is excluded, and how intersectionality shape women's leadership opportunities, showing that barriers are not experienced in isolation but at the crossings of identities. Planning for access, therefore, means more than removing physical barriers; it requires ensuring cultural, emotional, and linguistic accessibility. A Two-Eyed Seeing lens (Etuaptmumk) suggests that Indigenous and Western approaches can be used together, each maintaining integrity. Planning for inclusion should not erase cultural frameworks but honour multiple ways of knowing.

► Activity 2 - Community Allyship Mapping

- Go back to the Community Map you created in Module 3 "Community Mapping for Fundraising".
- Add a new layer with the following instructions:
 - » **Which connections represent true allies (reciprocal, accountable)?** Highlight or circle the connections that have consistently practiced solidarity (sharing resources, showing up, co-leading).
 - » **Which are more symbolic or extractive?** Mark the gaps where allyship is missing, fragile, or blocked by systemic barriers (e.g., language access, care responsibilities)?
 - » **Identify priorities:** Which allies should be nurtured? Which gaps need strategies to close? Where should you focus your limited time and energy to build stronger, more sustainable networks?

c. Community Mobilization

Community networks have long been the foundation of women's leadership, particularly in Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous traditions, where collectivity, mutual aid, storytelling, and grassroots action sustain collective resilience. Mobilization strategies include petitions, advocacy, cultural events, and social media campaigns, but also less formal practices like food sharing, rotating childcare (other-mothering or a support system in the community), or community dinners. These strategies may fill the gaps left by underfunded systems, redistributing labour and resources in ways that prioritize survival and justice. Allyship here means supporting these networks, not overshadowing them, and recognizing the leadership embedded in everyday acts of community care.

d. Conflict Resolution in Diverse Spaces

Conflict is a normal part of diverse and changing communities. Instead of being hidden or treated as a failure, it can be understood as a natural expression of difference that, when handled with care and respect, leads to growth and stronger ties. Both Indigenous and feminist traditions highlight that conflict can be relational and transformative: Indigenous circle dialogues emphasize reciprocity, patience, and collective responsibility, while feminist practices of self-management show that naming and working through conflict in open communication strengthens solidarity rather than weakening it. Instead of reacting with punishment or confrontation, restorative approaches prioritize voice, accountability, and reciprocity. Conflict becomes a site of learning and co-creation, where differences are not erased but valued as resources. Within trauma-informed methods, unresolved harms resurface in leadership spaces, so facilitators must respond with empathy, clear boundaries, and the flexibility to create space for repair over time. For Indigenous approaches, healing is collective, not only individual: circles, ceremonies, and land-based practices support whole communities. But care must be taken to avoid cultural appropriation: these practices should be informed by knowledge holders.

► Activity 3

- You will be put into small breakout rooms.
 - » Identify one type of conflict you have seen in a community or leadership space (no personal disclosures required, focus on patterns and structures). Think across contexts, such as conflicts in gendered labour,

Circle Practices

Circles create a space where everyone is equal, heard, and held in reciprocity.

•

Participants sit at the same level, and a talking piece may be used to ensure deep listening and patience.

•

Rituals, songs, storytelling, and collective memory are pieces to transform pain into courage and imagination for the future.

•

Circles close not just with words, but with commitments and gratitude.

•

From these practices, inspired by Indigenous feminist practices, we can learn that conflict can be carried without breaking bonds and that we remain part of a shared struggle for justice and healing.

Trauma-Informed Conflict De-escalation

De-escalation doesn't mean "calming people down" or forcing closure; it means creating conditions of safety, dignity, and respect so relationships can continue even through difficulty.

Key Practices:

Grounding before responding: Take a breath, pause, or use a circle check-in to honour body, mind, spirit, and emotions (Medicine Wheel balance).

Intent vs. impact: Don't let good intentions excuse harm. Ask: "What was the impact? What needs repair?" Recognize structural harms like racism, sexism, ableism.

Care & guidance: Small acts of reciprocity can ignite a healing process. Turn to Elders, matriarchs, or mediators when conflicts touch cultural protocols or trauma.

Time & cycles: Healing takes time. Avoid rushed closure and respect cyclical processes rather than colonial logics of efficiency.

Ethical space lens: When conflicts cross cultural worldviews, practice humility, listen, agree on shared terms, and acknowledge settler positionality.

Conflict as growth & memory: Don't hide conflict. In feminist and Indigenous traditions, facing conflict strengthens reciprocity, builds courage, and keeps memory alive for future generations.

Courageous Conversation Phrases Guide

“I want to make sure I understood you right. Can you tell me a bit more about what you meant?”

“When that happened, I felt hurt/frustrated/confused, and I don’t want it to come between us.”

“What would it take for this to feel okay for you again? How can I help?”

“I want us to move forward in a way that feels fair and respectful to both of us.”

“We don’t see this the same way, but I’d like us to stay connected. Is there something we could try together?”

“This is hard for me to bring up, but I trust this group to hear me out.”

Allyship Action Plan

“ Because we had struggles to be a feminist and a leader back home, and we are now in the same field of gender equality and leadership, we thought we should do something together. ”

Key Takeaways

Allyship is a practice, not a label: it grows through accountability, humility, and action.

Inclusion is co-created with communities, not designed for them.

Networks sustain leadership and mapping allies and support shows power and resources flows.

Conflict can be healing through trauma-informed tools, courageous dialogue, and circle practices.

Cultural humility grounds allyship through reciprocity and relational traditions.

Closing the session

Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles | Linking Bundles Together

Bundles are never carried alone. They connect us to others: women, mothers, mentors, allies, and communities. Bédard describes a cosmic lifeline called madjimadzuin that links us across generations.

- Think of one ally, mentor, or community that strengthens your leadership. You might draw a thread, braid, or path that connects your bundle to theirs; find or create a symbol (a piece of string, fabric, bead, or natural item) to represent that relationship and add it to your bundle. Look them up online and include a small note with their name, phone number, website, or logo, anything that could be a reminder of how to reach back or reconnect when support is needed. Or just speak their name quietly, honouring how their presence continues to travel with you.

Reflection

- Who has helped carry your leadership journey?
- What does this tell you about the networks that sustain you, and where new connections might be needed?

Preparing for Module 6

In our final session, we will throw down our bundles. Please bring your completed bundle with you: whatever form it has taken: written notes, drawings, objects, threads, or symbols. It doesn't need to be finished or perfect; it simply needs to be yours. We'll use it as part of a shared closing reflection and circle of gratitude.

Resources and Tools

Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., Marshall, A. (2012). *Two-eyed seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing.* **Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences**, 2, 331–340.

Brown, A. M. (2017) *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds.* AK Press

Cole, D. (2022). *The skin we're in: A year of black resistance and power.* Anchor Canada.

Fanon, F. (1970). *Black skin, white masks.* London: Paladin.

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness.* Harvard University Press.

Knott, H. (2019). *In my own moccasins: A memoir of resilience.* University of Regina Press.

Knott, H. (2023). *Becoming a matriarch: A memoir.* Knopf Canada.

Linklater, R. (2020). *Decolonizing trauma work: Indigenous stories and strategies.* Fernwood Publishing.

Lorde, A. (2012). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches.* Crossing press.

Manuel, C. R. (2022). *Indigenous Matriarchal Leadership-Our Methods to Healing* (Doctoral dissertation, San Francisco State University).

Melaku, T. M., Beeman, A., Smith, D. G., & Johnson, W. B. (2020). *Be a better ally.* Harvard Business Review, 98(6), 135-139.

Puri, S. (2004). *The Caribbean postcolonial: Social equality, post-nationalism, and cultural hybridity.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Afro-Caribbean Society of Northern British Columbia (AFCAS NBC) – Community group promoting Afro-Caribbean cultural awareness and support (Facebook link):
<https://www.facebook.com/AFCASSNBC/>

Indigenous Ally Toolkit:
https://reseaumtnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Ally_March.pdf

All My Relations (podcast):
<https://www.allmyrelationspodcast.com/>

BGD: Amplifying the Voices of Queer & Trans People of Colour (website):
<https://www.bgdblog.org/>

Ally Bill of Responsibilities (document):
https://www.lyngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/ally_bill_of_responsibilities_poster.pdf

Mutual Aid Canada (website):
<https://www.mutualaidcanada.ca/about>

The Danger of a Single Story, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (TED Talk):
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

Global Indigenous Solidarity with Palestine (CBC Radio audio file):
<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-105-unreserved/clip/16174894-global-indigenous-solidarity-palestine>

Two eyed Seeing (YouTube):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CY-iGduw5c

Etuaptmumk Two-Eyed Seeing with Albert Marshall (YouTube):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJcjf1nUckc>

MODULE 6

Leading from Where You Are: Navigating Workplaces and Building Systemic Change

*Organization / Affiliation:
Foundry, Prince George*

Outline

1. Land and language acknowledgement

2. Safety cues and cultural grounding

Review cultural grounding practices on [page 6.4](#).

3. Session overview and learning objectives

Review the session overview and learning objectives on [page 6.5](#).

4. Glossary in plain language - Key themes and talking points

Key concepts are presented on [page 6.6](#).

Theme 1: Unwelcoming and Hostile Workplaces

Theme 2: Navigating Workplaces

5. Conclusion

Review key takeaways on [page 6.14](#).

6. Closing the Session: Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles

See [page 6.15](#) for explanation.

7. Resource List

Review the resource list available in the toolkit ([page 6.16](#)).

8. Evaluation

Please complete the final evaluation.

9. Final Thanks

Land and language acknowledgement

*I am urged to grow and learn more but
I don't have mentors and connections.*

Cultural Grounding and Community Wisdom

By creating space for care and trust, we ground the session in Indigenous and feminist traditions of community accountability:

- **We begin with a land acknowledgement that is relational, not performative**, naming the Indigenous territories where we gather and the responsibilities we carry as participants.
- **Circles guide our facilitation**: equal seating, shared speaking time, and attention to reciprocity.
- **Storytelling and reflection are central**, honouring lived experiences as knowledge.

Session Overview

Workplaces are not neutral spaces: they are structured by histories of colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and racial hierarchies that continue to shape who belongs, who leads, and whose labour is undervalued. For women, Indigenous peoples, Black communities, racialized immigrants, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and persons with disabilities, the workplace is often experienced as a site of exclusion, surveillance, and unequal opportunity. From a feminist and decolonial perspective, “work” is not just paid employment, but includes unpaid care, emotional, and community survival labour that sustains life yet remains invisible in mainstream economic models.

Participants will situate their experiences within broader patterns described in feminist labour research: the glass ceiling that blocks women and marginalized groups from upper leadership; the sticky floor that traps them in insecure, low-status jobs; and the mommy wall, which punishes mothers and caregivers for care responsibilities. These barriers do not operate in isolation: through an intersectional lens, we see how race, class, disability, gender identity, and migration status compound exclusion in distinct and unequal ways.

This interactive training supports women and gender-diverse individuals, especially those in low-power or entry-level positions, to see their own workplace experiences within these broader systems. Through storytelling and peer learning, participants will connect exclusionary workplace moments to structural inequalities; through power mapping and SMART (Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goal setting, they will imagine concrete steps to shift workplace dynamics. The session affirms that change is not only individual but collective: leadership grows when people build networks of allyship, accountability, and care, transforming workplaces from sites of harm into spaces of possibility.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Recognize how workplace hierarchies, often rooted in colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal systems, produce hostile dynamics such as harassment, discrimination, microaggressions, and systemic bias.
- Understand how overlapping intersectional factors such as race, gender, disability, sexuality, migration, and class create barriers that lead to exclusion and systemic disadvantages for women and gender-diverse people.
- Identify and access workplace rights and protections such as safety, pay equity, accommodations, and anti-harassment, and link these to broader struggles for equity and systemic change.
- Practice strategies for navigating and reshaping workplace dynamics: building confidence, setting boundaries, communicating with clarity, building peer and allyship networks, and advocating from the margins when voices are unheard.
- Apply collective tools like story-sharing, power mapping, and SMART goals to connect individual experiences to structural patterns and design strategies for collective workplace change.

THEME 1: UNWELCOMING AND HOSTILE WORKPLACES

Work structures

Intersectionality

**Discrimination,
Harassment, and
Microaggressions**

**Workplace dynamics
and systemic bias**

Key Themes and Talking Points

THEME 2: NAVIGATING WORKPLACES

Know your Rights

**Self-awareness and
career development**

**Communication and influence
from the bottom of a hierarchy**

Advocacy and accountability

THEME 1: Unwelcoming and Hostile Workplaces

a. Work structures

Workplaces are built on hierarchies (both formal and informal) shaped by colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy, which decide who is seen as “professional” and whose work is undervalued. [See page 6.8.](#)

The idea of a glass ceiling highlights barriers that block women from advancing; sticky floor describes how many women, especially racialized, Indigenous, immigrant, and those with disabilities, are kept in low-wage, low-status roles, while the mommy wall refers to how caregiving responsibilities are used to question women’s commitment and limit career opportunities. These dynamics reveal that systemic rules and not individual failings hold people back, as can be seen in the wheel of privilege and power. [See page 6.9.](#)

► **Activity 1 - Power Mapping** - Where are you in the Wheel of Privilege and Power?

Map their workplace power structures and plan next steps through collective SMART goals related to career development, leadership, or advocacy that they could use in their workplace.

- » Sample map: **boss → HR → colleagues → union → informal leaders → community supports.**
- » Who holds influence?
 - Where are the barriers?
 - Who are potential allies?

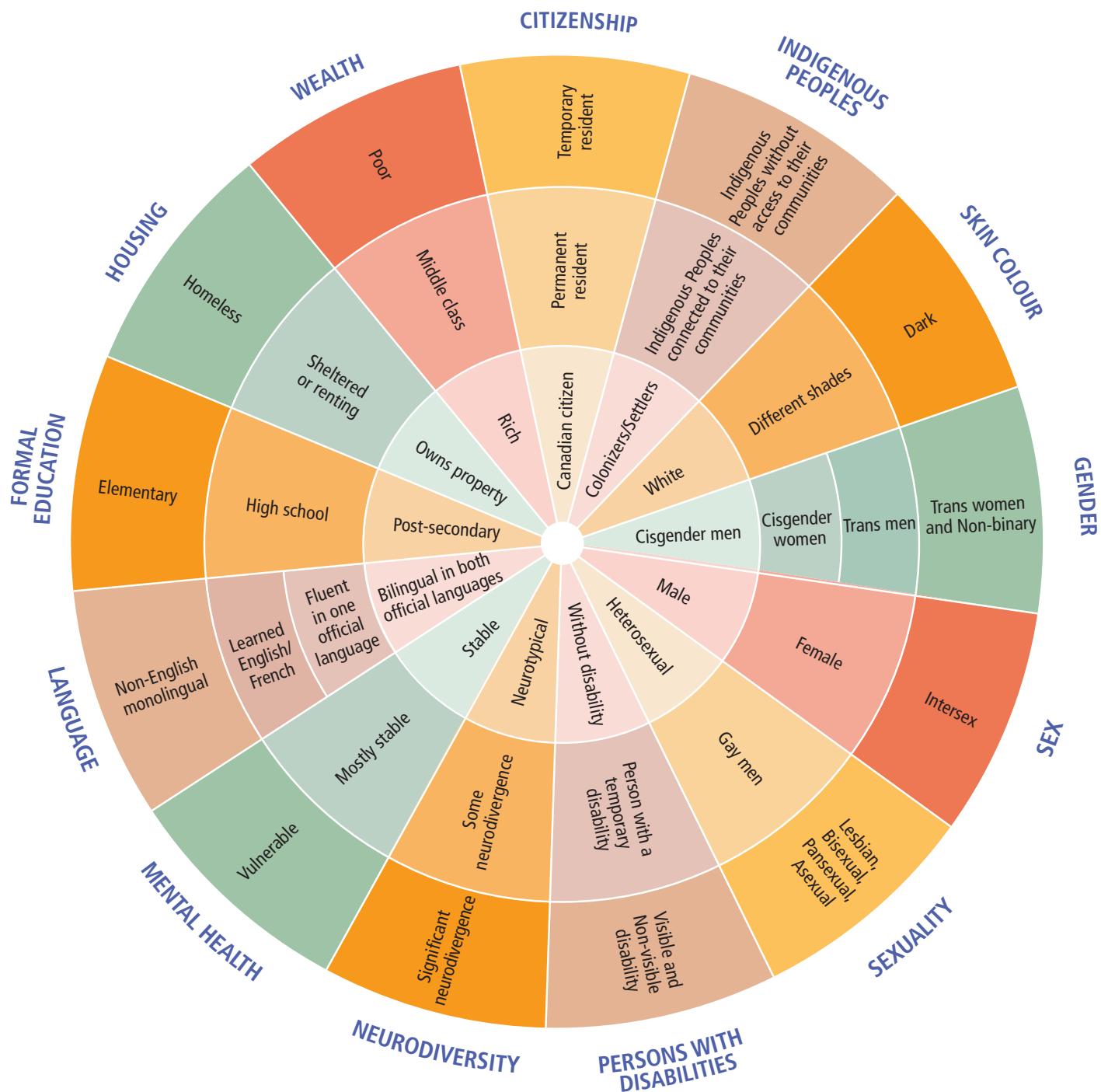
Barriers and Pathways for Women's Leadership

Barrier	What It Is	How to Identify It	How to Address It
Glass Ceiling <i>Can't rise</i>	The glass ceiling operates through invisible systems that block women and gender-diverse people from advancing into senior leadership, even when they are equally or more qualified. Barriers appear as subtle bias rather than explicit exclusion, such as being passed over for promotion despite strong performance or being told to "gain more experience" while men move ahead. Old boys' networks, lack of sponsorship, and stereotypes that equate leadership with masculine traits reinforce the ceiling.	<p>Leadership and executive teams remain mostly male or white</p> <p>Women of colour and gender-diverse people rarely occupy executive positions.</p> <p>Promotions rely on informal networks or "fit."</p> <p>Women's achievements are overlooked or credited to teamwork rather than leadership.</p>	<p>Individually: Document your accomplishments; seek mentors or sponsors who can advocate for you.</p> <p>Collectively: Organize peer and cross-sector mentorship circles; advocate for transparent promotion criteria.</p> <p>Organizationally: Audit pay, equity, and representation data; set measurable gender goals; redesign leadership programs to value multiple leadership styles.</p>
Sticky Floor <i>Can't move</i>	The sticky floor keeps women, especially racialized, Indigenous, immigrant, and disabled women, trapped in low-wage, insecure, or care-based roles with little opportunity to advance. These positions often lack training, mobility, and benefits, and are undervalued despite being essential to organizational and community wellbeing. The floor "sticks" through structural neglect, such as limited career pathways, inflexible schedules, and disregard for lived or community-based expertise.	<p>Women concentrated in administrative, care, or part-time roles.</p> <p>Racialized and immigrant women overrepresented in front-line service jobs.</p> <p>Few training or advancement opportunities available.</p> <p>Lack of childcare, transportation, or flexible scheduling options.</p>	<p>Individually: Recognize transferable leadership skills; pursue training or mentorship when possible.</p> <p>Collectively: Advocate through unions or networks; advocate for fair wages and mobility opportunities</p> <p>Organizationally: Redesign job structures; create internal advancement pathways; embed accessibility, childcare, and care supports into work design.</p>
Mommy Wall <i>Not seen as fully committed</i>	The mommy wall penalizes mothers - and women of reproductive age - through assumptions that they are less committed, less capable, or unavailable for leadership. This bias affects women long before or after having children: employers may hesitate to hire those who "might start a family," while mothers returning from leave are viewed as distracted or unreliable. These perceptions cause missed promotions, pay gaps, and exclusion from leadership pathways.	<p>Caregivers, especially mothers, or pregnant employees passed over for advancement or travel roles.</p> <p>Questions about family plans during hiring or evaluation.</p> <p>Limited parental leave or flexible work options.</p> <p>Career breaks penalized or viewed as lack of ambition or commitment.</p>	<p>Individually: Reframe caregiving skills, such as time management, empathy, and multitasking as leadership strengths; document bias or discrimination.</p> <p>Collectively: Advocate for flexible work, parental-leave equity, and culture change; share stories of caregiving leaders.</p> <p>Organizationally: Audit evaluations for pregnancy or parental bias; normalize re-entry programs; include reproductive and care responsibilities in inclusion metrics.</p>

Wheel of Privilege and Power

(the closer you are to the centre, the more privilege you have)

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/anti-racism/wheel-privilege-power.pdf>



Note: the categories within this wheel are only examples in the Canadian context, and we should not limit ourselves to them. Intersectionality is a broad concept, and this tool is only a beginning point.



Download

Workplace Violence & Harassment: How to Notice and How to Address Them

Subtle: being talked over, excluded from emails/meetings, jokes about accent, appearance, or family status.

Ongoing: unfair workload distribution, tokenism, and being repeatedly questioned about competence.

Overt: unwanted touching, threats, yelling, racist/sexfist/ableist slurs, and retaliation after speaking up.

Do's: Addressing Violence & Harassment	Don'ts: Common Traps
Name it: When safe to do so, call the behaviour what it is ("That comment is inappropriate" / "That's harassment"). Depending on context, this might mean calling out (naming harm clearly and setting a firm boundary) or calling in (inviting reflection with curiosity and care). Your safety and the power dynamics in the space should always guide your choice.	Don't minimize: "It's just a joke" or "don't be so sensitive" dismisses harm.
Document it: Keep dates, times, and details; write down what happened for yourself.	Don't isolate: Leaving the person to deal with it alone reinforces the abuse.
Support each other: Step in as a bystander when safe. Check in with the person harmed.	Don't gossip: Talking around the issue can escalate harm instead of resolving it.
Know your rights: Workplace protections cover safety, pay, accommodation, and discrimination.	Don't blame the victim: The problem is the behaviour, not the person who names it.
Report strategically: Use HR or unions, as well as community supports, advocates, and Elders.	Don't delay forever: Waiting "until later" often protects the harasser, not the harmed.
Set boundaries: Use clear phrases: "I'm not comfortable with that." "Stop." "This isn't appropriate."	Don't confuse intent with impact: Even "harmless" jokes can cause real harm.

b. Intersectionality

Exclusion in the workplace rarely happens for just one reason. Many women experience overlapping barriers, such as racism and sexism together, or language barriers and precarious contracts combined with gender bias. Seeing these intersections helps us understand that women's challenges are not "extra" but built into workplace structures, and must be addressed as central to equity and leadership.

c. Discrimination, Harassment, and Microaggressions

From open and direct violence to subtle exclusion, these acts are not isolated misunderstandings but patterns that reflect deeper inequities in workplaces. Harassment often targets people not only for their gender but also for race, culture, sexuality, disability, or even appearance. Together, they create hostile and unwelcoming environments that undermine confidence, silence voices, and keep people in lower-status roles and push people out of leadership tracks.

d. Workplace dynamics and systemic bias

Microaggressions, tokenism, and bullying are not "bad attitudes" but structural patterns. Tokenism forces individuals to represent entire groups, increasing pressure and isolation. Bullying and exclusion often target those already marginalized, reinforcing existing power imbalances. Recognizing these dynamics as systemic rather than personal helps participants see they are not alone and not to blame.

THEME 2: Navigating Workplaces

e. Know your Rights

Understanding rights around safety, harassment, pay equity, accommodation, and discrimination is essential. These protections exist through various avenues like Work Safe BC and relevant Provincial and Federal laws, but they are only effective when workers know about them, can claim them, and feel supported in doing so. Rights education also connects to advocacy, since policy protections often emerged through collective movements.

f. Self-awareness and career development

Storytelling and reflection help participants find their voice and confidence in spaces where they have been silenced. Using tools like SMART goals can connect personal growth with systemic equity: not just "I want to advance" but "I want to advance while shifting conditions for others too."

g. Communication and influence from the bottom of a hierarchy

Many women and marginalized workers do not hold formal power in their workplaces. Influence, then, comes through building relationships, finding allies, and using communication strategically. Peer support, shared advocacy, and building coalitions are powerful ways to shift workplace culture even without a title.

h. Advocacy and accountability

Advocacy means more than speaking up for yourself; it means also supporting others, following up when harm is ignored, and holding structures accountable. Accountability tools may include reporting systems, or equity audits. Community support networks (e.g., peer groups, union organizing, women's circles, and peer support circles) make advocacy safer and more sustainable.

Key Takeaways

Workplaces are shaped by colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist histories—exclusion is systemic, not individual.

Violence, harassment, and microaggressions are workplace harms that must be named and addressed.

Our stories, goals, and experiences are valid forms of leadership and advocacy.

Solidarity, allyship, and collective action transform exclusion into empowerment.

Cultural humility and trauma-informed practices are essential for building safer, more inclusive workplaces.

Closing the session

Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles | Laying Down the Bundles

Renée E. Mazinegiizhigo-kwe Bédard teaches that laying down our bundles is an act of power and renewal; a moment of claiming our agency, responsibilities, and purpose. Over these sessions, your bundle has grown to hold your values, hidden parts, teachings, safety practices, networks, and commitments.

Now, place your completed bundle before you: as an offering, a declaration, a promise and a recognition of each of our own paths, stories, courage, fears, experiences of discrimination, and determination. Let it stand as a reminder that leadership is not carried alone, but shaped by all that we have survived, learned, and shared along the way.

Take a moment to notice what has changed since you first opened it:

- What new teachings, allies, or strengths have joined you along the way?
- What feels lighter?
- What feels stronger?
- And also, what feels heavier, more unfair, unbalanced, or exhausting?
- What anger, grief, or fatigue still lives in your bundle, asking to be witnessed rather than carried alone?

These too are part of leadership: the truths we hold, the limits we acknowledge, and the shared work of transforming what harms us.

When you throw down your bundle, you are not discarding it. You are laying it on the earth: grounding your leadership in community, in responsibility, and in care. This gesture is both a commitment and a release: to lead with integrity, to rest when needed, and to carry forward what matters most.

Reflection

- What commitment are you ready to “throw down” now?
- How will you honour and assert your responsibilities, strengths, and relationships as a leader moving forward?
- What does collective leadership look like when everyone carries their bundle with courage and reciprocity?

Closing Circle

Allow a moment of silence or slow breathing together, acknowledging the collective courage, care, and wisdom in the circle. Then offer thanks.

Resources and Tools

WorkSafeBC Resources (website):

[https://www.workbc.ca/access-employer-resources/manage-employees/**workplace-rights**](https://www.workbc.ca/access-employer-resources/manage-employees/workplace-rights)
[https://www.worksafebc.com/en/**health-safety**](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety)
[https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/**bullying-harassment/resource-tool-kit**](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/bullying-harassment/resource-tool-kit)
[https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/**workers-compensation-act**](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/workers-compensation-act)
[https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/**ohs-regulation**](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation)
[https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/rights-responsibilities/**refusing-unsafe-work**](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/rights-responsibilities/refusing-unsafe-work)

BC's Aboriginal Small Business Resource (document):

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/employment-business-and-economic-development/business-management/small-business/aboriginal_small_business_resource_handout_web.pdf

WorkBC: Find Loans and Grants (website):

<https://www.workbc.ca/find-loans-and-grants>

Government of Canada: Workplace Standards (website):

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/workplace.html>

University of British Columbia - Women in Science and Engineering: Setting Goals (website):

<https://wise.ok.ubc.ca/smart-goals/>

Government of Canada: Writing SMART Objectives (website):

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/tools-for-applying/writing-smart-objectives.html>

Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs (website):

<https://www.abdc.bc.ca/iwe>

World Population Review - Gender Equality by Country 2025 (website):

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gender-equality-by-country>

UB report links Canada's temporary foreign worker program to 'contemporary forms of slavery' (YouTube):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVS4T72b9KI>

Canadian Women's Foundation - The Facts about and Poverty in Canada (website):

<https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/womens-poverty/>

BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (website):

<https://www.bcpovertyreduction.ca/>

Human Development Reports - Sticky Floors, Glass Ceilings and Biased

Barriers: the architecture of gender inequality (article):

<https://hdr.undp.org/content/sticky-floors-glass-ceilings-and-biased-barriers-architecture-gender-inequality>

Not glass ceiling, 'sticky floor' hinders women's careers, says prof (CBC News article):

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/women-ceo-mba-quota-1.3922799>

Sticky floors or glass ceilings? The role of human capital, working time flexibility and discrimination in the gender wage gap Economics Department Working Papers No. 1668 (article):

https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2021/05/sticky-floors-or-glass-ceilings-the-role-of-human-capital-working-time-flexibility-and-discrimination-in-the-gender-wage-gap_40ce7f9b/02ef3235-en.pdf

Explained: Why Women Are Paid Less (YouTube):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP8dLUxBfsU>

World March of Women - Action Areas (website):
<https://marchemondiale.org/homepage/action-areas/>

Who Cares? The gendered burden of unpaid care work (YouTube):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zcC9M4QKIU>

A Call for Justice (CBC Radio Audio File):
<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-105-unreserved/clip/16172152-a-call-justice>

Srivastava, N., & Nalawade, R. (2023). *Glass ceiling to sticky floor: Analogies of women leadership*. International Journal of Professional Business Review: Int. J. Prof. Bus. Rev., 8(4), 20.

Corbett, C., Wullert, K. E., Gilmartin, S. K., & Simard, C. (2024). *Glass Ceilings, Step Stools, and Sticky Floors: The Racialized Gendered Promotion Process*. *Socius*, 10.

DiBenedetto, R. (2020). *To shatter the glass ceiling, clean the sticky floor and thaw the frozen middle: How discrimination and bias in the career pipeline perpetuates the gender pay gap*. *Am. UJ Gender Soc. Pol'y & L.*, 29, 151.

Davis, A. Y. (2000). *Women and capitalism: Dialectics of oppression and liberation*. *The Black feminist reader*, 146-182.

Duncan, P. (2014). *Hot commodities, cheap labor: Women of color in the academy*. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 35(3), 39-63.

Federici, S. (2020). *Revolution at point zero: Housework, reproduction, and feminist struggle*. PM press. Duncan, P. (2014). *Hot commodities, cheap labor: Women of color in the academy*. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 35(3), 39-63.

■■ *Sexual harassment, hostile work environment
& subtle biases are still obstacles.* ■■

ACTIVITY WORKSHEETS

ACTIVITY: Carrying and Laying Down Our Bundles

Inspired by Renée E. Mazinegiizhigoo-kwe Bédard

Bédard, R. E. M. *Throw Down Your Bundles: An Anishinaabeg Mother's Perspective on Anishinaabeg Normative Motherhood*. In: O'Reilly, A. (2023). *Normative Motherhood: Regulations, Representations, and Reclamations* (pp. 342-368). Demeter Press. Kindle Edition.

<https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/people/Bedard.html>

Introduction

Renée E. Mazinegiizhigo-kwe Bédard, a scholar of Anishinaabeg ancestry and a member of Dokis First Nation, describes how Anishinaabeg women “throw down our bundles” as an act of standing strong in who they are and in the responsibilities they carry. A bundle, or gashkibijigan, is not just an object but a living collection of medicines, teachings, and stories handed down from mothers and grandmothers. Placing a bundle down can be an act of protection or a way of showing strength. Bédard explains that Aki, the Earth, is our first teacher, and that mothers are tied to children, ancestors, and Creation itself through madjimadzuin, the lifeline that links generations together.

Bundles are also inclusive. They reflect the Anishinaabeg understanding of Kwe, a word that embraces a wide spectrum of feminine and maternal roles, including aunties, grannies, adoptive mothers, two-spirit people, and Indigiqueer people. In this way, bundles represent many forms of leadership and care. They carry both cultural continuity and the possibility of renewal, especially in contexts where colonial systems sought to diminish or erase women's authority.

Bédard also tells the story of **Grandmother Spider**, who gave the people dreamcatchers to protect their children. This story is linked to the Seven Grandmother Gifts: humility, honesty, respect, courage, wisdom, truth, and love. These gifts act as guides for living, leading, and caring in ways that strengthen relationships and honour responsibilities. Carrying these gifts in our bundles reminds us that leadership is not only about power but about responsibility to family, community, and future generations.

Through these teachings, “laying down our bundles” becomes a metaphor for renewal. It is about bringing women back to the centre of family, community, and nation, where their leadership has always belonged. Bundles, whether hidden, carried, or laid down, hold the tools and commitments that ensure survival and resurgence. They represent an ongoing act of reclaiming, protecting, and reshaping leadership in ways that are intergenerational, collective, and rooted in care.

This activity invites you to create your own leadership bundle across six modules. You will add something new to your bundle after each module. By the end, you will “throw down” your bundle as a way of claiming the strength, responsibilities, and commitments you carry as a leader.

Module 1 – Foundational Concepts

Opening the Bundle: You already carry bundles into leadership. Write or draw two or three items you already carry in your leadership bundle. These might be values, skills, or life experiences that shape your leadership.

Reflection: How do these connect to intersectionality, cultural safety, or decolonization? Which ones feel most central to your leadership today?

Module 4 – Creating a Safe Space

Building Belonging: Bundles also hold medicines and responsibilities for protection and care. Safety and belonging are not extras but essential for leadership. Add something to your bundle that represents what makes you feel safe enough to lead. This might be trust, translation, peer support, cultural space, or another practice.

Reflection: What conditions make leadership sustainable for you? How could you bring these practices into the spaces where you work or lead?

Module 2 – Redefining Leadership

Hidden or Buried Bundles: Bédard tells how women sometimes had to hide or bury their bundles during colonization. Many of us have also felt pressure to hide parts of our leadership to fit in, such as our skills, voices, or cultural practices. Think about something you have had to hide. Write this on a new card and place it in your bundle.

Reflection: What patterns of silencing do you notice in your own life? What would it look like to reclaim these hidden parts of your leadership?

Module 5 – Allyship & Community Support Networks

Linking Bundles Together: Bundles are never carried alone. They connect us to others: women, mothers, mentors, allies, and communities. Bédard describes a cosmic lifeline called madjimadzuin that links us across generations. Think of one ally, mentor, or community that strengthens your leadership. Write down their name, role, or what they represent, and place it in your bundle.

Reflection: Who has helped carry your leadership journey? What does this tell you about the networks that sustain you, and where new connections might be needed?

Module 3 – Training & Mentorship in Fundraising and Grants

Adding Teachings: Our bundles also carry teachings. Choose one of the Seven Grandmother Gifts (humility, honesty, respect, courage, wisdom, truth, love). Write it down and add a practical example of how you can live this teaching in your leadership.

Reflection: Which teaching feels most urgent in your leadership right now? How could carrying this teaching change the way you share resources, mentor others, or tell stories?

Module 6 – Workplace Life & Support

Laying Down the Bundles: Bédard says that laying down our bundles is to assert our agency and responsibilities. Your bundle now carries your values, hidden parts, teachings, safety practices, networks, and commitments. Place your completed bundle in front of you.

Reflection: What commitment are you ready to “throw down” now? How will you assert your responsibilities and strengths as a leader moving forward?

Seven Grandmother Gifts

Zaagi'idiwin

- Love: Love is at the heart of all the gifts. It is the love of mothers for children, communities for each other, and people for the land and waters that sustain us. Love is both gentle and strong, and it is what makes all the other teachings possible.

Dabasendiziwin

- Humility: Humility teaches us to remember our small place within Creation. The Earth, the waters, and the sun remind us that life does not revolve around us alone. To be humble means to listen first, share space, and act with care for those most affected.

Gwayakwaadiziwin

- Honesty: Honesty means walking with a straight heart. It asks us to tell the truth about harm, even when it is uncomfortable, and to be true to ourselves without pretending to be someone else. An honest leader does not hide behind titles or appearances.

Minaadendamowin

- Respect: Respect teaches that every being has a purpose. Plants, animals, and people all carry gifts that matter. To live with respect is to take only what you need, to give something back, and to treat others as you would want to be treated.

Truth (Debwewin):

Truth is the weaving together of all the teachings. To live in truth means to align our words with our actions, honour our responsibilities, and follow a consistent and trustworthy path.

Nibwaakaawin

- Wisdom: Wisdom comes from experience, listening, knowing when to act and wait, and guiding us to use what we know to serve the whole community. It is not just knowledge in the head but also in the heart and in the spirit.

Zoongide'ewin - Courage:

Courage is not about being fearless, but about stepping forward even when you are afraid (or maybe because you are afraid). It is the strength of mothers who protect their children and of leaders who choose what is right, not what is easy.

Key concepts developed by the author:

Madjimadzuin is the lifeline that connects mothers, children, ancestors, and Creation. It is like a thread that stretches across time, holding us together with those who came before and those who will come after. It reminds us that leadership and care are never just individual. They are always part of a larger chain of relationships.

Bundles (Gashkibijiganan): Bundles are sacred collections that hold what is most important. They can contain medicines, stories, teachings, and tools. Carrying a bundle means holding knowledge and responsibility, and laying it down means to act with purpose, to protect, or to make a stand.

Kwe is a word that describes the feminine spectrum in the Anishinaabeg language and thought. It is not limited to biology. It includes aunties, grannies, adoptive mothers, two-spirit and Indigiqueer people, and all who carry maternal responsibilities. It is fluid and changing, like the seasons, and it honours many ways of being.

Biskaabiyyang means returning to ourselves. It is about remembering and reclaiming teachings that were pushed aside or hidden during colonization. It is a way of returning to our own sources of knowledge, especially those centred on women and mothers.

Degynocratization and Regynocratization: Degynocratization is the word Bédard uses to describe how colonial systems pushed women out of positions of respect and authority in their communities. Regynocratization is the work of bringing that balance back. It is about restoring women's central place in leadership, family, and governance, where they have always belonged.

ACTIVITY: Leadership Journey Mapping

The river path inspired by “Snakes & Ladders”, has participant moving from the “Starting Point” to the “Future Horizons” at the end with the river continuing to flow after that. Along the board are four colored squares representing key milestones in the journey:

- **Lived Experience** (blue) – moments that shaped you
- **Culture & Identity** (yellow) – heritage, traditions, community connections
- **Values** (red) – principles that guide your decisions
- **Roles** (purple) – formal and informal leadership roles

Just like in the game, the path may include ladders (supports such as mentorship, cultural teachings, solidarity) and chutes/slides (representing barriers such as racism, sexism, tokenism, burnout), that the participants can add as they move through the map.

At the Starting Point, participants write one word to capture how they felt when their leadership journey began. At the Finish Point, they write one word for where they hope to grow as leaders. Beyond the finish, the river continues to flow in dotted paths representing future possibilities they can continue to imagine and add to.

Instructions

Be creative! Use words, drawings, doodles, or symbols. Remember: leadership journeys are cyclical, relational, and evolving.

- **Starting Point:** Write one word that describes how you felt at the beginning of your leadership journey.
- **Travel the Path:** Move along the board. At each colored milestone, add words, drawings, or symbols that reflect:
 1. **Lived Experience:** What key moments shaped you?
 2. **Culture & Identity:** What communities, traditions, or heritage inform your leadership?
 3. **Values:** What principles guide your choices and actions?
 4. **Roles:** What formal or informal leadership roles have you taken on?
- **Snakes/Chutes & Ladders:** Think about supports (ladders) that lifted you and barriers (snakes/chutes) that made the journey harder. Add them onto your path with doodles or short words.
- **Finish Point:** Write one word that represents your aspiration as a leader.
- **Future Horizons:** In the open space beyond the finish, sketch or imagine new directions for your leadership.

Leadership Journey Map



ACTIVITY: My Safe Space Map

The goal of this worksheet is to help participants reflect on what they personally need to feel safe, respected, and able to participate in leadership or community spaces.

Visual Design

A circle divided into four quadrants (like a medicine wheel or compass), labeled:

- **Supports** (What/who helps me feel safe? e.g., childcare, Elders, allies, friends)
- **Boundaries** (What do I need protected? e.g., my name, photos, time, privacy)
- **Conditions** (What makes a space safe for me? e.g., translation, food, cultural protocols, ground rules)
- **Practices** (What helps me participate? e.g., breaks, right to pass, trauma-informed pacing)

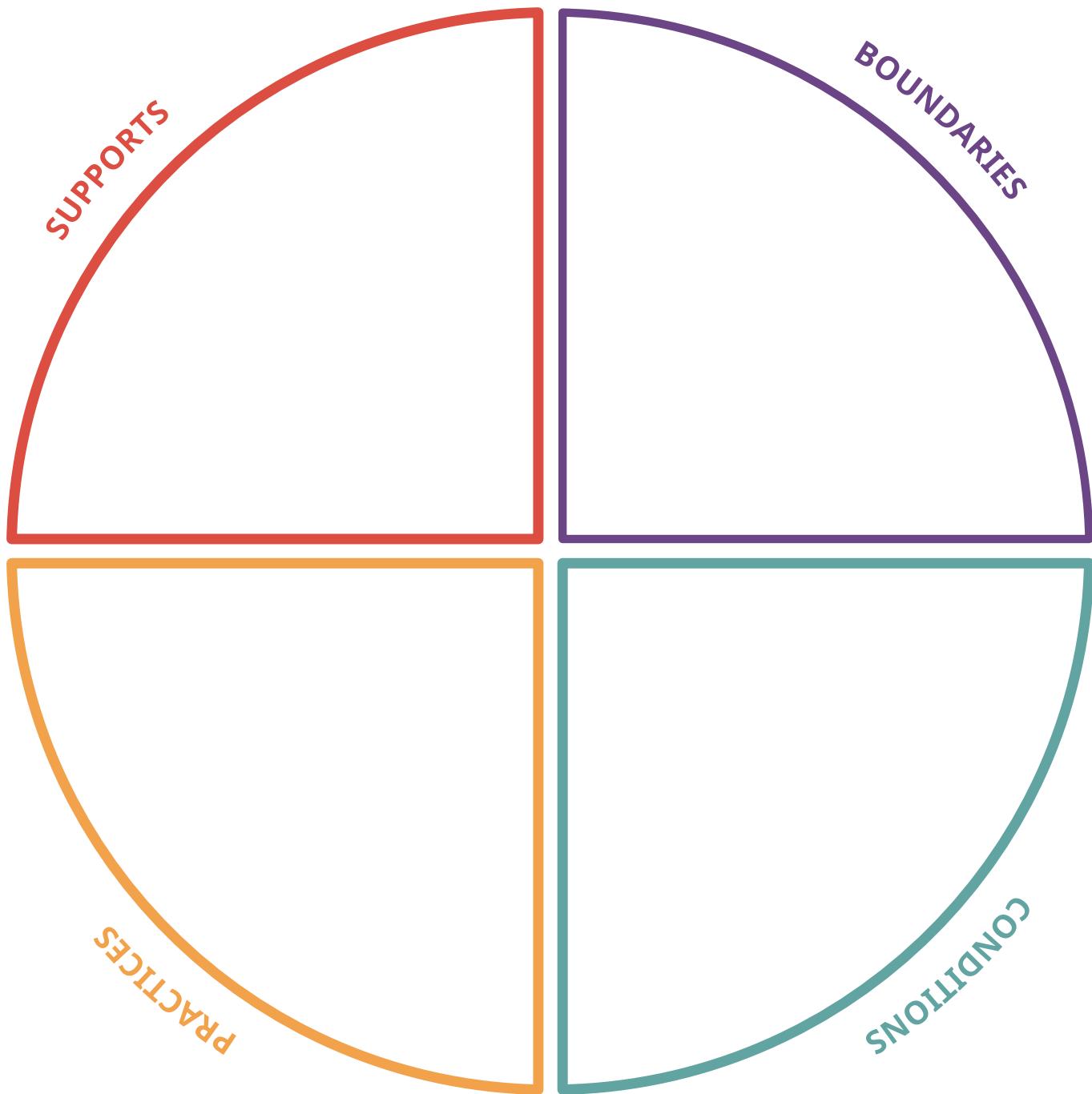
Instructions (on the worksheet)

1. In each quadrant, write or draw what you need to feel safe.
2. Be specific. This can include material supports (childcare, transportation), cultural practices (Elders present, ceremony), or boundaries (no photos, right to pass).
3. You may use words, symbols, or images.

My Safe Space Map

Instructions

1. In each quadrant, write or draw what you need to feel safe.
2. Be specific. This can include material supports (childcare, transportation), cultural practices (Elders present, ceremony), or boundaries (no photos, right to pass).
3. You may use words, symbols, or images.



Glossary of Terms

Ableism: Discrimination, prejudice, or systemic barriers directed at people with disabilities. Ableism assumes that bodies and minds should fit a narrow definition of “normal” and devalues those who do not. It shows up in inaccessible buildings, workplaces, and services, but also in attitudes, stereotypes, and policies that exclude disabled people from full participation.

Accessibility: The design of spaces, practices, communication, and policies so everyone can participate fully and equitably. Accessibility includes physical access, communication, and structural supports, going beyond compliance and creating welcoming environments.

Accountability: The responsibility to be answerable for one’s actions, decisions, and impacts, particularly to those most affected. In feminist and decolonial contexts, accountability means not only meeting formal obligations but also being transparent, listening, repairing harm, and redistributing power.

Advocacy: Actions taken to raise awareness, influence decision-making, and push for changes that advance justice and equity. Advocacy can be personal (supporting an individual), community-based (campaigns, organizing), or systemic (policy and legal reforms).

Allyship: Active, consistent, and reflective support for marginalized groups by those who are not part of those groups. Involves listening, learning, and using privilege to challenge oppression.

Bodily Autonomy: The right of every person to make decisions about their own body without coercion, violence, or external control. Central to discussions of reproductive rights, consent, and bodily integrity.

Capitalism: An economic system based on private ownership, profit, and competition, deeply intertwined with patriarchal and colonial systems, it is sustained by undervalued or unpaid labour, especially women’s caregiving. It exploits racialized and Indigenous workers, prioritizes financial gain over life-sustaining activities like care work, and deepens inequality between people and between nations.

Care: The continuous and complex activity of maintaining, sustaining, and repairing our bodies, relationships, communities, and environment. Culturally defined, it involves thought and action, is relational, physical and emotional, and carries ethical responsibilities of recognition, reciprocity, and justice.

Care Economy: The economic sector, both paid and unpaid, is devoted to caregiving and domestic work, such as childcare, elder care, health care, and household maintenance. Much of this labour is performed by women and is undervalued in economic systems.

Cisgender: A term for those whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisnormativity: A system of norms that treats cisgender identity as the default and “normal,” erasing or delegitimizing trans, non-binary, Two-Spirit, and intersex identities. It appears in everyday assumptions (such as presuming pronouns), in binary-only legal or medical systems, and in policies that deny gender-affirming care.

Cisheteronormativity: The combined system of cisnormativity and heteronormativity. It positions cisgender and heterosexual identities together as the only “normal” and acceptable way of being, reinforcing both binary gender norms and heterosexual dominance.

Colonialism: A system of domination where one nation establishes and maintains political, economic, and cultural control over another territory and its people, often justified through ideologies of racial, cultural, and gender superiority. Has profoundly shaped gender roles and relations in colonized societies.

Compulsory Heterosexuality: Describes how heterosexuality is institutionalized and enforced as the normative and “natural” form of sexuality, benefiting male dominance and sustaining patriarchal structures.

Confidentiality: The ethical and sometimes legal duty to protect private information shared in trust; essential in research, healthcare, leadership, and community spaces to ensure safety, dignity, and respect.

Collective Leadership: A model of leadership that shares power, decision-making, and responsibility among a group rather than concentrating it in one individual, valuing collaboration, reciprocity, and interdependence, often drawing on Indigenous and feminist traditions.

Community Mobilization: Bringing people together to identify shared concerns, build relationships, and take collective action. It can include grassroots organizing, campaigns, mutual aid, and advocacy efforts that shift power and resources to communities.

Conflict Resolution: Strategies and practices used to address disagreements, harms, or disputes in ways that prioritize respect, repair, and learning. Feminist and trauma-informed approaches to conflict resolution emphasize dialogue, equity, and collective healing rather than punishment.

Consent: An informed, voluntary, and ongoing agreement to participate in a specific activity. Central to safe and respectful interactions, particularly in discussions of sexual rights, workplace ethics, and community safety.

Cultural Safety: An approach that moves beyond cultural awareness and sensitivity to actively create environments where people feel respected, safe, and free from racism and discrimination. Requires ongoing self-reflection by those in positions of power to address inequities.

Decolonial Feminism: A feminist approach that critiques the colonial roots of gender oppression and centers Indigenous, Global South, and marginalized women's knowledges in the fight for liberation.

Decolonization: The active process of dismantling colonial systems, structures, and ideologies, and restoring Indigenous ways of knowing, governance, and sovereignty.

De-escalation: Using communication and calming strategies to reduce tension and prevent conflict from becoming harmful or violent, requiring listening, empathy, and non-threatening body language.

Discrimination: When someone is mistreated because of who they are (race, gender, age, disability, sexuality, religion, or background). It is often backed by workplace policies and practices, not just individuals.

Empowerment: A process through which individuals or communities gain power, control, and capacity to make decisions affecting their lives. Critical feminist perspectives emphasize that empowerment must go beyond self-esteem to include structural change and access to resources.

Emotional Abuse: Patterns of behaviour designed to humiliate, control, or diminish another person's self-worth, often through verbal attacks, manipulation, or isolation.

Femicide / Femicide: The gender-motivated killing of women, often rooted in misogyny and structural gender inequality. Recognized in international law in some contexts.

Feminism / Feminisms: A range of movements, ideologies, and theories to end gender-based oppression and inequality. Feminisms vary across contexts, acknowledging diversity in race, class, sexuality, culture, and history.

Feminist Activism: Collective and individual actions aimed at challenging and changing gender-based oppression, often integrating intersectional approaches to social justice.

Feminist Economy: An approach to economics that centres life-sustaining activities such as caregiving, health, education, food, and environmental stewardship rather than profit and accumulation, envisioning systems of production and exchange that are equitable, sustainable, and grounded in care, reciprocity, and collective well-being.

Feminization of Poverty: The disproportionate representation of women among the world's poor, driven by gendered labour markets, unpaid care responsibilities, and systemic discrimination.

Gender: A socially constructed system of identity, norms, and roles relating to masculinity, femininity, and other gender identities. It is distinct from biological sex and shaped through social interaction, institutions, and cultural expectations. It is produced through daily social interactions and behaviours, organizes social life, and is embedded in institutions such as the family, economy, and politics, perpetuating systemic inequalities.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Violence directed at a person because of their gender or gender identity. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, patrimonial, or economic harm, and is rooted in unequal power relations.

Gender-Responsive Budgeting: An approach to government budgeting that applies a gender lens to assess the impacts of fiscal policies and ensure resources promote gender equality.

Gender Diverse People: An umbrella term for people whose gender identities and expressions differ from binary male or female norms, including non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, and other identities, as well as cultural terms such as Two-Spirit.

Gendered Division of Labour: The assignment of tasks, responsibilities, and types of work based on gender norms, reinforcing economic and social inequality.

Gendered Time: How time is structured and valued differently for men and women, reflecting unpaid care work and disparities in leisure and career opportunities.

Harassment: Unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel unsafe, disrespected, or targeted. It can be sexual (comments, touching), racial (slurs, jokes), or based on gender, disability, or other identities. It's not about intent, it's about impact.

Hegemonic Masculinity: The culturally dominant form of masculinity that legitimizes the dominance of a specific type of men and the subordination of women and other masculinities.

Heteronormativity: The expectation that heterosexuality is the default and most legitimate form of sexuality to perpetuate binary gender roles; built into laws, policies, and cultural norms that privilege heterosexual relationships while marginalizing others.

Homonormativity: The expectation that sexual minorities conform to heteronormative norms and institutions to gain acceptance.

Indigenous Feminisms: Feminist perspectives grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems, addressing both gender and colonial oppression, and centring sovereignty and cultural continuity.

Intersectionality: A framework for understanding the intersection of different and overlapping systems of oppression (such as racism, sexism, classism and ableism) that shape people's experiences and opportunities.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): Violence and abuse experienced within a romantic or sexual relationship. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, patrimonial, or economic harm.

Microaggressions: Everyday comments, jokes, or actions that may seem "small" but carry stereotypes or exclusion. Microaggressions add up to considerable harm.

Patriarchal Dividend: The unearned advantages men receive collectively from the subordination of women, even if they do not actively endorse patriarchal norms.

Patriarchy: A social system that privileges men and masculine norms, shaping institutions, culture, and interpersonal relations to maintain male dominance, particularly benefiting those who embody hegemonic masculinity.

Political Representation: The presence and participation of individuals in political decision-making bodies.

Positionality: The practice of reflecting on how your identity, background, and social position (such as race, gender, class, sexuality, or education) shape your perspectives and access to power, and how what we know and how we know it depends on where we are located in systems of privilege and oppression.

Power (Structural): The systems and relationships through which resources, opportunities, and decision-making authority are distributed in society.

Privilege: The unearned advantages and opportunities afforded to individuals based on their membership in a dominant group, often invisible to those who hold it.

Public/Private Divide: The ideological separation between the "public" sphere (politics, paid work) and the "private" sphere (home, family and care work) that has historically devalued women's roles and reinforced gender inequality through a division between productive and reproductive work.

Racism: A system of domination that assigns value and access to resources, rights, and opportunities based on socially constructed categories of race. Racism is more than individual prejudice or bias; it is structural, institutional, and historical, embedded in laws, policies, economies, and cultural practices that privilege whiteness while marginalizing and criminalizing Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities. Racism operates across multiple levels with ongoing material and intergenerational impacts and is inseparable from colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy, which together sustain global and local hierarchies of power.

Reflexivity: An ongoing exercise of examining how your own positionality shapes your actions, relationships, and knowledge, going beyond self-awareness to ask how your standpoint influences the way you lead, research, or work in community.

Reciprocity: A principle of mutual exchange, care, and responsibility where relationships are not one-directional but balanced: giving back when you receive, and honouring the responsibilities that come with knowledge, resources, and community.

Reproductive Justice: A framework expanding reproductive rights to include the right to have children, not have children, and to parent in safe, sustainable communities, integrating racial, economic, and social justice.

Reproductive Rights: The legal and human rights relating to reproductive health and autonomy, including access to contraception, abortion, and maternity care.

Safe Space: A physical or social environment intentionally created to be free from discrimination, harassment, and violence, where marginalized groups can participate fully.

Sex: A classification of people as male, female, or intersex based on presumed biological characteristics, distinct from gender, which is socially constructed.

Sexism: Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination based on gender often results in the marginalization of women and gender minorities.

Structural Violence: Harm caused by systemic inequities embedded in social, economic, and political systems, which limit individuals' opportunities and well-being.

Tokenism: The superficial inclusion of marginalized individuals to give the appearance of equality, without meaningful change to power systems, as when someone from a marginalized group is included just to "look diverse."

Transformative Leadership: Leadership that prioritizes equity, collective empowerment and systemic change, often prioritizing marginalized voices.

Trauma-Informed Care: An approach that recognizes the widespread impacts of trauma and prioritizes safety, choice, trust, and empowerment, avoiding re-traumatization, centring survivors' voices, and acknowledging how colonialism, racism, sexism, and violence shape experiences of trauma.

Two-Spirit: A term used in some Indigenous communities for those who embody both masculine and feminine spirits, reflecting traditional gender diversity before colonization.

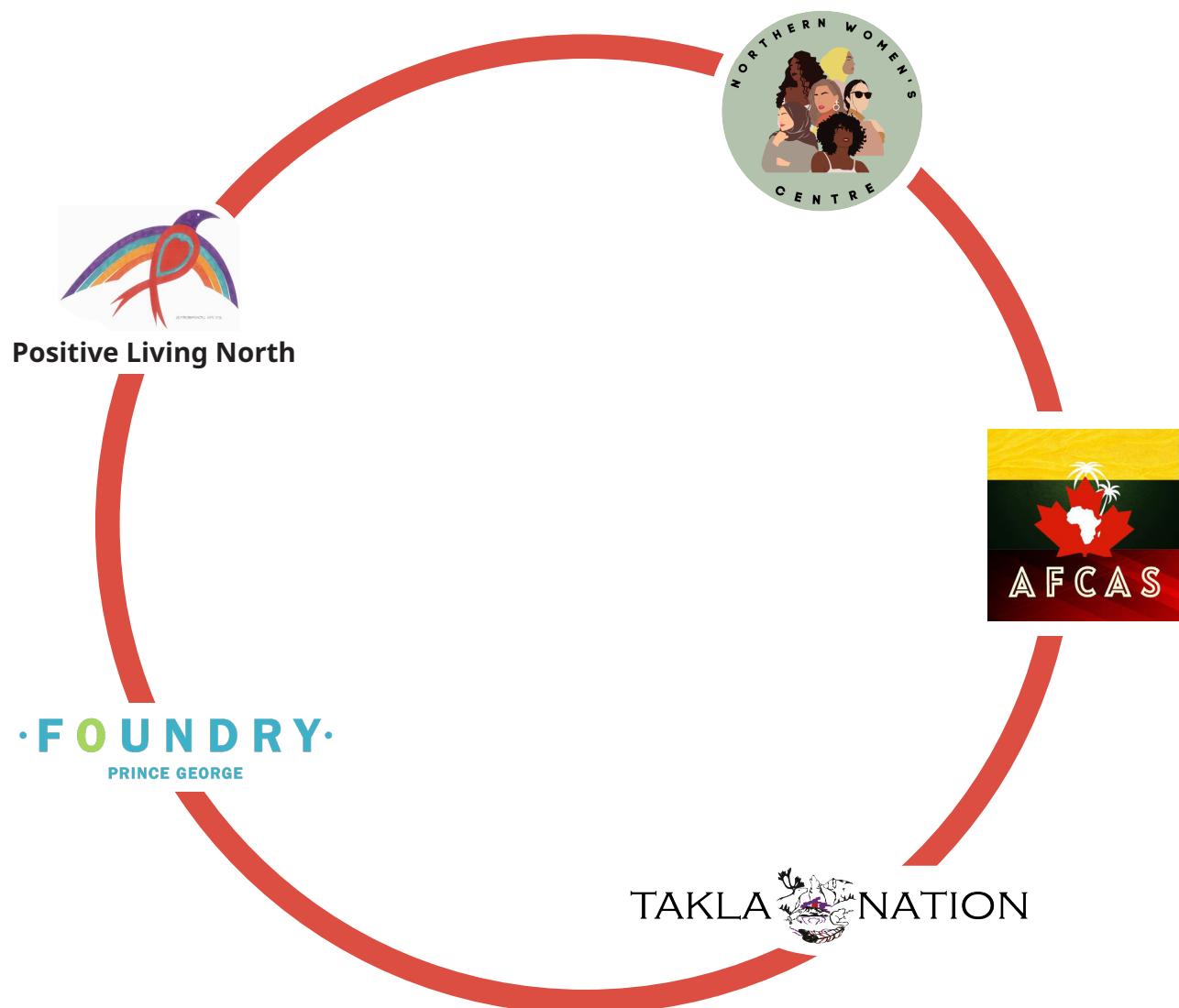
Violence Against Women (VAW): Gender-based violence against women, recognized as both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, patrimonial, or economic harm.

Work-Family Balance: The management of competing demands between paid work and family responsibilities, often shaped by gender norms and workplace structures.

Workplace Violence: Any act of physical aggression, threats, bullying, or intimidation at work. It can be obvious (yelling, hitting) or subtle (isolation, sabotage). It includes physical and psychological harm.

2SLGBTQQIA+: An acronym for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (with "+" representing other sexual and gender identities).

Project funded and supported by the following partners.



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada