

WHAT WE HEARD

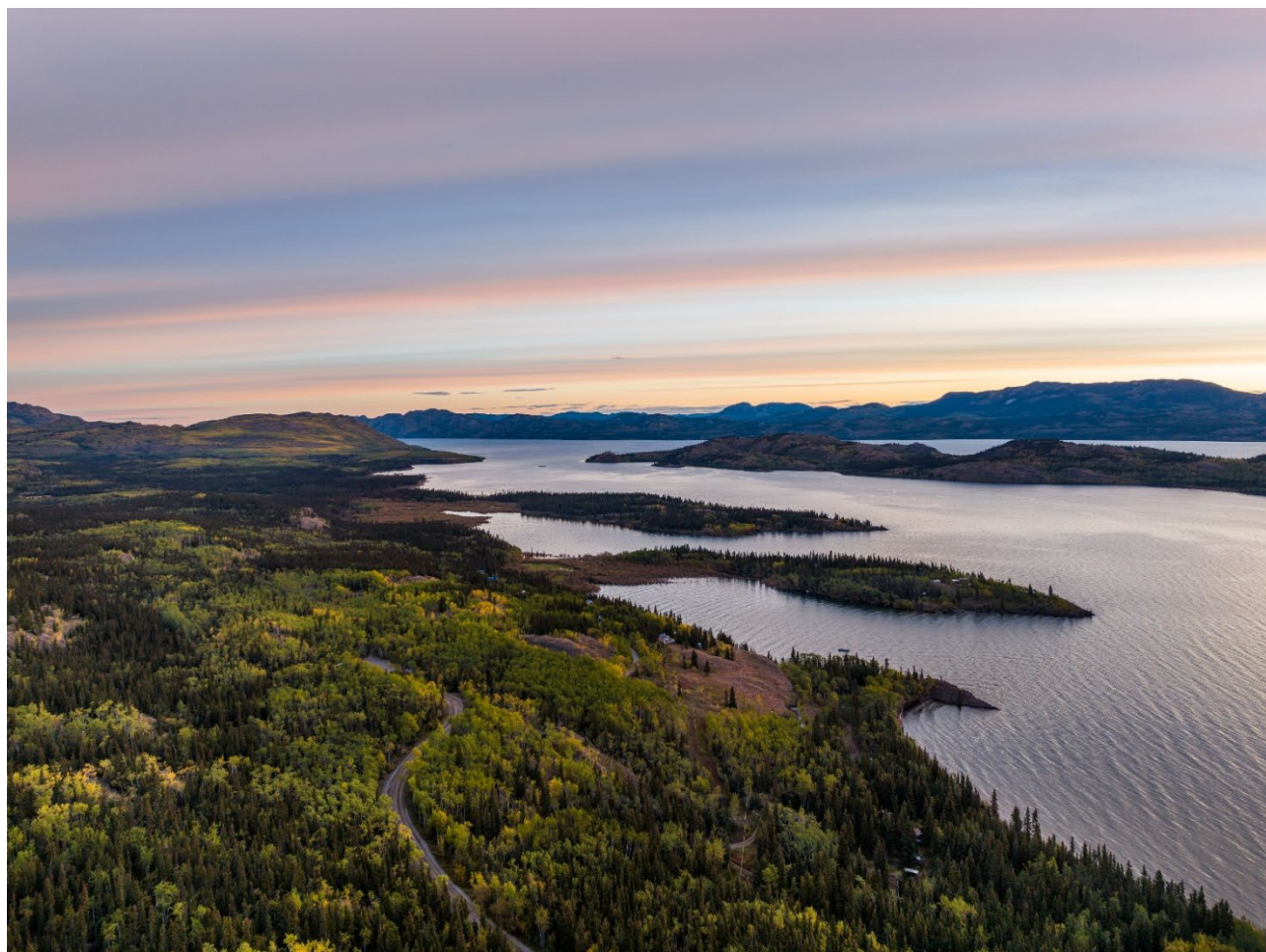
MMIWG2S+ Family Gathering

Coming together on the land, grounded in culture and care

August 4 and 5, 2026

Helen's Fish Camp, Lake Laberge

Traditional Territory of the Ta'an Kwach'an Council



This report summarizes information shared and discussions held during the Family Gathering. It reflects the perspectives, experiences, questions and recommendations shared during the gathering and does not represent a consensus view on all topics discussed.

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Gathering with purpose

The Family Gathering was a space for families and survivors to come together on the land, reconnect, share information and talk about what needs to happen to advance work related to missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit+ people.

The gathering was organized in response to requests from families at the 2024 Accountability Forum. It was intentionally designed as an on-the-land, family and survivor centred gathering rather than a formal conference to create room for connection, emotion, remembrance and support through culture while keeping attention on accountability and next steps.

Over the two days, families and survivors received updates and shared their perspectives on annual reporting, community engagement, youth involvement, governance and accountability, services and supports, and how to meaningfully participate in implementation of Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit+ People Strategy.

The gathering followed the medicine wheel and the movement of the seasons and elements. This framework guided the gathering from connection and grounding through information sharing, reflection and looking ahead.

The rhythm of the gathering

Fire brought people together in warmth, connection and reflection. It created space for listening, sharing and honouring the experiences that brought families and survivors together.

Earth grounded the gathering in shared commitments and a collective purpose.

Wind and Water carried information, experiences and stories between people and communities. The breakout sessions created opportunities to share updates, ask questions and learn from one another.

Growing Together acknowledged the importance of supporting one another while creating space for learning, healing and growth as everyone is at a different place in their journey.

Winter brought the gathering into reflection. Families and survivors considered what they had heard, what they wanted to carry forward and what should guide the next phase of the work.

The gathering was part of the ongoing implementation of Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit+ People Strategy.

Families and survivors have helped shape this work from the beginning. Their knowledge, experiences and leadership continue to be essential to how the work moves forward.

What we heard

Several messages came forward consistently throughout the gathering.

Families want to know what happens after they speak

Families and survivors continue to contribute their time, knowledge and lived experience. They want clearer information about how their priorities and recommendations are considered, what happens afterward and where issues remain unresolved.

Accountability needs to include visible follow-through, not only opportunities to provide input.

Information needs to be easier to understand and access

Families want clearer and more regular information about the strategy, implementation, funding, available supports and opportunities to participate. Plain-language materials, advance information before gatherings, printed resources for those who need them and different ways of communicating with communities were identified as important.

Healing needs to be culturally grounded and closer to home

Families spoke about the importance of land-based healing, cultural activities, family camps and services available closer to home. Barriers to accessing supports outside Whitehorse remain a concern. Families want greater community capacity so that healing and support do not depend on travelling away from family, culture and community.

Children and youth are central to lasting change

Children and young people were repeatedly identified as a priority. Families want better opportunities for prevention, education, healing, cultural connection and leadership. They also want youth to have opportunities to speak for themselves and help shape the work that affects them.

Families want meaningful roles in accountability and decision making

Family participation needs to extend beyond being invited to provide feedback. Families want meaningful roles in governance and accountability, with clear responsibilities, appropriate support, access to information and visible connections between what they raise and what decision makers do.

Men and boys are part of healing and prevention

The importance of including men and boys came forward through community engagement, family discussions and reflection activities. Families described healing and support for men and boys as part of strengthening families, preventing violence and building healthier communities.

Trust depends on transparency, relationships and follow through

Families raised concerns about justice systems, funding, government communication and engagement that does not lead to visible results. They emphasized the importance of transparency, direct relationships with decision makers and being able to see how concerns raised by families are influencing action.

August 4: Grounding, connection and sharing

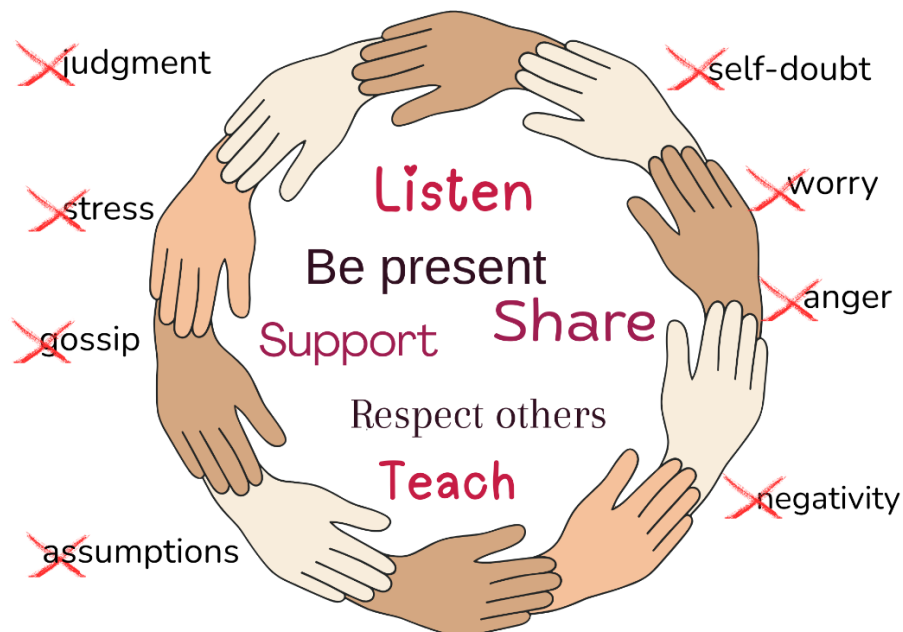
Rooted in shared commitments

The gathering began by creating a shared understanding of how people wanted to be together over the two days.

Through a collaborative handprint activity, families and survivors identified values they wanted to guide conversations and relationships.



People also reflected on what they personally wanted to bring into the space: listen, be present, share, teach, support, and respect others. They identified things they wanted to leave outside the circle, including judgment, stress, worry, self-doubt, gossip, assumptions, anger and negativity.



These commitments established a foundation for the conversations that followed.

Seeds of change

Families and survivors reflected on the long history that has shaped MMIWG2S+ work in the Yukon.

Honouring the foundation: families and communities call for change

Long before government strategies and implementation plans existed, families, survivors, Indigenous women's organizations, advocates and communities were raising awareness, seeking answers, supporting one another and calling for justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit+ people. Their leadership laid the foundation for the work that continues today.

2015: National Inquiry and Yukon Advisory Committee

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was launched. The Yukon Advisory Committee was established to help connect the national process with Yukon families, Survivors and communities and help guide Yukon-specific work.

2017: Yukon National Inquiry hearings

Families and survivors shared their truths and experiences during National Inquiry hearings in Whitehorse.

2019: Calls for justice and Yukon family direction

The National Inquiry released its Final Report and 231 Calls for Justice, identifying systemic causes of violence and calling for transformative change. A Yukon family gathering that year also created space for families and Survivors to identify priorities and help shape the Yukon response that followed.

2020: Yukon strategy and declaration

Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice was released. 52 partners signed the MMIWG2S+ Declaration, creating a shared commitment to action and accountability.

2022: Priority Action Items and Accountability Forum

Twelve Priority Action Items were identified to guide early implementation. Families, survivors, governments and partners came together through Accountability Forum to discuss progress and priorities.

2023: 15-year Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan established 32 actions across the strategy's four paths and set out long-term milestones and actions to advance the strategy's vision.

2024 onward: reporting, engagement and accountability

Annual reporting, family gatherings, Accountability Forums and community engagement continue to provide opportunities to review progress, identify gaps and help shape the work ahead.

This history reinforces an important point: families and survivors did not enter this work after government developed a strategy. Their advocacy and leadership helped create the conditions for the strategy to exist.

Wind and Water: Sharing information and experiences

The afternoon moved into two information and discussion sessions. Families rotated between the sessions so they could hear about work underway and share questions, experiences and priorities.

Wind: Carrying community connections forward

Community engagement

Families heard about the 2026 MMIWG2S+ Community Tour led by Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle. Between January and July 2026, engagement took place with 13 Yukon and northern British Columbia First Nations. Approximately 146 community members participated through group conversations, individual conversations and surveys.

Community discussions highlighted several concerns. Services and resources were seen as increasingly concentrated in Whitehorse, leaving some communities with limited access to local supports. Participants also spoke about distrust of systems and institutions, particularly policing and justice systems; the continuing effects of intergenerational trauma; substance use; and community safety concerns associated with resource development and increased numbers of people coming into communities from outside. Communities called for greater investment in:

- land-based healing and family wellness;
- approaches that include men and boys;
- stronger community capacity;
- services closer to home; and
- more visible action on commitments.

There was also a strong request for clearer information about the strategy. Some community members were unfamiliar with the work underway and wanted updates through community visits, radio, newsletters and other accessible formats.

What families and survivors shared

The community-engagement findings reflected many of the experiences raised at the gathering. Families spoke about difficulties accessing healing and other supports outside Whitehorse and the importance of culturally grounded services that can be offered within communities.

Concerns were also raised about communication and accountability within the justice system. Families spoke about the impact of receiving limited information or navigating unclear processes while seeking answers.

Some wanted greater understanding among prosecutors, judges and other justice professionals about the lasting effect their decisions can have on families and communities.

Community safety in relation to major development projects was also raised. Families emphasized the importance of involving communities in identifying risks and determining how those risks should be addressed.

There was a broader request for more regular communication about implementation, supports and funding, along with meaningful opportunities to speak directly with decision makers.

Water: Looking at implementation and reporting

This session focused on what had happened over the previous year, where implementation stands and how progress is being reported back to families and communities.

Families received an update on annual reporting for the Yukon's MMIWG2S+ Strategy. The 2024-25 annual report brings together information submitted by 27 implementation partners, including Yukon First Nations governments, the Government of Yukon, Indigenous women's organizations and other strategy partners. Each partner is responsible for reporting on its own work. Bringing these updates together provides a broader picture of implementation across the Yukon.

Progress is organized under the strategy's four paths:

1. Strengthening connections and supports;
2. Community safety and justice;
3. Economic independence and education; and
4. Community action and accountability.

Families heard examples of work taking place across these areas, including culturally grounded healing, victim supports, community safety initiatives, housing and transportation supports, education and employment opportunities, cultural safety and public engagement.

Together these updates help show where implementation is moving forward, where gaps remain and where further attention may be needed.

What families and survivors shared

Some participants expressed frustration that issues raised at previous gatherings continue to come forward without enough information about what happened afterward. They wanted clearer connections between concerns raised by families, commitments made through the strategy and the actions that followed. They want reporting that makes it easier to see:

- what has been completed and what changed as a result;
- what remains underway;
- what has not progressed;
- what barriers are preventing progress;
- where funding is being directed and how it is being used; and
- what is expected to happen next and timelines.

Questions about funding came up repeatedly, including whether resources are reaching families and communities they are intended to support.

Families also asked for reports and other information to be written in plain language and provided before future gatherings, so families have time to review the information and prepare questions.

Printed materials were identified as particularly important for some Elders.

August 5: Growing together

The second day focused on learning from youth, exploring future governance and how accountability and family participation can be strengthened.

Youth for Dignity

Families and survivors heard from Ts'ídāne á' nezen: Youth for Dignity, a youth empowerment project designed by Liard Aboriginal Women's Society to build community safety and justice in the town of Watson Lake and the surrounding areas.

This accredited program at the Watson Lake Secondary School works with young people in grades 8 through 12 and contributes to earning credit for their high school diploma. The program supports them to recognize, prevent and respond to gender-based violence while strengthening confidence, leadership, cultural connections and community relationships.

Families heard about Youth for Dignity's workshops, land-based learning, cultural camps and youth led awareness activities. Young people involved in the program have:

- supported local MMIWG2S+ vigils;
- created awareness activities;
- led conversations about safety and healthy relationships in schools; and
- shared violence-prevention messages with their peers.

The presentation showed how cultural connection, prevention and youth leadership can work together.

Participants also emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for young people to share their own experiences, ideas and priorities rather than having others speak for them.

Growing together: Proposed governance structure and accountability structure

Families and survivors learned about the proposed governance and accountability structure for implementation of the Yukon's MMIWG2S+ Strategy. The proposed model is intended to strengthen three connected areas of work:

- setting strategic direction;
- coordinating and carrying out implementation; and
- independently reviewing progress.

Family and survivor participation will be built into each part of the structure so that lived experience and community priorities continue to inform leadership, implementation and accountability.

The proposed structure includes three connected groups:

- a Leadership Committee;
- a Collaboration Circle; and
- an Accountability Committee.

Each group will have a different role, and they will work together toward the shared goal of advancing safety, dignity and justice for Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit+ people.

Leadership Committee

The Leadership Committee will provide senior-level strategic leadership for the implementation of the strategy and help keep MMIWG2S+ priorities visible across governments and organizations.

Members would bring knowledge of broader priorities and emerging issues within their respective governments, organizations and communities. This would help identify where MMIWG2S+ priorities require leadership attention.

Membership could include elected officials from all levels of governments and family members representatives.

Collaboration Circle

The Collaboration Circle will bring together organizations responsible for implementing the strategy. This will include governments, Indigenous organizations, service providers, other implementation partners and family members representatives. Family members representatives would help partners understand how programs, services and implementation decisions are being experienced by families and communities.

Individual partners would remain responsible for carrying out and reporting on their own commitments. The Collaboration Circle would provide a place to understand how that work connects across the broader strategy and where collective action may be needed.

They would also contribute information and updates that support the development of the annual progress report.

Accountability Committee

The Accountability Committee will focus on independent oversight rather than implementation. It would review where progress is occurring, where gaps remain and whether implementation responds to family and community priorities. Its proposed responsibilities include:

- monitoring implementation of the strategy;
- overseeing the annual accountability reporting process;
- reviewing progress, gaps, barriers and emerging priorities;
- ensuring an annual Accountability Forum takes place;
- considering whether changes to the Implementation Plan may be needed;
- making recommendations to strengthen implementation and accountability.

Membership will include family members representatives, survivor and representatives from strategy's partners.

How the three groups would connect

The model is intended to create a clear cycle of direction, implementation and accountability:

Leadership Committee sets the direction → Collaboration Circle carries out and coordinates the work → Accountability Committee reviews progress and identifies gaps → findings and recommendations go back to Leadership Committee for action.

Family and survivors' voices will be present throughout this cycle.

The intent is to make responsibility clearer at each stage and ensure that family and community perspectives continue to influence both implementation and future priorities.

How the proposed committees would move the implementation forward

Collaboration circle — Technical Forum

Partners share information, strengthen coordination, identify actions and confirm commitments.

Accountability committee — Implementation Plan updates

Review lessons from implementation and recommend updates that reflect changing needs and circumstances.



Winter



Spring



**Annual MMIWG2S+ cycle:
Implementation and
Accountability**



Fall



Summer



Accountability committee — Accountability Forum/ Family gathering

Review progress with families, survivors and partners; and identify priorities for the work ahead.

Collaboration circle — Annual report

Compile and confirm updates on progress toward the Implementation Plan milestones.

What families and survivors raised about governance

Governance and accountability generated significant discussion.

There was interest in family participation, along with questions about how participation would work in practice.

People interested in serving on committees want to understand what is being asked of them, how much time will be required, what supports will be available and how family perspectives will influence decisions and outcomes.

Families also want opportunities for direct engagement with leadership and clearer connections between what is heard during gatherings and what happens afterward. Governance training, orientation opportunities and accessible reference materials were also identified as important supports for family representatives.

What happens next

The governance structure will be implemented based on the support and input from the families gathering and community visit. During the gathering, participants spoke in support of moving forward with the proposed governance structure. The next phase will include work on:

- membership and representation;
- family and survivor participation;
- supports for people participating in governance;
- committee mandates and terms of reference;
- roles and relationships between the three groups; and
- how information, recommendations and decisions move through the structure.

The Women and Gender Equity Directorate will contact families, survivors, Elders and community representatives who expressed interest in participating.

The perspectives, questions and recommendations shared during the gathering will help inform the establishment of the governance structure and support ongoing implementation of the strategy.

Interested in participating?

Families and survivors who are interested in governance, accountability or implementation work can contact the Women and Gender Equity Directorate.

Email: wged@yukon.ca

Phone: 867-667-3030

Reflections

As the gathering moved toward its close, families and survivors were invited to reflect on what they wanted to carry forward.

Four activities provided different ways to share hopes, ideas, priorities, concerns and commitments.

North Star: What should continue to guide this work?

Responses focused strongly on children, youth, families and healing.



Ideas Garden: What ideas or recommendations would you like to see grow?

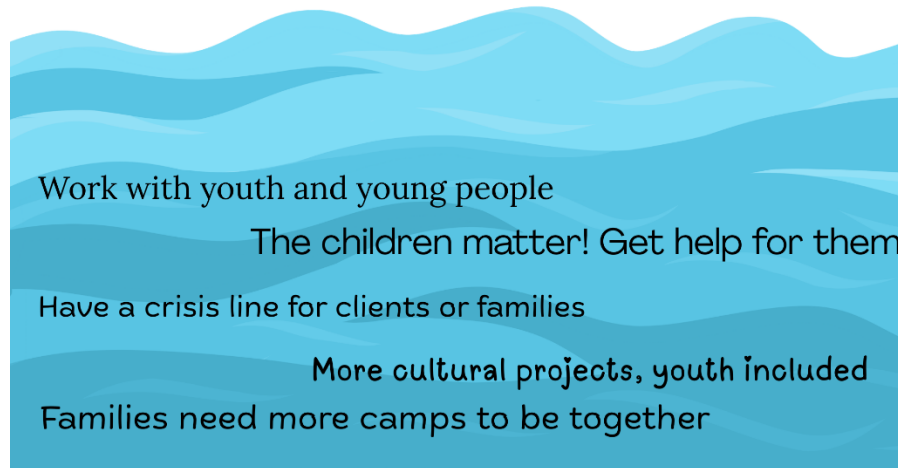
Families and survivors shared ideas they would like to see developed or strengthened.



Suggestions also included stronger family involvement in future Accountability Forums and greater transparency about progress and funding.

River of Voices: What would you like to share?

Families and survivors shared additional messages, concerns and recommendations.



Other reflections highlighted mentorship, self-care and connecting families with appropriate support.

Keeping the Fire: What hope or commitment will you carry forward?

Families and survivors reflected on the hopes, commitments they wanted to carry forward after the gathering. Their reflections spoke to continued healing, connection, advocacy and collective responsibility.



Helping future gatherings grow

Families and survivors were invited to provide feedback about their experience at the gathering.

A total of 31 experience forms were completed. Feedback was generally positive. About 89 per cent felt welcomed, 83 per cent found the topics meaningful, 90 per cent said logistics met their needs where applicable and 84 per cent reported a better understanding of the work underway through the Strategy. On average, 85 per cent felt emotionally, culturally and spiritually supported and reported that available supports and facilitation contributed to a respectful and inclusive environment.

Experiences were not the same for everyone. About 77 per cent felt their voice and experiences were listened to and respected, while three people selected “Not at all.” This feedback reinforces the importance of continuing to strengthen how families and Survivors are heard and how their input is followed up.

Written feedback highlighted reconnecting with family, ceremony and open conversation as meaningful. Suggestions for future gatherings including:

- creating more opportunities for meaningful participation by families, including youth involvement and youth-led discussions;
- expanding land-based gathering and healing opportunities, with traditional foods, self-care activities and supports for Elders;
- giving greater attention to the role of men and boys in healing, prevention and community wellness;
- providing more time for conversation and direct engagement with leaders and decision makers; and
- improving communication before and after gatherings, including participation options for those unable to attend in person and clearer follow-up on how family input is being considered.

Written comments also reinforced the importance of continued family involvement:

“The families are being heard and involved.”

“Families need to be involved. Children need help.”

“Do a follow up meeting.”

“That the work is still ongoing.”

Feedback from this gathering will help inform how future gatherings and accountability activities are planned.

The path ahead

The Family Gathering was part of an ongoing process of implementation, accountability and relationship building.

The next phase will include the establishment of the proposed governance structure and follow-up with families, survivors, Elders and community members who expressed interest in participating. Strategy partners will also continue to consider the priorities, concerns and recommendations raised through the gathering as implementation moves forward.

Families and survivors were clear that engagement needs to be followed by information about what happened next. Future reporting, Accountability Forums, community engagement and family gatherings will help provide opportunities to review progress, identify what remains unresolved and discuss where further action is needed.

Not every question raised during the gathering has an immediate answer, and some issues require coordinated work among governments, Indigenous organizations, service providers and communities. Where work takes time, families should still be able to understand what is happening, who is responsible and what the next steps are.

Families and survivors have been leading this work from the beginning and must continue to be included to shape its future. Continuing to listen, report back, build relationships and demonstrate how community voices are influencing action will remain essential to upholding dignity and justice for Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit+ people across the Yukon.

Services and supports

Information about services, supports and community resources was shared during the gathering. Families and survivors also received a Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle consent form for optional information sharing between Indigenous organizations. A copy is included at the end of this report. Families emphasized that support information should be easy to find and accessible across the Yukon.

Crisis and emotional support

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Crisis Line

Provides 24-hour emotional support related to MMIWG2S+ issues. Call **1-844-416-6649**.

Hope for Wellness Help Line

Provides culturally grounded support for Indigenous people across Canada by phone and online chat. Call **1-800-588-8717**.

9 8 8 Suicide Crisis Helpline

Provides 24-hour crisis support by phone or text across Canada. Call or text: **988**

Mental wellness support

Yukon Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services

Whitehorse: **867-456-3838** Toll-free in the Yukon: **1-866-456-3838**

Reach Out Support Line

A 24-hour confidential, anonymous non-judgmental and free support line run by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Yukon Division. Call **1-844-533-3030**.

Canadian Mental Health Association, Yukon Division

Free counselling services Monday to Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm. Call **867-668-6429**.

Victim services and safety support

Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU)

Provides free, confidential and culturally safe support to families, cultural kin and close friends of missing or murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit+ people.

Whitehorse Victim Services

Suite 210, 212 Main Street, Whitehorse

Phone: **867-667-8500** or Toll-free **1-800-661-0408**

Email: filu@yukon.ca

Violence and abuse support

Kaushee's Place

Provides 24-hour support for women and gender diverse people experiencing violence or abuse.

Call 867-668-5733 or visit womenstransitionhome.ca/kaushees-place

[Web chat and texting: Yukon Women's Transition Home](#)

Dawson Women's Shelter

Call 24-hour support line at **867-993-5086** or visit dawsonwomensshelter.com.

Family Preservation Wellness Centre

2166 – 2nd Avenue, Whitehorse, YT

Call **867-393-9200** or visit [CYFN Family Preservation Wellness Centre](#).

Help and Hope for Families

Call **867-536-7233** or email edhhfs@northwestel.net

Sexualized Assault Response Team

Provides 24-hour confidential support line, medical care coordination, priority counselling and accompaniment to hospitals or police for people of any gender. Visit: Yukon.ca/SART

Crisis Line: **1-844-967-7275** anytime, day or night.

Call **867-456-3838** for priority access to free counselling.

Community organizations

Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council

407 Black Street, Whitehorse, YT

Call **867-667-6162** or toll-free 1-866-667-6162.

Liard Aboriginal Women's Society

Box 3, Watson Lake, YT

Call **867-536-2097** or visit liardaboriginalwomen.ca.

Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle

6A 4230 4th Avenue, Whitehorse, YT

Email: info@wawc.ca or call **867-668-7532**. Or visit wawcircle.org.

Women and Gender Equity Directorate

The directorate provides secretariat support for Yukon's MMIWG2S+ Strategy. For information about the strategy, future gatherings, opportunities to participate in implementation or proposed committee involvement, email wged@yukon.ca or call **867-667-3030**.

Families and survivors are encouraged to reach out if they have questions about the work, want information about future opportunities or are interested in becoming more involved.

Consent to Share Information Between Organizations

Personal Information

Full Name: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Consent for Information Sharing

I, _____ grant consent for my contact information to be shared between the following Indigenous Women's Organizations.

Please check all that apply:

☐ All three Indigenous Women's Organizations

OR

☐ Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle (WAWC)

☐ Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council (YAWC)

☐ Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS)

Purpose of Sharing

This information is shared exclusively for purposes related to Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S+). These purposes include:

- MMIWG2S+ Related events such as family gatherings and accountability forums.
- Sharing of MMIWG2S+ related information, updates from the RCMP or Government, and key documents like the Annual Accountability Report.
- Any MMIWG2S+ related workshops, land-based programming, and other wrap-around supports that may benefit you or your family.

Terms and Right to Withdraw

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary. I can end this consent at any time, for any or all of the organizations listed above, by contacting any of them directly to withdraw my permission.

Authorization

Participant signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return your completed and signed form directly to the
Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle (WAWC) via any of the methods below:

By Email: Send a scanned copy or clear photo to info@wawc.ca
In Person / By Mail: Drop off or post to [6A 4230 4th Avenue, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 1K1](#)
(located in the Yukon Inn Plaza)

If you have questions about submitting this form, call the office at **(867) 668-7532**