

## SESSION UPDATES

### February 15 – Iqaluit Session

On Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 we held our final 60's Scoop survivor engagement session in Iqaluit, NU. It was an intimate session with 8 participants. Elders Natiq Kango were present and opened the session with a ceremony in Inuktitut. An Inuktitut translator was also present for survivors and facilitators needing interpretation services.

Due to the intimate and unique nature of this session, the engagement team used the day to allow participants to share their stories rather than the usual format of the engagement sessions. Throughout the day, Elders, mental health workers and the engagement team worked collaboratively together to support survivors as they shared their stories. Similarly to the Happy Valley-Goose Bay session, the group brought a focus on Inuit and Innu representation and the history of what has happened in the North.

#### *Participant Feedback*

3 participants completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Yellowknife session. Here are some results:

- 100% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views.
- 100% of participants felt heard or completely heard
- 100% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 100% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 100% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

#### *Participant Responses*

*I would like to see this Foundation to be a voice for all and represent and Indigenous equally use powerful will to deliver mandate good*

### February 8 – Yellowknife Session

On Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 we held our ninth 60's Scoop survivor engagement session in Yellowknife, NWT. It was a more intimate session with 12 participants present. Frank and Beverly Hope opened the session in a good way along with an honour song from Elder Leroy Bennet. A Dene translator was also present if any survivors needed interpretation services.

The engagement team kept to the same format as majority of the sessions.

The mental health and cultural supports did an excellent job of tending to survivors' needs and easing tensions and anxieties to create a safe space. During and after the talking circles, the mental health support workers and Elders worked collaboratively together to support survivors as they shared their stories.

Following the circles, and a tasty lunch, participants took part in a facilitated feedback process, where they were asked to provide their views and opinions on the five engagement questions. However, this time the engagement team changed the format to a roundtable to allow for a greater sense of connection within this session. Similarly to past sessions, the lead facilitators provided time and space for individuals to voice their concerns and questions during the Q&A and feedback portion towards the end of the day. Survivors who felt comfortable shared their feelings and thoughts.

#### *Participant Feedback*

6 participants completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Yellowknife session. Here are some results:

- 67% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views.
- 67% of participants felt heard or completely heard
- 84% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 84% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 100% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

#### *Participant Responses*

*“Would have liked to see more people attend, overall the meeting was good”*

### **February 1 – Vancouver Session**

On Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, we held our eighth 60's Scoop survivor engagement session in Vancouver, BC. It was our largest session to date with over 150 survivors joining us. There were four Elders present and Elder Sharon Brass, Contessa Brown, Michael Harris, and Richard Vedan begin the day with a powerful ceremony and opened the session in a good way, along with an honour song from Elder Leroy Bennett.

The engagement team kept to the same format as the previous five sessions.

We were surrounded with views of the beautiful environment of the territory of the Coast Salish peoples—Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations which lifted everyone's spirits. and following the circles, and a tasty lunch, participants took part in a facilitated feedback process, where they were asked to provide their views and opinions on the five engagement questions.

Like in all of our sessions, the mental health and cultural supports did an outstanding job creating a safe space for survivors so they felt comfortable enough to meaningful engage in the activities. Even though, it was such a large group, there was still a collective sense of community and healing following the Q&A and feedback portion of the day. Throughout the entire session, the mental health support workers and Elders worked collaboratively together to support survivors as they shared their stories.

### *Participant Feedback*

85 participants completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Vancouver session. Here are some results:

- 82% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views.
- 80% of participants felt heard or completely heard
- 87% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 96% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 86% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

### *Participant Responses*

*Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to gather with other people that experienced the child welfare system.*

*Thank you for all the time and for all of the countless hours your team has put into these engagement sessions.*

## **January 11 – Happy Valley-Goose Bay Session**

On Saturday, January 11, 2020, we held our seventh 60's Scoop survivor engagement session in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL. It was an intimate session with 9 survivors joining us from various areas of the Labrador region. Elder Leroy Bennet was present at the session, but due to the strong Inuit representation, survivors were asked to open with their own chosen prayer. Led by one of the survivors, the prayer was emotional and powerful and opened the session in a good way.

The engagement team changed the format to a roundtable to allow for greater ideation within this session. The entire group, including the team and the survivors, felt comfortable enough to meaningfully engage right from the start of the session. Similarly, to all previous sessions, during and after the talking circles, the team and Elder worked collaboratively together to support survivors as they shared their stories.

With a smaller group, the Q&A and feedback session was driven by collaboration and reflection – all participants worked together to build upon each other's ideas. Bringing a focus on Inuit and Innu representation, they expressed a positive outlook on the future work of the Foundation in supporting their healing, health and well-being as well as their communities. Some survivors took the initiative to collect contact information from other survivors attending to begin a Survivor Association group for survivors in Newfoundland & Labrador.

#### *Participant Feedback*

Every participant completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay session. Here are some results:

- 100% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views.
- 89% of participants felt heard or completely heard
- 89% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 100% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 100% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

#### *Participant Responses*

*Thank you for the opportunity to attend and meet others who have been through the same circumstance as myself and to feel connected and to have my voice heard. Thank you for coming and having us engage and be inclusive. Thank you very much.*

*Thank you for being there and incorporating Labrador.*

#### **December 7 – Saskatoon Session**

On Saturday, December 7, 2019, we held our sixth 60's Scoop survivor engagement session in Saskatoon Saskatchewan. Approximately 70 survivors from across the province joined us for the day. The morning began as usual with a traditional opening

and welcoming remarks. Elders Maria Campbell and Sanford Strongarm Sr. were provided and accepted tobacco and was requested to open the session in a good way, provide cultural support to survivor and welcome everyone to their traditional territory. As usual, Elder Leroy Bennet sang an Honor song for the survivors.

The engagement team kept to the same format as the previous five sessions. The mental health and cultural supports did an outstanding job creating a safe space for survivors so they felt comfortable enough to meaningful engagement in the activities. During and after the talking circles, the mental health support workers and Elders worked collaboratively together to support survivors as they shared their stories.

Once again the Q & A and feedback session prompted a few survivors to speak from their hearts about the impact of being taken away from their families and cultures; however, they expressed a positive outlook on the future work of the Foundation in supporting their healing, health and well-being. Some survivors took the opportunity to speak about their concerns about the current Indigenous child welfare removal system. The lead facilitators provided time and space for individuals to voice their concerns.

### *Participant Feedback*

Forty-two out of participants completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Calgary session. Here are some results:

- 85% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views.
- 81% of participants felt heard or completely heard
- 84% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 95% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 81% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

### *Participant Responses*

*Thank you for this opportunity. I will keep contact. Everything was awesome truly.*

*Everything went well and went smoothly. Coffee always on and support staff in place is very meaningful. Recommend that phones be put down or turned off.*

*The report when it's released include as much as possible.*

*Felt very acknowledged and appreciated, thank you*

*Felt like more time was spent explaining foundation than was for survivors to discuss.  
Session felt rushed*

*A beginning is beautiful*

## **November 30th – Calgary Session**

On Saturday, November 30, 2019, we held our fifth 60's Scoop survivor engagement session in Calgary, Alberta. Approximately 90 survivors from across the province joined us for the day which has been our largest turnout so far. The morning began as usual with a traditional opening and welcoming remarks. Elder Herman Many Guns and Bernadette lahtail opened the session by requesting our ancestors to support survivors as they engage in the work and welcoming the engagement team to Treaty 7 territory. Elder Leroy Bennet sang an Honor song for the survivors. Adam North Peigan, president of the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta (SSISA), addressed survivor participants and provided inspirational opening remarks that contributed greatly to setting a positive and optimistic tone to the engagement session.

The engagement team kept to the same format as the previous four sessions. There was a clear connection between survivors at the session, where many of the participants greeted each other with warm smiles and hugs. It became evident to the engagement team and the advisors the work SSISA had been conducting in the province has resulted in connecting survivors together and creating a sense of community. SSISA's work across the province illustrates the critical importance provincial and regional associations can play in bringing together and creating a community of belonging for 60's scoop survivors.

### *Participant Feedback*

Sixty-six out of participants completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Calgary session. Here are some results:

- 87% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views.
- 89% of participants felt heard or completely heard
- 97% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 99% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 95% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

### *Participant Responses*

*To be telecasted. Transportation for 60s Scoop survivors (south).Host 3 days session*

*In the introductions, it would be great for the survivors to be able to identify where their indigenous family are from or to have a map with the pins*

*Child care~ I brought my son and staff was amazing and watched him but having care for kids would be awesome!*

*It would be nice to have at least one sitting interim board member at these sessions*

*I am glad I came! I learned a lot from talking with others! Thank you!*

*Excellent session and helpful to better understand the National Sixties Scoop foundation Engage.*

*I really enjoyed the “open mic” session, the intimacy of smaller session was healing. But I think the ability to voice your stories, ideas, testaments was validating. Our very existence is our strength and our legacy to carry forward.*

## **November 16th – Toronto Session**

On Saturday, November 16, 2019, we held our fourth 60’s Scoop survivor engagement session in Toronto, Ontario. Approximately 67 survivors from across the province joined us for the day. The morning began as usual with a traditional opening and welcoming remarks. Elder Banakonda Kennedy-Kish Bell opened the session by requesting our ancestors to support survivors as they engage in the work. Elder Leroy Bennet sang an Honor song for the survivors.

The engagement team kept to the same format as the previous three sessions including engaging participants in short activities that allow them to get to know each other. Several participants arrived before the session begin and informed staff team members they were looking forward to the session and wanted to get an early start. There was a fair amount of positive energy in the room with survivor participants interacting and sharing their stories, needs and aspirations for their Foundation.

During the feedback and Q & A portion of the session, survivors built on ideas and expanded on ideas for their foundation. Some survivors took the opportunity to speak their minds about the concerns they had with the overall Indigenous Child Welfare removal system and how it continues to impact them negatively, their children and communities. They spoke passionately from their hearts and respectfully. The engagement team including the facilitators, supported survivors as they brought voice to their stories.

### *Participant Feedback*

Fifty-three out of participants completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Toronto session. Here are some results:

- 90% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views.
- 90% of participants felt heard or completely heard
- 92% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 94% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 94% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

### *Participant Responses*

*I appreciate the small group circles to start the day. This process must continue, survivors have a lot to share, and we have no had opportunities to share our stories and views. So many good ideas were shared, and it’s part of our collective healing.*

*Believe in this process and this Foundation. Excellent environment. Safety was very much taken care of.*

*Ensuring support for all members who participate in the engagement sessions. Glad to hear you can continue to engage online!*

*I only learned of this event after messages shared on social media. The content was well received and have grown personally. Thanks*

## **November 9, 2019 – Atlantic Region Session**

On Saturday, November 9, 2019, we held our third 60's Scoop survivor engagement session in the wonderful city of Halifax. Twenty-six survivors from the Atlantic region joined us for the day, despite the winter weather that prevented several survivors from travelling to attend. The morning began as usual with a traditional opening. Elder Geri Musqua-LeBlanc opened the session by asking the ancestors to support and guide the day's work. Elder Leroy Bennet sang an Honor song for the survivors.

The engagement team kept to the same format that was conducted in the previous two sessions. This session was rather unique, in terms of participants. All the participant survivors were women despite having several male survivors register for the session. The room was filled with very powerful stories and voices. The engagement team was mindful of the gender dimension and worked closely with the Elders and the Mental Health Therapist, Robyn Hazard to support survivors.

During the feedback and Q & A portion of the session, survivors expressed their interest in creating a regional network so they could maintain the connections they made at the session. The facilitators, Raven and Kenn, informed participants that there is a newly formed Facebook group called [60's Scoop Atlantic Region](#), which they could join.

### *Participant Feedback*

Twenty-one participants completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Halifax session. Here are some results:

- 86% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views
- 95% of participants felt heard or completely heard
- 91% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 100% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 91% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

### *Participant Responses*



*“The Circle sizes were perfect. It allowed everyone the opportunity to speak/tell stories. The bell worked! Thank you! and wishing you the best with the other sessions”*

*“Personally felt the sharing time wasn’t respected. Had other speaking over me which in turn shut me down. But however, once I raised my concern, I had an opportunity to speak to a therapist and felt 100% better.”*

## **October 5, 2019 – Winnipeg Session**

On Saturday October 5, 2019, we held our second 60’s Scoop survivor engagement session in Winnipeg Manitoba. Approximately 52 survivors from Winnipeg and surrounding areas joined us for the day. The morning began with a traditional opening from Elder Charlie Nelson and an honour song from Elder Leroy Bennet.

The engagement team kept to the same format that was conducted in Montreal, except for including more time for participants to introduce themselves, icebreakers and energizers. There were a few survivor participants that had never been in a room with other survivors and had never had an opportunity to share their experiences with others. The engagement team was mindful of this situation and worked with the two Elders and mental health specialist, Don Robinson and Amanda Burton, to sensitively communicate to the survivors they could access them should they require it.

### *Participant Feedback*

Thirty-two participants completed evaluation forms sharing their impressions of the Winnipeg session. Here are some results:

- 87% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable expressing their views
- 83% of participants felt heard or completely heard & understood
- 97% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 100% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected
- 94% of participants felt satisfied or completely satisfied overall

### *Participant Responses*

Participant were also asked, “What, if anything, would you like to share with us to improve the engagement session?” Here is a snapshot of a few responses:

*“Leaving with hope. Great Elder. Sharing of story excellent. Educated people – showed lots of respect. Ideas are welcomed. Appreciation acknowledged. Excellent – need more like this in FN lands. Staff should visit and present this in FN lands. More affiliations with people.”*

*“Leaders need to spread out – not all at one table. Getting people to engage more requires all the Leadership to engage, not sit off to the side. Give people the opportunity to connect – exchange contacts and network among all participants. All that being said, I heartily commend and thank you for your efforts!”*

*“Awesome team and team members. Involvement in providing feedback on our perspectives on the sticky paper was/is a true process of listening and hearing from us. Rating or prioritizing our feedback was also beneficial to me.”*

### **September 22, 2019 – Montreal Session**

On Saturday, September 22nd, we held our first 60s Scoop survivor engagement session in Montreal, Quebec. About 25 participants from Montreal, Ottawa, and surrounding areas joined us for the day. The morning began with a beautiful opening ceremony with our two Elders, Niloie:ren from Kahnawake and Leroy Bennet from Sagamok.

After some housekeeping notes and introductions by our advisors, Kenn Richard and Raven Sinclair, participants joined small sharing circles where participants could speak to their experience and what they wanted others to know about being a Sixties Scoop survivor. There was both laughter and tears. Our two Elders and experienced mental health expert, Vicky Boldo, offered support and comfort to those in need.

Following the circles, and a tasty lunch, participants took part in a facilitated feedback process, where they were asked to provide their views and opinions on five key questions:

- What should the Foundation do?
- What values should guide the Foundation?
- What are the most important skills, qualities, and experiences a Foundation board member should have?
- How do we make sure the Foundation lasts into the future?
- How should the Foundation’s identity be expressed?

Participants were also invited to share any “wild ideas” or suggestions for what the Foundation should be named.

The feedback was rich, thoughtful, and inspiring.

*Participant Feedback*

Participants were also asked to complete an engagement evaluation at the end of the day. The evaluation was developed to measure how the engagement team is performing in relation to our engagement guiding principles. One of our guiding principles is “all survivors voices, heard, valued and respected”. Participants evaluated the team:

- 88% of participants felt comfortable or completely comfortable
- 81% of participants felt they had a full opportunity to fully express their view.
- 96% of participants felt heard or completely heard & understood
- 96% of participants felt the session was meaningful or very meaningful
- 96% of participants felt their background was respected or very respected

The day closed with prayers from our Elders and the singing of the “Traveller’s Song.” As we stood together in the singing circle, there was a strong feeling of community in the room.

The Engagement Team is extremely grateful to all of those who joined us for this very first session. For those in and around Montreal who could not make it, we hope you will participate in our online engagement tool, which will be available (in both French and English) in the coming weeks.

### **August 17, 2019 – Survivor Association Meeting**

On Friday, August 17th, Advisors Kenn Richard and Raven Sinclair met with representatives of Sixties Scoop Survivor groups and associations from across the country to get their input and guidance on the engagement process. Participants included representatives from the National Indigenous Survivors of Child Welfare Network from Ottawa, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Labrador, and British Columbia, as well as representatives from the 60s Scoop Legacy of Canada based in Manitoba, the Creating Hope Society of Alberta, the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta, and the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Saskatchewan. The engagement team looks forward to hearing from more groups and individuals across the country through the national engagement process over the months ahead.