

Public Safety Report: April 2021 to September 2021

Report submitted by: Jami Tonasket, Community Safety Coordinator
Mike Ochoa, Youth Justice Worker

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Activity 1: Community Engagement

OKIB communities have experienced several (back to back) passing of membership: COVID, suicide, homicide, overdoses and loss of Elders. Our community has been greatly impacted by:

COVID 19 and Variant Confirmed cases – “Soft re-opening of offices”, essential services maintained and all staff support efforts for safety of community members on/off reserve. The Okanagan Indian Band has experienced several membership passing due to COVID 19.

Announcement of unmarked graves, May 2021

- “Evidence of a horrific act of genocide was laid bare to the world, with the confirmation of at least 215 unmarked graves of little ones who attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School”. *Source: Tk'emlups te Secwepemc, May 2021.* The Okanagan Indian Band members were sent to Kamloops Indian Residential School.
- Across the country more graves are identified of our children.
 - OKIB provides supports, healing ceremonies for our membership etc.
 - Education, Cultural Safety and confirmation of truth.

White Rock Lake Wild Fire:

- July 26th OKIB on “Alert” – OKIB evacuates Elders and membership with compromised immune systems etc.
- **August 1st to September 4th OKIB Evacuation Orders**
- **EOC and ESS enacted**
 - On-going Communications/Updates to OKIB membership
 - Supports for: accommodation, food, mental health etc.
- September 2021 to current: **Recovery Phase** – all OKIB residents returned home September 4th, 2021.
- Loss/damage: over 30+ homes damaged/loss, one major business, live stock, agriculture equipment/feed, loss of traditional medicines/wild life, fish/ceremonial sites etc.

Supports/Activities Description:

- Supports to register with ESS and navigate all supports systems including Red Cross
- Provided individual and/or family support (debriefing, grounding techniques, cultural and spiritual)
- Substance abuse, mental health services for individuals/family
- Fostering a sense of safety, healthy and resiliency with individuals/families
- Emphasize importance of community services and individual spirituality
- Appropriate group activities to promote healing, laughter, socializing etc. in a healthy manner. Laughter is medicine!

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Public Safety team has reached out for mental health supports; Okanagan Nation Response Team, to strengthen team work when addressing crisis, prevention, counselling, traditional healing and supports. By working as a team we are able to coordinate mental health service delivery, coordinate culturally appropriate service delivery, as well as promote mental health awareness to our members/families

Community Safety Planning

Comprehensive Safety Strategy:

Community Mobilization, Phase 1: “How the people of n’kmaplqs came together to re-envision a safe community” - surveyed community members on/off reserve completed. <https://okib.ca/uploads/files/2020-2021-Public-Safety-Dept.-Annual-Report.pdf>

Community Mobilization, Phase 2: “ntytyix: A time for Action”, the Public Safety Team listened to what n’kmaplqs people have said would create a safe community over the past year, hearing over 182+ voices. Next, we wrote down what we heard and witnessed and shared it in a story. “How the people of n’kmaplqs came together to re-envision a safe community”, was released in the late spring during a time where our people were in dire need of being provided with a safe space to be heard.

In this next phase, there will be movement happening in and around the community putting the voices into motion. The implementation plan of action that will mobilize change set out by the contribution of the community. We have identified recurring themes that community has identified that will create a safe home for them: the resurgence of sqilxw ways of being and life: feeling a sense of belonging; more social supports in the face of colonialism; holistic wellbeing through mental and physical health and most importantly having a safe community to nurture these things in.

Over the next several months we will meet with: Leadership, Directors/employees, Elders, Youth Leadership Council, Community Advisory Committee, Community Consultative Group etc. to define short/medium/long term action items, targets and goals, as well as tell the story of how the good work has been done so far. As a living document, we will continually seek input from community members on and off reserve over the next four years. Additionally, the community conditions and systems will be reviewed annually and adjusted according to community needs.

Activity 2: Direct Interventions and sustainability of programs, services and partnerships.

Sustainability of programs, services and partnerships that include culture, language and sense of belonging/connection.

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Youth Leadership Council – (YLC) has adopted our cultural ways of knowing that have been passed down through our captikwl. Within these stories are found our values, our protocols and our laws. This captikwl is shared in the Four Food Chiefs brought together to inform the discussion, the problem solving, the decision making and the action plan.

Perspectives of the Four Food Chiefs:

Skemxist (black bear)	tradition oriented, knowledge keeper/teacher and ties everything into culture.
Siya? (Saskatoon berry)	innovation/creative, nothing is impossible and thinks outside the box.
Ntytyix (salmon)	action oriented, find ways through barriers and efficient
Spitlem (Bitter root)	relationship oriented, aware of all the connections, inclusive and takes other into consideration.

Youth Leadership Council has their own '**Instagram**' to stay connected and have important conversations with youth and community.

YLC has developed and promoted "Get your Vaccines" campaign.

For further information: <https://okib.ca/departments/public-safety/okib-youth-council>

First Nation Justice –The Youth Justice Worker continues to provide support in dealing with the justice system, social justice, police, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, referrals to other services, counselling etc. The Public Safety team priorities are: keep people safe by reducing incarceration, promote a healthy path away from the justice involvement (referrals to health, treatment, other supportive programming), provide supports to navigate legal system and includes social justice (education, employment, housing etc.).

Community Advisory Committee - (CAC) role is to provide input and perspectives on matters that impact Okanagan Indian Band membership. A forum for more in-depth discussion of key issues, concerns or solutions and to provide advice to OKIB in developing an understanding of relevant issues: mental health, illicit drugs, alcohol, social justice etc. The OKIB Leadership and Directors seek support to address the key challenges and looking at health more holistically – acknowledging and valuing that it encompasses mental, emotional and spiritual aspects as well.

The composition of Advisory Committee is structured to provide a balance of perspectives (technical backgrounds), experts in their working capacity and are of Okanagan decent. Its composition includes: Indigenous knowledge in historical and intergenerational trauma and healing. Technical Backgrounds may include: Addictions,

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Mental Health, Social Justice, Life Skills, Health, Cultural Safety etc. The CAC will meet at least four times per year or at the request of the Public Safety Team. The CAC has developed their *vision statement*: “Push boundaries to create a foundation of healing one person, one voice and one heart at a time”.

Activity 3: Cultural Based Supports

Community informed workshops, healing circles and clients supported:

Description	Month	Average # of participants
Wellbriety	April 2021	Native Housing = 47 Shelter = 42
Clients:19 Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Klamath Falls=18 • Youth Leadership=7 		Clients = 19
Wellbriety	May 2021	Native Housing= 42 Shelter = 32
Clients:19 Sage Gathering= 12 Water Ceremony= 14		Clients= 19
Wellbriety	June 2021	Native Housing= 48 Shelter= 32
Clients:19 Vernon Immigrants Services: Sylx People=18 Okanagan College, Medicine Wheel= 15		Clients = 19
Wellbriety	July 2021	Native Housing=63 Shelter= 40
Clients:22		Clients = 22
Wellbriety	August 2021	Native Housing=42 Shelter= 32
Clients: 23		Clients = 23

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OKIB Evacuation – provided supports to community at various locations.		
Wellbriety	September 2021	Native Housing=55 Shelter=32
Clients: 23 Recovery Clients from Evacuation = 6 families		Wellbriety & Clients = 75

Next Steps:

OKIB Community Presentation in the New Year 2022: Crime, Guns, Gangs, Trafficking and Opioids Crisis. The Indigenous Policing Services is working with: Public Safety Team, Education Liaison, A/D Worker, Recreation Worker etc. to raise awareness about the realities of organized crime and the supports needed to intervene to have a safe community. All Youth, Parents, Elders and Leadership are invited to attend in-person or live stream.

Youth Leadership Council will present at OKIB Community Presentation 2022: Cathy Peters will raise awareness to the issue of Human Sex Trafficking/Sexual Exploitation for the purpose of Prostitution to the Okanagan Indian Band. Cathy's work has been introduced in the BC Legislature in spring 2018 and she has participated in 2 Federal Justice Committee Human Trafficking Roundtables (2017, 2018) in Vancouver. In response to the MMIWG Inquiry Cathy presented to the Okanagan Native Alliance (7 bands) on how to protect Indigenous women and girls (January 2020).

The YLC will develop a plan to support the second phase of community mobilization: "ntytyix: A time for Action". In a sqilxw way the perspective of action, cooperation is very important and working together can accomplish a lot. The YLC will work through discussions and develop goals and objectives to bring balance and safety to community. This is how everyone's voice gets heard and all perspectives are given equal respect and inclusion.

Mending Broken Hearts Healing Circle's began November 2021 and is intended for families who want to face unresolved grief. Unresolved grief is a significant issue in Indigenous communities. Many people have been affected by the historical and intergenerational trauma: cultures have been made "sick" by the anger, guilt, shame and fear passed on from generation to generation. The Public Safety team will be hosting the 3-day family healing circles. The participation of a maximum of 15 individual family members will determine their schedule (date/time) of healing circles, as well, we will host mixed groups. The teachings will bring to consciousness our traditional ways of decision-making, guided by our Syilx values and the teachings that can help us

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acknowledge and assume our roles within our family systems and communities. The Public Safety Team will offer these healing circles as long as community requests...

Community Advisory Committee has formally invited OKIB Leadership and Directors to meet. The CAC will draft a resolution for action and present at this meeting, specifically; education on trauma informed practices, cultural safety and humility.