

Public Safety Report: April to September 2020

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

Date: October 7, 2020

Activity 1: Community Engagement

Note: COVID 19 – OKIB closes main offices, March 16th. “Soft re-opening of offices”, June. Essential services maintained, EOS enacted, all staff support efforts for safety of community members on/off reserve. OKIB has no COVID 19.

Community Safety Planning

Comprehensive Safety Strategy – Community Mobilization, Phase 1: survey community members on/off reserve. Survey Monkey launched on OKIB website, ongoing promotion to participate in development of community driven safety plan.

OKIB communities has experienced several (back to back) passing of membership: suicide, homicides, overdoses etc. and loss of Elders. Survey will continue respectfully and by years end OKIB will have completed Phase 1 of community mobilization.

Public Safety team sequestered the support of our 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.

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.

Racism Talking Circle – participants included Elders/Knowledge Keepers and Youth (College & High School students). Collectively, it was agreed upon that racism has impacted each one of us and that we have a high capacity to tolerate racism – which we have allowed to go un-checked in our environments due to not feeling safe. We agreed that knowing who we are, where we come from and sense of belonging needs further discussion as Okanagan peoples before we expand our talking circle with non-native peoples and/or groups open to talking about “Racism in the Okanagan”. The Elders/Knowledge Keepers and Youth will continue exploring individual actions equal collective impacts that includes: Okanagan Peoples, history, others (migrant peoples) speaking up etc. The Vernon Social Planning Council and Immigrant Services will host (when OKIB is ready) to a Racism Talking Circle.

Public Safety Report: April to September 2020

FASD – Workshops designed for OKIB front-line workers and community: Myths of FASD, FASD and the brain, supporting individuals and communities – prevention. FASD Caregiver Support Groups have been developed for: parents, grandparents, loved ones, adult siblings supporting an adult with FASD. Sponsored by the FASD Okanagan Valley Assessment Society, People Place Vernon.

Youth Leadership Council – The Youth Leadership Council call-out for applications has concluded (posted for 3 months). The Youth Leadership Advisory Committee will select candidates, welcome successful applicants, make announcements to OKIB membership, Chief and Council etc. The Advisory Committee will provide support mentor, guide Youth Leadership Council. The first training for Youth Leadership Council will be Cultural Safety Education.

First Nation Justice – The Public Safety team continues to research, explore and navigate the Justice System in BC. An announcement: Canadian press, September 6, 2020: “BC planning up to 15 First Nations justice centres across the province”. The First Nations Justice Strategy launched this year. The current reality of First Nations people are over represented in the criminal justice system. The Youth Justice Worker continues to provide support in dealing with the justice system, police, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, referrals to other services, counselling etc.

Youth Transitional Housing – Partnership with Vernon Native Housing and Ministry of Children and Families to support our Youth with transitional Housing as they age-out from the Ministry. The Vernon Native Housing provides 6 units and a Youth Transition Worker who provides: supports, advocacy, life skills, mentoring, referrals etc. The Youth Justice Worker identifies gaps in service for youth transitioning from care to living on their own - to funding for the units via MCFD.

Activity 3: Cultural Based Supports

Community informed workshops, healing circles and clients supported:

Description	Month	Average # of participants
Wellbriety	April 2020	60
Clients: Youth at Risk = 2 Youth Justice = 3 Homeless = 4 Referred = 3 Crisis Line calls = 12	April 2020	Wellbriety & Clients= 84
Wellbriety	May 2020	44
Clients: Youth at Risk = 2 Youth Justice = 2	May 2020	Wellbriety & Clients= 62

Public Safety Report: April to September 2020

Homeless = 5 Referred = 4 Crisis Line = 5		
Wellbriety	June 2020	49
Clients: Youth at Risk = 2 Youth Justice = 2 Homeless = 5 Referred = 4 Female = 3 Male = 10	June 2020	Wellbriety & Clients= 62
Wellbriety	July 2020	48
Clients: Youth at Risk = 3 Youth Justice = 3 Youth Advocacy = 2 Mentor = 4 Addictions = 1 Homeless = 5	July 2020	Wellbriety & Clients = 66
Wellbriety	August 2020	38
Racism Talking Circle	August 2020	10
Masks We Wear	August 2020	10
Clients: Youth at Risk = 2 Youth Justice = 2 Addictions = 5 Homeless = 5 Mentoring = 4 Female = 7 Male = 11	August 2020	Wellbriety/Racism Circle/Masks & Clients = 76
Wellbriety Kickanee, VNH = 38 Homeless = 20 Public Safety office = 15	September 2020	73
Clients: Youth Justice = 3 Youth at Risk = 3 Addiction support = 3 Homeless support = 5 Advocate = 1 Mentor = 4 Female = 6 Male = 13	September 2020	Wellbriety & Clients = 92

Public Safety Report: April to September 2020

Next Steps:

Cultural Safety Training – Cultural Safety Educators Eric Mitchell and Chris Marchand will for the first time train 10 OKIB members in Cultural Safety Education > October 2020.

- Session 1: Who we are? Positive pre-contact about Okanagan/Syilx Peoples
- Session 2: Canada's Hidden History – the political, legal structure and impositions on Okanagan/Syilx Peoples
- Session 3: Understanding Truth & Reconciliation – a dialogue necessary to understand our truths as Okanagan/Syilx
- Session 4: Community Engagement – to celebrate our past, live in present and visualize our future as Okanagan/Syilx

Youth Traditional Games – reconnecting sqaylxw people to traditional ways of being through physical movement by: ensuring Syilx rooted traditional games are relevant and continuously practiced. Empowering to attain the highest level possible to be physically active, fun, inclusive personal growth, land-based and building meaningful relationships. Movement is medicine!

Cultural Based Supports – continue with workshops, healing circles, balanced cultural activities etc.: Mending Broken Hearts series, Racism Talking Circles, Medicine Wheel, Wellbriety on/off reserve, One-on-One supports/advocacy etc.

Public Safety Open House – invite community membership, partners etc. to Public Safety Office to introduce the Public Safety Team: Community Safety Coordinator, Youth Justice Worker, Youth Support Worker and Indigenous Police

Comprehensive Community Safety Planning – respectful inclusion of community members on/off reserve to complete surveys.