



**Okanagan Indian Band**

**Public Safety Department**

**Annual Report 2020-2021**


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**How the people of  
n'kmaplqs came together  
to re-envision a safe  
community**

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*We would like to acknowledge the OKIB members of  
n'kmaplqs for their commitment to creating a safe  
community.*





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# First, let's point out how you made our community safer this year...



The PSD has intervened and implemented safety measures for Elders in situations where abuse was occurring thanks to the community for bringing it to our attention

PSD collaborated with other departments to provide accurate GPS coordinates for a quicker response time in the event of an emergency.

We heard from the community that suspicious activities were causing concerns, so while a more in-depth solution is being planned we put up four Safety signs to remind visitors that we are a watchful community and will always keep an eye out for one another.



With racism still a problem in 2021 the Youth Leadership program began to train in anti-racism in an effort to one day facilitate training in the City of Vernon.

With increased traffic throughout the community it has made for unsafe driving, issues like speeding have seen many livestock killed on the open range. The PSD is now implementing a community-led speed trap initiative that will see speeders receive fines while working alongside the RCMP liaison Cst. Kyle Camalush.



The community asked for accountability for unsafe drivers around children accessing bus services, the call was met with installing cameras on the school buses that travel through the community.



# What we heard members tell us would make a safer community



**'Love, like, and protect each other,' this happens when we feel control of what happens to where we live.**



*-Chris Marchand & Eric Mitchell*

## ***A Comprehensive Safety Strategy 1 Year Check-In***

### **The Intention**

The Public Safety Department (PSD) was formed in recognition of the importance of healing and educating our children, youth and their families who have been impacted by trauma and/or crime.

The intention of developing a Comprehensive Safety Strategy (CSS) is to have a plan of action that will mobilize change set out by the contributions of the community.

In the past year, the CSS has been actively engaged in listening to all voices of the community with the goal to come to a collaborative consensus around one question.

***What does a safe community look like for you?***





For our community to come to a consensus on this topic means that we together, in solidarity, agree to move forward in action of the outcome we have all collectively contributed to. Creating responsibility and purpose both individually and as a collective people on our homelands.

Coming to a collective understanding means the solution belongs to all of us.

Setting our intentions in a good way for those yet to come is a prayer that the decision of what a safe community is is done for the betterment of all- now, and, for future generations.

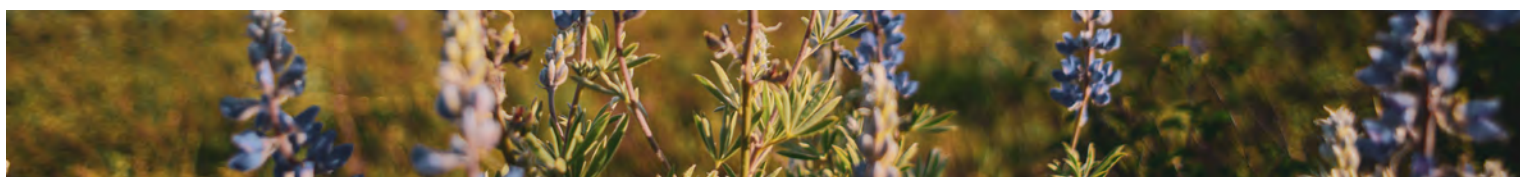
### **The Process of Coming to a Consensus**

Community members on/off-reserve have been participating in the development of the Comprehensive Safety Strategy.

Using a holistic and collaborative approach we invited everyone from the community to speak with us and share their contributions in a personal, respectful manner that honoured their experiences and voices.

Engagement is integral to ensure culturally safe services that people access and thrive from in all areas: mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically.

We value the community as the experts of what it means to cultivate a safe space. So we offered a variety of ways to participate: in person, zoom, by email, online survey monkey and/or handwritten input – respecting the ways in which people want to contribute during these times. We also engaged in virtual meetings with post-secondary students, Youth Leadership Council, OKIB Departments, individuals, families - community members on/off-reserve used all methods to give their offerings.





□□ **A very powerful symbol of a safe community would be a vision of kids playing organized sports, families enjoying themselves into the summer evening where everyone is feeling seen and appreciated.** □□

- Terry Harris

### Community Mobilization Framework

- Changing Community Conditions and Systems for families to have a greater awareness of positive achievements, supports, learning about relationships and problem-solving.
- Analysis of change in Behavior and Risk Factors - It's important that the community and individuals have a 'sense of belonging', greater awareness of supports and have a greater understanding of crime, victimization, drugs and vulnerable people in the community.
- Community recommendations put into Short/Med/Long term targets/goals

### What will do with the collective consensus?

Together we will use the collective consensus to establish a clear and validated understanding of a sense of community in order to develop programs that have been rooted in the shared vision and goals set - strengthening and preserving community.

### Community Engagement Results

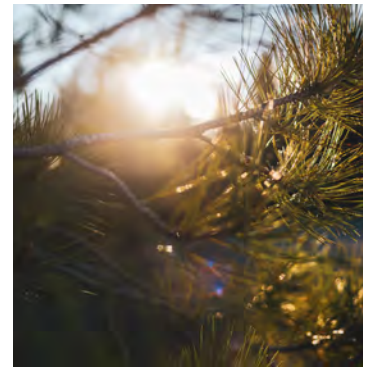
The Community Consultative Group (CCG – 4 volunteers) reviewed all comments from the community to look for key themes and to begin drafting the shared vision.





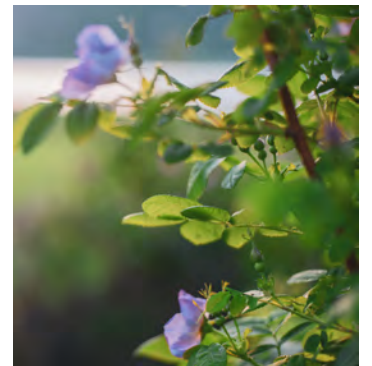
It is important to note/acknowledge that there are traditional spokespersons for families, who identified as such; “I speak for my family”.

We acknowledge those important roles and know who to contact in each family to communicate and in return, they will relay the message and/or get back to you with what was decided upon.

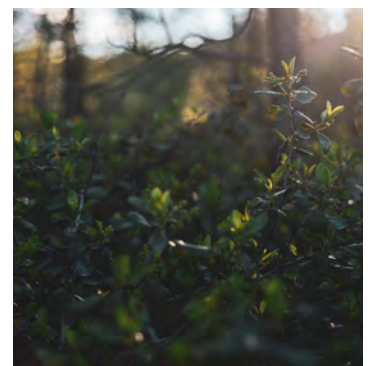


***Overall, approximately 182+ gave their contributions to the collective discussion of, ‘What does a safe community look like to you?’***

As a living document, we will continually seek input, respecting each person’s voice and their ownership of developed goals over the next four years. Also, to honour people’s voices, all working documents and community input have been archived for future reference. We have a living document that will continually evolve to meet the needs of our membership on/off-reserve.



Please note that throughout all the identified themes: Inadequate communication of programs, services, access, policy etc. is a consistent issue identified. We are accountable to the community we serve and are focusing on the solution.





# Here's what we heard so far...

## Traditional

**The community has identified that implementing traditional way's of being is crucial to the success and healing of each individual, which in turn is healing the collective**

- More engagement is needed with School District 22 to implement culture into all curriculum.
- Protect our lands, water, animals – territorial stewardship is a responsibility of all however it is imperative that each person feels safe on the lands to be able to gather foods, medicines etc.
- Environmental protection is needed for the animals, plants, water, people etc.
- Conservational bodies need to engage in cultural awareness training and Memorandum Of Understanding with OKIB
- It's been identified that it's important to know who the 'head of family' or spokespersons are for collective communications, so it's important to continue to gather names/contacts for all families to be included in activities/gatherings.
- Offer the ceremonial puberty training which will embed each young person with their purpose and will inherently create responsibility and belonging.
- Train the young ones/youth to gather & preserve foods, medicine and the ceremony of sharing with the community.
- Sharing funeral protocols so grief processes are respected and honoured, things such as; support for all families, training for young adults, teaching how to make markers, gravesite preparation, the importance of traditional foods and offering those foods while they are grieving, equitable support for every family/individual etc.
  - "In a good way" teachings when supporting family, preparing food, burial
  - Include all Elders from the different families – invite to participate, share, or just be present
- Acknowledge Elders/Knowledge Keepers and holders are not defined by age
- Support each individual/family for foods, medicines, visiting, and wellness check-in.
- Normalize asking individuals/families to join you to gather food, medicine etc. as was once done collectively
- Acknowledge that not everyone has a vehicle or transportation to hunt or has firearms, so it's important to provide the PALS program annually



☐☐ **More lateral violence prevention needs to take place within the community from band administration to families as a means to healing and wellness.**

☐☐

## **Sense of Belonging**

**To belong gives each individual a purpose, this purpose is needed for any community to thrive, honouring the gifts and skills each individual has and how important each person is - to belong is to preserve life and preserve Syilx ways of being**

- Ensure the Inclusivity of all cultures, remembering the importance of feeling welcomed and safe to participate as part of the collective community.
- Acknowledge that we have cultural practices
- Sense of pride, by supporting the wellbeing of each individual and family
  - Community Clean-ups, social gatherings where each person has a role, etc.
- Everyone getting together to remember the power in unity
  - Traditional feast more often
  - Private Cultural Camps for members of the community where sensitive teachings that belong to us can be shared
- Acknowledge holidays (Indigenous and Western) and mark the significance of Solstice
- Clear and identifiable markings of who we are
  - Community buildings/sites clearly showcase our culture, sense of pride, who we are and that we are beautiful.
  - Update the OKIB sign
- It's important to remember the value of being accepted by your community through various individual identifiers such as:
  - Honouring gender identity and sexual orientations
  - Remembering our own history
  - Upholding family names
  - Being mindful that no matter the skin tone we are still Syilx
  - Community-driven 'Asset map' of what gifts and skills each person carries as a contributor to the collective



## Social Supports

**It's important to acknowledge how in modern times and under systems of oppression and colonialism we can move about our journeys in a safe way.**

- Transportation is needed
- Clean and livable housing
- Community Safe Home for women, kids/youth, men, elders etc.
- Lateral violence awareness and lateral kindness teachings
- Clearer communication of what all supports, programs and services are available
  - Communicate in all forms: mail, email, social media sites, website etc.
- Staff/employee supports, education, awareness, competency
- Cultural safety awareness for non-Indigenous staff
- More programs, services and supports to communities
  - Round Lake/Salmon River, Duck Lake, off-reserve etc
- Youth Centre is needed
- All subdivisions need children/youth playgrounds
- Safe social media sites – safe from lateral violence
- Protect our health resources
- Access for OKIB members should be prioritized
- Equitable services for all on/off-reserve
- Employees/directors/managers/leadership should be accountable to the community in a way that honours the role they sit in. It is imperative they display that accountability through timely and respectful communications to individuals and families utilizing teachings of lateral kindness.
- First responders/dispatch/RCMP – need to be educated on jurisdictional boundaries for example Round Lake and Salmon River are considered grey areas of who responds. This is unacceptable when time is of essence (life/death).
- Community safety planning
  - Defined steps for reporting, action, in-action/barriers, laws, education support, follow-up etc.
- Traditional modelling of social support, safe communities etc.
- The importance of working together with leadership to develop safety plans that are tailored to the geographic area, understanding and honouring that those who access the lands are experts of those lands.

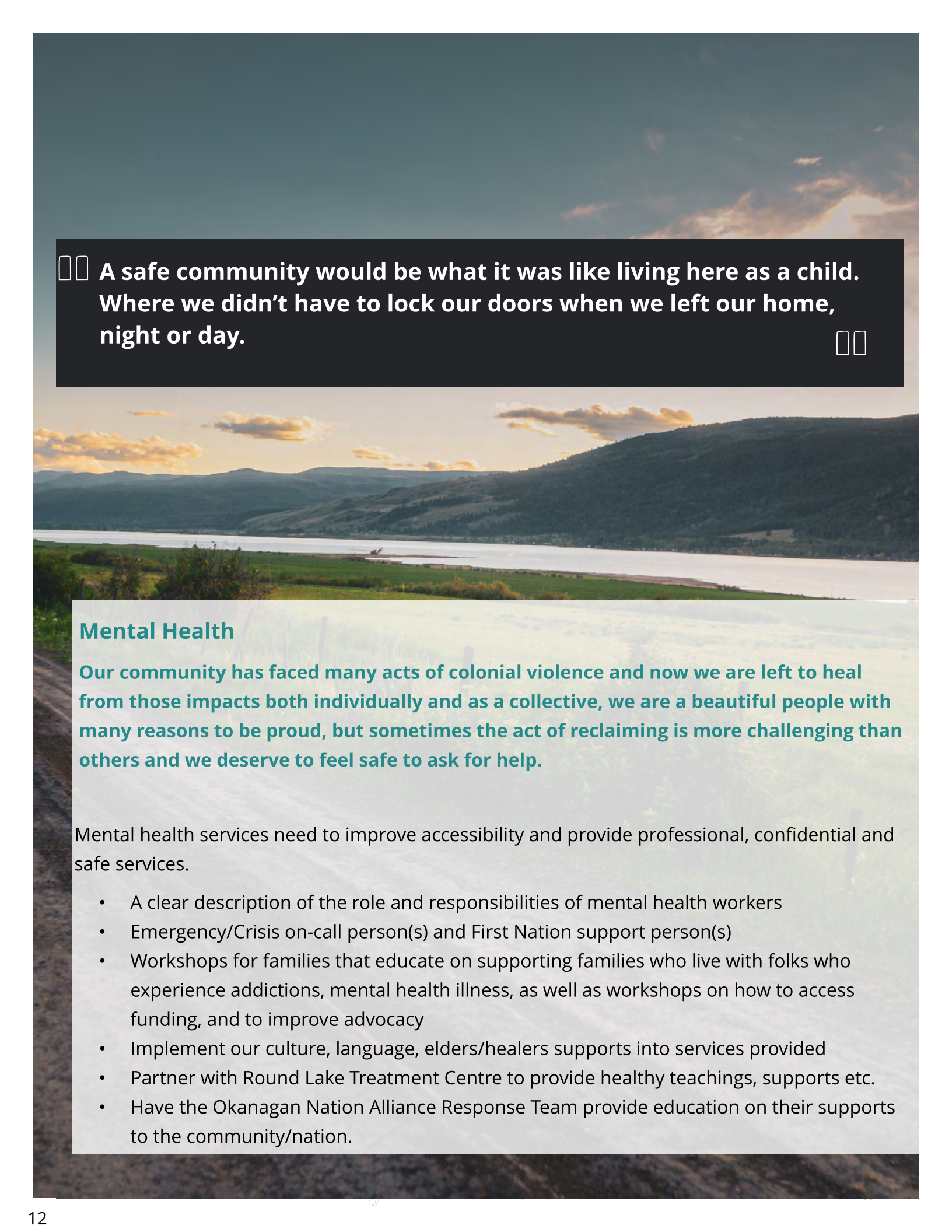


## Health Care and Healthy Living

**Each person's physical health is vital to the balancing of overall health, without good physical health it is difficult to honour your mental health, care for your emotional well-being, and can affect one's ability to connect to your spiritual well-being.**

- It's important to provide Naloxone kits and training for proper use. It's also of equal importance to acknowledge supports for the person providing Naloxone who may be giving it to a family member, close friend or community member.
- People must be provided with clean and safe access to drinking water.
- In order to be able to work towards solutions and also to celebrate the successes, OKIB Reports should communicate the statistics, demographics, persons served, barriers etc.
  - Health, Wellness, Alcohol and drugs
  - Education
  - Social development
  - Housing
- It's important to educate Interior Health on our Syilx culture
  - Use of our traditional medicines
  - Indigenous healing methodology
- OKIB Health Care to include our healing methods, medicines, social supports, cultural and spiritual teachings – led by our people.
- Food security – for all membership (individuals, people with disabilities, Elders, and families)
  - Access to garden
  - Wild game and fish
  - Berries
  - Plants/teas/roots
- Housing units/rentals that are safe for women, children, elders, and people with disabilities etc. Some of those identified safety needs are having units accessible, with safety alarms/cameras, and generators
- Free zone for alcohol or drug use - support people who are on a healing path
- Homecare supports for holidays/weekends/pandemics etc.
- Health care services reinstated e.g. blood tests





□□ **A safe community would be what it was like living here as a child. Where we didn't have to lock our doors when we left our home, night or day.** □□

## **Mental Health**

**Our community has faced many acts of colonial violence and now we are left to heal from those impacts both individually and as a collective, we are a beautiful people with many reasons to be proud, but sometimes the act of reclaiming is more challenging than others and we deserve to feel safe to ask for help.**

Mental health services need to improve accessibility and provide professional, confidential and safe services.

- A clear description of the role and responsibilities of mental health workers
- Emergency/Crisis on-call person(s) and First Nation support person(s)
- Workshops for families that educate on supporting families who live with folks who experience addictions, mental health illness, as well as workshops on how to access funding, and to improve advocacy
- Implement our culture, language, elders/healers supports into services provided
- Partner with Round Lake Treatment Centre to provide healthy teachings, supports etc.
- Have the Okanagan Nation Alliance Response Team provide education on their supports to the community/nation.



## Safe Community

**Healing cannot happen in an environment that doesn't feel safe, it's crucial to have that feeling of safety, and to be provided with the Emergency services that honour that call to action**

- RCMP and Indigenous Policing Service
  - Increase presence: Get rid of drug dealers, gangs etc.
- Implement a designated safety alert system to notify all community members of emergencies in the community
- Need more speed traps, more speed signs etc.
- Provide education/training on:
  - When to contact RCMP, Ambulance, Fire, OKIB Bylaw
  - What to expect when calling 911 Dispatch
- All OKIB Buildings need more security, such as security people, lighting on buildings/parking lots, cameras on buildings/parking lots, alarms etc.
- Designated safe buildings for community members
- Bylaw, policy, patrol, enforcement etc.
  - Parks, rangelands, OKIB properties
  - Squatters removed
  - Illegal dumping signs/cameras
  - Aggressive animal removal
- The community needs to open the conversations around sexual abuse, sexual offenders and how to now deal with those harms both in the current and from the past
- Elder Abuse has been an ongoing issue, more knowledge needs to be shared about what is Elder abuse? How to recognize it, and action plans and strategies
- Road maintenance
- Clear brush that impacts safety
- Ensure that all signs are visible such as speed signs, pedestrians, kids playing, turtle crossing etc.
- Street lights for subdivisions
- Implement Community Block Watch and training
- Cannabis Dispensaries in community
  - Get rid of all pot shops
  - Ensure compliance with OKIB Bylaws
- Public Works should increase clean up discarded needles on all playgrounds, parks, schools, beaches and public spaces.
- Safe Community Preparedness: education, training, supports, individual responsibilities etc.
  - Fire, flood, winter storms, power outage, the dangerous person(s)
  - Community evacuation or lockdown plans



## Next steps....

1. The direction will be given to Directors, Managers and Leadership who will implement the collective consensus
  - A. Community input will be organized into Short, Medium and Long term targets/goals
  - B. Community Conditions and Systems will be reviewed annually and adjusted according to community needs
2. As a living document, we will continually seek input from community members on/off-reserve over the next four years.



**Things have changed where Elders are being abused in our community. Elder protection would make our community safer.**





# Now let's take a moment to see who makes up our community currently...

*From: Jan 1/2021 to: March 16/2021*

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Under 1	0	0	0
1-5 years	34	19	53
6-13 years	109	84	193
14-17 years	53	47	100
18-29 years	169	175	344
30-39 years	171	165	336
40-49 years	134	132	266
50-59 years	138	161	299
60-64 years	59	79	138
65-84 years	120	167	287
Over 84 years	10	13	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>2,039</b>

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
On-Reserve	482	428	910
Off-Reserve	494	599	1,093
Other Reserve	21	15	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>2,039</b>

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Births	0	0	0
Deaths	1	2	3

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Voter Eligibility	780	864	1,644



**Walking down the moccasin trail over to the Public Safety Department in n'kmaplqs, we hear from the team to see what they've been up to this year...**



Jamie Tonasket, mother, wife, friend, aunty, and dedicated member of the community is the Community Safety Coordinator and has been working tirelessly to ensure she is hearing from all voices in the community and advocating for change at a policy level.

She currently sits on at seven tables;

- Vernon Social Planning Council
- Vernon Cultural Audit Team
- OKIB Community Consultative Group
- Indigenous Cultural Advisory Committee, BC RCMP
- Local Immigration and Partnership Council
- OKIB Youth Leadership Council
- Interior Health Indigenous Community Representative
- FASD Okanagan Valley Assessment and Support Society





Michael Ochoa, Youth Justice Worker, a syilx man whose story inspires many, has been on the frontlines advocating for change for youth and other members of the community from a place of knowing. His [story](#) brings him full circle to where he is now and is now the root for the work he does of advocating and facilitating with the goal to build up the people and bring unity.

Mike who sits at nine tables;

- Vernon Native Housing, Board of Director
- Okanagan Nation Response Team
- Wellbriety Facilitator
- Vernon Social Planning Council
- Vernon Cultural Audit Team
- Local Immigration and Partnership Council
- OKIB Community Consultative Group
- OKIB Youth Leadership Council

FASD Okanagan Valley Assessment and Support Society



**Here are just some of the department's contribution to the collective efforts of creating a safe community:**

- Listened to hundreds of voices placing focused attention to the collective contributions of each person the team spoke to or engaged with for the development of the Community Safety Strategy.
  - Gathering data, research, and archiving important contributions that will not only contribute to the final outcome but will continue to provide guidance in the future.
- Worked in partnership with FASD Okanagan Valley Assessment Society, People Place Vernon to have 5 OKIB community members sponsored for assessments.
- Even during times of pandemic, the department found ways to deliver much-needed workshops and groups such as; FASD awareness for OKIB employees, FASD Caregiver Support Group was developed; Racism Talking Circles, Cultural Safety Training, and continuing Wellbriety meetings
- Implementing solution-focused responses to concerns raised by the community over the past year as shared on Page 1.
- Liaising with the Vernon School District #22 to address ongoing concerns of racism with



the hopes to bridge the gap by utilizing OKIB-led innovative solutions alongside the Youth Leadership group

- Wellness checks have also been performed to lower the need for RCMP engagement with the community
- Nurtured partnerships 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 Public Safety team continues to research, explore and navigate the Justice System in BC. The current reality of First Nations people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. 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, Gladue Reports etc.

Although this list just scratches the surface of the work completed you can find a more exhaustive list on the [website](#).



## Indigenous Policing and Reconciliation

Constable Kyle Camalush is the RCMP Liaison Officer, Indigenous Policing Service, is there to support the initiatives set by the community and the PSD to ensure that if protection services should be required he is there.

Cst Camalush is a part of Indigenous Policing Services, he recognizes that relations between Indigenous communities, including OKIB, and RCMP have had a stark history. His role is here to build on a new relationship while also contributing to the community's vision of safety in whatever capacity that may be needed.

In the past year, Cst Camalush has heard the community concerns around increased traffic and dangerous driving, particularly around the morning bus route. So he has increased presence during those hours, he continues to ensure there is an increase in traffic safety.



# Youth Leadership Council

**Now, we shift our focus to the future. Let's check in with the Youth because they are doing amazing things and have been working hard to become the leaders of tomorrow, while also contributing to the transformation of our community.**

Over the past year, the Youth Leadership Council was developed in order to engage youth to be actively involved in the decisions that will shape their lives, family, community and Nation.

The goal was to meet the needs of reclaiming community by forming a council with the intention of listening to youth voices for their innovative solutions and creative input on situations that will impact the community and their futures.



So let's take a glance at how this council was formed; it began in 2020 where a vote was held to choose the current day council.

The Youth Leadership Council is guided by a [Terms of Reference](#) that clearly outlines how they are to go about business.

The Youth Leadership Council positively supports, strengthens, advocates and addresses social, economic, cultural and community issues facing youth today. The Council participates in Council to Council meetings to raise awareness about issues concerning them and bring forth recommendations to the Chief and Council who will make final decisions on actionable items.

The group took part in important work that would lay the foundation for facilitating Anti-Racism workshops to various institutes, organizations, or whoever requested it.

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 unchecked in our environments due to not feeling safe. We agreed that knowing who we are, where we come from and a 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”.

***There is a strong knowing that the education about Syilx Peoples needs to come from Syilx Peoples.***

The Cultural Safety Training was done through the wisdom and teachings of Cultural Safety Educators, Eric Mitchell and Chris Marchand, who trained ten OKIB members and the Youth Leadership Council in Cultural Safety Education.

Discussed was, ‘Who we are? Positive pre-contact about Okanagan/Syilx Peoples’; ‘Canada’s Hidden History – the political, legal structure and impositions on Okanagan/Syilx Peoples’; ‘Understanding Truth & Reconciliation – a dialogue necessary to understand our truths as Okanagan/Syilx’; and ‘Community Engagement – to celebrate our past, live in present and visualize our future as Okanagan/Syilx.’



## Message from the Youth

*The OKIB Youth Leadership Council (YLC) aspires to provide opportunities for young adults in our community by developing leadership skills, training and capacity building, and creating and maintaining meaningful relationships and professional partnerships. This year the YLC has taken training in cultural safety, leadership, and we have met with other First Nations youth councils to learn from their experiences. Hopefully, Covid-19 restrictions will be lifted soon and we can go back to doing things in person at full capacity. The YLC is looking forward to partaking in canoe journeys, creating space to learn about culture and language, and engaging with our community and organizations.*

*The current governance model for the YLC is based on the 4 food chiefs, wherein there are four positions currently that are tied to each skimxist (board chair), spitlum (co-chair), n'titxw (treasurer) and siya' (secretary). The YLC is open to having more members aboard and we are still growing and feeling out what works best. Our largest concern is getting connected to the youth in our community and having meaningful engagements while having the guidance of our elders.*

*It is our goal that we will bear witness to a resurgence of our culture and nation, that our people can live with purpose and walk with inner balance, and through shared teachings, we can create greater unity which will last for generations as our legacy.*

*Justen Peters, nskemxistcn, OKIB Leadership Council - Board Chair*



# Meet the Youth Leadership Council...

## Co-Chairs

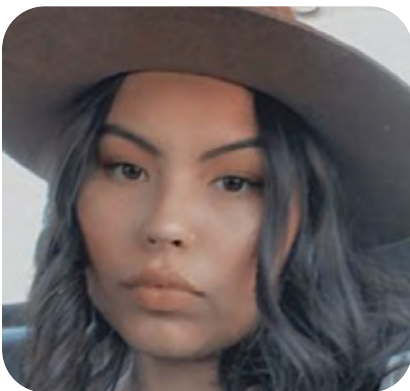


**Tyara Marchand**

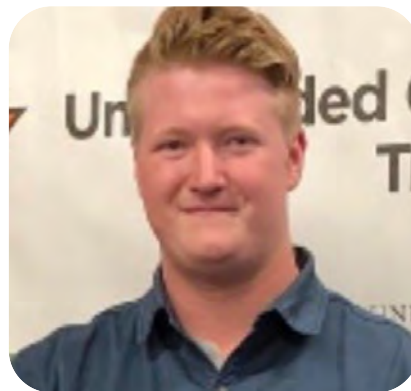


**Justen Peters**

## Council Members



**Taijah Clough**

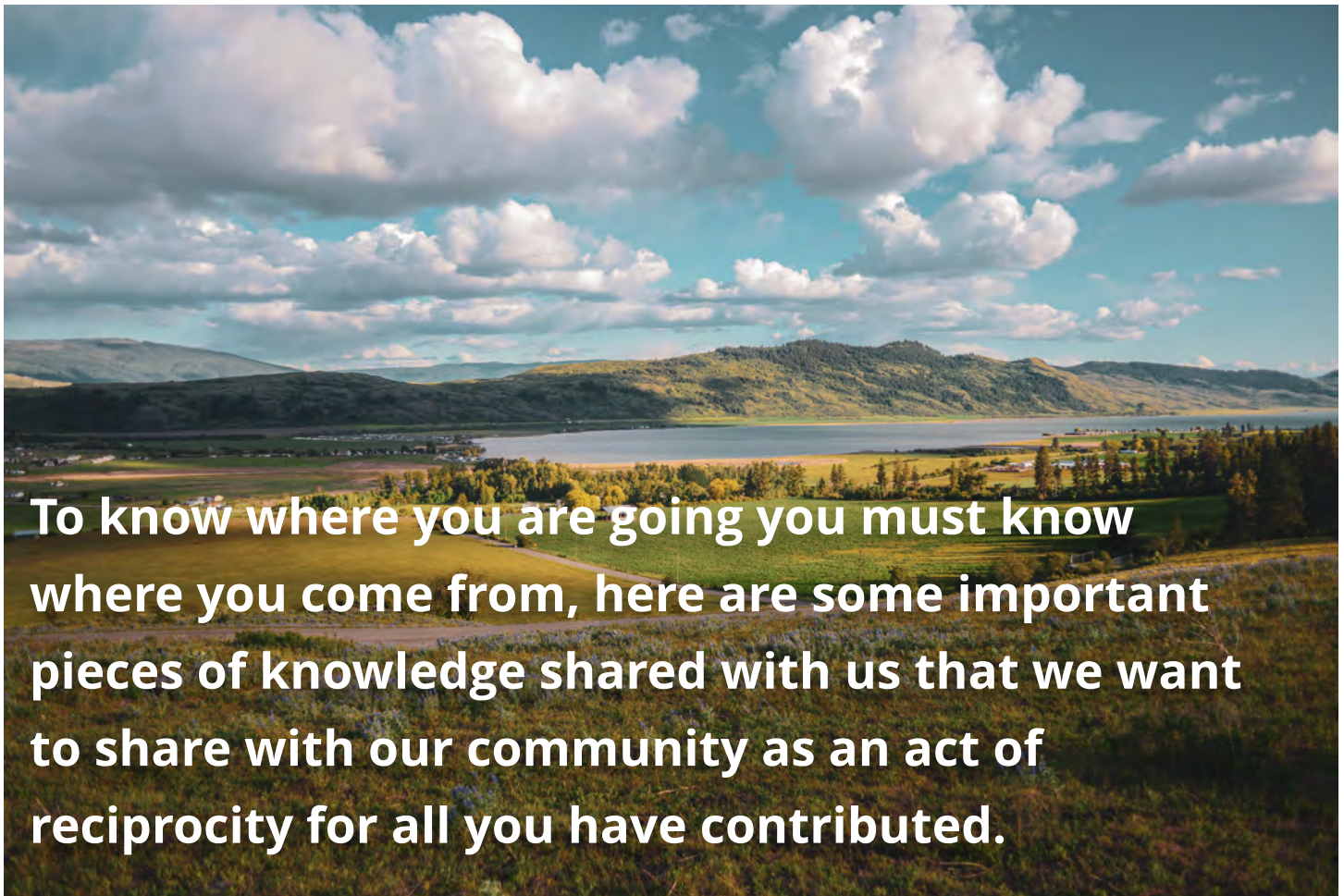


**Kaylan Lawrence**



**Kayla Ochoa**

[Please See Full Youth Write-Ups Here](#)



**To know where you are going you must know where you come from, here are some important pieces of knowledge shared with us that we want to share with our community as an act of reciprocity for all you have contributed.**

List was gathered by a collective of Elders, some who have passed now, Eric Mitchell share's this list he transcribed, see a full list [here](#).

Okanagan	Translation	Now known as
naḡəḡənḡwinaʔk	unknown	Nahun
siswłk <sup>w</sup>	little drink place	near Terrace mtn road
aksíkməqsəm	point of land	Fintry Delta
snk <sup>ʷ</sup> niʔutiyaʔtn	grabbed near here	Shorts Creek
akłilik <sup>w</sup> lxqn	place of mtn sheep	Terrace mtn
k <sup>ʷ</sup> sunk	island	at Carrs landing
snq <sup>w</sup> ʕaip	bay	Ewings landing
łq <sup>w</sup> q <sup>w</sup> aqintn	unknown	Sugarloaf mtn
nq <sup>w</sup> łinəm	place of birch	Whitemans creek
stłkmaqs	point of land	Whitemans Delta
pqpqisaʔxən	many white rocks	pole wharf area
ćəćqłpinaʔk	little firs on sidehill	near Robins place
spuł <sup>ʷ</sup> mis	little end of bush	Alexis beach area



**This is how the people of n'kmaplqs came together to re-envision a safe community and the story of how the good work has been done so far.**

**Together we collectively raised our voices to contribute to the safety and well-being of those we cherish in our homelands.**

**Acknowledging our Youth, our Mothers, our Fathers, and our Elders for ensuring these conversations take place in a good way.**

**And for as long as the sun shines, the rain falls, and the people's hearts beat, the well-being of the Syilx Peoples will be collectively cared for.**

Compiled by: Jamie Tonasket & Michael Ochoa

Creative Contributions by: Kelsie Kilawna (Marchand)



Public Safety  
Canada

Sécurité publique  
Canada

