

Healing in the Kitchen Program

Fort McKay Metis Nation – 2024 UCW Healing Initiative

The Fort McKay Métis Nation’s proposal to the United Churches Healing Fund seeks to address the profound impacts of intergenerational trauma stemming from the residential school system within our community. Our comprehensive project encompasses a series of ten workshops centered on traditional healing practices, augmented by communal dinner meals, and a revitalized iteration of our successful Healing in the Kitchen program.

Our primary goal is to create a culturally affirming and supportive space for healing, reconciliation, and holistic well-being. Through the workshops, we aim to empower community members to reclaim their Métis identity, strengthen resilience, and foster meaningful connections with their cultural heritage and each other.

Building on the success of our previous Healing in the Kitchen program, we plan to reintroduce this initiative with enhancements aimed at maximizing impact and participant engagement. We will bring in additional facilitators with expertise in Métis culinary traditions, expanding the breadth of knowledge and skills shared with participants. Based on feedback and evaluation from previous iterations, we have identified areas for improvement and will implement strategies to enhance the program’s effectiveness and relevance.

Furthermore, we recognize the importance of hands-on learning experiences in facilitating meaningful connections with Métis culture and traditions. As such, we have redesigned the workshops to incorporate more interactive and experiential elements, allowing participants to actively engage with traditional healing practices. Whether it’s preparing herbal remedies, participating in sweat lodge ceremonies, or crafting traditional Métis dishes, participants will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in culturally relevant activities that promote healing and well-being.

The inclusion of communal dinner meals in each workshop serves multiple purposes. Not only does it provide a nourishing and culturally relevant dining experience for participants, but it also fosters a sense of community and solidarity. Sharing meals together offers opportunities for informal learning, relationship building, and mutual support, further enriching the healing journey for all involved.

By combining traditional healing practices, communal dining experiences, and the revitalized Healing in the Kitchen program, our project offers a holistic and culturally grounded approach to addressing the impacts of residential schools. We are confident that these initiatives will contribute to the empowerment, resilience, and well-being of the Fort McKay Métis Nation community, aligning closely with the objectives of the United Churches Healing Fund to support initiatives that promote healing and reconciliation for Indigenous peoples.

Project Goals

The goals of our project are multifaceted, aiming to address the enduring impacts of intergenerational trauma from the residential school system while fostering reconciliation, healing, and community well-being within the Fort McKay Métis Nation. These goals align closely with the objectives of the Healing Fund and contribute to the broader process of reconciliation in several key ways.

Facilitate Healing and Reconciliation

Our primary goal is to provide access to culturally relevant healing modalities that acknowledge the historical trauma experienced by Indigenous communities, including the Fort McKay Métis Nation. By offering workshops rooted in Métis culture and traditions, we aim to support individuals on their healing journey and promote reconciliation within our community. Through experiential learning and participation in traditional healing practices, participants can begin to heal from the wounds inflicted by the residential school system, fostering a sense of empowerment and agency in the process.

Empower Community Members

Another goal of our project is to empower community members to reclaim their cultural identity, strengthen resilience, and build meaningful connections with their heritage and each other. By providing opportunities for hands-on learning and communal dining experiences, we create a supportive environment where participants can learn from one another, share stories, and build relationships. Empowering community members to actively engage in their healing journey is crucial for fostering a sense of ownership and agency, contributing to the broader process of reconciliation by amplifying Indigenous voices and perspectives.

Promote Holistic Well-being

Our project prioritizes holistic well-being by addressing the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of health. Through workshops focused on traditional healing practices, participants can explore holistic approaches to healing that integrate Métis cultural teachings and values. By promoting holistic well-being, we aim to support participants in achieving balance and wholeness in their lives, contributing to their overall health and resilience. This emphasis on holistic well-being is central to the reconciliation process, recognizing that healing is not just an individual journey but also a collective one that encompasses all aspects of a person's well-being.

Build Community Resilience and Solidarity

Finally, our project seeks to strengthen community resilience and solidarity by providing opportunities for communal learning, sharing, and support. Through the communal dinner meals and interactive workshops, participants can come together as a community to break bread, build relationships, and support one another on their healing journey. By fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity within the Fort McKay Métis Nation, we contribute to the

broader process of reconciliation by promoting community cohesion and resilience in the face of historical and ongoing challenges.

In summary, the goals of our project align closely with the objectives of the Healing Fund and contribute to the broader process of reconciliation by providing access to culturally relevant healing modalities, empowering community members, promoting holistic well-being, and building community resilience and solidarity. Through these efforts, we aim to support the healing and reconciliation of the Fort McKay Métis Nation community and contribute to the broader goal of reconciliation in Canada.

Project Objectives

The project objectives are specific, measurable goals that outline what we aim to achieve through the implementation of our healing workshops and communal dining experiences. These objectives are designed to guide our efforts and ensure that we are effectively addressing the needs of the Fort McKay Métis Nation community while aligning with the broader goals of the Healing Fund.

Increase Access to Traditional Healing Practices

Our first objective is to provide community members with access to culturally relevant healing modalities rooted in Métis culture and traditions. By offering workshops on herbal medicine, sweat lodge ceremonies, storytelling, and other traditional practices, we aim to increase awareness and utilization of these healing methods within the community.

Empower Community Members to Reclaim Cultural Identity

We seek to empower participants to reclaim their Métis cultural identity and heritage by providing opportunities for hands-on learning and engagement with traditional practices. Through experiential workshops and communal dining experiences, we aim to foster a sense of pride, connection, and belonging among participants.

Promote Holistic Well-being

Our project aims to promote holistic well-being by addressing the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of health. We will provide workshops that address these dimensions, such as self-care and healthy living, traditional healing from loss, and the medicine wheel and holistic healing, to support participants in achieving balance and wellness in their lives.

Facilitate Healing from Intergenerational Trauma

One of our key objectives is to facilitate healing from the intergenerational trauma inflicted by the residential school system. Through culturally relevant healing practices, storytelling, and communal support, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment for participants to address and heal from past traumas.

Strengthen Community Connections and Solidarity

We aim to strengthen community connections and solidarity by providing opportunities for communal learning, sharing, and support. Through communal dinner meals and interactive workshops, we seek to foster a sense of belonging and unity within the Fort McKay Métis Nation community.

Evaluate and Improve Program Effectiveness

Finally, we aim to evaluate the effectiveness of our program and make necessary improvements based on participant feedback and outcomes. By collecting data on participant satisfaction, knowledge gain, and changes in well-being, we will continuously assess and refine our program to better meet the needs of the community.

Overall, these project objectives guide our efforts to support healing, empowerment, and reconciliation within the Fort McKay Métis Nation community, while aligning with the broader goals of the Healing Fund.

List of Workshops to be offered throughout the Healing in the Kitchen Program.

1. **Herbal Medicine and Plant Healing:** Explore Indigenous herbalism by identifying medicinal plants and engaging in traditional healing ceremonies.
2. **Healing Practices through Storytelling:** Share healing stories, explore emotional well-being, and strengthen community connections through traditional storytelling.
3. **Sweat Lodge Ceremony:** Experience the history and healing benefits of the sweat lodge, fostering spiritual and physical well-being.
4. **Traditional Jigging and Movement Therapy:** Engage in traditional Métis dance forms, using movement as a means of self-expression and healing.
5. **Medicine Wheel and Holistic Healing:** Discover the Indigenous medicine wheel, balancing physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health for holistic well-being.
6. **Traditional Healing from Loss:** Support community grieving and healing through therapeutic interventions like letter writing and communal support.
7. **Self-Care and Healthy Living:** Assess and enhance self-care practices, focusing on physical, spiritual, professional, and psychological well-being.
8. **The Role of Youth in the Community:** Empower Métis youth with life skills, cultural knowledge, and mentorship for a successful path forward.
9. **Art Therapy:** Express creativity and healing through various traditional artistic activities like beadwork, ribbon skirt making, and more.
10. **Building Healthy Families:** Address domestic violence, provide safe haven support, and foster healthy family dynamics within the community.