

Community Conversations What We Heard



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KDFN
Justice

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Introduction

Kwanlin Dun First Nation (KDFN) is exploring the development of a temporary safe place for children and youth who have experienced a family disruption or crisis that requires the children or youth or parents to leave the home. This project is called 'Auntie's House' and has been broadly discussed with the KDFN community for the last several years. In mid-November, 2019, the KDFN Justice Director assembled a small team, including several staff and a volunteer. This team engaged the community to hear what peoples' vision might be for this project and to explore whether there was a compelling need to develop this resource within KDFN. Over the next month, a series of individual, group and town hall sessions were held with Elders, children and youth, KDFN staff from various departments, and KDFN Chief and Council, as well as representation from Government of Yukon's Family and Children's Services.

This report highlights the strong support in the community for Auntie's House and proposes five potential models for further exploration. There was strong support for additional community engagement and the formation of a Working Group made of Elders and youth to oversee the project is identified. Throughout this engagement, the citizens of KDFN have been incredibly open and generous with their time. Deeply personal stories were shared and their privacy has been protected by ensuring there is no identifying information. KDFN is a small community. With fifteen years into self-government, KDFN is at a unique stage in its development, ready to move forward with positive initiatives such as this to help its citizens.

The Context for Auntie's House Community Conversations

In 2016, a consultant was hired by KDFN to prepare a Letter of Intent for federal funding on the development of the Auntie's House project. It was identified that the community was experiencing higher rates of violence and addiction than other areas of Yukon. The impacts of colonization and intergenerational trauma were described as contributing to these social issues. Concerns were raised in a KDFN 2015 Community Needs Assessment in regards to children and youth who were witnessing or becoming victims of violence in their homes, and suffering long-term impacts. It was also identified that 34 KDFN children under the age of 19 were in the formal care of the Director of Family and Children's Services. This was a significant number of children and many parents and community members were motivated to look for new approaches to prevent children coming into care and assisting children to return to the community. It was proposed "a hands-on proactive approach that involves

working at multiple levels in the community, including with children, youth and their families, at Auntie's House and on an outreach basis from Auntie's House, to address factors leading to violence and crime."

Activities and Expected Outcomes for the project in the report were identified as:

- 1) Establish Auntie's House in the community, using a cultural model of the extended family to provide a safe haven and center offering loving support, education, resources, cultural values, services and programming to support healthy life.

Outcome: Children, youth and families to increase the access to a safe place in the community and use, programs and services to strengthen parenting and family life.

- 2) Offer parenting education around the history of colonization and its effects on family and community relationships—and how to rebuild family strength using cultural values.

Outcome: Knowledgeable parents, children and youth that understand the impacts of colonization and how to create reconciliation at a family level.

- 3) Provide outreach using a home-visiting model to support families.

Outcome: Families access the support and have fewer risk factors and more identified strengths over time.

- 4) Offer land-based healing for families at Jackson Lake Healing Camp.

Outcome: At least 4 families per year engage in a 4-week-or-shorter series of land-based healing experiences including developmentally appropriate experiences for children.

- 5) Community engagement and recruitment of paid and volunteer Auntie's team members, including peer mentors and Elders to work in the program.

Outcome: Active community engagement and involvement of a range of ages of people from all families within KDFN.

A presentation was given to KDFN Leadership in the summer of 2016 with a recommended program model of a single safe house providing in-house and outreach services for an estimated 200 citizens per year. Costs were identified in the half-million-dollar range including a startup estimate of \$70,000. Funding was to be pursued from federal and territorial governments, nonprofits, and the Assembly of First Nations—with KDFN providing in kind funding for infrastructure, planning and human resources.

There was strong support for this model and it was approved in principle by Chief and Council. It was identified in KDFN 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. Unfortunately, no new funding was obtained for the project and it was not able to proceed in 2016.

Community Level Prevention Initiatives

In the meantime, there have been significant positive developments in KDFN aimed at improving wellness and safety. They include:

- 1) Yukon Mental Wellness Strategy (2016) – KDFN partnered with, TKC, Yukon Government, and Mental Health Association Yukon on this 10-year implementation plan.
- 2) Community Safety Officer (2017) – Development and implementation of program where four officers provide daily patrols and peacekeeping for the community and have received tremendous support and trust.
- 3) Trilateral Child Welfare Forum (2018) – KDFN is one of three Yukon First Nations engaged in this policy and decision making forum with Indigenous Services Canada and Yukon Government.
- 4) Child Welfare Liaison Outreach Team (2018) – This team was enhanced to provide outreach and home-visits to families who are involved with Family and Children’s Services.
- 5) New Extended Family Care Agreement (2017) – This agreement was developed in partnership with FCS and KDFN to allow extended family members, including grandparents, to receive financial benefits for caring for children who require living outside immediate family home. These arrangements allow a child to remain safely in the community and not be moved into the formal child welfare system under the care of the Director.
- 6) As of October, 2019, there were 19 KDFN children under the care of the Director of FCS (11 in foster care and 8 youth in group homes) which is a 45% decrease from the 34 children in care in 2016. There is still more work as the vision is to have all KDFN children living with their families or extended families in KDFN.
- 7) Revised Memorandum of Understanding between KDFN and YG (2018) – These new protocols and initiatives are aimed at preventing children coming into care.
- 8) Yukon Forum (2018) – This government-to-government quarterly leadership forum with the Premier of Yukon, the Grand Chief of Yukon Council of First Nations, and Chiefs from all fourteen Yukon First Nations identified child welfare as a key priority. An Action Plan was developed with strategies to prevent First Nation children needing to come into care by FCS and reducing the current over representation of First Nations children and youth in FSC care.
- 9) Jordan’s Principle (2018) – Funding is provided to Council of Yukon First Nations to address gaps in services and funding for First Nation children.

- 10) Human Rights Tribunal Funding (2018) – Phase 1 and 2 is provided to Yukon First Nations and guided by Trilateral Child Welfare Table to focus on prevention-related activities.
- 11) KDFN’s new Recreation Hub (2018) – This program focuses on providing regular, free recreation opportunities for children and youth to improve their wellbeing through social and physical activities.
- 12) Jackson Lake Land-Based Healing Camp (2016–present) – The Jackson Lake team enhanced and expanded their land-based programs by offering a series of treatment programs and camps aimed at youth, families and Elders with a focus on family reconciliation, to meet the growing needs of KDFN citizens and other Yukoners.
- 13) *Safe at Home: A Community Based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness* (2017) – Led by KDFN and other community partners, this identified need for more housing resources for adults, families and children and youth who were experiencing disruption in their lives.
- 14) By Name List Project (2018) – A part of the Safe at Home implementation, provides a coordinated access program for individuals who are most in need of shelter and support. As of August, 2019, over twenty individuals had been permanently housed as a result of this initiative.
- 15) KDFN Elder Ray Sydney is appointed (2018) Deputy Chair to the Advisory Committee for the *Five Year Review of the Child and Family Services Act*.
- 16) Government of Yukon partners with KDFN Justice Department (2018) to establish an onsite FCS unit at KDFN.
- 17) *Open Hearts, Open Doors* (2019) – This community-based, community-led prevention initiative with FCS, identified that children and youth who might face unexpected disruption need a short-term, safe place in the community to prevent coming into care of FCS.

National-Level Prevention Initiatives

Over the last five years, there have been two major National Inquiries reports that have focused on the impact of residential schools, colonization and violence on Indigenous People. The first one *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (2015)* outlined the widespread, systemic, community, family and individual impacts of residential school including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, loss of culture connection, and intergenerational trauma including loss of parenting skills. It also brought attention to the overrepresentation of First Nations children in care.

Justice Murray Sinclair, Lead Commissioner of TRC (2015) provided these comments when he presented the final report in 2015 in Ottawa:

“The recommendations are centered around a core challenge in Canadian society—a broad lack of understanding of the unjust and violent circumstances from which modern Canada emerged ... and how the legacy of

Indian Residential Schools is part of that history and of our country today. Achieving reconciliation is like climbing a mountain—we must proceed a step at a time. It will not always be easy. There will be storms, there will be obstacles, but we cannot allow ourselves to be daunted by the task because our goal is Just and it is necessary. Remember, reconciliation is yours to achieve. We owe it to each other to build a Canada based on our shared future, a future of healing and trust.”¹

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Actions (2015) identifies the first 5 actions related to child welfare. They are:

- Calls federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) governments to reduce number of Aboriginal children in care;
- Provinces and Territories to produce annual reports on number of children in care compared to non-Aboriginal children including reasons for apprehension, total spending on preventative and care services and their effectiveness;
- Fully implement Jordan’s Principle;
- Enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards; and,
- Calls on all FPT and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

The National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls’ (MMIWG) ***Reclaiming Power and Place*** report (2019) identified 231 Calls for Justice. These are aimed at systemic changes, including a review of child welfare to reduce the violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls and need for early identification programs to identify girls at risk of exploitation and trafficking. Chief Commissioner Marion Buller, former BC Judge, stated:

“The violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA is a national tragedy of epic proportion. As a nation, we face a crisis: regardless of which number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is cited, the number is too great. The continuing murders, disappearances and violence prove that this crisis has escalated to a national emergency that calls for timely and effective responses.”²

In the MMIWG report, it identifies that there is consistent evidence showing that the children and grandchildren of those affected by residential schools are at risk of various

¹ Sinclair (2015) MacLean’s December 15, 2015

² Buller (2019) Preamble Reclaiming Power and Place

negative mental, physical and social outcomes. Also, it documents that over the years between 1989–2012, First Nation children on reserve were 12 times more likely to come into care than non-Aboriginal children, due to issues related to neglect, primarily driven from poverty, substance misuse and inadequate housing.

There are 15 specific calls to Justice focused on Social Workers and those implicated in child welfare. It identifies the need for more self-determination and inherent jurisdictions of Indigenous people with child welfare and broad systematic reforms including recommendation on service delivery, staffing and training as well as supports aimed at preventing children and youth coming into care. Appendix 1 provides the complete list of all 15 Calls to Justice.

A Canada-wide emergency meeting on Indigenous Children and Families was held in January, 2018, with leaders from Indigenous communities (Chief Doris Bill attended with Minister of Health and Social Services, Pauline Frost), and provincial, territorial and federal governments. Six points of action were agreed to by all parties. They are:

- Fully implementing all orders of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal including a flexible funding model;
- Shifting programming focus to prevention and early intervention;
- Co-developing federal child and family service legislation;
- Accelerating the work of trilateral and technical tables;
- Supporting Inuit and Metis Nation Leadership on culturally appropriate reforms; and,
- Developing a data and reporting strategy.

On February 28, 2019, the federal government introduced Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families* which became official law in June 2019, and proclaimed in January 2020. This new Act affirms the rights of First Nations, Metis and Inuit people to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services and establishes national principles such as the best interests of the child, cultural continuity and substantive equality. Its aim is to improve the health and well-being of generations of Indigenous children and youth.

The full impacts of this Act are not fully understood yet, but it does represent a new opportunity for First Nation governments and Indigenous communities to take significant leadership in the area of prevention, early intervention and delivery of child welfare. It also provides a significant amount of funding to each region to implement prevention programs—much of this funding in Yukon has not been allocated to date.

Over the last five years across Canada, within Yukon, as well as in the Whitehorse and KDFN communities, there has been a tremendous amount of attention devoted to and

developments made on the need to keep children safe, well and happy in their families and community. Given this positive trend, KDFN Chief Doris Bill asked the KDFN Director of Justice in 2019 to engage the community to assess if there was still a need for Auntie's House.

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Overview of Methodology

A project team was formed consisting of the Child Welfare Manager, a volunteer, and the Director of Justice. A jurisdiction scan and a literature review were conducted on a variety of promising prevention models across Canada. A jurisdiction scan on prevention projects in British Columbia and Saskatchewan was generously provided by FCS.

Two interview guides were developed to provide structure to individual and group interviews (See Appendices 2 and 3). Individual interviews were held with Elders, KDFN citizens and staff, and FCS staff. Group sessions were held with KDFN Youth Council, KDFN Community Safety Officers, KDFN Department of Health staff, and Jackson Lake staff, KDFN Department of Justice staff including Child Welfare Liaisons, KDFN House of Learning staff, and member of the KDFN Leadership Council. An informal brainstorming session was held with children and youth in the Recreation Centre. A “Let’s Keep Talking” town hall session was held in December 2019. Stakeholder interviews were held with leaders from both FCS and Indigenous Service Canada. Written questionnaires were distributed to key sites around the KDFN community for those citizens and staff who feel more comfortable providing their feedback anonymously. In total, there were over 100 people who participated and provided their input over a six-week period in November and December of 2019.

Individual Interviews with Elders, Citizens, Staff, FCS	10
Group Sessions with Youth, Children, Staff, FCS, ISC	10 Sessions – total of 74 participants
Let’s Keep Talking –Town Hall – December 9, 2019	Approximately 35
Written Submissions	1

Participants demonstrated significant courage, kindness and hope in these interviews. Their willingness to take part was gratefully appreciated by the project team. The next section of the report outlines the findings from this community engagement.

Community Conversations: What We Heard

A) How to Go Forward in a “Good Way”

In order to show respect and build trust in the engagement process, we asked participants how we should go forward in a “good way.” This was our way to seek guidance from the collective wisdom of the community and to avoid causing harm in any way to participants during the engagement process. This stage also reflected the need to understand the worldview and cultural context of KDFN citizens and the importance of reaching out to certain representative groups to gain their unique perspective: Elders, youth, citizens directly impacted, KDFN staff, KDFN leadership, and FCS staff.

Elder’s wisdom and guidance was critical to the engagement process. Elders have had a strong leadership role in First Nations communities for thousands of years. They were uniquely positioned to guide the community engagement process. It was emphasized to talk to Elders early in the process to seek their wisdom and buy-in. Interviews were held with Elders individually; Some Elders participated in group discussion with KDFN staff.

The Elder’s Council was suggested as a good place to hear the collective wisdom of Elders. Unfortunately, there was no meeting in December 2019 and unfortunately we were unable to get on the full agenda in January 2020, therefore, we will attend the next meeting. We will continue to seek their advice throughout the duration of the project. It was also suggested that diversity was especially important because not all Elders’ experience is the same; not all Elders grew up with cultural traditions, which can lead to a feeling of exclusion for some.

It was also repeatedly identified that we should consider offering discussion in their language, with translation services because of the importance of oral traditions. We were also advised to value their contribution with an honorarium. During this first phase of engagement, we were not able to provide sessions in their language but it is hoped that as the project develops, native language and translation services will be offered allow for their full participation.

We also heard that Elders and youth should be consulted together. This would provide an opportunity to share perspectives and work together on a project that would benefit both groups. Early on, we heard the suggestion for a standing Elder/Youth Working Group to oversee the project, bringing together the wisdom and cultural context of the past with the “tomorrow people.” Also, it was identified that Auntie’s House had been discussed within the community several times over the years but had never moved forward from a concept

to an actual service. It was hoped by getting commitment from Elders and youth it would have more strength to be implemented.

What We Heard:

- “Listen to Elders – they live in both worlds and see the challenges they lived through as well as their children and grandchildren.” —Elder
- “Ensure that the focus (on Auntie’s House discussion) is not on why families aren’t working. This is a needle in a pine tree. We need to see the whole context on why jails are full, people are dying from suicide, residential schools, trauma, children and adults not knowing their culture.”—Elder
- “Colonization has had such an impact on our people that they won’t speak up, even if they know there are wrong things going on in the community like bootlegging. They need to be given leadership and courage to speak about social ills and deal with them, otherwise trauma and colonization repeats itself.” —Elder
- “Racism, we deal with every day, we need to address it and break down the shame. It is wearing our people down and it makes it hard to go forward in a good way because it means we are opening ourselves up to criticism.” —Elder
- “Important to have discussions with Elders in their own language, if possible, because the concepts are fuller in their language and it is important to ask Elders what they need.” —KDFN staff
- “Involve Elders—it would benefit them and youth—there is a disconnect because of intergenerational trauma ... there are not a lot of positive role models for youth so it would be nice for youth to see Elders taking on positive role.” —KDFN staff

Understanding Cultural and Spiritual Context

There are diverse cultures and traditions in KDFN: Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, and Tlingit. KDFN is made up of citizens from many of the 14 Yukon First Nations. It was emphasized the importance of understanding the Wolf and Crow clan system and family roles and responsibilities. Elders emphasized that it is important for families to know their family trees to understand their relationships and ceremonies particularly when there are losses in the community. They asked for families to recreate the “holding way” whereby children are positioned in the middle and are supported and surrounded by extended

families and the entire community—and not just by their immediate families. It was stated that cleansing, smudging and other ceremonies needed to be embedded into every aspect of the project. Also, the importance of having a strong connection to the land and that the only way to true healing is through culture.

What We Heard:

- “Start with traditions of Wolf and Crow, which have been validated for thousands of years ... need to understand clan system and tribal laws how people fit in, and boundaries, so people know how they belong and their place in the community. Understanding difference between men and women in medicines and ceremonies ... need to focus on balance with individuals and the people around them.”—Elder
- “Important to remember that community loved all their children, and it was the role of extended families, aunties to teach life lessons, uncles to hunt and fish... it was not just immediate families ... whole community had a role.”—KDFN staff
- “Important to have programs that pass on traditional knowledge and be involved with the teaching of children ... we can’t leave it to the school system to raise our children.”—Elder
- “Only way to make things better is to look after the needs and move forward with positive things ... Guide them starting young then when they are older, they won’t need as much healing to happen.” —Elder

Engaging Youth and Children

All participants emphasized that youth should be recognized as the leaders of tomorrow. The focus of the service at Auntie’s House needs to both informal (e.g., drop-in recreation program) and formal (e.g., meeting with youth Council). Communication mediums need to be varied to gain their voice and interest right from the beginning. It was stated that youth face many complex pressures, like technology, social media, and losses of their peers. It was emphasized their trust and buy-in is critical.

What We Heard:

- “Need to listen more to our children who are our greatest teachers.”—Elder

- “Ask children and youth what the safe house should look like, and what it needs to be for them to feel welcome and safe... need to talk about healthy topics with children not just issues.” —KDFN staff
- “Interview youth who have been in care, getting their voices, letting them know they are heard.” —KDFN staff

Engaging Citizens

It was suggested to reach out to citizens directly through *Let's Keep Talking* sessions as well as by offering individual or group discussions with families who had been directly impacted by past contact with child welfare and who may benefit from Auntie's House. It was emphasized that it was important to find safe methods of engagement so that families won't feel intimidated and can express freely their opinions on Auntie's House. It was suggested that building trust and involvement in the beginning was integral—and would help gain knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of past projects. Ongoing discussion about Auntie's House can also provide an opportunity to build awareness and education to allow the community to learn more at every stage. These suggestions were followed during the first phase of engagement and more efforts should be continued in follow-up engagement processes.

What We Heard:

- “Citizens are often motivated when things are at the breaking point in the community—like a death. They need invitations to be involved earlier.”
—Elder
- “Build trust in the community by having town halls—introduce staff, explain who they are, especially if they are not from the community... important when hiring (for Auntie's House) to have a community call out to see who is interested.” —Youth
- “Have flyers on *Let's Keep Talking* and have children paid to deliver them ... lots of notice if you want people to show up.” —KDFN staff
- “Reach out to parents ... lots of families are in turmoil, but they love their kids. Start with that belief.” —KDFN staff
- “Whatever is created, make sure that children, youth and parents are not to feel fault or to internalize that they are somehow bad.” —KDFN staff

- “Check back in with community on what we hear—Did we get it right?—before decisions are made ... word of mouth is how information gets out in KDFN.” —KDFN staff

Engaging KDFN Staff and Family and Children’s Services Staff

Many participants emphasized that there is tremendous strength already existing in the programs delivered in KDFN. There was hope expressed about having the new FCS unit here in KDFN in the trailer by the Justice building and that relationships are now positive. It was stressed that it was important to ask how Auntie’s House would fit in so that there would not be silos or communications problems later on. It was shared that KDFN staff are already providing services to citizens in a variety of forms (individuals, groups, Councils) that are improving their wellness, providing safety and preventing crimes. For FCS, they expressed appreciation on being asked and saw alignment with Auntie’s House and their current *Open Hearts, Open Doors* initiative.

What We Heard:

- “Need to think carefully about the resource people helping out ... are they healthy enough, have they done their own work ... teachers need to learn to take care of themselves before they can teach.” —Elder
- “Identify what services people are accessing to see what is important to them. Talk to the people working with families directly on gaps.” —FCS staff

Planning Process and Need to Act Now

Many participants stated that Auntie’s House had been discussed many times over the years in the community, and there was a need to add clarity on its intended purpose. There was a mixed response on how to go forward in a good way. Some stressed taking time, going slow in an incremental, phased-in approach. Others emphasized a need to act now and learn as we go. Everybody stressed the need to be very thoughtful, to be cautious about setting unrealistic expectations around timing and services available, and to ensure core funding is secured rather than starting up as a pilot project. Many suggested we should use the Community by Design approach—similar to the successful approach used when the Community Safety Officer program was developed in 2017.

What We Heard:

- “We need to talk about all these issues. Auntie’s House is not a cure for all the issues impacting KDFN, but it is an important start.” —Elder
- “Don’t want a temporary fix that takes all the resources that could be dedicated to culture.” —Elder
- “Need to build trust, lead by example, have patience ... it takes time in KDFN.”—KDFN staff
- “We need to focus on how to keep community safe, and ensure there are options to meet the needs ... now is the time to rethink our community role with children.” —Elder
- “We can’t sit back and wait for things to happen, otherwise things will go worse for families ... we need to start coming back together ... can’t hang on to negative. We need programs for whole family unit.” —Elder
- “If we don’t act now—we will lose another generation to residential school trauma.” —Elder

B) Thoughts and Support for Auntie’s House

Focus and Purpose of Auntie’s House

There was rich conversation on what Auntie’s House should be and who would be the primary recipients of service (e.g., children and youth or whole family; KDFN citizens or all First Nation citizens). There were important discussions on how to ensure we employ the guiding cultural approach that focuses on the whole person and whole community to restore families to strength—and how we should avoid the medical, clinical, deficit approach that focuses on the behaviors, issues or problems for the child, youth or families.

The number one priority, stated repeatedly, was the safety for children and youth. In particular, people expressed concern for the selection of staff in the House. There was strong support for a zero tolerance for abuse or bullying in the house.

Also, many voiced the importance that Auntie’s House is a last resort and the least intrusive approach to support families in crisis before formal involvement with FCS. The first approach would be to use the family’s, and extended family’s, current system of supporting and guiding their own family members. Strong support was expressed on preventing children coming into care, reconnecting children who have been in care with families and

communities, as well as providing supports for youth who are transitioning into adulthood who have “aged out” of the formal system.

Participants emphasized that there was an important role for children and youth to design and develop the Auntie’s House model—children who are living with the direct impacts from colonization, residential school, loss of culture and trauma and the impacts these have on parenting. It was suggested that their involvement would help children “find their way” and learn the traditional role of extended families, grandparents, uncles and aunts in providing cultural guidance. It would also be an opportunity for children and youth to learn from Elders and give back to community.

What We Heard:

- “It takes a whole community to raise a child, those are the traditional values of First Nations ... need to ensure kindness, gentleness and respect are key values and that all voices are heard.” —Elder
- “Auntie’s could be place of healing, reconnection, strong element of healing, supported by the community and fitting in with other KDFN resources.” —KDFN staff
- “Focus on how to lift weight off people ... what can be given and shared.” —Elder
- “Don’t focus on old way of psychologist or clinical approach, it needs to focus on spiritual connection and giving support to the family.” —Elder
- “Auntie’s place to ease their minds, and plant seeds in their minds, that they are good, they are worthy of safety ... the exposure to the seeds will stay with them and they will have opportunity to give back.” —Elder
- “Make it a sacred place ... focus on reconnection with spirit and culture.” —Elder
- “We have gone through history, knowing how to care for each other ... it is important to keep children in the community, and surround them with support.” —Elder
- “Auntie’s style ... focus is on the child, nothing else is as important.” —KDFN staff
- “Safety has to be number one focus of staffing ... rest of the qualities can fall from there.” —KDFN staff

- “Need for kids to feel good about themselves ... have traditional cultural pathways to find their way out ... give them something positive to balance out so many negatives. Balance is the key when going through difficult times.” —Elder
- “Parents need to learn how to talk to youth. It is a vital role in helping youth go forward.” —Youth
- “For younger children, it is important not to sever connections with their parents. Auntie’s House has decreased likelihood, because it is in the community, run by community. Culture should be the basis of Auntie’s House, and everything should be built from it.” —FCS staff
- “Youth could be role models, mentors, volunteers, give talks.” —Youth
- “There are lots of good things that could be done for youth, and even if Auntie’s House only saves one youth every 6 months, it would be a success because of the impact for generations to come.” —Elder

Planning and Development

There was a great interest in proceeding in a good way, and having key people in the community, particularly Elders and youth, be involved in the design, development and implementation of Auntie’s House. An Elders and Youth Working Group was suggested several times to bring youth back into the fold of the community, increasing their sense of connection, and provide Elders will a meaningful role in guiding them. This would build on the success of the Elder-in-Residence role at the Health Centre.

Caution was expressed that many people are hurting in the community, and may not be able to talk openly about their feelings. There were also diverse opinions on the timing and pacing of the development of Auntie’s House. There was discussion on whether other First Nations citizens should be able to access Auntie’s House. It was also suggested that KDFN could be a model for other communities to develop their own safe house resources.

What We Heard:

- “There is nothing better than helping your people.” —KDFN staff
- “Need to have youth and Elders involved to guide development, and ongoing advisory role.” —Youth
- “Youth could learn to be helpful in their community especially with their Elders ... Elders are struggling. Elders could help (youth) by activities and teaching their history.” —Elder

- “Need to focus on capacity development in community in order to support Auntie’s or staff. Support Community by Design approach for development ... support working group of Elders and youth.” —KDFN staff
- “We should not wait for social workers, lawyers, or court workers to devise a model for safety. We need to do that for our people. Need not to have staff, coming into community, telling us what to do, we need more listeners.” —Elder
- “Strongly support Auntie’s House. Need to build it like the Community Safety Officer program, from the community up. They are trusted, provides drives, don’t judge people and everyone understands their role.” —Elder
- “KDFN can be a doorway. We have the money. We need a more humane approach. We have several generations of residential school studies ... we need healthy, strong leaders who can show kids that they can have healthy, happy, enjoying lives in a positive way. We need to show we can live in a good way and be proud of our culture.” —Elder
- “Start small and get it right ... don’t take on too much and become overwhelmed ... important step and needs to be done carefully ... it can’t be everything, separate out key functions and integrate processes.” —Elder
- “Important Auntie’s House is connected to broader approach for children, youth and families.” —KDFN staff.
- “We need a 5-year plan for programs ... need proper words ... need proper people who can write proposals to get the money from Jordan’s Principle and child welfare. We need to base it on our knowledge from experience ... have families involved and step up to the plate ... and then have lots of patience as we go forward. It is long time coming, and it will be a valuable asset to the community.” —Elder
- “Don’t be afraid of early failure. Dust yourself off and try again ... it may not work for everyone, but if it helps some, it is important”- Elder
- “We have a moral obligation to help even if the person is not KDFN citizen, we need to strengthen our connections with other communities.” — Youth

- “Need possibly visit other First Nations, network with them to find out percentage of children in care ... involve them, their children and parents in programming development.” —KDFN citizen
- “Yukon Government should step up for others. We may be pioneering this approach, and other First Nations will want to do it for their own communities. Help them (First Nations) take it on their own.” —Youth

Services and Activities

For many participants, it was difficult to imagine Auntie’s without having a description of what would happen there for children, youth and their families. Many had great ideas of what supports are needed to make a difference, and how other programs in KDFN could complement Auntie’s.

Children at the Recreation Hub program had a long list of activities including: safe place to go, respite, visits, outreach, follow-up after children return home after time at Auntie’s, parent and youth groups, and opportunity to connect with land and cultural teaching as well as programs focused on prevention (on subjects like food and nutrition, parenting, drives, life skills, and counselling).

Many Participants in the sessions identified activities related to restoring family relationships including: talking circles, safety planning, restorative conferencing, and activities that reconnect youth to their community. A Family Resource Centre with a drop-in component and regularly scheduled programs was also identified as beneficial. People urged that clear communication around the role of Auntie’s house within the context of other KDFN services would be necessary to ensure coordination of services and to prevent program silos or duplication. Also, cultural activities would allow for volunteers to lead activities on the land and teach traditional skills like beading, sewing, cooking, hunting and fishing. It was mentioned that it would be useful to have greater access to Jackson Lake for youth and family land-based camps, and remove the barrier of the high cost of renting it.

What We Heard:

- “Need safe place for kids sleep there, that also helps parents ... need food, counseling, groups ... visits with families, friends.” —Children
- “Chill zone, comfy couches, board games ... books ... flat screen TV... Nintendo switch.” —Children
- “More help for youth dealing with family problems ... get youth what they need, more listening and helping, help kids stay in school.” —Children

- “Parents should be supported ... provided with guidance... shared information, not judged.” —Youth
- “Need drop-in place with no bullying ... place to go ... weekly smudges ... need a calming person ... someone to deal with bullying ... provide grief counseling, Elders available.” —KDFN citizen
- “Have Recreation Hub connected to Auntie’s to ensure children have access to sports.” —Youth
- “Emergency place is good—anything that prevents kids from going down wrong path is good.” —Elder
- “Need to educate staff, provide parent counseling ... you would have better behaved youth.” —Youth
- “Need parenting clubs and cultural activities while kids are at school ... teas that support parenting activities, connection. Could be regular coffee place.” —KDFN staff
- “Need more people to do outreach ... get lots of requests to pick kids up, and take them to school—not our role, but it is important to keep kids in school, and feeling supported.” —KDFN staff
- “CSOs could play a number of important roles with Auntie’s House: referral, drop the kids off, provide back-up support and security ... could be ambassadors for Auntie’s in the KDFN community, because we already have good trust and relationships.” —KDFN staff
- “When I got out of residential school, I had to go back to land and live off it. Now I talk to school children who come to the camp, about being on the land, gun safety, and how to do what is good for people.” —Elder
- “Program led by Elders on different topics ... values ... we all learn differently. Elders need to lay the groundwork for us.” —Youth

Operating Models

We asked for ideas of how Auntie’s House should operate to meet its goals. The participants identified, again, the importance of ensuring safety, openness, privacy and confidentiality. There were diverse opinions as to where Auntie’s House should be located; some suggested a house in McIntyre, others advised somewhere undisclosed outside the McIntyre community. On the physical structure, there were mixed thoughts on whether

Auntie's should be just one house, combining its dual functions of a safe house and family resource center under one roof. A number of people felt that a network of homes with different functions would be a better fit for the community's needs, whereas, others thought that having a duplex with two entrances could accomplish the same separation of functions. All agreed that a home-like, welcoming environment was key, and that it not appear to be an institution or a group home.

Also, we heard repeatedly that they wanted a welcoming, kind, gentle Auntie, with tough skin, who represented the traditional Auntie in First Nations culture. They also wanted her to be paid for her work. Others suggested, "What about an Uncle's House?" And other participants suggested employing a couple to demonstrate the importance of both genders. Many participants felt that any individual or couple would need to be supported by trained staff, either in the safe house or in the outreach area. Clear roles, responsibilities, screening, training, regular supervision and debriefing were suggested to support staff. It was emphasized that safety for children and youth was critical, and anyone with a history of perpetrating abuse or violence should never work there because of the vulnerability of the children. Staffing models that ensure 2 staff on per shift were suggested to ensure safety of children and staff.

Hours of operation were also identified, with some people worried that it would be overwhelmed with needs at the beginning. Others, believing that at times it would be empty, suggested it be available to offer respite. Suggestions were made regarding separating children of different genders and ages for their protection. Others focused their contributions on the importance of developing working partnerships and protocols with KDFN staff (e.g., CSOs), and FCS, so that protocols can help identify when FCS should be formally notified for child protection concerns.

During discussions on how Auntie's House would operate, the conversations naturally turned to who could help (e.g., partners), and how could it be funded. Many key partners and stakeholders to engage were identified: Community Safety Officers, Child Welfare Liaisons, Family Support staff, Jackson Lake and Health Centre counselling staff, House of Learning and FCS staff on site at KDFN. It was suggested that they could meet to brainstorm on how they could work collaboratively together on the development and implementation of Auntie's House. Elders and youth were also seen as key partners for their various roles of providing guidance and assistance with activities on site or on the land.

Core funding was identified as being critically important so that Aunties, Uncles, staff, children and youth would not have uncertainty on whether it would continue beyond a pilot stage. The recent *Open Hearts, Open Doors* initiative by FCS was identified as a potential source of support as well as the Human Rights Tribunal prevention funding from the Trilateral Forum.

Five proposed models were discussed –although there was no universal agreement on one clear best choice. More details on the five proposed models will be presented later in this report. Rightly so, participants wanted more opportunities for public engagement on the operations of Auntie’s House—and wish to have a working group assigned to take a deeper look at what model best suits the needs of KDFN.

What We Heard:

- “Safe house should be in KDFN, a family home, not an institution.” — KDFN staff
- “Needs to be a place outside the community, anonymous, not advertised. Needs to be cleansed of negative energy before a child goes in.” —Elder
- “First appearances say a lot. Add comforting colors and furniture to space, everyone entering space should be greeted and treated with respect.” — KDFN staff
- “Like the idea of a network or group of homes. It could really help at times, when school is shut down for two weeks stretches. Kids get worried, about who is out there, if they need help.” —KDFN staff
- “Need to address family conflicts ... may need to be a couple of places in case there is a conflict with the family who is running Auntie’s ... perhaps a network of homes.” —KDFN staff
- “Auntie should work from the heart, tough skinned, be nice and gentle with children. Don’t always be saying no, and hurting their feelings. You still need to tell them the truth, and work things out with their parents.”—Elder
- “Auntie needs to be like one of the respected Elders, with additional supports from staff. Ideally, staff would be citizens from the community and trust would develop more quickly.” —KDFN staff
- “Can’t be a group home ... don’t want a clinical focus, more like a family. Auntie’s approach ... where a person brings a kind, loving, patient approach and there are spiritual and cultural supports.” —KDFN staff
- “Needs to be more than Auntie and Uncle ... need list of staff required, and it would have to be advertised in KDFN, with training opportunities.”— KDFN citizen

- “Strongly believe in the importance of traditional food that nourishes our bodies and minds. It keeps a strong and healthy mind that it will remember throughout their lives.” —Elder
- “Hard to predict times or hours that Auntie’s would be most needed. Sometimes, it is when cheques are coming in, parents are downtown drinking. Could be holidays, when there are deaths, it won’t be just weekends.” —KDFN staff
- “Training for staff will be critical ... could use some training from FCS like Risking Connection which is more culturally relevant than PRIDE training for foster parents.” —FCS
- “Children are fragile in their growing years ... young child (you need to think) what you are exposing it to, hopefully, it is exposed to positive and it can be pruned in a good direction like a tree. You want to protect it, but not over protect it.” —Elder
- “Should be strict rules—no name calling ... need a break from home but (Auntie’s is) not a babysitting service.” —KDFN citizen
- “Some youth may want to stay at Auntie’s because they don’t want to go home. Need for them to call parents and make sure it is okay for youth to stay... Lots of sensitive situations.” —KDFN staff
- “Should have a zero tolerance for alcohol and drug use—can’t do it there.” —Youth
- “Need Open House to welcome it to the community, and parents can see it is okay.” —KDFN staff
- “First Nations are partners in our Family and Children’s Services system. We all benefit when they are caring for their own children and children stay in their communities.” —FCS
- “We see some alignment between Auntie’s House and *Open Hearts, Open Doors* (a community based program focused on providing short term places of up to several days for children when unexpected concerns arise in their family home and/or children need for whatever reason another place to stay). There are four possible funding options under this initiative.” —FCS
- “Need to make sure there is core funding in place, and that this is not a pilot project.” —Youth

C) Community Needs

When asked what the community needs were for an Auntie's House, the people interviewed were very forthright and open, even though it was often a painful subject area to discuss. There were clear signs of strength and capacity in KDFN in how they were able to articulate both broad needs (e.g., the impacts on intergenerational trauma from residential schools and colonization) and specific needs (e.g., need for parents to be able to speak to youth about alcohol and drug use).

Many participants identified that KDFN has been developing amazing people and programs such as the CSO program resulting in the community feeling safer than it was in 2016. However, the community is still struggling with high rates of trauma as well as large percentages of children and youth living outside the community in formal care. There is need for respite and there are current gaps in services for families. KDFN, like other Yukon communities, is facing social problems such as a high rate of drug and alcohol addiction, gambling, violence, suicide, motor vehicle accidents, crime, vandalism and bootlegging that impact children and families directly. Impacts of globalization, climate change and formal systems like schools are daily realities for children and youth which can be challenging when trying to stay true to the traditions and culture of being a First Nations citizen.

Auntie's House was seen as a way to move forward in a positive way to meet some of these needs. Caution was stated that Auntie's is not a panacea to meet the needs of everyone and primary attention should be given to keeping KDFN children with their families and in their communities.

Intergenerational Trauma from Residential School and Colonization

What We Heard:

- "Parents need help ... they don't know their history and weren't shown how to be a good parent ... trauma of residential schools where we were referred to as "savages" ... punished for using our own languages ... we turned inside and became quiet and deferred to others. Also, we did not get a good education." —Elder
- "Lots of intergenerational trauma ... they have not been taught and were victims of abuse, meanness, and then it is passed onto their kids." —KDFN staff

- “There is so much unresolved grief and loss in the community from death, tragedies, residential schools, and children being removed from families. Parents have grown up in the fall-out of residential schools.” —KDFN staff
- “Need to focus on supporting families, and assisting youth to grow up strong. There is a loss of traditional knowledge from colonization that affects families ... impacts of alcohol, drugs and violence in the community.” —KDFN Leadership
- “Need to learn from the past of Sixties Scoop, and Residential school trauma ... outlined in Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.” —FCS
- “We are all Creator’s children, not just First Nation children ... need to be able to understand other people, and teach them about the impacts of trauma from residential schools.” —Elder
- “We live in a community where there is a lot of trauma, lots of grief, people losing family members. When they lose someone, there is a ripple effect, increasing drinking, revenge, suicide, and it impacts children. There needs to be a safe place during the difficult times.” —Elder
- “I lost one grandchild; I won’t let another one be lost.” —Elder

Addictions and Crime

What We Heard:

- “Not going to be easy to break the cycle of addictions ... people spending their money on alcohol and bingo ... and children not having enough to eat. We need to make sure kids go to school and have enough in their stomachs to concentrate.” —Elder
- “Work with lots of families who are struggling and need a safe place when drinking and violence happen. Parents are afraid children will be taken into care.” —KDFN staff
- “There is a lot of drinking in the community ... struggles with mental illness ... kids in the home, and grandmother coming to pick kids up, grandparents getting burnout ... need a place in the community that it is easy for families to access.” —KDFN staff

- “Children are being exposed to drugs and it is taking them down a bad path. They are being recruited to be drug dealers, and girls are being trafficked. Once it happens, hard to get help, to get out.” —Elder
- “Lots of digital disconnection among youth, especially among girls who use it as a way to protect themselves from a situation that they are uncomfortable in.” —KDFN staff
- “Kids are using their screens to get away from parents’ drinking.” —FCS
- “Our culture would not have let violence fester. We need to bring back our culture when people took care of each other. It is important to not let pain of children and families fester.” —KDFN staff
- “To thrive, we all need a safe place to unwind physically and emotionally. If children are able to turn their full attention to the many needs of growing up, they need a secure solid home, where they feel protected. They need to feel that we can keep them safe from the neighbour bully, the cold, and the abusers. No matter how independent our children or families look in the community, they are seeking security.” —Elder
- “Community has a lot of strength, and situations have improved since CSOs have been in place (June, 2017).” —KDFN staff
- “Need more camps ... last year, there was a 2-week hunting camp for men. It made a huge difference in their wellness, and reduced their drinking when they got back.” —KDFN staff
- “Young people are living in terror ... they need people to help them out ... keep them in school. We need not wait for them to fail, before we as community step up.” —Elder

Social and Environmental Changes

What We Heard:

- “Youth have been impacted by school system, religion, globalization ... need to invest in this generation with language, spiritual beliefs and ceremony.” —Elder
- “Our children are impacted by changing climate ... just like animals. We just doesn’t understand it yet.” —Elder

- “Youth need time to focus on themselves rather than the problems at home and in the community.” —KDFN staff
- “Children need to be the focus ... can see children are scared, confused, lost, full of uncertainty ... not sure what is going to happen tomorrow ... hungry ... they need to know their community is there for them.” —Elder
- “See lots of children and youth wandering around ... maybe no one is at home... get into trouble. Youth can be hard to deal with, when they feel unloved. They don’t know how to show respect, because they have not been given respect, or taught. They have their defenses up, talk back... need to learn to trust. Elders need to be friend to youth.” —Elder
- “Need to become a more inclusive, welcoming community... regardless of a person’s family background.” —Elder

Keeping Children in their Families and in KDFN community

What We Heard:

- “When children are taken away from families, and placed in child welfare care, they come back different. Lost.” —Elder
- “Need to keep kids out of formal care system ... there are more than 19 KDFN children in care, and lots of families with Extended Family Care Agreements.” —KDFN staff
- “If kids come into care, parents lose hope and give up, because the requirements are too high, and they end up binge drinking or having more kids.” —KDFN staff
- “Parents want to do well, but it is a long way for the person to go, while they are trying to be sober ... person would need to trust kids would be safe when they go to Auntie’s.” —KDFN staff
- “Strong need to keep families together, and focus on what supports are needed rather than deficit model.” —KDFN
- “Strong need for support for kids coming back from being in care, and need cultural connection to family and community that is positive.” —FCS

- “We need to care for our children in our communities—some things are bigger than Auntie’s House can solve ... KDFN and YTG could work on it.” —Elder

Gaps in Services

What We Heard:

- “100% need in this community for Auntie’s House ... kids are falling through the cracks ... not wanting to go to school ... staying out late. We need a place where youth could go when they are tired from the stress at home. Many youths feel burnout by the ongoing tensions at home and want to escape it.” —KDFN staff
- “Can think of seven kids right now who would benefit from this program if it was open today. Youth need short-term housing, and they don’t meet criteria for shelters ... and we have no place to bring them now after hours to help de-escalate situations.” —KDFN staff
- “Respite is really needed in our community. Single mother who works really hard to get her kids back, and then left without supports once she achieves this, and then feels overwhelmed.” —KDFN staff
- “Respite for families—immediate, extended families, foster families. Auntie’s could play a role.” —FCS.
- “See a real need for a safe house, short-term ... provide a chance for families to get together to problem-solve and work through their issues.” —FCS

D) Concerns or Worries about Auntie’s House

Community members were also asked to turn their minds to what concerns or worries they have about Auntie’s House, as this input should be considered during the development stage. Most of the concerns focused on managing family relationships, culture, privacy and operational issues such as safety, staffing, funding and protocol developments with FCS on mandatory reporting.

Family Relationships

What We Heard:

- “Caution on how to approach families ... can’t be shaming or divisive ... have parents who drank a lot and gave up hope ... want to make sure families are engaged and know there is support.” —Elder
- “No judging, just smudging.” —KDFN Leadership
- “Need to make sure it is providing real support to families, and preventing children coming into care. Need to think of the long-term help for families ... sending them down south for treatment does not always work because the treatment does not reflect Indigenous culture.” —KDFN staff
- “Families could threaten youth, to say, if you don’t comply with rules at home, they will send them to Auntie’s House ... like in the past when they threatened about being sent to a group home.” —KDFN staff
- “We have lost a lot of young people, and it impacts the families and community very hard. Often, no one is able to talk about the losses.” —KDFN staff
- “Worry about parents dropping off kids because it is convenient. Auntie’s is good idea, but parent and child should not become dependent on it.” —Youth
- “Concern if there are repeat users, to make sure they are not using it as a babysitting service ... it can’t be everything to everyone, it needs to have clear purpose.” —KDFN staff
- “Worry about parents who are drinking, coming there and are being disruptive ... banging at door of Auntie’s.” —Youth

Community Culture

What We Heard:

- “So many impacts from residential school here and colonization ... parents have not learned to parent from their own parents who were directly impacted by residential schools.” —KDFN staff

- “Need a mandate to clean up community so that initiatives like Auntie’s House can succeed ... so our community can heal.” —Elder
 - “Elders should play a strong role in supporting kids with trauma and they should be adequately paid within the tax laws.” —KDFN staff
 - “Spiritual, cultural and traditional approaches must be totally supported by leaders and Elders in the community.” —KDFN staff
 - “Under the UN Convention on Indigenous Persons, Articles 41-44, First Nations are entitled to carry out our cultural practices.” —KDFN staff
- “Auntie’s could be used when there are significant tragedies in the community.” —KDFN staff
- “Make sure it doesn’t duplicate the problem and end up being a dangerous place.” —Elder

Privacy

What We Heard:

- “This community is small: 1 kilometer by 1 kilometer ... people watch, gossip, so privacy has to be a number one consideration.” —KDFN staff
- “Worried about privacy for kids who are there ... kids will come and go, and need supervision and programs to guide them.” —Elder
- “Parents may be afraid to open up ... it’s important to have rules on privacy and confidentiality—what is said there, stays there.” —KDFN staff

Operations/Safety

What We Heard:

- “Don’t want to become like a group home or any institution like residential school, or like jails ... need to understand why people act the way they do, and be kind and compassionate. People need supports, food, housing—not jails—when things go wrong. Need to believe in parents, and the love they have for their children.” —Elder

- “Location—don’t have it by the woods.” —Youth
- “Programming needs to be balanced with males and females ... demonstrates healthy relationships.” —KDFN staff
- “Needs to be safe to avoid any speculation ... safe for kids and staff.” —KDFN staff
- “Need to screen (staff/volunteers), so no one abuses kids ... Even if they are a respected person in the community, they can’t work at Auntie’s if they have hurt kids in the past. It is too important to keep kids safe.” —Youth
- “Most important thing is that children are safe and not abused ... needs to be more than one person. One person can say or do what they want, and no one can see. So many of us were molested at residential schools and kids were told they were bad for telling.” —Elder
- “Can’t be any bullying in the house ... children need to be taught how to stay calm ... have rewards for being respectful. Not a babysitting service for those who want to drink.” —Elder
- “Need to keep in mind various levels of components like child’s age, gender. To predict levels of staffing necessary. All these items can be worked through. Don’t stop going forward because it is complex.” —Elder
- “Scared it will be overrun with need, and not enough people to support it properly. Local people with training ... make sure they are qualified.” —KDFN staff
- “Some youth are coming with high-risk behavior and could be fresh from using and drinking. Need to plan so staff are not overwhelmed.” —FCS
- “Concern if Auntie’s was trying to do everything ... prevention, intervention (safe house for 72 hours), post-intervention with housing ... need to make more capacity for prevention and focus on what youth really need.” —FCS
- “Need to have clear accountability framework to know its purpose, and how it is to be used.” —FCS
- “Need to build in evaluation model from beginning to know if it is successful or needs to change.” —Elder
- “Make sure the money is in place from the beginning.” —Youth

- “Need to think of all the legal parts if parents take kids home but it still may not be safe. Need to be concerned if the child is being abused and who needs to report it.” —Youth
- “Need to have protocols and policies in place for working with FCS.” — KDFN staff

General Comments

Participants were encouraged to provide any general advice or comments. Some identified that KDFN should offer other programs (e.g., harm-reduction and managed-alcohol programs). Other identified that long-term treatment centers should be built in Yukon. The most comprehensive comments came from the KDFN Youth Council who generously gave several hours of their time, describing what success would look like for Auntie’s. Here are their suggestions on how to measure Auntie’s success. They provide excellent guidance for the team going forward.

What We Heard from KDFN Youth Council:

“Success could be measured by:

- Being able to notice that the overall wellbeing of children and youth improves—such as reduced drug and alcohol use—because youth have learnt to properly cope with issues;
- When you see kids whose situation has improved or the way they cope is improving;
- Rehabilitation—even a little bit;
- A spark—children’s lives have improved and people can see the difference;
- Auntie’s is not having to be used as much, because situations are improving and people can take care of things themselves;
- Parents would want to know children are learning responsibilities and life skills;
- Parents are not against Auntie’s House;
- Learning experiences available for young parents;
- Programs are available on a regular basis for families;
- Community trusts Auntie’s and sees youth behaving better;
- There is confidentiality;
- There is reduced drug and alcohol use; and
- There is a working committee set up to establish Auntie’s.”

Proposed Models of Auntie's House

From the Community Conversations, five models emerged from the discussion. They all feature a safe house component, since this was strongly supported as the most needed element. Models 1–4 feature a safe house that is for children and youth. Model 5 features a safe house for one or more parents to go to temporarily, while the children stay home with care of extended family. This model is currently being used in Manitoba. A Family Resource Centre is identified with the safe houses in Models 2, 3 and 4. Location of Auntie's House was a key issue for many participants ensuring that it was safe and private. Models 1,2,3 and 5 have the safe house in McIntyre and Model 4 has the safe house at an undisclosed location in Whitehorse. These models were not presented to participants in Phase 1 and are intended to evoke further conversation in Phase 2 (See Appendix 4 Discussion Guide) of public engagement.

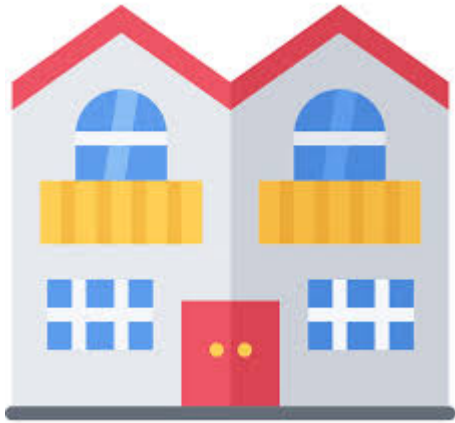
Model 1 – Safe Home for Children and Youth in McIntyre Subdivision



Auntie's House would be a single-purpose home in McIntyre providing a temporary safe place for up to 72 hours for children and youth under the age of 19.

Aunties (and/or Uncles) who are KDFN citizens are paid for their services, supported by trained, well-screened staff who would provide supports in the home and outreach. Aunties would open 24 hours, 7 days/week and could be used for scheduled respite. Children and Youth would be offered support services and land-based activities.

Model 2 – Duplex, Safe House for Children and Youth, and Family Resource Center in McIntyre Subdivision



Auntie’s House has a dual purpose— temporary safe house for children and youth under 19 in McIntyre as well as a separate entrance for a Family Resource Centre. Family Resource Centre would have a drop in component as well as regularly scheduled parenting support programs. Staffing for Auntie’s would be enhanced from Model 1 to carry out additional services in the Family Resource Centre.

Similar services would be offered to children and youth as identified in Model 1. Families would receive enhanced services focused on prevention.

Model 3 – Network of Houses with different functions (Safe Houses for Children and Youth, and a Family Resource Center) in McIntyre Subdivision



Auntie's House would comprise of a network of homes including several safe homes and one Family Resource Centre in McIntyre. Services would be the same as Model 2 for children, youth and families with the addition of another home for periods of high volume or could be used exclusively for respite. This model allows for situations where there may be a conflict with a family and one of the Auntie's Houses. All Auntie's Houses report to one Director and are expected to follow Auntie's policies and standards.

Model 3 – Safe House for Children and Youth in Undisclosed Location and Family Resource Center in McIntyre



Safe House is located at an undisclosed location in Whitehorse to protect the privacy of children, youth and families. Family Resource Centre would be located in McIntyre providing drop-in and regularly scheduled programs. Staffing Model and Services are the same as Model 2.

Model 5 – Safe House for Adults in McIntyre



Auntie’s House would provide temporary shelter to parents who are experiencing disruption or crisis. Children and youth in the family would remain in their family home and supports for them would be provided by extended family or outreach staff. Parents would be offered supports and services on site as well as referral to other KDFN or YG programs. Children and Youth would be provided access to supports and services.

Auntie’s House would be staffed similar to Model 1, with an emphasis on training in dealing with adults.

Proposed Next Steps

The Community Conversation on Auntie’s House occurred in a short six-week period of time involving over 100 people. This was a significant commitment by the KDFN community, particularly in the winter and being so close to the holiday season. Many citizens identified that they would like to be engaged if more opportunities were available. Many also expressed a desire to meet in groups after a draft report is prepared to ensure we had listened carefully and heard their feedback accurately. There were other suggestions of having a meeting with Elders in their own language, with translation services available so we could capture the richness of their discussion. Also, more efforts are necessary to reach out to families to hear directly from them their thoughts on Auntie’s House and how it—as well as other supports—could assist them in their important family roles. We are all learning and we all need support in parenting. Many Elders emphasized it takes a whole community to raise a child.

More engagement with children and youth is necessary to fully understand their views in a safe and fun brainstorming process. We were delighted with their involvement in Phase 1 and there is so much more we can learn from “tomorrow people” as Auntie’s House exploration moves forward. Dialogue with Elders and children and youth together is critical in bring the two perspectives and wisdoms together.

There was overwhelming support for further engagement and development of Auntie’s House. The community identified significant needs that this project could address and a compelling need to act. A robust planning process, involving a number of working and advisory committees, to oversee the development should be considered. The worries and concerns identified need to be addressed within this plan.

This Community Conversation process would not have been possible without the openness and trust of KDFN citizens. It is a time of hope and healing in dealing with tremendous pains and losses. Each participant was extremely kind, gentle, patient and insightful regardless of their age or gender. They demonstrated the “Auntie’s style” in every interaction. It will not be difficult to bring Auntie’s House to fruition or find Aunties, Uncles or staff from KDFN because these qualities are everywhere in this community.

Proposed next steps include:

- 1) Provide a draft *Auntie’s House Community Conversation: What We Heard* report to KDFN community to ensure we heard the feedback accurately and allow time (e.g., one month) for reflection and discussion.
- 2) Commence a Phase 2 Community Engagement by distributing a Discussion Guide (Appendix 4) on the *What We Heard* report and the 5 proposed models of Auntie’s House. KDFN Justice will offer individual, group, or *Let’s Keep Talking*

- town hall sessions. Update the *What We Heard* report based on additional feedback.
- 3) Arrange for meeting with the Elder Council with translation services to discuss Auntie's House and seek their guidance.
 - 4) Meet formally with Youth Council to continue discussions on Auntie's House and seek their guidance.
 - 5) Create an online video with an Elder and Youth discussing Auntie's House report to garner increased community interest.
 - 6) Provide overview of Phase 1 findings to KDFN Leadership and seek their support and direction for Phase 2.
 - 7) Establish an interim project structure for further research and development of Auntie's House including Advisory of Youth and Elders as well as Working Committee of key KDFN staff and partners.
 - 8) Consider seeking funding under the Trilateral Forum Prevention fund to complete further model development, costing, funding identification and a feasibility study.
 - 9) Consider using a Community by Design approach for project development. This approach was successfully used for the Community Safety Officer program.
 - 10) Develop a robust Communications Plan to keep citizens involved and informed as well as to respond to requests from the public.
 - 11) Consider developing further community wellness/crime prevention strategies to enhance community safety.
 - 12) Provide KDFN Leadership final report and seek their direction on Auntie's House development.

Appendix 1: MMIWG Calls for Justice

MMIWG Calls for Justice for Social Workers and those Implicated in Child Welfare:

- All FPT governments to recognize Indigenous self-determination and inherent jurisdiction over child welfare
- All governments including Indigenous governments to transform current child welfare delivery systems and funded adequately and resourced to provide better supports for families and communities to keep children in their family homes
- All governments develop a definition of the “best interests of the child” based on distinct Indigenous perspectives, world views, needs and priorities
- All governments to prohibit the apprehension of children on basis of poverty or cultural bias
- All levels of government for financial support to be provided so that families and community members of the children of missing and murdered women are capable of caring for the children left behind
- All governments, where apprehension is not avoidable, child welfare priorities and ensure that a family member or community member assumes care of the Indigenous child
- All governments to ensure the availability and accessibility of distinctions-based and culturally safe culture and language programs for Indigenous children in the care of child welfare
- PT government and child welfare for an immediate end to the practice of targeting and apprehending infants from Indigenous mothers right from birth
- Establishment of a Child and Youth Advocate in each jurisdiction with a specific mandate of Indigenous children and youth
- All governments immediately adopt the 14 standards regarding the implementation of the Jordan’s Principle
- All governments reform laws on obligations for youth “aging out” of the child welfare system
- All child and family service agencies to engage in recruitment and training of Indigenous staff as well as training of existing child welfare staff on a variety of topics related to Indigenous culture and history of colonization practices
- All governments to implement “Spirit Bear Plan”
- All child welfare agencies to establish more rigorous requirements for safety, harm-prevention, and needs-based services within group or care homes, as well as within foster situations, to prevent the recruitment of children in care into the sex industry.
- All child welfare agencies and all governments to fully investigate deaths of Indigenous children in care.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Auntie's House

Preamble: KDFN is exploring the development of new community resources for children, youth and families called Auntie's House. We all want children and youth to feel safe and have their best interests protected. We also want families to be supported by the community in this important role. The history of colonization, including the impacts of residential schools, has interrupted the positive cultural patterns and methods of parenting. This intergenerational trauma has led to great pain including violence, suicide, crime, and self-destructive behavior. Many parents lack the family experience and support to feel proud in their important role as parents. This is especially true when a family is in crisis and is afraid if they reach out that they will be judged or have their children placed in child welfare. Children and youth experience tremendous loss and fear when they are placed outside our community. As a community, we all share this pain. The proposed plan for Auntie's House is to create a safe haven in the community for children and youth to go for a short time until the parents are able to feel strong again. It would use a cultural model of extended family values and loving supports providing education, parenting resources, outreach home visiting services, and programming to support healthy family life.

There would be active community engagement in the development of the model and in the recruitment of the paid and volunteer Aunties. Elders and trusted community members would guide the process. Auntie's House would be developed and operated by KDFN. One of its goals is to prevent children from coming into care by FCS and leaving our community.

As we research the best way forward for Auntie's House, we need your help to ensure we do it in a good way that respects our community and our values.

Questions

- 1) How should we go forward in a good way to discuss the proposed Auntie's House with the community?
- 2) Who should we talk to and how should we demonstrate respect for their input?
- 3) Auntie's House's main goal is for children, youth and families to have access to a safe place and use the programs there to strengthen parenting and family life. What are your thoughts about this goal? How do you think it could make a difference?
- 4) Auntie's House was first suggested in 2016 after the community assessment. Do you still think there is a need to have a resource like Auntie's House here in KDFN? **A)** If so, what do you see as the biggest need it would meet? **B)** If no, what do you see as different in 2019 that is meeting the safety needs of children and youth?
- 5) Would you support Auntie's House development? How do you see you or your family members benefiting from its support? How do you see you working with Auntie's House if you are in a KDFN staff person?

6) How could it be a trusted resource that families would feel safe using? What suggestions do you have to build trust in the community?

7) What concerns or worries do you have on proposed Auntie's House?

8) What other advice would you give on Auntie's House?

We welcome all your thoughts and comments. Please provide your additional thoughts.

DRAFT

Appendix 3: Interview Guide for Elders on Auntie's House

Preamble: Auntie's House is a proposed safe haven for children and youth to stay for short periods of time outside their home when a family is in crisis. Auntie's House will have respected members of community there, to provide care and guidance. It will focus on cultural supports to strengthen the child, youth and family. There will be outreach connecting families to other supports in KDFN such as land-based healing and parent education.

- 1) What are your thoughts on proposed Auntie's House? Is it needed and how could it make a difference?
- 2) What concerns or worries do you have on Auntie's House? What could be done to address them?
- 3) How should we go forward in a good way?
- 4) Who else should we talk to?
- 5) Other wisdom you wish to share?
- 6) Thank you for the generous gift of your time and wisdom.

Appendix 4: Discussion Guide for Auntie's House for Phase 2

During November and December 2019, there were a number of individual and group interviews held with citizens on Auntie's House, a proposed temporary safe house for children and youth during a family crisis. Over 100 KDFN citizens participated in these discussions as well as the Let's Keep Talking session on December 9, 2019.

A draft report *Auntie's House Community Conversations - What We Heard* is now available on the KDFN website. It has not been finalized yet because we wanted to go back to the community to ensure we had accurately captured your feedback and to see if there were other items we missed. This project is at the exploratory research stage and no decisions have been made by KDFN to go forward with the project.

Attached is a series of questions on the draft report we would appreciate you answering and providing your thoughts on the 5 proposed models. If you prefer to meet in person rather than provide written feedback, please call KDFN Justice Department and we will arrange for an interview.

Questions

- 1) Did the overall report reflect your thoughts on Auntie's House? If not, please let us know what is missing and how it can be improved?
- 2) What are your thoughts on the 5 proposed models for Auntie's House? Which one is your preference and why?
- 3) The report outlines a number of proposed next steps. Do you agree with the suggestions and is there anything missing that you believe is an important action?

Thank you for your generous time and commitment on this proposed project.