



*Whitefish River First Nation*

*Young Adults Ages 19 – 39 Specific  
Dialogue Session*

*February 8 & 9, 2020*



**Whitefish River First Nation  
Community Cannabis Advisory Group**



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## **Executive Summary**

In preparing to create a Whitefish River First Nation specific response to cannabis legalization, continuous engagement and communication continues to occur. Over the month of February 2020, three community dialogue sessions occurred to continue sharing trusted information based on past events and the current landscape of recreational (non-medical) cannabis. This report will focus on the age group of young adults ages 19 – 39. The two-day dialogue session was held on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of 2020 at the Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Center in Little Current, Ontario.

### Key Events:

- Opening ice breaker activity
- Group discussion: What would you like to learn over the next two days?
- Introduction to cannabis presentation
- Memory testing interactive quiz game
- Learning the difference between dialogue and debate
- Watching a cannabis video
- Practicing dialogue
- Learning the effects of cannabis on the body and developing brain
- Exploring different possibilities for a potential cannabis facility
- Concluded with a guided painting activity

### Results & Recommendations:

- Two young adults participated in this dialogue session.
  - Recommended that we learn from others who have both chosen to participate in and abstain from recreational cannabis facilities.
  - Look into many economic options not just the sale of products.
  - Improved communication on all topics not just cannabis.
  - Ready for a community vote.

**The funding for this project was made possible through a research grant awarded by Health Canada's Substance Use and Addiction Program (SUAP).**

## 1.0 Background

This project is in response to the 2015 federal government announcement of a plan to legalize adult cannabis use across Canada. On October 17, 2018, the Federal Cannabis Act was put in place. The Cannabis Act says that adults age of 18 years and older can legally possess up to 30 grams of dried product. However, provinces, territories and First Nation governments have the power to increase this age but not lower the minimum age of use. Currently in Ontario, the minimum age of use is 19 years of age. As Whitefish River First Nation (WRFN) has not yet created their own cannabis law, the age of use falls under the Ontario regulations. A reminder that a community-wide moratorium on recreational cannabis shops was enacted on August 26, 2018 and is still in effect.

To better understand how these new laws will affect our community the Ayaan-gwaa-mizid-daa – Let's Be Careful – Whitefish River First Nation Cannabis Advisory Group (the advisory group) was created. The central purpose of the advisory group is to oversee all the cannabis education, prevention and misuse programs, policies and regulations with the aim to promote responsible use.

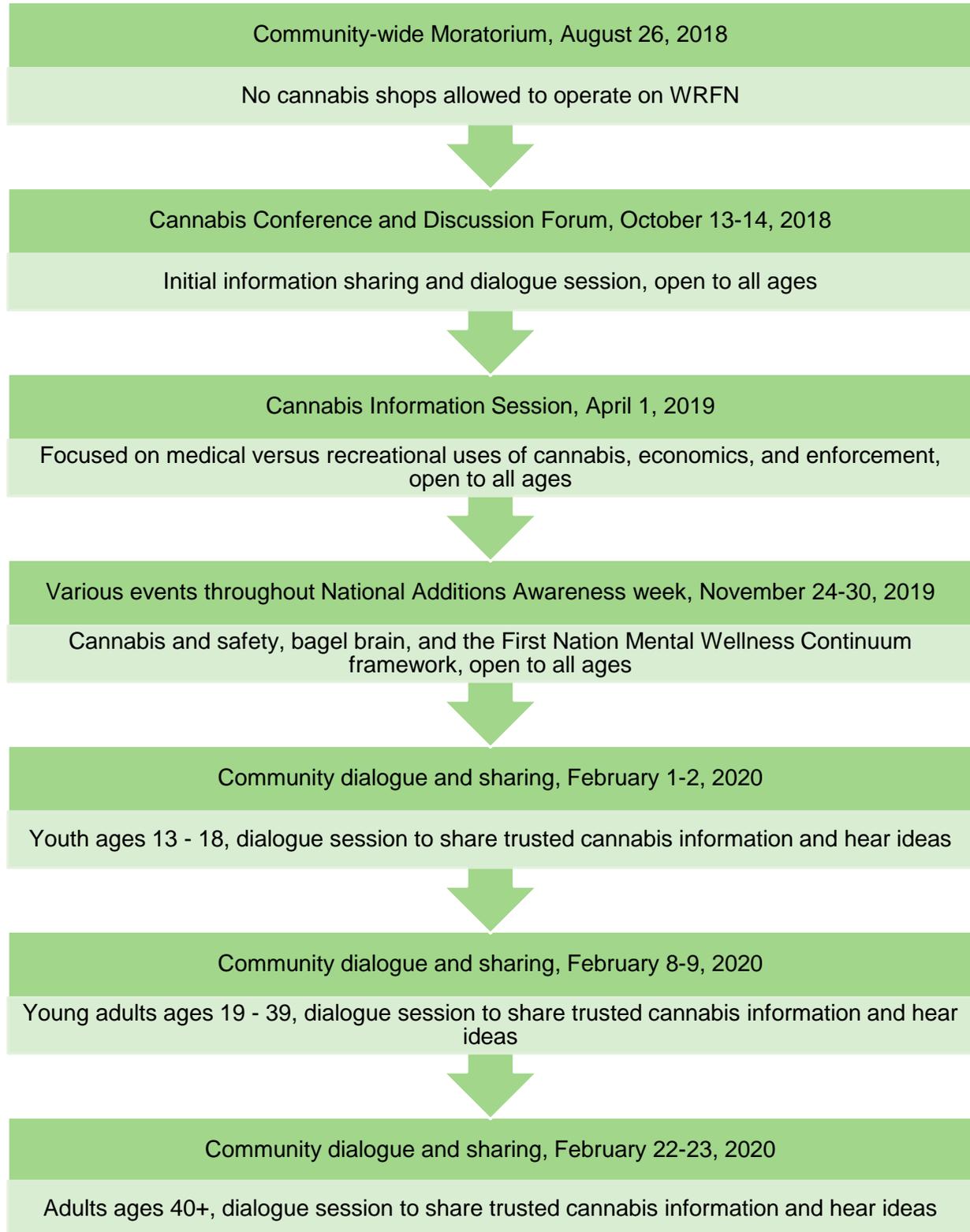
The mandate of the advisory group is to:

- A. Review, prepare, and recommend policies and procedures regarding cannabis related matters on WRFN territory.
- B. Review all educational programming and, using best practice, recommend enhancements with the aim to improve individual's knowledge and understanding of safe cannabis use/misuse through ongoing education seminars, conferences, focus groups, or other knowledge translation tools.
- C. Review the current support systems and, using best practice, make recommendations for improvement.
- D. Advise on assessment and evaluation mechanisms that will allow the WRFN to monitor the effectiveness of cannabis /health promotion programs and services.
- E. Gather information regarding community issues around cannabis use and to hold forums as directed by committee and approved by Chief and Council
- F. Development and approval of a work plan with timelines.

Ideally, no one would use substances, such as cannabis. However, that is not the reality. As such, the advisory group has been busy planning engagement sessions to continue sharing trusted information based on past events and the current landscape of recreational (non-medical) cannabis (See *Figure 1: Timeline of Past Events*). The next set of engagement sessions include three separate workshops based on participant age: A) youth ages 13 – 18, B) young adults 19 – 39, and C) adults 40+.

This report will focus on the age group of young adults ages 19 – 39. The two-day dialogue session was held on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of 2020 at the Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Center in Little Current, Ontario. On both days there were two young males in attendance.

**Figure 1: Timeline of Past Events**



## 2.0 Agenda

Day 1:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:30 – 9:00	Welcome breakfast
9:00 – 9:30	Opening ice breaker
9:30 – 9:45	Share agenda for the day
9:40 – 10:00	Activity: Weeding out the weeds
10:00 – 10:15	Activity: What do you want to learn?
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:15	Cannabis introduction
11:15 – 11:30	Activity: Kahoot!
11:30 – 11:45	What is dialogue
11:45 – 12:15	Video: Talking cannabis with Indigenous youth
12 – 12:45pm	Lunch
12:45 – 1:00pm	Ice breaker
1:00 – 1:30	Effects on the body
1:30 – 1:45	Harm reduction
1:45 – 2:00	Break
2:00 – 4:00	Group dialogue
4:00	Closing for the day

Day 2:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:30 – 9:00	Welcome breakfast
9:00 – 9:10	Smudge and prayer
9:10 – 9:30	Opening ice breaker
9:30 – 9:45	Hurt buffalo – connection
9:45 – 10:15	Dispensaries
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:45	Group dialogue
11:45 – 12:00	Closing thoughts on cannabis
12:00 – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00 – 4:00pm	Art
4:00pm	Closing

### ***3.0 Workshop Description***

Jasmine Fournier is an Anishnaabe-kwe from Garden River First Nation with a Master of Public Health. She is currently the Health Promotion Educator for Whitefish River First Nation. Prior to working with WRFN, Jasmine worked with the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, a national not-for-profit organization that focused on supporting the mental wellness of First Nations people across Turtle Island. As Thunderbird Partnership Foundation's Indigenous Knowledge Exchange Coordinator, Jasmine focused on research, curriculum development, and training. One of her main projects was to research and create easy to understand presentations, toolkits and lesson plans about cannabis.

Jasmine presented all of the workshop materials and facilitated group discussion for the young adults ages 19 – 39 dialogue session. She used mixed methods of teaching, focusing on involving the workshop participants as active learners. A few methods used include audio, visual, tactile, lecture-based, game-based learning and group-based discussions.

It is important to note that Pinegrove Productions was invited to this event to video record the session. In our funding agreement with Health Canada's Substance Use and Addiction Program (SUAP), we agreed to include video storytelling of our activities to help support the evaluation processes. When these video storytelling works are complete, they will be available on the Whitefish River First Nation website.

### ***4.0 Review of Events***

Day One:

On the first day, February 8<sup>th</sup> 2020, we started with introductions and an ice-breaker activity to kick off the event. Participants were asked to write a fun fact about themselves on a piece of construction paper, then fold the paper into a paper airplane. Once everyone was done creating their airplane, they threw them to the front of the room where the instructor would read the fact and try to guess who made which airplane. This game was intended to get laughter and fun incorporated early in the day. A learning environment that is fun and open is more productive than an environment that is tense and overly structured.

Next the participants were asked to fill out a worksheet on what they already know about cannabis and what they want to get out of the presentation. Following this activity an introduction to cannabis that incorporated what the participants asked for in the previous activity was provided. Topics included what is cannabis, cannabinoids, why was cannabis legalized, timeline of federal legalization, brief information on medical cannabis, why focus on youth and cannabis, common questions and misconceptions about cannabis. This section was concluded by an interactive quiz game on the platform called Kahoot!. Participants have to guess the right answer to the questions on the screen as fast as possible to collect the most points. The winner of the quiz game got to choose first prize!

After lunch, a short workshop on dialogue was held. The participants learned and practiced the fundamentals of dialogue: respect, openness, empathy, and reflective listening. The day concluded with a group dialogue about the participants' thoughts on a potential cannabis business in Whitefish River First Nation. The comments and concerns are captured below in section *5.0 Summary of Comments, Questions and Answers*.

### Day 2:

Day two started out with an ice breaker called penguin walk. Two tape lines were made on the ground and participants had to race between with a balloon between their knees without using their hands. Again, laughter and fun to start off a day of learning has the potential to increase memory retention and increase general mood.

The first learning opportunity of the day was about the effects on the body that cannabis can have. Participants learned that cannabis can effect each person differently depending on their past experience with cannabis, current mood, how the cannabis was consumed (smoked or ingested), and many more factors. Some of the more common effects of cannabis are altered sense of time, poor coordination, challenges with problem solving, among others.

Ideally, no one would use substances, which is the only way to reduce all harms related to cannabis. However, this is not the reality. If someone chooses to use cannabis there are some ways to reduce the potential risks of cannabis use. These tactics include



purchasing cannabis and cannabis products from a legal source, choosing products with lower THC content, postponing use until after the brain is finished developing (around the age of 25), trying to limit use, and not driving or using heavy equipment while under the influence of cannabis.

The final learning opportunity of the day was exploring different possibilities for licensing a cannabis facility. This initial discussion was a high level overview. If the community decides to move in the direction of a retail cannabis store these options can be explored in further detail.

The day wrapped up with an art activity. Participants had the opportunity to learn how to paint a mountain scene. Chi-Miigwetch to Who's Crafty for this opportunity.

## ***5.0 Summary of Comments, Questions and Answers***

The young adults in this group were open and direct with their questions, concerns and suggestions. The discussion started off with mixed feelings about potentially allowing a cannabis retail operation on WRFN territory. The group thought that there should be more community awareness, especially for youth. To help with awareness we can provide factual information available for download on the WRFN website, in addition to in-person dialogues.

The group then moved the dialogue to the potential economics of cannabis. The general consensus was that no matter what the decision is, the results should benefit the community as a whole over individual gains. One suggestion was to have the potential retail cannabis business owned by the community where the community could decide where the profits are directed. Suggestions included supporting youth activities including arts, dance, education, community development, community café, among others.

The young adults in this group want there to be open communication about any plans that arise. Open and transparent communication will increase community trust and buy-in. This communication will also help alleviate potential conflicts that may arise.

The group would like the community to look at multiple different licensing options. Some of the different ideas were to create our own laws, be a licensed grower, licensed processor, and/or licensed retailer. It was suggested that if the community were to grow their own cannabis we could create a healthier product with less pesticides or additives leading to better quality. The facility could have locals care for the plants, providing local jobs. If this were the route that the WRFN community were to go, more research would be needed.

## ***6.0 Workshop Demographics and Feedback Survey Results***

On both days there were two young adult males. Chi-miigwetch to the two young adults who participated in this dialogue session. These participation numbers are too low to generalize the opinions of these youth to encompass all views of this age group in the community.

Learning from what was explicitly said as well as what was implied is an important skill to have. Observing the tapering of attendance at events can indicate a number of things. Lower attendance numbers could indicate a saturation of information which would demonstrate we have accomplished our work plan goal of education. Another potential reason for lowering attendance rates could be the unwillingness to be video recorded. This event was video recorded by Pinegrove productions to satisfy the proposed reporting requirements to Health Canada. As such, it would be advantageous to have an anonymous method to allow community member provide their real, uncensored opinions about cannabis without fear of reprimand or social stigma.

## ***7.0 Recommendations to Chief and Council***

Based off this engagement session, and the previous events, we, the advisory group, recommend the following:

1. Learn from what other First Nations are doing across Canada.
2. Ensure community benefit over individual gain.
3. Look into multiple different license options.
4. Make decisions soon. This group was concern how long it may take.
5. Ensure open and transparent cannabis communication about goals and intentions