



Whitefish River First Nation

Adults 40+ Specific Dialogue Session

February 22 & 23, 2020



Whitefish River First Nation
Community Cannabis Advisory Group



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	- 3 -
1.0 Background.....	- 4 -
2.0 Agenda.....	- 6 -
3.0 Workshop Description	- 7 -
4.0 Review of Events	- 7 -
5.0 Summary of Comments, Questions and Answers	- 8 -
6.0 Workshop Demographics and Feedback Survey Results.....	- 9 -
7.0 Recommendations to Chief and Council	- 10 -

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 adults 40+. The two-day dialogue session was held on February 22nd and 23rd of 2020 at the Seven Fires Youth and Elders Center.

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 wood burning activity

Results & Recommendations:

- Eight adults participated in this dialogue session.
 - Ready for a community vote.
 - Incorporate cannabis into the community 20-year plan
 - Focus on ensuring we do not normalize cannabis use especially for the younger generations.
 - Improved communication on all councils, groups, task forces, committees, and community programs.
 - Explore multiple options for economic development including cannabis and hemp products

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.

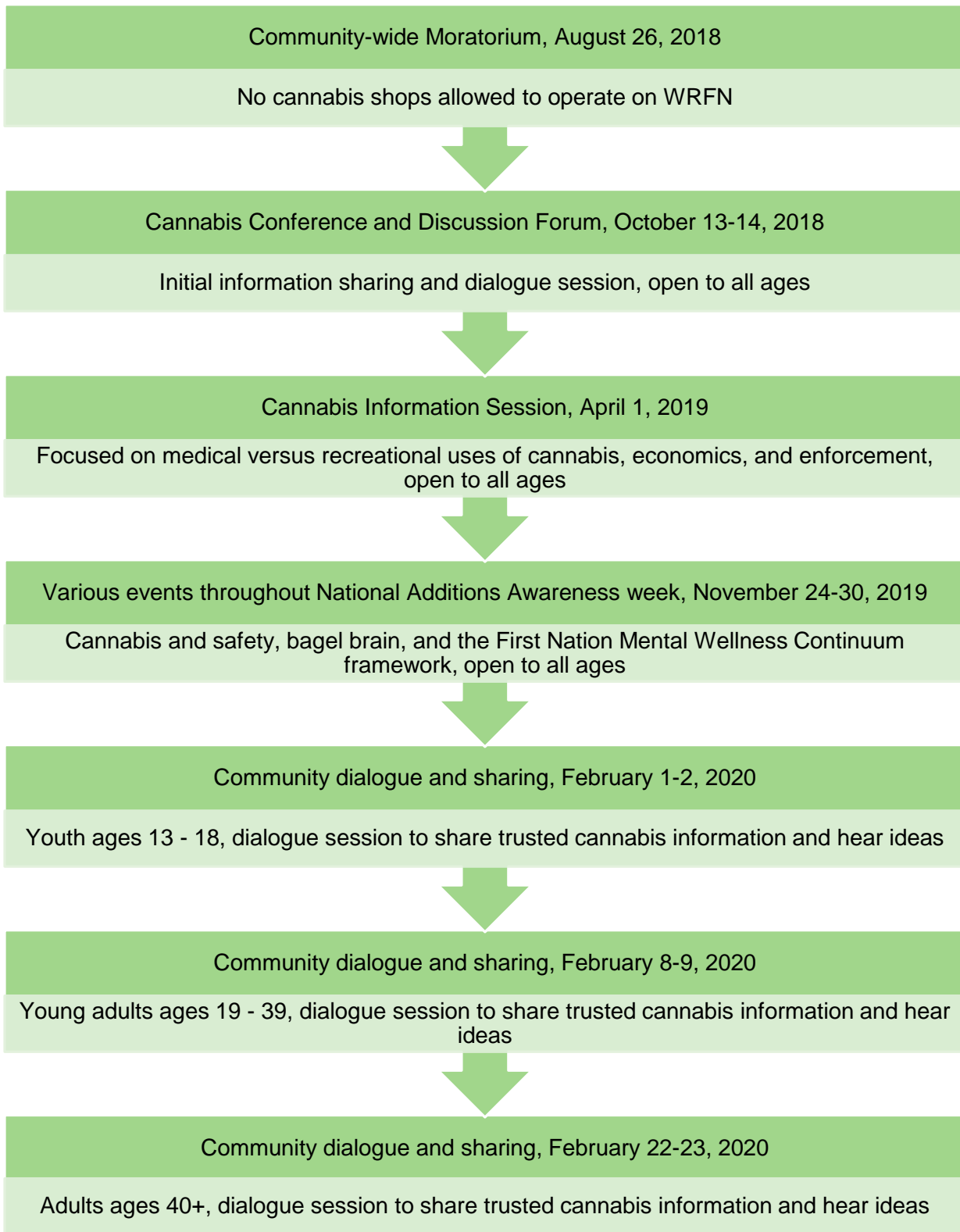
The mandate of the advisory group is to:

- 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 adults 40+. The two-day dialogue session was held on February 22nd and 23rd of 2020 at the Seven Fires Youth and Elders Center. On day one there were 8 participants, 2 males and 6 females. On day two there were 5 participants, 3 males and 2 females.

Figure 1: Timeline of Past Events



2.0 Agenda

Day 1:

Time	Activity
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:

Time	Activity
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 adults ages 40+ 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 8th 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, and 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, the participants learned about dialogue and how it can be helpful in situations that have multiple opinions. Using the fundamentals of dialogue: respect, openness, empathy, and reflective listening having dialogues with multiple opinions can be easier. The group watched a video called *Talking cannabis with Indigenous youth*. This video was created by the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation to increase conversations about cannabis with youth across the country. The group then had the opportunity to dialogue about the video and their experiences challenging conversations. The day concluded with a group dialogue about the potential for a recreational cannabis retailer in the WRFN community. The comments, questions and concerns are captured below in section *5.0 Summary of Comments, Questions and Answers*.

Day Two:

Day two started out with an ice breaker called *Keeping up with our Emotions*. The group spread out into a circle and had to keep a balloon from hitting the ground. The catch is that the person keeping the balloon off the floor had to say an emotion that had not been said yet. The game intensifies when more balloons were added later in the game.

After the smiles and laughter, the group learned about the effect of cannabis on the body and ways to reduce the potential harms of long term use. This group focused on the Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines. The presenter went over the 10 recommendations for using cannabis in a safer way based on the best available scientific evidence put out by the Center for Addiction and Mental Health.

Next the group reviewed potential licensing options for if WRFN decides to allow a retail cannabis business in the community. This presentation was a high level overview. If the community does decide to move in the direction of a cannabis operation more research will be required.

The day concluded with a guided art activity. Robert Stonepoint guided participants through their own wood burning project. Many of the participant created signs, one even created a design in a wooden box. Once participants were satisfied with their creations, a wood sealant was used and projects were set to dry. Chi-miigwetch Robert for this fun learning opportunity!

5.0 Summary of Comments, Questions and Answers

This group started the conversation with the economics of cannabis. It was suggested that any revenues gained from any cannabis operation could go towards multiple activities including sports, arts, and community development projects like a flat walking track for seniors. Emphasis was given to supporting the gifts of all youth, not just those who are interested in sports. Diversity leads to a stronger community.

It was also suggested that the community look into uses of cannabis other than recreational: medicine, farming, hemp production, physical building materials, producing own materials in community such as clothing, rope, and nets. More research should be focused on hemp and the production of hemp products.

The group expressed that if there is a moratorium on cannabis stores the same should apply for tobacco stores. The point was made that we know the negative health effects of tobacco yet we still allow them to operate. It was also noted that the tobacco stores do not share the profits with the community and that potential profits from a cannabis operation should be directed to community needs.

Furthering the conversation on wellness, the group expressed that we have to work to not normalize the use of cannabis. Normalizing the use of tobacco has led to widespread challenges. We have to be proactive in our efforts to prevent the same from happening with cannabis use.

One suggestion to reduce the likelihood of normalizing cannabis use is to increase the stress relieving opportunities for all ages within the community. Regularly scheduled activities like yoga for children at Shawanosowe School, community paint nights, family dances, community feasts, and others. It would be recommended to ask the community what activities they would like to attend.

Another way to ensure that cannabis use is not normalized is to build the foundation of any decision on the Seven Grandfather teachings. Coming back to our ways is an important part of individual, family and community wellness. This is one of the many reasons that the logo for the Advisory Group is in both English and Anishinaabemowin. We will continue to use these teachings as a guide to doing our work in a good way.

The group expressed their gratitude for having a dialogue. They would like to see more dialogues in the future about cannabis as well as other topics of interest to the community. This is another way to stay proactive in meeting community needs. Although the group was appreciative for the initial dialogue, they would like to see more open and honest communication from all councils, groups, task forces, committees, and community programs.

6.0 Workshop Demographics and Feedback Survey Results

On day one there were 8 participants, 2 males and 6 females. On day two there were 5 participants, 3 males and 2 females. This group was vocal about their feedback and suggestions. Overall the group enjoyed the activities and suggested having even more hands learning opportunities. The general feel from the group is that they are ready to have a community vote and would like to keep having dialogues throughout the whole project.

Learning from what was explicitly said as well as what is implied was 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. Conduct a community vote sooner rather than later
2. Include vote results in the 20-year plan currently being developed
3. Increase open two-way communication from all councils, groups, task forces, committees, and community programs.
4. Look into other uses of cannabis other than recreational: medicine, farming, hemp production, physical building materials, producing own materials in community such as clothing, rope, and nets
5. Increase activities for community members including land-based activities, family friendly activities, physical activities, and art inspired activities for all ages to help prevent mental health and addiction challenges
6. Actively work to ensure we do not normalize the use of cannabis