



*Whitefish River First Nation*

# *Youth Ages 13 – 18 Specific Dialogue Session*

*February 1 & 2, 2020*

*Ayaan-gwaa-mizid-daa – Let's be Careful*



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

*Ayaan-gwaa-mizid-daa – Let's be Careful*



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**Table of Contents**

**Executive Summary ..... - 2 -**

**1.0 Background..... - 3 -**

**2.0 Agenda ..... - 5 -**

**3.0 Presenter Description ..... - 6 -**

**4.0 Review of Events ..... - 6 -**

**5.0 Summary of Comments, Questions and Answers..... - 8 -**

**6.0 Workshop Demographics and Feedback Survey Results..... - 8 -**

**7.0 Recommendations to Chief and Council..... - 8 -**

## **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 youth ages 13 – 18. The two-day dialogue session was held on February 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</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
- Concluded with a guided painting activity

### **Results & Recommendations:**

- Three youth participated in this dialogue session.
  - Youth want to participate in conversations that effect their future.
  - We as decision makers, need to enhance our youth engagement efforts.
  - Motivational speakers, such as sports players or inspirational youth, were suggested as a way to increase youth attendance.

**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.

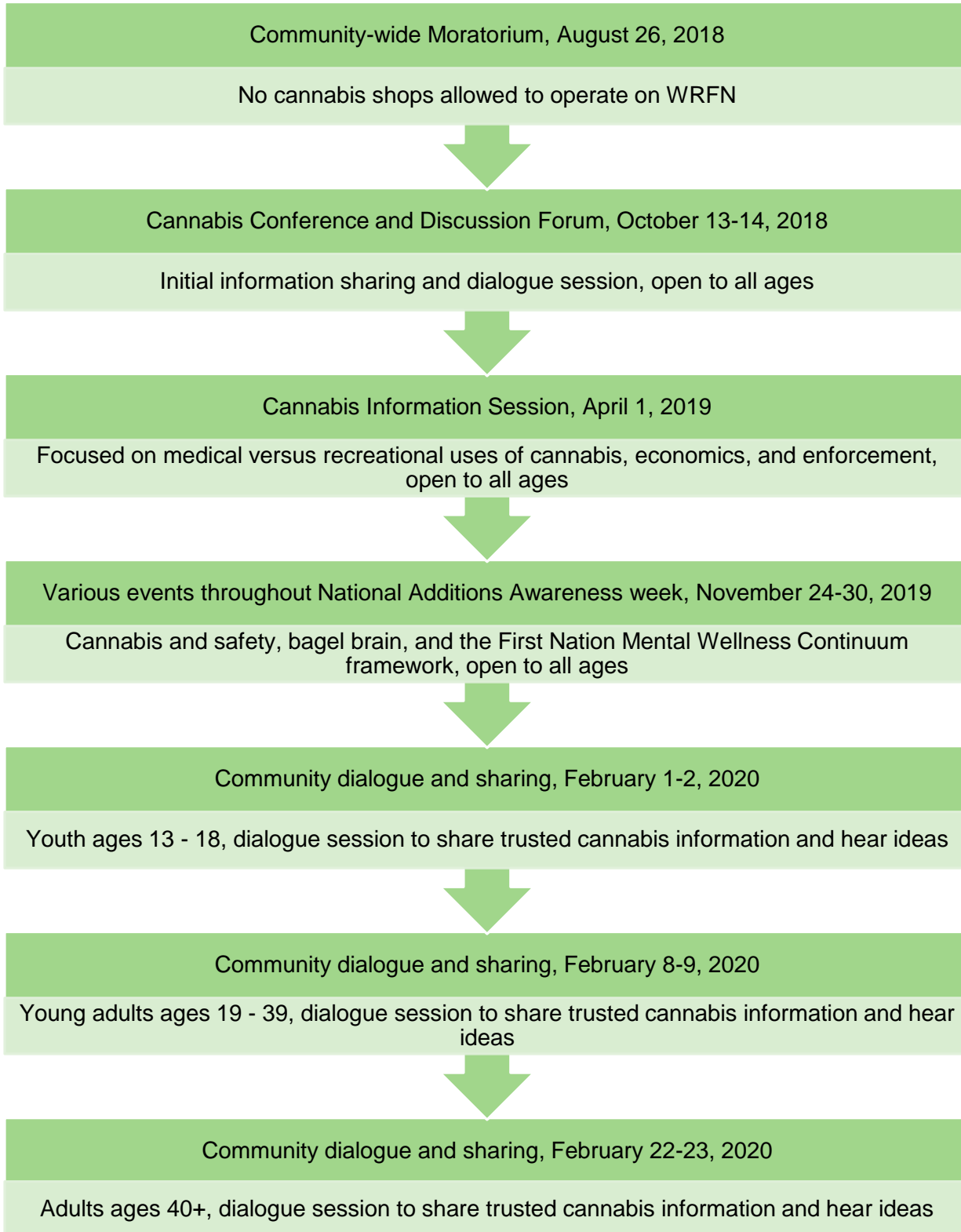
The mandate of the advisory group is to:

- 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 youth ages 13 – 18. The two-day dialogue session was held on February 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2020 at the Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Center in Little Current, Ontario. On day one there were two youth (one male and one female). On day two there were three youth (one male and two females).

**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	Cannabis and our bodies
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 Presenter 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 youth ages 13 – 18 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:

The day started around 10:30am, instead of 8:30am, to allow more participants to arrive. On the first day, February 1<sup>st</sup>, there were two youth. Councilor Esther Osche and Band Manager Art Jacko also participated in this event.

Introductions and an ice-breaker activity kicked 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. Topic 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.

Day one ended with key interviews from the youth who attended this event.



## Day Two:

The workshop for February 2, 2020 started off with a recap of the day before followed by the plan for the day. The first activity of the day participants learned about the fundamentals of dialogue. Understanding and practicing the difference between dialogue and debate are important skills to develop. These skills can be used to navigate difficult conversations that have many different opinions and ideas. Dialogue allows for multiple answers to the questions being asked. Laying the fundamentals of dialogue now will help conversations about cannabis and many other challenging topics in the future.

After practicing dialogue, the YouTube video “Talking Cannabis with Indigenous Youth” created by the Thunderbird Foundation was shown. The participants were asked if the views of the youth in the video reflect the experiences in WRFN. The experiences seemed similar other than the part in the video that talked about having different cliques, instead everyone generally gets along.

Next the group had a discussion about what might attract other youth to come to educational events. A few famous sports players and teams were suggested – hockey, lacrosse, snowboarding. We could ask these players to talk with the youth and have a focus on overall wellness, including physical, mental and emotional well-being through the development of a specialty interest and skills.

A short exercise and snack break took place. Then the group recapped what was learned yesterday then proceeded to focus on the effects of cannabis use in adolescence. One of the facts that stuck with the youth is cannabis is in fact addictive and that 1 in 10 adults and 6 in 10 youth will develop a habit if they use daily.

The discussion was furthered by exploring the developing brain. Participants learned the different areas of the brain that are effected by cannabis use. The pre-frontal cortex is not fully developed until the age of 25. This part of the brain is responsible for planning and decision making. Cannabis can effect this part of the brain making it harder to make decisions including organized thoughts. The emotion centers of the brain are also effected by cannabis use making it more challenging to regulate mood and impairs memory. This portion of the day was closed out by a dialogue of any final questions or thoughts.



After lunch, the day concluded with a painting event run by Who’s Crafty. The youth were invited to paint the Aurora Sky. This event was a two hour instructed painting session run by two local artists.



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

Overall, the youth were quiet at this session. They preferred to write down their ideas instead of saying them out loud. For example, when asked what might draw more youth to an event one of the participants wrote NHL Team or other famous hockey team on a piece of paper instead of sharing with the group. Once this idea was shared there was a discussion around what the athlete would provide while here. Suggestions included a skills workshop with a message of a positive lifestyle followed by a presentation on cannabis might be effective.

The low volume of questions and comments might be seen as the youth not paying attention. However, in fact the opposite is true. When the interactive quiz platform Kahoot! was used to engage the youth, the high scores demonstrate that the participants were listening and understanding the content being delivered.

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

On the first day, February 1<sup>st</sup>, there were two youth. One male and one female. On day two, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, another female youth joined the group. Chi-miigwetch to the three youth 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 demonstrated 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. Youth are willing to participate in advisory groups, activities, and events if the person running the event is willing to engage with them in ways other than impersonal poster invite.
2. Asking youth to participate by going door-to-door seemed to be an effective method of increasing engagement.
3. Youth asked for motivational speakers to draw more attendance at future engagement sessions.

4. The youth at this event were thoughtful listeners and asked questions for clarity. It is clear that they retain the facts provided to them. With this in mind, we believe the youth are well equipped to make informed decisions.