

Report to SPARC-BC on Community Development: Collaboration Project

To continue the Gathered Voices Project and Interagency Collaboration

Event: October 29, 2025

Report prepared by BVSPS Interagency Project Coordinator: Cheryl Hofweber

1. Number of people engaged during the planning and facilitation of the events.

- **In planning the event:** A total of 12 meetings were held, with a participation of 5-9 at each meeting, from Dec. 16, 2024 to November 26, 2025. The December meeting was to debrief the previous event and begin planning for 2025 in addition to planning to apply for funding for the 2025 event. Once funding was approved, planning meetings began in April, 2025.
- **For the event:** A total of 33 agencies/groups were invited. Of these 25 were represented by a total of 75 participants. (See attached list of agencies)
- **Grant Approved** for \$10,000 as of March 31, 2025 up to March 30, 2026.

July 2025: Save the date notice was sent out; sent out again at the end of August. Invitations to the event, were sent out via email, along with a number of in-person invitations to the agency managers. Posters were distributed to each agency in person. Members of the planning team shared in this task.

October 29th: The event. The collaborative event was entitled *“Resilience in Changing Times: How do service providers, clients, organizations, and systems adapt and work together as the world changes around them?”*

- A welcome to the territory was made by **Mabel Forsythe**, Timberwolf. **Cormac Hikisch**, Northern Health Interim Senior Operating Office, gave a welcome, endorsing the importance of this event focused on collaboration.
- **25 local agencies were represented** at the event. Unfortunately another event focused on Child Safety was later scheduled on that day, resulting in a few regrets. Approximately **75 service providers** attended.
- **13 Display tables** were set up by various agencies with handouts on their services.
- The formal **agenda** included a variety of information sharing from 9am to 3pm. With nutrition breaks and a catered lunch. A variety of agenda items in the morning fostered mingling, interaction, and case studies. In the afternoon a “World Café” was held to look at barriers and solutions for 4 specific issues local agencies need to deal with.
- Documents shared:
 - **Voices Carried:** Conversations with 5 local individuals with lived experience. (attached to report)

- **Notes from the Coffee, Conversations, and Connections sessions held monthly at the Salvation Army in 2023.** Feedback from those with lived experiences.
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2. The types of insights and knowledge gained:

- Once again there was overwhelming positive response and appreciation expressed by all participants, with recommendation that this kind of event be held annually. Many new service providers especially appreciated getting to know what other services were available. This was our third interagency event and people express that they are comfortable as well as appreciative.
- We learned that it is unwise to assume that various agencies and services are aware of what else is being provided in this community. There were many ‘aha’ moments of services they were unaware of.
- We learned that if there is a scenario being discussed, those providing the services need to be a part of it. We had a case study where an immigrant family with complex needs was being discussed, and the person responsible for English Language Learning wasn’t attending. Many didn’t know such a service existed.
- Last year we ended at 1pm and we realized that more time was needed. This time the full day was good to ensure time to capitalize on the knowledge in the room and have time for discussion.
- Having two microphones was helpful when there were speakers from the floor. Next year assign a person to have that microphone and deliver to speakers. People think they have a big voice, but in a large room with a group of 75, many aren’t able to hear these comments.
- Sending out a save-the-date notice is important, as is the personal connection with the leaders/managers of the various agencies.
- We need to ensure that the Indigenous agencies are involved in the planning. There is much to be learned from traditional pathways to wellness.

Information collated from the World Café activity (attached)

- We had a World Cafe activity where participants rotated through 4 posters, each having a topic and a chart where they would indicate Barriers on one column and Solutions on the other. The four issues were:
 - A. What is one thing you could do to improve youth supports in our community?*
 - B. What can be done to improve collaboration for client-centred care among service providers*
 - C. What can be done to improve families' awareness of and access to supports?*
 - D. How does someone get a support team when trauma and/or substance use are part of the problem?*
- Responses were collated and shared with agency managers as well as all participants, with the hope that they would be able to address some of the issues brought up.

3. Pathways for future research or community engagement

- Learning what the public concerns are and using this type of event to address them, or identify the gaps, is important. We will need to find a way to solicit this information.
- We plan to connect with the local newspaper reporter to be able to share the information participants gave regarding access to services.
- A **Community Directory** (www.smithersdirectory.com) is available on line. Wallet-sized **Help Cards** with many local services are available, and **FETCH** (For Everything That's Community Health <https://pacificnorthwest.fetchbc.ca/> . All the information regarding local health and wellness services are available, but there seems to be a lack of awareness about them. In addition, another challenge is that agencies need to ensure that their info is current.

4. Opportunities for future knowledge development and mobilization

- More **public information sharing** is key
- Focus on **expanding leadership team and sustainability** for a team to carry on with these interagency events.

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APPENDIX #1 : AGENCIES Invited

1	BC Emergency Health Services
2	BC Community Response Networks (CRN)
3	BCSS Mental Health Family Resource Centre
4	Bulkley Emergency Support Services (BESS)
5	BV Critical Incidence Response Team
6	BV Social Planning Society
7	BV Hospice
8	Community Living BC (CLBC)
9	Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre
10	Foundry and Proton Foundation
11	Grendel Group
12	High Roads
13	Houston Link to Learning: BV Community Connector
14	Legal Aid BC - Parents Legal Centre

15	Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
16	Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (Community Corrections Officer)
17	Min. of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
18	Northern Brain Injury Association - Bulkley Valley
19	Northern Health - (Hospital Services, Specialized Services; Com. Health Services, Primary Care Net.)
20	Northern Society for Domestic Peace (NSDP)
21	Northwest Child Development Centre (NWCDC)
22	Office of Wet'suwet'en (ANABIP, Witset),
23	PNW Division of Family Practice, Primary Care Network
24	Positive Living North (PLN)
25	RCMP and the Situation Table
26	Salvation Army
27	School District #54
28	Service Canada
29	Smithers Community Services Association (SCSA)
30	Smithers Health Committee
31	Smithers United Church
32	Thomas Robinson Consulting Ltd.
33	Witset First Nations Band

APPENDIX #2: Feedback Survey Summary from Interagency 2025.

What they liked:

- It was welcoming, a positive experience.! Name tags help with this sense of belonging.
- Keep it as interactive as possible, small table discussions.
- Use a case study involving a variety of services. Look at barriers and solutions.
- Participants want to know what other agencies offer
- Facilitate connections, mingling. (agency Bingo worked well!)
- Morning open seating, but afternoon purposely reseated to work with other agencies.

How it could improve:

- Note which agencies didn't attend, and why?
- Learn about the pathways for referral to specific programs
- What programs are available and what they do, exactly.
- Get permission to share list and contact info of participants so they can connect following the event.
- Include a self-care component

- Have breakout rooms of specific services; facilitators could give a brief overview of the topic and people could choose.
- Assigned seating right at the beginning to ensure new connections being made
- More agencies sharing info on display tables.

Would your organization be able to take it on?

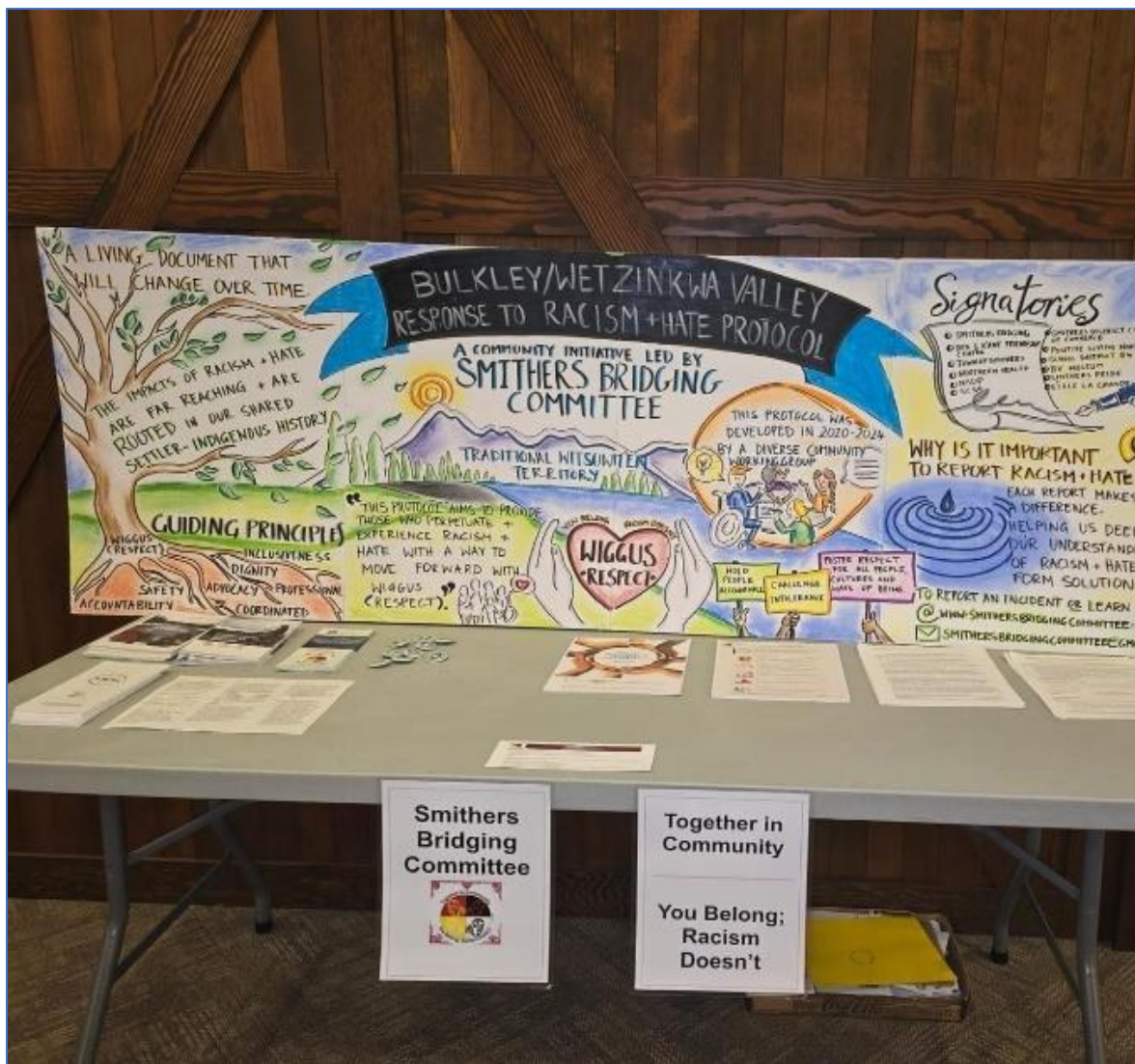
- Unsure, but I would personally be willing to support this
- Situations change for organizations when it comes to funding
- Maybe have meetings/connection over lunch, max 2hrs. quarterly, to keep connections
- Our organization could encourage everyone to attend
- Regular, indirect reminders like this are helpful. Events like this help from working in isolation.
- Support this by allowing paid staff time to help with the organization of such event.
- Could agencies step up and take on one component of the day, e.g. set up, cleanup, catering, plan agenda, registration, evaluation, communication with invitations, save the date, etc. Contribute either manpower or funds.

Action you will take following this event:

- Update our listing in the Smithers Directory of Services
- Contract outside agencies if needed
- Refer clients to relevant programming
- Look at the larger systems and community for reasons for barriers and for solutions
- Solidify new relationships/network
- Have already reached out to the Friendship Centre and provided info they needed
- Reach out to connections I made here and ensure they understand how to fully utilize the supports I can offer
- Have already talked with Friendship Centre about their daycare openings
- Find resources to provide to clients
- Share the Community Directory with individuals in my program
- Continue to research and take what I learned to try to understand the services better.

APPENDIX #3 :Photos from the October 29, 2025 event.

**Smithers Bridging Committee displayed a graphic outlining their project
“Response to Racism.”
The map was created by Lydia Howard.**



INTERAGENCY 2025.....A few highlights of the day!

