

Community Wellness Connections for Indigenous Youth Across Canada







Outline

- Outline the status of mental health supports

Identify

- Identify services gaps through perspectives of community members

Explore

- Explore how to address the gaps or to enhance existing supports

Develop

- Develop culturally responsive mental health supports

People are very reluctant to go to the hospital and seek out those services from town for fear that their confidentiality is going to be broken

I've heard stories from students where they don't have, have never had a bedroom, you know, or don't even have a mattress. You know, they have a blanket and a pillow and that's the reality.

The community experiences such a high number of suicides that "it's just like you're complacent to it".

A lot of students have said I don't want to go home [because] so and so is there. And there is that feeling of I don't want to go because whether it's family members or whatever's happening in that home, they aren't feeling comfortable or safe in that space.

Grief counseling for loss and trauma, anything that could assist with dealing with those would be a big deal because I know for us there is a feeling of not if, but when the next [traumatic] thing is going to happen within the community.

Voices of the Teaching Staff

I've been in family medicine and for 22 years and I worked in some of the most difficult communities in Baltimore ... I've been to a lot of disaster relief. I've been to the Haiti earthquake. I've been to this and that and you name it, I've been there.

And this is one of the most traumatized communities I've ever been in.

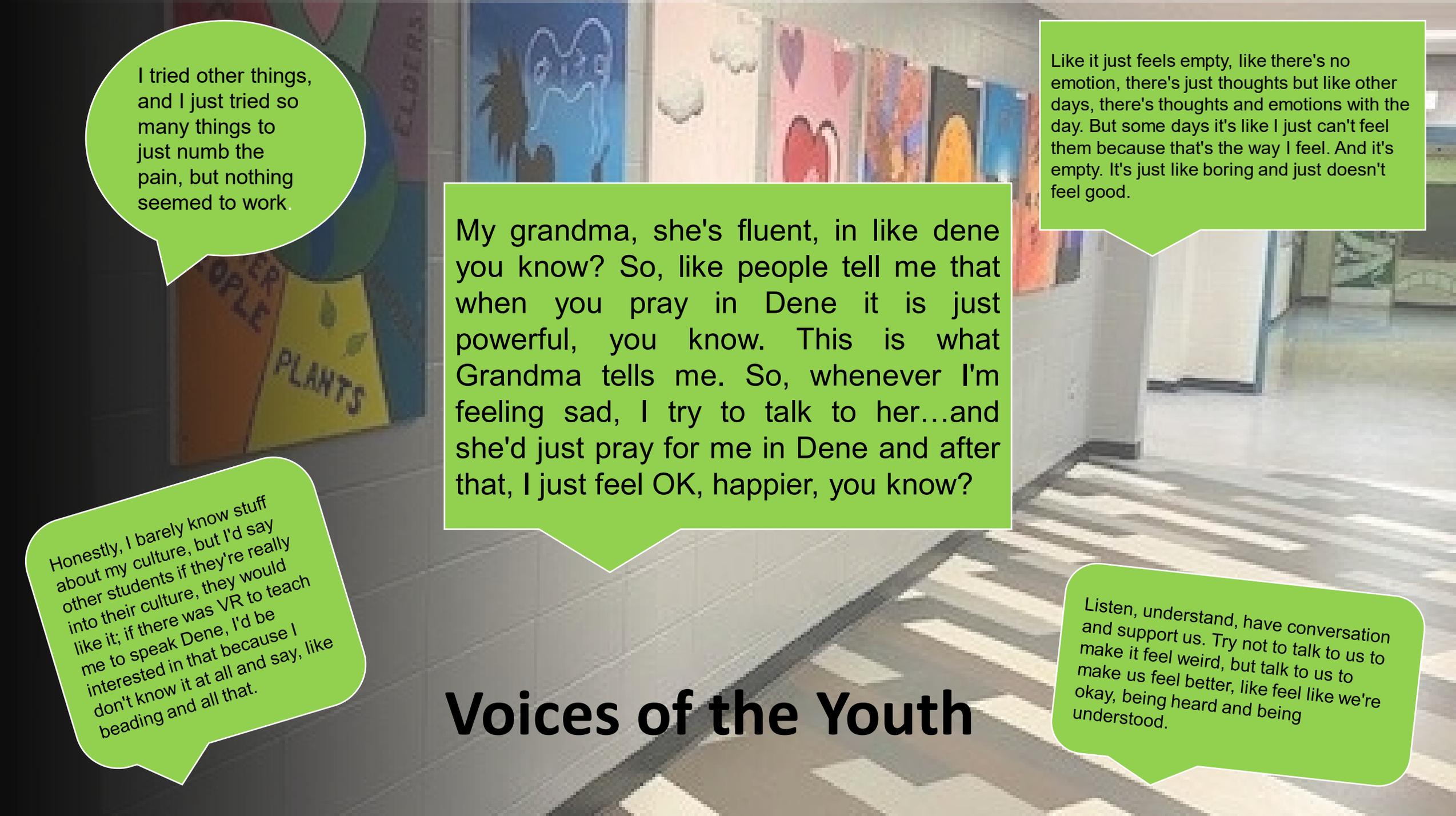
The counselors we have already are not being accessed. We don't need more counselors.
We need a different approach.

There's this **vicious cycle of hopelessness** and the idea that I have a future, I have a better tomorrow is not part of the language.

I'm actually quite frustrated ... I feel like I am **perpetuating a system designed to fail** and has failed for 20, 30, 40 years ... And yet we're still perpetuating it. And I'd like to know why are we doing something that doesn't work?

I wish there were more resources to keep them in community, to **heal them within the community**, and the virtual reality set would be an awesome opportunity to actually sit at home or someplace private and actually have a live meeting with someone to talk about certain things and what not.

Voices of the Clinicians



I tried other things, and I just tried so many things to just numb the pain, but nothing seemed to work.

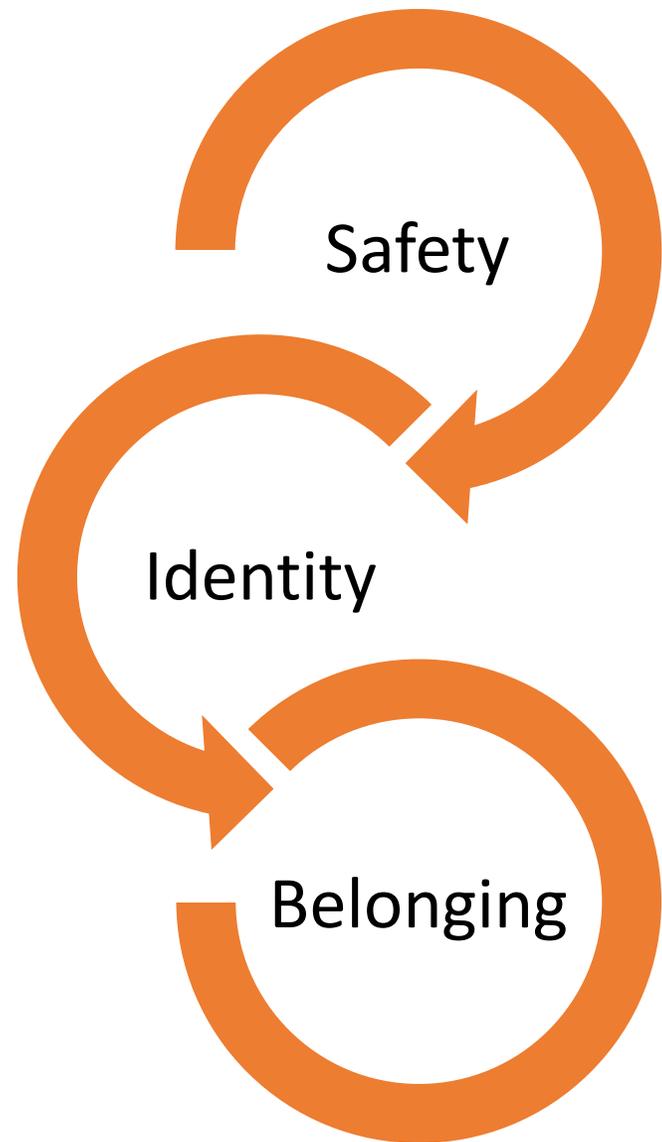
Like it just feels empty, like there's no emotion, there's just thoughts but like other days, there's thoughts and emotions with the day. But some days it's like I just can't feel them because that's the way I feel. And it's empty. It's just like boring and just doesn't feel good.

My grandma, she's fluent, in like dene you know? So, like people tell me that when you pray in Dene it is just powerful, you know. This is what Grandma tells me. So, whenever I'm feeling sad, I try to talk to her...and she'd just pray for me in Dene and after that, I just feel OK, happier, you know?

Honestly, I barely know stuff about my culture, but I'd say other students if they're really into their culture, they would like it, if there was VR to teach me to speak Dene, I'd be interested in that because I don't know it at all and say, like beading and all that.

Listen, understand, have conversation and support us. Try not to talk to us to make it feel weird, but talk to us to make us feel better, like feel like we're okay, being heard and being understood.

Voices of the Youth







Dedicated & secure
VR platform that
offers:

- Interactive Social Platform
- Educational Content
- Role Model Sharing
- Synchronous Workshops
- Capturing communities and culture with 360 recordings
- Counseling and support groups



Rural and Remote Connections:
A Community-Based Mobile
Research Lab and Learning
Centre



Mahsí cho

Kinanâskomítin

Pídamaya

Míigwech

Marsee

Thank You

Questions?

Lindsey Boechler, PhD (student), MA

Research Manager

Saskatchewan Polytechnic

Lindsey.Boechler@saskpolytech.ca

<https://twitter.com/BoechlerLindsey>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lindsey-boechler/>

