



CITY OF VANCOUVER WORKING MEETING TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

April 25, 2017 • Vancouver City Hall

City of Vancouver Working Meeting Report

Convened by:
City of Vancouver Urban Aboriginal
Peoples Advisory Committee



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May 1, 2000—Lisa Graveline Poem

*Death found you,
I don't know how or why,
I was the one living on the edge,
Ready to die.
Together forever was
Our motto
Our love song,
If I could see your smile,
Touch your face,
Ensure every memory of you they said
Was erased,
I would give my soul so they could see...
Your Dance live through my feet,
Hear your laughter through my voice,
And all of your dreams through my eyes,
You are the wind that gently pushes me to continue,
The voice that speaks through me when I feel silent,
The love when my heart feels so broken,
The light within me that fills the darkness,
You are my hero when I feel so fearful,
Fearful of the future I have to pass onto my children,
If death gave me life so I could live I promise you I will live for you
So your voice lives forever in the wind that pushes me gently forward
And will be the wind within my children that allows them to soar.*

Maura Gowans
Dene, Tulita, Northwest Territories
City of Vancouver MMIWG Meeting Panelist
Representing the Coalition on Missing and
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Executive Summary

On April 25, 2017, the City of Vancouver hosted a Working Group Meeting to support the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG Inquiry). Over 50 participants attended the full-day event in an effort to better understand how families involved with the MMIWG Inquiry can be more fully supported in Vancouver.

During facilitated group discussion, participants were asked in a visioning process to reflect upon what might families need throughout the MMIWG Inquiry in Vancouver. Participants identified 15 **Areas of Need** with the Top 5 emerging to involve matters related to:

1. Space;
2. Inquiry Engagement;
3. Systemic Issues;
4. Healing and Wellness; and
5. Cultural and Tradition.

A mapping exercise followed that allowed participants to delve deeper into these Areas of Need. Participants then identified and voted on each discussion group's most urgent priorities. The Top 5 **Priorities of Need** to emerge are, as follows:

1. Inquiry Engagement;
2. Healing and Wellness;
3. Space—funded 24/7 space;
4. Space—trauma-informed staff; and
5. Culture and Tradition.

Participants stressed the importance of empowering Indigenous women within the MMIWG **Inquiry Engagement**. Indigenous women will need to define for themselves what successes will be at the end of the MMIWG Inquiry.

Second, the next 3 priorities relate to the significance of a dedicated **Space** for families to use throughout the MMIWG Inquiry. Participants called for an immediate **Healing and Wellness Space**. A space that is funded, offers access 24- hours a day, 7 days a week that is supported by and for Indigenous women.

Furthermore, quality trauma-informed staff would operate the space.

Last, participants called for **Culture and Tradition** to be incorporated into any health, healing, and wellness needs. Ceremonies need to be available to families in need. There needs to be plenty of opportunities to honour and respect traditional, spiritual, and cultural protocols while taking care of families before, during, and after the MMIWG Inquiry.

Introduction

The City of Vancouver hosted this event with the goal of developing a plan to support the Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This Working Meeting was a one-day facilitated event, bringing together frontline human service and women-serving organizations. Together we would collectively ask: How can we come together to support the needs of families involved in the MMIWG Inquiry?

Background

On April 21, 2016, the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee (UAPAC) put forward a motion to work with Council Liaisons, Councillor Andrea Reimer and Councillor Adriane Carr, to develop a motion to Vancouver City Council requesting support to host an event with the goal of developing a plan to support the Inquiry.

The UAPAC advises Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for urban Aboriginal Peoples to fully participate in City services and civic life.

UAPAC initially identified three areas where the City of Vancouver could help support:

1. Support for survivors, families, and current victims;
2. Advocate making the Inquiry a Nation Inquiry as opposed to a Federal Inquiry; and
3. Convening an event to bring different groups together to develop a plan for support and advocacy around the upcoming Inquiry.

In September 2016, UAPAC members, Councillor Reimer, and City staff met with the BC Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to get advice from the Coalition on supports families will need during the Inquiry.

Recommendations from the meeting included:

- Establish a space for families, communities, survivors, women-serving organizations to come together throughout the Inquiry;
- Support the space to facilitate services, such as legal advice, healing, information, food, childcare, etc.;
- Convene a meeting with women-serving organizations to understand what their capacity is and where the gaps are, in order to plan how to best support families, victims, and survivors throughout the MMIWG Inquiry; and
- Develop a framework to support families, victims, and survivors.

UAPAC recommended that the City convene an event to develop a strategy on how to provide support for survivors, families, and current victims. This support is often overlooked or underfunded and a critical part of the process.

City of Vancouver Working Group Meeting to Support the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

On April 25, 2017 at City Hall, over 50 organizations took part in the Working Meeting. The event was emceed by Suzette Amaya and facilitated by Kinwa Bluesky.

Councillor Andrea Reimer shared a welcome, followed by an opening prayer by Lillian Howard, who is also a member of the UAPAC. Councillor Reimer spoke again to provide the background and overview of the City's work to date in the area. A panel was introduced to speak locally, regionally, and nationally on current work in the area:

- Lillian Howard, City of Vancouver's UAPAC
- Maura Gowans, Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

- Tanya Kappo and Wendy Van Tongeren-Harvey, Commission of Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Speakers also shared some of the areas of need that families may have going into the MMIWG Inquiry. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. Many questions were directed to Tanya Kappo and Wendy Van Tongeren-Harvey, who were present on behalf of the MMIWG Inquiry. After the panel, the working meeting session began with facilitated discussion groups.

Facilitated Discussion Groups

At each of the nine tables, the group discussions were led by a facilitator and focused on what the families will need throughout the MMIWG Inquiry in Vancouver. The afternoon session focused on visioning and mapping, with a SOAR engagement framework, which helped to take an inventory, a ranking, and a reasoning of why the groups valued these Areas and Priorities of Need.

This report reflects the discussion groups' work, findings, and recommendations. The City of Vancouver's staff and UAPAC will reviewed the report and provided initial feedback. All participants will receive a report and are encouraged to suggest additional revisions, if interested.

City of Vancouver Working Meeting to Support the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

April 25, 2017

City Hall Town Hall Room 1

8:30 am–4:00 pm

AGENDA

Emcee: *Suzette Amaya*

Facilitator: *Kinwa Bluesky*

8:30-9:00	Registration and Coffee	
9:00-9:15	Welcome Opening Prayer	<i>Councillor Andrea Reimer Lillian Howard</i>
9:15-9:30	Background and Overview of Meeting	<i>Councillor Andrea Reimer</i>
9:30-10:30	Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Vancouver's Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee • Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls • Commission of Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 	<i>Lillian Howard Maura Gowans Tanya Kappo</i>
10:30-10:45	Health Break	
10:45-11:45	Small Group Work—Visioning	
11:45-12:45	Lunch – Provided	
12:45-1:45	Small Group Work—Mapping	
1:45-2:45	Small Group Work—SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results)	
2:45-3:00	Health Break	
3:00-3:30	Report out from Small Groups	
3:30-3:50	Wrap Up and Closing Comments	
3:50-4:00	Closing Prayer	

Areas of Need

As part of the visioning process, discussion groups were first asked:

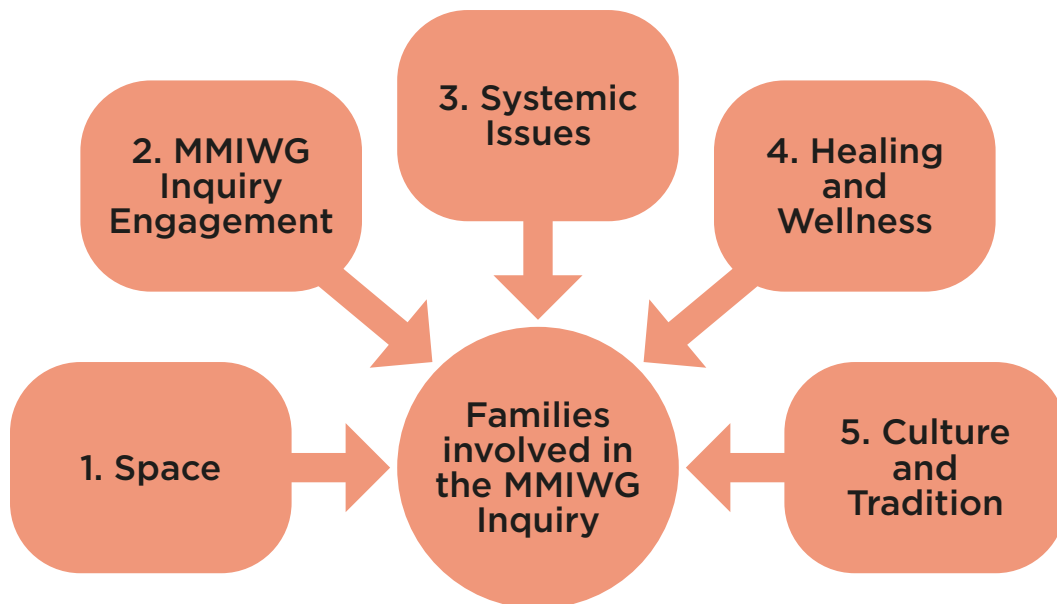
“What will families need throughout the MMIWG Inquiry in Vancouver?”

Each group discussed and identified the needs many families may have during the course of the MMIWG Inquiry. Facilitators then worked together to identify main areas. Before proceeding onto the mapping exercise, participants were given the opportunity to add and change any of the identified 15 **Areas of Need**.

During the mapping exercise, each group was asked to brainstorm what they saw as top assets, resources, supports and/or services needed for each of the identified **Areas of Need**. Then each of the 9 discussion groups was asked to identify their top 3-5 priorities, which were mapped onto the 15 **Areas of Need**. Every participant was given the opportunity to then vote, using a dotted sticker, on either an overall identified **Area of Need** or a more specific **Priority of Need**, if they so chose.

Once tallied, the Top 5 **Areas of Need**, as defined by the participants, are:

1. Space;
2. Inquiry Engagement;
3. Systemic Issues;
4. Healing and Wellness; and
5. Culture and Tradition.

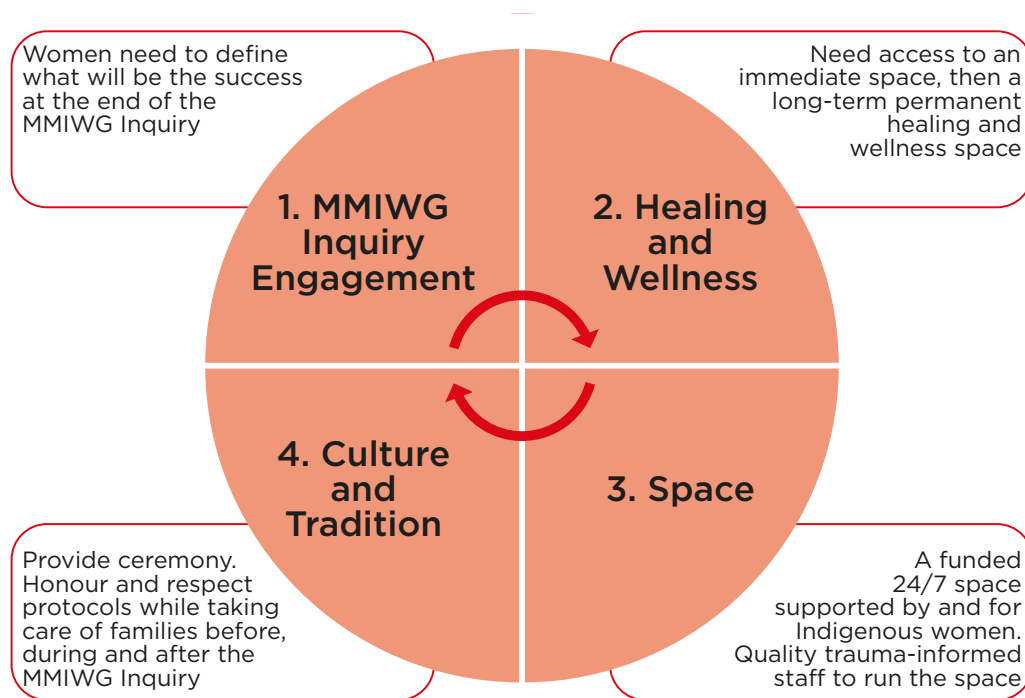


Priorities of Need

Within these **Areas of Need**, the Top 5 voted **Priorities of Need** to emerge are as follows:

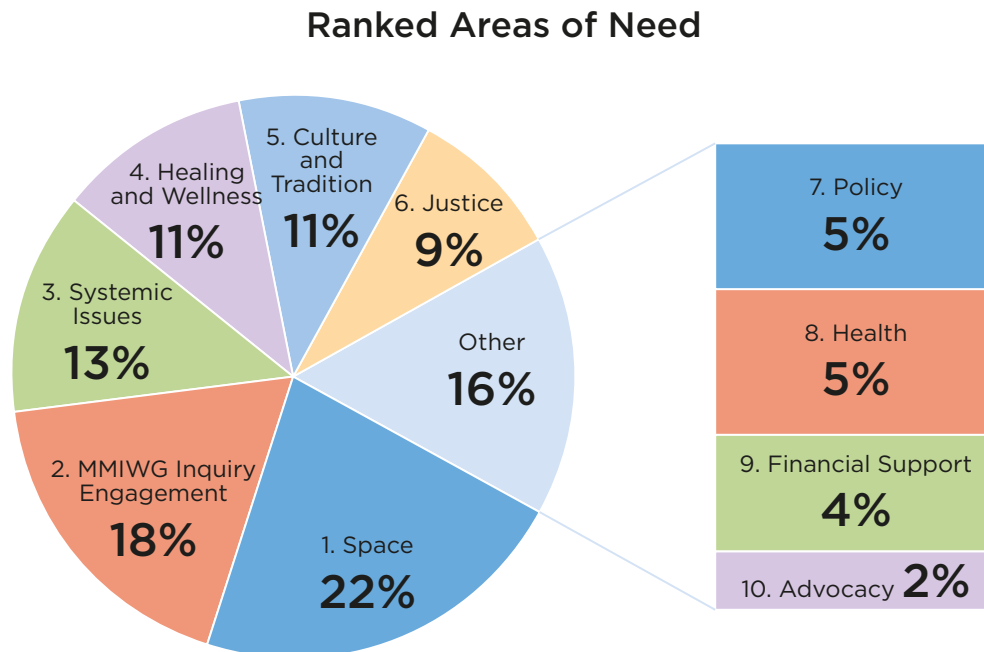
1. **MMIWG Inquiry Engagement**—Women need to define what will be the success at the end of the MMIWG Inquiry. Many women are not included. Acknowledge this MMIWG Inquiry is not a one-off event
2. **Healing and Wellness**—Need access to an immediate space, then a long-term permanent healing and wellness space
3. **Space**—A funded 24/7 space supported by and for Indigenous women, such as the Aboriginal Mother Centre, an Indigenous women's organization in the Lower Mainland, that offers responsive services for the needs of whole families and children by supporting and keeping families together
4. **Space**—Quality trauma-informed staff to run the space
5. **Culture and Tradition**—Provide ceremony. Honour and respect protocols while taking care of families before, during, and after the Inquiry

Top 5 Priorities of Need



The Top 5 **Priorities of Need** relate to primarily to the engagement of Indigenous women and families in a meaningful way within the MMIWG Inquiry. The remaining 4 priorities relate to the need for a space and/or spaces that ensure women have access to a space supported by Indigenous women with a quality trauma-informed staff. This space should be further grounded in healing and wellness supports and services that are grounded in traditional, spiritual, and cultural practices in order to more fully support the families as they become engaged with the MMIWG Inquiry in Vancouver.

Results for the Areas and Priorities of Need



1. Space

Space ranked as the highest **Area of Need** with nearly a quarter of the total votes. Participants identified the two of the Top 5 **Priorities of Need**:

- A funded 24/7 space supported by and for Indigenous women
- Quality trauma-informed staff to run the space

The remaining space commentary was identified in the group discussions as pressing priorities. Comments highlight the importance of the space being City owned, open, and interconnected within existing spaces that provide cultural supports and services.

- A City owned space
- A Welcome Centre that uses a logic model going through the MMIWG Inquiry from start to finish
- Establish a network of existing spaces that provide supports like cultural counselling, children's activities, etc.

There were suggested spaces for the MMIWG Inquiry to use community centres and civic facilities, such as the Round House Community Centre, Carnegie Centre, Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre, and Chief Joe Mathias Centre.

- Bring the MMIWG Inquiry into community centres and civic facilities
- Provide access to different spaces for testimony and healing: Roundhouse Community Centre, includes multiple spaces, accessible, and near ocean; Carnegie Centre (and/or other DTES spaces); Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre (Musqueam territory, near water, and accessible by transit); and Chief Joe Mathias Center (Squamish Nation territory, trees)
- The space should also provide nourishment and sustenance for all. Group discussions also addressed the availability of food programs, a Food Bank drop-off, etc.
- Space to provide abundant nourishment – enough for all: food, water, blankets, etc.

Group discussions stressed the importance of access to traditional foods for feasting and other honouring and celebratory ceremonies.

2. MMIWG Inquiry Engagement

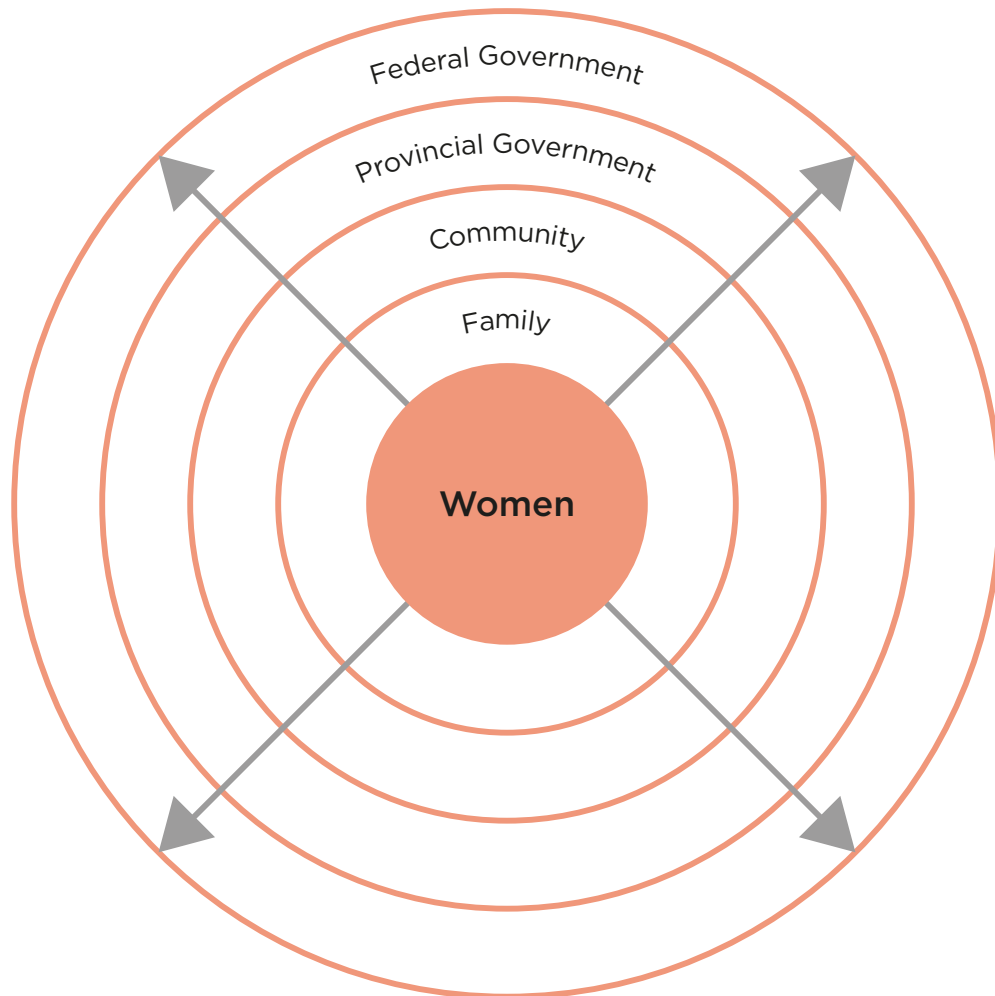
MMIWG Inquiry Engagement came in as the second **Area of Need**. However, the overall top **Priority of Need** was voted on to be the significance of Indigenous women being able to define for themselves what successes will come from the MMIWG Inquiry.

At the event, many participants shared their concerns that many Indigenous women and their families are feeling left out of the MMIWG Inquiry process.

- Women need to define what will be the success at the end of the MMIWG Inquiry. Many women are not included. Acknowledge this MMIWG Inquiry is not a one-off event

Group discussions stressed the significance of having an Indigenous women-centred approach.

Indigenous Women-Centred Approach



The MMIWG Inquiry must shift from a federal government directed process to a women centred process. Women are already convening and connecting. The process must be inclusive of other sectors of the system (such as police services, RCMP, etc.) to hear and learn from. This will ensure healing, recognition, accountability and justice for the missing and murdered women and girls, victims, survivors and families.

For many attendees, we also learned of the May 1st deadline for interested parties to apply for Standing, other than families and survivors. Other questions arose around process on how the MMIWG Inquiry will best move forward to support survivors and families during the Truth Hearings.

As a result, many suggestions were made to help inform families, organizations, and communities about the MMIWG Inquiry process, such as toolkits, training workshops, uses of social media, etc.

- Provide clarity on the Inquiry process and scope (Residential school survivors, missing and murdered young girls, women and girls at-risk or vulnerable, victims of systemic injustice)
- Inquiry to provide a toolkit to inform throughout the process, such as setting out what to expect. For example, see Reconciliation Canada tool-kits for individuals, communities, and organizations; municipal or First Nation Governments; Young Leaders; and, Young Adult Voices
- Inquiry should host training workshops for organizations to build capacity
- Provide accessibility to information about Inquiry (website, using social media, and communications plan). Build on partnerships with Indigenous support organizations already working with families in Vancouver
- Ensure safety of participants, including the provision of confidentiality, anonymous affidavits
- Recognize the thousands of Indigenous girls who did not survive residential schools, as well as those who died as a result of child apprehension and in child welfare services

Some groups discussed the importance of having protective measures be put in place for participants who feel at-risk, such as private interviews, taped and anonymous submissions.

At this time, family members, loved ones, and survivors are being directed to call the National Inquiry toll-free line at 1-844-348-4119 or email Profile@mmiwg-ffada.ca. All relevant MMIWG Inquiry information is being posted on their website.

3. Systemic Issues

The MMIWG Inquiry will be addressing key systemic issues and legacies of all forms of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and members of the LGBTQ2S community in Canada. Discussion groups addressed a number of Priorities of Need to hold government accountable while upholding the rights of Indigenous women:

- Advocate for a systemic approach with tangible outcomes and commitment from all-levels of government to implement changes
- Hold Federal agencies accountable with reporting requirements on implementation of recommendations
- Address self-determination and self-government for Indigenous women

Discussion groups also brought attention to other systemic issues to be addressed, such as cycles of poverty, homelessness, mental health and addictions, sexual exploitation and trafficking, sex work, and over-representation of Indigenous women and girls in the criminal justice system.

- Need to address ongoing systemic issues beyond the families
- Advocate for the MMIWG Inquiry to be able to subpoena relevant institutions, such as the police, hospitals, churches, coroners, and child welfare offices.
- Address systemic issues including racism and discrimination, institutional changes, constitutional changes, judicial changes, and the Indian Act

In examining the role of social and economic marginalization of Indigenous women and girls, discussion groups contemplated ways to empower and strengthen families that may be vulnerable to violence, cycles of poverty, homelessness, addictions, reliance on prostitution, and incarceration while being engaged in the MMIWG Inquiry.

4. Healing and Wellness

Greater efforts are needed to support the health, healing, and wellness of families involved with the MMIWG Inquiry. The second most important Priority of Need is the need for an immediate healing and wellness space.

- Need access to an immediate space, with plans for a long-term permanent healing and wellness space

The *Aboriginal Health, Healing, and Wellness in the DTES Study* calls for more spaces and places to support Aboriginal healing practices to address physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms.¹ Groups discussed innovative approaches to create an inclusive Healing and Wellness space that depends on co-sharing in programming, unifying local Indigenous women and groups, and prevention and support of violence against women by men and boys.

- A “one-stop shop” with all health, healing, and wellness related resources
- Organizations could co-share on programming with each organization programming a day of the week
- Begin by supporting survivors and families then transition to offering healing and wellness supports to everyone
- Must be inclusive of all Aboriginal cultures
- Address men and boys in their role of prevention and support of violence against women
- Unite an Indigenous group of women who collectively can create healing and wellness with women in the DTES, including hosting a Day of Wellness
- First Nations Health Authority to contribute and provide operational funding

It is clear that a Healing and Wellness Centre will improve the health and healing journeys of Indigenous women and families in a culturally appropriate and meaningful way while trying to meet the courageous demand for MMIWG Inquiry engagement.

5. Culture and Tradition

Culture and Tradition are integral to any healing and wellness initiative while supporting families involved with the MMIWG Inquiry. Access to traditional and culturally appropriate healing supports and services are needed. Supports for families should include traditional ceremonies and other cultural practices. Also a call for an Elders advisory was made.

- Provide ceremony. Honour and respect protocols while taking care of families before, during, and after the MMIWG Inquiry
- Convene a provincial advisory of Elders for the MMIWG Inquiry

Groups also discussed the significance of supporting a diversity of Aboriginal healers and Elder in offering healing practices for families. There is a call for culture and tradition to be woven throughout the MMIWG Inquiry, allowing families to address their needs and find strength in their own reconciliation and healing journeys.

- Provide access to Elders
- Provide cultural specific supports representing diverse cultural practices, address the gap of a system fix response by involving those MMIWG Inquiry participants to address their needs rather than system define them
- Include culture and tradition throughout process of standing, screening, proof, and advocacy
- Provide access to traditional foods

The *Aboriginal Health, Healing, and Wellness in the DTES Study* identifies some of the traditional, spiritual, and cultural activities available and offered locally: smudge, prayer, healing circles, drumming, Elders’ teachings, Brushing-Off ceremonies, sweat lodge, pipe ceremonies, and traditional retreats.² Cultural and traditional supports that reflect the diversity of families are critical to supporting them in their MMIWG Inquiry engagement while actively working to mitigate potential re- victimization effects.

¹ Bluesky, Kinwa. *Aboriginal Health, Healing, and Wellness in the DTES Study – Final Report*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2017 at 65
² Bluesky, Kinwa. *Aboriginal Health, Healing, and Wellness in the DTES Study – Final Report*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2017 at 33

6. Justice

Similar to Systemic Issues, groups discussed the importance of key MMIWG Inquiry issues like law enforcement and the criminal justice system. In pre-inquiry consultation meetings, participants called for representatives of the government, justice systems, and law enforcement agencies to participate in the proceedings.

There is a call to review structures and systems in place to ensure police and law enforcement agencies are accountable for how they investigate cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

- Engage police in MMIWG Inquiry process and hold police accountable
- Advocate for commitment in advance to provide funding that is not tied to an election

Many families and supporters have called for an independent review of investigations or official conclusions regarding the deaths or disappearances that family members believe should be re-examined. Funding will be required to redress any failures of the criminal justice system had to respond and deal with individual cases.

7. Policy

The groups discussed efforts required to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders.

- Medical model needs to recognize traditional knowledge keepers. More access to Elders who provide cultural health supports is needed. For example, Pacific Association of First Nation's Women who provides an Aboriginal Elder Support Program, an Aboriginal Community Health Liaison Program, Community Homecare Services Program, and an Aboriginal Girls Day Camp
- More resources are required to grow community supports, such as staff, to deliver services. The demands are increasing while the resources have remained the same, been reduced or even cut

Sustainable funding for existing and new changes within the Canadian healthcare system is needed in order to support such Indigenous health, healing, and wellness initiatives.

8. Health

Health and wellbeing were discussed throughout the sessions. Culturally appropriate approaches to health care must be accessible for families involved with the MMIWG. Traditional, spiritual, and cultural health and healing supports are essential services in improving their health outcomes.

9. Financial Support

Financial support will be critical. Participants discussed how as a community we could come together to offer financial support or in-kind organizational support and contributions. Suggestions included supporting needs for transportation, access to recreation passes, and travel grants for families and their supports.

- City of Vancouver to take on an advocacy and funding role
- Park Board to provide OneCard recreation passes for families, giving access to Park Board pools, rinks, and fitness centres, and participating community centres
- Provide Compass Cards, Metro Vancouver's public transit Compass fare- payment card
- Provide travel grants for families and supports, if needed

The Aboriginal Health, Healing, and Wellness in the DTES Study addresses many of the barriers for participants in accessing cultural services. In offering healing and wellness supports, discussion groups tackled how to support families who may need access to transportation, childcare, food programs, travel, and other costs associated with participation.

Lillian Howard introduced the Uplifting Indigenous Families Fund which was established to support BC families of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls before, during and after the National Inquiry. The Fund is in place to ensure that families get the support they will need to fully participate in the Nation Inquiry in terms of travel and mental health support during and after the process. (Appendix IV)

10. Advocacy

Many of the discussions revolved around advocacy for nearly all the addressed Areas of Need and their Priorities of Need: culture and tradition, traditional ceremonies and cultural practices for all, supports for women, and resources for life education.

- Advocacy for access to culture, Elders, teachings, and ceremonies, including for children, youth, adults, Elders, LGBTQ and transgender people, and survivors
- Advocacy for current supports for women, especially women escaping violence
- Advocacy for resources and places in support of life education, such as Aunt Leah's Place which helps prevent children in foster care from becoming homeless and mothers in need from losing custody of their children
- Support from the City of Vancouver to have more spaces available to support families of MMIWG

11. Other Area of Need

One way to support women, mothers, and families is to revitalize the Mother's Day Pow Wow, which has been cancelled due to lack of funding.

- Revitalize Mother's Day Pow Wow

12. Communications Information

A variety of methods should be employed to clearly and effectively communicate the MMIWG Inquiry's scope, goals, schedule and dates of Truth Hearings.

Communications should be circulating information about the MMIWG Inquiry through various existing networks, particularly organizations who directly support and engage with women, families, and communities.

- Address the lack of communication
- Create an inventory of community resources, such as Elders, counsellors, social workers, and supports for women

Barriers to engagement, especially in reaching out to those individuals who may wish to participate, need to be addressed. Special efforts and resources and tools should be made to reach out and support the poorest and most marginalized groups to ensure their participation.

13. Trauma-Informed Counselling Services

Trauma-informed counselling services are critical to the health, healing, and wellbeing of survivors and families. The need for professional mental health counselling that is trauma-sensitive to cultural health supports is critical in supporting individuals and community healing.

- Provide traditional supports that are proactive, and not just reactive, with Aboriginal-oriented therapy, including ceremony, gifting, and involvement of Elders
- Culturally sensitive and appropriate health supports must be available throughout the engagement, including aftercare. Cultural ceremonies, such as healing, honouring, and celebratory ones, should be inclusive to all Indigenous women and families.

14. Arts

Cultural arts and crafts, including art therapies, should be offered to families in the Healing and Wellness space(s).

- Cultural art activities within the space will be key
- Provide access to materials to do art-related projects and therapy

There should be opportunities to bead, weave, and make drums, regalia, or other projects that promote healing, growth, and celebration.

15. Safety

Groups discussed the importance of safety with the need for protective measures to be put into place, especially for individuals who feel at-risk. Suggestions included written or taped submissions, telephone hotlines, and focus groups, healing or talking circles. Special consideration should be given to needs and safety of children of victims to ensure they have the necessary health supports and protection.

- A liaison is needed to help families navigate the City of Vancouver and the MMIWG Inquiry

SOAR Group Discussions

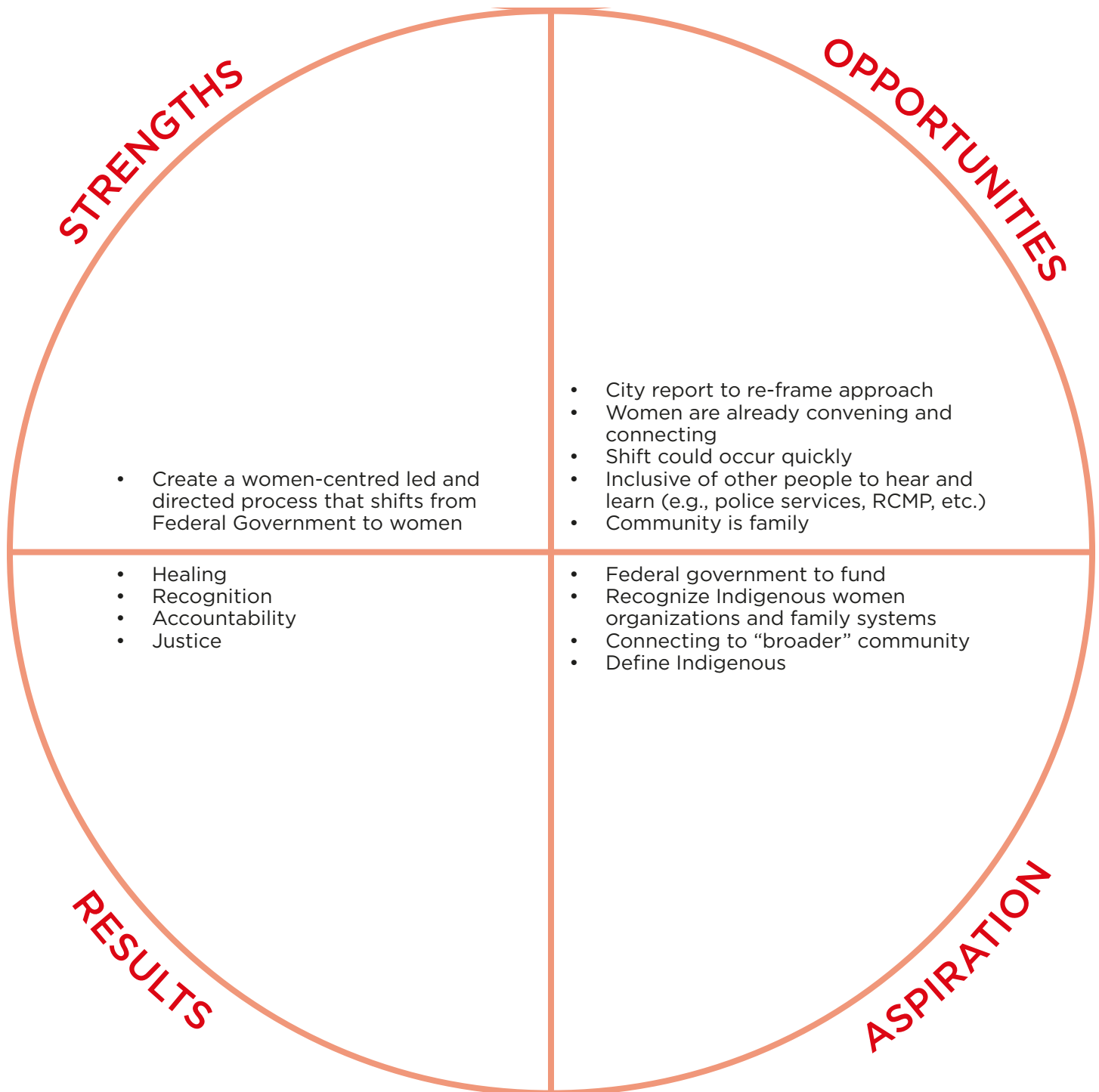
The last exercise of the day involved group discussions using a SOAR framework, a strengths-based approach to strategic planning. A SOAR framework can be beneficial and culturally adaptable in discussing the needs and interests of the families. Groups discussed the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results of the most preferred future going forward.

Each group chose an area or priority of need to discuss. Some groups chose similar areas and priorities and those discussions have been incorporated into one. For the most part, the wording is reflective of the participants' dialogue.

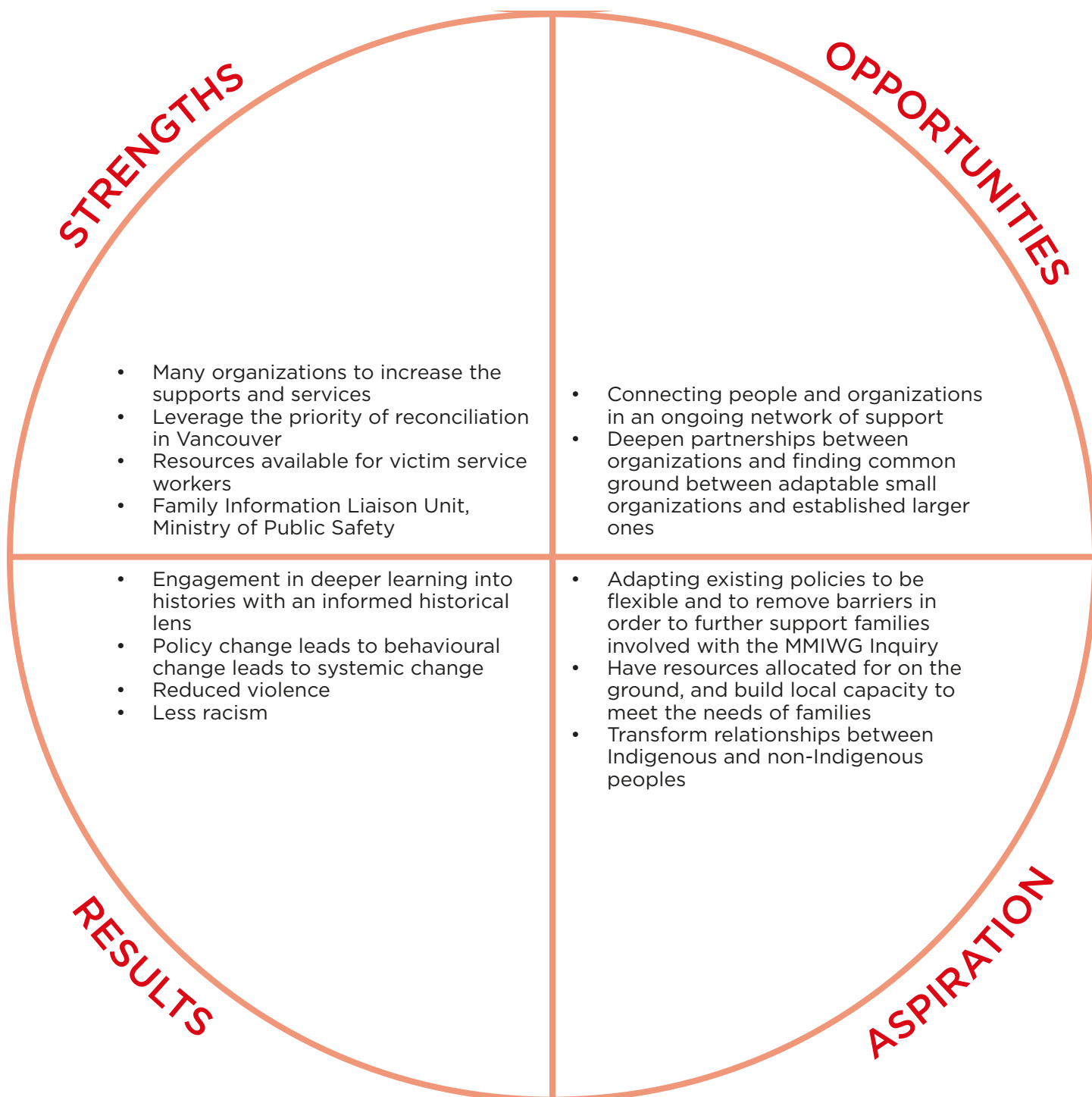
Space



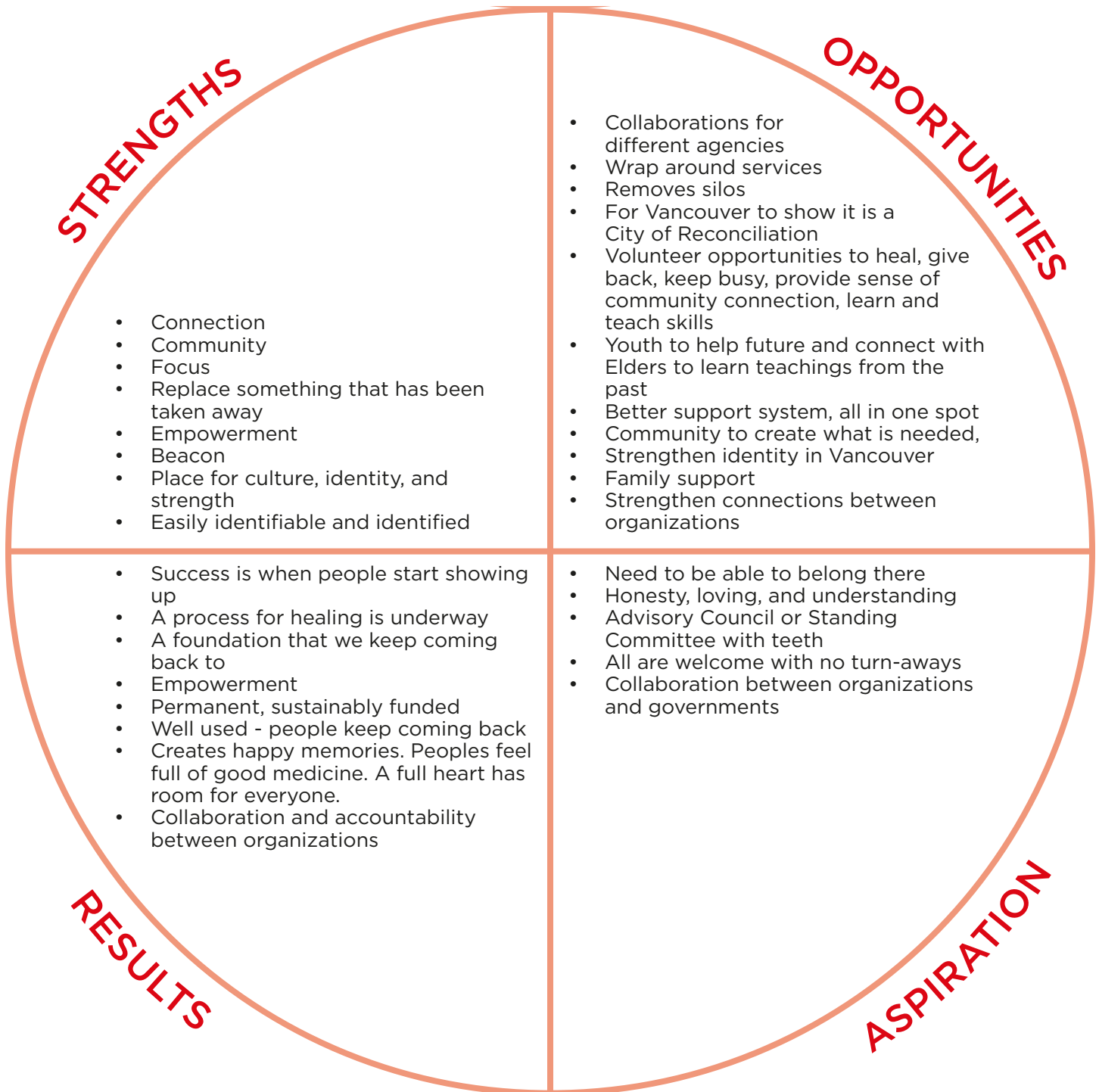
Inquiry Engagement



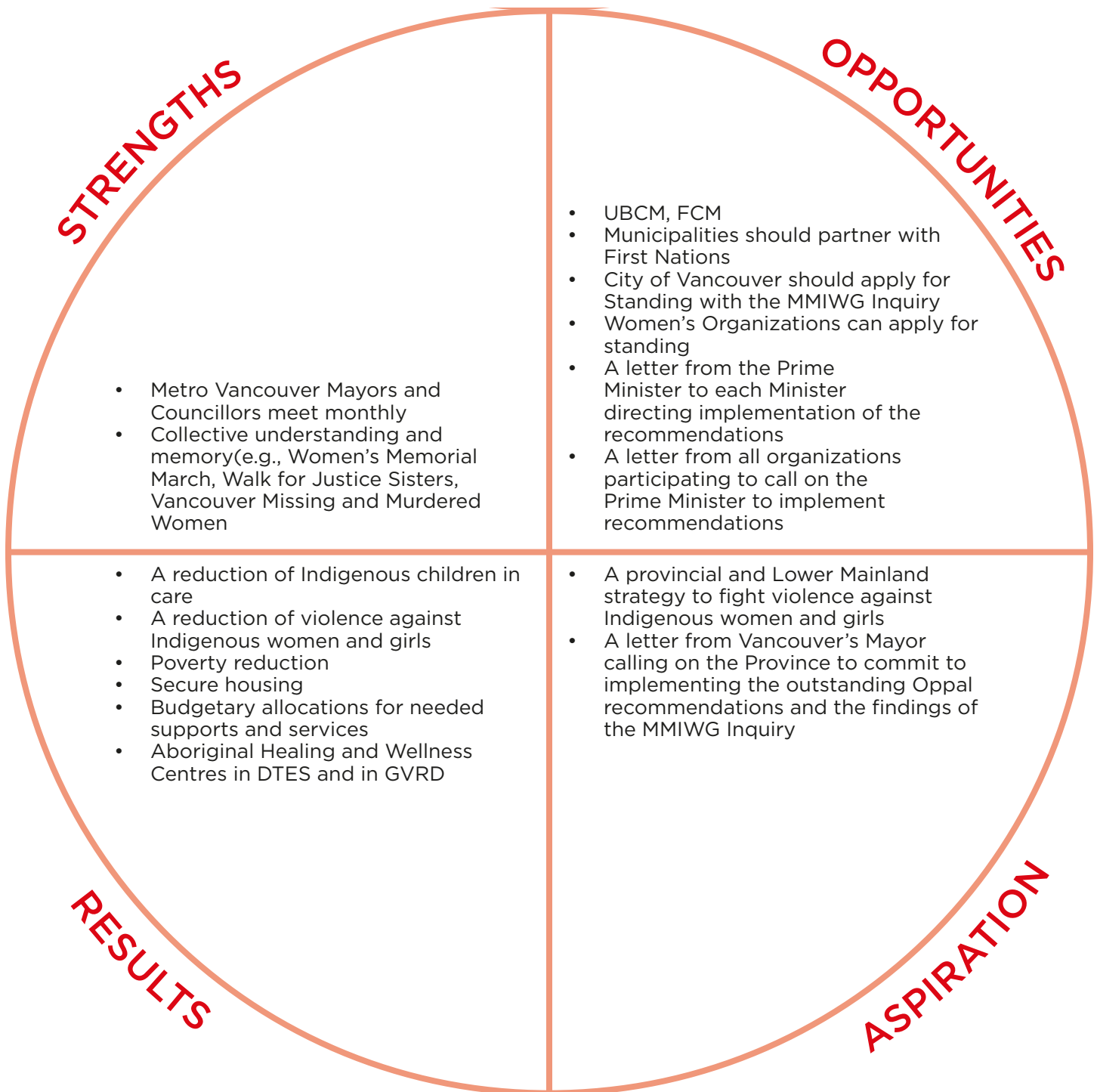
Systemic Issues



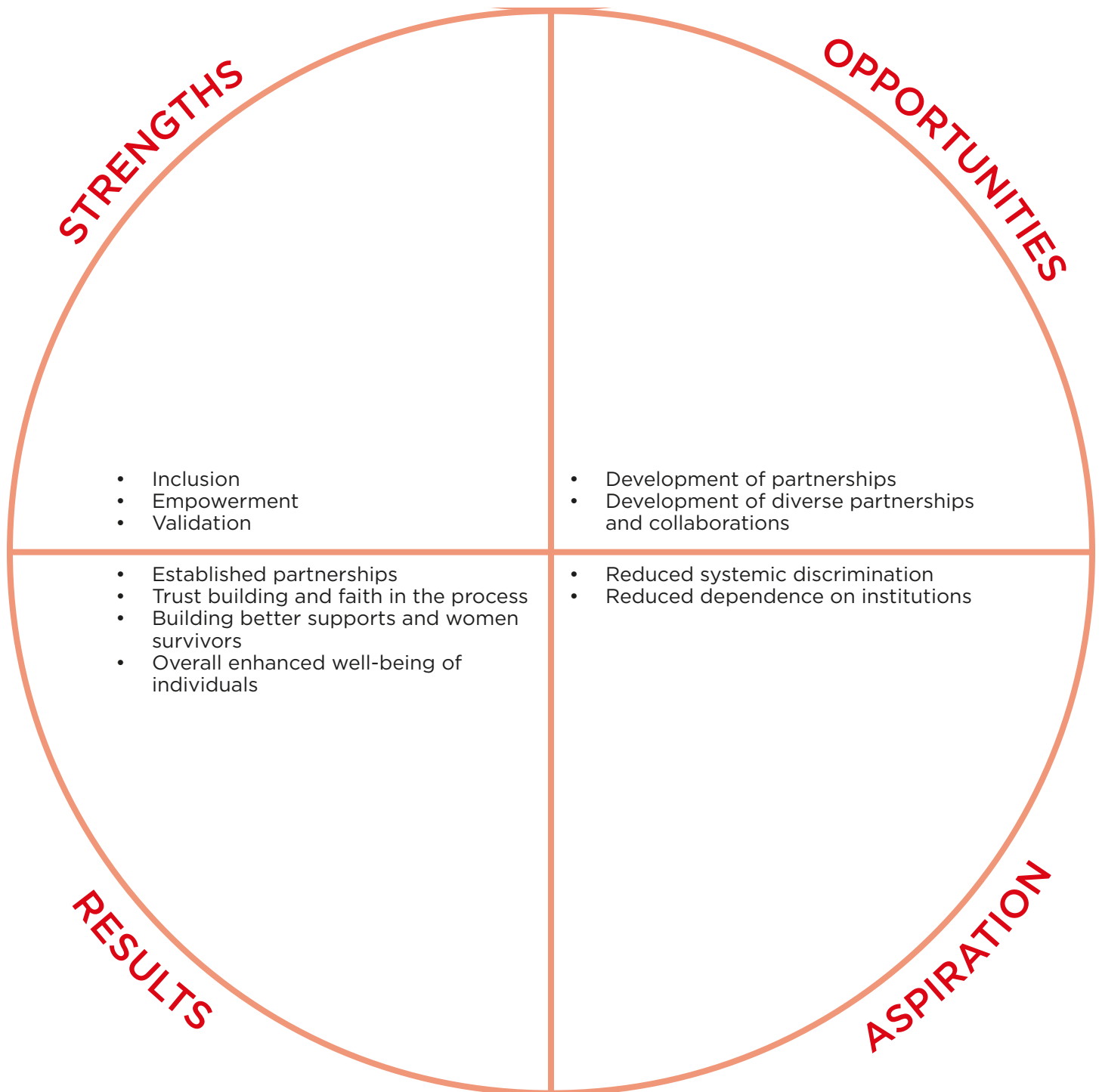
Health, Healing and Wellness Centre



Justice



Supports



Calls to Action

Discussion groups addressed how we can collectively come together to meet the needs and priorities of families in Vancouver as they engage with the MMIWG Inquiry over the next year.

Overall participants identified 15 **Areas of Need** with the Top 5 emerging to involve matters related to:

1. Space;
2. MMIWG Inquiry Engagement;
3. Systemic Issues;
4. Healing and Wellness; and
5. Cultural and Tradition.

More specifically, participants identified the following Top 5 **Priorities of Need**:

1. MMIWG Inquiry Engagement;
2. Healing and Wellness;
3. Space—funded 24/7 space;
4. Space—trauma-informed staff; and
5. Culture and Tradition.

Participants called for an Indigenous women-centred approach and stressed the importance of empowering Indigenous women within the **MMIWG Inquiry Engagement**. This approach will empower Indigenous women to define for themselves, their families, and their communities what successes will be at the end of their MMIWG Inquiry journeys.

The next call to action relates to 3 priorities surrounding the significance of a dedicated **Space** for families to use throughout the MMIWG Inquiry. Participants called for an immediate **Healing and Wellness Space**. A space that is funded, offers access 24-hours a day, 7 days a week that is supported by and for Indigenous women. Furthermore, quality trauma-informed staff would operate the space.

Last, participants called for **Culture and Tradition** to be incorporated into any health, healing, and wellness needs. Traditional ceremonies and other cultural practices need to be offered to families in need. There must be opportunities to honour and respect traditional, spiritual, and cultural protocols while taking care of families before, during, and after the MMIWG Inquiry. These cultural and traditional supports and services for families must also be trauma-informed and culturally safe while promoting health, healing, and wellness for all.

Final Remarks

We started the day with prayer, full of heartfelt emotion as women shared some of their own connections and experiences with violence against Indigenous women, girls, and transgender and two-spirit people. We all listened carefully to their stories, their pain and grief, and wholehearted concerns for all Indigenous women and their families who will be taking steps toward healing while addressing their calls for justice for victims and families, systemic change, and concrete actions to end violence against Indigenous women and girls. At the end of the day, we acknowledged *mino-giizhigad* – “It is a good day.” This ancestral Anishinaabe teaching acknowledges in gratitude the kindness, lovingness, and generosity to be found in every day. We concluded the meeting with a circle and traditional song of the late Chief Dan George from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation led by Deacon Rennie Nahanee.

As a collective of front-line human service, women-serving organizations, law enforcement, and City staff, we worked to envision a holistic approach we can take to support the local participation and engagement of families, survivors, and loved ones in the MMIWG Inquiry – in a good and meaningful way.

Our next steps will be how we can collectively address the Priorities of Need surrounding the empowerment of families in their engagement in the MMIWG Inquiry. Families also need access to a healing and wellness space(s) that is grounded in culturally-responsive, traditional supports and services.

We would like to thank everyone who participated and gave invaluable guidance and support as we take steps toward more fully supporting survivors, families, and loved ones who will need great courage and strength in sharing their experiences and views during the MMIWG Inquiry.

Appendix A. Event Handout



City of Vancouver Working Meeting to Support the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

The City of Vancouver is hosting this event with the goal of developing a plan to support the Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This Working Meeting is a one-day facilitated event, bringing together frontline human service and women-serving organizations.

On April 21, 2016, the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee (UAPAC) put forward a motion to work with Council Liaisons, Councillor Andrea Reimer and Councillor Adriane Carr, to develop a motion to Vancouver City Council requesting support to host an event with the goal of developing a plan to support the Inquiry.

The UAPAC advises Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for urban Aboriginal Peoples to fully participate in City services and civic life.

UAPAC identified three areas where the City could help support:

1. Support for survivors, families, and current victims;
2. Advocate making the Inquiry a Nation Inquiry as opposed to a Federal Inquiry; and,
3. Convening an event to bring different groups together to develop a plan for support and advocacy around the upcoming Inquiry.

In September, 2016, UAPAC members, Councillor Reimer, and City staff met with the BC Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to get advice from the Coalition on supports families will need during the Inquiry. Recommendations from the meeting included:

- A space for families, communities, survivors, women serving organizations throughout the Inquiry;
- The space to facilitate services, such as legal advice, healing, information, food, childcare, etc.;
- The City to convene a meeting with women-serving organizations to understand what their capacity is, where the gaps are, in order to plan how to best support families, victims, and survivors throughout the Inquiry; and,
- Develop a framework to support families, victims, and survivors.

UAPAC recommended that the City convene an event to develop a strategy on how to provide support for survivors, families, and current victims. This support is often overlooked or underfunded and a critical part of the process. There are over 60 organizations taking part in the Working Meeting.

Facilitated Working Groups

At each table, the group discussions will focus on what the families will need throughout the Inquiry in Vancouver. The afternoon session will focus on visioning, mapping, and the SOAR engagement framework, which helps to take an inventory, a ranking, and a reasoning of why the group is valuing these assets (supports, services, interests, etc.). The goal of these group sessions is to:

- a. Get to know the assets within the community;
- b. Share an appreciation for the value of these assets; and,
- c. Understand how we can build and/or sustain these assets.

Once mapped, we will collectively strategize about how to build on the assets in order to sustain and enhance them for families in Vancouver throughout the whole of the Inquiry. We will discuss the resources that support these Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results.

A final report from Kinwa Bluesky will reflect the findings, recommendations, and any relevant organization commitments. The report will be submitted to the UAPAC for review.

For more information about the working meeting and next steps contact Maureen Lerat at Maureen.lerat@vancouver.ca

Appendix B.

Maura Gowans Panel Presentation

City of Vancouver Working Group Meeting to Support the Commission of Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Maura Gowans, Panelist

Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

I am here today on behalf of the Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. By way of background, the Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is comprised of family members, survivors, Indigenous organizations, front-line service organizations, feminist and women's organizations, legal advocates, faith-based groups, and provincial organizations. The Coalition initially came together in response to the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry in British Columbia, overseen by Commissioner Wally Oppal, and has grown since. Our breadth of representation and our experience with the Oppal Commission of Inquiry make the Coalition well positioned to respond to and inform the National Inquiry.

My name is Maura Gowans and I am Dene, from Tulita, Northwest Territories. I am the mother of five beautiful boys, a Registered Social Worker, and the program manager at Maxxine Wright Place, a shelter, second-stage housing program, day care and community health centre for women who are pregnant and early parenting, and at-risk.

I moved to BC at the age of 15 and was living in the Downtown Eastside shortly thereafter. I was a teenager in 1994, and women were going missing all around me. A close friend's body was found in a dumpster after she was murdered and left there, like garbage. I have witnessed too many violent acts against women to mention, as a direct result of my living the Downtown Eastside, and because I am an Aboriginal woman. For a time, I lived with one of the women found on the Pickton farm, in a house on the corner of Princess Avenue and Hastings Street; she took me in and under her wing in order to help me survive. It was acceptable then, as it is now and has been throughout our history, to be subjected to harm, violence and abuse. Rather than confront and put an end to the systemic and pervasive racism and resulting violence, society made it acceptable by dehumanizing and labeling us, making it easy to violate and murder us.

For a time, I lived in Smithers B.C. and I have a deep understanding of the racism Aboriginal women face in small communities. I was picked up by the RCMP and left outside of town on the Highway of Tears, instructed to return to my reservation. I was a very young and vulnerable Aboriginal woman and those officers put my very life at risk. The only way to get home and indeed around was by hitchhiking both because of the lack of transportation and the poverty that many of our communities and sisters face. I want to share this message, with your blessing, because I was there, because I continue to experience racism and oppression and because I care passionately for all Indigenous women.

I work at Atira Women's Resource Society and have for the past 15 years, because they have accepted and supported me for who I am and because we accept, respect, and support women regardless of where they are at in their lives. We as an organization recognize the role colonialism, racism, substance use, struggles with mental wellness and gendered patterns of violence intersect, and our understanding of these intersecting oppressions informs our daily work with and alongside the women we serve. I sit on the coalition on behalf of Atira Women's Resource Society, but I also actively participate in the community as a direct result of my own history.

Living was one of the hardest things I had to do. For a time, I could not figure out how to live when I had lost so many women that I loved. Counselors told me this was “survivor’s guilt.” I lived and they died and for a very long time, I did not understand why I was still here. In order to live, I chose to live for them; for the women I loved, that I lost. I chose to raise my voice for so many of the women whose voices were never heard, and to dedicate my life to the work of ending systemic violence.

Working for Atira for the past 15 years, I see daily the huge need for vulnerable women to receive and access services. Many organizations do not accept women who struggle with substance use, which leads many of them to live in unsafe conditions with no supports, which increases their risks of being harmed. There are so many young Aboriginal girls being pushed out of care and into the world, with little or no preparation, which again increases their risk. As a registered social worker, I am committed to work alongside many of the young girls to advocate with ministry workers for their safety as well as any vulnerable women.

Things Atira offers are Aboriginal staff to provide trauma-informed and culturally- appropriate services to families and victims who are impacted by violence, while supporting women and girls at-risk to develop safety plans. Supporting women through the legal system, as well as potentially providing them with a safe place to go into our transitional living programs and eventually securing a rent supplement; advocating to ensure their needs are met mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Our transitional living programs in north Surrey, Newton, and South Surrey may also provide a safe place for women who are looking to escape or find respite from the Downtown Eastside, while advocating to get into safe and affordable housing.

Concerns for the Coalition:

- Culturally relevant services for family members (access to traditional education, Elders, etc. if they want it)
- The urgency of getting this Inquiry rolling as soon as possible, and of sending the right message to family members and survivors
- Family members, loved ones, and survivors of violence wanting to share their experiences with, or testify before, the National Inquiry are asked to email the National Inquiry at Profile@mmiwg-ffada.ca with your name, contact information, and location and/or you can contact the Commission at 1-844- 348-4119.
- Reaching out to families at the heart, survivors, young people, those who have experienced “close calls” (radio, town hall meetings, 1-1 work through our agencies) (Hard for women on reserve who are ostracized if she speaks about women’s issues)
- Sending a message of encouragement, not discouragement, to those affected who should participate in the Inquiry
- Need for clear and increased communication from the Inquiry
- Need for more supports for all affected (sacred space, accommodations, support staffs, food, travel costs)
- Growing the list of names of family members, families of the heart and survivors, and using existing lists from past inquiry, gatherings, etc.

As of press release on April 3, 2017:

Concerns from the Coalition were that according to news reports, the National Inquiry has so far only identified about 100 potential witnesses among family members of survivors; we are concerned that the federal, provincial, and territorial governments are not using their offices and capacities to assist the National Inquiry in identifying family members and survivors.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reviewed Canada in 2016 and gave 38 recommendations, stating that Canada is in grave violation of the human rights of Indigenous women and girls. Canada has not acted on these recommendations and has complied with only one. Just because we have an Inquiry does not mean that we should wait to take action. Adequate supports for witnesses are needed. There needs to be a specific plan to address the socioeconomic conditions of Indigenous women and girls.

Ensuring that all families and communities are represented, that the Highway of Tears and the Northern communities as well as the communities on the island are included.

Violence against women and apprehension of children affects income, leading to the loss of a home, and involvement in street life. These can be snowball effects of violence against women, which can further silence women.

The Inquiry is looking at systemic changes:

- Poverty
- Inadequate housing
- Inadequate health care
- Lack of access to safe transportation
- Inadequate access to legal aid to enforce fundamental rights
- Over-criminalization and over-incarceration
- Ongoing structural discrimination within child protection systems
- Policing
- Racism
- Discrimination
- Systemic predominance of male leadership at the expense of women leadership
- Systematic de-funding of women's and Indigenous women's organizations

Aboriginal women 15 years and older are 305 times more likely to experience violence than non-Aboriginal women.

Rates of spousal assault against Aboriginal women are more than 3 times higher than those against non-Aboriginal women.

54% of Aboriginal women reported severe forms of family violence, such as being beaten, being choked, having had a gun or knife used against them, or being sexually assaulted, versus 37% of non-Aboriginal women.

44% of Aboriginal women reported, "fearing for their lives" when faced with severe forms of family violence, compared with 33% of non-Aboriginal women.

27% of Aboriginal women reported experiencing 10 or more assaults by the same offender, as opposed to 18% of non-Aboriginal women.

Thank you for all of the work that you do.

Mahsi Cho. All my relations

Maura Gowans

Appendix C. List of Attendees

- Maura Gowans, Atira Women's Resource Society
- Angela Marie MacDougall, Battered Women's Support Services Lana Sullivan, BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre
- Sharon Belli, Carnegie Community Centre Councillor Andrea Reimer, City of Vancouver Ginger Gosnell-Myers, City of Vancouver Grace Chungath, City of Vancouver
- Mary Clare Zak, City of Vancouver Dianna Hurford, City of Vancouver
- Lillian Howard, City of Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee Penny Kerrigan, City of Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee Alice Kendall, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
- Carol Martin, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre Michelle Buchholz, Ending Violence Association of BC
- Oswald Thomas, Indian Residential School Survivors Society Lisa Gibson, Living in Community
- Candice Day, Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council
- Alexandra Campagnaro, Ministry of Public Safety and Attorney General, Province of BC
- Emily Arthur, Ministry of Public Safety and Attorney General, Province of BC Freda Ens, Ministry of Public Safety and Attorney General, Province of BC Tanya Kappo, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commission
- Wendy Van Tongeren-Harvey, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commission
- Veronica Butler, MMIWG Coalition
- Christine Spinder, Pacific Association of First Nations Women Ruth Alfred, Pacific Association of First Nations Women Brenda Belak, Pivot Legal Society
- Tanya Fader, Portland Hotel Society
- Laura Dilly, Providing Alternatives, Counselling & Education Society (PACE) Kate Hodgson, Ray-Cam Community Centre
- Kim van der Woerd, Reciprocal Consulting
- Rennie Nahannee, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver
- Shelda Kastor, Sex Workers United Against Violence Society (SWAUV) Patti Zettel, SheWay, Vancouver Coastal Health
- Lanna Many Grey Horses, The Bloom Group Kathleen Leahy, UBC Learning Exchange
- Lorelei Williams, Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society Norm Leech, Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society Leslie Bonshor, Vancouver Coastal Health
- Brittany Bingham, Vancouver Coastal Health
- Deputy Chief Constable Laurence Rankin, Vancouver Police Department Dale Weidman, Vancouver Police Department
- Linda Malcolm, Vancouver Police Department Raymond Payette, Vancouver Police Department Richard Lavallee, Vancouver Police Department
- Keira Smith-Tague, Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter Mary Sherman, WISH Drop-In Centre Society
- Rebecca Brass, Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) Sandra Noronha, Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) Ellen Woodsworth, Women Transforming Cities
- Laura Robinson, Women Transforming Cities
- Evelyne Youngchief, Womens's Memorial March Committee Fay Blaney, Womens's Memorial March Committee

Appendix D. Uplifting Indigenous Families Fund



UPLIFTING INDIGENOUS FAMILIES FUND

The Uplifting Indigenous Families Fund (UIFF) has been established to support the B.C. families of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls before, during and after the National Inquiry.

We want to ensure that families get the support they will need to fully participate in the Nation Inquiry in terms of travel and mental health support during and after the process.


Who Are We?

The Uplifting Indigenous Families Fund is guided by a Working Group of established community partners and charities who have a wide geographical reach to distribute funds.

This fund is designed to contribute to wholistic supports for families in their ongoing healing journeys.

What Your Donation Provides:

- funding for families who require travel, accommodation and other emergency funds for participation in Inquiry testimony
- mental and spiritual health supports for ongoing community and family healing
- planning and implementing gatherings
- supports for families facing financial challenges accessing health and mental health care



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED?

Facebook: @UpliftingIFF
Email: upliftingIFF@gmail.com

Donate At:

www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/give/donor-advised-funds/uplifting-indigenous-family-fund

Appendix E. Biographies



Lillian Howard

*Co-Chair, Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee
City of Vancouver*

Lillian Howard is Mowachaht and of Nuuchahnulth, Kwakwaka'wakw and Tlingit ancestry. She is currently working with the Provincial Health Services Authority in BC - San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training. She sits on the Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee. Lillian is an advocate for addressing violence against Indigenous Women and Girls. She worked with a team of people in setting up the Uplifting Indigenous Family fund to raise emergency funds for families during the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Ms. Howard is an Indigenous, social and environmental justice advocate.



Maura Gowans

*Program Manager of Maxxine Wright 2nd Stage Housing and Shelter
Atira Women's Resource Society*

Maura Gowans is the proud mother of 5 boys, she is Dene from Tulia, NWT but has lived in the lower mainland for the past 25 years. Maura has worked in the non-profit sector for over 15 years in various positions including Stopping the Violence Counselor (BWSS), youth detox/support worker (UNYA, DEYAS and Family Services of Greater Vancouver), Family Support Worker (Vancouver Native Health), Front line Support Worker (Look Out, Atira) and Children Who Witness Abuse Facilitator, Senior Support Worker and Program Manager through Atira Women's Resource Society. The majority of the work she has done has been advocating and supporting women and children that have been impacted by violence. She is also very passionate about preventive measures within the Aboriginal Communities in terms of breaking cycles of abuse, addiction and poverty as well as trying to keep families together.



Tanya Kappo

*Manager, Community Relations
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commission*

Tanya is a member of the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation in Treaty 8 territory. She was involved with the Walking With Sisters premier in Edmonton as the "Keeper" of the Vamps. She has also been invited to give keynote addresses and panel participation at various conferences and meetings such as the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women; The Edmonton Lifelong Learning Association; Feminist Art Conference; Silence No More; Edmonton LitFest; Indigenous Circumpolar Women's Gathering; and Global Shapers Edmonton "Preparing for Davos". Tanya also contributes to media awareness of Indigenous issues and perspectives by having op/ed pieces published in national news venues; as well as numerous appearances on television news reports and radio shows.



Wendy van Tongeren Harvey

Commission Counsel

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commission

Wendy van Tongeren Harvey graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1973 with her B.A. and Queen's Law School in 1976. She was called to the Ontario Bar in 1978 and to the British Columbia Bar in 1979. She is best known for her work in the area of prosecution of sex crimes and crimes against vulnerable persons - children, persons with disabilities. Wendy has specialized in this area since 1981 as a prosecutor and also in areas of training, development of training material, writing, public speaking, policy development and legislative reform. She has lectured throughout Canada and represented Canada in Italy and the UK at international conferences, and has been called upon as an expert to assist in Canadian legislative reform before parliamentary committees and the development of international guidelines for child abuse prosecutions. She has played a significant role in training police, Crown counsel and social workers throughout the country.



Kinwa Bluesky

Principal Consultant and Lead Facilitator

Kinwa is Anishinaabe-kwe from the Sandy Lake First Nation and the Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg. She moved to the West Coast nearly twenty years ago to pursue her post-secondary education. Following two legal degrees, she is currently finishing her Ph.D. at the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law. Kinwa knows the importance of health and fitness.

Raised traditionally, she practices her teachings daily by returning to Pacific Spirit Park and giving thanks for being able to run the beautiful territory of the Musqueam Peoples. Kinwa is also the mother of three endurance runners in the making. Kinwa is an Indigenous community-centred consultant who provides strategic engagement, development, and management services to non-profits, charities, and all-levels of government.



Suzette Amaya

Master of Ceremonies

Suzette is Kwakwak'wakw, Cree, Nisga'a, Coast Salish, born and raised in East Vancouver BC. Suzette graduated from Port Hardy Secondary and obtained a Diploma in Criminology and Associates of Arts Degree. She is a mother of three and holds many roles within the Vancouver community: a support worker with St. James Community Services Society; working with women and children in the DTES with homelessness, poverty, addictions, HIV/AIDS and mental health; and those suffering from emotional, physical, financial and sexual abuse. Suzette is also the creator, producer and host of the widely listened to and award winning radio show ThinkNDN 100.5fm CFRO which is aired live on Mondays 8-9pm PST. ThinkNDN radio show is a three time winner at the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards in 2008, 2009 and 2011. Find out more about the amazing Indigenous woman at www.suzetteamaya.wix.com/suzetteamaya.

Appendix F.

City of Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee

The mandate of the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee is to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for urban Aboriginal Peoples to fully participate in City services and civic life.

Terms of Reference

The committee will:

- Ensure that effective communication and consultation of Vancouver's Urban Aboriginal communities play a major role in the efforts of the committee to fulfill its mandate
- Strive to develop and maintain a positive relationship with other individuals, groups, agencies, and others, who are addressing issues of concern to Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Peoples
- Advise Council and staff on the City of Reconciliation Framework as it is developed, implemented and updated

The committee may:

- Assist the efforts of other agencies, organizations, and others who are addressing issues of concern to Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Peoples
- Research, study, or investigate areas of concern for Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Peoples in order to develop advice and make recommendations
- Solicit input and receive advice, recommendations, reports, or concerns from individuals or groups addressing issues of concern to Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Peoples, and recommend appropriate action
- Facilitate decision making on municipal matters, such as community services, planning and design to regularize the consultation process

Policy Advice

- Provides input to City Council and staff about issues of concern
- Considers any matters which may be referred to the committee by Council or staff
- May take positions on policy initiatives from other levels of government within the mandate of the committee

Collaboration

- Works co-operatively with other agencies whose activities affect constituent communities, including initiating and developing relevant projects
- Acts as a resource for staff doing public involvement processes and civic events

Awareness and Outreach

- Exchanges information with the constituent communities and the general public about relevant programs and issues of interest
- Engages in outreach to disseminate information and encourage participation from constituent communities

Planning and Reporting

- Produces an annual work plan with specific objectives by no later than April of each year, in consultation with Council and staff liaisons, for distribution to Council and civic departments for information
- Submits an annual report to Council describing its accomplishments for the year, including reference to each objective set out in the work plan and any arising issues to which the committee has responded

Membership

The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee has up to 15 voting members, with at least three members identifying as Metis. Committee members are selected through the City of Vancouver's Civic Committee public selection process. The Committee Chair is selected by the members at the first meeting for the Council term of the committee. Committee members appointed in 2017 will serve until October 2018. Members must reapply to be reappointed.

Members:

- Eric Anderson
- Michelle Casavant
- Dominic Compston
- Steven Eastman
- Lillian Howard
- Shauna Johnson
- Cody Kenny
- Penny Kerrigan
- Sheldon Martin
- Rennie Nahanee
- Jeane Riley
- Winona Stevens
- Teyem Thomas
- David Wells
- Cameron Zubko

Liaisons:

- City Council: Councillor Adriane Carr
- City Council: Councillor Andrea Reimer
- Park Board: Commissioner Michael Wiebe
- City staff: Wendy Au, Assistant City Manager; Ginger Gosnell-Myers, Aboriginal Relations Manager

Contact the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee:

urban.aboriginal.peoples.committee@vancouver.ca

Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee webpage:

<http://vancouver.ca/your-government/urban-aboriginal-peoples-advisory-committee.aspx>