Appendix A: The Story of Us: Understanding Each Other as Stakeholders

In "The Story of Us" we will use the information, feedback and experiences we have gleaned through the Momentum Project to paint a picture and share a bit of the "story" of the stakeholders in this work. It may not be completely comprehensive, there will be parts you recognize and parts you don't identify with. You will have your own information to add to this. But it will hopefully provide enough insight and perspective for you to be able to see with different eyes, as a community, the components of your community that are available to use in solution making.

The Story of Us.

Addressing homelessness and its contributing factors requires an entire community. There are many players in this story. Some are aware of their roles and importance to the story, and others are not so obviously connected and don't realize their part. There are those that are front and centre, and others that work behind the scenes. This section has been divided into "chapters." Each contains some information on the various sectors and groups represented in our communities within a framework that will assist in a cohesive understanding of how each impacts and is impacted within the homelessness picture. There will be those that you know well, or think you do, and if so, feel free just to browse.

These are not exhaustive descriptions and you will be able to add your own information to what has been gathered here. The main point of this section is to support the foundational piece of systems thinking application to the problem through increasing awareness and understanding of each stakeholder group. This is an amalgamation of what is known, provided through research, direct dialogue, observation, and personal experience, about the people who can, do, and will make a difference to what it will take to "end" homelessness in every community. This is the story of us.

Chapter 1.) Lived experience

 Every community is going to have a different Lived Experience landscape. This "chapter" in *The Story of Us* provides some general overviews of who these folks are. In our work within the Momentum Project, we met a number of people who were asking for more information about the people they could see as needing help. They shared that there are a number of stigma and assumptions that create barriers for people who could assist in some way. As well, not knowing what the best use of what they had to offer, or not seeing how what they had to offer could help, created reticence for joining in the work of community care.

Knowledge about the people we are trying to help out of homelessness, and the dynamics surrounding their experience as it relates, or not, to yours, may be something you are disconnected from in your particular sector, field and focus. Understanding what combination of each of these demographics you have in your community, and what that means for your community, is something each community will have to do as part of your foundation work for systems change and community action. It should be noted that there needs to be a balance between highlighting specific vulnerable populations in order to provide appropriate sensitivity in care and unwittingly perpetuating discrimination and disempowerment through a different kind of isolation and silo creating, and even enabling and entitlement. At the core, we are all human beings with more similarities than differences. When we focus too much on the differences it can lead to the systemic ostracization that Gabor Mate talks about. .

Who we are

Lived Experience within the context of Homelessness means people who are experiencing or periodically have experienced homelessness or risk of homelessness. They are our neighbours, no matter where they live or don't live. Demographically this really fills a broad spectrum, along with the particular "cocktail" of circumstances and reasons for being homeless or at risk of becoming so for each population group and individual.

This is why we see that housing programs work quickly for some, but not others and why many interventions fail to achieve expected outcomes. This is why available accommodations are sometimes not a good fit and why we see homelessness even in a community that seems to have plenty of vacancies. In some cases, the reasons for this last situation have more to do with community capacity, perceptions, and assumptions, than the circumstances and needs of the people themselves.

And this is why a one-size-fits all approach to assist those in crisis can never work. It requires a community, including those with lived experience to humbly assess and strive to understand all the parts of itself, and the environments within which it sits (physical, social, economic, political, cultural, even mental and emotional) before it can hope to effectively tackle a social challenge such as homelessness. But there is hope, and there are some universal principles and ways of being that can create a situation in which people can get the help they need, when they need it, and at the pace that works for them.

- Understanding and awareness are key in being able to do things differently and achieve positive outcomes.
- There is both visible and invisible homelessness.
- Assumptions and perceptions play a big role in what homelessness "looks like" verses the real world experience and what it actually means for people who are.
- At the core every homeless person is a human being, with strengths, weaknesses, dreams, hopes, fears, and world view coming from a challenging set of circumstances that needs belonging, safety, meaning, accountability, and to be seen and valued as someone who can contribute to community. Just like all of us.
- Systems "tragedies" occur constantly, sapping the effectiveness of resources and interventions that could produce significantly better outcomes with a little more collective effort and big picture thought put into it.

As a community we can often see that there are organizations and processes in play, funded through government programs. And because that funding is reliant on achieving outcomes, it is tempting and often common practice, to work very hard to justify the outcomes and over-inflate the actual effectiveness or scope of the intervention. But the reality is that while there are good things happening and pockets of collaboration, the resources and services in most communities are frequently disconnected, sometimes competing, feel inadequate to the need, and are often difficult to navigate for those with lived experience as well as those who are trying to help them.

Seniors: Seniors are a growing group of both visible and invisible homeless. There are seniors, whose mental health challenges, including addiction, are creating problems for them to fit into mainstream seniors housing options. But there are still an increasing number of seniors who are at risk of homelessness due to a lack of affordable units, available spaces close to home and family, facilities that can address the separate needs of some seniors couples, or not qualifying for government support programs even if they can address these challenges. It should be unconscionable to any community that people who have been together for decades are no longer able to live together due to their differing support needs and the inability of many facilities to be able to support that, especially affordably. But this is often the case, and it is due to current systems. Seniors who need increasing amounts of support are living with their adult children who are shouldering a growing load exacerbated by the disconnect of systems designed to support their parents. Terms like 'sandwich generation" and "compassion fatigue" not to mention the economic fallout lead into a whole other discussion of domino-ing elements that are taking their toll on communities.

Another complicating factor for seniors is the tendency for them to be "put out to pasture," not seen for the life wisdom, both professionally and personally, that they hold, and thus an often untapped resource in a community. Many still have a lot of miles left in their tanks, but lack of engagement and feeling useful can sap their viability and lead to deterioration of well-being and all aspects of health. This puts further strain on community resources for a population that could be adding so much to community at this point in their lives, given the right support to

do so . The good news is that the opposite of this scenario can be true and meaning and value can breathe new life and health into senior community members, and thus the community.

Mothers and children escaping domestic violence: In this group, we are dealing with numerous compromising factors that can include poverty, unemployment, underemployment, mental health challenges including addiction and trauma. There are safety factors that also need to be considered. They are often fragile, terrified, and easily motivated to return to unsafe relationships in order to have the stability they need. This is why they can number among our invisible homeless. Helping them move as quickly as possible into self-reliance, or at least not having to rely on their dangerous partner is an important and urgent imperative.   For some, with intervention and supported hard work, families can find a way to work through their challenges and heal. For others, this is not going to be the case. For all, their safety and well-being is the most important thing to be considered. The societal fall-out that is being experienced due to families in this situation not being properly supported and resourced is tremendous. Assisting to break the cycles that stem from this scenario will garner massive savings in community resources.

Many housing options are not equipped to deal with the complexity involved with housing this group. That being said, it is imperative that solutions are found in order to create the stability that will aid healing and activate and support resilience that can break the cycles leading to homelessness contributors. These women are often highly motivated due to the needs of their children. The description of this group and its challenges bleeds into that of the following group.

Families in poverty and/or other dysfunction: Whether a family is taxed economically or in other ways, the experience and its ramifications end up being very holistic. This means that poverty, mental health challenges, unemployment or underemployment, family relationship struggles, discrimination and lack of opportunities can all interplay and influence each other. Socio-economic elements play a role in the welfare of families and breaking cycles of poverty between generations should be an important work for any community that would like to see important social changes. Poverty stunts education in many ways including disrupting learning but also limiting opportunities for education and training that could increase marketable skills and thus income. Mental health challenges, including addiction and trauma contribute to the dysfunction and disruption that puts housing at risk. All of this dynamic creates a vicious cycle. People in this demographic are often stressed, and compromised in other ways including emotionally, physically and spiritually. It is difficult for people in crisis to navigate our "helping" systems.

Youth at risk: This group of vulnerable community members are getting to the point of aging out of Child Services , already have, or are not connected to any service. For various reasons, many of them distressing and tragic, including mental illness, addiction, or trauma (their own or that of parental figures), changing family dynamics, abuse, poverty, exploitation, they are unable to live at home. The ramifications surrounding LGBTQ youth are well documented and observed in our communities. Certainly, their mental, emotional and spiritual and often physical health is compromised by their situation. Youth in crisis may be defiant and have difficulty trusting anyone. But some will be needy and easily bond with someone who helps them feel seen and heard. This can be an asset in intervention, but also creates vulnerabilities where safe and healthy supports are not available.

 Ages 16 to 25 are often considered in this category although this number is fluid. We see drug and sex trade activity within this group, they are often very vulnerable to community predators and illicit business folks. They are also resilient, enterprising, and clever. Behaviourally, as with most humans, they will either externally process their angst, leading to safety issues in the community, or they will internalize it, leading to safety issues for themselves that spill over into the lives of those around them.

Youth tend to navigate toward peers for support and social connection. For this group, this can put pressures on those peers that they may not be able to manage, causing a ripple effect of increased need, which, left unsupported leads to continued, ever enlarging spirals of dysfunction. In this group as well, are many promising, bright human beings that are fighting hard to break the chains and move forward in their life. They will be working one or more jobs, going to school, and trying to survive day to day without a place to call home. There are a

number of invisible homeless in this population as they move between family members or friends for shelter. Unfortunately, this potentially puts them at further risk.

Persons with Developmental Disabilities: This population comes with or without complex needs including mental health or addiction issues. FASD, brain injury, and trauma. Because of intellectual or physical deficits, and sometimes behavioural challenges they are often undervalued as community contributors, and quite vulnerable. But they usually possess many strengths and potentials they may or may not have yet had the opportunity to discover or demonstrate. Many come with supports to help them. It has often been said that these folks can make some of the best workers. Individuals in this population are as varied in their strengths and liabilities, diagnoses, interests, and personalities as anyone else on the planet. Because of their "different abilities" they require some individualization in planning for their needs but, like all of us, there are some universal principles that apply.

LGBTQ+ This demographic element may exist in any of the other populations described here. Indeed, many of these demographics overlap. These are folks that, on top of anything else that is going on with them that has put them at risk of homelessness or in crisis, are also experiencing gender and sexuality-based complexities. Social attitudes and mores are not always on par with changing laws and policy, which can lead to discrimination and persecution. There can be difficulty finding safe spaces. LGBTQ+ youth may be estranged from their families.

People with mobility issues: Folks in this category can also be in any of the other demographic categories. From needing a wheelchair or walker, to health and physical disability challenges that make it difficult for them to move normally, or without pain, accessibility and distance between services is an important consideration. The requirement for mobility accommodation can diminish the number of viable housing options for this group and exacerbate the length of time a person is homeless. Mobility challenges can keep people in isolation and prevent them from engaging in healthy ways in their community. Whether youth or seniors, newcomers or Indigenous, add other challenges to this and you are seeing a recipe for additional and seemingly insurmountable difficulty. It can often be hard for others to see past the disability to the person and the strengths and ability to contribute that they have.

Single Men who are unemployed (or employed but not making enough to afford housing): Sometimes because they are away from the home they are already paying for, but also because they are not making enough money to afford a home in the community in which they are working. For these, an affordable, safe home is all the answer they need to move forward, and what this looks like is varied. For others, employment is required. Some are experiencing brain injury from a previous injury that has decimated their life as they knew it and they need help to rebuild in different directions. Sometimes their homelessness is due to mental health challenges including, addiction and trauma which compromises their ability to remain employed. But not always. Sometimes those issues are simply exacerbated by their homelessness, which means that finding the right fit for housing will assist them to thrive.

A number of these folks are vulnerable within the community. This group can possess many learned "skills" and traits that have enabled them to cope and survive. These guys would be good friends to have in an apocalypse. But often these coping mechanisms and learned survival "skills" are what get them into trouble in "mainstream" situations and need to be reframed as part of their road back into inclusion. This group makes up the majority of chronically homeless individuals in many communities. Their disconnect from community is a serious deficit and needs to be addressed. They often come with baggage from their past lives that comes with them into housing and supports programs and must be addressed. But they also have often had past lives of productivity and come with skills and experience that, in a supported situation, they can tap into for gainful employment and to make a contribution. In fact, doing so is something that is helpful for healing and recovery and reconnecting to community.

 Single Women: There are many reasons for women to be homeless or at risk of being so, including those mentioned for single men. Abusive relationships, mental health challenges including addiction and trauma compromise their well-being and employment are among them. Some are involved in and desiring to leave the sex trade. They may be in the sex trade due to their history of homelessness and falling through community gaps

previously. A number of women will identify that they may not qualify for services because they live with a partner, but for many, that living situation is fraught with danger, risk and exploitation. They are stuck between a rock and a hard place and end up staying with a partner, predator, or ill-equipped friend because there is not a viable choice for them. So they don't necessarily show up on homeless counts, but they still need to be counted, and provided for. There are a number of this group for whom it is mostly, if not simply, an economic circumstance that could be remedied quickly with the right resources applied in a concerted community effort.

Previously incarcerated or recently released: This demographic includes people who have been incarcerated previously and those that are transitioning from incarceration. As much as there are some successes for this population, they are plagued by stigma and systemic challenges. Inconsistencies in practice based on location or the human factor in the justice system can create gaps. Individuals coming out of prison either return to their home communities or are released into urban areas, sometimes with well thought out discharge planning in place, and sometimes not, either through a refusal to work with parole officers on discharge, or a disconnect between the institution, parole officer and community organizations.

Most have received correctional programming to mitigate the risk of reoffending, but if their environment doesn't change, re offence is likely. Complex factors including mental illness, addiction, FAS and trauma require a more intense level of support to improve integration and decrease recidivism. Stigma plays a considerable role for some offenders. Usually this is not an issue in urban centres, though in exceptional circumstances it can drive offenders away from supportive environments. For example, the sex offender who served twelve years seeking help to move forward after release. A well-meaning community worker researched his history then disclosed his past offences, leading to a concerning conversation among agencies about future provision of services to this person.

Discrimination and ostracization, can lead to isolation and disconnect from services and opportunities that would mitigate deficits and improve integration, increasing connection with community (a factor known to improve mental health, social outcomes and prevent addiction and recidivism). Stigma often plays a bigger role in reserve communities. These communities are tight-knit and lateral violence is extensive. For this reason, some offenders from reserve communities prefer release to an urban centre. Others may decide to move to urban centres after being released to their home communities. Either way, these offenders often lack the resources or supports to be successful.

Correctional Service of Canada implemented a continuum of care model in the early 2000's. Implementation of this model does not work very well. There are issues of communication and follow through between the releasing institution, the community parole office, and community organizations. Sometimes this is a result of the offender not following through, too.

Refugee and other Newcomer individuals and families: There is an often politically charged perception that refugees and newcomers receive a lot of support to settle in their new communities. And for many, this is the case. It needs to be recognized that newcomers are not the same as refugees and those supports are not necessarily the same for both. But mental health challenges arise from trauma, as well as culture shock, displacement and disconnection from cultural and traditional elements. Language barriers and waiting lists for ESL courses can compromise employment, not to mention the need for requalifying professional skills. Whatever the reason for coming, the ones who need support and experience barriers but don't find the help they need, are at risk.

There may be services but often services can be inadequate for the demand, or navigating them is difficult or impossible due to language barriers or for compromised and traumatized humans. Especially when there are language barriers. Cultural and linguistic competence in many services is lacking. Even when there are interpreter services, staff may not be aware of them (a product of organizational siloism between organizational departments) . For numerous refugees, their occupation was farming or subsistence living, and unless they are able to move into a similar opportunity, there is the need for retraining and integration that challenges economic situations and tries even the most resilient spirit. There is also fear of deportation which creates a reticence to ask for assistance so as not to draw attention to the fact that things are not going well.

Not all newcomers have a traumatic history behind their move, but language, and certification issues, and discrimination, can lead to underemployment and poverty, which, coupled with cultural barriers, different ways of being and world views can create overwhelming needs that might lead to homelessness or risk of homelessness.

Indigenous individuals and families: With some similarities to the challenges faced by refugees and newcomers and including all of the demographics listed in this section, Indigenous community members can be a significant stakeholder group in homelessness and its contributing factors in some communities. Due to the scope of the Indigenous experience and perspective as it relates to homelessness and its contributing factors, and the fact that this was an important focus of the funding mandate of the Momentum Project, we have given this community their own "chapter" in this section. Please refer to Chapter 2: Indigenous Community.

How we connect into the Community of Care

At the risk of sounding "preachy," it is important to remember that we are homeless for a number of reasons, many of which you might not see when you look at us. We know we are judged by a lot of people. We get to expect it and sometimes our behaviour reflects that assumption. It seems like people make judgements based from their own experience and perspective and none of us can know what the experience of another human being is without "walking a mile in their shoes.".

It might be easier to compassionately see the refugees from other countries, fleeing violence, war, traumatic events, escaping impossible political, physical, and economic situations and trying to build a new situation for themselves and their families. Although, this is beginning to shift with current political tides. But there are many of us who are local refugees. We can be victims of elements in our environment over which we have had no control that have impacted us on a number of levels. We have been displaced and disconnected from our places of origin, from our personal and community "sacred spaces" due to economics, politics, violence, and other traumatic events. We live in stressful, uncomfortable, and sometimes dangerous situations and are forced far outside of our comfort zones to survive.

No matter the background or origins of each human being in front of you, or the reasons we are currently experiencing crisis, it is important to take each one of us on our own merit. Generalizing populations is dangerous and problematic. It's true that this works both ways. How we see people who cross our paths has an impact on the next steps in our journey together. We, for our part, are uncertain, or stressed beyond imagining and cannot always see that you might be too, in your own way. We all look at the world through our own lenses, after all. We have such a hard time navigating all the places and people, the appointments and information that is thrown at us. We will often either miss things we are told, not understand what you mean, or just say what we think you want us to hear so we can get any kind of help. We may be terrified, or hardened, depending on our particular personalities, and the depth and length of experience in homelessness and what got us here in the first place. We have a hard time trusting and are easily spooked. We may have been burned or disappointed so many times before this.

But we know a lot about ourselves and our experience and can be a great team member in the work that is being done on our account. We can be experts in our own support and care, and have insights about what directions will work for us and what won't, what we are ready to take on and what we cannot. Complications with mental illness and addiction can create ups and downs in our progress, but be patient with us.

You might have a hard time believing it, and we do too, sometimes, but we have great resilience. You can see this in the fact that every day we keep on trying to make it in spite of the mountain of pain and negative circumstances that would bring others to their knees in defeat, stacked up in our way. Given the right elements and resources present in our environment, (not the least of which is trusting relationships,) and when negative elements are removed or mitigated, you will see movement forward. But it will not be in a straight line, we have ups and downs and detours.

Understanding this, when you see a lack of movement or see continual re-cycling, it makes sense to look at what is happening or not happening in the environment surrounding us, and what could be happening in our inner environment that we need to process in order to move forward. This is really the same for every human being. What you are understanding, doing, or not doing, in your roles as facilitators, advocates, and coaches, is as important as what we are understanding, doing, or not doing in our roles as service users. We can help each other.

What we have to offer the community:

Every human being, even a person that is in crisis, at a lower socioeconomic level, dealing with mental, emotional, or physical health issues, has something to offer their community. Research and experience has shown that people in poverty are often more generous than those who have more. We have had to learn to be creative in problem solving, adapting and coping with what is thrown our way. We have learned to use what we have. Sometimes these survival skills cause us problems as we use them with you, our way, in your world, and we both have to learn to see them as the strengths they can be, and redirect them.

With all of this, we have things to give, to contribute. We have skills that we need to reconnect with in order to reconnect with our best selves and push past the trauma and despair that can get in the way of our progress. We love to be valued, have meaningful things to do. We can help. We can also share our stories to increase understanding for the rest of the community and help advocate for what is needed. And we know what works and what doesn't work, in your systems of care, and can help you transform them.

We can help each other. If we are surrounded by supports and moving forward in good directions, it can be beneficial for us to have peer support options. We can be participants in our own solutions but also in the solutions of others, thus stretching resources and increasing the "team" or "partnership" nature of this process rather than the "Helpee/ Helper" nature that tends to be exhibited within support systems.

What is important to, and for us?
- Belonging, being valued, being seen for who we are and what we can contribute, not as problems to be fixed
- Being empowered rather than enabled, or allowed to become entitled
- Understanding, compassion and patience for the definition
- Being able to maintain or reconnect with our cultural values and practices
- Connection to the community in which we live
- Safety, security and stability
- Knowing what is available for help and being able to navigate those helps
- Being productive, having a contribution to make, and enough income to thrive
- Input, accountability and responsibility in our own solutions
- Choices, and resources available to help us make those choices
- Time and support to work through what needs to be worked through at each stage of our journey in order for us to move on.
- Cultural and contextual awareness, culturally sensitive and trauma-informed approaches
- A movement toward self-reliance, with clear pathways and help along the way
- The ability to share our experiences, and help others, in order to solidify our own gains
- Hope for a better tomorrow

What helps us to be successful in engaging in a continuum of care?

- Safe spaces to be ourselves and just experience the plain old every day.
- Getting reconnected to past skills and knowledge, experiencing play, re-creating an ideal and healthy family dynamic (which can be created within community).

- Assistance to "renovate" personal support systems and create healthy social networks, intentional opportunities to contribute, in the ways we can, to others, to be valuable and valued within the community.
- A strengths-based approach that sees who we are and what we personally have to work with as part of our individual plan for success.
- Recognition that things like stress, trauma, nutritional deficits, have compromised our ability to focus, keep on task, and that there is healing work that needs to be done while we are in the process of putting other aspects of our lives together. Indeed, the one helps the other and vice-versa. And continuous informing and education, at the level of our individual understanding, about these things and how they are impacting our process and experience.
- Trusting relationships as a foundation upon which to build our success journey. Workers that show up and services that are welcoming and ready to work patiently but persistently with us. We have been burned so many times, disappointed and betrayed consistently. We need to know we can count on someone.
- An integrated, connected, community network, that knows each of us and cares about each of us, provides a strong relational foundation upon which to build new, more positive experiences.
- Not being re-traumatized by having to share our stories multiple times. We need single entry points and an information sharing process so that the community is one system of support, rather than broken up into segments that we have to navigate and inform, over and over, often on our own. As vulnerable and compromised human beings, we.are.not in the position to be able to do that.
- Our whole picture being taken into account. There are areas we are strong in and areas we need support with. There are things we can do to help others and things that we need others to help us with. Creating an environment that is geared to our success by having programs that build capacity in our neighbourhoods, in the workplace, and in other areas of community life to foster inclusion, decrease judgement, correct misconceptions, change assumptions, and support the unique needs we will initially have due to some of our current vulnerabilities.

What isn't working?

- Being treated as someone with limited or no ability to help themselves
- Rigid criteria around funding and support that doesn't make sense. (E.g. needing a doctor's note to get a bus pass to go to the doctor…) or not having the circumstances of our housing be considered in the definition of homelessness. (E.g. living in a dangerous relationship to keep a roof overhead being seen as adequately housed.) The only thing worse than this is inconsistencies throughout the systems based on the personalities and whims of the humans who work within them, or the differences among siloed organizations.
- Being lumped together with people with complex problems who may be at a different point on their journey of change, with no safe places to work our own recovery, or next steps when we are ready.
- Enabling, "Band-Aid" solutions that take away our power to make decisions, work for and advocate for ourselves. Consider this: rather than providing meals with no requirements, set it up so we can cook for and clean up after ourselves, or have to do something in trade that benefits the community or others in the community. Yes, there are some challenges to that, but overcoming those challenges together will create more value in the service and help lead all of us to next steps. Instead of constantly offering new supplies, help us to be able to adequately store and/or take care of what supplies we have. There are those among our number for whom it is easier to throw away a perfectly good clothing item and get a new handout, rather than do laundry, for example. And trying to work on employment when we are concerned about losing our possessions stalls our progress. Safe storage of belongings for people who are participating in programs, will alleviate worry, open up more opportunities, and improve success rates.
- Services being siloed. This creates massive difficulties for us in navigation, knowing what is available, and depending on one organization for a need that another organization could fill, but none of us know about. It also leaves a lot of loopholes for clever and manipulating individuals to take full advantage of limited resources while others, who have more integrity, suffer with the lack.

- Not being held accountable for what we can do, while being supported with elements in our environment to make up for deficits. Let's face it, there are those that would like to coast and those that could do more. Those that like to coast are not helped by being enabled to continue to coast. And those who can do more are not helped by the lack of opportunity to do so. In both cases a learned helplessness wastes time, opportunities, and ties up finite resources.
- Not being considered as an individual with individual needs and abilities, requiring some tailoring of the "program" and processes to help us be more successful.
- Hard time limits. This journey is not linear, and it is not the same for each of us. It can take a long time to undo years of damage in a life.
- Workers and services not living up to their end of the deal, paying lip service to the program but not putting in the effort to follow through. E.g. meaningful and consistent home visits often do not happen, even though that is part of the "contract" for service, that they be accepted. We may not like it, but hold us to our agreements and keep yours.

What is our responsibility?

- Understand and accept that some of the emotional and mental "barriers" we are experiencing come from a place of trauma, stress, or exhaustion, and try to push past it whenever and however we can.
- Try to get informed about and understand our own contributing factors. Knowing how we got here can help inform the way out.
- To meet the program where it's at- It might not be perfect but we can take what is there and do something with it, and provide respectful feedback to help improve things. Helping our service providers focus on what is really helpful and trim the rest of it back.
- Have a desire to succeed and believe in our own ability to do so
- Don't rely solely on our service team, if at all possible, but also look around and find peers and mentors that can help us on our journey. (It helps when there are ways and means to meet them)
- Be honest about what we need and what is not working for us, bringing potential solutions and ideas rather than disengaging.
- Take responsibility for our part of the solution- be humble enough to acknowledge our own roles in the success or failures of what has been tried. This is what we are asking from everyone else, so it should be something we are willing to do. But be patient with us, please!
- Understand and accept that supports are temporary and prioritize the action needed to get ourselves to where we need to be when the "program" ends.
- Don't leave the supporting up to the "workers". Be part of the team, the expert in our own needs, potentials, and abilities, and someone who is willing to take on their pieces of the puzzle.

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Chapter 2: Indigenous Community

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The Indigenous community has been given its own section due to the social and political largeness attached to it, as well as the fact that it was a particular focus in the mandate of the Momentum Project. To be clear, the meaning of indigenous is: originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native. There is indigenous knowledge, tradition, and wisdom in all of our cultures, that we all have inherited, ignored, or lost touch with depending on how far removed we are from our countries of ancestral origin. In our developed shared cultures as co-occupiers in any given region or space, we have developed some form of indigenous or "native" to the area ways of being, doing, knowing, and thinking. In the context of this work, innovative solutions to homelessness in Canada, when we speak of Indigenous communities, we are referring to our First Nations, Metis, and Inuit neighbours.

94 recommendations from Truth and Reconciliation can be reviewed and used to cross-check community systems work, especially in a multi-sectoral collaboration to enhance community collective impact: https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/truth-and-reconciliation-94-calls-to-action-1.3362258

As with all information in this work, what you find in this "chapter" is gleaned from our direct experience with historical and regional documentation, direct conversation and dialogue, and observation within Alberta. Some insights are universally applicable, others may be more regional or subjective. Your community will have Indigenous communities, individuals and families, and organizations that are representing and advocating for the local needs of Indigenous individuals and families in your area. This can serve as an insightful "jumping off" point. But it is important that you take the initiative to find out what people in your area are experiencing and what recommendations they have or would like to give to your region and community. Respectful, compassionate, authentic inquiry will go a long way toward establishing strong relationships, open communication, and communal, collective impact. If there are any glaring discrepancies in what we present and the reality of Indigenous community members, we would like to hear your feedback.

Who are we?

The story of Indigenous individuals and communities takes on the flavour of Charles Dickens "A Tale of Two Cities." Not just because of the distinctions between urban, off-reserve, and reserve living, although these are distinctive factors with their own implications. Whether we are service users or service providers, like every human, Indigenous people are also on various points in a healing journey. But unlike many of the rest of us humans, their journeys began in a complicated, extremely negative and disrupting place. They span a spectrum from completely broken and dysfunctional, physically, emotionally, mentally and economically due to systems, community and generational fall-out from residential schools and cultural disconnect to the leading-out generations that are breaking cycles, and reconnecting and strengthening culture. Some reserve communities are well off with industry and business, while some are in poverty, with basic human needs like housing, water, food security and safety not adequately met. But even within those differing communities, you will find that same spectrum.

All reserve communities are subject to the inequities and power imbalances of broken colonial-based systems and their descended iterations. Off-reserve and urban Indigenous people are subject to racism, discrimination, and sometimes lateral violence from their home communities. On reserve, the government owns housing and land. This leads to barriers to moving forward economically with no equity ownership.

While there is sometimes an assumption that Indigenous people get money and tax breaks from the government, money provided to Indigenous communities through various programs often does not find its way into the community pockets it is intended for, or at least to its fully intendended extent. Their communities have been struggling for well over than a century and a half of colonialism. Often artificially imposed community systems play a role in the distribution of these funds, which leads to inconsistencies within and between Indigenous communities. And to be fair, even if everything worked as it should, what might sound like impressive amounts of money doesn't necessarily go far, per capita, especially when needs and deficits are so high.

Indigenous teachings vary among nations, and communities, as well. While there are some universal concepts, and philosophies, they can be subject to the local or regional interpretation or iteration. It is important to find out specifics about the region in which you are located.

How we connect into the Community of Care- actuals and potentials:

Even without poverty added to the mix, Indigenous individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness are often dealing with a spectrum of elements related to intergenerational trauma, disconnection

and displacement from close communities, and sometimes escaping dysfunctional communities, and families, with damaging dynamics. We are likely also dealing with challenges of physical and/or mental health, addiction or substance abuse, lack of education or marketable skills, discrimination, prejudice and different ways of seeing the world and functioning that often don't fit in with "western" or mainstream systems. We need a spectrum of interventions and wrap-around care that include cultural sensitivity, but that also acknowledges our differing levels of engagement and interest in our culture.

Many of us have been raised with, or identify more with a circular, rather than linear way of operating which creates challenges in a linear oriented system. Indigenous land-based culture and traditions, where community is a strong factor and experienced much differently, often clash with "mainstream," individualistic perspectives and systems, and represent the colonization which has produced existing trauma. Housing is particularly challenging because, if an individual or family comes from a communal culture, or way of being, family members (street, community, as well as biological) can find their way into rented units, creating challenges for landlords and other neighbours that can threaten tenancy. Whether Indigenous or not, those that are experiencing the disruption and fall out of substance abuse, trauma, and mental health challenges are often ill-equipped to manage basic tenancy responsibilities and navigate needed services. We operate in extremes from a dis-empowering over-reliance on and blind trust in services with a buy in to power inequalities, to a disruptive deep mistrust which keeps us from engaging, or produces arrogance or defiance. Both of these extremes can create their own sets of problems.

Socially inherited guilt and shame on the part of "settler" populations can lead to overcompensation, disempowerment and unintended further colonization if not checked at the gate. Nikki Sanchez, an Indigenous Canadian filmmaker and public educator is not alone in suggesting that the work of decolonization is for everyone. "Historical bystander trauma" needs to be recognized along with intergenerational trauma and the healing work includes all people (Sanchez, 2019). The authentic community and culture many of us come from holds important solutions. But many have also been disconnected from that culture as a result of colonialism, residential schools, and other, intentional or otherwise, forms of cultural genocide.

What we have to offer the community-

Even though there are Indigenous people and communities that are struggling and dysfunctional, Indigenous teachings and traditional ways of being are holistic and universally applicable for healthy, sustainable systems. Indigenous history is full of stories and insights of systems tragedies and their consequences to help us see where we can and should do things differently. We know, so intimately, the ways in which we are disconnected from those "smart" ways of being, doing, thinking, and seeing, and the fall-out of that. Our way of being is different than mainstream "western" ways. Because of this, we make great partners to move forward in healing and systems change as individuals, organizations, and communities, rebuilding systems in better ways. We come to the table with solutions, if our non-Indigenous neighbours will see, hear, and be humble enough to validate and apply them.

Land-based wisdom and learning has a number of levels of application and ways of understanding that can greatly improve the human experience and sustainability in our relationship with Mother Earth. The natural laws and lessons found in land-based learning and the natural laws can inform and impact all areas and domains of our lives. The holistic nature of understanding and supporting ourselves and each other to survive, grow, interact within our environment and with each other, and to thrive is found in the Indigenous ways and wisdoms that permeate their traditional culture. Connecting with and developing your understanding of them will help you to connect with the Indigenous ways of our own backgrounds and places of origin. The idea that no one is left behind, that every decision as a community and nation should consider the effects on succeeding generations, that we take what we need and leave the rest and other communal and community accountability and sustainability concepts, have transformative power in the change we all wish to see.

The Indigenous community, for the most part, is ready and willing to partner with you to move past the mistakes of your predecessors and forge a new path of community, rather than colonization and re-traumatization. As with all of our first fathers, we are willing to welcome you into our space (you are here anyway), show you the best

way to move within it, and learn from you the best that you have to offer from your own journeys to this point, so that we all can learn and grow together in a good way, and have the best life possible, indefinitely for our children and grandchildren who follow us.

What is important to us, and for us?
- Numerous comments from Indigenous people have centered around stopping the blame game and moving forward in healing, lasting change in our ways of being together, and sustainable solutions for all of us.
- Aboriginal folks, for the most part, don't go into the community and be loud. There is still that mentality of turning to white leaders (E.g. executive directors of agencies), and asking them to speak for us. But we need to advocate for our own needs and the needs of community. In our way, respecting our way, believing the information as it is offered and acting on it.
- Brokenness is a fact of life- when dealing with Aboriginal community members, as in any situation with any human being, you can generally tell who acknowledges their brokenness and is working on it, from those who do not acknowledge it. People who are on the healing path come from a place of care and collaboration, rather than a place of trying to take or keep power. Acknowledging that we are all broken in some way is a fair assessment. Don't come from a place of superiority. We are all walking on a journey together and need to recognize we are all victims of systems, beliefs, actions and processes that in some ways have oppressed and broken all of us.
- Communities and the powers that be need to operate from a stance of "nothing about us without us" and acknowledging that the wisdom holders in Aboriginal communities know we we need and have a good idea of how to get there. Having the right resources and more self-governance, rather than colonially imposed systems, goes a long way toward not leaving us feeling re-colonized or retraumatized.
- Cooperative research, sensitive to and mitigative of unequal power relations, based in the perspective that knowledge is a dynamic process and traditional philosophies, ways of being, land-based understanding is something to be brought into use rather than something to just be described. This means that for things like natural resource management and supporting vulnerable populations, honour us with honest and authentic negotiation for determining and sharing responsibilities.
- Natural supports need to be developed- any program needs to support this. So funding needs to support this. And this might look different in an aboriginally supporting program compared to a mainstream white supporting program, and then to a program supporting a mixed group and urban aboriginal folks.

What helps us to be successful in engaging in a continuum of care?

As an individual community member or service user:
- Respect, as a human being with the ability and wisdom to be a partner in solutions, to be consulted, not acted upon.
- If sensitivity to Indigenous culture is important to you, learn about it and be sensitive to it, and how it impacts and is impacted by the care and solutions you are offering.
- Be honest- acknowledging our brokenness- allowing us to mutually share that we are self-aware. Don't come from a place of denying your own brokenness or trying to take power.
- It is how we are with each other that is more important than what we do. A way of being approach will go a lot farther than an outcomes approach. Because with the right way of being, the outcomes will follow. The right outcomes will follow.
- We want to make the decisions. This is our life. Make room for us to tell you what is needful in our way.
- Social agencies may find that they have to reframe an assessment or evaluation activity as a simple conversation- a "consultation" might be required by funders, but it just amounts to a meal and a visit, community style, to get what we need. A process might be required or recommended from a western,

and dare we say, bureaucratic perspective that is long and involved, when the information can be gained from a storytelling or sharing circle.

- Ask about what community looks like to us, what are the natural roles and responsibilities of community members? How to help a community equates to how can we help people return to their natural roles, and support them in that. Just sitting down and talking to people equates with research, because that is how it is done traditionally, through stories.
- In housing development or even program development show us how you are changing things, how this is different from before. Show that you are committed to the process and want to do things in the right way. It might result in the same outcomes- especially if you understand what is needed going into the situation. But it is important to our community to be asked, and invited to engage in the planning and visioning process.
- When engaging communities in interventions say, and show, " I care about this community and all communities. I need your help to do this right and in a good way."

What isn't working?
- Barriers to engaging Indigenous Organizations:
  - Lack of trust and rapport
  - Secrecy/program hoarding
  - Competing interests
  - Concerns of jurisdictional issues
  - Fears of marginalization
  - High staff turnover
  - Political intervening (typically unique to on-reserve agencies from their respective FN band administrations)
- Disparity between how different Aboriginal groups interact or are interacted with in communities
- Western perspective tends to be analytical, logical, straight lines, but in the aboriginal community especially, and for most people in general, this is not the case.
- Numbers (E.g. of people using services, of people with specific needs) are not as important as what our communities need. In real life, for us and for anyone, there is real complexity at play. This is emerging as a best practice- working within the complexity of a human life rather than just attacking individual symptoms. This best practice is doubly important with Indigenous people.
- Continually being promised change and then not seeing it- in what is happening, in how help is being offered, in how we are approached.
- When what is shared as important, when instructions are asked for and given but then not followed it creates a reticence to engage (example; appropriate spaces in housing development- spaces for ceremony, gathering, culturally informed spaces, discussed during architectural consultation but not translated into design)
- Long, drawn out processes to get action started. "When the community has told us what to do, a non-profit can do it within weeks. The bureaucrats need to get on the ship with us and sail."

What is our responsibility?

- Continue to advocate for what is needed and how it should be enacted
- Teach community partners about what is important to us socially, culturally, traditionally
- Provide respectful feedback and either trust in or insist on (where necessary) partnership that takes the best of what each has to offer and uses it to make good things happen.
- Understand the extent of systemic colonization and what it means for non-Aboriginal community members.
- Recognize that we are all victims of the same broken systems, and that others come from traumatic backgrounds and may be experiencing inter-generational trauma, even if for different reasons.

- Share stories and information to help others develop a picture of real and ideal Aboriginal community life and ways of being.
- Continue to participate in conversations regarding how systemic colonization has impacted the natural Aboriginal community and how those systems are keeping us all from moving forward in a good way, together.

Indigenous organizations:

Defining or identifying Indigenous organizations is difficult due to the differing opinions, within and outside of the Indigenous community as to who has a right to claim that status. For our purposes here, this group includes any organization that has been created to support our FNMI populations. In our conversations and research of historical documents, there are a number of elements that were communicated and that need to be considered. There is high frustration in this community when being "engaged" in solution making. There is still a sense that they are being required to fit their round pegs into square holes, just being consulted as to how to do this. Even seemingly progressive actions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Fund and activities therein, seem like re-trauma and can be co-opted often by the agendas of others.

Indigenous peoples generally agree that they already have all the answers they need for their own healthy, successful communities. But they have been separated from so many of the elements needed in their environment to be able to do this. Indigenous led solutions need to be supported and resourced. Administration is often identified as a weak area; you may see them hire "whites" to help run our organizations. So the tendency might be to want to take over and have them in a consultant role. But, as in a strengths-based model with individuals, we would do better to insert supports to increase capacity in areas of deficit, and leave them to run in the areas of their strengths, just providing resources and opportunities for them to achieve their vision of success.

The beauty of Indigenous solutions is that they are good for everyone, are inclusive of everyone, because at some level, we all, as human beings, have deep roots in community, the land, the natural laws that permeate what we call "Indigenous" culture. In truth, every single human being on the planet is a victim of unnatural systems, invented to make things better (for some or all), that have become all-encompassing influencers and shapers of our world, and that have separated us from the natural and organic ways of being human together. The people we term Indigenous, the First Peoples of this continent, are in reality the least removed from those natural, holistic ways of being that are increasingly recognized as needing to be reintroduced into the human experience. This is a community coming to terms with colonization, systemic abuse, institutionalized ostracization, the resulting trauma, and learned helplessness, and that are in the process of healing by re-establishing their connection to those ways of being. They can teach the rest of us a lot of fundamentals that can underpin a better, more effective way of supporting the thrive-ability of community members and the common good.

While the "Western" mode of operation is to do miles of research and inquiry before moving forward, and there are certain criteria, and ways and means of doing this which can become time consuming and tedious, Indigenous communities don't necessarily operate in the same way. To paraphrase a respondent in our research, "a community supper and some conversation can give you all the "data" you need to justify a program or project." But while there is a more holistic and action-oriented mind-set, there is also a learned helplessness and systems created barriers to moving forward that often need to be considered and overcome.

Community and workplace dynamics, are created from a mish-mash of elements from politically imposed western-oriented governance models and systemically induced community dysfunctions, to human beings who are in various stages of trauma and healing, themselves, to environmental and policy complexities, and bring their own challenges. This is the case not only for those in the "white" community working with them, but also within and among their own interactions. But while it might make sense to want to overcompensate by essentially retaining too much control and thus creating a power imbalance, perhaps a better approach would be to provide resources, within some parameters that can help protect them from their systemic challenges while giving them room to be the leaders in their own solutions.

Face to face meeting, establishing relationships outside of any agendas, is a good start to improving a working relationship with Indigenous organizations and communities. There are often artificially created systems challenges within these communities that need to be addressed, and the right people need to be given the right resources, and the space, within those communities, to help work within or overcome those challenges. In the meantime, capacity building within our Indigenous communities needs to continue to be supported, so that historic, systemic ways of dealing with this community can shift and the tipping point for healthy self-governing and self-reliance for community care can happen sooner than later.

What helps us engage:
- Respect, as human beings with wisdom and ability to partners in solutions, and to be consulted and not acted upon.
- If you are unsure, just ask us what the right words to describe Indigenous communities and community members are, what terms we feel comfortable with, how we want to be addressed. To be fair, some of the terminology has been artificially applied by colonial organizations
- Some communities or organizations stand more on ceremony and protocol than others. Giving gifts to Elders is a sign of respect and appreciation and in many instances expected. Honorariums for time or travel, tobacco, an item that might be useful or needed, are some of the things to consider having ready to provide to someone who is participating in community activity. Be mindful that the person who is participating may come from a situation of poverty or at least experiencing a financial burden to participate. When in doubt, ask if a gift is required and get suggestions as to what that could be. When a gift is offered to you, accept it. If you don't need it, acknowledge the gift for what it means to the giver and ask if you can pass it on to someone who is in need of it. Take the time, ahead of time to know what the protocols and expectations might be for the Indigenous communities in your region. Across the country and within your region, while there are some fundamental similarities in teachings and traditions, there may be differences in prioritization, structure and ceremony surrounding those traditions.
- As with any organization, heads want to be treated as the leaders and decision makers they are. Engage an Indigenous organization as you would any government organization; level-to-level. Going outside of this structure will likely promote an impression of disrespect. If you wish to meet with an ED, or equivalent, you could start with lower channels to establish the initial connection, but it would be better to attempt direct communication with the ED first. Never meet with their staff members unless directed or granted by the ED; respect for their chain of command is important. Even when granted, send an equivalent from your organization to meet with their organization. For example, send your program manager to meet with their program manager, etc.   However, be hesitant to send a non-decision maker from your organization to meet with a decision maker from an Aboriginal organization due to accountability issues. This creates an environment of equality with the Indigenous organization.
- Trust is an inherent issue with many Aboriginal organizations and communities. It will take time to build trust. A great start is to shake every staff member's hand when you walk into an organization's building; at least the staff members you are introduced to or meet as you come into the building. This small act has a large impact on the people working for the organization. It is advised this become routine; each new day you see these people is a good practice. Honour them.
- If you find yourself on a step, or raised platform, or behind a barrier (of some sort), it is necessary to step down from the raised step or platform or come from behind the desk or podium, etc… to shake hands. This may seem silly, but it does so much to break barriers. When a person engages an Aboriginal organization or decision maker in a way which puts them above others, the receiver will shutdown and withdraw from further contact. Never assume you know better than the other. Even if you are better versed in a particular subject matter, collaboration is more effective than lecturing or leading. Remember, trust and respect go a long way.
- It is invaluable to research the organization with which you wish to engage. This will give you an understanding of perspective, challenges, or potential hot-button issues. When a person discusses a concern, treat it as important. It may not align with the agenda or goal(s) of your meeting, but it is important to the person discussing. Dismissing items or concerns will derail your schedule and set back

relations with the organization. In most cases, the organization is not looking for a saviour, or someone to solve their problems. Rather, they are seeking to be treated as equals and collaborators. A program of collaborative problem-solving would be a good fit for working with most Indigenous organizations. Treading gently, authentically, and patiently becomes important.

- "Dropping in" is really just what it sounds like. Often, dropping in and visiting is important and welcomed. Scheduling a meeting and having an agenda are not usually required to sit and meet with an Indigenous organization. It is a welcome gesture to not just discuss business and leave, unless indicated otherwise at the start of the interaction. Let thoughtful common-sense be your guide. For example, call ahead of time and ask if your target person will be in. If so, drop in. If not, call back later and try again.

- If meeting with a First Nation Chief and Council, an agenda is always required and will be set by the Chief and Council. Your organization will usually be a line item on their agenda of one of their meetings. Chief and Council require formality as they are considered a government body.

- Flexibility in scheduling may be important. This is especially true when dealing with First Nations band offices or on-reserve organizations, but will be experienced with urban organizations as well. In reserve communities, a death or memorial could shutdown the entire community. In urban communities, a death or memorial or illness of a family member could result in a person leaving for their home community with little or no notice. Sometimes, it is not known when the person will return from their community. While this level of unknowing sounds alarming, patience is required, and understanding will likely be rewarded with increased trust and rapport.

- Meaningful compassion is important. This requires an understanding of the organization's history, challenges, and goals. It also requires a basic understanding of the many issues which have plagued Aboriginal people for generations. Sometimes the people you meet with share personal anecdotes or current personal issues. These become just as important to listen to and acknowledge as you work through the agenda at hand. In most cases, the person just wants to feel heard rather than have their problems solved. Aboriginal people can be storytellers, especially if they are comfortable with you. Be cautious of debating or arguing history, politics, or intention. This will work against you. Understanding their perspective will put you in a good position.

> Arbinger Institute puts out some wonderful literature and training on the outward mindset and ways of being that foster good relations and safe "out of the boxes we carry" spaces that can help us understand how the assumptions and attitudes that we bring into a situation can impact our experience. Look for "The Anatomy of Peace." Their philosophies and material resonate with the Indigenous way of being.
> Refer also to the Safe Conversations material of Hunt and Henrix, whose work has been beneficial in cross-cultural communication and problem-solving.

Chapter3.) Social sector

Who are we? This is not an exhaustive listing or description. It is meant to provide some brief explanation for those not familiar with this sector. The Social Sector is generally comprised of non-profit, social benefit, non-governmental (though still often funded at least in part by government) grass-roots organizations that have emerged to provide community-based care, advocate, or increase access to more formal supports. This sector has emerged to meet needs that are not seen as being met adequately. It is a sector that has a foundation of capacity building and self-reliance for community members.

Indigenous organizations:

Defining or identifying Indigenous organizations is difficult due to the differing opinions, within and outside of the Indigenous community as to who has a right to claim that status. For our purposes here, this group includes any organization that has been created to support our FNMI populations. In our conversations and research of historical documents, there are a number of elements that were communicated and that need to be considered. The nature of the Indigenous situation in Canada, as well as the fact that it was a specific focus within the mandate of the Momentum Project, warrants its own chapter in this section. Please refer to Chapter 2: Indigenous Communities for more detailed information.

Mental Health and Addiction supports:

 Generally formed to provide grass-roots, community-based, but sometimes professional supports and services for those dealing with mental health or addiction challenges, that institutional public sector organizations are unable to provide adequately. They may be private for profits, or not for profits (with or without charity status). They operate through grants, contracts, some private billing, usually on a sliding scale, or through insurance, and fundraising.

Developmental Disabilities supports:

These can be for-profit or not-for-profit organizations. They generally operate contracts with the ministry of Community and Social Services to provide residential, supported independent living, employment prep, employment, community access supports for persons with developmental disabilities. They are always looking for ways to help integrate their clients and provide community opportunities for them. Housing may or may not be something they provide, and if not, they are always looking for good options and potential partnerships. Their clients come with a spectrum of supports that could be good fits for some community landlords.

Affordable Housing organizations:

 Sometimes set up as regional authorities managing provincial or municipal properties, with some of their own developed along the way, and sometimes as private not for profit companies or charities, these organizations provide lower priced housing. They operate through government funding, revenue generation from their properties, and sometimes philanthropic donation and support. Affordable housing generally requires constant subsidy and input from government for its upkeep and maintenance and sometimes its actual operations. Some are now utilizing mixed use, mixed income approaches to create sustainability and self-reliance.

Needs based organizations:

 These are often not-for-profit societies or charities created from a need that is seen by their founders as being unmet in the community. Sometimes their inception is as a direct result of siloism making it difficult for community members to discern just what services are being provided for their specific area of concern. Sometimes they form to help meet a need that an established institution or entity is unable to fulfill due to tight mandates. They can be formed as operational organizations which supply a specific service or set of services, or they can be foundations which raise funds to apply to social needs. They can be registered as charities, or not for profit companies or societies. They may be funded by the government, or public institutions through grants or contracts. They also solicit private donations, or Foundation support.

Service Clubs or Volunteer Organizations:

 This type of organization can be formed around a specific community need or general philanthropy. These organizations do everything from supplying volunteer support to raising funds to support other organizations, locally or internationally. They are created and designed to provide self-actualization, networking, and capacity building for their members while they do good in the world. They can be full-fledged charities, informal clubs or organized not-for-profit societies. Their funding generally comes from private donations, and fundraising activities.

Faith-based Organizations:

These can be churches or other not-for-profits created by churches or people of faith that have a spiritual or denominational component to their service. Some are more stringent in incorporating direct facets of their particular teachings in their engagement and ministry than others, but all are motivated into service by their faith. Like Neighbourhood associations, these groups are not fully tapped as a powerful resource in community continuums of care. These organizations can be volunteer or ministry based and led, although there are some faith based not-for-profits that have grown to varying degrees of sizes, scopes, and revenue streams. Their funding is generally from donations from the members of the churches to which they belong, or solicited from the general public. They sometimes will apply for grants from the Government or philanthropic foundations, but it can be difficult for them to find grants that they are eligible for, simply because they are faith based. They may enter into service contracts. Within the homelessness spectrum, we will see meal provision, specialized housing, and community outreach, even counseling services all motivated from a faith-centred perspective. Church congregations, church "families" make a big difference in the lives of community members in building capacity for the prevention of, and working through, crisis. A church community can make up for the lack of connection in a neighbourhood, but not everyone goes to church. Church members, however, properly motivated and supported, can help build those important networks in their neighbourhoods.

Employment Services:

This group of organizations may be independent for-profits, privately funded not-for-profit, or funded by the government to provide training and retraining, job placement, workplace capacity building for the general public or for specific populations. Sometimes they are generalist and sometimes they are industry specific. In a collaborative community plan, they can be great bridges into some of the development work that can be done with the private sector.

Community Alliances and Coalitions:

Sometimes a group of organizations or a cross sector collaboration will organize an alliance or coalition which consists of memberships or participation in regular convenings from a number of other entities in a community. This could look like a Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Association, Cultural or Newcomer, Poverty, Mental Health, Child Advocacy or Homelessness Alliance, Builders or Landlords Association, for example. These have formed with the idea of power in numbers and the desire to combine efforts, advocate more powerfully, or make something specific happen in a community. Alliances and coalitions can play an important part in a framework to foster community alignment and enhanced collective impact. They are naturally, organically occurring convenings that can be given a purposeful, significant role in assessment, the gathering and dissemination of knowledge, input into community needs and the strategies to meet them, as well as the roll out of the requisite action and evaluation. The loose framework and practice these alliances form can be exploited to form a community Center of Excellence model that promotes and supports the ongoing learning required in community level change management.

Neighbourhoods and neighbourhood associations:

Neighbourhoods and their associations have powerful potential in community continuums of care. Where people live is the first frontier of community connection and care. Every person in every other sector is also a community member, a neighbour, and thus has inherent potential to contribute on the most personal and first line level with anyone experiencing crisis. They also have the potential to be personally affected by the social "fall-out" of some of our most potent social crises.   Isolationism, discrimination and distrust, are the killers of the kinds of healthy, supportive networks that can happen in neighbourhoods which can help prevent and alleviate core causes and contributors to the social crises we are trying to mitigate with community alignment and collective impact.

The neighbourhood associations we connected with in the Momentum project all expressed a downturn in participation, aging memberships, and a frustration with how to engage new members in their association, as well as engage the residents in their neighbourhoods. We also learned that each neighbourhood is unique, based on their physical locations, and the socio-economic levels of their residents in their experience with homelessness, its contributing factors and its community fall-out. Where there is more homelessness "traffic," there are high levels of frustration and concern. While there is compassion for the plight of people in crisis, there also can be a sense of injustice that some people seem to be allowed to burden the rest of the community with seemingly no responsibility for themselves. The kinds of assumptions being made and levels of knowledge about homelessness correlate with levels of compassion. But at the end of the day, residents require respect for their property, and a sense of safety in their own home and neighbourhood, in which many have invested and have a significant emotional and economic stake, whether property owners or renters.

Neighbourhood associations generally are given a few thousand dollars per year from the municipality to assist their operation, which is fairly strictly mandated. Some receive dues from the residents and some will fundraise. They can have limited options for community grants. Some associations are only focused on improving or increasing amenities in the neighbourhood, such as parks, athletics spaces, road maintenance, or building community centers, and ensuring the area maintains a certain standard. Others recognize the social, economic, and safety needs in their neighbourhood and are advocating and engaging in these areas. This can reflect the level of needs in a community but also the interests and focus of association members. There is a recognition that while some residents are self-contained and self-sufficient, there may be some who need more support. Knowing how to identify, engage, and resource neighbours in need is something that can have important impact within neighbourhoods, in building community resilience and capacity for self-reliance, and in helping people access the helps that exist in a community.

Capacity building for leadership as well as community care was of interest, but as with everyone, time spent in any kind of engagement needed to bear meaningful fruit. As every community member is connected in some way to one or more sectors, with varied knowledge, expertise, skills and talents to bring to bear, our neighbourhoods can be natural "microcosms" of multi-sector connection, alignment, and collective impact. Neighbourhoods that are informed, resourced, and connected can have great potential for welcoming and supporting new neighbours who are leaving homelessness. Something that can be considered and consulted for when planning for affordable housing development is what added value and resources could be brought to a neighbourhood that would help residents be more on-side and less NIMBY.

How we connect into the Community of Care- actuals and potentials: As has been previously stated, due to siloism, many organizations and alliances are not as fully connected into the community of care as they could be. There are gaps in awareness of each other that can leave us feeling alone and overwhelmed by demand. There are inefficiencies and inconsistencies that could be rectified with greater alignment and better communication. There are pockets of collaboration and integration in numerous communities, where good things are happening all the time. Sometimes big things, like advocacy and learning centres, and sportsplexes. But the general consensus is that there is still too much disconnect. Even the most effective interventions and community programs are hampered in their impact and limited in their potential by disconnected and unaligned community systems.

We are often the first layer of connection into the community continuum of care (aside from attentive and engaged neighbours). This layer is the place where community members can have help to build capacity, engage in peer support, and connect or bridge into more formal services. This is the space where social justice is advocated for, where community engagement allows for the assessing and meeting of needs, and links to more formal services can take place. We can be an entry point into solutions pathways, and can be part of the transition solution out of formal services and into community. Engagement with community members in this sector is a place where community opinions and assumptions can be gathered to inform other sectors, as well as influenced, to adjust community dynamics. Capacity building for the general community can also occur within our organizations

What we have to offer the community-
Social Service organizations offer something outside of institutional services(or the public sector). We tend to be more grass roots and locally centred, and thus more able to engage in what could be termed "guerilla welfare." We exist, most often, to fill a need that is not being met by larger institutional services due to the nature or location of the need. The larger, public institutions tend to be more standardized and rigid, centralized, heavy on administration, with many criteria and policies. While designed to protect the system from liability, and preserve quality of service, this can result in institutions losing touch with the day to day, real world realities of individual communities, environments, and the people they may (or may not) have been developed to serve. Institutional services are often multi-faceted behemoths that move slowly, where we are less controlled, are smaller, often specific, and able to be targeted strategically, more cheaply, and more effectively for certain outcomes. Generally, we are more informal with less professional and more community-based services provided. We interact directly with communities and offer the best opportunity for community engagement and volunteering. We have the ability to increase the capacity of a community to manage general self-reliance while leaving the formal, professional care to the more heavily regulated, monitored, and resourced institutions.

What is important to us, and for us?
- Knowing what we are doing is making a difference
- Being heard, understood, and included in decisions that affect us and the people we serve. Being able to advocate for them based on a more holistic view of them.
- Safety, security, and sustainability. We would like to spend more of our time doing the work of our mandate and less time fundraising and hoop jumping in order to do it, and worried about being able to continue it.
- Feeling supported, having the right resources available for us to do the work we feel is important to do, and the tools we need to be as successful as possible
- A responsibility to and accountability for our mandates and the funding we receive to achieve them
- The causes that formed us in the first place, the injustices and inequities we want to correct
- Good relationships with others, including our clients and stakeholders in other sectors.
- That more people recognize the value of the work we do, and the ways our work effects or impacts them, so that they know they are actually stakeholders.
- Being able to create balance that mitigates burnout and increases effectiveness.
- Hope for a better tomorrow.

What helps us to be successful in engaging in a continuum of care?
- Clients who want to move forward
- Flexibility in funding to better move with the needs and bridge into next steps, or offer (or collaborate to create) them
- Good communication with other services and sectors
- Clear community vision, a knowledge of our place within that vision, with support and leadership provided
- A clear understanding of where we end and others begin and ways to interact across those parameters
- Consistent and clear criteria, outcomes expectations and reporting, with freedom to operationalize outcomes.
- A sense that there is enough funding and other resources to provide security and stability for our operations and human resources
- An interactive system, infrastructure or framework of support that makes sense (time and energy wise and through meaningful benefit to our organization and mandate) and in which we can operate authentically (e.g. safe conversations that can have positive impact)
- Informed boards with skills that help us work better and smarter, connections into other sectors and the ability to advocate for us, and make decisions in a timely manner.

What isn't working?

- Silos, and not enough communication and organization within a big picture, waste resources and burn out even the kindest of hearts. It also leaves room for some organizations to crowd out others. Duplication of services occurs often, and gaps in service exist.
- Funding being given to organizations that are not seeing the client traffic needed to justify that funding.
- Competition for funding, and sponsors, creates rifts between organizations
- Lack of clear leadership from where it makes sense accompanied by barriers to autonomy from those potential sources of leadership
- Application and reporting for funding that is annual, takes so much time and energy, and creates uncertainty each year
- Lack of cohesiveness and coordination between service organizations leaves gaps in service, makes it difficult to help people move to next steps, and creates opportunities for abuse of those services
- Disconnect from the Business Sector and other Sectors and service organizations creates situations where we are trying to be all things to all people
- Having to spend so much time fundraising and finding sponsors
- Front line worker burnout, and overwhelmed management.
- Often not enough resources for adequate administration
- Our services are not known in the community
- Not having enough funding to offer some of our services
- We are often not business oriented, which creates some challenges in being sustainable and staying viable in an environment in which funding is not certain and doesn't feel adequate.
- When our boards are inadequate, un-informed, and unconnected to the work we do or to outside resources.

What is our responsibility?

- Know what is going on in the community and put our efforts and resources toward the things that fit most closely with our vision
- Don't duplicate services. If someone else is doing it, promote and support them, rather than compete.
- Collaborate with other related entities to better utilize finite resources and provide something better for our clients and users.
- Get on boards or participate in alliances to provide influence and bring our networks to bear in a bigger way.
- Be smart with the resources we have.
- Demonstrate and report outcomes and use the funding we get within the specified parameters.
- Learn continuously and develop new practices and ways of doing things that will help us work smarter.
- Communicate to others about our work, our offerings, and our needs.
- Be humble and more willing to see how we might be contributing to the difficulties we see, and to "be the change we wish to see" in our community
- Be clear with our "asks," providing a business case, showing meaningful benefits to donors and sponsors, and how we will sustain the project we are trying to get funded.
- Educate, first ourselves, and then other community sectors, about the people we serve, and the part of those sectors in that success.

Chapter 4.) Public Sector

Who are we?

The public sector is defined as the part of the economy controlled by the government. So, it includes any service or activity that is supported by government funding and aimed at public service, welfare and safety, as well as to provide or promote employment and increase economic opportunities. An exhaustive listing and description are not practical here but these are areas in which we will find publicly funded organizations acting in the interest of the government to support the needs of the society they govern.

- Healthcare
- Social Services
- Economic Development
- Trade
- Finance
- Housing
- Transportation
- Safety
- Infrastructure
- Municipal activities
- Agriculture
- Children
- Education
- Emergency Services
- Energy and Utilities
- Police Services
- Labour and Employment
- Environment
- Culture

The Provincial and Federal Governments have ministries assigned to oversee and support these and other areas of public service. And municipal governments have their own departments to deal with what is required to keep a community running well with balanced growth and productive citizens. And within each of these areas are still further subsets to manage, monitor, provide resources, and keep things moving along.

How we connect into the Community of Care- actuals and potentials

For our purposes, here, we are considering the community of care on its most powerful and holistic level. That means that it encompasses everything from prevention to intervention and all points in between. It includes health and wellness for community members as much as it include economic development to provide jobs. It concerns itself with transitioning from prison, hospital care, childhood into adulthood. It includes education as much as it includes the safety of citizens. It includes utilities costs and policy making or legislation that can create bridges or barriers.

Because of this, we, in the public sector, have very significant connections or potential connections into the community of care from ensuring that the needs of the individual community member are taken care of and holding them accountable to the rest of society, to the needs and accountability of organizations from largest corporation to smallest not-for profit or neighbourhood group. We should be, within each of our areas of focus and scope, included, consulted, informed and engaged in activities that seek to tackle systems interplay. As paid organizations supported by taxpayer dollars, we should be seen and used as a resource for all community work.

John McNight suggests that within the context of community capacity building, there are specific roles, especially in social support, although this occurs in other areas as well, that related institutions logically fit into. The lines can blur sometimes, and it is important to ensure communication and coordination so that public institutions are supporting community organizations to support the people. Formal human services, requiring professional care that are offered at no cost to the public belong in the realm of the public sector, or supported by that sector within community service hubs. Sometimes we are tempted to move to fill in perceived service gaps with programs, just as community service organizations emerge from perceived gaps. Without intentional and concerted coordination and communication between we can see overlap and wasted resources, and certainly see areas where instead of competing for funding or participants, entities in the social and public sectors could coordinate to provide a clearer spectrum of services. We don't necessarily like letting go of our money, but an

honest assessment would also see places where public dollars could be better used and achieve more impact in social sector efforts, but are being spent on public sector budgets.

The main thing to understand is that because human thriving has such a holistic scope, to align and coordinate and make the most of available resources requires communication and connection with all public sector activities for a couple of reasons. First financial, and value or impact for dollar. And second, efficiency and best fit for the work. Large, standardized, heavily administrated systems don't have the ability to move gently and intentionally within a unique set of community needs. They do, however, have the ability to coordinate with and support those quicker, smaller, and more specific social sector organizations.

What we have to offer the community-
- Funding
- Education
- Capacity building assistance
- Employment opportunities
- Research and policy contribution and assistance
- Standards oversight and accountability enforcement.
- Influencing and incentivizing other entities
- Service on Boards that bring professional skills and public sector connection to community-based service organization
- Support for development
- Staff hours and service "portfolios" that are dedicated to certain tasks which link with and benefit community care and can help stretch community resources when used within a coordinated plan and framework.

What is important to us, and for us?
- Accountability for spending
- Communication and coordination with on-the-ground activities and services
- Policies and standards
- Keeping our budgets
- Trends in needs
- Political will and tides
- Sustainability

What helps us to be successful in engaging in a continuum of care?
- Communication between areas of focus and between public sector and social sector community level supports
- Recognition of the holistic nature of human care and thriving
- Clear roles and distinctions within local community service and support
- Guaranteed income (even though there may be fluctuations)
- Clients who want to move forward
- Strong links between areas of focus and other sectors
- Knowing needs
- A big picture view

What isn't working?

- Disconnect between areas of focus
- Lack of awareness, will and ways or opportunities to coordinate and flex budgets between ministries or departments for mutual benefit and greater effectiveness and efficiency

- Disconnect from the Business Sector and other Sectors and service organizations creates situations where we are trying to be all things to all people
- Lack of sustainability
- Systems intractability
- Unwieldy, ineffective, or top-heavy administration and management leading to less resources for the front-line human interface
- Overabundance of bureaucracy leading to a disconnect from the front line
- Lack of accountability
- The public's and other sectors' lack of knowledge about what we provide
- Changes in political will and tides

What is our responsibility?

- Be accountable for spending
- Work toward sustainability
- Each area of focus aware of other areas of focus and how to work better together
- Be coordinated and connected with community entities and efforts
- Help build capacity for communities to meet their own needs
- Provide specialized supports

<center>Chapter 5.) Private Sector</center>

Who are we?
The private sector includes all entities that are set up to make a profit. This includes everything from the largest private corporations to sole proprietorships and one-human home businesses. Some private sector organizations have a specific social benefit aspect, while others need to be nurtured, developing relationships and assisting them to see the ways they can contribute. Regardless of their nature and purpose, all private sector enterprises are manned by human beings who live in communities and at some scope and level interact with all other sectors. They are affected, in the communities in which they operate, by what is happening for the other sectors, and have their own impact on those other sectors and the communities they operate within.

How we connect into the Community of Care- actuals and potentials

Every member of the private sector holds at least one other position or role, and that is a member of his or her community. They each live and work in a community. So we, as with all other sectors, for that matter, are inseparably connected to the grass-roots, community level activity and need. Activity in our sector affects and is affected by what is happening to and with community well-being. It is well researched that making contributions to the social welfare of its community creates benefits for a business. Healthier and happier employees, improved public opinion and loyalty lead to increased productivity and fiscal returns. Investing locally, then, is good for business. But many times, we don't know how. The social landscape of communities can be hard to navigate, and we can be pulled in multiple directions. With our business mindset, we want to see best value for dollar, efficiency and sustainability in the contributions we make.

We are at various stages of accepting and incorporating the concepts of social benefit into our bottom lines. Something we might not be particularly aware of, in general, is that almost every homeless person was once a member of the workforce. This illustrates the reality that this could be the situation for anyone, no matter where they may presently be on the spectrum from crisis to thriving. Some are just one paycheck away from being destitute. Others are dealing with substance use and even addiction, or mental health challenges, that with a simple change in circumstance could hurtle them into dysfunction. While many of us in this sector have had a practice of contributing to social needs, we are learning, as a sector about the importance of addressing these things within our operational scope.

From another perspective, community members that are thriving contribute to the ebb and flow of market demand, which is good for business. So, it makes sense for us to be invested in helping our fellow community members move into a place of engagement and contribution to the local economy, rather than in a state of drain and demand on local resources. It makes sense then that doing our part in growing future reliable customers and stable, loyal employees should be part of every business's bottom line. With this in mind there are numerous ways that the private sector can and do connect into efforts to develop a community of care.

What we have to offer the community-
- Funding
- Manpower: Staff hours can be dedicated to certain tasks which can benefit community care and help stretch resources if used within a coordinated plan and framework. Or staff groups can participate in service days or projects as part of team building and meaning making in a workplace.
- Goods and services. Sometimes this can be creatively explored, and is a better option than defaulting to asking for dollars.
- Influencing and incentivizing other entities
- Support for development
- Service on Boards that bring professional skills and private sector connection to community-based service organizations.
- Employment pathways potentials
- Business and administrative mentorship to community-based service organizations

What is important to us, and for us?
- Accountability for spending and use of resources, ours and the organizations we help
- Communication and coordination with on the ground activities and services
- Policies and standards
- Keeping to our budgets
- Maintaining or expanding our revenues and activities.
- Trends and market changes
- Political will and tides
- Productive and Loyal employees
- Sustainability, ours and for the programs or projects we are being asked to contribute to

What helps us to be successful in engaging in a continuum of care?
- Communication with public sector and social sector community level supports
- Recognition of the holistic nature of human care and thriving
- Clear opportunities and roles within the big picture of community need and dynamics
- Clear information about what area a contribution is being asked for (local communities are first preference, generally), how it will be used, and what portion will go directly to service provision.
- Comprehensively planned strategies and programs with consultation from numerous sources to ensure best practices, best effect, and best use of contributions
- Employees and management that want to be involved meaningfully in community
- Emotional pull of "cause"
- Find out how we like to be approached. Some like email, others prefer personal contact and face to face meetings
- Seeing strong links between our areas of focus and values and the causes we are supporting, or being asked to support.
- Knowing needs: specific asks
- Being able to see clear benefits for us for the engagement with community care
- A big picture view

What isn't working?

- Our lack of understanding or knowledge of community needs and social complexities
- Disconnect between business and fiscal needs and activities and community needs
- Not knowing where we can help, where our help is needed and what that help might be
- Staff turnover and loss of productivity due to high stress, mental health, well-being issues
- Social challenges manifesting on our "doorsteps," literally and figuratively
- Unpredictability of markets
- Forgetting that we are community members as well as businesses

What is our responsibility?

- Be accountable for spending
- Work toward sustainability and maintenance of returns
- Stay relevant and expand markets
- The well-being of the people who work for us
- The well-being of the communities and environments in which we operate
- The bottom line should include people