



# Cultural Care & Land Based Healing to Alleviate Indigenous Homelessness



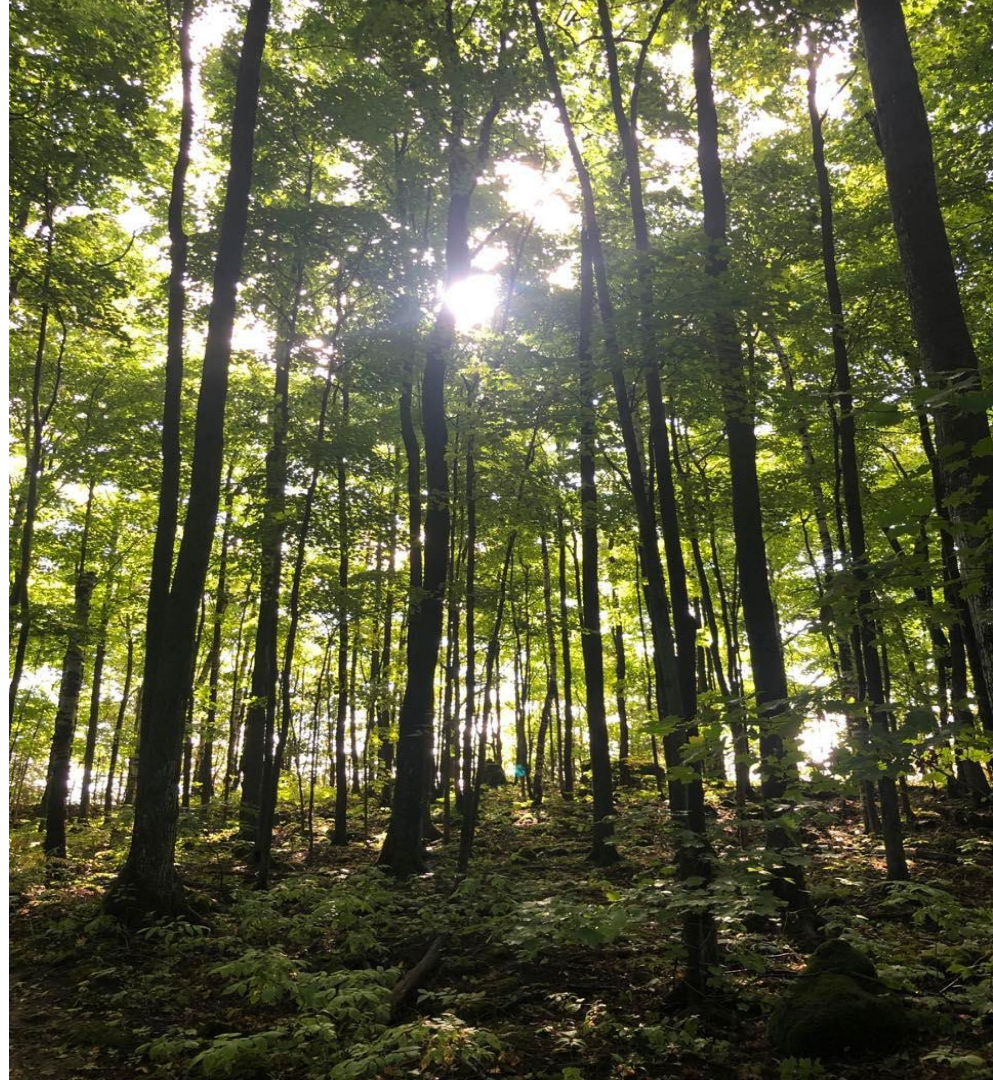
**ATLOHSA**  
FAMILY HEALING SERVICES





# Objectives

- Increase understanding of cultural safety as a path to alleviate Indigenous Homelessness
  - Review example of regional capacity building towards culturally safe services
  - Review example of responding to systemic anti-Indigenous racism against homelessness providers
  - Increase understanding of land-based emergency shelter model and successful outcomes
- 





# About Us

- Atlohsa Family Healing Services provides Indigenous-led programming and services for wholistic healing, education, shelter and support
- Giwetashkad is an Indigenous-led, housing first program offering pathways to housing and cultural reconnection.



# Giwetashkad Indigenous Homelessness Strategic Plan 2020-23

- Community engagement with 78 Indigenous individuals with lived experience of homelessness
- Informed four (4) strategic directions:
  1. Implement an Indigenous Housing First Model
  2. Build Internal Capacity
  3. Cultivate Community Leadership
  4. Advocate for Systems Change

*You can access the strategic plan at:*  
[www.Atlohsa.com](http://www.Atlohsa.com)



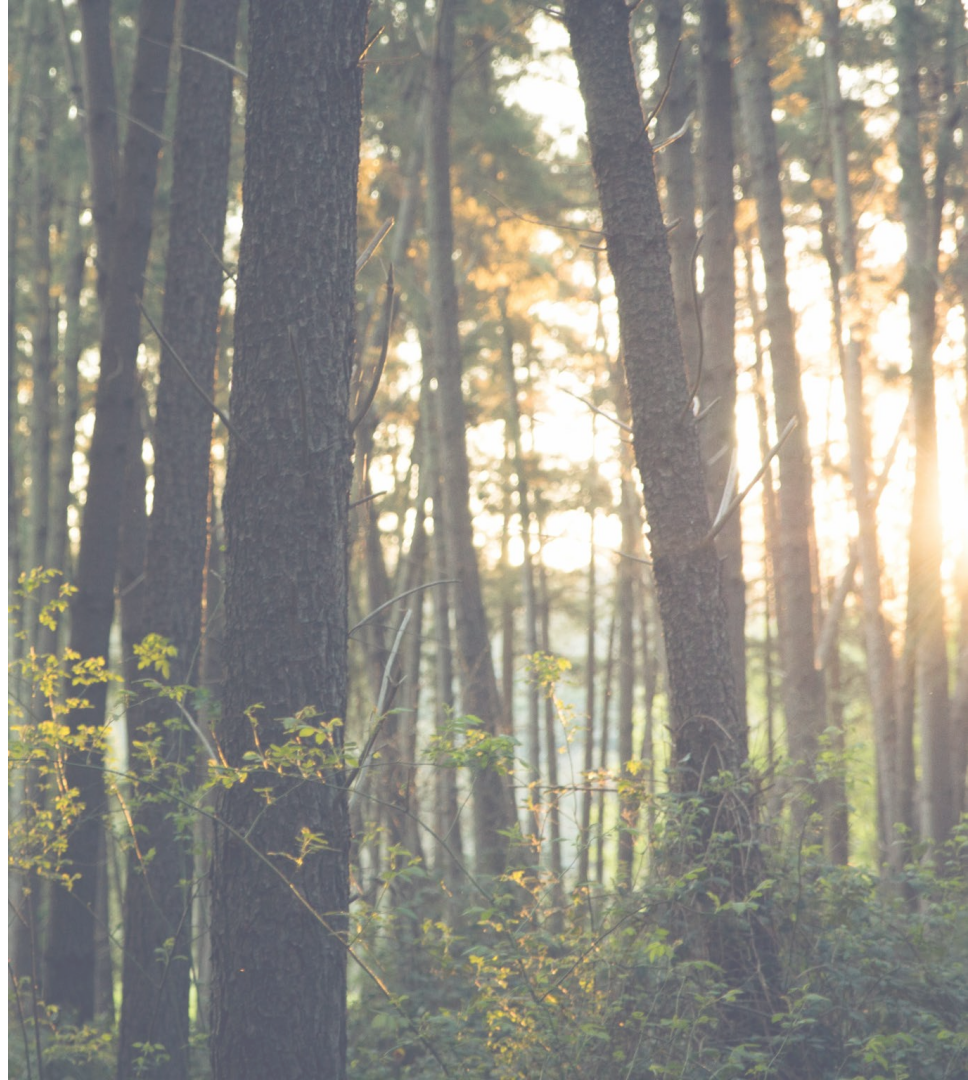


# Community Engagement

**30%**   
of London's homeless population  
is Indigenous, yet Indigenous  
people represent only **2.6% of**  
**London's total population**

We spoke with 25 individuals with lived experience of homelessness who self-identified as Indigenous

- Over **50%** recounted experiences of racism when accessing housing and social services
- Over **50%** actively avoid shelters out of fear of re-traumatization



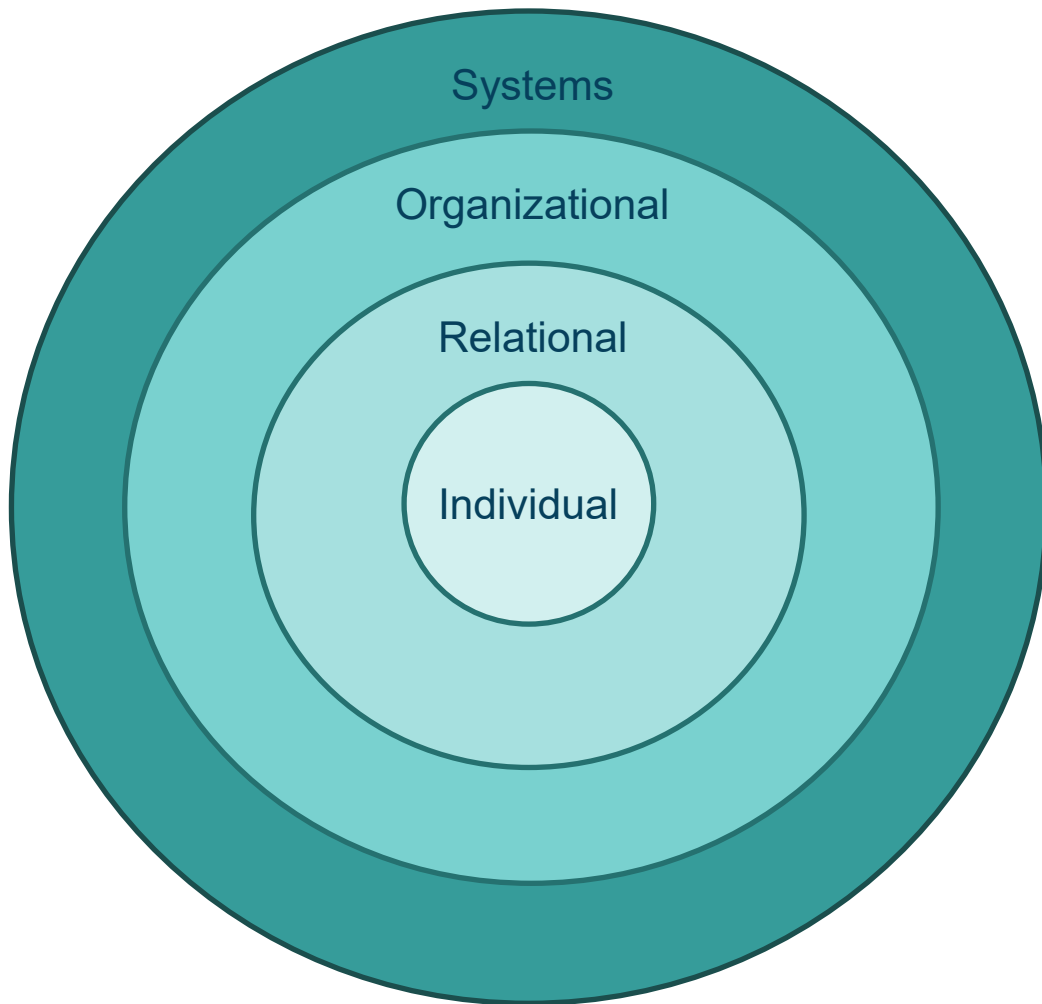


# Community Engagement

**Institutional Avoidance:**  
Fear or inability to interact with social support systems due to traumatization and mistrust

- Non-Indigenous agencies lack services that recognize the effects of historic and ongoing colonization faced by Indigenous peoples
- Individuals' relationships to culture are often dismissed leading to mistrust when accessing services

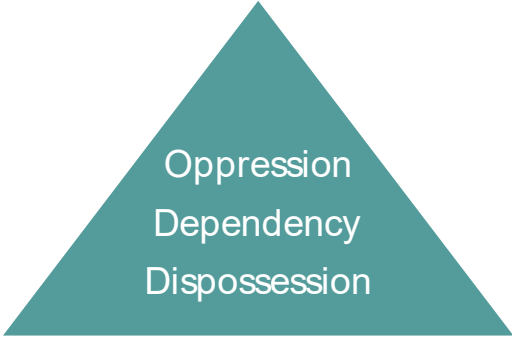




## What is Indigenous Cultural Safety?

- “Cultural Safety is an approach to service delivery that involves **ongoing self-reflection** and organizational growth to address cultural, historical, structural differences and power dynamics within the care that is provided to [Indigenous] peoples.” (Honoring Our Strengths, TPF, 2011)
- Moves beyond cultural awareness to address **power dynamics** of settler colonialism
- **Indigenous person receiving care determines when it is culturally safe**

# Settler Colonialism



Oppression  
Dependency  
Dispossession

**Settler Colonialism** is a hidden and ongoing system of power that perpetuates oppression and genocide of Indigenous peoples

Honouring our  
Fallen Relatives

Invasion, Terror  
and Despair

Assimilation and  
Broken Families

1492-1649

1650-1749

1750-900

1850-1950

1890-Now

Mass Dispossession of  
Indigenous Homelands

Indian Act and  
Forced Relocation



# Atlohsa's Cultural Care Model



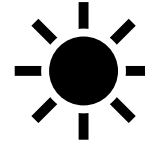
Relationship

- Relationship as intervention
- Each participant is our relative
- Self-awareness of power dynamics



Empowerment

- Empowering individuals to care for themselves & respecting their free will



Safety

- Non-judgment, while noticing and addressing challenging behaviors with compassionate boundaries

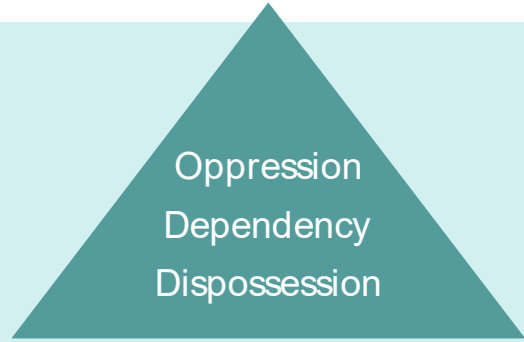
**How might these cultural safety principles be applied within policies & procedures at organizational level?**

Relational intake process

Engaging participants in conversations about culture as part of their care plan

Utilizing specific de-escalation strategies that work for that individual participant

# Colonial Practices in Homelessness Services



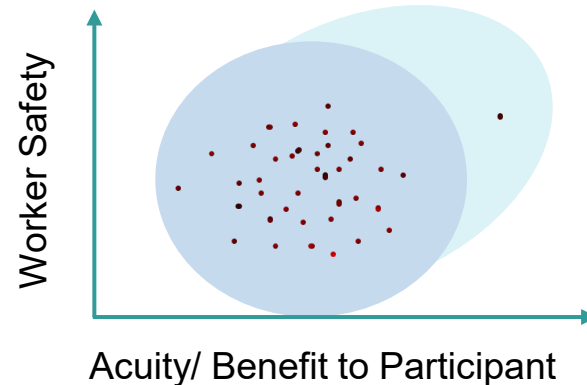
## Settler Colonialism

### Reflection Prompts to Consider:

- What policies and practices at my organization replicate colonial dynamics of dispossession, dependency, and oppression?
- Who does this policy or practice benefit? Why was this policy or practice put in place?
- How can we move towards relationship, empowerment, and safety?

### Service Restrictions

- Creating physical and emotional dispossession
- Oppressive as a barrier is created for securing housing

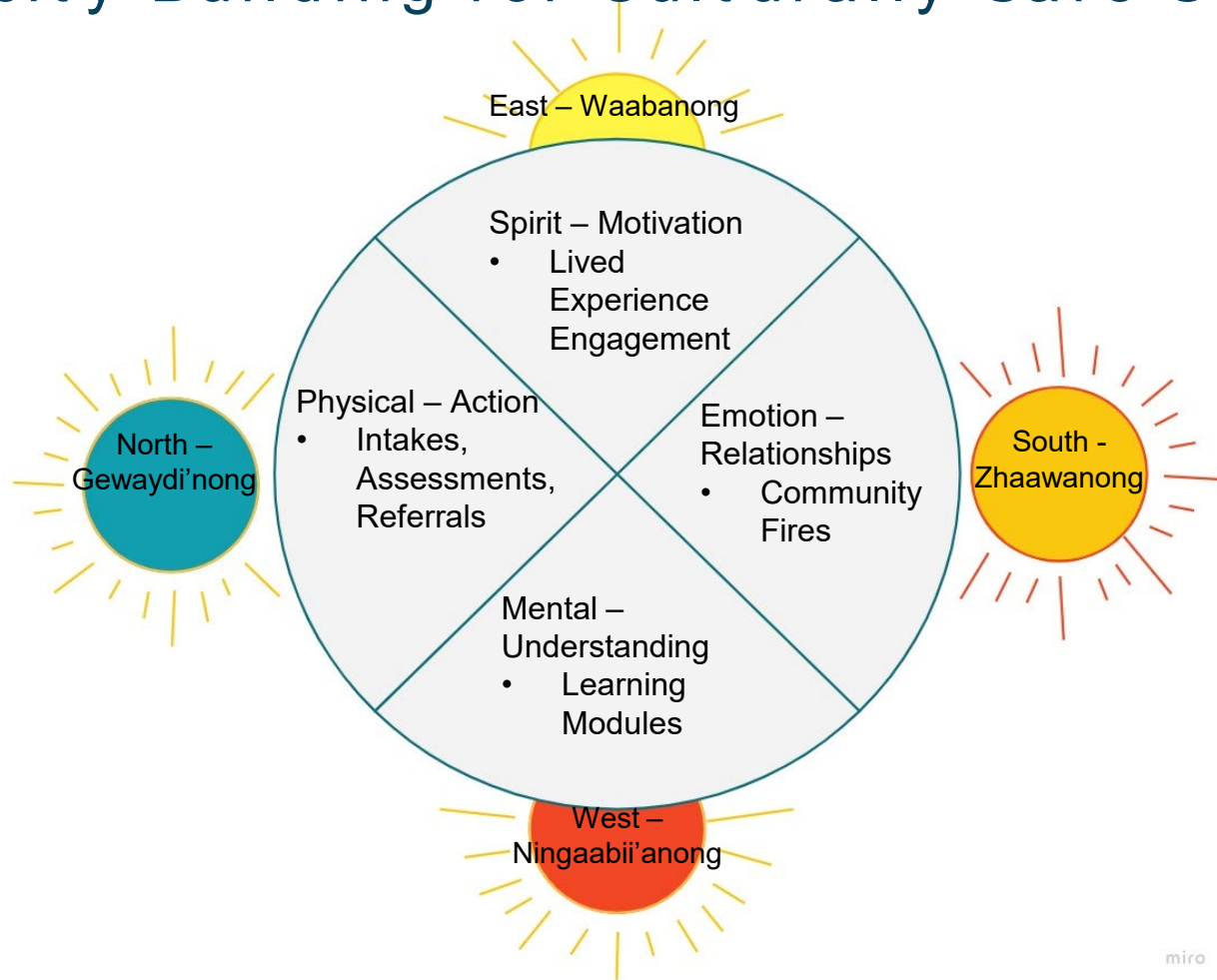




# Moving Towards Cultural Safety Everyday

Scenario	What to Expect	Engagement Tips
<b>Asking about Indigenous Self-Identification</b>  “Do you identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Metis?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hesitancy to disclose due to experiences of racism</li><li>• Ambiguous &amp; unknown responses due to “Indian status” or disconnect from family</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask everyone</li><li>• Explain why you are asking</li><li>• Update referral forms, databases for data quality</li><li>• Educate yourself on the diversity of Indigenous Nations – “What community are you from?”</li></ul>
<b>Referrals to Indigenous or Cultural Services</b>  “How do you feel about culture being apart of your care?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Varied responses due to colonial missionary efforts</li><li>• Apprehension to access cultural supports while using substances</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain why you are asking</li><li>• They are in the driver’s seat</li><li>• Indigenous Harm Reduction education – substances and traditional healing</li></ul>

# Capacity Building for Culturally Safe Services







# Land as a Solution to Indigenous Homelessness

- Community
- Connections
- Belonging





<https://londonandareagolfhistory.com/river-road-golf-course-1992-present/>



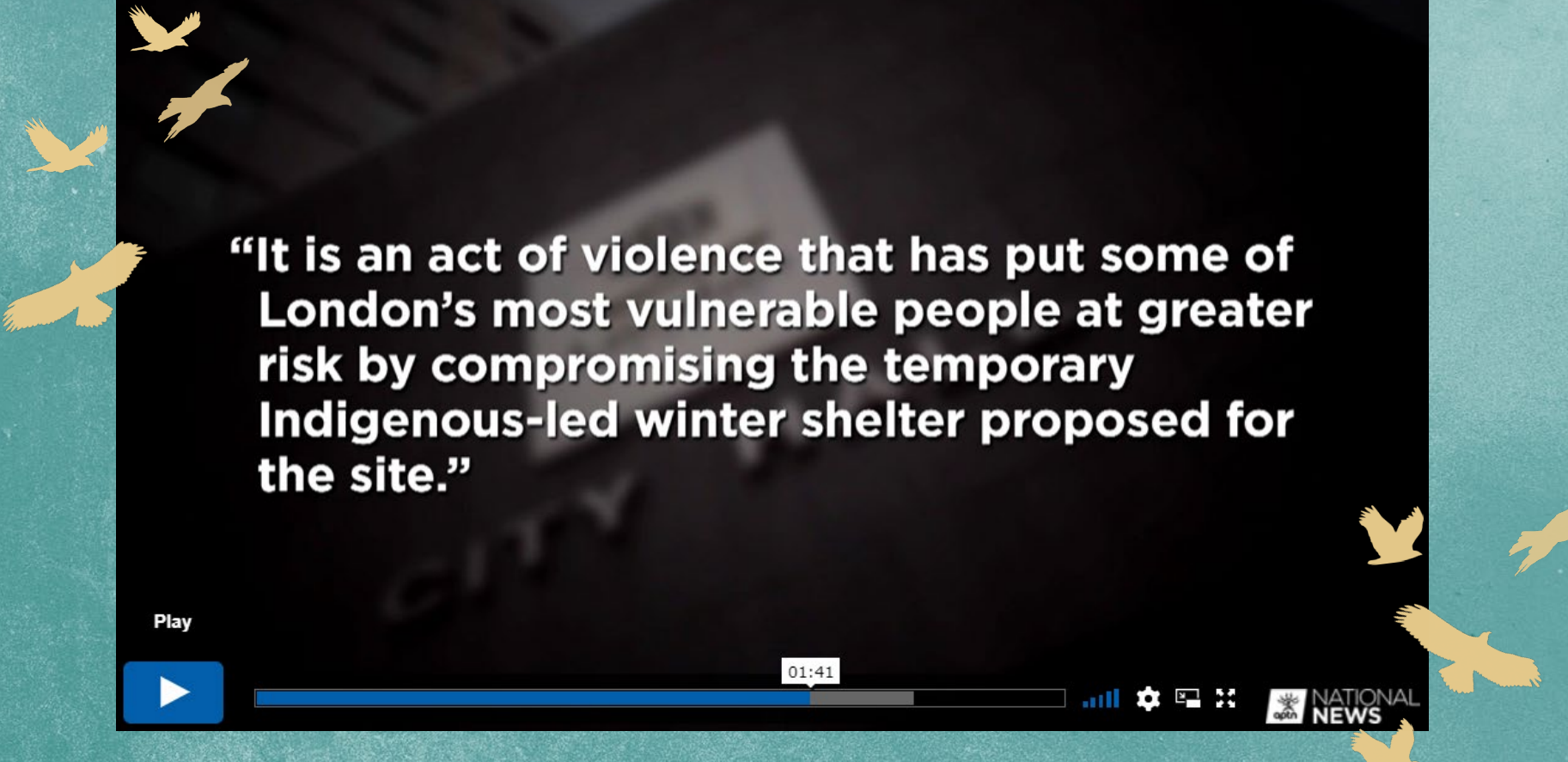
# Anti-Indigenous, Anti-Homelessness Attack

## November 7, 2021



Damage following the River Road Golf Course fire in London, Ont. is seen on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021. (Brent LaLe/CTV London)





**“It is an act of violence that has put some of London’s most vulnerable people at greater risk by compromising the temporary Indigenous-led winter shelter proposed for the site.”**

Play



01:41



**NATIONAL  
NEWS**

November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Lynne Livingstone, Deputy City Manager

# A message to our community from President and CEO Roy Butler

*November 23, 2021*



Atlohsa Family Healing Services (Atlohsa) and the City of London were in need of a new location for an Indigenous-led winter shelter following a senseless act of arson that destroyed the planned location on River Road. St. Joseph's Health Care London is pleased to be able to support this urgent need and is providing a location for the shelter on the grounds of our Parkwood Institute site at the corner of Commissioners Road and Wellington Road.

St. Joseph's has a long history as an organization that cares for the most vulnerable in our society. We believe we must work together as a

community to find meaningful solutions that address homelessness in our city.











# Wiigiwaaminaan ( Our Lodge)



Photo Credit: Moses Odida





Photo Credit: Moses Odida



**What happens when providing an emergency shelter  
that allows for cultural resurgence?**









Photo Credit: Moses Odida

**Land**

**Fire**

**Traditional Foods**

**Medicines**

**Language**

**Song**

**Storytelling**





Photo Credit: Moses Odida





Photo Credit: Moses Odida





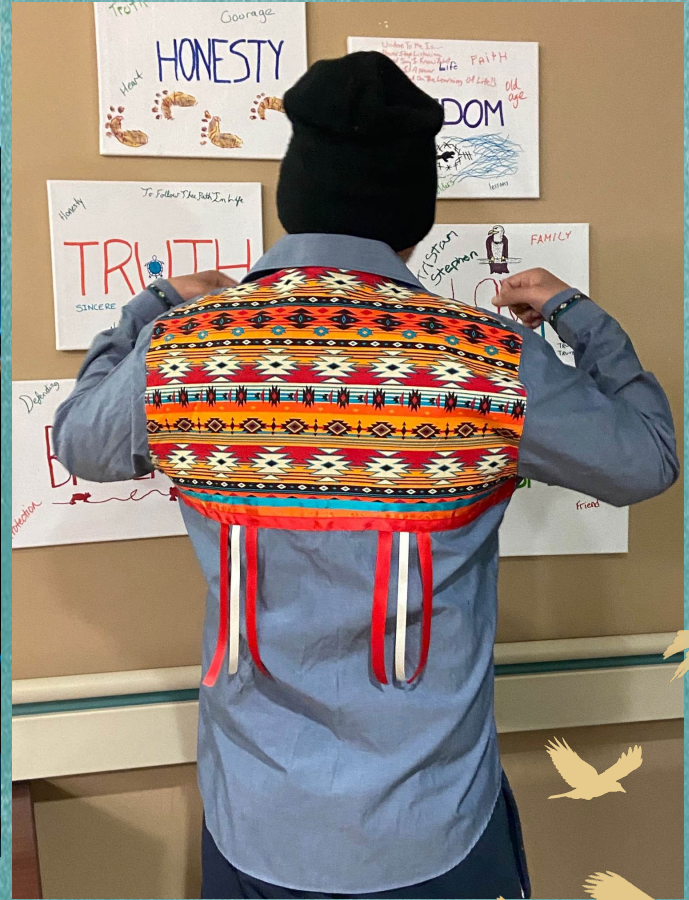
Photo Credit: Moses Odida







Photo Credit: Moses Odida





# Niindawe Maaganag (All My Relations)

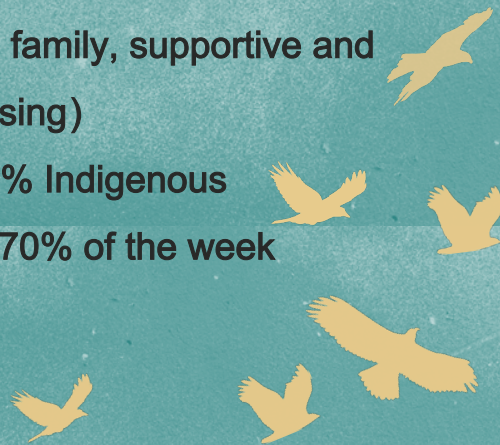






## Wiigiwaaminaan Outcomes December 2021- March 2022

- Supported 38 Indigenous people
- 19 people attended ID clinic
- 11 people engaged in trusted supports
- 7 individuals sustained or gained employment, training or education
- 13 people gained housing (including reconnecting to family, supportive and permanent housing)
- Staffing was 50% Indigenous
- Fire was going 70% of the week





# What questions do you have for us?



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FAMILY HEALING SERVICES





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