



**Rediscovering the Workplace**  
**Creating a Person-Centred Culture**

**November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

## Rediscovering the Workplace - Creating a Person-Centred Culture

I would like to gratefully acknowledge that I live, work, and play on the Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional territories of many First Nations including the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nakota Sioux (Stoney), Anishinabae (Saulteaux) and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and within the Métis homelands and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4.

## Workshop Overview

- 1. Principles of Being Person-Centred**
- 2. What is Person-Centred?**
- 3. Why Create a Person-Centred Culture?**
- 4. Ten Foundational Themes**
- 5. Organizational Self- Assessment**
- 6. Courageous Conversations**



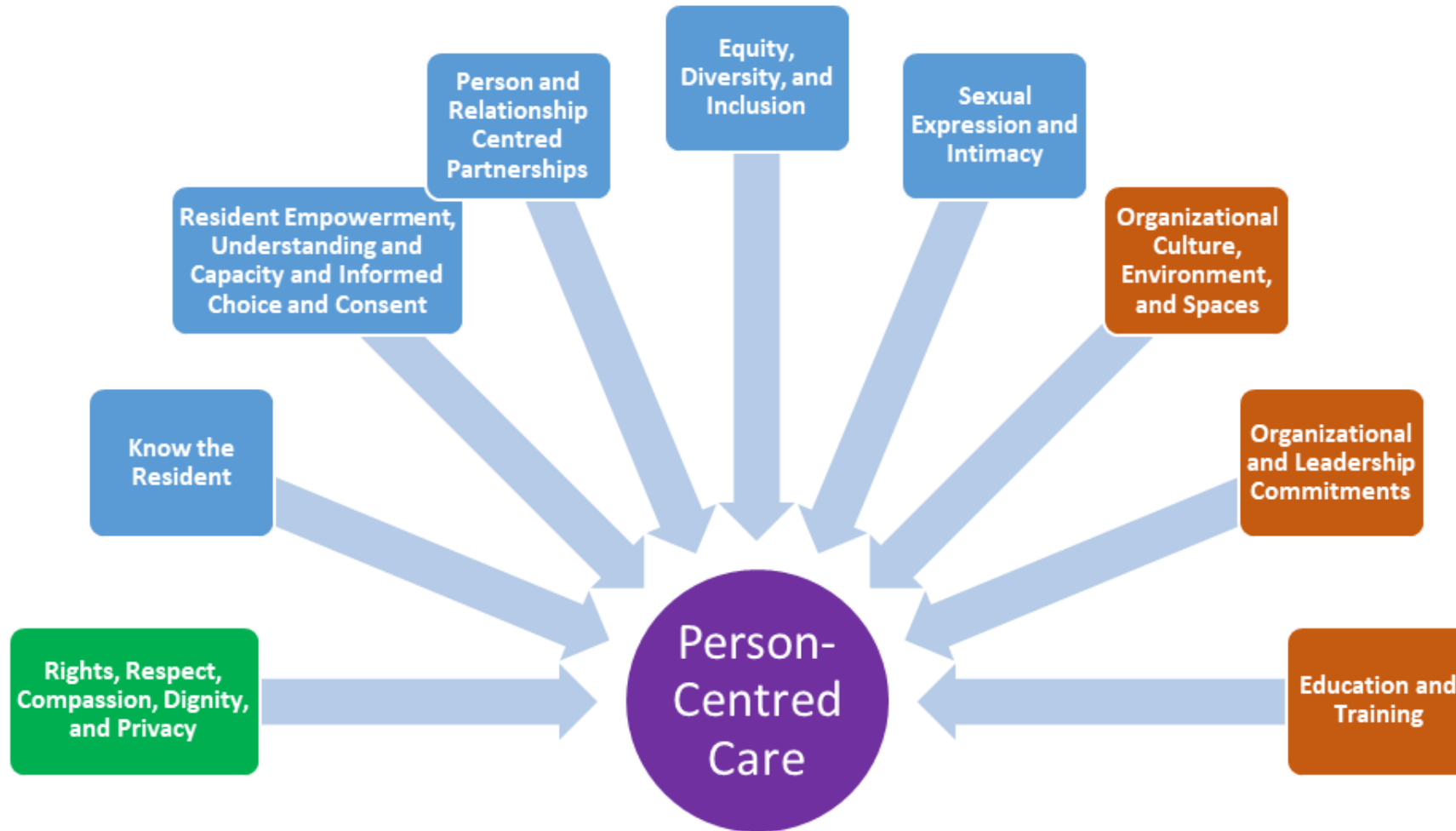
## Elder Mary - Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation

***“If you take care of your boat, your boat will take care of you.”***

## Principles of Being Person-Centred

- Knowing the person
- Respect and dignity
- Person and relationship-centred partnerships
- Rights
- Informed choices
- Support and empowerment
- Participation and involvement
- Collaboration
- Safety
- Trust
- Compassion
- Meaning communication/information sharing
- Strengths
- Flexibility
- Working “with and not “for”
- Planning
- Humility and learning
- Inclusion and belonging

# Principles of Being Person-Centred



# What is Person-Centred?



## What is Person-Centred?

### What does it mean to be person-centred in the workplace?

- An employee-centred workplace is one in which all individuals, programs, processes, and systems are focused on helping employees become fully successful (Lynch, 2009).
- Ann Frey, a Corporate Leadership Coach, defines employee-centric organizations as ones where “you honour your employees, where you take care of them, so they can take care of your customers” (Haines, 2019 as cited in Jack, 2021).



## What is Person-Centred?

### What does it mean to be person-centred in the workplace?

- Organizational culture is your personality.
- Collection of values, ethics, and principles in action.
- Nurtured cultures create a tight connection between organizational personality and energy (physical, emotional, intellectual, and connection).
- Work towards a higher purpose and uncover your “why.”

## Why Create a Person-Centred Culture?

***Workplace Culture***

***“How we do things around here.”***

# Why Create a Person-Centred Culture?

## Top words U.S. employees use to describe the culture of their workplace

### Engaged Employees

Caring | Friendly | Fun | Integrity  
Innovative | Inclusive | Service  
Quality | Professional

### Actively Disengaged Employees

Toxic | Disorganized | Money  
Unorganized | Stressful | Profit  
Horrible | Chaotic | Fast-Paced

*Empowering Workplace Culture Through Recognition*

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/hff6luki1ys4/2xrSNinWnSjqVBXvGgJhh3/58e93c17d83ddbc44d041f222621df5e/Workhuman\\_Culture\\_Report-US.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/hff6luki1ys4/2xrSNinWnSjqVBXvGgJhh3/58e93c17d83ddbc44d041f222621df5e/Workhuman_Culture_Report-US.pdf)

## Why Create a Person-Centred Culture?

- Creates synergy and energy
- Recruitment, retention, succession
- Strategically makes sense

## Why Create a Person-Centred Culture?



**Collaborative Problem Conquering  
Energized and Positive Mindset  
Responsive versus Reactive  
Communication  
Sense of Trust  
Connection  
Inspired**

## Ten Foundational Themes

- Strategize, Energize, and Synergize
- Responsive versus Reactive
- Mission Driven
- Human-Centred Leadership
- Human/Employee Basic Needs
- Employees are Assets
- Communication, Teamwork, and Collaboration
- Rites, Ceremonies, Stories, and Socialization
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Technology

# Theme #1: Strategize, Energize, and Synergize

## Be a Strategic Leader

- Don't focus on keeping up.
- Don't wait to be dust off your strategic plan.
- Develop your leaders.
- Embrace the inflection points.
- Know it all to learn it all.

# Theme #1: Strategize, Energize, and Synergize

## Be a Learning Organization

Learning organizations [are] organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, page 3.

Learning organizations are characterized by total employee involvement in a process of collaboratively conducted, collectively accountable change directed towards shared values or principles.

Watkins, K.; Marsick, V. *Building the Learning Organization: A New Role for Human Resource Developers*, *Studies in Continuing Education*, 14(2): pp 115-29



# Theme #1: Strategize, Energize, and Synergize

## Vision for Long Term

- Commit and create a vision for a better future.
- Set your vision and walk backwards from there to today.
- Elevate your culture of creativity, innovation, and risk taking.
- Don't compare.

## Theme #1: Strategize, Energize, and Synergize

- What conditions create community in your organization?
- Is your current culture person-centred?
- Do you encourage a higher purpose culture?
- Do you know and celebrate your “why?”
- Have you defined your personal, team, and organizational values?

## Theme #1: Strategize, Energize, and Synergize – *In Action*

*What conditions create community in your organization?*

## Theme #1: Strategize, Energize, and Synergize – *In Action*

- Consistent and transparent conversations.
- An altruistic and unselfish environment where employees are regularly recognized and celebrated for the great work they do.
- Authentic leaders that show vulnerability.
- The leaders being on site and working with the staff.
- A culture of safety and inclusion.
- Modeling from leadership.
- Establishing strong values and then living those values.
- Regular town-hall meetings where employees can showcase their work and is acknowledged.

## Theme #1: Strategize, Energize, and Synergize – *In Action*

*Have best practices/approaches for positive employee experiences emerged from the pandemic?*

## Theme #1: Strategize, Energize, and Synergize – *In Action*

- Transparent and open conversations.
- Post pandemic flexibility.
- Understand how this [pandemic] has affected staff and what ideas can be found to make the workplace more engaging.
- Our staff like pizza but sometimes it is trying to see what the staff actually want.

## Theme #2: Responsive versus Reactive

- Do you respond versus react to adverse situations?
- Do you communicate responsively and gather feedback?
- Did you maintain a responsive momentum during the pandemic?
- Did you sustain a high level of service quality?
- As of today, are you responsively planning for the future?

## Theme #2: Responsive versus Reactive – In Action

*How did you create/continue momentum during the pandemic?*



## Theme #2: Responsive versus Reactive – In Action

- Creating capacity on teams to be innovative through team structure set ups, work delineations, stretch assignments.
- Brand awareness and promotion.

## Theme #3: Mission Driven

Foundational to person-centred cultures is being mission driven:

- Motivates employees to act with passion and purpose.
- Instills a sense of belonging and identity for the employees.
- Provides clear reasons their role in the organization benefits the larger goal.
- Helps employees see the positivity in their work.
- Boosts morale and creates an environment that encourages long term investment in the workplace culture by the employees themselves.

## Theme #3: Mission Driven

A good mission includes who we are, what we do, and why we do it... but take your mission statements further and ask does it represent “how we achieve this together.”

- Are you truly staying in the lane of your mission?
- Are the external pressures pushing you into mission drift?
- Does your mission show up in practice?
- Does your mission involve messaging around being person-centred?
- Does your definition of person-centred include your employees?

## Theme #3: Mission Driven – In Action

*How does being person-centred include your employees?*

## Theme #3: Mission Driven – In Action

- Conditions of work are conditions of care.
- Culture is owned by everyone in our organization.
- Celebrating the individuals within the organization and including them in creating a workplace of choice.

## Theme #4: Human-Centred Leadership

### Three Key Components to Human Centred Leadership

#### **Vulnerability**

- Leaders who model vulnerability in the workplace create energy needed for psychological safety and mutual trust.

#### **Empathy**

- Listen to the voices of your employees and understand their values. Be selfishly curious.

#### **Humility**

- There is always more to learn.
- Focus on learning instead of being right.



# The bosses we remember...

Based on the tweet by Valo Afshar



... provided us a safe place to grow



... Opened career doors



...defended us when we needed it



... recognized & rewarded us



... developed us as leaders



... inspired us to stretch higher



... led by example



... told us our work mattered



... forgave us when we made mistakes

## The bosses we remember....

- ...provided us a safe place to grow
- ...opened career doors
- ...defended us when we needed it
- ...recognized and rewarded us
- ...developed us as leaders
- ...inspired us to stretch higher
- ...led by example
- ...told us our work mattered
- ...forgave us when we made mistakes

- ...told us WE mattered
- ...knew us and our values
- ...admitted when they made a mistake
- ...were authentic and genuine
- ...showed emotion and vulnerability
- ...allowed us to know them

## Theme #4: Human-Centred Leadership

- Do you allow your employees to know you?
- How does your leadership show up during a crisis?
- Do you take the time to demonstrate empathy, vulnerability, and display humility?
- Do you take meaningful care to understand employee values?
- Do you focus on mentoring and coaching or telling and assigning?
- Do you create a learning organization?



## Theme #4: Human-Centred Leadership – In Action

*What do you feel is the most important leadership quality for creating a person-centred culture and why?*

## Theme #4: Human-Centred Leadership – In Action

- Innovation, humble, confident, willing to listen.
- You must consider what the employee feels about how they are treated.
- The tone of the organization and the values that drive our culture that is set, communicated, and modeled by leaders but the culture itself is grown and nurtured by everyone else in an organization.
- Humility: You don't and can't know it all and you have to be willing to surround yourself with people who are better than you at critical things.
- Leadership quality is not what you say, but what you do!
- Be open, honest and do what you promise.

## Theme #5: Human/Employee Basic Needs



## Theme #5: Human/Employee Basic Needs

- Do you know your employees as unique individuals?
- Do you know their basic needs?
- Do you respond to and approach their unique needs?
- Do you create opportunities for employees to fulfill their needs of physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self actualization?

## Theme #5: Human/Employee Basic Needs – In Action

*How do you get to know your employees?*

## Theme #5: Human/Employee Basic Needs – In Action

- You need to walk around and spend time just talking with people as you would talk to anyone you would want to get to know.
- Host and ATTEND regular all centre staff meetings.
- Attend quarterly new employee orientation sessions.
- Schedule time every week to walk around the office and talk to staff.
- Read all staff kudos and send an email of thanks.
- Get to know people on a personal level so when we connect, I have an opportunity to check in about things that are important to them.
- Share a lot about myself personally, which promotes others to share.

## Theme #5: Human/Employee Basic Needs – In Action

*What strategies have you integrated into your organization that have strengthened a sense of belonging for your employees?*

## Theme #5: Human/Employee Basic Needs – In Action

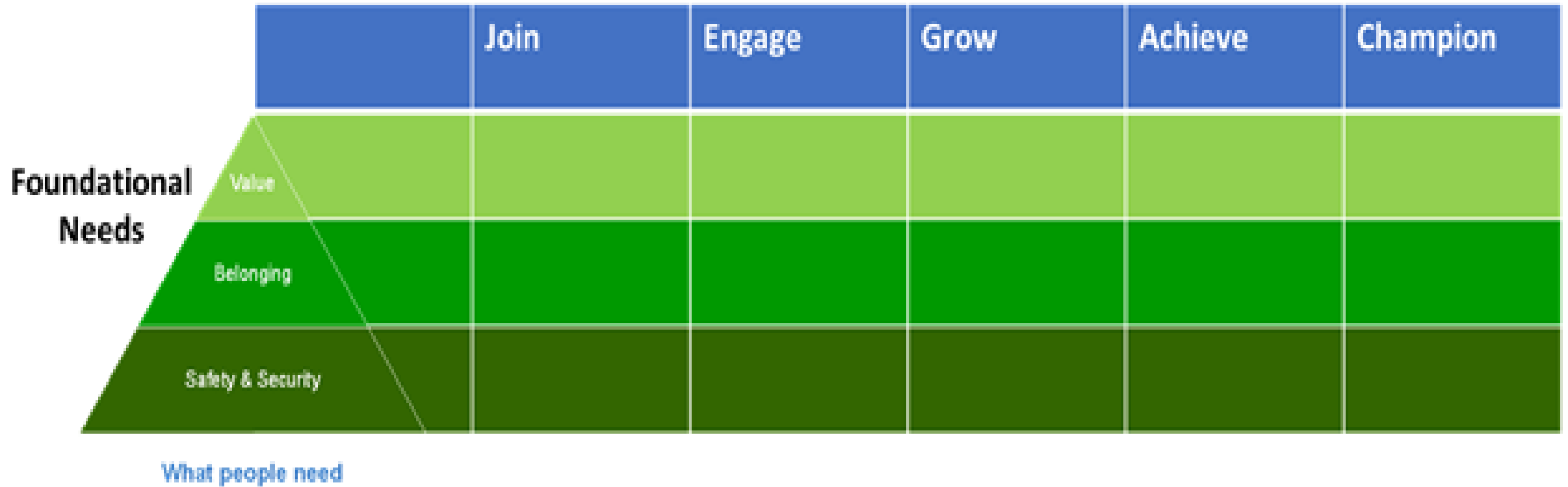
- Staff features on social media and staff share stories in our internal newsletter.
- Diversity, equity and inclusion: we are mindful of the language we use and what we promote.
- We talk about what's going on around the world and take values based positions on items.
- Committees: book clubs, social gatherings and fun opportunities for staff to get to know each other.
- Monthly staff meetings including a Board representative.
- Transparency in communications.



## Theme #6: Employees are Assets

- Join
- Engage
- Grow
- Achieve
- Champion

## Employee Lifecycle Phases



<https://medium.com/slalom-business/human-centered-leadership-in-a-crisis-da0efc4ded54>

## Theme #6: Employees are Assets

### Employees are Expecting More

- Work/life Balance
- Employee-centredness
- Recognition
- Money and Benefits
- Inclusivity
- Forward-Thinking/Visionary
- Included in Planning Process
- Career Development and Growth

## Theme #6: Employees are Assets

- Do you put people over performance, budgets, projects, reports, and results?
- Do you have strategies that sustain employee well-being?
- Does person-centred include employees?
- Has your board set strategic goals that demonstrate employees are assets?

## Theme #6: Employees are Assets – In Action

*What are you most proud of in terms of your recruitment and retention strategies?*

## Theme #6: Employees are Assets – In Action

- Hiring for will and can do.
- Looking for entrepreneurial skills as oppose to for skill only.
- Retention – creating progression paths, personal development plans, stretch assignments, stand-in roles etc.
- Most proud when we hire referrals.
- Hiring the right person for the position and compensate them appropriately.

## Theme #6: Employees are Assets – In Action

*What strategic priorities have been set by your board or organizational examples that consider employees as assets?*

## Theme #6: Employees are Assets – In Action

- They have not done this.
- Our strategy has set a goal of being an employer of choice to attract and retain top talent.
- Offer market competitive pay rate and benefits packages.



## Theme #7: Communication, Teamwork, and Collaboration

### Communication

- Time speeds up in a time of crisis.
- Increased demands for clear, accurate, and timely information.
- Be honest, transparent, and frequent in your communication.
- Raise your profile through intentional communication strategies.

According to a survey of 130 CEOs, many are “balancing communication about what they are doing to **protect** the business with what they are doing to **prepare** for the new world.”

(CEO Mindset: How leaders can prepare for the post pandemic world)

## Theme #7: Communication, Teamwork, and Collaboration

### The Planning Process

- Engage the entire organization and stakeholders.
- Importance of the SWOT.
- Don't change the process but...
- “Plan Ahead Teams”
- Elevate your prioritizing of high impact goals.

## Theme #7: Communication, Teamwork, and Collaboration

- Do you engage and include all employees in meaningful discussions and do they get to make or influence important decisions?
- Do all employees have the opportunity to sit on collaborative teams outside of their work unit?
- Do you create opportunities for teams to plan, create influence, and build relationships?
- Do you communicate frequently, relevantly, and inclusively and close the feedback loop?

## Theme #7: Communication, Teamwork... – In Action

*What are you the most proud of in terms of communicating and allowing staff to influence important decisions?*

## Theme #7: Communication, Teamwork... – In Action

- Communication flow, openness and honesty:
  - Helps encourage relationship building
  - Creates a sense from staff that they know you
  - Translates into people feeling more comfortable approaching you or opening up when you do meet them in the hall.
- More regular and open conversations.
- Family Style

## Theme #8: Rites, Ceremonies, Stories, and Socialization

Rites, ceremonies, stories, and socialization communicate organizational culture and can reveal the kinds of behaviours that are valued by an organization.

- Language is often expressed through slogans, symbols, and jargon.
- Language is used to help employees come to know expectations while bonding with one another.
- Language is also expressed in how people dress, the offices they use, the cars they drive, and the level of formality they use in their interactions.

## Theme #8: Rites, Ceremonies, Stories, and Socialization

- How do rites, ceremonies, stories, and socialization show up in your organization?
- How do employees learn and internalize norms and values?
- Does your culture build common norms and values and are they demonstrated in practice?
- Does your organization motivate commitment to norms and values and if so how?

## Theme #8: Rites, Ceremonies, Stories... – In Action

*How do employees learn and internalize norms and values  
how are they demonstrated in practice?*



## Theme #8: Rites, Ceremonies, Stories... – In Action

- Culture is owned by everyone in our organization. It's enabled and modelled by leaders but it's strengthened and expanded by staff.
- Staff checking in on each other, making a point to reach out to new staff, and offering to help someone who is struggling.
- We have a mechanism internally where you can give another colleague a kudos and it gets posted publicly and shared across the organization.
- Small but very meaningful gestures make the biggest difference in our culture. This has created a situation for our staff where they prioritize how they show up and they tend to act on these gestures even more.

## Theme #9: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Organizations who are person-centred have a strong commitment and intentional action around equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- EDI is now about how your organizations examines and serve your communities.

Diversity is a fact.  
Equity is a choice.  
Inclusion is an action.  
Belonging is an outcome.

# Theme #9: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## The Organizational DEI Journey

McLean & Company supports four phases of the organizational DEI journey:



## Theme #9: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without.

~ William Sloane Coffin Jr.~

## Theme #9: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Does your planning dive deep into EDI?
- Is your board engaged and understanding the importance of this?
- Has your board set strategic goals that support EDI?
- Is there an energy of belonging in your organization?
- Have you personally made a commitment to creating a culture built on EDI?

## Theme #9: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – In Action

*What strategic priorities has your board set or any organizational examples regarding equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging?*

## Theme #9: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – In Action

- The board has not done this but we try to encourage people from all areas to come and work with us.
- We have gatherings that are mindful of the diversity of the employees
- DEI allow us to celebrate the fabric of the organization and make people feel welcome.
- We use signs and visuals (pride flags), gender neutral washrooms, pronouns, we celebrate different holidays and culturally significant days.
- Leadership has been directly involved in our EDI activities.

## Theme #10: Technology

- How is technology considered in your strategic planning?
- Have you considered a gap analysis on your current technology to determine current and future needs?
- Do you listen and respond to your employees' technology needs?
- Do you strengthen the use of technology to improve service delivery options and increase business efficiency and effectiveness?



## Theme #10: Technology

### Data Driven

- What is your data culture?
- How are you collecting data?
- What story is this data telling you?
- What are you doing with this data?
- How are you sharing this data?
- How are you responding to this data to improve, grow, and celebrate?
- How are you incorporating data into determining your strategic priorities?

## Theme #10: Technology – In Action

*How have you used technology to improve service delivery options and increase organizational efficiency and effectiveness?*

## Theme #10: Technology – In Action

- We have electronic records and electronic charting.
- We are usually fairly low tech but improving.
- We are regularly improving technology here.
- We look at both risks and opportunities when it comes to technology.
- We have a plan that is linked to our strategy which mentions using technology to further our mission and vision.
- Have a dependable working computer system and up-to-date computer programs running.

## Brene Brown: Atlas of the Heart (2021)

Taken from Abby Wambach's book *Wolfpack*...

Abby is a two time Olympic gold medalist soccer player and FIFA World Cup Champion. She was the United States' leading scorer in 2007 and 2011 Women's World Cup tournaments and the 2004 and 2012 Olympics. In *Wolfpack*, Abby writes about the "Point and Run."

She explains that every time she scored a goal, the first thing she would do is point to the person who made the assist or the coach who called the play. And the run was about celebrating another person's victory (p.37).

## About Me



**Penny Gagnon, Chief Advisor  
CARF CANADA**



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### Who I am:

- Daughter
- Mother, Momma, Mommy
- Auntie, Friend, Partner, Community Member
- Grateful, Kind, Inclusive, and Motivated
- Not an Expert, but a Life-Long Learner

### Career Background:

- More than 20 years of leadership experience working in the field of child, youth, family, and community services
- Post secondary instruction
- Joined CARF as Canada's Chief Advisor in 2017

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