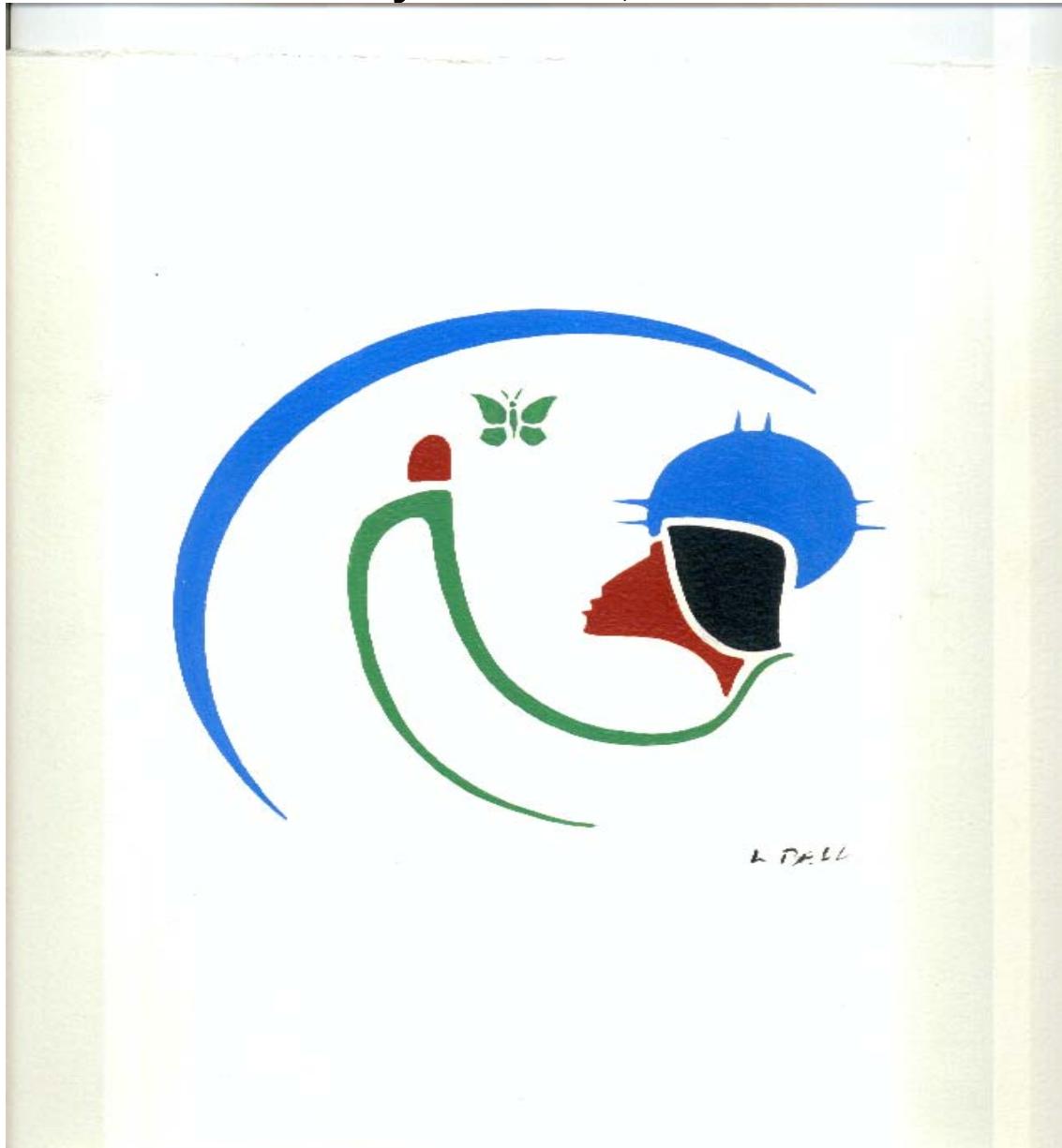


*Transforming Generations:*  
**15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**  
**TWO-SPIRIT GATHERING**  
**GENEVA PARK - - Mnjikaning, Ontario**  
**July 20 to 25, 2003**



**FINAL REPORT**

**August 2003**

## **THE THEME:**

### **Transforming Generations**

The Planning Committee talked about how “Two-Spirit” was a modern term which attempted to describe more accurately and holistically who we are, as people.

We also discussed how the terms in our original languages were so beautiful and contemplated movement and “becoming”, just like a butterfly. There seemed to be such a feeling of transformation in the words which describe the roles and ceremonies of the “ogokwe”, “nadle”, “lhamana”, “alyha” and “winkte”.

One of the sad facts about Two-Spirit existence today is the loss of pride and respect for those traditional roles and responsibilities which we performed. The Annual Two Spirit Gatherings are a way to return to that pride and respect.

When discussing the theme for this year’s event, we wanted something that captured our goal of regaining our rightful place in the world.

“**Transforming Generations**” seemed to express the way Gatherings are held, combining the visions and abilities of different generations, transforming ourselves back, and forward, in time and spirit.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*2-Spirited People of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nations would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the sponsors and contributors who provided generous financial and in-kind support which made this event such a success.*

*Thank you – Megweetch.*

- Mnjikaning First Nation
- AIDS Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- First Nations & Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada
- Addictions & Mental Health Division, First Nations & Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Correctional Services of Canada
- Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy
- Nechi Training Institute
- Healing Our Spirit, BC First Nations AIDS Prevention Society
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
- Northern Lights Alternative Canada
- Oneida First Nation
- Trax
- NA-ME-RES
- Nishnawbe Homes
- Canadian Friends Service Committee
- First Nations of Quebec & Labrador Health & Social Services Commission
- Native Management Services
- Jean Tweed Centre
- Native Women's Resource Centre
- Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network
- Leland Bell and Lorie Pelletier

The Planning Committee is also warmly acknowledged here for all their time, efforts and contributions: Terry Sands, Trevor Stratton; Doe O'Brien; Michael Marks; David Redwolf; Art Zoccole; Naz; Kris Pheasant; Corena Ryan; Dwaine Hill; David Drakeford; Shane Potts; Russ Krebs; Rod Michano; LaVerne Monette; and Scott Sunday.

**2-Spirited People of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nations** would also like to take this time to thank **EVERYONE**, who contributed toward the planning of this Gathering, especially the Elder, **Sue Anderson-Kelly** and other **Traditional people** who conducted ceremonies and offered Teachings.

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Two-Spirit Gathering took place at Geneva Park, near Mnjikaning Ontario during the week of July 20<sup>th</sup> to July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Approximately **one-hundred and forty-one (141) participants** from across Canada and the United States attended, including one participant from Australia. Of the 141 participants, there were **three children and two youth** in attendance. Overall, there were approximately four Inuit registrants; five non-Native partners; one Australian Aborigine; and at least twelve Métis registrants. The remainder were First Nations people, both on and off-reserve.

In keeping with previous Gatherings, the format was semi-structured which allowed ample flexibility to address a wide range of topics. Key issues addressed were Addiction; Mental Health and HIV/AIDS. Despite one of the key speakers being unable to attend, other workshops were quickly added to accommodate this change in plans. Most presentations were loosely structured, with some being held outdoors and others inside the teepee. Many were held inside, in various rooms reserved for the Gathering.

Almost the entire audience received scholarships to attend, thereby waiving registration fees. Many stated it was their first Gathering. Almost every province was represented, as well as some of the territories. Many, mainly because of the ceremonial activities that occur, consider these Gatherings spiritual in nature. However, they are also supportive environments and an important element in building community. Activities were varied and took a holistic approach, addressing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of human nature.

There were approximately eighteen (18) structured workshops/presentations, some of which were not evaluated, as they were deemed spiritual in nature (e.g. talking circles). Other activities were social and recreational in nature (e.g. sports, No Talent Show, etc.). Several workshops were educational, increasing knowledge and understanding or the mental aspect. Other activities were fun and social, allowing the physical to be addressed (dances, sports, etc.). Emotional needs were also addressed through various activities that provided release for mental health stressors, (Sweat Lodge ceremonies, Memorial Ceremony, Talking Circles, etc.). Overall, spiritual needs were addressed by having Elders present, Traditional knowledge shared, and such ceremonies such as the Sacred Fire, etc.

Next year, in 2004 the Gathering will be held in Montana, with either Manitoba or California hosting it in 2005. The site for 2006 may be Quebec as the Gay Games are to occur in Montreal, leading some people to voice support at this stage.

## **2. INTRODUCTION:**

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Two-Spirit Gathering was a huge success offering a wide variety of activities that appealed to various needs. Major aspects dealt with Mental Health Issues, Addiction and HIV/AIDS, both directly and indirectly through workshops and also a number of informal activities. The gatherings have been held in various locations over the years, starting in Minnesota. Each Gathering has taken its own unique approach, some being very informal, while others have been much more structured, as was the case with this years Gathering. A full agenda was developed and is attached in the appendices. Despite being more structured, the Gathering was also flexible enough to accommodate various requests and personal needs.

The Gatherings are also alcohol and drug free events, and some individuals who were sponsored to attend, came with struggles in this area yet attended as full participants. This is a positive indicator of how all participants came to feel actively involved, reducing feelings of isolation and marginalization they may otherwise be experiencing elsewhere. In fact, it was quite moving to see some individuals with addiction struggles, helping to collecting rocks for the Sweat Lodges or collecting wood for the Sacred Fire, both of which are examples of harm reduction. This observation is due to certain ceremonial functions generally requiring abstinence from mind-altering substances, with some Traditional Elders requiring at least four days abstinence. In this case, individuals were abstinent at the time and were fully included in these activities.

A Council of Elders was present, providing guidance where sought or necessary. One key role was to help determine where the next two Gatherings would be held. The Council determined a process selecting Montana for next years Gathering, at which time two other locations (Manitoba and California) will make their case to host the 2005 Gathering. Some participants are hoping the Gathering will come to Quebec, Canada in 2006 to coincide with the gay Games being held in Montreal.

For many participants, new and old alike, these alcohol and drug-free events offer a well-needed opportunity to connect with other Aboriginal people and recharge themselves from the experiences and life circumstances they each come from. The Gatherings are not educational forums for non-Aboriginal people (although non-Aboriginal partners can attend), and are mostly intended to support Aboriginal Two-Spirited people in culturally sensitive ways, such as Talking/Sharing Circles, the Sacred Fire, Sweat Lodge ceremonies and other ways. These Traditional activities and approaches offer much needed support and affirmation for participants, some of whom may feel isolated and marginalized from the mainstream gay community because of culture, language, Residential School experiences, etc. For some, this includes personal struggles with addiction; mental health issues such as depression; or living with HIV/AIDS.

Even providing a 24-hour craft room was uplifting, as individuals made items for their regalia which they wore at the Pow Wow. During this time, individuals talked and laughed, connecting with new people and nurturing old friendships. Some individuals learned much about what it means to be Two-Spirit, from a Traditional perspective. All of these activities, allowed individuals to gain a broader understanding, feel connected among peers, and participate at whatever level they felt comfortable with.

Thus, if someone needed more of the **Social aspect** addressed, there were such things as dances, the No-Talent show, and the craft room. The **Mental aspect** was attended to by various workshops and teachings that increased knowledge and understanding. The **Spiritual aspect** was supported by access to Elders and Traditional people, who offered various ceremonies such as Sweat Lodges and Sacred Fire. Lastly, the **Emotional aspect** was nurtured through supportive individuals and peers, who through various activities such as Talking/Sharing Circles, the Sacred Fire and the Memorial, as well as one-on-one, allowed individuals to process some of their feelings. Some individuals, as a result of the Gathering, have indicated positive options they are seeking to make, opening new doors and opportunities to take their lives in new directions. In terms of measuring success, **30 out of 39 respondents** felt they wanted nothing changed in terms of planning.

### **3. WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS:**

#### **3.a TRADITIONAL ROLES OF TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE:** **Facilitated by: Sylvia Maracle**

This workshop occurred on the first full day and lasted all morning. It was an excellent opportunity for participants to gain a fuller understanding of what were once, strong Traditional roles. From a Mohawk perspective, the facilitator walked participants through some Teachings on the origins of her people. A special focus included her search for Elders who had knowledge and teachings about the roles of Two-Spirit people. Using medicine wheels, she explained different aspects of human nature and those that apply to Two-Spirit people. Three essential questions, spiritual in nature, were phrased as part of these teachings. They were: Where do I come from? Where am I going? What are my responsibilities (my gifts)?

Some participants later voiced their immense satisfaction with this workshop. One person said: "That was the first Two-Spirit teaching I have ever heard." Certainly the knowledge held by the Facilitator would allow greater understanding of the role of Two-Spirit people rather than the shunned and discriminated experiences many have today. The workshop allowed opportunity to gain a greater sense of self and pride in their true identity.

### **3.b HARM REDUCTION:**

**Facilitated by:** LaVerne Monette, Provincial Coordinator of the Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy and Lyndon George, Strategy Support Worker, London Strategy Office

The workshop was attended by approximately 10 individuals, a small but enthusiastic group of people from across Canada.

LaVerne started by introducing the Project: "**Mending Our Circle: An Aboriginal Harm Reduction Training Project**", funded by Health Canada, which was undertaken by the Strategy to introduce and promote harm reduction in the Aboriginal community as a way of strengthening our communities. This is seen as mending our circles by including people in the circle who have been traditionally excluded by virtue of their substance use and the failure of abstinence-based treatment services to meet their expressed needs. The project has completed four out of five regional training sessions for service providers who deal with Aboriginal substance users in Ontario to introduce harm reduction and to dissipate the mythology that harm reduction is new in the Aboriginal community. So far the sessions have been extremely successful in that it has opened service providers to looking at alternatives to abstinence-based programming and services and is starting to create small networks of service providers who can discuss and implement new tools and techniques in servicing Aboriginal substance users. There has also been a demand for additional training sessions in each region which has been covered.

The purpose of the workshop at the Gathering was to introduce the subject among a broader audience and to seek assistance from the Two-Spirit community many of whom have had negative experiences in trying to address substance use issues, Two-Spirit issues and HIV/AIDS issues with abstinence-based treatment centres.

General topics discussed were:

- Treatment centres who do not allow people living with HIV to take anti-retrovirals or methadone when in treatment;
- The dichotomy between attitudes about "good" medicines such as insulin and "bad" medicines such as methadone or medical marijuana;
- The principle of "non-interference" in our traditional practices and the maintenance of abstinence as the only way of treating people with substance use issues;
- The feelings of rejection of Aboriginal people who cannot access their traditions and culture unless they have tackled and vanquished their substance use;
- The absence of Aboriginal treatment programs which will even try to incorporate harm reduction tools and techniques in their practice; and

- The attitudes of traditional gatherings such as the two-spirited gathering about medical marijuana.

### **3.c AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES AND HIV:**

**Facilitated by:** Jim Morrison, Policy Officer with the Western Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organization Inc. (WAACCHO)

This workshop presented information related to a study being conducted by this organization which is: "undertaking a study of best practice models relating to Indigenous health."

**Purpose of Study:**

- To review what services are being provided in the United States of America and Canada, and other relevant countries, relating to Indigenous people living with HIV.

**Areas of study include:**

1. Mobile professional support services for Indigenous people in three at-risk groups, namely prisoners, homeless people and Intravenous Drug Users.
2. Culturally relevant sex education packages and train-the-trainer strategies for workers with Indigenous people.
3. Community education programs based on youth-to-youth peer models.
4. Indigenous leadership commitment to awareness raising action.

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### **3.d SWEAT LODGE TEACHINGS**

**Facilitated by:** Traditional people who conducted the ceremonies

Due to various cultures being present, there was a group of Traditional people who each conducted Sweat Lodge ceremonies according to their own customs and traditions. In order to be a conduit to further learning on the Sweat Lodge,

these individuals invited interested participants to assist in the building of the Sweat Lodge and to sit through Teachings on what is involved. Participants helped gather the saplings and tie them together to build the structure. Another group collected the rocks that would be used to heat the lodge.

**3.e CREATIVE WRITINGS:**  
**Facilitated by: Nancy Cooper**

This workshop was intended to provide an outlet to express inner thoughts and experiences as a means of releasing negative energy. It was also an opportunity to create positive energy and share these life lessons with other participants. This workshop was not recorded as it was deemed more personal in nature.

**3.f MOON TEACHINGS:**  
**Facilitated by: Veronica Moonstream Eagle**

This activity was not recorded as it was spiritual in nature and presented, not as a workshop, but as a sharing of certain Teachings. The workshop was aimed at providing Traditional teachings specific to the female gender.

**3.g CREATIVE MINDS OF MUSIC:**  
**Facilitated by: Group of individuals**

This particular activity was also not a workshop but a group of musically talented individuals who would write and later perform a song specifically for this Gathering at the No-Talent Show. Several days of collective expression and effort went into this moving tribute.

**3.h FOLLOWING THE RED CART: MÉTIS and HIV/AIDS**  
**Facilitated by: Duane G. Morrisseau-Beck**

Information regarding this project was made available through various formats, including a large display in the main building. This project is sponsored by the Métis National Council who developed a series of booklets which address HIV/AIDS. Several other health resources and cultural information was available to all participants in a very prominent area.

**3.i TWO-SPIRITS IN MOTION:**  
**Facilitated by: Richard Jenkins and the Edmonton Group**

This workshop was presented twice during the Gathering due to interest from the participants. Experiences planning and hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Forum on Two-Spirit Peoples, HIV/AIDS and Health which was held in Edmonton AB during February 6-8, 2003 were shared with the audience. The theme of this forum was "Building Healthy Attitudes in Families and Communities". Eighty-two (82) people had participated in the forum, addressing: Addiction issues and Correctional issues, among others. A key item of support that arose at this forum was the need for a national Two-Spirit organization, as well as future forums where relevant issues facing the Two-Spirit population can be addressed.

**3.j     GETTING YOUR ROCKS OFF:** Things we can do to relieve stress in our lives! **Facilitated by: Terry Sands**

The workshop was very interactive, aimed at addressing life stresses. The format was a circle discussion, talking about "The Medicines and the Grandfathers" to teach about stress and grief and their impact on us. The discussion included identifying strategies to work with our stress and pain. The fact that many of us carry stress is like carrying rocks on our backs. They become very heavy but we can remove them one at a time and lighten our load. These rocks can be painful but they can also be our teachers. The workshop was small in number but very productive in allowing individuals to look at this area and see how things can change to relieve our stress.

**3.k     ISSUES OF GENDER:**  
**Facilitated by: Johl Ringuette**

The workshop began by asking the circle of about sixteen people, to talk about being Two-Spirited and what that meant for each of us. Then, I explained my trans-gendered identity as "Epicene", meaning having characteristics of both male and female and/or neither (essentially gender neutral).

The facilitator asked the group to attempt an exercise of changing the use of pronouns. Each time we chose to use a pronoun like he or she, we replace it with "E". The discussion opened into talking about five (5) different identities: Female, Male, Trans-gendered, Transsexual, and Inter-sexed. Profoundly, all five identities actually existed in this workshop audience.

At this point, the workshop moved into a sharing circle with discussion about gender, identity, children, childhood experiences, support systems, and future gatherings and awareness. It became very apparent that more discussion on this subject matter would be greatly welcomed, appreciated, and needed.

**3.l     MEMORIAL CEREMONY:**

About 50 people attended the memorial. In the middle of the circle was the sacred fire, which had been lit on the evening of the first day. The fire was roped off with an opening for the eastern doorway and poleflags for each of the four directions. Terry Sands introduced Traditional teacher, Alita Sauve who opened the ceremony with a heart felt prayer for the important thing we were about to do. After the prayer Terry explained how this thing would be done in a good way.

With an Eagle Feather in his right hand, Terry leaned over to pinch some tobacco out of the wooden bowl that had been presented to the gathering by the local Elder, Sue Anderson-Kelly from Mnjikaning First Nation. The tobacco was placed in the sacred fire. He spoke of people who had passed on to the spirit world. And then he exited the sacred area handing the feather to the next person in the circle. All 50 participants repeated the process.

Some folks offered prayers, songs, poems or fond words not only for specific individuals but also for general groups of people including unnamed APHAs, abuse victims, incarcerated ones among others. There were many tears and in some cases full out crying. There were many spiritual helpers and counselors on hand who offered support when this would happen. Invariably the vigorously grieving one would be able to remain for the duration of this healing experience. Many spoke of how this 2.5 hour memorial allowed them to grieve the loss of loved ones for the first time. It was very powerful.

### **3.m   HEALTHY SEXUALITY: Facilitated by: Doe O'Brien**

Objective: To raise awareness of our sexual health and promote a balanced view on ourselves.

Introduction: Facilitator provided an overview of the history of Aboriginal sexuality, including pre-contact, contact and present day.

Discussion: The circle format discussed what influences our sexuality and our sense of selves? Discussion also looked at both male and female sexuality. The workshop ended by reviewing what healthy sexuality is and that an orgasm is a gift from the Creator.

### **3.n   APHA PANEL:**

APHA Speakers Panel was thrown together the day before the actual workshop. At the onset, there were about 12 attendees, mostly APHA's from Toronto. Panel speakers were: Trevor S., Duane M., Rod M., and Ron H.

Doe O'Brien opened the discussion and introduced the *Elder, Sue Anderson-Kelly*, and then the first APHA speaker, Trevor S.

Speakers presented on their life experiences living with HIV/AIDS. Subjects included experiences of stigma and discrimination, low self-esteem, feelings of isolation, institutional detention, mental health, desperation and loneliness. Alcohol and drug consumption, sex trade, failing health and deathbed experiences were also described. All speakers told of HIV/AIDS as a powerful teacher to be respected and listened to. All speakers told how getting involved in the Aboriginal HIV/AIDS movement as a very positive healing experience that "transforms" them (as a butterfly).

Attendees were very quiet and respectful while speakers presented their stories. There were some tears. The Elder closed with another prayer and kind words. By the end of the presentations the audience increased to about 35 or so.

Speakers offered to be available to individuals who would like to speak in private. The actual presentation lasted only about an hour, as Doe and the Elder were late for other workshops that they had to facilitate elsewhere. Afterwards there was an impromptu sitting circle out on the grass where Duane and I were asked for a few more details. Several of the people who listened to the panel speakers expressed some disappointment in the shortness of the session and would have liked to have had the opportunity to have a full-audience participation in a talking circle after the presentations. By the expressions on some of the faces, I could see that a much longer session (perhaps 3 hours) would have been more appropriate. Perhaps that could be a recommendation for gatherings in the future.

### **3.o CORRECTIONS WORKSHOP: Facilitated by: Ken Morton**

Workshop participants discussed what Correctional Services Canada is doing in terms of programming for Aboriginal prisoners and the issues surrounding traditional ceremonies and access to them inside the institutions.

Part of this discussion included the reasons for the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the corrections system and what alternate kinds of justice might be available than incarceration. Participants also questioned why there were so few Aboriginal organizations, which will visit prisoners inside, work with them and then assist them when they leave the institutions. The participants tried to think of ways that services and traditional practices available to Aboriginal prisoners could be improved in the institutional setting.

Another significant issue was same-sex visitations or trailer visits which are not available and what could be done to change the CSC guidelines to end this kind of discrimination.

Another issue was the difficulty of getting traditional medicines inside the institutions for the use of Aboriginal prisoners. The only acceptable way seems to be for an elder to bring them in. This raised the issue of availability of elders throughout the system and how access to elders could be improved.

There was a great deal of discussion about CSC rules and regulations about how to get articles of clothing, cigarettes, money etc. to a prisoner. the workshop facilitator provided basic information about standards, rules and referrals were provided about who to raise these issues with in the institutions and outside of them.

Overall the workshop had a good response and a lot of good questions were raised. It is clear that more information needs to be shared with the general Aboriginal public about the corrections system and what an Aboriginal prisoner and his/her family is facing when he/she is incarcerated.

### **3.p ADDRESSING HOMOPHOBIA IN RELATION TO HIV/AIDS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES (AHRHAAC): Facilitator: Albert McLeod,**

#### GOALS:

1. To create a supportive and non-judgmental environment for Two Spirit people living with HIV/AIDS.
2. To assist Aboriginal organizations and communities to develop policies that address homophobia.
3. To raise awareness in Aboriginal communities on how to address homophobia when it is a barrier to HIV/AIDS prevention and education.

#### PHASES:

1. To conduct an environmental scan of existing policies that address homophobia in Aboriginal communities.
2. To create an anti-homophobia policy development model for Aboriginal organizations.
3. To develop a communications strategy to promote the implementation of anti-homophobia policies in Aboriginal communities.

The presentation shared results from the literature review which showed an estimated Aboriginal population in Canada as being approximately 976,305 according to Statistics Canada 2003. Using a figure of between 5 to 10%, the presenter estimates the Two-Spirit population as being around 48,815 - 97,630.

The term “Two-Spirit” was discussed and presented as follows. (Adapted from Lang (1998) and Tietz (1996)): “A modern English term which encompasses a variety of roles, gender identities and sexual behaviours – namely:

- contemporary Aboriginal people who are gay or lesbian;
- contemporary Aboriginal alternative genders;
- the traditions of institutionalized gender variance and alternative sexualities in Aboriginal (tribal) cultures;
- traditions of gender variance in other cultures;
- transvestites, transsexuals, and transgendered people;
- and drag queens and butches.”

Negating factors that affected the role of Two-Spirits include colonization which involved both the Indian Act, 1876 and Residential Schools, 1892.

<b>Sociological Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Unemployment	(141)	76%
Poor housing	(83)	45%
Racism	(82)	44%
Poverty	(75)	40%
Homophobia	(71)	38%
Suicide	(60)	32%
HIV discrimination	(59)	32%
Physical Abuse	(59)	32%
Sexual Abuse	(58)	31%
Gay Bashing	(58)	31%
Partner/spousal abuse	(52)	28%

### CONCLUSIONS:

- Inherent and contemporary rights
- Fear of coming out or being outed
- Discrimination a result of imposed laws
- Homophobia, transphobia, hate crimes are wide spread
- Rights violations a result of racism and heterosexism
- No organized advocacy on behalf of Two Spirit people
- Empowerment increasing with decolonization
- Not using anti-discrimination mechanisms
- Growing social networks with other indigenous peoples

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Research Aboriginal languages about sexuality
- Research with Elders about Two Spirit people

- Aboriginal research must collect Two Spirit data
- Organizations must collect discrimination statistics
- Policy development must include Aboriginal Customary Law government processes.

### **3.q CLOSING CEREMONY:**

A group of Traditional people conducted the closing on the Thursday evening. Seven people volunteered to enter the inner circle to share a prayer, song and kind words for those passed on and still living in pain. The fire was then allowed to go out on its own overnight. The **Sacred Fire** was an important part of the Gathering, as this was where most participants spent time connecting, praying, honouring loved ones and friends who have passed on, etc. It was lit on day one and kept going day and night for the entire Gathering. Many participants took time to schedule themselves in for two hour durations, to keep the fire going. A strong commitment was maintained by everyone to ensure the Sacred Fire remained lit, and that it would be available for all people needing it.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS:**

Without doubt, this Gathering can be termed a success. With approximately one-hundred and forty-one (141) participants, it is certainly the largest attendance of all the gatherings held to date. A significant proportion of participants indicated it was their first Gathering, introducing them to a broader Two-Spirit community, than what they had before the Gathering. Close friends were made from across the country and beyond. Existing friendships were made stronger.

**Key issues addressed** included: **Addictions**, both through workshops such as Harm Reduction and Corrections, but also by other activities such as the meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Likewise, the Gathering itself was an alcohol and drug-free event, with the exception being medical-marijuana for some APHAs. Other issues addressed were related to **Mental Health**, in such workshops as the Addressing Homophobia; Issues of Gender and Getting Your Rocks Off, among others. In addition, the Memorial Ceremony and numerous Traditional Teachings and Ceremonies, as well as Talking/Sharing Circles also addressed mental health issues by allowing grief and loss issues to be dealt with in safe, nurturing environments and with proper support. The other key area was **HIV/AIDS**, by having the APHA Panel, several workshops such as Healthy Sexuality, Australian Aborigines and HIV/AIDS, etc. and other means of indirectly addressing this concern. Evaluation comments reveal deep satisfaction, which confirms the Gathering was a success.

## APPENDIX 1: SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup>

Park opens to participants.

2:00 & 3:00 pm	Tour of Geneva Park
4:00 – 5:00 pm	Registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants will be checked into their rooms</li> </ul>
5:00 – 6:30 pm	Dinner
7:30 – 10:00 pm	Opening Ceremonies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grand Entry</li> <li>• Welcome and Prayer by local Elder, Sue Anderson-Kelly</li> <li>• Welcome by Gathering Planning Committee</li> <li>• Opening Prayer by Sylvia Maracle</li> <li>• Greeting Circle</li> <li>• Lighting of Sacred Fire Outside</li> </ul>

Note:

- We will need volunteers for the Sacred Fire – 2 hour stretches 24 hours a day
- There is no smoking in any of the buildings, please smoke outside and on balconies only. Please use ashtrays provided.
- All workshops in Geneva Court building (GC) or Centennial Centre (CC) or outside.
- Craft tables in CC room #15 lounge and display tables in CC room # 8 starting Monday

### Monday, July 21<sup>st</sup>

6:00 am	Sunrise Ceremony
7:00-7:30 am	Fitness with Russ Krebs
8:00 – 9:00 am	Breakfast Sign up for fire keeping Sign up for security
9:00 – 10:00 am	Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If people want specific groups or services during the Gathering make requests now and times &amp; rooms will be set up</li> <li>• Make arrangements for Elders Meeting at a later day</li> <li>• Build Sweat Lodge and Teepee, Sweat times to be posted</li> </ul>
10:00 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting your rocks off! By Terry Sands</li> </ul> <p>Things we can do to relieve stress in our lives</p> <p>Traditional Roles for Two Spirit People. By Sylvia Maracle</p>
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:00 – 2:45 pm	Traditional Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snake game Cree</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tea making contest Cree</li> <li>• Other suggested games</li> </ul>
3:00 – 4:45 pm	“Our Two Spirit Lives” A discussion of our history and the term Two-Spirit.
5:00 – 6:30pm	Dinner Break
7:30 – 9:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movie: Deep Inside Clint Star</li> <li>• Two-Spirits in Motion – Edmonton Group</li> <li>• Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, facilitated by Viola Romi – The Great Magic Show. By Michele Rosano</li> </ul>

### **Tuesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>**

6:00 am	Sunrise Ceremony
7:00 – 7:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness with Russ Krebs</li> </ul>
8:00 – 9:00 am	Breakfast
Times to be posted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sweat Lodge ceremonies (Women's, Men's, Mixed)</li> </ul>
10:00 – 12:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Writings. By Nancy Cooper</li> </ul>
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:00 – 2:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Minds of Music. A Group collaboration</li> <li>• Kids and Youth Activities</li> </ul>
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 – 4:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APHA Panel</li> </ul>
5:00 – 6:30 pm	Dinner Break
7:30 – 8:45 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movie: A Bug's Life (for kids and adults alike)</li> </ul>
8:00 – 10:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Spirit Mixed Talking Circle</li> </ul>

Note: Participants need to register for the canoe race on Wednesday

### **Wednesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>**

6:00 am	Sunrise Ceremony
7:00 – 7:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness with Russ Krebs</li> </ul>
8:00 – 9:00 am	Breakfast
All day Times to be posted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's Sweat</li> <li>• Men's Sweat</li> <li>• Mixed Sweat</li> </ul>
9:00 – 10:15 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting of Elders to determine next 2 Gatherings</li> <li>• Living Positive: APHA Panel</li> </ul>
10:00 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Sexuality – Doe</li> <li>• Following the Red Cart: Métis and HIV/AIDS. By Duane Morrisseau</li> <li>• Addressing Homophobia. By Albert McLeod</li> <li>• Issues of Gender. By Johl Ringette</li> </ul>
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:00 – 4:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring Our Creativity with words and theatre. By Actor, Billy Merasty</li> </ul>

1:00 – 2:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harm Reduction. By LaVerne Monette &amp; Lyndon George</li> <li>• Ojibway Language. By Peetanncoot Nenakawekapo</li> <li>• Edmonton Group Presentation</li> <li>• Two Spirit (Male) Risk Reduction Part Two – Rhys</li> </ul>
3:00 – 4:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal People and HIV/AIDS. By Jim Morrison</li> <li>• The “Corrections” System. By Ken Morton</li> <li>• Kids and Youth activities</li> </ul>
5:00 – 6:30 pm	Dinner Break
6:30 – 7:15 pm	<p>Canoe Races:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single</li> <li>• Partners</li> </ul> <p>Make up and skin care. By Conrad Jones Face painting for kids. By Michele Rosano</p>
8 pm – 12:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No-Talent Show</li> <li>• Dance and Karaoke with DJ Scott</li> </ul>

Note: Participants should sign up for the West or East baseball team for the Thursday game. Participants can submit names for the Memorial Candle Lighting on Thursday

#### **Thursday, July 24<sup>th</sup>**

6:00 am	Sunrise Ceremony
7:00 – 7:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness with Russ Krebs</li> </ul>
8:00 – 9:00 am	Breakfast
All Day	<p>Take down of teepee and Sweat Lodge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathways to Healthy Families. Alita Suave will be available to parents by appointment. She will also be available to anyone who wishes to talk to her.</li> </ul>
10:00 – 12:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open session</li> </ul>
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:00 – 2:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorial Candle Lighting</li> </ul>
2:00 – 2:30 pm	Break
2:30 – 5:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseball Game: West vs East</li> <li>• Talking Circle</li> </ul>
5:30 – 7:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strawberry Ceremony and Dinner</li> </ul>
8:00 – 11: 00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Pow Wow and Giveaway</li> </ul>
11:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put out Sacred Fire</li> </ul>

#### **Friday, July 25<sup>th</sup>**

8:00 – 9:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakfast: Official Farewell by Art Zoccole</li> </ul>
9:00 – 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packing and taking leave of your rooms</li> </ul>
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
11 am & 1 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buses leave for Toronto</li> </ul>

## **APPENDIX 2: WORKSHOP EVALUATIONS**

### **CORRECTIONS – Ken Morton (n=5)**

**Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 5**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	Soundly delivered	<b>Excellently delivered</b>

Q.1 COMMENTS:

- ◆ great;
- ◆ straight to the point, easy to understand
- ◆ interest in the system, personal experience.

**Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

Q.2 COMMENTS:

- ◆ will be going in as visitor
- ◆ great; well done
- ◆ need more liaison work for this purpose.

### **HEALTHY SEXUALITY – Doe O'Brien (n= 5)**

**Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 5**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	Soundly delivered	<b>Excellently delivered</b>

Q.1 COMMENTS:

- ◆ Group was very open and talkative;
- ◆ very interesting, questions were answered;
- ◆ clarified points

**Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 3**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	<b>Adequate</b>	Very useful	Extremely useful

#### Q.2 COMMENTS

- ◆ communication is part of sex, good;
- ◆ didn't talk about the issue (i.e. HIV/AIDS).

### OJIBWE LANGUAGE – Peetanacoot (n= 6)

**Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	<b>Soundly delivered</b>	Excellent delivered

#### Q.1 COMMENTS:

- ◆ difficult to present but very well done;
- ◆ limited time but lots was covered.

**Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

#### Q.2 COMMENTS

- ◆ understanding culture convey our meaning, undoing European interpretation
- ◆ proper words and language (not Ojibwe slang).

### AUSTRALIA AND HIV – Jim Morrison – (n=7)

**Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	<b>Soundly delivered</b>	Excellent delivered

#### Q.1 COMMENTS:

- ◆ knowledgeable about his communities

- ◆ Australian accent difficult to understand but very informative
- ◆ needed more visuals like power point
- ◆ I got lost.

**Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

**Q.2 COMMENTS**

- ◆ good background information on Aussie Aboriginal community issues and HIV/AIDS
- ◆ need to share information on this global issue
- ◆ learned about problems with different countries
- ◆ another perspective, strategies in Australia are different than here.

**HARM REDUCTION – LaVerne Monette – (n=8)**

**Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	<b>Soundly delivered</b>	Excellent delivered

**Q.1 COMMENTS:**

- ◆ should talk about Métis people
- ◆ lots of new information; very interactive
- ◆ outdoor setting facilitated more openness of ideas
- ◆ HR very relevant and important to our future
- ◆ some listened, others talked.

**Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 5**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

**Q.2 COMMENTS**

- ◆ need to know more about HIV/AIDS work
- ◆ 2-spirit knowledge

- ♦ understood more about harm reduction
- ♦ HR important to our future
- ♦ HR and HIV/AIDS.

### **GETTING YOUR ROCKS OFF – Terry Sands (n= 8)**

#### **Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	<b>Soundly delivered</b>	Excellent delivered

#### Q.1 COMMENTS:

- ♦ great to relieve stress
- ♦ presenter very knowledgeable
- ♦ I was able to express myself (2)
- ♦ held outside, best circle I've ever attended.
- ♦ learned how to listen effectively(2)

#### **Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 3**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	<b>Adequate</b>	Very useful	Extremely useful

#### Q.2 COMMENTS:

- ♦ useful to everyone but not specific to coping with HIV/AIDS
- ♦ no talk about HIV/AIDS (2).

### **ISSUES OF GENDER – Johl Ringuette (n= 9)**

#### **Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	<b>Soundly delivered</b>	Excellent delivered

#### Q.1 COMMENTS:

- ♦ much cross-talk and general discussion, I prefer circle format to promote open discussion

- ◆ liked open forum to explore complex issue
- ◆ very touching, personal and profound

**Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 3**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	<b>Adequate</b>	Very useful	Extremely useful

**Q.2 COMMENTS:**

- ◆ I use gender neutral approach to the work I do
- ◆ deals with sexual identity
- ◆ extremely pertinent.

**ADDRESSING HOMOPHOBIA – Albert McLeod (n=15)**

**Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	<b>Soundly delivered</b>	Excellent delivered

**Q.1 COMMENTS:**

- ◆ presenter very knowledgeable
- ◆ liked humour, eye opening
- ◆ rushed for time
- ◆ very prepared, funny, professional
- ◆ great, loved it; was captivated from beginning
- ◆ good but long
- ◆ good teacher, audience hypnotized
- ◆ presenter is an authority on 2-spirit movement.

**Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 5**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

**Q.2 COMMENTS:**

- ◆ reserves need to start addressing our needs
- ◆ to deal with AIDS you first deal with sexuality

- ◆ not enough said
- ◆ lots of supporting information, another step beyond what we know
- ◆ getting to know and understand about 2-spirit rights
- ◆ new information; more teachings in this workshop
- ◆ little information known in this field.

## **2-SPIRITS IN MOTION – Edmonton Group (n=23)**

Note: This workshop presentation was delivered twice based on interest.

### **Question 1: How effective was delivery? Overall average = 5**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	Soundly delivered	<b>Excellently delivered</b>

#### Q.1 COMMENTS:

- ◆ good information (7) but stretched too long
- ◆ humour (2), video, history, current issues and trends – very interesting and profound
- ◆ sensitive
- ◆ deadly/awesome
- ◆ interactive; easy to understand
- ◆ progression of planning process creates momentum, commitment, determination
- ◆ clear, concise, very inspiring
- ◆ Aboriginals need to know 2-spirits exist
- ◆ created links to agencies and 2-spirits
- ◆ very open
- ◆ fun and encouraging.

### **Question 2: How useful to HIV/AIDS work? Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

#### Q.2 COMMENTS:

- ◆ effective and caring
- ◆ sense of feasibility
- ◆ calm, non-threatening and culturally appropriate
- ◆ more organizations involved outside the Aboriginal ones

- ◆ provided hope and community, we heal through community as much as through our own choices
- ◆ needs more resource information; information about HIV/AIDS was from a positive perspective, not negative as usual
- ◆ contacts and resources made available.

### **TRADITIONAL ROLES FOR 2-SPIRITS– Sylvia Maracle (n=27)**

**Question 1:** How effective was delivery? **Overall average = 5**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Very poorly delivered	Poorly delivered	Adequately delivered	Soundly delivered	<b>Excellently delivered</b>

**Q.1 COMMENTS:**

- ◆ learned about medicine wheel
- ◆ understood and learned a lot (3), humorous (4) and clear, to protect, provide and nurture
- ◆ listeners were comfortable
- ◆ calming
- ◆ everyone should have attended this one
- ◆ learned about 2-spirits
- ◆ brought balance, information, exercise, knowledge and history
- ◆ interesting from beginning to end, knows how to work a room
- ◆ story telling and discussion, healing, perfect length
- ◆ good speaker with experience and knowledge
- ◆ explains responsibilities, nurturing and helping
- ◆ learned about roles
- ◆ great facilitator (2)

**Question 2:** How useful to HIV/AIDS work? **Overall average = 4**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

**Q.2 COMMENTS:**

- ◆ learned how to find help and how to help my spirit
- ◆ good for psyche but not specific to HIV/AIDS
- ◆ respect and acceptance
- ◆ fuller understanding of self

- ◆ not enough information on female health care/prevention of STI's, need 2-spirited balance
- ◆ more knowledge to share
- ◆ when people learn about traditional culture, they find themselves turning away from unhealthy lifestyles
- ◆ was historical/cultural – emphasis not placed on HIV/AIDS work.

## **APPENDIX 3: GATHERING EVALUATION**

### **QUESTION 3: IMPORTANCE OF TWO-SPIRIT GATHERINGS**

This section provides analysis of evaluation sheets for question 3, which read: “**From one to five, how useful do you feel this Gathering is to the Two-Spirit community?**” Judging by the answers in the comments section of question #3, it appears that many participants were referring to the specific workshop rather than the overall Gathering, for which this question was intended.

For this reason, responses are tallied by individual workshops and also overall numbers. Comments have been separated into individual workshops or overall comments depending on how they answered. Some comments are entered on both lists where it was difficult to make a determination.

To clarify this information, “N” refers to the number of evaluations completed in that workshop. The overall average is calculated by tabulating all selections to reach a total, which is then divided by the number of evaluations. This provides an average figure for that question. Also, for the comment section, when there is a figure in parentheses, that indicates the number of individuals who gave that specific or very similar response.

#### **CORRECTIONS – Ken Morton (n=5) Overall average = 5**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

#### **Q.3 COMMENTS:**

- This affects us all
- There are 2-spirits in jail
- Informative
- Work and research only permitted infrequently

#### **HEALTHY SEXUALITY – Doe O'Brien (n=5) Overall average = 4.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

#### **Q.3 COMMENTS:**

- Helps people with their issues and a chance to speak their words
- Many people need to know about this
- Very important.

### **OJIBWE LANGUAGE – Peetanacoot (n= 6) Overall average = 4.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

Q.3 COMMENTS:

- We need connections to feel supported by our people
- Culturally appropriate, empowering, healing
- Communicate more clearly.

### **AUSTRALIA AND HIV – Jim Morrison (n= 7) Overall average = 4.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

Q.3 COMMENTS:

- Good mentoring discussion
- Good to know about different countries (2)

### **HARM REDUCTION – LaVerne Monette (n= 8) Overall average = 5.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

Q.3 COMMENTS:

- More Two-spirit people need to be involved
- Need dialogue so 2-spirit people can feel included
- Traditions and harm reduction
- Opens discussion not regularly tied to spiritual principles i.e. don't have to follow 12-step program.

### **GETTING YOUR ROCKS OFF – Terry Sands (n= 8) Overall average = 5.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

Q.3 COMMENTS:

- Support and education regarding stress and coping
- Really felt good after this session. I think we all did.

### **ISSUES OF GENDER – Johl Ringuette (n= 9) Overall average = 5.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

Q.3 COMMENTS:

- Sex and sexual identity is part of the human world
- Priority area that requires more dialogue.

### **ADDRESSING HOMOPHOBIA – Albert McLeod (n= 15) Overall average = 4.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	<b>Very useful</b>	Extremely useful

**Q.3 COMMENTS:**

- Still way too much denial about being Two-spirited
- Support, teachings
- Freedom, validation, unity, direction
- People need to know that we exist
- So much material, community and info
- As educators we need updated information and more education. Possibly very few of us did not know any of these teachings
- I love Albert McLeod. He is very proficient.
- Life changing. Transforming for many
- Everyone will get to know what it's like to be GLBT in urban or rural areas

### **2-SPIRITS IN MOTION – Edmonton Group (n = 23) Overall average = 5.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

**Q.3 COMMENTS:**

- Toronto has something like that
- Shows what can be done if you set your mind to it
- Like they say, we are truly trailblazers
- Explained from different points of view
- Pertinent information for future First Nations work

- Speaks to Two-spirit community
- To bridge Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal and various other communities

**TRADITIONAL ROLES FOR 2-SPIRITS – Sylvia Maracle (n = 27) Overall average = 5.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

**Q.3 COMMENTS:**

- Very thorough and educational
- More understanding
- Difficulty finding/hearing some of the points
- I learned a lot about being Two-spirited
- We need teachings. We are whole, not stereotypes and being excluded from culture
- A knowledge of history and teachings provides us with insight, history and traditional roles
- Always healthy for the spirit to be supported in these ways and acknowledged. Able to learn others' cultures

**OVERALL TALLY FOR QUESTION #3: (n= 113)**

**Overall average was a 4.5 which is between “very useful” and “extremely useful”.**

Scale used:

1	2	3	4	4.5
Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Adequate	Very useful	<b>Extremely useful</b>

**OVERALL COMMENTS:**

- Helps people with their issues and a chance to speak their words
- We need connections to feel supported by our people
- Culturally appropriate, empowering, healing
- Communicate more clearly
- Good mentoring discussion
- Two-spirit community is good
- More Two-spirit people need to be involved
- Need dialogue so 2-spirit people can feel included
- We need gatherings more often. (2) Circles allow us to talk openly about issues specific to us

- This candid, honest exposure of our emotions in a quiet, respectful way will give me confidence
- Two-spirits coming together at the gathering creates openness; A way to come together and emotionally connect with others
- Support and education regarding stress and coping; Very important
- Gives us a place for voice and discussion
- Still way too much denial about being Two-spirited; Support, teachings
- Freedom, validation, unity, direction; People need to know that we exist (2)
- So much material, community and info
- As educators we need updated information and more education. Possibly very few of us did not know any of these teachings
- Life changing. Transforming for many
- I have been to the gatherings. Everyone was very informative and healing
- Shows what can be done if you set your mind to it
- Like they say, we are truly trailblazers
- It's an essential part of this de-colonization process
- Wish that there were more "womyn"
- We can never stop learning
- I am more relaxed being around other "out" gay people
- Community, spiritual growth, friendships, networking, gaining strength, creating alliances across Turtle Island
- Gives Two-spirit people the confidence they are seeking
- Pertinent information for future First Nations work
- Speaks to Two-spirit community
- "My first gathering." I feel so honoured and filled with happiness to be here
- It's like a beginning in different ways
- Explains responsibilities, nurturing and helping
- Very thorough and educational
- More understanding
- I learned a lot about being Two-spirited
- We need teachings. We are whole, not stereotypes and being excluded from culture
- Able to meet brothers and sisters from different walks of life and share our experiences – make new friends

## **QUESTION 4 & 5:                           PLANNING AND FINAL COMMENTS**

Out of a total of 113 evaluations received, 39 respondents answered question 4 while 45 respondents answered question 5.

**Question 4: Is there anything you would have wanted done differently with the Gathering planning?**

Generally speaking, **30 out of 39 respondents** felt answered “no”, indicating they would not want anything done differently. Other responses support ways of improving representation, such as more womyn or more grandmothers.

- ◆ No (30)
- ◆ Pre-conference orientation for first-timers to help set safe place and share expectations
- ◆ Develop new ways to make “womyn” feel welcomed. Promote more participation from “womyn.” More “womyn” specific (2)
- ◆ More Grandmothers in attendance
- ◆ More information about inter-sexed people
- ◆ More advertising; people need to know this group exists
- ◆ Too short. Allow for more time at workshops. Longer if possible (2)
- ◆ Big drum is essential, more drumming
- ◆ Protocol for ceremonies needs to be done in the beginning of the gathering i.e. use of pot and drugs. More discussion with Pipe Carriers about fire set up, etc (2)
- ◆ Provide at least one “open-minded” flexible Traditional Leader. More Traditional knowledge sharing from different cultures/tribes/territories. More Elders and teachers. (3)
- ◆ Need a more intimate environment
- ◆ More planning to explain time change, etc...
- ◆ Have people introduce themselves
- ◆ Get rid of the word “why” from this evaluation form. “Why do you feel this way?” sounds judgmental.

#### **Question 5: Any final comments?**

- ◆ Need a lot more done for the brochures
- ◆ Whole experience is very entertaining; Do it again; I'm so honoured to be here; I hope we meet again; I appreciate the opportunity to share in this experience; You guys were nice to help Two-Spirit people; I love this whole thing; I could never get bored of this; Good job; Very good; Sexy! Keep up the good work that you are doing; I give you 110%; Great! I can't wait to experience everything else here; Awesome! (16)
- ◆ Profound learning; Good information; I find this very educational, entertaining, open and humorous; Very enjoyable and informative (4)
- ◆ These gatherings are the legacy we will leave to our Two-Spirit family one hundred years from now; Comfortable environment
- ◆ Migweetch; Thank-you; I love you all; Live well. (7)
- ◆ Find out how to attract more “womyn” and transgendered people
- ◆ Elders in our communities need to own and embrace the HIV/AIDS issue and “bring it down”.

## **APPENDIX 4: POST-GATHERING FEEDBACK.**

"Hi everyone:

Just wanted to take a few minutes to express my gratitude for all the hard work that went into the planning for Two Spirit gathering that just took place in Orillia. I have to admit there is more than enough to keep us all curious. Having a sacred fire and having sweets accessible to all of us was wonderful. In the whole time I was at the event I felt comfortable and unthreatened.

There were more events than anyone could imagine, from baseball games to canoe races to volleyball games and of course those wonderful meals. Who could forget that wonderful "no talent show ". Sitting in the audience and being able to laugh and cry all at the same time really is an amazing feet. Only goes to prove that we have more talent that needs to be tapped into.

I would take this opportunity to thank all the staff at Two Spirit office in Toronto. All the planning and organization that went into this event obviously paid off and you all should be honoured for all that work. I know that you all have touched many. I have been truly touched and honoured in being able to attend this special event. I know for sure that many of us are going home stronger and wiser than when we got there. Going home stronger and healthier was a wonderful thing, Thank You.

Looking forward to participating in events in the coming months."

**Signed, Carol B-K.**

"Unravelling the challenges of the past takes a community effort. The 2 Spirit Gathering is vital for shared ideas, getting helpful information about HIV and AIDS to people who need it; healing the pains of the past and beginning the path towards better self esteem. Healing our spirits.

I have been going to the Gathering for 3 years and it has made a remarkable difference in my life. I have felt more connected than ever before. I have seen the rebirth of Coyote Medicine in the laughter of people that have been challenged with some of the most extraordinary circumstance I have ever witnessed.

The health of the 2 Spirit Community is coming back. It excites me and it takes my breath away for the magnificent efforts of, often disenfranchised, people to create such a fantastic vehicle for creating life and love in our community.

Thank you to the efforts of the organizers to help create the 2 Spirit Gathering."

**Signed, Richard G.**

**“August 6, 2003**

**Mr. Zoccole,**

I want to express my gratitude in how much the **Transforming Generations, 15<sup>th</sup> Annual International Two-Spirit Gathering** has changed my outlook on life and of being a 2-Spirited person myself. The Gathering was filled with hope and dreams. I came away from the gathering not wanting to leave as I have made many dear friends for life (and that's the honest truth!!!).

At first I was wondering what I was getting myself into. I can remember the day as if it were yesterday, when I arrived at your office in downtown Toronto. I was filled with anticipation as well as fear. I guess you could say that I was going to the gathering with my eyes wide shut!! And upon arriving we were met with open arms. Your staff and volunteers sure made us feel welcomed as well as at home. Congratulations go out to your staff, for they did an excellent job in organizing the gathering and greeting the participants.

There were many aspects of the gathering that were entirely new to me as this was my first time at such an event. I now that I came away from there **feeling stronger, healthier and full of much needed wisdom**. I will never forget my experience for as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow and the grass grows.

I am truly looking forward to next years gathering as I hope to be invited. Any response in regards to the event will surely be appreciated.

Once again, I want to thank you for being there for the 2-spirit people and I know we will meet again.”

**Yours in respect,  
Wesley G. K.**

## **APPENDIX 5: LIST AND LOCATIONS OF ANNUAL TWO-SPIRIT GATHERINGS**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GATHERING</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>PROV./STATE</b>
1988	1 <sup>ST</sup>	Minneapolis	Minnesota, USA
1989	2 <sup>ND</sup>	Wilderness Way	Wisconsin, USA
1990	3 <sup>RD</sup>	Beausejour	Manitoba, CAN.
1991	4 <sup>TH</sup>	Eugene	Oregon, USA
1992	5 <sup>TH</sup>	Goldbridge	British Columbia, CAN.
1993	6 <sup>TH</sup>	Tuscon	Arizona, USA
1994	7 <sup>TH</sup>	Lawrence	Kansas, USA
1995	8 <sup>TH</sup>	Rexton	New Brunswick, CAN.
1996	9 <sup>TH</sup>	Olympia	Washington, USA
1997	10 <sup>TH</sup>	Onamia	Minnesota, USA
1998	11 <sup>TH</sup>	Beausejour	Manitoba, CAN.
1999	12 <sup>TH</sup>	San Jose	California, USA
2000		No official gathering	
2001	13 <sup>TH</sup>	Chehalis lodge	British Columbia, CAN.
2002	14 <sup>TH</sup>	Nakoda lodge	Alberta, CAN.
2003	15 <sup>TH</sup>	Geneva park	Ontario, CAN.
2004	16 <sup>TH</sup>		Montana, USA