



Communications and Engagement

Elaine Alec

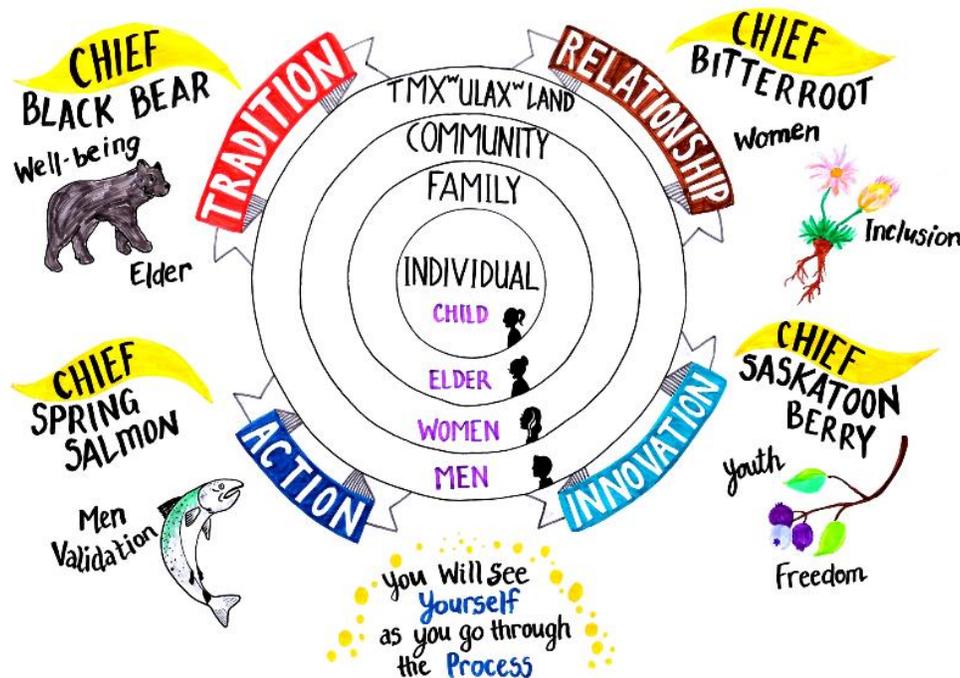
9:30am - 10:30am, October 23

Virtual BC Comprehensive Community Planning Workshop 2020

Topic Overview

Communicating with and engaging community members in CCP processes.

Key learnings



Teachings from the Four Food Chiefs

1. We must recognize that there are people in our community that have different ways of communicating, being, and doing, so you can't rely on one form of communication because that may not work for everyone. The diagram above shows the four perspective types: Tradition, Relationship, Innovation, and Action and it can guide us in how we need to gather and who we need to include.
2. We must listen to everyone - even the most small and insignificant being such as fly, even his voice, is just as powerful as the Chiefs' voices in bringing life to our communities.



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3. It is important to bring together a planning team with all four perspective types so that the process and engagement questions asked are accessible to each communication style.
4. Planning is not a linear process - it is iterative and can look many different ways
 - a. It is love-based and built on a foundation of trust.
 - b. Community plans are living documents - it can and will evolve over time
5. Recognize the nestest system (individual, family, community, land)
 - a. You cannot plan for one system without planning for the other.
 - b. We tend to focus on family, community, and the land, but it is important to ensure the individual is taken care of and considered as well.
6. Trauma informed practice
 - a. When people feel safe and have a strong sense of belonging, they are confident in sharing their values and ideas without fear of judgement.
 - b. In order to create a safe space, you have to be a safe space. In order to be a safe space you have to understand all people have different perspectives and listen with an open heart and open mind.
 - c. Recognize that many people have immediate needs (how to feed my family tonight)

Engagement Tips:

1. Meaningful engagement means including people from the very beginning or the conception of the idea.
 - When setting up meetings, try to schedule them at different times
2. Build a planning **team**
 - a. Working in community can be hard and draining, so having a team helps to avoid burnout
 - b. One way of doing this is having representatives from different family groups
 - Offer training to reps so they feel comfortable to go and host their own engagement sessions
 - c. Not everyone will like you, and that is ok, that is why you need a team!
 - d. Your team members should represent all four perspectives as well as the fly or outspoken “difficult” person
3. Ensure that you ask questions that align with each perspective



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- a. You do not have to define or clarify questions, rather, allow individuals to answer the question in the way they understand the question
4. Planning work spans all departments and sectors.
 - a. Work to shift community away from planning in separate departments or sectors
 - b. Example: Held weekly sessions with a different topics and questions provided ahead of time
 - i. This allowed people to think about the topics ahead of time and attend whatever meetings they were interested in (ie. education, health, ...)
5. Engagement Example: Family meetings
 - a. Planning team supported family meetings throughout the community
 - b. Provided \$200 gift cards to host a large dinner
6. Take note of the people who didn't attend the meetings and call them to have an individual meeting so they have the opportunity to be heard
7. Planning is all about the process - think about your stories, the stories about your families, and how you have always done things. These stories live inside you - what are the things you just do without explanation? Trust in these ways of doing.
8. Virtual engagement sessions:
 - Limit sessions to 20-25 people max (6-10 is best when possible)
 - Enables everyone on the call the chance to be heard
 - You can see everyone's cameras in the Zoom grid
 - Meeting can stay within 1-1.5 hr
 - As people sign in, write each person's name down, which you can then share with everyone to form the virtual circle
 - Not everyone has the same grid view screen, so this helps create structure in the conversation
 - Example session format:
 - Circle introduction - what is on your heart?
 - Presentations
 - Breakout session
 - Closing - asking people to share as they wish
9. Celebrate achievements and show successes to focus on the positive elements.

Amazing Quotes



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“Trust the process, trust your people - they will lead you exactly where you need to go.”

Further Resources and Links

Elaine Alec's Book, *Calling My Spirit Back*: https://www.amazon.ca/Calling-Spirit-Back-Elaine-Alec/dp/0228830699/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Notes by: Cleo Breton