



INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE IN METRO VANCOUVER

YWCA CRABTREE CORNER

APRIL 2022

To which Indigenous nation(s) do you belong or have kinship connections?

22
Participants

15
Nations

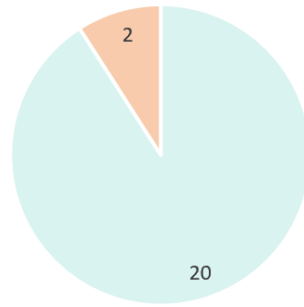
3
Provinces

"How to improve Indigenous child welfare is a big, loaded question that one cannot give simple answers to."

– Amber

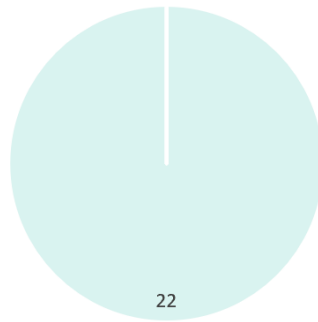


Which of the following best describes you?



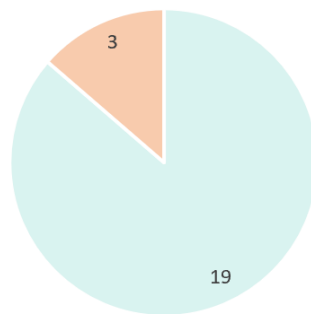
■ I am an adult
■ I am an Elder

Which of the following best describes you?



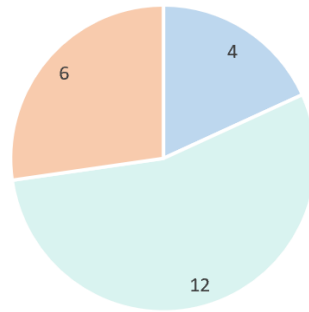
■ I live in Metro Vancouver
■ I do not live in Metro Vancouver

Which of the following best describes you?



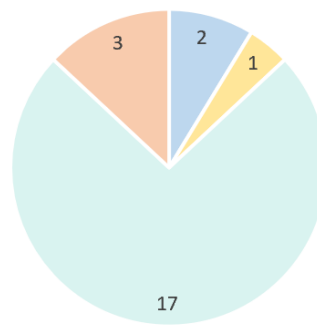
■ I am a caregiver to dependent children/youth
■ I am not a caregiver to dependent youth/children

Which of the following best describes you?



- I used to be in foster care
- I have never been in foster care
- Other (e.g. I was in residential school, I was adopted)

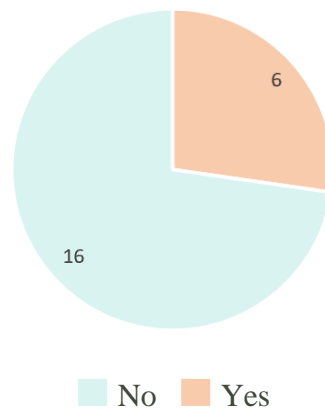
Which of the following best describes you?



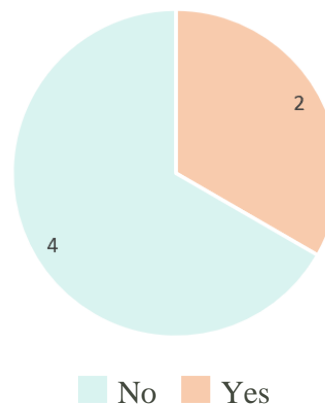
- I am currently a foster parent to Indigenous children/youth
- I have never been a foster parent to Indigenous children/youth
- I would like to be a foster parent to Indigenous children/youth
- I have previously been a foster parent to Indigenous children/youth

“Keep Families together. Support Families any way you can.”
– Crystal

Are you aware of any child welfare initiatives that are being led by the Indigenous nation(s) to which you belong or have kinship connections?



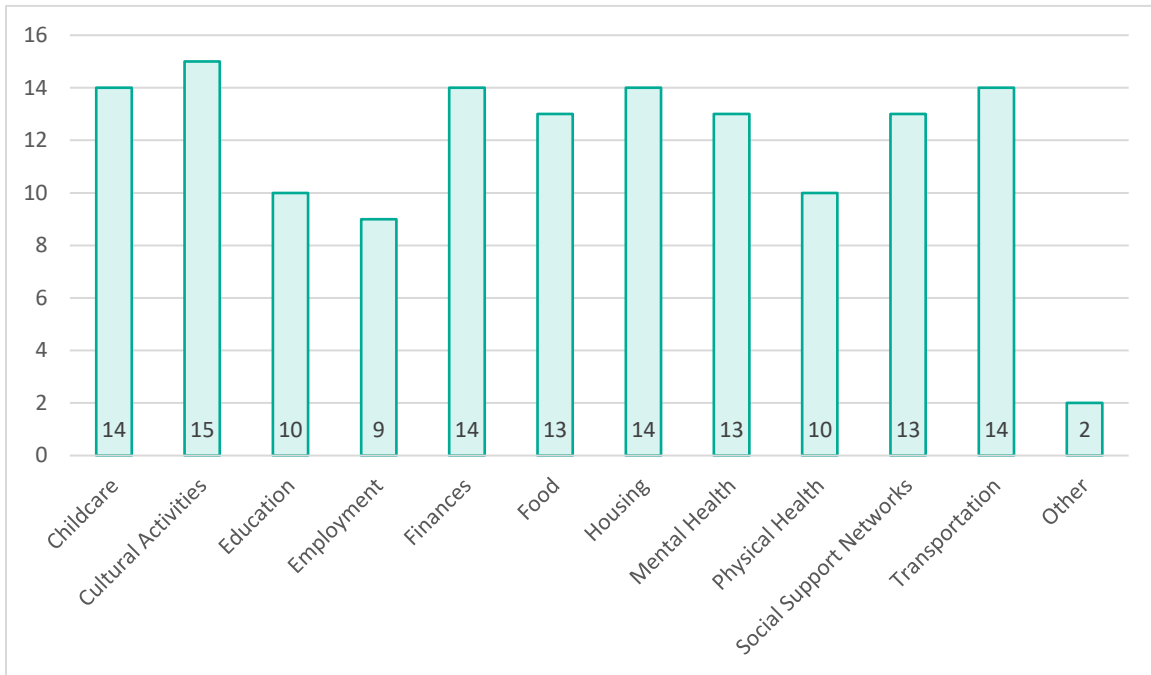
If the Indigenous nation(s) to which you belong or have kinship connections are leading their own child welfare initiatives, have you faced any difficulties accessing them while living in Metro Vancouver?



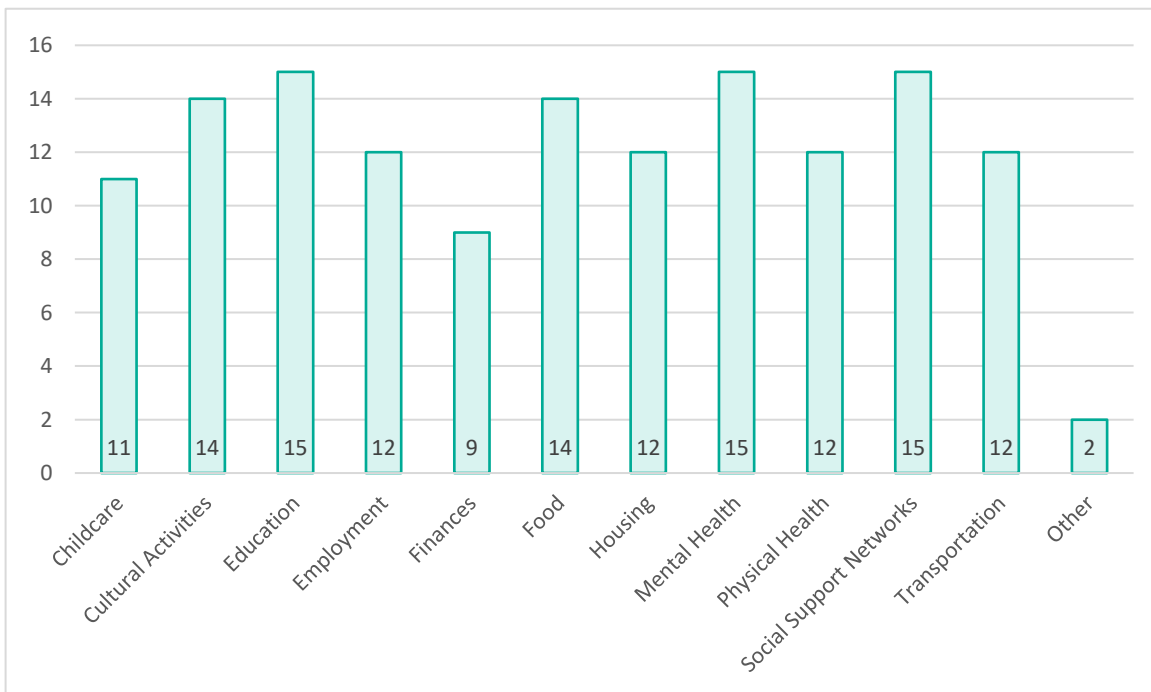
If yes, please tell us about the difficulties you have faced.

No services provided for people who don't live at home
Not enough supports provided for single mothers
Focused on apprehension

What are some challenges that you face when trying to take care of yourself, your family, and/or your community?



What are some programs or services would like to see offered or expanded (at/beyond YWCA Metro Vancouver)?



What are some programs or services you would like to see offered or expanded (at/beyond YWCA Metro Vancouver)?

Daycare so that parents can work

Help grocery shopping for single parents

...

Help finding a family doctor

Help getting to specialist appointments for Elders

...

Activities to bring families together

Housing for entire families, not just moms

...

Indigenous-specific child and family supports

Support groups & programming for parents with teens

Support groups for mothers who may feel alone or judged by family/friends

...

Help obtaining GED & ABE level 4



While an ideal outcome may be for Indigenous communities to lead their own child welfare services, many communities are still in the early stages of making this a reality. In the meantime, what is one way that the current child welfare services in BC could be improved? Part 1.

Foster good relationships:

- Earn parents' trust
- Listen to the family
- Be gentler with parents
- Don't stigmatize parents
- Unlearn internalized biases
- Use trauma informed practice
- Withhold subjective judgements
- Be responsive when families ask for help
- Work together with parents rather than against them
- Stop harassing parents who are treating their children well
- Recognize that fit parenting and responsible substance use are not mutually exclusive

Keep families together:

- Advocate for families to receive more support
- Invest in more services that keep families together
- Don't prolong reunification if the parent is doing everything asked of them
- Facilitate communication between parents and children who are in foster care
- Do not take the child from the parent if the parent is doing everything asked of them
- Contact the child's family and nation after apprehension as per federal law

↪ In Vancouver, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS) are not currently following this mandate.



While an ideal outcome may be for Indigenous communities to lead their own child welfare services, many communities are still in the early stages of making this a reality. In the meantime, what is one way that the current child welfare services in BC could be improved? Part 2.

Improve service delivery:

- Hire more service workers
- Hire Indigenous employees
- Conduct proper investigations
- Demand better accountability from MCFD
- Connect clients with services that are available
- Foster knowledgeable advocates in the community
- Create more connection in how services are delivered
- Learn about and apply current evidence-based methods
- Help employees become more informed about Indigenous child welfare
- Ensure staff are not overworked and have enough time to do their job well

Provide more supports & services:

- Job hunting support
- Employment training
- Free education and certificates
- Programs that help foster self-identity
- DNA testing for people who were adopted
- Second-stage housing for entire families, not just women
- One-on-one supports to help parents get their children back
- Opportunities to raise children with first nations beliefs, spirituality, and teachings

