



Crime Prevention Investment Plan Framework for Wisdom Seeking and Evaluation

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Acknowledgements: This framework was developed by Calgary Neighbourhood researchers using the Siim 'ohksin: Wahkotiwin Oral Validation (Evaluation) process (2019) developed by Suzanne McLeod and CPIP Evaluation Framework (2019) developed by Constellation Consulting. Suzanne McLeod is Anishinabe from Sagkeeng First Nation (Fort Alexander), MB. She has worked extensively within Indigenous communities as a researcher, writer, and educator with a focus on community, program, and policy development.

INTRODUCTION

The Crime Prevention Investment Plan (CPIP) supports time-bound, evidence-based programs focused on crime prevention. The long-term goals of CPIP are to reduce criminal offending or re-offending and enhance wellbeing. These goals are high-level, have multiple co-occurring causal factors, and are difficult to measure at the program level. Because of this, CPIP has also identified mid-term outcomes that research shows contribute to the long-term goals. In the mid-term, CPIP seeks positive change to risk and protective factors related to criminal offending or re-offending.

CPIP funds programs using either a [Social Development](#) lens, which can focus on early intervention for people most at risk of involvement in crime or prevention of reoffending for those already engaged with the criminal justice system; or the [Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin](#) approach towards crime prevention among Indigenous¹ people. Likewise, the evaluation of CPIP-funded programs incorporates both Western approaches and Indigenous evaluation methodology, known as wisdom seeking².

This framework describes and provides the rationale underlying both wisdom seeking and Western written evaluation methods, highlighting parallels between them.

This document is intended for City of Calgary staff, CPIP-funded programs, and others interested in the development of parallel processes for oral wisdom seeking and Western written evaluation. For a step-by-step guide to the processes, see the Social Development Evaluation Toolkit and Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin Wisdom Seeking Toolkit (both are in the “Evaluation” section of www.calgary.ca/CPIP).

GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF WISDOM SEEKING/EVALUATION

CPIP’s goals for evaluation/wisdom seeking are to assess whether programs are being implemented as planned and whether they are contributing to mid-term outcomes. The following principles provide the foundation for CPIP evaluation/wisdom seeking:

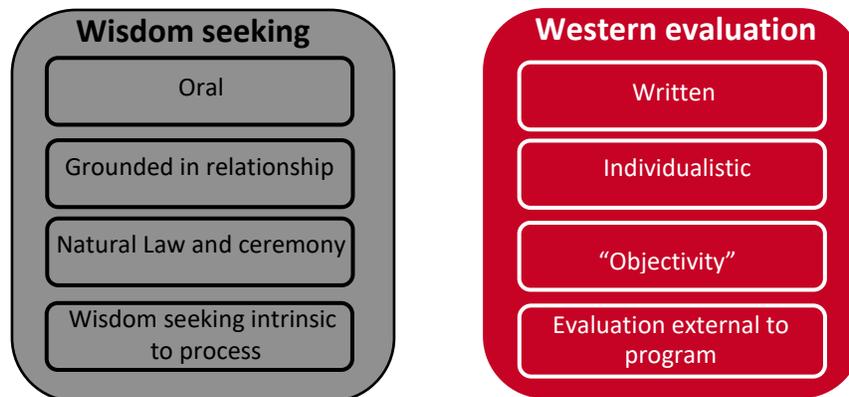
1. In support of the TRC Calls to Action⁷, the funder accepts wisdom seeking as a valid approach to evaluation.
2. All programs are required to collect data/information and use it to report on program outcomes. Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin programs use oral wisdom seeking, which parallels Western written methods, as well as surveys developed for Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin. Social development programs can choose the data/information collection and analysis methods that work best for them.
3. Both funded programs and the funder strive for continuous improvement.

WESTERN WRITTEN EVALUATION AND ORAL WISDOM SEEKING

Little precedent exists for Indigenous communities and municipal government to use parallel processes for evaluation. Because of the TRC Calls to Action, Western organizations are at a watershed moment where doors are opening to parallel Indigenous ways of knowing in practice. Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin represents such a commitment to change. Generalizing about oral wisdom seeking and Western written

evaluation methodologies risks oversimplification but identifying high-level characteristics of each is an important starting point. (See [Figure A.](#))

Figure A. Characteristics of wisdom seeking and Western evaluation^{3,4}



Using a written format for this framework limits our ability to fully understand and communicate Indigenous ways of knowing. Creators of this framework acknowledge the challenges and opportunities in this effort and seek to enter into ethical spaces with Indigenous communities to find solutions and best practices as the experience unfolds. Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin calls for City of Calgary leaders and staff to be differently involved with evaluation than they are when Western evaluation is used. Given the importance of in-person relationship and oral tradition to Indigenous ways of knowing, City leader’s and staff presence at ceremony are crucial to show commitment and to build relationship and shared community.

Indigenous communities are in the process of unearthing and remembering their true and validated values, teachings, and norms in the face of historical and ongoing colonial conquest^{5,7}. This situation means that understanding of protocols, roles, and ceremonies may shift and evolve. Given these challenges, when uncertainties about wisdom seeking and Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin arise, Ceremonial Elders and Indigenous communities are the authority.

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Western Written Evaluation - Contract/Theory of Change and Year End Report

Evaluation for programs using a social development approach centres on comparing a program’s intentions, as documented in the funding contract and Theory of Change (TOC), to what they actually accomplish, as documented in the Year End Report (see [Figure B](#)). Implemented at the beginning of the funding cycle, the funding contract signifies the terms of the agreement between the funder (CPIP) and the program, while the TOC outlines programmatic information, including the program goal, strategies to achieve it, and related research. Then, at the end of each year, programs report on progress towards those goals in the Social Development Year End Report in FIMS (sample form [online](#)). Learnings from the Year End Report may be used to revise the TOC. See the Social Development Evaluation Toolkit (in the “Evaluation” section of www.calgary.ca/CPIP) for more detail and step-by-step instructions.

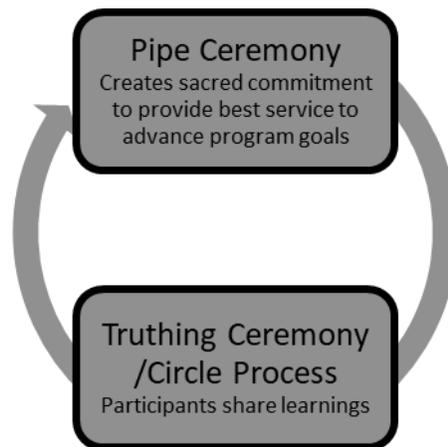
Figure B. Western written evaluation



Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin Wisdom Seeking - Pipe Ceremony, Truthing Ceremony/Circle Process, and Smudge

Wisdom seeking centers around the Pipe Ceremony and the Truthing Ceremony. The two ceremonies are inextricably linked; one cannot occur without the other (see [Figure C](#)). Both ceremonies begin with the smudge, which cleanses, brings out positive energy, and facilitates a connection with the Creator. The smudge parallels the call to order in the formal meeting structure of Western traditions. The ceremonies happen in and create an ethical space⁵. An ethical space means a space where Indigenous and Western world views come together, recognizing their different perspectives and intending to engage with and understand one another.

Figure C. Oral wisdom seeking



The Pipe Ceremony represents the start of something - in this case the program. It takes place at the beginning of the funding cycle. It is the creation of a sacred commitment between each funded-program, the funder/City (represented by the Host), and the Creator, as well as the Ceremonial Elder, smudge, other funded programs, and the concept of Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin. They commit to provide the best service possible to advance program goals and the responsibility of Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin is transferred to organizations.

The Truthing Ceremony (also called the Circle Process), takes place at the end of program delivery every year. In the ceremony the Ceremonial Elder invites each program participant, one by one, to sit in front of them and lights a Smudge. The participant responds to questions from the Ceremonial Elder about what they have learned and how they will support Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin in the future. This process is considered a conversation between the participant and the Smudge or Creator.

In some years, in addition to individual participants answering questions, oral stories of individual programs or the larger story of the combined programs are also shared. There may also be a Pipe Ceremony during which Drummers sing the Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin song, the funder provides a summary of the written evaluation, and the Host acknowledges their responsibility to Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin by putting the written evaluation in the satchel. In these years, the Pipe Ceremony ends with a round dance and feast.

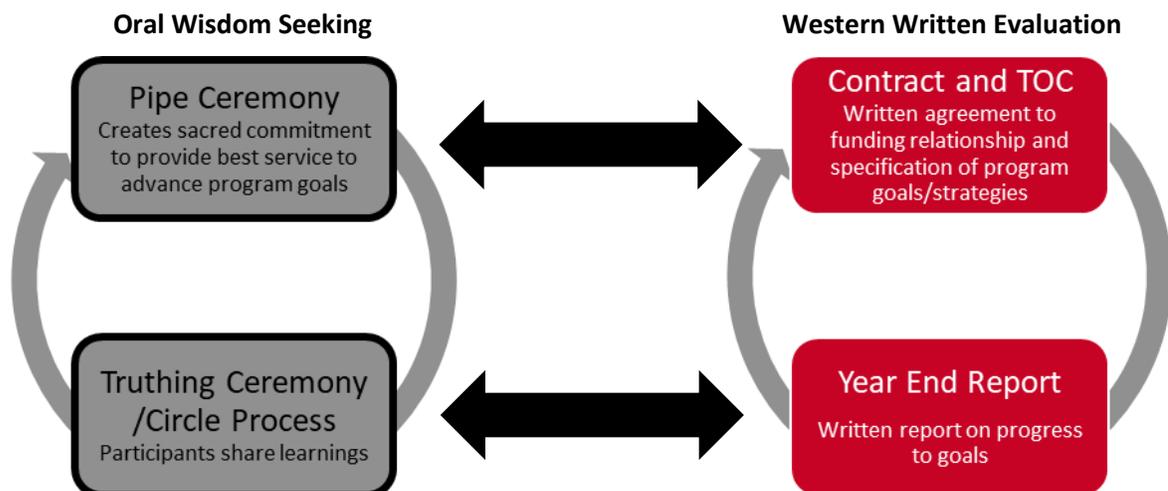
Understanding the critical importance of the Pipe Ceremony

Prior to colonization, Pipe Ceremonies were used to create sacred space between the physical and spiritual worlds. A sacred ceremony, they were used to bring disparate people together in friendship or to achieve a common goal. In some cases, Pipe Ceremonies were used to make ceremonial, meaningful commitments, or to seal a covenant. Pipe Ceremonies create the ethical space to bring the oral and written together. Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin is the vehicle by which the Western funder comes together with the Indigenous approach in ethical space and ceremony to meet objectives and conduct evaluation from an oral, spiritual perspective.

Parallels between Oral Wisdom Seeking and Western Written Evaluation

The link between the Pipe Ceremony and Truthing Ceremony/Circle Process in wisdom seeking is parallel to the link between the contract/TOC and Year End Report in Western evaluation methods. Both begin with setting intentions and goals and then check in on progress towards those goals. [Figure D](#) illustrates parallels between the processes.

Figure D. Parallel Processes in CPIP



Protocol and Social Expectations

Those new to attending ceremony may not be aware of rules for social conduct. While it is beyond the scope of this document to describe all aspects of protocol, some key concepts are:

- Do not leave the Circle once a ceremony starts;
- Listen first and wait to be invited to speak;
- Be generous and respectful;
- Do not flaunt knowledge or “expertise;”
- Women on their moon time (who are menstruating) should ask the advice of a female Knowledge Keeper in order to follow proper protocol;
- Women should wear a full-length skirt or bring a blanket or shawl to cover their legs;
- Ceremony participants who are transgender/non-binary/gender nonconforming and are unsure of whether to follow protocol for women/girls or men/boys should ask a staff member, Knowledge Keeper, or the Host how to proceed;
- Participants can bring pillows or other seating to be comfortable as the ceremony can last several hours;
- Knowledge keepers should be served first if there is a feast.

Readers are encouraged to attend ceremonies and consult with Knowledge Keepers to better understand protocol.

Western written methods with Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin programs

While wisdom seeking is part of Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin, some Western evaluation techniques are also used for these programs. They sign a written contract, submit a written TOC and submit a brief Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin Year End Report in FIMS (sample form [online](#)). In the Truthing Ceremony/Circle Process, City researchers unobtrusively record participant stories. Researchers work with Knowledge Keepers and funded-program staff to gain participant consent before the ceremony. The recorded audio is transcribed, and CPIP researchers theme responses against the cultural principles of Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin - Respect, Responsibility, Accountability, and Discipline. Researchers and Partnership Specialists share themes with funded-program staff and the Knowledge Keeper for each program and revise them until all parties are satisfied with their validity.

Programs also use [Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin Indicator surveys \(SWI\)](#) to assess whether participants are changing over the course of the program. Suzanne MacLeod, program Elders, funded programs, and City staff collaborated to develop SWI surveys in the creation of the Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin: Research Brief and Strategy, which was validated in ceremony on June 28, 2017. Participants in all programs are required to answer one question - “I understand what Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin means” to facilitate reporting collective impact. Programs also select from the additional surveys available: Understanding the Role of Colonial History and Residential Schools, Understanding Risk and Protective Factors, Understanding Natural Laws and Ceremony, and Understanding Cultural Knowledge and Personal Resilience. CPIP researchers will analyze data and produce reports for funded-programs.

See the Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin Wisdom Seeking Toolkit (in the “Evaluation” section of www.calgary.ca/CPIP) for more details and step-by-step instructions.

Sharing Learnings

CPIP researchers plan to produce a CPIP Annual Report that combines findings from social development programs with findings from Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin programs. It will include indicators of high-level

collective impact, like the number of participants, contacts, volunteers and volunteer hours across all programs, drawn from Year End Reports. It will describe the number of programs that demonstrated improvement to risk/protective factors, based on Year End Reports and SWI survey reports. Substantive examples of how risk/protective factors were improved will include themes from the Truthing ceremony/Circle Process and qualitative examples provided in Year End Reports. Efforts will be made to present the written report in a parallel oral form, such as an audio/video recording of participants sharing stories (with their consent), made accessible by a QR code in the written report.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK

Because of the TRC Calls to Action, Western organizations are at a watershed moment where doors are opening to parallel Indigenous ways of knowing in practice. Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin represents such a commitment to change. While Siim ohksin: Wahkotiwin draws on longstanding Indigenous culture and traditions, identifying parallels between wisdom seeking and Western evaluation techniques and implementing parallel processes is new. Western written evaluation methods, wisdom seeking, and the connections between them will develop and evolve as the work unfolds. The framework depends upon and helps to nurture ethical spaces and relationships between Indigenous communities and The City of Calgary's CPIP. This framework is only a starting point. Members of the Indigenous community, Indigenous researchers, and CPIP researchers should regularly revisit it to facilitate continuous improvement.

Suggested citation: Calgary Neighbourhoods. 2020. Crime Prevention Investment Plan: Framework for Wisdom Seeking and Evaluation. (Calgary, AB: Crime Prevention Investment Plan, The City of Calgary)

References and Notes

1. For the purposes of this document, Indigenous refers to not only the legal definition contained in Section 35 of the 1982 Canadian Constitution Act, First Nations, Metis and Inuit, but also the historic – individual, familial, and communal definitions of what it means to be an Indigenous person in Canada. The complex history and current scope of the political, cultural, economic and social influences on Indigenous communities results in a spectrum of Indigenous identity at both the individual and community levels.
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3. Katz I, Newton BJ, Bates S, Raven M. *Evaluation Theories and Approaches; Relevance for Aboriginal Contexts*. Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia; 2016. <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/conversations/Evaluation%20theories%20and%20approaches%20-%20relevance%20for%20Aboriginal%20contexts.pdf>.
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6. Ermine W, Sinclair R, Jeffery B. *The Ethics of Research Involving Indigenous Peoples: Report of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre to the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics*. Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre; 2004. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317055157_The_Ethics_of_Research_Involving_Indigenous_Peoples
7. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; 2015. http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf.