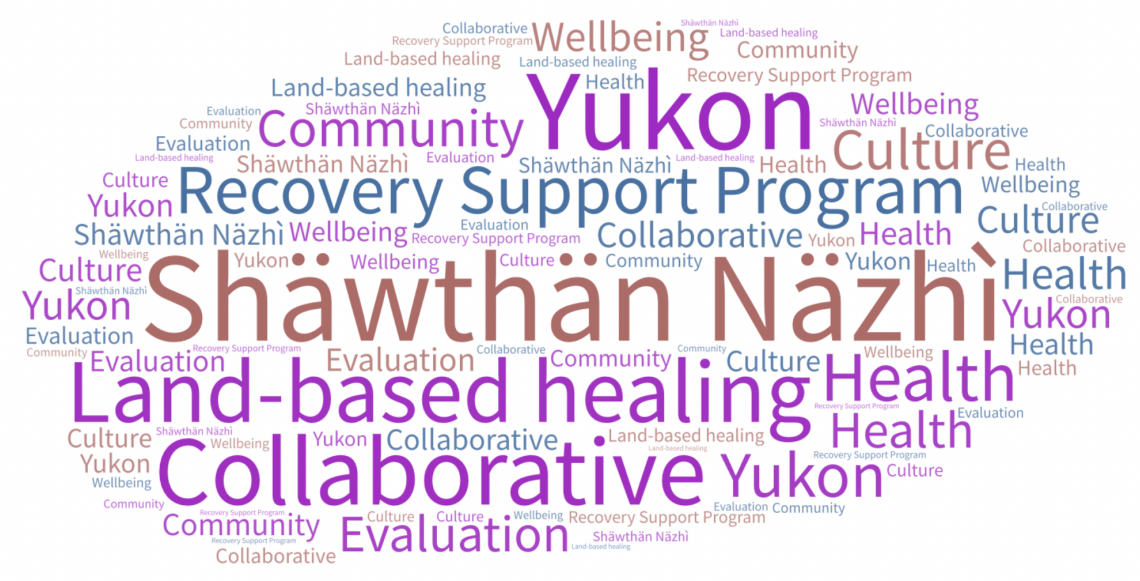
Shäwthän Näzhì
Recovery Support Program



Program Evaluation Plan
Prepared by Melissa Tremblay

May 2024

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Preface

The impetus for this document emerged directly from Shäwthän Näzhì Recovery Support Program staff, who contacted Melissa Tremblay (i.e., the evaluator) to begin an evaluation project. In this document, a plan for the evaluation project is proposed. The evaluation was designed with the program's current developmental stage in mind while also considering program needs for formative information and summative outcomes. The evaluation plan was created based on discussions during two days of evaluation planning meetings between Melissa and Shäwthän Näzhì staff.

Introduction: What is the Shäwthän Näzhì Recovery Support Program?

Organizational Context

Yukon Territory.

In January 2022, the Government of Yukon responded to a recent, drastic increase in substance use harms, including overdose-related deaths, by declaring a Substance Use Health Emergency. The Government of Yukon website states that, "This declaration was a commitment to respond and a call to action to all governments, communities, organizations, partners and Yukoners to do their part. This is an ongoing, territory-wide challenge that cannot be solved by the Yukon government alone." Part of the Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy involves expanding a range of community-tailored initiatives that aim to address substance use harms and invest in the health and wellbeing of Yukoners. The Government of Yukon has also expressed explicit recognition of the profound place of the land in facilitating the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. There are currently no aftercare recovery programs available in the Yukon.

Shäwthän Näzhì.

Launched as a pilot program in the fall of 2020, Shäwthän Näzhì was formed in recognition of the integral, root cause of intergenerational trauma in disrupting the health and wellbeing of families and communities. After 18 months of successful pilot programming, the Shäwthän Näzhì: Healing With The Land Society was established to facilitate investment in broader programming and training of additional team members. Shäwthän Näzhì consists of a leadership team who guide programming, board members, and a team of passionate healers, with expertise that spans counselling, energy healing, equine therapy, art and play therapy, music therapy and traditional First Nation cultural practices.

Recovery Support Program

Program background.

Substance use, misuse, and abuse occur among people from all demographic backgrounds in Canada. Indigenous peoples, however, experience a disproportionate burden of *harms* related to substance use, given the structural and systemic health disparities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.[1] The causes of substance abuse among Indigenous peoples are deeply rooted in historical and ongoing colonialism. In particular, experiences with residential school, having a child apprehended by the child welfare system, and cultural dispossession have all been linked to intergenerational trauma

and substance abuse.[2,3,4] Moreover, Indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted by barriers to service access as well as a lack of culturally safe services.[5] Thus, there is a pressing need for substance use treatment and recovery programs that better meet the needs of Indigenous peoples.

Where treatment is accessible, many Indigenous peoples choose to engage in formal substance abuse treatment and recovery programs, but the *mechanisms* by which these diverse programs promote healing have not been widely evaluated. What is known is that, despite significant adversity, Indigenous peoples have resisted the impacts of colonialism by upholding connections to culture, traditional territory, family and community systems, and identity. Where these connections are honored in treatment and recovery approaches, promising pathways are forged toward healing trauma and substance use harms. Upholding cultural connections can include land-based healing. Although land-based healing has been practiced by Indigenous peoples for millennia, land-based approaches are only recently being more *widely* recognized as integral to supporting Indigenous peoples recovering from addictions.[6] However, the potential of land-based healing approaches to support Indigenous peoples' recovery is substantial.[7,8] Recognizing these realities, Shäwthän Näzhì plans to begin offering a land-based recovery support program in Spring 2024.

Program description. The Shäwthän Näzhì Recovery Support Program was formed with acknowledgement that people who are on a recovery journey require ongoing, tailored supports to manage their health and wellbeing. The program is also foundationally built on recognition of the insidious nature of intergenerational trauma, which can be addressed using land-based approaches to healing.

The program values the perspectives of individuals, families and communities in facilitating their own healing, and emphasizes understanding, learning, as well as respect for different ideas and opinions. The program is supported by a Program Manager, Equine Director, Clinical Director, Recovery Male Leader, Recovery Female Leader, Art Specialist, Fire Keeper and Traditional Ceremonialist, as well as the Shäwthän Näzhì Executive Director.

Although the program continued to take shape at the time of writing, 12-15 participants are anticipated during the program's inaugural offering. In addition, it is expected that the program will take the form of monthly ~4-hour sessions at a meeting space in Whitehorse, with arts-based and crafting activities integrated with intention. It is also expected that participants will be welcomed onto the land at least twice during their year-long programming. On-the-land programming is intended to nurture people through their recovery so that they can return to community with strength, recognizing that many Yukoners do not have access to land-based opportunities. Participants will also be supported by team leads in between sessions as needed; for example, by connecting participants to other community supports.

While meeting with the evaluator, vision and mission statements were shaped for the Shäwthän Näzhì Recovery Support Program, as follows:

Our **vision** is that people and families are surrounded by connected communities with a streamlined continuum of recovery support. We envision a world where sobriety is the norm, and where Indigenous peoples have unlimited opportunities to connect to their culture, spirit, land, and wellbeing.

Our **mission:**

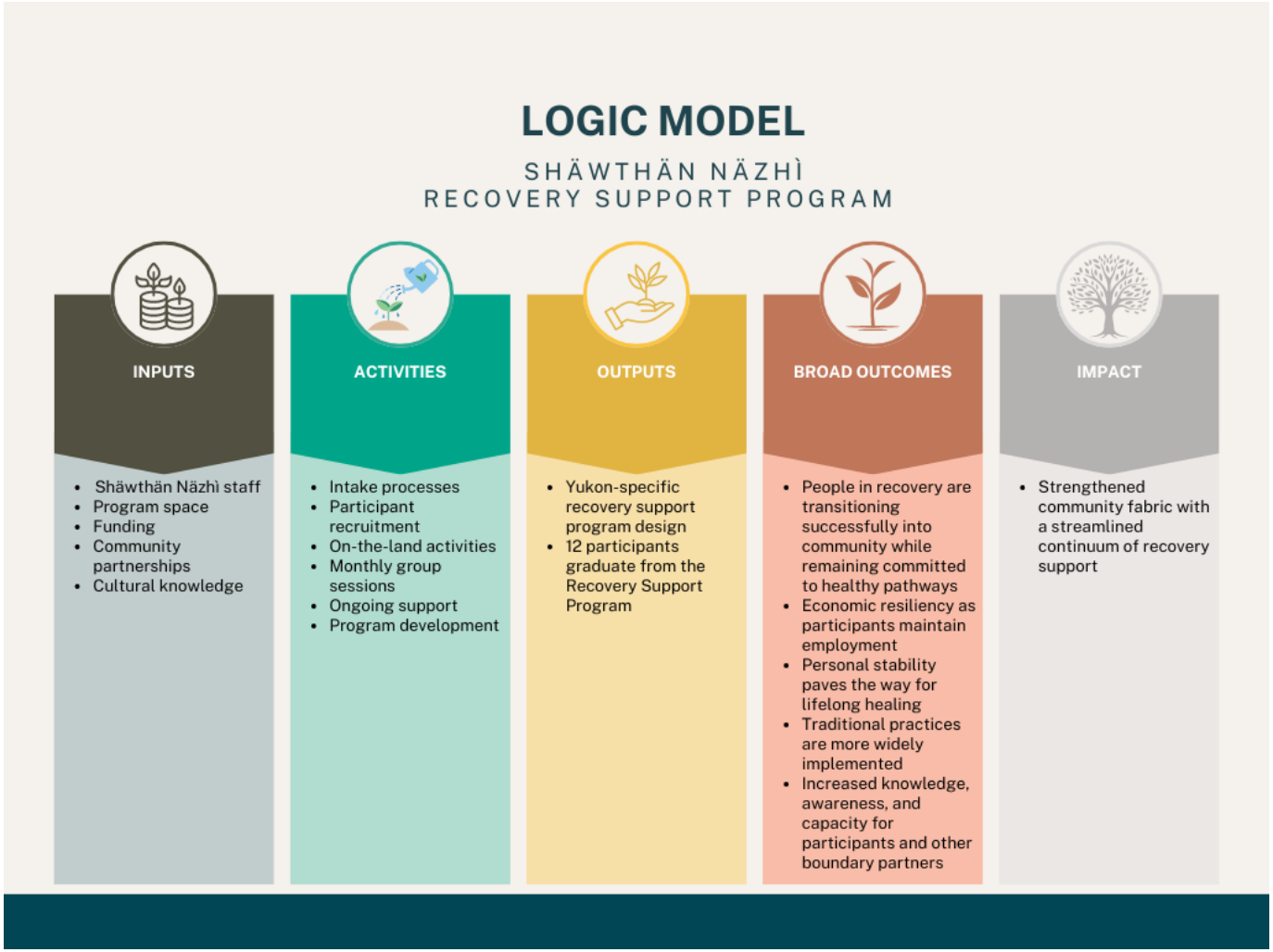
- We use land-based approaches to supporting people where they are on their recovery journey.
- We normalize and support recovery so that people feel safe being honest about where they are on their recovery journey.
- We encourage healing through genuine, transformational and compassionate relationships that foster acceptance and dignity.
- We work to decrease stigma and shame around recovery support access.
- We collaboratively engage in community-grounded supports and share knowledge to build capacity and inspire community partners.
- We build on participants' and families' strengths to promote individualized success.

Program logic model. The logic model below depicts the inputs, activities, outputs, broad outcomes, and impact of the Shäwthän Näzhì Recovery Support Program. This logic model represents a simplification of the complex processes of recovery, although it is acknowledged that the lived realities of people in recovery are multi-faceted and ever-changing, with context-dependent risk and protective factors that may be different for and specific to each individual. Therefore, this logic model provides a snapshot of the Recovery Support Program for the purpose of high-level understanding. It represents a picture of the program as it is currently intended to be offered; however, it is expected that the program will continue to change and evolve to reflect new learning as it is implemented.

Inputs refer to the resources dedicated to running a given program. Inputs for the Shäwthän Näzhì Recovery Support Program include Shäwthän Näzhì staff; the physical facilities where participants and staff will meet, and where land-based activities will take place; monetary funding; community partnerships, which may be intentionally developed and maintained; as well as the cultural knowledge that is critical to supporting participants.

Activities refer to what the program does with the inputs to provide services that meet program goals. Participants will undergo an intake process before being welcomed into the program, and intentional recruitment will take place. On-the-land activities and monthly sessions will form the core of programming, while ongoing support and program development also take place simultaneously with program implementation. Outputs serve as immediate evidence that activities have taken place. These include a Yukon-specific recovery support program design as well as the number of program graduates.

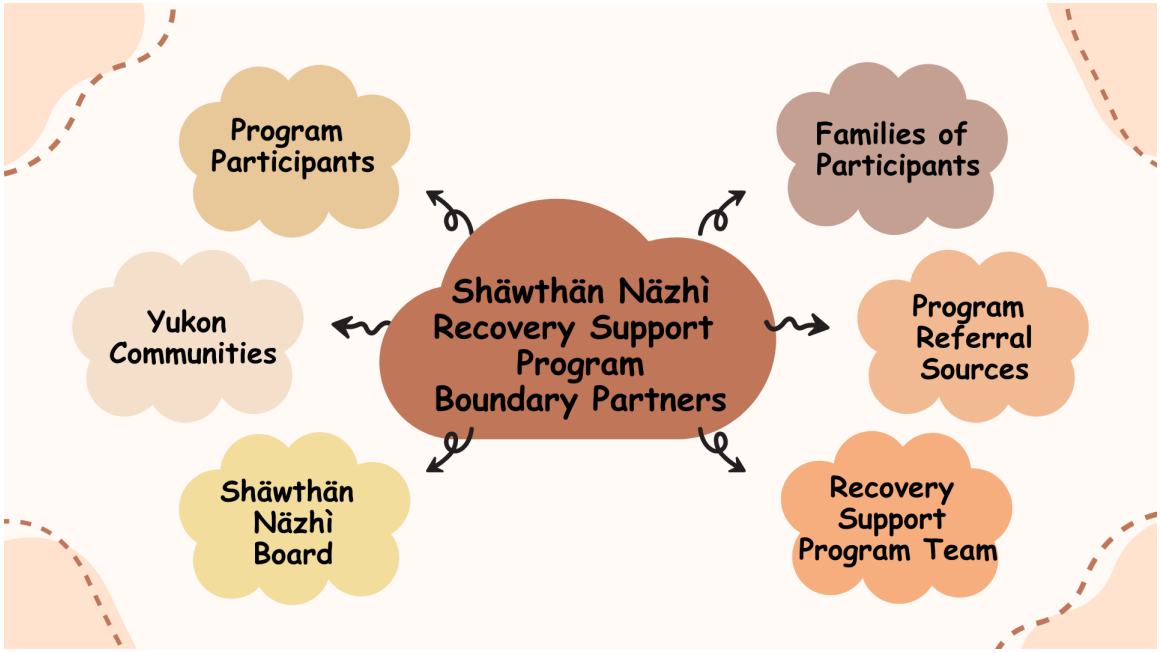
Outcomes refer to the benefits that result from the program. Broadly, outcomes include people in recovery transitioning successfully into community while remaining committed to healthy pathways; economic resiliency resulting from participants maintaining employment; personal stability paving the way for lifelong healing; wider implementation of traditional practices; and increased knowledge, awareness, and capacity for participants and other boundary partners. The ultimate projected impact of the program is a strengthened community fabric with a streamlined continuum of recovery support.


LOGIC MODEL
SHÄWTHÄN NÄZHÌ
RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAM
INPUTS
ACTIVITIES
OUTPUTS
BROAD OUTCOMES
IMPACT
• Shäwthän Näzhì staff
• Program space
• Funding
• Community partnerships
• Cultural knowledge
• Intake processes
• Participant recruitment
• On-the-land activities
• Monthly group sessions
• Ongoing support
• Program development
• Yukon-specific recovery support program design
• 12 participants graduate from the Recovery Support Program
• People in recovery are transitioning successfully into community while remaining committed to healthy pathways
• Economic resiliency as participants maintain employment
• Personal stability paves the way for lifelong healing
• Traditional practices are more widely implemented
• Increased knowledge, awareness, and capacity for participants and other boundary partners
• Strengthened community fabric with a streamlined continuum of recovery support

Boundary Partners

Below, a simplified depiction of the Shäwthän Näzhì boundary partners is provided. The term *boundary partners* is used as an alternative to the term *stakeholders* for two reasons. First, many Indigenous peoples are shifting away from the term *stakeholder* given its colonial roots. Second, the term *boundary partners*, first coined by Outcome Mapping practitioners,[9] signifies that there are limits or boundaries around the influence of a given program on participants. In addition, the term denotes the mutual relationship between a program and its interested parties. Overall, boundary partners are those individuals, groups and organizations with whom the Recovery Support Program interacts directly to effect changes and with whom the program can anticipate some opportunities for influence.[9]

Program participants represent a central boundary partner because they are most directly affected by the program's degree of success. In addition, families of participants have an interest in and influence on the success of participants. Yukon communities also play a role in the program's success, along with program referral sources. The Shäwthän Näzhì board is also represented as a boundary partner given their integral role in guiding the direction and accountability of the program. Finally, the Recovery Support Program team, who will work directly with participants to deliver and shape programming, represent another unique boundary partner who are expected to influence participants and be influenced by the program themselves.



Evaluation

Evaluation Type and Purpose

The Shäwthän Näzhì Recovery Support Program evaluation will incorporate developmental, summative, and formative elements aligned with Indigenous worldviews. This will support innovation within the program, acknowledge the program's continuous development and adaptation, and recognize emerging program outcomes and impacts. The purpose of the evaluation is threefold: (1) to document the model of recovery support being provided by Shäwthän Näzhì (developmental); (2) to understand the experiences of program participants (formative); and (3) to understand the impact of the program on participants and other boundary partners (summative).

Evaluation Approach

In keeping with the Indigenous lens of the Recovery Support Program evaluation, the evaluation will depart from conventional evaluation framing of "data" and "data collection" toward a more relational approach. An assumption here is that all knowledge is relational, and that participants, staff, and all of the program's interested parties have valuable wisdom and knowledge to contribute to the program's development, implementation, and evaluation. Thus, although the writer of this document is an outsider to the Yukon, Shäwthän Näzhì, and the Recovery Support Program, the evaluator's role is to facilitate decision-making and leadership from program staff in planning the evaluation. This process began with two days of meetings, as mentioned above, and will continue with a collaborative approach that integrates research, action, reflection, and communication.[10] In line with a collaborative approach, it is expected that program staff can learn from the knowledge co-created throughout program implementation and evaluation and begin to share this knowledge with their own networks and communities.

Evaluation Questions

1. What is the model of recovery support being provided by Shäwthän Näzhì? How does it align with other relevant programs?
2. As the program model emerges, what key learnings have occurred that can inform program evolution?
3. What are the impacts of the program on participants and other boundary partners?

Co-Creation of Evaluation Knowledge

Seven methods are recommended to co-create evaluation knowledge. These consist of (1) staff-completed debrief forms; (2) photo documentation; (3) participant surveys; (4) participant interviews; (5) staff interviews; (6) community surveys; and (7) direct observation. Ideas for each of these methods were generated during the two-day evaluation planning meeting held in late April 2024.

1. Staff-completed debrief forms. After each monthly session, staff will complete a debrief form to capture basic information about the session (e.g., number

of attendees), and general themes that arose during sessions. A draft debrief form can be found in Appendix A of this evaluation plan document.

2. Photo documentation. In addition to gathering feedback through interviews, participants and staff will document their program experiences through photos. Photos have been used as an effective program evaluation tool, both to document program events as they unfold, and to elicit detail and context when conducting interviews.[11] Participants and staff will be asked to capture the successes, challenges, and impacts of the Recovery Support Program through photographs, which will be shared with the evaluator before interviews.

3. Participant Surveys. A survey is proposed to garner participant feedback regarding circle sessions. Brief rating scales can be administered after each session, or less frequently depending on staff preference. A suggested survey is provided in Appendix B of this document, adapted from the Session Rating Scale (SRS V.3.0)[12] Survey items will ask participants to rate the extent to which (1) they felt heard, understood, and respected; (2) the session was helpful for them; (3) the program's approach is a good fit for them; and (4) the session felt right for them. Surveys also include two open-ended questions where participants can indicate their favorite part of the session and suggestions for improvement. Since staff may need to follow up with participants regarding their feedback, it is suggested that participants indicate their name on survey forms.

4. Participant Interviews. To gather participant feedback in a relational way, interviews with participants will be conducted. The suggested timeframe is immediately upon program completion. It may also be useful to conduct interviews with participants partway through program implementation; these interviews could take place virtually or by phone depending on participant preference. The objective of conducting participant interviews is to understand the extent to which they feel their recovery needs are being met through program participation; share suggestions for improvement; discuss program-related successes and challenges; and discuss how the program has impacted their recovery journey in such areas as engaging with their relations, successfully transitioning back to communities, reclaiming relationships with culture and land, and reconnecting with themselves. Not all of these areas will be queried in depth; rather, specific participant responses and experiences will guide interviews, which will be conducted in a conversational style.

5. Staff Interviews. Brief interviews will be conducted with staff. It is suggested that interviews take place at three time points: once closely following the program's launch, once approximately halfway through the year, and once following the program's completion. Staff will be asked to draw on their experiences and knowledge to provide feedback regarding the Recovery Support Program including program successes; conditions that support the successful provision of services; barriers to accessing services and more general program challenges; potential areas for program evolution; and emerging learnings regarding the program model.

6. Community Surveys. A survey of community boundary partners is recommended. Community boundary partners might include referral sources to the program, families, and other community agencies. The purpose of this survey would be to understand, from the perspectives of those external to the program, how the Recovery Support Program is filling a gap in services for people in the Yukon, and how the program can continue to evolve. This survey could be administered immediately following the program pilot in an online format. A survey has not been drafted for inclusion in this evaluation plan, since it is expected that ideas for survey items would emerge throughout program implementation.

7. Direct Observation. In cases where an external evaluator is commissioned for a program evaluation, direct observation can contribute to co-creating rich insights that are not possible without such observation. Therefore, it is recommended that an evaluator visit the program during one of its land-based learning sessions to understand the nuances of program implementation. In addition, in keeping with the developmental stage of the Recovery Support Program, it is recommended that the evaluator review project documentation in order to understand program activities, reflections, and opportunities for program improvement. These documents might include meeting minutes, job descriptions, environmental scans, proposals, funding reports, and program summaries. To complement direct observation and document review, it is also recommended that an integrative literature review[13] to be conducted to map the existing field of knowledge in relation to recovery support programs, with a focus on programs in Canada.

Analysis Methods

A collaborative approach will be used to make sense of the knowledge co-created for the purpose of this evaluation. With permission, interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Qualitative information will be analyzed using content analysis.[14] Information will be sorted into similar groupings, coded according to similar content, and synthesized into themes, all in consultation with staff as their time allows. Ongoing conversations with staff will allow for learnings to be integrated into program implementation in real time, drawing conclusions regarding the evaluation questions, and generating a narrative of the program's implementation.

Knowledge Sharing

Ongoing communication between the evaluator and program staff will provide opportunities for regular updates and communication, and to engage in ongoing knowledge sharing regarding evaluative insights. In addition, toward the end of the first year of program implementation, evaluation reporting requirements will be decided on collaboratively with the evaluator, Recovery Support Program staff, and the Shäwthän Näzhì board. An evaluation report is typically expected, but depending on the needs of the program, creative forms of knowledge sharing might also be drawn upon; for example, a community photo exhibit or open house, photobook, infographic-style report, or policy brief.

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Appendix A

SHÄWTHÄN NÄZHÌ RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAM

STAFF DEBRIEF FORM

Date: _____

Number of Session Attendees: _____

Are there any participants who require a follow-up phone call? Explain in the space below.

What were the common themes from today's session? Where did the conversation go? What did participants tend to focus on?

1

SHÄWTHÄN NÄZHÌ RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAM
STAFF DEBRIEF FORM (CONTINUED)

What was challenging about today's session? Was there anything that made today's session difficult?

What were the bright spots in today's session? What are you most proud of from today's session?

Appendix B

Shäwthän Näzhì Recovery Support Program

Participant Survey

Name: _____

Please rate today's session by placing a dash mark on the line nearest to the description that best fits your experience.

I did not feel heard, understood, and respected.	_____	I felt heard, understood, and respected.
Today's session was not helpful for me.	_____	Today's session was helpful for me.
This program's approach is not a good fit for me.	_____	This program's approach is a good fit for me.
Something was missing in the session today.	_____	Overall, today's session felt right for me.

What do you like most about today's session?

_____

_____

Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

_____

_____

This survey was adapted from the Session Rating Scale (SRS V 3.0) developed by Johnson, Miller, & Duncan (2000)

Appendix C: Boundary Partners, Intended Outcomes, and Markers of Progress

During our two-day evaluation planning meeting, ideas were generated regarding the ideal outcomes and markers of progress that the program hoped to achieve for the identified boundary partners. Below is the list that was generated. This list can serve as a reminder for staff of the outcomes and progress markers that they are working toward. In addition, these outcomes and progress markers may be touched on through interview questions and/or community survey items.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS ARE ENGAGED WITH AND CONNECTED TO THEIR RELATIONS BY:

- Sharing during circles
- Maintaining connections to the Recovery Support Program team
- Following through on commitments they make to their relationships
- Being honest with others

PARTICIPANTS SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITION BACK INTO COMMUNITIES BY:

- Learning how to be a part of their communities
- Being active members of their communities
- Experiencing a sense of belonging
- Being employed

PARTICIPANTS RECONNECT WITH CULTURE AND LAND BY:

- Embodying cultural practices in daily living
- Spending time on the land in ways that are meaningful to them
- Being committed to learning about themselves and their identity

PARTICIPANTS RECONNECT WITH THEMSELVES BY:

- Fulfilling/feeding their spirit in a good way
- Being honest with themselves
- Feeling instead of numbing
- Demonstrating openness to vulnerability
- Developing a more profound sense of self
- Keeping their determination alive
- Participating in hobbies
- Reconnecting with their life purpose
- Following their goals

PARTICIPANTS LIVE A GOOD SOBER LIFE BY:

- Maintaining connections to their own sobriety
- Developing awareness of triggers and how to manage them in a healthy way
- Having knowledge and understanding of all aspects of substance abuse
- Taking ownership of their own recovery supports, perhaps starting their own recovery groups in the future

FAMILIES

FAMILIES SUPPORT THEIR LOVED ONES IN RECOVERY BY:

- Being supportive and connected
- Recognizing addiction is a family issue
- Gaining knowledge and awareness of addiction recovery
- Showing understanding and compassion for people suffering with addictions
- Engaging with the program
- Working on healing their trauma

YUKON COMMUNITIES

YUKON COMMUNITIES DEMONSTRATE ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRAM GOALS:

- Yukon communities strive for communal meaning, purpose, hope, and healing
- Community agencies refer clients to the program
- Staff from other agencies communicate with Shäwthän Näzhì staff

SHÄWTHÄN NÄZHÌ TEAM

THE SHÄWTHÄN NÄZHÌ TEAM REMAINS COMMITTED, HEALTHY, AND RESILIENT BY:

- Keeping up with self-care practices
- Demonstrating confidence in each other
- Being committed to building a sense of hope
- Working together as a team to build each other up and be aware of others' weaknesses so can step in as needed
- Walking the talk in terms of culture, connection to selves, the land, and spirit
- Remembering all recovery journeys are different
- Feeling that they are living authentically and congruently with their values
- Applying their own knowledge and experiences to their work

SHÄWTHÄN NÄZHÌ BOARD

THE SHÄWTHÄN NÄZHÌ BOARD SUPPORTS THE RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAM BY:

- Facilitating team building
- Being available for debriefing as needed
- Encouraging staff to engage in self-care
- Actively supporting staff in their work

Appendix D: Narrative Summary of Notes from Meeting with Shäwthän Näzhì Staff

During the two-day evaluation planning meeting, Shäwthän Näzhì staff shared their hopes and fears about upcoming program implementation, and the evaluator took notes. Their conversations brought to life the complexities and tensions inherent to recovery support work, and are presented in narrative form here to provide additional program context relevant to program implementation and evaluation.

Staff began by speaking to the need for normalizing and supporting recovery given the intense stigma that surrounds help-seeking for struggles with addiction. As one staff member indicated, "We just have to shift the thinking around recovery." Staff also spoke about the significant need for culturally safe service providers in addiction treatment spaces.

They also shared what successful recovery can look like; one staff member described successful recovery as being, in part, "the opposite of trauma-bonding." In other words, people in successful recovery are able to develop healthy relationships with their support systems and "work through normal conflict with love." They described dreaming of a world where people in recovery could access healing support for as long as they needed, and recovery supports being offered in every Yukon community, out on the land. One staff member spoke of a loved one in their life by noting that, "If I could've taken them to a camp with their helpers instead of taking them to a detox where they're gonna get kicked out…that would've created lasting change. To stay until your spirit is ready." As one staff member put it, "In an ideal world as soon as someone relapses, there would be a team of people to catch them, or even before they relapse." They also shared the need for healthy, alcohol-free family and community gatherings to support the goals of people in recovery, and striving for the Yukon Territory to "one day not be the highest per capita in Canada for substance use-related harms." They saw the potential for lateral violence and oppression to be relegated to the past by "coming together again for our children tomorrow."

Staff members also engaged animatedly in a discussion about harm reduction, bringing to light tensions with understandings of the concept, and demonstrating that they felt safe to express dissenting perspectives amongst one another. One staff member identified herself as an advocate for harm reduction, while another expressed hesitation: "I've seen so many harm reduction attempts fail. And we have to ask, is it really contributing to the world we want to see? The world we want for our children?"

In addition, staff spoke with excitement about the potential of the program to facilitate successful recovery, and hoped that "One day, we can travel across Canada telling others how we did it." They communicated passion about delivering person-centered supports where participants could feel safe to make mistakes. At the same

time, participants tempered their enthusiasm. One staff member wanted to be clear that "I don't want to be seen as an example of someone who's not at risk."

Staff also spoke about more granular ideas regarding program implementation. Staff wondered whether they might need a clock in the room given that cell phones might not be used in the room where circle sessions take place. One staff member felt that it would be important to keep case notes, and also brought up that it could be important, during circle sessions, to speak about the complexity of family dynamics in the context of recovery. Another staff member had the idea of conversing with participants about boundaries during the first session; for example, being open about how staff and participants might greet each other (or not) should they run into each other in a public space. Another staff member had the idea to create a "let's-not-relapse kit with emergency smudge." They also spoke to the need to clarify their roles in "a crisis plan, since it shouldn't be us dealing with the crises. We have to walk with them, not for them." They were also clear that "we can't be everything for everyone, so we have to remember we're one piece of the puzzle." They acknowledged that the program needed to be tailored to participants, "not a cookie cutter program. And it's their program, not our program."

They also spoke about the critical need to integrate traditional culture in programming, noting that, "Through colonization processes, we were told we were wrong about everything so now our traditions are unclear. So we need to come back together to understand our own traditions." Another participant spoke about the need for pairing arts and land-based activities with honest and meaningful recovery-oriented conversations: "We've done circles. We've done sewing. Has it drastically changed anyone's life? No. it's the deep diving where the change happens." Describing the complexities of healing, one staff member also clarified that, "Learning is good but unlearning is the recovery. Unlearning the toxic behavior. And it's like, in some programs you say, 'I'm an addict' but then I'm like, 'no I'm not. Cause then the law of attraction. I don't wanna identify as an addict.'"

On that note, some staff expressed feeling overwhelmed with the list of outcomes and progress markers that was generated. As one person put it, "Not everyone will achieve lots of these things. We have to remember we have an acute need and purpose, which is sometimes just helping people stay sober." They also discussed how all participants might be at different points on their recovery journey, and hoped that "people will be showing up in a meaningful way, not just to check a box, like check a box for probation, for example."

Along these lines, staff emphasized the complexities inherent to supporting people in recovery. One staff member clarified the difference between addiction treatment and recovery support by noting that, "With recovery support or aftercare, their walk has already started, so they're further along in their journey, but it's like they have to balance between worlds." Staff provided a reminder that several experiences can create relapse, such as friends passing away. As another person shared, "Triggers could be the smell of money, a song. Anything can be triggering but it's all a part of

life." They also indicated the weightiness of addiction struggles: "It's forever. That's why there's medical language around disease and disorder."

Additionally, staff highlighted how heavy healing could feel when coming up against cultural disconnection: "Recognizing things you didn't know you lost, like traditional language. It's a different kind of trauma. How do we change that script in our heads so we move forward?" Similarly, staff spoke poignantly about intergenerational trauma: "For so many people, it's like, I don't know what I'm doing because I grew up in active addiction. There's no book that tells you." They shared witnessing and/or being a part of generations who experience guilt and feel hypocritical as parents due to repeating their own parents' mistakes. As a result, staff felt that it would be important to be careful about involving families in the program: "We'll have to see how comfortable participants are because families can sometimes be more of a trigger than a support." One person shared her own experience coming home from treatment, "and nobody cared. Sobriety is lonely. The more you heal, the more you can't accept things the way they were, and that's hard for some families. There can be jealousy and judgment there." This staff member also spoke about how difficult it can be to leave treatment only to return to unsupportive environments: "It's like taking a shower and putting your dirty clothes back on."

Finally, staff spoke about tensions on systemic and community levels, noting that "not everyone grows up with their culture. There's literally a divide in some communities and it's not always easy. So many are still healing from disconnection, and whether you belong depends on if your community welcomes you." They spoke with a sense of exhaustion about the state of emergency declared in the Yukon with respect to substance abuse, sharing the perspective that, "We need so much up here. Like a family treatment centre or program. In the Yukon, we're failing people by not listening to what they need. Communities have to come together to tackle systemic issues. And quit piecemealing our healing."

In all, staff spoke about the intricate nuances of providing recovery support, and discussed opportunities and challenges at individual, family, community, and system levels. They came across as a brilliant and passionate group with different yet complementary areas of expertise to bring together powerful recovery support experiences for participants.