

Squamish Nation Elder's Program



Our Plan for Respectful Relationships and Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh



November 2024

Acknowledgments

A sincere huy chexw a to all the Elders, staff, managers and directors who participated in the development of **Our Plan for Respectful Relationships** and **Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh**. The completion of this process would not have been possible without your wisdom, vulnerability and guidance.

We want to thank and acknowledge Program Team Leads: Waylon (Bo) Baker, Celestino Silveira, and Shawn Turgeon as well as staff from the North Shore and Squamish Valley: Evangeline Nahanee, Sandra Jacobs, Jenny Guss, Heather Spence, Colette Shewman, Gwen Baker, Shanda Dosanjh, and Lisa Baker for your contributions and leadership in the planning process. We would also like to acknowledge the Steering Committee: Marie Natrall, Monica Jacobs, late Jordan Ann Joseph, Josie Harry, Samaya Jardey, Glenda Gibbon, and Bob Sokol, and Project Manager Kate Kittredge for your guidance and leadership.

We want to thank Xwí7ski: late Byron Joseph *Tselkwilem't*, Donna Billy *Sisolia*, Barry Cordocedo, Wendy Lockhart Lundberg, Mary Jane Natrall *Lats-mat*, Kevin Rivers *Sxwch'alten*, Gladys (Flo) Williams *Sulseelsamat*, Mason Gamley, MJ Jacobs *Ketaxtenaat*, Dominique Nahanee *Tsawaysia*, Aggie Andrews *Sesaxwalia*, and interim members Shlomish, Bonaro Newman and Val Wright for the dedication and knowledge you put into this process.

Planning Team: Program Team Leads (named above), Ruby Carrico, Dianna Hurford, Sharon Roling for your guidance and support. We also thank the former Program Team Leads Justine Jordan and Lucie Neliba for advancing early planning for respectful relationships.

Planning support was provided by Jeff Cook, Paula Hay, and Amy Abdel-Malak from Beringia Community Planning Inc.

Facilitation support was provided by Shelley Joseph and Annita McPhee.





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Introduction

Listening to Our Elders

Elders Provide Feedback

Through feedback provided during the Elder's Program Assessment (2016), North Shore Elder's Program Survey (2020), and Squamish Nation Elder Abuse and Neglect Response Initiative (2018-2019), it was determined that Elders are not feeling appropriately included and safe in their Elder's Program. Feedback emphasized that this is mostly due to colonialism, social isolation, challenging relationships with other Elders in the Program, and a lack of structure and policies to support safety and respect in the Program.

Snewíyelh

is the Squamish word for the ways and teachings we are given and share how to be a good person and take care of one another.



Launch of the Elder's Program Engagement Project

In response to feedback from Squamish Nation Elders, staff including Monica Jacobs from Member Services, Josie Harry from Squamish Valley Operations, and previous Elder's Program Team Leads Justine Jordan and Lucie Neliba, championed the launch of the Elder's Program Engagement Project. Kate Kittredge was hired as Project Manager and funding for this work was secured. Squamish Nation Elders were invited to engage in a meaningful way, learn what they want for the Elder's Program, and how they would like the Program to operate in a way that centres Skwxwú7mesh values, culture, and language.

An Elder-Led Process

The Elder's Program Engagement Project was conceptualized as an Elder-led process, under the guidance of Xwí7ski (Elder's Program Action Team – EPAT), Steering Committee and Planning Team. From January 2022 to present, The Elder's Program Engagement Project engaged over 400 Elders and 44 youth, as well as community members, staff, managers, directors, and community partners. This planning resulted in an Elder's Program Plan, with communication and collaboration as a core theme. The planning process to develop the Elder's Program Plan helped identify developing a Respectful Relationships Code as a priority action initiative.

Developing a "Respectful Relationships Code"

On July 6, 2023, Council directed staff to develop an "Elder's Program Respectful Relationships Code" consisting of principles, steps, and resources needed to support and maintain respectful relationships among Elders participating in the Program, and between Elders and Program staff.

**The healing period is here now,
we can still heal at any age.**



The purpose of this process was to:

1. Engage Elders and staff about respectful relationships through conversations that are culturally-based and healing centred;
2. Clarify the purpose of the "Respectful Relationships Code";
3. Co-develop a Plan for Respectful Relationships describing the Principles, Teachings, and expectations of behaviour for staff, Elders, and everyone involved in the Elder's Program;
4. Co-develop ways to address disrespectful or unsafe behaviour;
5. Communicate, share, and implement the plan for respectful relationships.

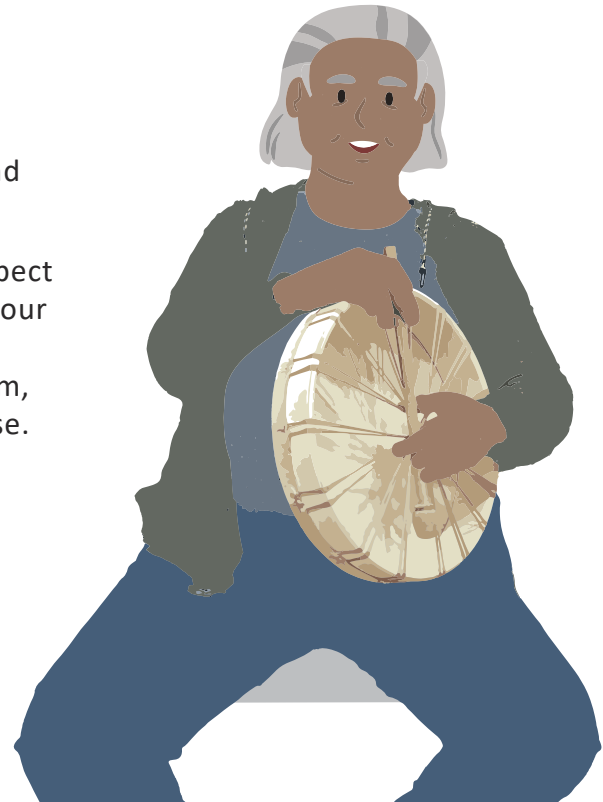
This process resulted in **Our Plan for Respectful Relationships** and **Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh**.

Our Plan for Respectful Relationships includes our vision for respect and inclusion in the program, and a summary of how we will put our values into action. **Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh** identifies our expectations about how we will respect each other in the program, and a set of steps for addressing issues in a good way as they arise.

"Code" and "Policy"

were words Elders shared that they found problematic from a historical and cultural perspective. Elders felt that **Snewíyelh** would be most appropriate to use for this work.

**How I take care of myself affects you.
How I take care of you affects everyone around us.
We were born to love.**



Developing Our Plan for Respectful Relationships and Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh

Reviewing Past Planning

Throughout the Elder's Program Engagement Project, Elders shared several principles, values, and teachings related to a respectful and safe Program. We began our process by reviewing and summarizing the important ideas and feedback shared by over 400 Elders during the Elder's Program Engagement Project.

These results were shared with Elders at 2 luncheons (1 on the North Shore and 1 in the Squamish Valley). The Elders at these events helped to endorse and co-design the respectful relationships planning process. The results of these sessions are summarized in **Figure 2**.



Engaging our Elders

After reviewing and summarizing the important ideas and feedback shared during the Elder's Program Engagement Project, we engaged Elders, staff, program team leads, managers, and directors through various events between January 2024 and April 2024. The development of the Elder's Program Sneŵíyelh involved a cycle of engaging with Elders, analyzing and grouping ideas, presenting results and including feedback over time.

Elders and staff were able to share their thoughts in the following events:

1

ENDORSEMENT
AND
CELEBRATION
EVENT

2

STAFF
WORKSHOPS:
1 NORTH
SHORE
1 SQUAMISH
VALLEY

QUESTIONNAIRE
MAILED
TO EVERY
SQUAMISH
NATION ELDER



MEETINGS
WITH PROGRAM
TEAM LEADS,
MANAGERS AND
DIRECTORS



3

MEETINGS WITH
XWÍ7SKI

MEETINGS WITH
PROJECT TEAM
INCLUDING
INDIGENOUS
CULTURAL
FACILITATORS

MEETINGS WITH
THE STEERING
COMMITTEE

4

ELDERS'
LUNCHEONS
ENGAGEMENTS
AND REPORT
BACKS

TALKING
CIRCLES WITH
INDIGENOUS
FACILITATORS



Our next steps include endorsement by the Elders, a presentation to Council and celebrating and launching Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh.

Getting the Word Out

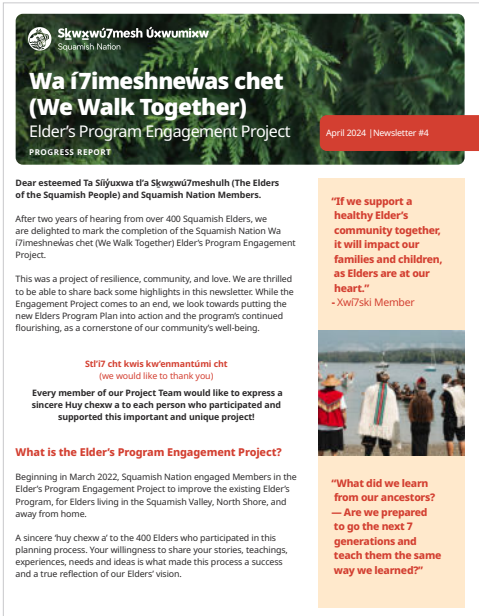


Figure 1
Summary in the Elder's Program Engagement Project - Newsletter #4



Figure 2
Elders Result Summary Posters (3)

Vision & Goals

The vision and goals of Our Elders' Program Snewíyelh are informed by our Elders. They have created the foundation for the respectful ways of being in our Elders' Program.

Vision

Our Elders are respected and cherished members of our community. Our Elders' Program serves our Elders in a respectful and safe way, honouring their contributions to the Nation. Our Elders' Program is grounded in Skwxwú7mesh ways and teachings. Elders' spaces are places of healing, learning, and love for Elders, and those working with Elders.



Our Elders' Program Snewíyelh

Goals

Expand healing and learning

Promote safety and inclusion

Strengthen our sense of community

Promote a strong sense of belonging

Strengthen relationships in the Elders' Program

Figure 3

Engagement Posters (2)

Principles & Teachings

The principles of Our Elders' Program Snewíyelh are important teachings and ways of being Elders wanted to include as a foundation to base our respectful ways of relating to each other.

Our Elders' Program Snewíyelh

Raising our hands to each other and speaking with love

Gratitude & Love

Safety & Wellbeing

Prioritizing our wellbeing and creating safety in our Program

Coming together in a good way to heal and maintain trust

Healing & Trust

Belonging & Acceptance

Coming together as the community and family we are

Allowing ourselves and others to show up in a good way

Mutual Respect & Learning

Giving & Receiving

Gathering the medicine passed on to us by our Ancestors

Results Summary

Our results are summarized in 3 key tools – the Current Situation, Our Plan for Respectful Relationships, and Our Elder’s Program Sneŵiyelh.

Our Current Situation summarizes our understanding of key strengths and challenges related to belonging and safety. Based on our Current Situation we worked with Elders, staff, and Xwí7ski to develop Our Plan for Respectful Relationships.

Our Plan for Respectful Relationships includes a Vision Statement, set of Principles and Teachings, Goals, Strategies, and Activities.

Our Elder’s Program Sneŵiyelh describes how we want to be together and ways of putting our Sneŵiyelh into action. Our Sneŵiyelh applies to anyone who uses the program, including staff, Elders, Junior Elders, community members, and visitors.

Current Situation

We wanted to understand what is working well and not working well in terms of respect, safety, and relationships. We reviewed the experiences, knowledge and information shared through a variety of engagement methods during the Elder’s Program Engagement Project and Our Respectful Relationships Planning Process. We have summarized the key strengths and challenges on the following pages and organized them into 8 themes.

Our Sneŵiyelh

applies to anyone who uses the Program, including staff, Elders, Junior Elders, community members, and visitors.



1. SAFETY AND BELONGING

Many Elders shared that the Elder’s Program is a space for fun and connection. Other Elders, however, shared that they did not feel included or safe in their Elder’s Program.

Among those not feeling included were Elders living away from home, Elders who are still working, Elders who are feeling socially isolated in the community more broadly, and Elders who are newly returning home to the community. It can be challenging to include Elders who are working because programs are typically limited to day time activities held from Monday to Friday.

There are limited options for Elders living away from the community to access Squamish Nation programming.

They shared that bullying by other Elders has led some Members to be afraid to enter the Elder’s Centres.

Among staff, capacity and resource challenges, as well as feeling bullied by some Elders has also led to burnout and staff turnover.

Our Elder’s Program is a space of safety, fun and connection

Not all Elders and staff feel safe and included due to bullying and other accessibility issues

Our Elder’s Program is a space of safety, fun and connection.



2. CONNECTION TO LAND AND CULTURE

Our Elders have cultural and historical knowledge to share, but they may also feel disconnected from their land, culture, language and traditions. They have shared that knowledge is being lost because of limited opportunities for sharing.

Elders have expressed the need for more formalized opportunities to share their knowledge and teachings and be lifted up and respected as Knowledge Keepers. Including culture and language in our Elders' spaces and programming, and providing cultural approaches and support for Elders could help foster a strengthened connection to culture, our teachings, and each other.

Connection to culture, language and the future generations brings joy and meaning to Elders

Many Elders feel disconnected from our language and culture and want more opportunities for learning and sharing

Our people need to feel safe
being in their community.



3. FOLLOWING OUR TEACHINGS

Elders have emphasized the importance of following teachings and integrating them into the Elder's Program and Elder's Program Sne'wíyelh. For example, Elders have shared the importance of Longhouse teachings and how they can be applied in Elder spaces. One teaching that Elders shared is about the need to hang a nail outside of Elders' spaces so that everyone is able to hang their 'baggage' outside because it might help create positivity, warmth, and light when participating in the Elder's Program.

Elders also mentioned the importance of giving and receiving. They hold a wealth of knowledge as the Elders of the Squamish Nation but emphasize that they also have much to learn from youth, staff, and other community members.

Elders are grounded by the teachings they learned from their Ancestors

Elders don't always feel teachings are respected and prioritized around them

Hanging a Nail Outside

the Longhouse is a tradition to make sure negative energy is hung up outside of the Longhouse.



4. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

The Elder's Program is a central place for Elders in the community and is often the first point of contact for Elders experiencing difficulties. The breakdown of connection among Elders and in the community was identified as an issue that impacts knowledge sharing, respect, health, and wellness.

Elders have expressed their desire to connect with children, youth, families, other Elders, and other First Nations communities. In particular, Junior Elders have shared that there is a lack of mentorship opportunities with more senior Elders. With limited space and program capacity, the Elder's Program is focused on serving Elders, with priority given to senior Elders. As capacity grows, supporting opportunities for relationship-building with a foundation of S̓kwx̓wú7mesh teachings will help to foster connection and respect for and among Elders.

Elders wish to elevate and celebrate their role as respected and cherished members of the community

Elders feel disconnected from community and the younger generations and want opportunities to build relationships



5. WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT AND SPACE

To many Elders, the Elder's Centres feel like a second home. Elders also shared that there are capacity issues in the space that can make it difficult to relax and engage. Elders shared a variety of examples where the space doesn't feel welcoming or safe. For example, when there aren't enough seats or there isn't any food left by the time they go to serve themselves at a luncheon, they feel unwelcome, excluded, and disrespected.

Staff have shared that space issues in both locations have created challenges for program delivery and expanding the reach and inclusivity of the Elder's Program. Tensions might arise, for example, when there are overlapping activities that are not complementary. As space challenges in both locations are addressed by the Planning and Capital Projects Department, the Elder's Program is expected to expand to include more Elders, including those living away from home. Having clear expectations about how Elders share and use our spaces will support good communication and relationships.

Elders feel like the Elder's Centres are a second home

The current limited space makes it challenging to participate and can lead Elders to feel unwelcome and disrespected

**To many Elders, the Elder's Centres
feel like a second home.**



6. HEALING AND GRIEF

Many of our Elders have been on inspirational healing journeys. Some of our Elders struggle with grief, trauma and the effects of Indian Residential School (IRS). Many cultural responses to grief and loss have been identified by Elders and the need for this type of support within the program. The high demand for grief and healing support among our Elders requires more capacity and resources within the Elder's Program to respond to these needs, particularly as part of implementing Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh.

Our Elders are engaged in healing and want more opportunities to safely explore and work through grief and trauma

The need and desire for healing and grief support requires additional resources and capacity



7. CONNECTIONS AND FUN

Elders appreciate opportunities to connect with each other by feasting, going on outings, and hosting events. They shared that events can sometimes feel unsafe for a variety of reasons. Elders have different wellness needs and capabilities. Food preferences can't always be accommodated for everyone but they emphasized that the food being served to Elders is not always traditional and sometimes not healthy.

Capacity and accessibility limitations can greatly impact Elders' ability to participate. For example, there is only 1 wheelchair-accessible space in the Squamish Valley vehicles, so if more than 1 Elder needs a wheelchair-accessible space for an activity, they will not be able to participate.

Staff have shared that there are sometimes long wait lists for events and that when Elders don't show up or cancel last minute it causes delays and can prevent another Elder from participating. Staff have shared the need for guidelines on event registration and participation to address their concerns.

Elders appreciate opportunities to connect with each other through events, outings, and gatherings

Elders have felt unheard and disrespected during events and outings if their needs are not able to be met due to capacity limitations

Staff have shared the need for guidelines on event registration and participation to make sure events are run smoothly



8. RELIABLE PROCEDURES

There are policies and procedures in place that support good working relationships between staff. However, there are few ways of addressing relationships among Elder's Program participants and between participants and staff. Elders and staff have shared that more support is needed when there are incidents of disrespect and bullying among Elders and/ or between Elder(s) and staff.

Staff have found it difficult to navigate these situations, which has led to burnout and turnover in some cases. Building tools and approaches that support strong relationships will involve staff and Elders working closely together to navigate concerns. It will also require identifying opportunities to build capacity and adapt as needed.

Elders and staff have found navigating incidents difficult without procedures in place

Building tools and approaches that foster strong relationships will involve staff and Elders working closely together



Our Plan for Respectful Relationships

Vision Framework

Our Vision Framework describes the Vision, Principles and Teachings, Goals, and Strategies that will guide Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh. We have also detailed Activities for putting our Goals and Strategies into action.

Our **VISION STATEMENT**



is a summary of our long-term desired change for our Elder's Program relationships that we want to see.

Our **PRINCIPLES AND TEACHINGS**



are carried with the Vision. They reflect our Sḵwǰwú7mesh ways of being and the core values that will guide our decision-making.

Our **GOALS**



are what move us forward. They are the high-level directions that describe what we will focus on to build on our strengths, address our challenges and meet our needs.

Our **STRATEGIES**



describe how we are going to achieve our Goals and inform our key Initiatives and Snewíyelh.

Our **INITIATIVES**



are the specific actions that will help bring our Strategies and Goals to life.

Our **SNEWÍYELH**



describe how we will make sure strong relationships that we aim for in our day-to-day operations and activities are achieved. They also include a set of guidelines for addressing relational challenges if they come up.

Our Vision Framework is summarized on the next page (page 22), and Our Snewíyelh are detailed further in 'Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh' (page 40).



PRINCIPLES AND TEACHINGS (6)

Gratitude
and Love

Healing
and Trust

Mutual
Respect
and Learning

Safety
and Wellbeing

VISION

Our Elders are respected and cherished members of our community. Our Elder's Program serves our Elders in a respectful and safe way, honouring their contributions to the Nation.

GOALS (5)

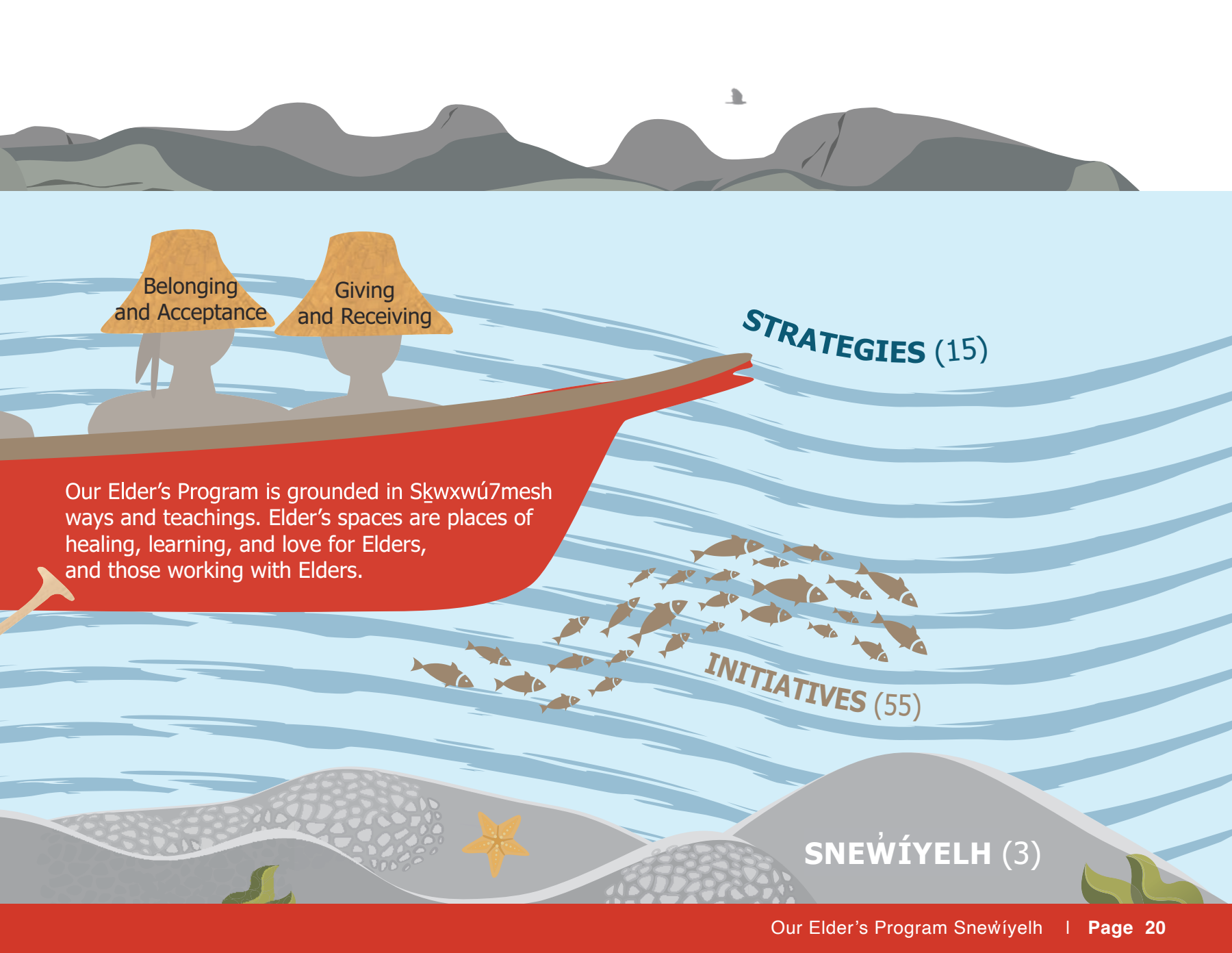
1
Expand
healing and
learning

2
Promote
safety and
inclusion

3
Strengthen
our sense of
community

4
Promote a
strong sense
of belonging

5
Strengthen
relationships
in the Elder's
Program



Belonging
and Acceptance

Giving
and Receiving

STRATEGIES (15)

Our Elder's Program is grounded in Skwxwú7mesh ways and teachings. Elder's spaces are places of healing, learning, and love for Elders, and those working with Elders.

INITIATIVES (55)

SNEWÍYELH (3)



Vision Statement

Our Elders are respected and cherished members of our community. Our Elder's Program serves our Elders in a respectful and safe way, honouring their contributions to the Nation.

Our Elder's Program is grounded in Sḵwxwú7mesh ways and teachings. Elders' spaces are places of healing, learning, and love for Elders and those working with Elders.

Principles and Teachings

Elders shared important Principles and Teachings that they wanted to serve as the foundation of Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh. Our Sḵwxwú7mesh ways are meant to support and uplift one another. We create community around our Elders so that our cultural teachings are passed to the next generation. Our Principles honour our Longhouse teachings, which promote learning and growth for all our Elders and passing knowledge on to future generations.

GRATITUDE AND LOVE

“We raise our hands to each other as a way to literally hold one another up”. Showing gratitude and speaking with love empowers our Elders.

HEALING AND TRUST

Coming together in a good way allows our Elders to build trust and have a healing space. We take care of our entire selves, including our spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, and cultural wellbeing, to ensure we are in good health to share love, culture, and healing with our future generations.

BELONGING AND ACCEPTANCE

Belonging and acceptance is about coming together and inviting all Skwxwú7mesh Elders to participate in celebrating the diversity of our community and family.

GIVING AND RECEIVING

Elders have shared memories of receiving knowledge from Elders who came before them. Giving to each other and our youth is our medicine. We are grateful for opportunities to share the knowledge that was once shared with us.

MUTUAL RESPECT AND LEARNING

Mutual respect is about being aware of others’ feelings, being flexible, and allowing our Elders to take the time they need to show up in a good way. It includes respect for our land, traditional knowledge, and each other. Continual learning is about connecting with our Ancestors’ teachings and learning about ourselves and each other and the Skwxwú7mesh way of doing things in order to build respect for differences.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Elders’ spaces and programs are safe spaces. Elders’ programming fosters well-being for all Elders. We work to acknowledge everyone’s needs and move towards cultural, physical, and emotional safety.

GOALS

STRATEGIES

INITIATIVES

1
Expand healing and learning

Increase healing and learning opportunities
Strengthen connection to culture and tradition
Enhance our communication about respectful relationships

2
Promote safety and inclusion

Strengthen accessibility
Increase healthy food options for Elders
Ensure events are safe, fun, and celebratory

3
Strengthen our sense of community

Welcome new Elders formally
Increase connection opportunities for all Skwxwú7mesh Elders
Strengthen outreach to all Elders

4
Promote a strong sense of belonging

Enhance communication and information about events and programs
Ensure visiting Elders are welcomed in a good way

5
Strengthen relationships in the Elder's Program

Strengthen connections between Junior Elders (aged 55-64) and Elders (aged 65+)
Increase supports for Elders to safely address challenges
Enhance staff capacity to address conflict
Strengthen Elders – Staff communication



SNEWÍYELH

Our Snewíyelh describes how we want to be together and ways of putting our Snewíyelh into action. Our Snewíyelh applies to anyone who uses the program, including staff, Elders, Junior Elders, community members, and visitors.

Communication

Snewíyelh: How staff welcomes all Elders into Elder's Programming, spaces, and celebrations by providing accurate and accessible information.

Trip, Outing and Activity

Snewíyelh: How staff and Elders will ensure that trips, outings, and activities are celebratory, welcoming, culturally grounded, healthy, and enjoyable for all participants.

Incident Snewíyelh:

How we address incidents that impact our Elders and/or staff in a good way that provides healing and unity within the Elder's Program.

Goals, Strategies, and Initiatives

Our Goals are the high-level statements that describe what we will focus on to build on our strengths, address our challenges and meet our needs. Our Strategies describe how we are going to achieve our Goals and inform our key Initiatives and Snewíyelh. Our Initiatives are the specific actions that will help bring our Strategies and Goals to life.





GOAL



1 EXPAND HEALING AND LEARNING

This Goal focuses on more healing opportunities for Elders and creating space to connect and learn about Squamish culture, traditions, lateral kindness, and one another.

STRATEGIES

INITIATIVES

INCREASE HEALING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Hold workshops and quarterly sessions to focus on Elder healing and respect; these workshops bring Elders from both communities and off-reserve together in a good way
- Check in on our Elders regularly, asking them if they need anything and offer our support

STRENGTHEN CONNECTION TO CULTURE AND TRADITION

- Ask a Squamish language speaker to translate communications to Elders
- Include time for culture and ceremony in programming
- Provide family tree sessions for Elders wanting to learn more about their families
- Brush off Elder’s Centre on a regular basis, and enable Elders to be brushed off upon request
- Hang a nail outside Elders’ spaces as a reminder of the Longhouse teaching: the existence of the nail outside the Longhouse to hang up all the negative energy and emotions that may be weighing on us so these do not get brought inside
- Schedule opportunities to engage with youth through singing, dancing, and storytelling

ENHANCE OUR
COMMUNICATION
ABOUT RESPECTFUL
RELATIONSHIPS

- Put up posters that summarize what our Elder's Program is, how we put our teachings into action, what is not acceptable in our Elder's Program, and what we should do when we disagree
- Put up a poster of 'Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh' Vision Framework
- Have a copy of 'Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh' available for Elders to take home as part of their orientation and included on the Squamish Nation website and social media pages



Lateral Kindness

is showing kindness, compassion, and love in how we communicate to build strong, healthy relationships.

GOAL



2 PROMOTE SAFETY AND BELONGING

This Goal focuses on ensuring that Elders feel included regardless of where they live, who their family is, when they gained Squamish Nation Membership, or any accessibility needs they may have. Elders should feel safe to participate and interact with activities, other Elders, and staff.

STRATEGIES

INITIATIVES

STRENGTHEN ACCESSIBILITY

- Coordinate with any service providers of outings and activities to make sure accessibility issues are addressed
- Schedule assistants (volunteers or staff) to be available for Elders during activities and outings to make sure they are safe and comfortable

INCREASE HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS FOR ELDERS

- Order or prepare a varied menu when meals and refreshments are offered to accommodate dietary needs (i.e., allergies, intolerances, health concerns, taste preferences)
- Provide a variety of activities that support different wellness needs

ENSURE EVENTS
ARE SAFE, FUN,
AND CELEBRATORY

- Schedule support staff or volunteers to attend each event and outing
- Review the needs of Elders that are attending events and outings and determine if and how they will be accommodated
- Communicate to registered Elders the requirements for event attendance and cancellation
- Provide appropriate and sufficient accommodations and transportation
- Address Elders' concerns during outings in a good way
- Pull Elders to the side to talk and check in with them if they are disrupting an outing



GOAL



3 STRENGTHEN OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY

This Goal focuses on strengthening our identity by coming together as a community through outreach, and creating opportunities for all our Elders to participate in Program activities.

STRATEGIES

INITIATIVES

WELCOME NEW ELDERS FORMALLY

- 🐟 Welcome our new Elders (Elders that just turned 55, recently gained Squamish Membership, or are coming to Elders’ programming for the first time) to the Elder’s Program by inviting them to go through an orientation of the space and the Program
- 🐟 Ask Elders to follow the Squamish Nation on social media

INCREASE CONNECTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL SK̓W̓X̓W̓Ú̓Z̓MESH ELDERS

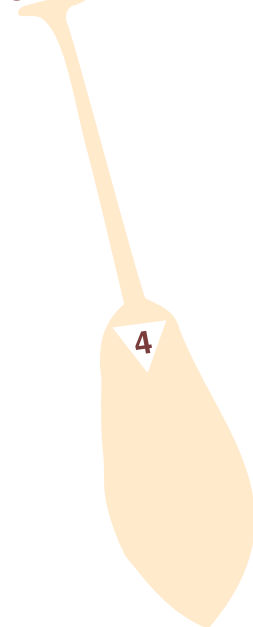
- 🐟 Host an Elder feast every season to gather our Elders living on the North Shore, Squamish Valley, and away-from-home to keep a strong community connection
- 🐟 Host a luncheon once a month on the North Shore and Squamish Valley that is open to both Junior Elders (55-64) and Elders (65+)
- 🐟 Provide evening program opportunities for Elders who are still working
- 🐟 Manage the registration lists for outings and events so that they maximize the number of Elders attending and stick to the cancellation rules

STRENGTHEN
OUTREACH TO
ALL ELDERS

- 🐟 Check-in (call or visit) with Elders who are unexpectedly away from the Elder's Program
- 🐟 Create an Elder's visitation program where active Elders visit housebound Elders
- 🐟 Produce mailouts, posters, and online communications about 'Our Elder's Program Sne'wíyelh' and the Elder's Program and send them to all registered Elder households, emails, and post the same online
- 🐟 Seek out (e.g. by phone, visit, and surveys) the Elders we do not see to ask what we can do to make our Elder's Program safe and welcoming



GOAL



4

PROMOTE A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING

This Goal focuses on how we can draw on our Squamish tradition of being good hosts and teachers. Ensuring that all Elders feel a sense of belonging in our Program, including welcoming visiting Elders and mentoring our Junior Elders to step into their role as Elders.

STRATEGIES

ENHANCE
COMMUNICATION
AND INFORMATION
ABOUT EVENTS
AND PROGRAMS

INITIATIVES

- Advertise events and outings well in advance so that we reach as many of our Elders as possible
- Communicate all updates or changes to events in a timely and appropriate manner to registrants
- Create user-friendly tools for the Elders
- Ask Elders to keep their contact information up to date
- Schedule staff so they are available to register Elders for activities, outings, and events (in-person, over email, or on the phone)
- Communicate to our community members (registered Squamish Nation Members and their spouses) that they are welcome to 'Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh' at all times (with noted restrictions)

ENSURE VISITING
ELDERS ARE
WELCOMED IN
A GOOD WAY

- Aim to host 1 luncheon every season where anyone is welcome to register and attend (registration is required for these events so that we can accommodate everyone properly and respectfully)
- Aim to host an annual feast where anyone is welcome to register and attend (registration is required for these events so that we can accommodate everyone properly and respectfully)
- Coordinate with other Nations to facilitate gathering Elders across communities

STRENGTHEN
CONNECTIONS
BETWEEN JUNIOR
ELDERS (AGED 55-
64) AND ELDERS
(AGED 65+)

- Aim to host 1 luncheon per month that is open to both Junior Elders (55-64) and Elders (65+)
- Invite Junior Elders to attend Elder engagement sessions and larger celebratory events so that they have the opportunity to learn from Elders and hear their teachings
- Provide spaces for Junior Elders on outings as they are available

GOAL



5 STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS IN THE ELDER'S PROGRAM

This Goal focuses on addressing challenges in the Elder's Program in a good way to support Elders and staff and their continued participation and growth in the Elder's Program.

STRATEGIES

INCREASE SUPPORTS
FOR ELDERS TO
SAFELY ADDRESS
CHALLENGES

INITIATIVES

- Communicate how Elders can address situations where they see an incident or conflict that they were not directly involved with
- Provide an anonymous form for Elders to report incidents
- Offer the option to report the incident directly to a staff member
- Train new staff members and volunteers on how to receive/direct complaints to the appropriate person
- Schedule refresher sessions on grounding, safety, and healing to make sure Elders, volunteers, and staff have the tools to navigate conflict and frustration in a good way

ENHANCE STAFF
CAPACITY TO
ADDRESS CONFLICT

- 🐟 Train staff on how to log and report incidents that they witness or are involved in
- 🐟 Offer bystander training to staff and volunteers
- 🐟 Offer training for staff on lateral kindness, lateral violence, and intergenerational healing

STRENGTHEN
ELDERS – STAFF
COMMUNICATION

- 🐟 Communicate how Elders can approach staff with their concerns in a good way
- 🐟 Communicate how staff can approach Elders in a good way when addressing conflicts and incidents
- 🐟 Encourage staff and Elders to communicate their needs and boundaries respectfully

Lateral Violence

is the result of colonialism and happens when we direct our feelings of anger and hurt at each other instead of the oppressor.



Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh

Our Snewíyelh describes how we want to be together and put into action Our Plan for Respectful Relationships. Our Snewíyelh applies to anyone who uses the Program, including staff, Elders, Junior Elders, community members, and visitors.

Participation and Membership

Due to capacity limitations, we prioritize registered Squamish Nation Members. Squamish Nation Membership includes Descendant (has at least 1 registered Squamish Member parent), Lineal (has at least 1 registered Squamish Member parent), and Acquired (registered Members that have married or been adopted into Squamish Nation and forfeited Membership from their previous Nation) Members*.

All Squamish Members receive the same services and benefits regardless of Membership type. When possible, we aim to welcome spouses and other community members who are not registered Squamish Nation Members and we have Snewíyelh that describes how to do that in a good way.

As we expand the capacity and resources available, finding opportunities to include the broader Squamish Nation community will be pursued.

**If you would like more information on what membership types mean, please reach out to the Member Services Department.*





Our Communication Snewíyelh

Our Communication Snewíyelh describes how staff welcomes all Elders into Elder's Programming, spaces, and celebrations by providing accurate and accessible information.

1. Elders who recently turned 55, recently gained Squamish Membership, and/ or are using the Elder's Program for the first time (including participation in events, outings, and/ or activities) must go through an orientation process. 1 3



- a. Orientation includes an introduction to the space and staff, completing necessary forms, and reviewing Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh Handbook

2. Elders should be supported to make sure that their contact information is up to date with the Elder's Program Team Lead 4 5



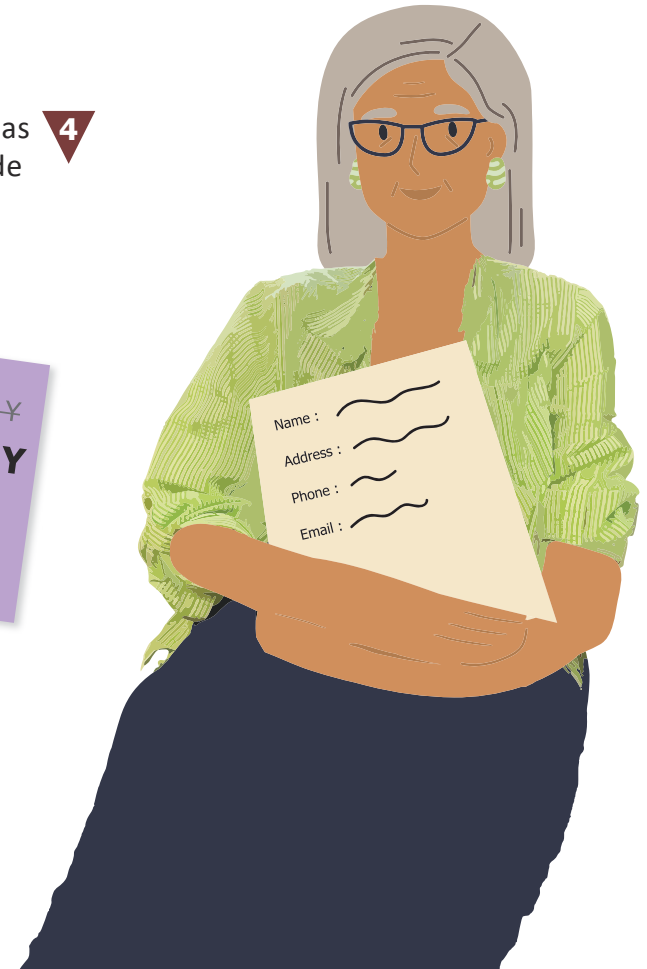
GOALS LEGEND

- 1 Expand healing and learning
- 2 Promote safety and belonging
- 3 Strengthen our sense of community
- 4 Promote a strong sense of belonging
- 5 Strengthen relationships in the Elder's Program

3. Communications will be bilingual whenever possible (Squamish language and English) 1

4. The Elder's Program's communications must be accessible to Squamish Nation Elders that live in community and/or away from community 3 4

5. Any updates or changes to events/outings must be communicated as soon as possible to people who registered – staff will aim to provide updates at least 1 day before events/outings 4



Our Trip, Outing, and Activity Sneŵiyelh

Our Trip, Outing and Activity Sneŵiyelh describes how staff and Elders will make sure trips, outings, and activities are celebratory, welcoming, culturally grounded, healthy, and enjoyable for all participants.

1. All reasonable steps must be taken by the Elder's Program Team Lead to make sure outings and activities consider Elder's wellness, are accessible, and offer healthy options for meals and refreshments 2
2. A facilitator or counselor will be available during scheduled workshops to talk to Elders if requested 1 2
3. Space to connect with culture and ceremony will be made available during scheduled workshops so Elders can rest and reset if needed 1 2
4. Elders wanting to invite guests (friends and family who are not Squamish Nation Members) to the Elder's Program for an occasion that does not have open registration must provide notice and background to staff to make sure it would be a positive experience for our Elders and staff 4



5. Due to capacity and budget limitations, our outings and activities are for registered Squamish Nation Member Elders only: 3

- a. In the Squamish Valley, non-Member participants and spouses who are not Squamish Nation Members *may* be able to join in a volunteer capacity if they have volunteered with the Nation on 3 other occasions in a calendar year
- b. On the North Shore, non-Members who live in community can fill out a form to be eligible to participate when there is capacity

6. Preference for outings, activities, and luncheons must be given to Elders who are 65+ and provide spaces for Junior Elders (55-64) as they are available, specifically as follows: 3 4

- a. When there is limited capacity for Elders 65+, priority will be given from oldest to youngest – this includes transportation and accessibility capacity
- b. When there is capacity to accommodate Junior Elders, priority will be given from oldest to youngest – this includes transportation and accessibility capacity
- c. At luncheons/feasts, the eldest Elders will be served first (going from oldest to youngest) and everyone will be served before there is an opportunity to fill personal take-out containers



12. Elders cancelling on an outing without notice 1 time results in staff checking in with them to see if any additional support could be provided to support their attendance at future events



13. Elders cancelling on an outing without notice 3 times results in the Elder being asked to not sign up for Programming for 1-month



14. After the 1-month period has been completed, the Elder will be asked to have a refresher orientation on 'Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh' and invited to sign up for Programming again in a good way



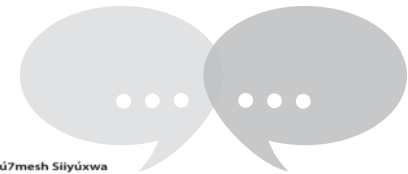
15. Elders leaving an outing without communicating an expected return/meeting place is considered an incident (page 48). This is to make sure everyone is safe and their day is respected.



16. Elders leaving outings 3 times without communicating with staff will be asked to not participate in out-of-town outings indefinitely



17. North Shore and Squamish Valley programs must communicate in advance of shared events and outings to make sure stipends (reimbursement for participation) for Elders are equal




Skwxwú7mesh Silyúxwa
Squamish Elders



Our Incident Sneŵíyelh

Our Incident Sneŵíyelh describes how we address incidents that impact our Elders and/or staff in a good way that provides healing and unity within the Elder's Program.

An incident can be 1 event or a consistent pattern of negative behaviour and/or communication.

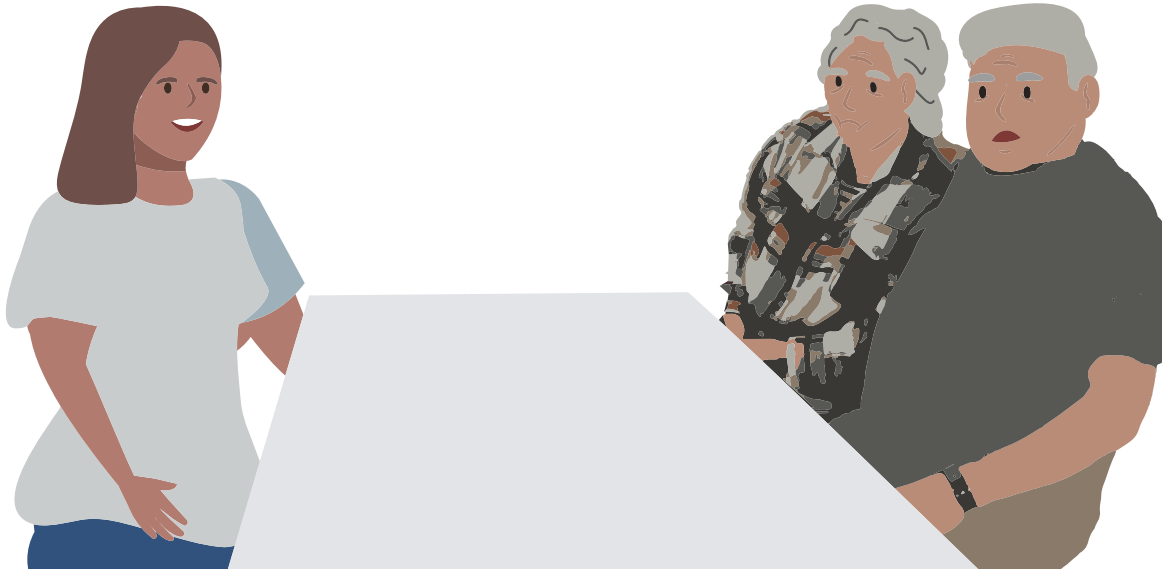
1. Incidents that are reported by staff or Elders must follow the complaint resolution process: 

STEP 1

The incident is logged (date, time, who was involved, what happened, and who is reporting)

STEP 2

Another incident with the same Elder(s) and/or staff results in a set time to come together in a good way with the Program Team Lead or Program Manager to try and come to a resolution



STEP 3

A 3rd incident with the same Elder(s) and/or staff results in the involved people having a session with a facilitator/mediator with a cultural background to determine how to move forward in a good way. Elders and/or staff not wanting to meet with a facilitator must continue to be monitored and may be asked to not participate in Elder activities for a 1-month period by the Program Manager. After the 1-month period has been completed, the Elder/ staff will be asked to have a refresher orientation on 'Our Elder's Program Snewíyelh' and invited back in a good way

STEP 4

Elders and/or staff who choose not to meet with a facilitator and are involved in more incidents or conflicts may be asked not to return to the Elder's Program indefinitely

2. Elders having differences in wants during activities must come to a compromise to accommodate everyone as much as possible

3. The Program Team Lead is the main contact person if an issue arises. Their Manager/Director may be contacted if:

- a. The Program Team Lead is unavailable
- b. The person with the complaint does not feel comfortable discussing the incident with the Program Team Lead
- c. The Program Team Lead is involved in the incident

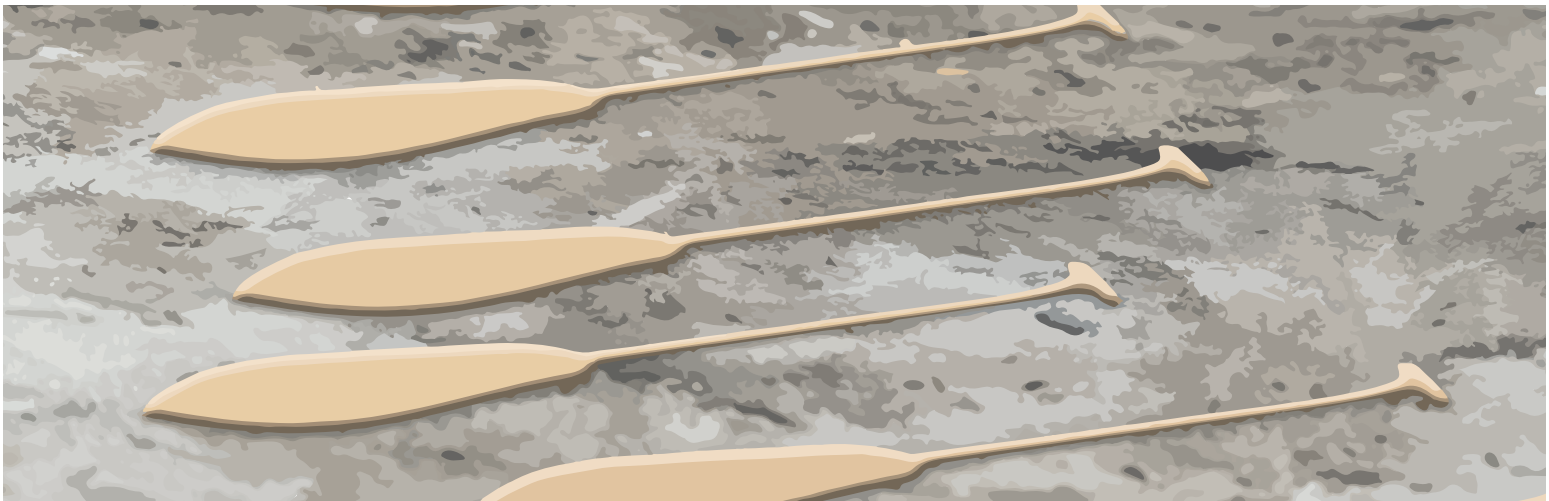


Putting Our Sneŵíyelh into Action

Our Sneŵíyelh are guidelines that remain living as we reflect on what is working, what isn't working and whether we are moving in a good direction, closer to our Vision.

Putting our Sneŵíyelh into action involves staff and Elders bringing the Sneŵíyelh to life and all the related parts. This is a process of preparing for change, having good supports in place, and making sure we have the resources and capacity we need to manage our Elder's Program and relationships, including external supports.

We also want to understand if and how our Sneŵíyelh are strengthening relationships in our Elder's Program. As our Program grows, such as greater Elder participation, we can identify ways to adapt and change our Sneŵíyelh to respond to the needs and priorities of our Elders and community. We want to continue to build capacity, mechanisms, and tools to support the activation of our Sneŵíyelh, in a way that honours and involves our Members.



In Summary

Elders and staff collaborated to develop our Snewíyelh for our Elder's Program and ground it in our traditional ways and healing practices. They shared personal stories about what Snewíyelh means for them and future generations. Elders are excited to continue growing, healing, learning, and connecting with each other in a good way with the support of our Snewíyelh, grounded in the teachings passed down from our Ancestors. Implementing our Snewíyelh will take dedication, resources, and commitment from staff, managers, and Elders to break colonial cycles of trauma, build relationships, lift each other up, and making sure dignity and pride are strengthened.



APPENDIX A: SNEWÍYELH PROGRAM SUMMARY POSTERS

These posters were developed with the help of staff and Elders to hang in Elder's spaces as helpful reminders to celebrate and ground ourselves in our united identity as Squamish People.

OUR ELDER'S PROGRAM IS A SPACE OF...

Learning



**Giving and
Receiving**



Love

Belonging

**Joy and
Playfulness**

Safety



Healing



HOW DO WE PUT OUR TEACHINGS INTO ACTION?

The Elder's Programs' priority is to foster lateral kindness amongst our Elders, each other, and by extension, our communities. Lateral kindness can be shown in many ways:

Welcome everyone



Greet and engage with people entering into Elders' spaces, especially if they are new

Have open and welcoming body language

Check-in

"What I hear you saying is..."



Ask others if they need support, offer tea, and listen to them

Gratitude

Acknowledge positivity and express thanks - raise our hands to each other!

Mutual respect

Value everyone for their unique skills and perspectives



Boundaries

Keep yourself and those around you safe and comfortable by having boundaries you express respectfully



WHAT IS **UNACCEPTABLE** IN OUR ELDER'S PROGRAM?

Body language

Negative body language could include crossing your arms, making a face, rolling your eyes, etc.



Continued negative feedback

Consistent negative feedback can take a toll on people around you



Gossiping

Speaking about someone behind their back (even if it's true)



Bullying

Talking down to people, shaming, mocking, excluding people, and making people feel unwelcome



Verbal abuse and sarcasm

Being verbally aggressive, yelling, swearing, and being sarcastic can all cause harm to the people around us



Ignoring

Giving someone the silent treatment, ignoring them when they speak, talking over them, disregarding what they have to say



WHAT SHOULD WE DO WHEN WE DISAGREE?

Elders' spaces and programs are safe spaces. If you find yourself feeling frustrated or in a disagreement, here are some steps to avoid escalation:



Talk about it
Talk to someone you trust about the incident, staff members are always around for support!



Address it respectfully
Ask to speak with them off to the side, explain your perspective respectfully and try to come to a resolution



Walk away
Take some time to cool off or agree to disagree



Breathe
Take 2 deep breaths.
1 hand on your chest
1 hand on your stomach

Connect with culture and ceremony
Ask a staff member to be brushed off



Ground yourself
How you are feeling?
Hungry?
Angry?
Lonely?
Tired?



Listen
Take the time to understand their perspective and consider that it might not be personal





