

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Native Transformations
in the Pacific Northwest:
Stories of Strength in a
Public Health Crisis**



NORTHWEST
INDIAN COLLEGE
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Purpose of This Guide

This guide accompanies the Native Transformations Project film and is intended to honor the stories of Coast Salish people's testament of healing and wellness through sources of strengths and protections. It provides guidance on holding culturally safe, sensitive, and appropriate conversations about healing and wellness from substance use disorder.

GROUP FACILITATION GUIDANCE

SETTING UP THE SPACE

Create a welcoming and supportive space to view the documentary and hold a follow-up conversation by providing all participants:

- Chairs
- Tissue
- Water
- Any additional items requested

PRE-DOCUMENTARY VIEWING

Take time to acknowledge and honor stories about to be told, and allow space for participants to prepare mentally, emotionally and spiritually to witness the documentary by:

- Conduct an Opening Prayer/Ceremony
- Disclosing a Sensitivity Topic Warning

POST DOCUMENTARY VIEWING

Immediately following the documentary, and before any discussion, offer a Moment of Silence. Whether it's a few minutes or more, take as much time as needed to allow the group to pause and process what they witnessed. It's important for facilitators to be comfortable with the group's silence.

PROTOCOL EXAMPLES

In addition to an opening prayer and moment of silence, facilitators can consider additional cultural practices to complement the discussion and set a positive tone, including, but not limited to:

- Prayer
- Song/Drum
- Guided Breathe Work
- Sage/Smudge
- Cedar Bows
- Lit Candles

Overview

Northwest Indian College's Native Transformations Project I

The Native Transformations Project I (NTP) is a community-based participatory research project that explores the inherent strengths, protections, and resilience against substance abuse in three Coast Salish communities in the Pacific Northwest: Lummi Nation, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, and Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. Through the sharing of Life History Interviews, NTP developed a Coast Salish Reef Net Wellness Model, that represents a Coast Salish specific process of change that builds strengths, protections and resilience against substance misuse.

Northwest Indian College's Native Transformations Project II

The Native Transformations Project II builds upon the successful findings of the Native Transformations Project to better understand the protective and risk factors specific to opioid misuse and opioid recovery in three Coast Salish communities: Lummi Nation, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, and Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.



About the Film I *Native Transformations in the Pacific Northwest: Stories of Strength in a Public Health Crisis*

Northwest Indian College Center for Health Native Transformations Project II in collaboration with Children of the Setting Sun Productions presents the 55-minute documentary film, *Native Transformations in the Pacific Northwest: Stories of Strength in a Public Health Crisis*.

This film highlights three Coast Salish communities' strengths and protective factors identified through a community-based participatory research process by following four individuals who share their experiences of overcoming the impacts of an opioid crisis.

This film highlights the NTP II research findings of Coast Salish sources of strength and protective factors that build resilience against opioid misuse outlined in the Coast Salish Reef Net Wellness Model.

This film articulates through an Indigenous perspective how **connection to family, community, culture, and spirit protects and strengthens Coast Salish peoples** to overcome the impacts of an opioid crisis.





Coast Salish Protective Factors

The stories told in the NTP’s community-based participatory research process revealed much strength in Coast Salish people, communities, families and spirituality. Protective factors listed below help build strengths and contribute to resilience and recovery.



COAST SALISH PROTECTIVE FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL SOURCES OF STRENGTH

- Awareness
- Working on Living
- Helping Others
- Honoring your Gift/Speaking from the Heart
- Power of Mind
- Indian Names/Being a Namesake

FAMILY SOURCES OF STRENGTH

- Teachings
- Family Roles, Rules and Rituals
- Protective Parenting
- Ancestors
- “Uncles”
- Powerful Women
- Grandparents



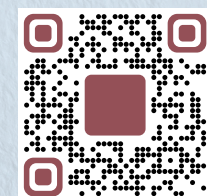
See p6 in the **Native Transformations in the Pacific Northwest Exploring Coast Salish Strengths and Resilience Against Substance Abuse** report for full list and description of Coast Salish Protective Factors.

COMMUNITY SOURCES OF STRENGTH

- Opportunities for Learning and Healing
- Social Connections
- Strong Elders
- Traditional Laws
- Harvesting and Sharing Resources
- Healthy Connections to the Past

- Welcoming the Spirit
- Belief in Prayer
- Gatherings
- Warnings
- Rites of Passage
- Being on the Land/Water

See p6 in the **Native Transformations in the Pacific Northwest Exploring Coast Salish Strengths and**



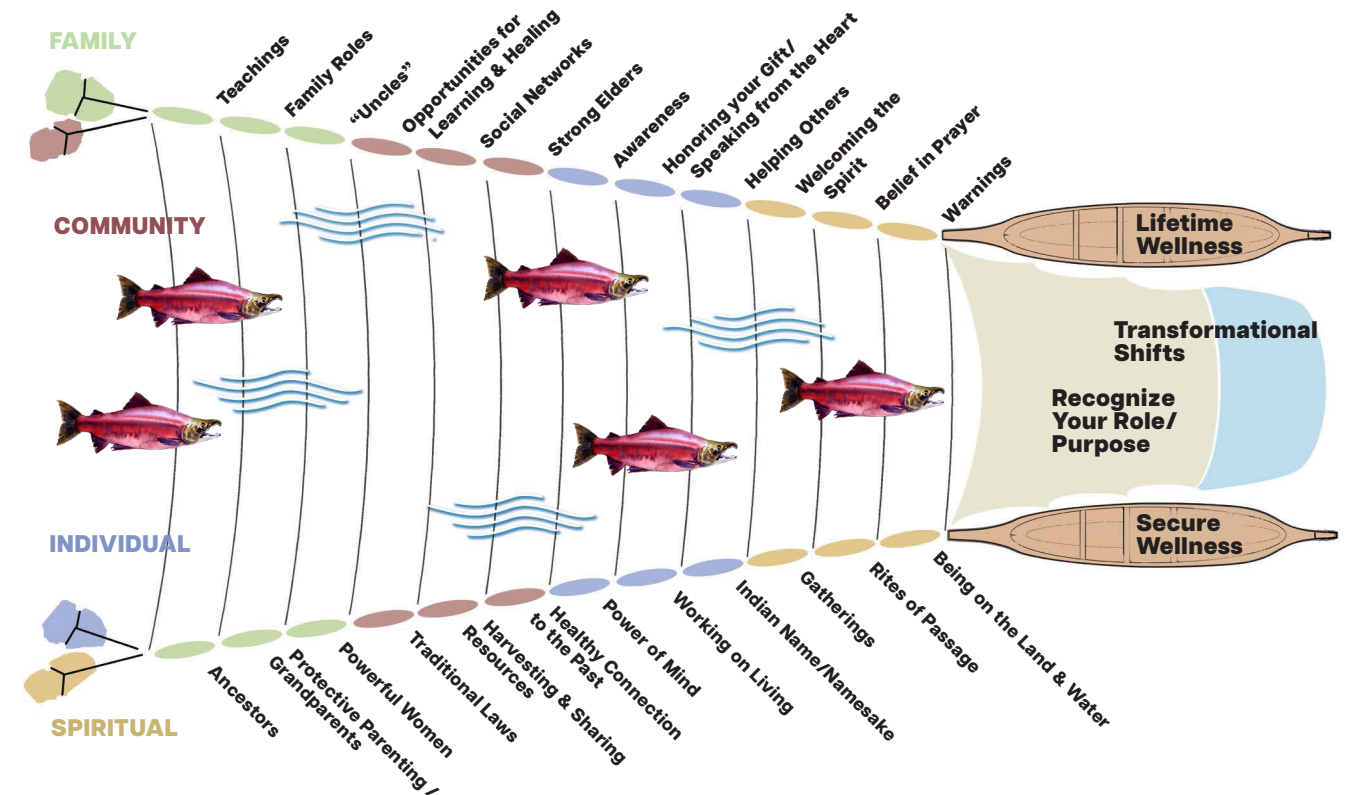
Resilience Against Substance Abuse report for full list and description of Coast Salish Protective Factors.

Reef Net Wellness Model

The Reef Net Wellness Model represents passage to wellness through Coast Salish stages of change and transformation. In Coast Salish oral traditions, salmon were once people, and people, just like the salmon today, are drawn to swim with the currents. The forces

in people’s lives – their families and community (sources of strengths) act like currents pulling them in difference directions. The anchors of the net are like the individual and spiritual (sources of strength) characteristics of a person.

Protective factors, like floats on net, help keep a person, family, and community open to wellness, and provide safe passage through life’s ebbs and flows. Properly set reef nets can guide the salmon on either ebb or flow of the tide.



In the NTP study, individuals fit into a broader category of either lifetime wellness or secure wellness.

LIFETIME WELLNESS:

Defined as those individuals in the communities who may have experienced other hardships and challenges in their lives but had not had a problem with drugs and/or alcohol and were considered good role models of resilience.

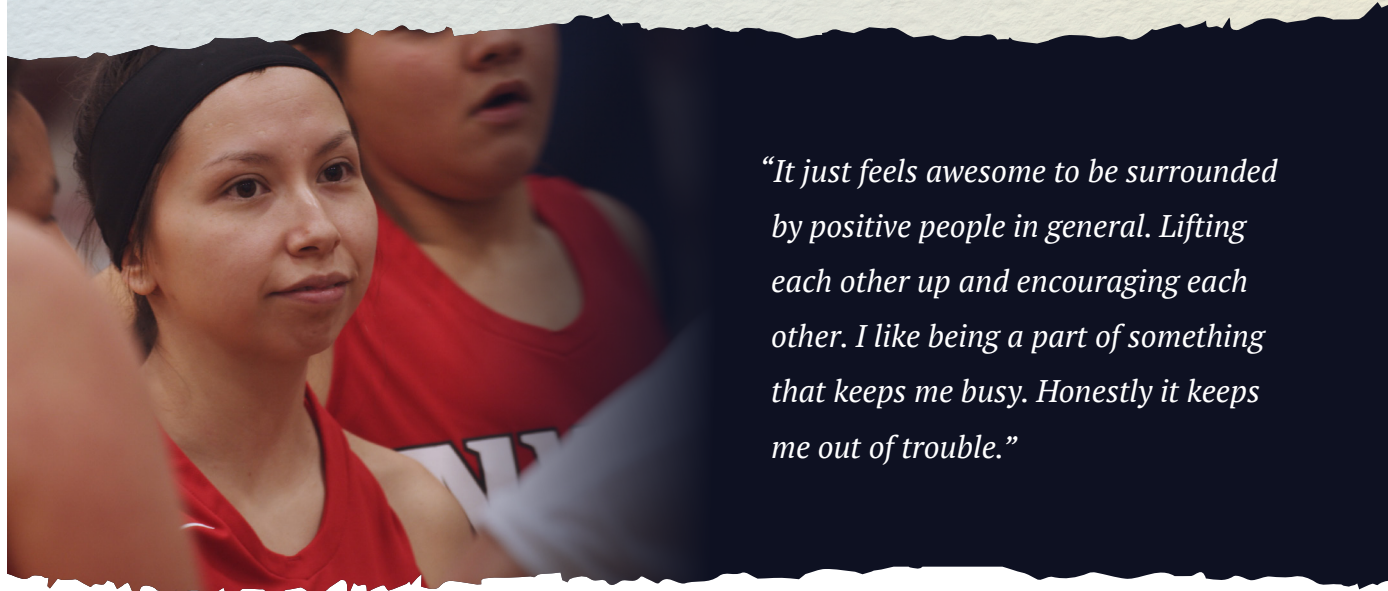
SECURE WELLNESS:

Defined as those individuals in the communities who did at one time in their lives have a problem with drugs and/ or alcohol but had transformed their lives and had not had a problem with drugs and/or

alcohol for three or more years and are considered good role models of recovery.

Isabella “Bella’s” Story

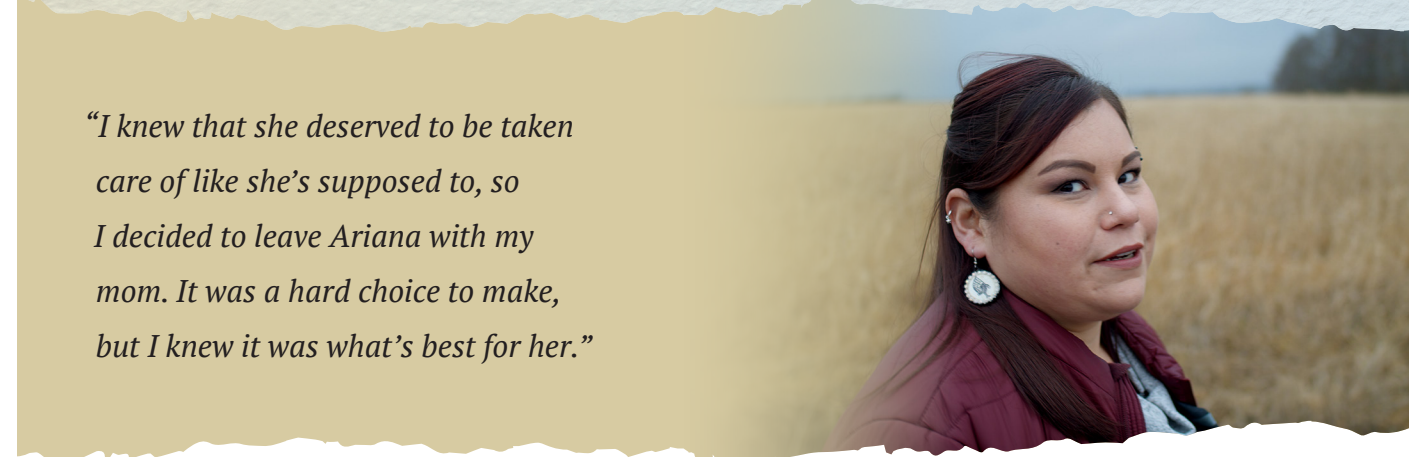
Bella’s story centers around some of the sources of strength and protection in her life that lift her up and carry her into wellness throughout life’s challenges. When substance use touches her life, though indirectly, she leans into these strengths to protect her family, herself, and her future.



“It just feels awesome to be surrounded by positive people in general. Lifting each other up and encouraging each other. I like being a part of something that keeps me busy. Honestly it keeps me out of trouble.”

Jandy’s Story

Jandy’s story is one of healing, not only of herself, but also of her community. It highlights the inherent strengths and protections in her life that supported her recovery from substance use and drove her to help others in her community do the same.



“I knew that she deserved to be taken care of like she’s supposed to, so I decided to leave Ariana with my mom. It was a hard choice to make, but I knew it was what’s best for her.”

COAST SALISH PROTECTIVE FACTORS



COAST SALISH PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Power of Mind: Individuals with Power

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Individual spirit power protects bodies and minds. Individual with power of mind can buck the tide and go against negative social norms and stand up to hard times without the use of drugs or alcohol.



Helping Others

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Doing and caring for others, especially elders, helps build resilience.

Opportunities for Learning

COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Protective communities include opportunities for learning new skills, gaining new knowledge and for healing. Opportunities include access to both western-based and culturally based learning and healing.

Powerful Women

TEACHINGS

Protective families have central female figures who provide the glue and the teaching that hold a family together and keep a family strong.

Social Connections

STRONG LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

Protective communities build interdependence and provide emotional support. Social networks describe social connection in a community. Strong social networks create intergenerational interconnections. Social networks with strong love relations and those that include elders build resilience.



Awareness

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Opening-up to learning and healing builds resilience. Process of awakening and transformation.

Eagle Jo's Story

Eagle Jo's story focuses on his relationship with his daughter, Bella, and how his connections to his culture, family, ancestors and community lift him and provide strength and healing from the effects of substance use.



"It's kind of special to be able to come out and practice this way of life. It's in our blood – being able to let things go emotionally, mentally, spiritually.... be able to give it to the water, let the water take care of it."

Holle's Story

Holle's story is a reminder that Coast Salish strength and healing exists within each person, no matter where they are on their journey. Reconnecting with family, culture, spirit and community are all protective factors that support Holle throughout her story.



"No matter what, they always gave me a job on the water. They were always there, they always supported me. They never gave up hope. They kept me involved and a part of my family and a part of my culture."

COAST SALISH PROTECTIVE FACTORS



COAST SALISH PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Welcoming the Spirit Back

SPIRITUAL PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Acknowledging the spirit that lives within us. Guided learning in how to be in a healthy spiritual relationship. Providing a safe and loving home where our spiritual self can live.

Being on the Land/Water

SPIRITUAL PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Being out on the land, in the forest and mountains, and out on the water, on the rivers and Salish Sea, is protective and strengthens the spirit.



Healthy Connections to the Past

COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Being part of a community's success story is protective. Recognizing your community's historical strengths and the strengths of your ancestry builds resilience.

"Uncles"

FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Protective families have strong male role models who, like the Watchmen on a reef net canoe, look after the younger members of their families. "Uncles" play a key role in Coast Salish communities, providing guidance and discipline when needed. The role of "Uncle" can be assumed by any of the older male relatives in an extended family system.



Working on Living

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Individual contributions to family survival and success are protective.

Honoring your Gift/Speaking from the Heart

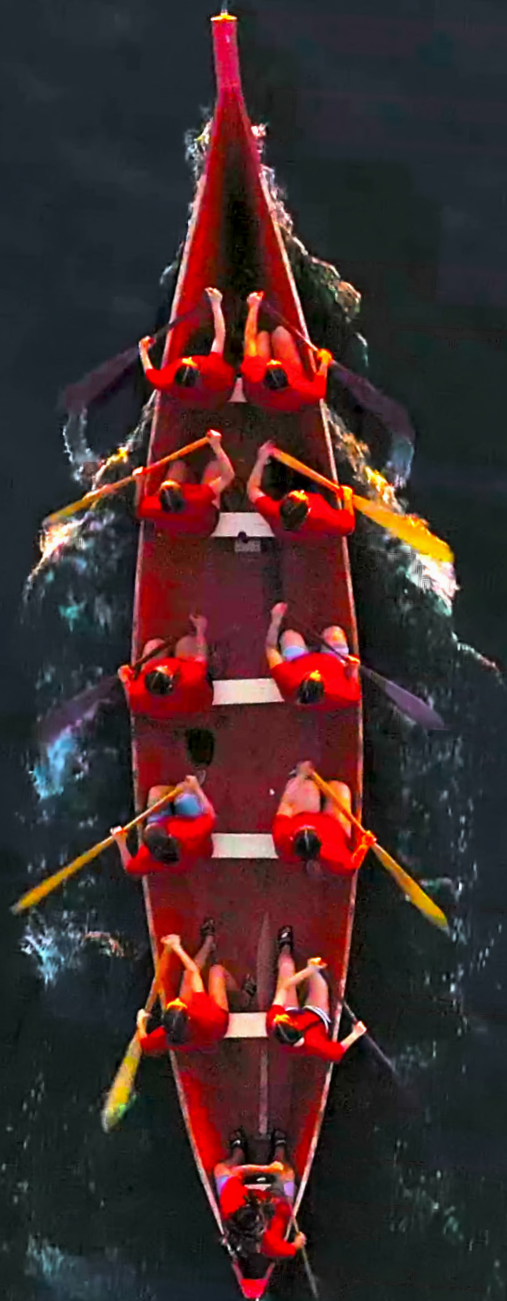
INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Gaining knowledge of your own personal strengths and special abilities. Honoring yourself, as you are, and learning to speak from the heart builds resilience.

Key Learnings about Coast Salish Strengths and Protections

Native Transformations in the Pacific Northwest: Stories of Strength in a Public Health Crisis tells the unique and personal stories of four individuals on their own healing journeys. They use their inherent family, individual, community and spiritual sources of strength and protection along the way. Across these stories, we can identify common themes about protections and strengths in Native communities. These include learnings such as:

- ***Living a traditional life is protective.***
- ***Ancestral strengths and resilience are passed on to future generations.***
- ***Culture and community are prevention.***
- ***There are many pathways to recovery:*** clinical, spiritual, individual, and communal pathways.
- ***Relapse is a part of recovery;*** and we pray our people find their way back.



Your Story



Finding Inherent Strengths and Protections in Your Own Life

The film portrayed the ways in which four individuals used their inherent strengths – family, community, individual and spiritual strengths – as Coast Salish people as protection and healing from the harms of substance use.

Using their stories as inspiration, think about how you can apply their learnings and identify the inherent strengths in your own life to lean into for strength, protection, and healing.



Questions to Ask Yourself

How can my community's traditional healing practices, ancestral wisdom and spirituality strengthen our community and prevent future substance use?

How do I or my family show up for others in my community to support their healing and recovery?

What roles in my family, culture and community empower me and give me a sense of purpose?

How would I like my family and community to show up for me to support my healing?

Acknowledgements

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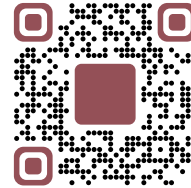
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Honorable Recognition of Late Community Action Board Members

Darlene Peters, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Larry Campbell, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Ethel Hillaire-Warbus, Lummi Nation

Learn More: Information and Resources

Native Transformations in the Pacific Northwest: Exploring Coast Salish Strengths and Resilience Against Substance Abuse



Northwest Indian College



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The views in this film do not reflect the views of these agencies.



Children Of The Setting Sun

