

## **Gathering the tools to build better relationships around Indigenous foods: An evaluation of a Feed BC pilot learning journey to help prepare B.C. public institutions to incorporate Indigenous foods in a good way**

Between September 2023 and January 2024, Feed BC commissioned Osier Consulting to offer a four-part pilot learning series for public institution partners. The goal of the series was to support staff from public institutions across B.C. to increase their readiness to partner with Indigenous communities through an Indigenous foods centered program to strengthen their understanding, knowledge, and skills for practicing cultural safety and humility and Indigenous anti-racism practice. Results from this evaluation found that the pilot positively impacted participants knowledge, understanding and skills in several ways indicating greater readiness for incorporating Indigenous foods in a good way across the five participating institutions.

The pilot was delivered by Jared Qwustenuxun Williams, Indigenous Foods Educator and Fiona Devereaux, Dietitian, Educator, Presenter, and Indigenous Anti-Racism Facilitator.

### **Program details**

Four sessions (3.5-hour each) were delivered virtually once per month from September 2023 to January 2024, with learning material engagement prior to and between sessions. Twenty-one staff participated from five Feed BC institution partners including Interior Health Authority, Northern Health Authority, Simon Fraser University, University of the Fraser Valley, and School District 73 (Kamloops-Thompson).

### **Session topics**

1. Setting the Table for Learning Together – Relationship building and modelling
2. Food Privilege: Who are we–self-reflection, systems of power and privilege
3. Impacts to the Table – Reflective practice on biases, stereotypes and patterns of harm
4. Building a Collective and Collaborative Table

**Participant evaluation:** Using Jody Wilson-Raybould’s steps to reconciliation<sup>1</sup>, three key themes of transformation were noticed amongst participants.

1. Listening: Increased Humility
  - Listening more and differently
  - Learning from Indigenous peoples
  - Leaning into courageous and difficult conversations
  - Making more space for Indigenous people and food systems
  - Listening to the judgements and stereotypes that live within
  - Being present to new ideas
2. Understanding: Knowledge and Understanding
  - Impacts of colonization on Indigenous foods and food systems, including relationships with Indigenous people



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<sup>1</sup> Jody Wilson-Raybould (2022). True Reconciliation: How to Be a Force for Change.

- Critical self-reflection on their own social location with respect to colonization, privilege, bias, stereotypes, and how the mechanisms of colonialism within our institutional landscape
- Importance of relational practice, building working relationships which mean interrupting and disrupting colonial behaviours
- Understanding and seeing things differently

### 3. Acting: Skills

- Increased reflection on institutional process and practices, personal attitudes and actions
- More confidence to show up authentically, with an open mind and heart, and prepared to sit in discomfort
- Challenging colonial norms and seeking to work in a new, more relational way
- Pausing, less judgements, rushing and silence
- Speaking up against racism and creating more opportunities for anti-racism policies and procedures
- Thoughtful and intentional engagement and making personal and professional space for others' thoughts and ways of knowing



Left: This figure summarizes participants feelings after the final session showcasing that feelings and feeling uncomfortable and inspired are both/ands to this work.

#### Participant reflections:

“Get ready for an amazing learning journey you are about to embark on. The knowledge is well organized in a gradual learning format with many very interesting and thought-provoking readings and videos. The sessions build on each other and are eye opening to topics which are not always easy to

discuss but presented in a way that will make you think and learn. The sharing is very engaging and nice to have people participate from different areas of practice with common goals.”

“Embark on this incredible learning and un-learning journey with an open mind as you expand your mental horizons. Do no fear the feelings that may come with this work, sit with them, accept them, and focus your energy forward to creating a more promising future. The experience and knowledge shared through this program is so meaningful, impactful, and life changing.”

“Enter this journey with an open heart and mind by listening with 3 ears. Be vulnerable by knowing that it's okay to ruminate on ideas and to not have to speak and/or offer solutions. Rather be willing to continue to learn even after you have signed off. How will our actions affect people seven generations from now?”