

**BOLD  
NESS**

**THE  
WINNIPEG  
BOLDNESS  
PROJECT**

# **HEALTH & WELLNESS PLANNING: PREGNANCY AND FAMILY SUPPORT**

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**PROTOTYPING FOR CHANGE  
DECEMBER, 2019**







**THE WINNIPEG BOLDNESS PROJECT IS WORKING TOWARDS A BOLD GOAL: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN POINT DOUGLAS WILL EXPERIENCE DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED WELLBEING IN ALL ASPECTS OF SELF: PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, AND SPIRITUAL.**

We are working with residents and groups in this neighbourhood to test new ideas to support the wellbeing of children and families. These prototypes which we are calling Proofs of Possibilities (POPs), support a vision for change in our community. We are exploring possibilities in the following areas:

# PROOFS OF POSSIBILITIES





# HEALTH & WELLNESS PLANNING: PREGNANCY & FAMILY SUPPORT

## COMMUNITY VISION

Families are able to plan and choose the help they need to give their child the best start possible.

Many community resource centers already strive to build long-term supportive and trusting relationships with families. The services and resources they offer, however, are often held back by a lack of resources or funding. We are seeking to change that and explore what might be possible if the supports that families value most were given the resources and flexibility needed to work with families as-needed.

We partnered with a local, established non-profit organization to work with expectant parents and their families over several months and facilitate their creation of a whole-family health and wellness plan, while connecting them with the supports that they felt they needed most. In partnership with the Andrews Street Family Centre (ASFC) we provided **help and guidance through a whole-family health and wellness planning process, including:**

- Information and referrals to existing community programs and training (e.g., addictions programs, counseling)
- Help in navigating family and community care systems (e.g., Manitoba Housing, Child and Family Services)
- Resources that helped the ASFC to respond in a flexible way to each family's unique needs
- Time, space, and activities to build trust and relationships with support staff Indigenous and non-Indigenous families.
- Changing perceptions: Inviting families in Point Douglas to events and working with arts organizations to show that these events are for them.



## WHY DID WE FOCUS ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLANNING?

Children have many natural supports - their parents and family, the community, relatives, and elders among them. However, these eco-systems need to be strengthened and supported themselves in order to give children their best start. The help that systems provide to families is generally reactive in nature, meaning that families often cannot access many resources unless they are in the midst of a crisis. Preventative measures are sometimes non-existent when it comes to helping families avoid crises in the first place.

While the care and services that systems provide are intended to help families and have the best of intentions, they sometimes miss the mark. More efforts are needed to help expectant parents and their families plan and access the supports they need to have a healthy pregnancy and ensure a positive start to life for their baby. This can be achieved by prioritizing keeping families together, funding resources for families to avoid apprehension by child and family services, and allowing expectant parents to determine a resource plan for both for themselves and their children.

**Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care and keeping families together is action that has been called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Providing supports like Health and Wellness Planning is an important step in giving children the best care possible.**



## WHAT BLOCKS ACCESS TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLANNING?

### Natural Supports are not Properly Resourced

Existing supports that are best for a child - their natural supports such as parents and extended family - are not provided the resources that they need to be most effective, leading to families often encountering crises.

### Loss of Trust

Many of the policies that systems implement can at times be punitive to families, even though they're meant to help those facing challenges. As a result, families will often not seek the help of these organizations even in times of need.

### Lack of Whole Family Supports

While there are some existing supports for mothers and women, more opportunities to access help are needed that include everyone who cares for children, including men and fathers. Gaps in existing services makes it difficult for whole families to participate in family health and wellness planning.

### Rigidity of Services

Families need resources that meet them where they are at and respond to their individual needs. Existing services should provide more flexible options in order to build healthy, supportive, and trusting long-term relationships with families.

### Lack of Preventative Resources

Existing resources are focused on helping families respond to crises, but do not prioritize helping them prevent crises or make plans for a healthy future. Many families only gain access to services like counseling after they have had intervention from systems (e.g., gaining access to counseling once children are in professional care).

### Not Knowing What's Available

Families may not be aware of the supports that are available to them or how they can help.



# PUTTING THE CHILD-CENTRED MODEL INTO ACTION

The Child-Centred Model – a way of working for positive change developed by the community of Point Douglas – helps us find the best ways to support families in creating a health and wellness plan.

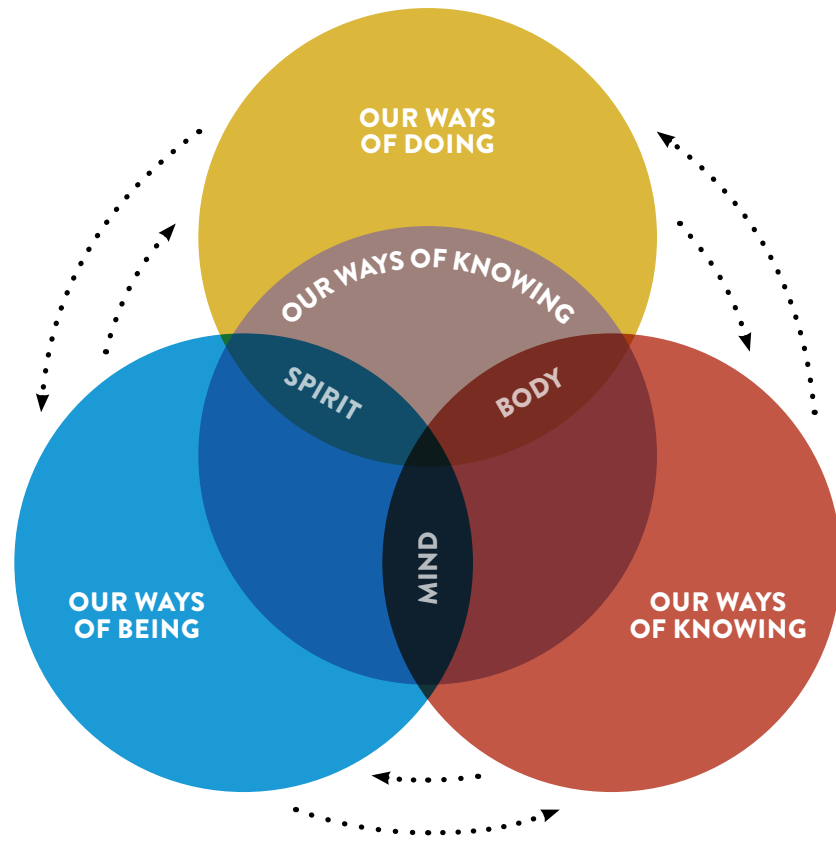
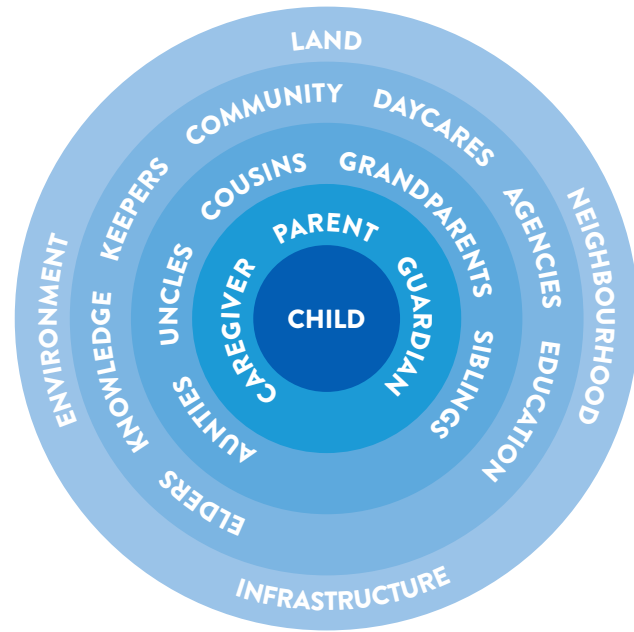
**We listen and respond to the help that families asked for**, rather than assuming that professionals know better.

**We work to support the whole extended family**, rather than focusing only on the needs of children or parents.

**We work to give families the time and space to plan and dream**, rather than providing help only during crises.

**When we work with the Child-Centred Model as our guide**, we are able to support positive change for children, parents, families, and the community.

To learn more about the Child-Centred Model, read the full report at [winnipegboldness.ca/childcentredmodel](http://winnipegboldness.ca/childcentredmodel)



**YOU NEED TO LOOK AT THE WHOLE PICTURE - [FAMILIES] ARE IN CRISIS, BUT THEY HAVE RESOURCES AND STRENGTHS TOO AND THAT IS WHAT WE FOCUS ON... I THINK THEY SAW THEMSELVES IN THAT AND SAW THEIR STRENGTHS; THAT THEY WERE CAPABLE OF DOING SOMETHING ELSE AND THEY COULD CHANGE THINGS."**

— Trainer/mentor

**"THROUGH [THIS PROTOTYPE] WE REALIZED THAT IF YOU PUT MORE TIME AND ENERGY INTO THAT ONE FAMILY LONG-TERM, LOOK AT HOW COST-EFFECTIVE IT IS! I SEE IT BECAUSE I WORK WITH THE FAMILIES ALL THE WAY WITHOUT THE RESOURCES."**

— Support staff

**"PEOPLE WANT TO TALK TO EACH OTHER AND BE ABLE TO BE FREE TO SAY STUFF WITHOUT SOMEONE USING THE INFO AGAINST THEM OR JUDGE THEM."**

— Host Organization Staff Member

**"FOR ONE FAMILY THERE HAD BEEN ISSUES WITH ONE WITH ADDICTIONS. WITH ADDICTIONS COMES MISTRUST. SO, THERE WAS A TIME FOR FORGIVENESS AND TIME FOR THAT PERSON TO SAY SORRY; THERE WAS NON-JUDGMENT; THE FAMILY ACKNOWLEDGED THE MISTAKE BUT FOCUSED ON WHAT WAS NEEDED TO GO FORWARD INSTEAD OF GETTING STUCK."**

— Support Staff

**"I SAW A DIFFERENCE WHEN ELDER MAE WAS PART OF GUIDING THINGS; EVEN IF THEY [THE FAMILIES] WEREN'T INTO TRADITIONAL [INDIGENOUS] WAYS OF BEING, MOST OF THEM WERE CURIOUS ABOUT IT AND WANTED TO START THAT JOURNEY. IT WAS ABOUT ACCESS."**

— Support Staff



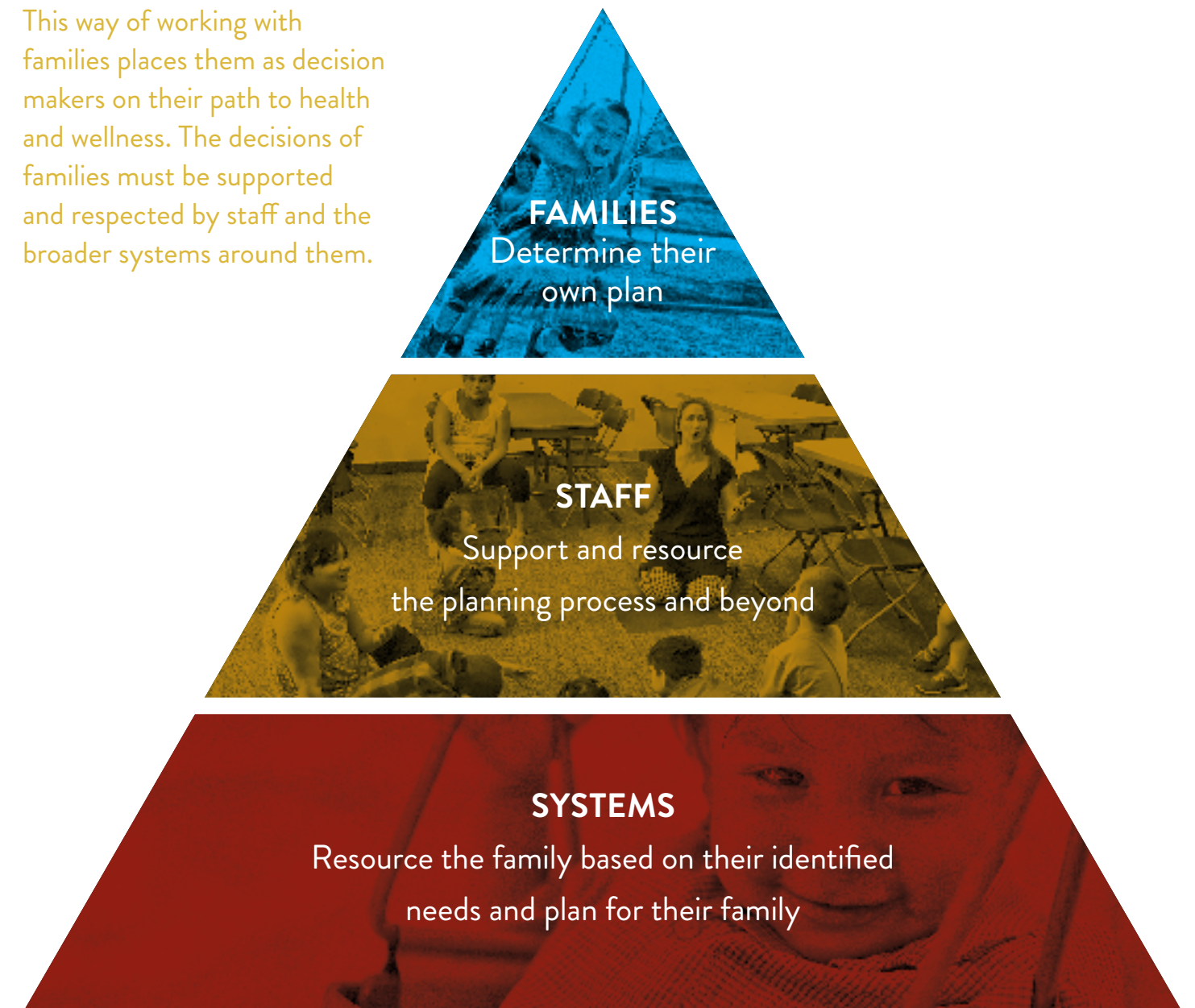
# THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLANNING PROCESS

- 1 | RECRUITMENT:**  
The health and wellness planning process begins when staff identify potential families and meet with them to discuss the process and what to expect. If families are interested, they complete a series of forms and a brief interview.
- 2 | PREPARATION:**  
The majority of staff time and support is provided during the preparation stage, which can take up to a few months. This is the most important part of the process. This time is needed to help build trust between families and staff and to help families reflect on what they might need or want to consider. This includes:
  - Discussing their short and long-term goals
  - Deciding who to invite into this process
  - Discussing the details of the plan day (e.g., ceremonies, meals, etc.)
  - Providing culturally appropriate planning tools
  - Outlining other needs including transportation, childcare, etc
- 3 | PLAN DAY**  
Plan Day: The structure of the day is entirely guided by the family. Normally staff and non-family supports join at the beginning to offer resources or help and then leave families for as long as they need to develop their health and wellness plan. When the family is ready they present their plan to staff and non-family supports, who in turn share how they can resource the family's plan. The actual plan day may not be needed by some families, depending on how pre-planning goes and their family's dynamics.
- 4 | FOLLOW-UP**  
After the plan day, the team shares a written summary of the family's plan with everyone. The team also works with the family to plan times for check-ins on their progress and for additional resources as requested by the family, continuing a long-term supportive relationship.



## RESOURCING FAMILIES AND THEIR NATURAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

This way of working with families places them as decision makers on their path to health and wellness. The decisions of families must be supported and respected by staff and the broader systems around them.



# WE NEED CHANGE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

SUPPORTING HEALTHY FAMILIES TODAY



As long as today's systemic barriers exist, the best ways that we have found to provide support for families are:

## LET FAMILIES DEFINE SUCCESS

There are many steps on the road to longer-term outcomes. Progress needs to be defined by families themselves and respected by service providers.

## BE FLEXIBLE FOR FAMILIES

Families are balancing multiple issues and crises. Being flexible in scheduling meetings and providing flexible supports like a family budget helps families participate in planning.

## PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD TRUST

Trust is needed for families working with support services. Opportunities to connect with families and build trust such as cooking or recreation can be the start of long-term trusting relationships.

## COMMIT TO THE LONG-TERM

Working successfully with families needs a longterm relationship without a planned end. Each family is walking their own path and will benefit most from supports that will walk alongside them asneeded.

## HELP FAMILIES PLAN TO AVOID CRISES

Provide supports for families that help them dream, help them get support before crises occur, and help them build their own pathways to success.

## BUILD STAFF CAPACITY

Provide training and experience to help staff work better with families, including opportunities to learn from Elders.



# CHANGING THE SYSTEM FOR TOMORROW



Through this work we found that there are large barriers that affect families and communitymembers. We need governments, non-profits, and businesses to:

1

## DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY VALUE FAMILIES – A CHILD'S NATURAL SUPPORTS – BY PRIORITIZING KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER.

Our existing approaches to child protection do not prioritize resourcing families in order to avoid removing children from their families. Systems must instead focus on keeping families together and providing them with the tools they need to thrive.

2

## ENSURE THAT FUNDING STRUCTURES ALLOW FOR WHOLISTIC AND FLEXIBLE APPROACHES.

Existing structures focus on individual family members or short-term, one-size-fits-all programs. Families need long-term, flexible supports to achieve their goals

3

## BUILD HONEST AND TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FAMILIES AND AGENCIES BY PUTTING FAMILIES' NEEDS FIRST.

Families have often had negative experiences with systems and agencies, even when seeking help for crises. These relationships need to be healed to be able to truly help children and families.

If you would like to learn more about the barriers that families in Point Douglas face to health and wellness planning, read the full POP report [\[reference\]](#), read our report on helpful ways to work with Point Douglas [\[reference\]](#), and explore our other POP reports [\[reference\]](#),







**“WE ARE THANKFUL TO OUR ANCESTORS WHO ENTRUSTED US WITH THE CARE OF THIS GENERATION, AND THE GENERATION WE WILL NEVER KNOW.”**

—(MacNeill, 2014, p.29)

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development and implementation of our prototypes, including our guide groups, partners, community organizations, local residents, and the North End community as a whole.

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