



WAYC

How to Host Your Own Event

*A Toolkit for Youth Groups
and Community Organizations*

Created by:

Western Arctic Youth Collective

Prepared Spring 2021 for:

Gwich'in Council International

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WAYC's focus areas are:

- *Mental Wellness*
- *Cultural Values and Knowledge Exchange*
- *Community Empowerment*
- *Collective Mentorship and Education*

The ***Western Arctic Youth Collective (WAYC)*** is created by Gwich'in and Inuvialuit youth for youth with connections to the Western Arctic. Our purpose is to empower our northern youth to be changemakers by providing a platform of youth-led collaborative initiatives and partnerships in their communities, and to partner with other like-minded groups in the North. WAYC is a project on MakeWay Charitable Society's Shared Platform as of March 2020, which supports on-the-ground efforts to create uncommon solutions for the common good.

Since 2018, WAYC had this idea of youth coming together to support and prioritize building collaborative relationships; strategize and be forward thinking about community-based goals and solutions; and organize creative and relevant programming for young people in their region. In 2021, WAYC was recognized as one of the Youth Category recipients of the Arctic Inspiration Prize.



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Introduction

In March 2021, WAYC hosted a **Local2Global Youth Digital Stories and Community Exchange** in Inuvik, Northwest Territories in collaboration with Gwich'in Council International (GCI).



The objectives of the **Local2Global** event were:

- To engage participants with Project CREATEs films
- To provide a platform for community discussions of mental wellness
- To connect participants with each other and with supporting organizations
- To inform future Arctic Council collaborations with youth-led initiatives
- To support youth-led organizations in event planning and facilitation

We heard other youth want to host similar events in their regions. This toolkit is to help youth groups and community organizations share ideas, get others involved and connected, and make a plan to use the Project CREATEs films as an anchor to create space on talking about suicide prevention and life promotion efforts in our communities.

About Project CREATEs:

Project CREATEs is a project of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) of the Arctic Council. The SDWG co-leads on this project included the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Canada, Finland, Kingdom of Denmark, and Sweden. Youth, invited by Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, were invited to engage in a dialogue about suicide prevention by telling their own stories, and were supported to make these stories into digital stories, or short films.

Key Findings of Project CREATEs:

Storytelling was an effective way of eliciting personal experience related to both suicide and resilience

Youth want to be meaningfully involved on suicide prevention efforts

Youth want culturally safe spaces to talk about suicide

Youth value circumpolar exchanges with other youth

Getting Started

1) Reflection - WHY?

Ask yourself and others involved:

- Why is this important or needed?
- Have there been other events like this? If so, what worked well? What would you change, or want to avoid?
- Are there particular sensitivities or recent events to be mindful of in the community? On your team?
- What do you hope to achieve? What does success look like?
- Do you have the resources to do this?

5) Creating Positive Impacts!

To improve you must monitor, debrief, and evaluate your efforts individually and collectively. Talk about lessons learned and obstacles or conflicts that arose. Remember to celebrate what you did well!

Questions to consider:

- Will there be a follow up to this event? If so, what does that event look like?
- How will results be shared? How will lessons learned or feedback be shared?
- What else interests you and your team?
- How do you align values, passion, and strengths in these activities moving forward?

4) Let's Get Planning!

Time to get moving! When you have a plan, remember to stay positive, communicate, and work together.

- What could this event look like?
- Who is the target audience?
- What are your team goals? Is everyone on the same page?
- What are the roles of the team? Who is responsible for what task?
- What are additional supports needed to make this event successful?
- What is your budget? Do you need more resources or partnerships?

2) Get Others Involved!

Time to approach others to contribute to your event. Good team work and communication are key!

- What empowers you that can empower and motivate others to get involved?
- Who do you need on your team? Early in planning stages? For delivery and implementation stages? To help promote and publicize? To be there during the event?
- What strengths does your team have? Where is help needed and what supports are available to you?

TIP: Build an Advisory Committee!

- Make sure to have a range of representation, diversity, and experience on this committee; ie. consider having someone from local government; education sector; grassroots sector; someone who's been involved in a similar event in the past; and maybe partners/other youth groups. These will be your community champions and people who can connect you to resources
- Set check in times and realistic deliverables within an agreed timeline
- Have clear expectations that it is a supportive and collaborative environment to share and contribute ideas and receive feedback

3) Power of Networking!

You may discover new ideas, have access to knowledge, and get support for your idea. There is a range of knowledge and support existing within your community!

TIP: Do it LOTS, OFTEN, and EARLY!

- Be clear when you're at the brainstorming and ideation stage and need feedback, help, people, or connections
- Be clear and encouraging if you need people to amplify your message and spread the word of your idea or vision
- Be clear and inviting whether you need people to help, implement and/or attend

Getting Started: WAYC

1) Reflection - WHY?

WAYC determined that using the Project CREATEs films would help create space for meaningful conversations and reflections on the reality and loss of suicide in community.

From 2018 to 2021, youth have shared with WAYC that:

- *Youth want to be meaningfully involved on suicide prevention and life promotional events and activities in their communities and regions*
- *Youth want culturally safe and appropriate spaces to talk about suicide without judgement and stigma, along with voicing concerns on other challenging topics and contributing factors to suicide that youth face, such as addictions, violence, bullying, depression and anxiety*
- *Youth want to learn from others and gain knowledge and skills on self-regulation and healthy coping mechanisms*

5) Creating Positive Impacts!

This event aligns with WAYC focus areas and values of youth-led engagement and participation within community on the topics of mental wellness and life promotion, community exchange and knowledge sharing, and capacity building activities and workshops. Our team focused on long term and positive impact efforts that were captured in the following themes with virtual and in-person activities, panels, and workshops:

- Increased connection and support between youth
- Increased hope over the winter
- Increased pride across cultures
- Recognition and resilience of youth and community members
- Increased capacity in community organizations
- Increased access to support and resources for mental wellness

2) Get Others Involved!

WAYC was supported by a Advisory Group of professionals and supports from GCI and other stakeholders connected to the Project CREATEs development over the years. WAYC also was supported by community champions with experience in the mental wellness and education sectors in the region.

WAYC participated in 3 Advisory Group meetings:

- Pre-planning stages and brainstorming of activities, topics, and workshops connected to the themes of the Project CREATEs films
- Interim check-in on progress and offering support with remaining tasks prior to the event
- Debrief event and activities, with lessons learned and reflections of the overall efforts

3) Power of Networking!

WAYC has strong relationships in our communities and throughout the region because of our networking skills. As shared - do it lots, often, and early in your planning process. From 2018-2021, WAYC has collaborated and partnered with community champions and allies, grassroots groups, not-for-profit organizations, local and territorial governments, and other organizations outside of the region.

4) Let's Get Planning!

WAYC had clear objectives agreed with GCI to implement the program and carry out the event:

- To engage participants with Project CREATEs films
- To provide a platform for community discussions of mental wellness
- To connect participants with each other and with supporting organizations
- To inform future Arctic Council collaborations with youth-led initiatives
- To support youth-led organizations in event planning and facilitation

Creating Your Program Plan

TIP: Break down all of the different groups you are trying to engage and strategize on how your team will engage each one specifically!

Remember that different individuals and groups will require different styles and forms of engagement and timelines to meaningfully participate

Remember that different individuals and groups will require multiple weeks to months of notice to participate within their schedules

Remember that different individuals and groups will range on what form of communication works best for them, ie. phone, virtual meeting, email, in-person, social media, etc.

Program Name: What is your event called? Be clear and consistent for when you promote it!

Creating a Team: Team work is everything when you have a group of people working together!

- Be open and transparent of what you can offer the team and where support is needed to make this event a success
- Discuss your communication style, ways of sharing and absorbing information
- Be clear and assertive of what your boundaries are when you are a part of a team and sharing tasks

Target Individual/Group: Who is the target audience? Who are we trying to engage? Who do we need to invite to participate?

- Share with youth, Elders, youth support workers, cultural support workers, teachers, social workers, counsellors, leaders, politicians, and other community members
- Reach out to schools, local groups and other organizations, local governments, territorial governments, and organizations outside of your region

Context/Background: Why is this important to address in your community? Have there been other events like this? If so, what worked well? What would you change, or want to avoid? Are there particular sensitivities or recent events to be mindful of in the community? On your team?

Timeline: Is it scheduled at a good time? Is the event overlapping with other events? Is there enough notice for people to attend? How much time does your team need per task to make this event happen?

Program Outcomes: What are your objectives? What are short term and long term impact will this event/activity have on participants? What are possible obstacles or threats?

Contributors: Do you have presenters? Speakers? Moderators? Facilitators? Create an agreement form and confirm expectations on time commitments and payment before the event.

Promotion: How do we make individuals and groups aware of this event? What promotional and advertisements will your team use?

Resources: What resources are required to make this event/activity successful? (ie. money for venue/food, salaries, honoraria, equipment rentals, workshop supplies, etc.)

Program Plan: WAYC

Program Name: Local 2 Global: Youth Digital Stories and Community Exchange

Creating a Team: Our core team consisted of 4 staff that shared a range of tasks from brainstorming and offering ideas, logistics and finance support, promoting the event, recruitment of presenters, on-site preparation, evaluating and reporting. Our team was supported by an Advisory Group.

Target Individual/Group: Our focus areas are youth ages 18-35. Our target group was engaging and creating space for youth ages 15-35 to share their perspectives, insight, and ideas for community solutions on life promotion, mental wellness, and community empowerment in the region and across similar northern and circumpolar regions.

Context/Background: High suicide rates among youth, specifically Indigenous youth in remote and isolated communities and across similar northern and circumpolar regions. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted everyone's mental health and wellness as well.

Timeline: Our timeline was mid-January to end of March to host the event and complete a report.

- *January:* Familiarize our team with objectives and deliverables; Participate in advisory pre-planning and brainstorming sessions; Outline tasks for team and create program plan; Book venue; Start approaching contributors and other supports in the community; Submit COVID-19 Safety Plan
- *February:* Participate in check-in Advisory meeting; Purchase supplies for wellness kits; Send save-the-dates to promote event; Create promotional content for social media; Confirm supports and presenters;
- *March:* Last minute tasks and logistics; Host the event; Debrief with the team and Advisory Group; Finalize report and feedback from all participants; Finalize expenses

Program Outcomes: We hoped community would feel empowered coming together virtually and in-person on a subject that impacts all our communities. We hoped youth would feel heard and valued to share their perspectives, insight, and ideas by creating a safe space to discuss fear, stigma, discomfort, apathy, and other contributing factors to suicide we see in community. Below are some outcome examples:

- Participants practice self-care activities using the resilience kits provided
- Participants connect with each other through shared activities (film screenings, paint workshop, safeTALK workshop, and beading workshop)
- Community exchange opportunities (world cafe, youth panels, reverse town hall, suicide prevention vs. life promotion presentation)

Contributors: We had over 15 youth participate in virtual panels and a live reverse town hall. We had Elders making opening remarks and be supports on site. We hired local facilitators to deliver workshops and youth wellness advocates to present on the topic of suicide prevention vs. life promotion and moderate the panels.

Promotion: Our team used Facebook and Instagram advertisements to promote the event. We also circulated save-the-dates within our networks and our partners' networks 2 weeks prior to the event.

Resources: WAYC had a budget of \$30, 000 to cover all expenses associated with the event.

Creating a Budget

Category and Budget Examples:

Salaries: Salaries and benefits for staff

Honoraria: Honoraria for individuals contributing their time and knowledge, such as youth, guest speakers, artists, volunteers, Elders, knowledge keepers, etc.

Professional Fees: Contracted work, such as counselors, photographers, consultants, designers, facilitators, instructors, extra hands, etc.

Materials/Supplies: Prizes, medicines, sewing supplies, swag, facilitation materials, camping needs, art materials, etc.

Venue: Venue rentals, equipment rentals, catering, etc.

Food: Meals, snacks, drinks, per diems, etc.

Travel: Flights, mileage, car rentals, shuttles, taxi, etc.

Accommodations: Hotels, Airbnb, or gifts for hosts and billets (if staying at someone's home)

Communications: Printing, Canva subscription, internet fees, Facebook and Instagram ads, audio/visual rentals, etc.

<i>Budget for film screening with world café engagement activities:</i>	<i>Anticipated Event Costs</i>
A. <i>Materials/Supplies (local prizes and facilitation materials):</i>	\$100 CAD
B. <i>Honoraria/Professional Fees (counselor and Elder):</i>	\$500 CAD (\$250 each)
C. <i>Venue (with equipment rental):</i>	\$300 CAD
D. <i>Food (snacks and drinks):</i>	\$100 CAD
E. <i>Total Anticipated Event Cost:</i>	\$1000 CAD

<i>Budget for film screening with beading workshop and sharing circle:</i>	<i>Anticipated Event Costs</i>
A. <i>Materials/Supplies (beading supplies):</i>	\$350 CAD
B. <i>Honoraria/Professional Fees (Beaded instructor, counselor, and Elder):</i>	\$750 CAD (\$250 each)
C. <i>Venue (with equipment rental):</i>	\$300 CAD
D. <i>Food (snacks and drinks):</i>	\$100 CAD
E. <i>Total Anticipated Event Cost:</i>	\$1500 CAD

<i>Budget for film screening with youth panel on life promotion and wellness:</i>	<i>Anticipated Event Costs</i>
A. <i>Materials/Supplies (local prizes):</i>	\$100 CAD
B. <i>Honoraria/Professional Fees (3 youth, counselor, Elder, and moderator):</i>	\$1500 CAD (\$250 each)
C. <i>Venue (with equipment rental):</i>	\$300 CAD
D. <i>Food (snacks and drinks):</i>	\$100 CAD
E. <i>Total Anticipated Event Cost:</i>	\$2000 CAD

Budget: WAYC

WAYC had a budget of \$30, 000 to cover all expenses associated with the event. This covered salaries of WAYC staff (with an administration fee), venue costs and equipment rentals, professional fees and honoraria for youth and other community presenters and facilitators, supplies for wellness kits, and prizes for engagement.

Salaries: WAYC paid 4 staff to make this event a success. This cost also included an overhead/administration fee.

Honoraria: WAYC paid two Elders to make opening remarks for the event and to be a support person onsite for the film screenings and activities. WAYC also hired a youth helper for the days of the event to help with the COVID-19 requirements (ie. sign consent forms and tracking details for in-person activities).

Professional Fees: WAYC hired over 15 youth, ages 17-32, to contribute to the event activities. Youth participated in the virtual panels and the reverse town hall. Youth lead a beading and painting workshop. Youth contributed to content and resource development for the wellness kits (ie. Ullaakkut stay alive messages and Nikita Larter images) and a youth presented as a keynote (T'ánc'háy Redvers)

Materials/Supplies: WAYC supported local businesses whenever possible. This mainly covered the wellness kit purchases, shipping costs, and prizes for engagement and participation.

Venue: WAYC rented the local community hall to host the event. This included equipment rentals.

Food: WAYC covered meals and snacks for staff and other contributing participants (ie. youth helper) during the event. WAYC also ordered some quality snack items (ie. popcorn, beef jerky, teas and coffees).

Travel: There were no travel or mileage related costs for this event.

Accommodations: There were no accommodation costs for this event.

Communications: WAYC used Facebook and Instagram ads to promote the event online.

<i>Budget</i>	<i>Anticipated Event Costs</i>	<i>Actual Event Costs</i>
<i>A. Materials and Supplies: (Including, but not limited to, all program/workshop expenses such as program supplies, advertising, hall rental, snacks and drinks, printing, etc.)</i>	10,044.00 CAD	9,190.85 CAD
<i>B. Professional Fees:</i>	9,350.00 CAD	9,490.00 CAD
<i>C. Salaries:</i>	9,344.15 CAD	7,669.15 CAD
<i>D. Report Preparation:</i>	0.00 CAD	650.00 CAD
<i>E. Subtotal (A+B+C):</i>	28,738.15 CAD	27,000.00 CAD
<i>F. Administration (10 % of E):</i>	3,000.00 CAD	3,000.00 CAD
<i>G. Total Anticipated Event Cost (E+F):</i>	31,738.15 CAD	30,000.00 CAD

Implementation & Evaluation

Creating a Positive Impact:

- *What outcome are you most proud of?*
- *Do you wish you approached some outcomes differently?*
- *Do you have recommendations and advice for other youth groups and community organizations that try to do similar events?*

Creating Safe Spaces: How are you designing the safe space? Is the venue appropriate, accessible, and welcoming? What formal and informal perimeters are your team considering to support the space? Do you have aftercare considered?

Possible Obstacles: What are challenges you may face in implementing your team plan? Can you think of solutions? What could you do to overcome obstacles in a future project?

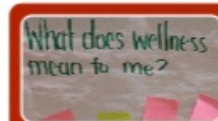
Media Release: Are you planning on taking any photos, videos or interviews?

Consent Forms: Do you have youth that need parent's consent to participate?

Evaluating your event: What do our indicator of success look like? What tool will you use to receive feedback and rate participants overall experience?

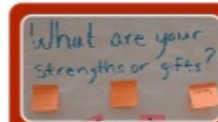
Unexpected Outcomes: What surprised your team? Did things happen, either in a good way or that was tricky, that you weren't expecting? Were the negative factors outside your control or were they risks that could have been avoided?

Team Debrief: What worked? What did not work? What were the lessons learned and areas for growth? What skills were developed? What kept the team motivated and focused?



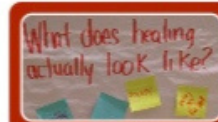
What does wellness mean to me?

• Rest; Looking after yourself; Taking care of myself; Self-love; Everything; Balancing in 2 worlds; Being with Elders; Balance; Self-care



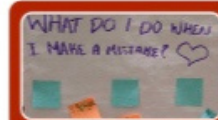
What are your strengths or gifts?

• Empathy; I teach; Making people feel comfortable; Artistic; Being vulnerable; Culture, family, love, language; Caring, Communication; Listening without judgement; Super friendly; Encouraging others to try new things



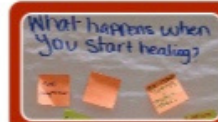
What does healing actually look like?

• Healthy; Messy; Being on the land; Looking & feeling good; Smiles & healthy community and family; Cultural transmission; Laughter; Everything; Being there; Family



What do I do when I make a mistake?

• Tell someone; Apologize; Try to figure it out; Forgive & forget; Try to fix it; Be kind to myself; Learn from it; Own up to it, apologize & do better; Reflect & learn; Accountable & responsible; Cry & try again; Improve



What happens when you start healing?

• Self-compassion; Create opportunities; peace; Cultural transmission; Start a business; Emotions, hard times, learning, good things; You create success & inspire others; Self-worth

Implementation & Evaluation: WAYC

Creating Safe Spaces: We asked for an Elder to join for in-person activities, as well as a counsellor and other support workers in our community to be on site at all times for the event. We tried to open each event in a good way (ie. Quilliq lighting and prayer). We offered information on supports and aftercare options (ie. counselling, crisis lines, information on coping, etc)

Possible Obstacles: COVID-19 realities, triggering moments, and delays or issues with technology and/or poor WI-FI connections.

Media Release: All contributors and presenters signed a media release with their participation agreement. Participants that attended the in-person events signed a media release.

Consent Forms: Our COVID-19 Safety Plan called for tracking of participants for the in-person events. Consent forms were signed as well.

Evaluating your event: Our team used google forms to evaluate the event and provide feedback. Here is a sample of questions:

- What does wellness mean to me?
- What are your strengths and gifts?
- What does healing actually look like?
- What do I do when I make a mistake?
- What do we need to normalize in our community around mental health/wellness?
- What is a message you have for others that may need to hear it?
- What do life-promoting activities, supports, or programming look like in our region for youth? For community?

Unexpected Outcomes: Our team experienced some issues with technology and the equipment rented from the venue. We also had some last minute changes due to some availability of contributors and presenters.

Team Debrief: Our WAYC team used a SWOT analysis approach (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) following the event to debrief. Our team also had a final debrief and review of the event success, lessons learned, takeaways, and ideas for other opportunities with the Advisory Committee formed.

Creating a Positive Impact:

- *We were proud to bring youth and community together on a tough subject during pandemic times*
- *There are some areas that were out of our control and we wished we had more time further enhance the quality and impact of the event, and the value is we know more for future events*
- *Our team gained valuable skills and lessons that we will continue to grow and nourish to offer our community moving forward*

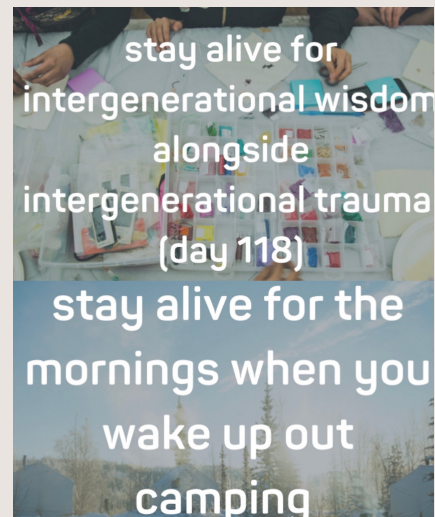
WAYC Programming Debrief – S, W, O, Ts



Recommendations

To best expand the reach of future events and increase the potential benefits to community, our team recommends the following for future planning for other youth groups and community organizations:

- Strong communication with your team
- Duplicate daytime event offerings in the evening, whenever possible
- Send formal invitations to community leaders, schools, and other sector well in advance
- Be creative with promoting your event, ie. networking, radio, community channels, etc.
- Confirm counsellor, Elder, and other forms of support to attend all in-person events, and provide mental health and aftercare resource lists for online participants
- Identify content creation opportunities to maximize impact of single events
- Support local business and community members as much as you can



Resources

Western Arctic Youth Collective:

Facebook @waycwaycwayc

Instagram @waycwayc

Project CREATEs, including links to all films: <https://www.projectcreates.com/>

Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group:

<https://sdwg.org/>

Gwich'in Council International:

<https://gwichincouncil.com/>

YouTube links to 2021 events:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqafgqgOsv9jRm_f-E9tcCQ/featured