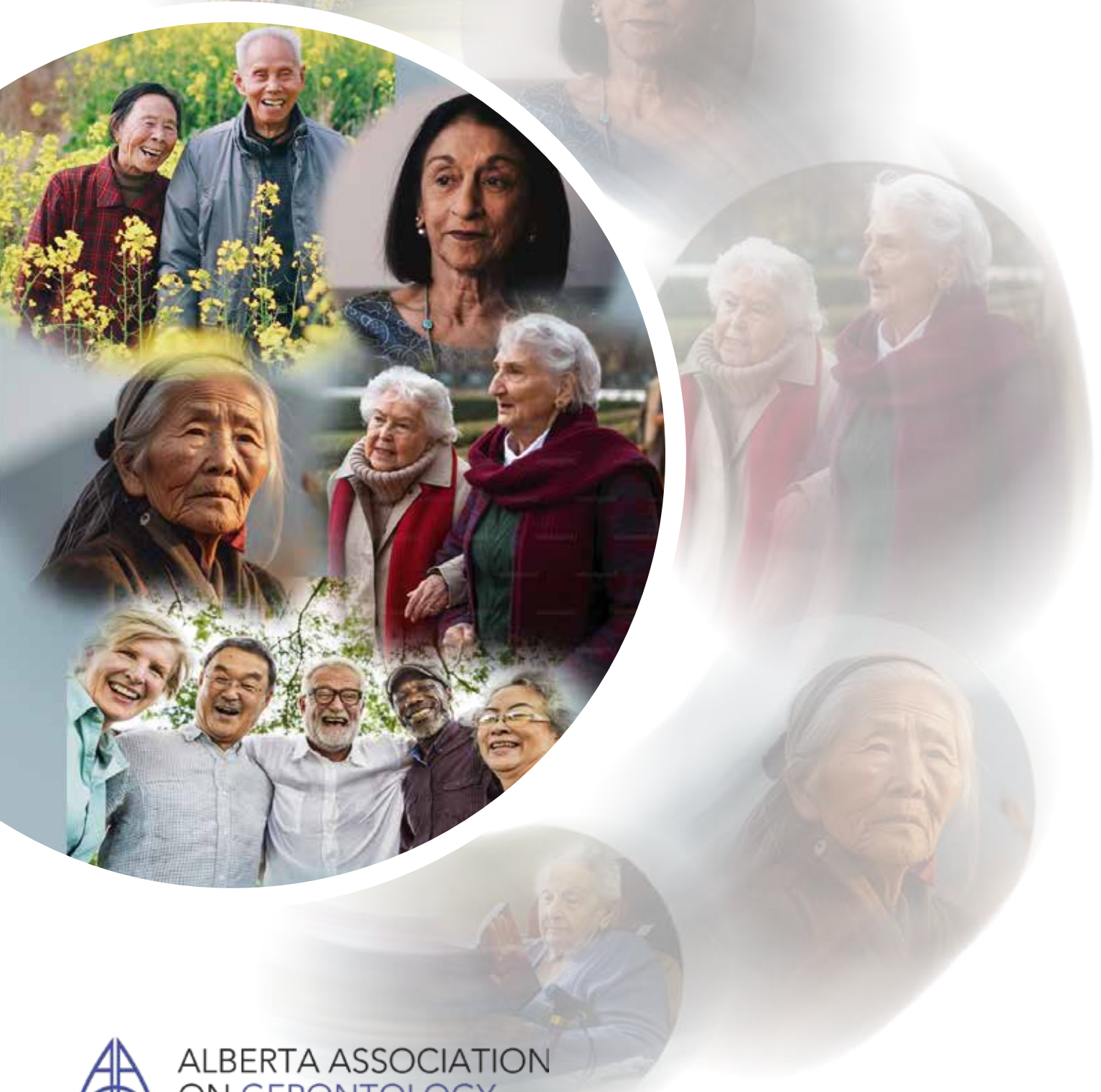


AAG Cultural Change Project

Report on Enhancing Inclusion for Individual Wellbeing in Diverse Communities: From Intention to Action for Inclusive Living.



ALBERTA ASSOCIATION
ON GERONTOLOGY
Improving the Lives of Older Albertans

June 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Executive Summary	3
2 Introduction	5
3 The Case for Change	7
Four Key Lessons Learned.....	7
The Case for Change and Call for Action Are Clear	8
4 Learnings from the Community Forum	10
Introduction	10
Opening Perspectives from the Co-Hosts	11
The Circle of Learning	12
Those with Lived Experiences: Messages from the Frontline.....	17
Closing Comments	18
5 Post-Community Forum Findings	19
The Survey	19
Survey Respondent Profile	19
Survey Findings	20
6 AAG Future Directions for Promoting Healthy Aging in a Future of Diverse Communities	23
Future Directions for Promoting Health Aging in a Diverse Person-Centred Community Ecosystem .	23
APPENDIX A: Community Forum Poster	25

1 Executive Summary

Enhancing inclusion for individual well-being in diverse communities will be a hallmark of moving to a future for healthy aging and quality of life for older Albertans.

- Alberta is the third most diverse province in Alberta.
- Growth of the population of older adults is a fact; the future of diversity is multi-faceted and equally real, encompassing age, ethnicity, race, personal preferences, gender identity, religion and other personal situations.

Our challenge: inclusion for all where inclusion means a sense of belonging & dignity, as well as meaningful engagement, empowerment, and equality of opportunity in any community.

Over 100 individuals from rural and urban communities, community-based organizations, housing providers, community care, continuing care, health services, and educators attended a two-hour webinar to learn from colleagues about strategies to move from intention to action.

- We learned about strategies and resources to connect and support people in diverse communities.
- We heard about the difference that cultivating an inclusive environment for clients and employees can make in home care, for individuals being served, families, and employees.
- We were encouraged by the difference a strong focus on person-centred care can make—and not to give up.
- We were introduced to strategies to create culturally sensitive practices in education settings to prepare students for positive experiences in the workplace.
- We were provided with a pathway to make EDIR (equity diversity inclusion and reconciliation) a reality with a specific step to make reconciliation a part of continuing care practice.

Persons with lived experience and webinar hosts reinforced the call for action; needs to change are required today; action can't wait for tomorrow.

Participants in the post-webinar survey spoke to the value of this learning and indicated an intention to share these perspectives and ideas for practice change.

Two strategies for follow-up action. Discussion at AAG's Stakeholder Collaborative Committee built on participant input regarding ongoing supports for change. This committee identified two strategies for follow-up action—by service providers and policy leaders:

1. Champion person-centred care

- Develop a common understanding of what person-centred care means and how it looks in action
- Facilitate development of strategies to address systemic inequalities, disparities and barriers

2. Facilitate learning and knowledge mobilization

- Facilitate a common understanding of the many facets of diverse communities
- Facilitate development of strong and inter-connected community ecosystems in which diversity, equity and inclusion are core values in attitudes and actions
- Facilitate development of strategies to support changes in practice that advance equity, diversity, and inclusion—including inclusive policies and procedures, inclusive programming &

activities, anti-discrimination and anti-bias education and training for students and workers and development of cultural competence and proficient communication skills.

MOVING FROM INTENTION TO ACTION BELONGS TO ALL OF US. In the words of our host, Rev. Travis Enright: “People are sometimes afraid of the word advocacy but standing for and standing with is very much a part of what it means to be a human being. Where have we been... the journey we all need is here, especially at a time when we think that inclusivity is at the forefront of people’s imagination.

“Looking forward, collaborative efforts are key. Collaboration can be daunting, but it involves seeing, hearing, and including each other, breaking down barriers, and creating new opportunities”

2 Introduction

Alberta Association on Gerontology (AAG)'s Culture Change Project with funding received from Alberta Health, is focused on developing resources to support Alberta's transformation journey. In this part of the project, the focus was on thought leadership for healthy aging in a future of diversity.

Project Focus

Enhancing Individual Wellbeing in Diverse Communities: From Intention to Action for Inclusive Living, focused on developing the capacity of community and continuing care organizations to enhance inclusion for individuals and families seeking/receiving services and individuals in the workforce, as agents of transformation for a future of healthy aging and quality of life for older Albertans.

Two Project Objectives

- **To engage a broad range of participants from community-based, housing, and continuing care organizations** in learning about promising practices to create environments of inclusion for individuals being served and the workforce and volunteers providing these services.
- **To model a circle of learning with community leaders sharing promising practices for inclusion** of persons with diverse backgrounds and preferences across services and workplaces.

Project Approach

AAG organized and conducted a Community Forum via webinar using the Zoom platform. Features of the planning for the Community Forum were:

- Consultation with a small cross-section of the Stakeholder Collaboration Committee (SCC) to discuss the approach to be used, the preferable date and time available, and the choice of changemakers to share promising practices in the field of EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion).
- The initial planning was discussed at the February SCC and further refined.

Result: a two-hour webinar on March 6, 2024, involving:

- Two co-hosts, both recognized champions for change
- Circle of Learning of five speakers of diverse backgrounds speaking to their work and promising practices in the community at large, community/home care services, continuing care centres, and education.
- Three diverse speakers representing the frontline perspectives, either being on the receiving end of services, engaged in education, the workforce or volunteer situations.

A webinar host was contracted to manage the webinar logistics and a consultant assisted with the planning and coordination of the presentations. An annotated agenda was prepared and reviewed with the co-hosts and speakers prior to the webinar. The registration poster is shown in Appendix A

101 people participated. Following the webinar, a post-webinar survey was distributed to all participants for their feedback and suggestions on priorities needing attention moving forward.

Report Purpose

This report provides a synopsis of the key information presented at the Community Forum as well as the findings from the post-webinar survey. The information is intended as a starting point for all leaders in the community, continuing care, and education fields

The information is expected to enhance increasing awareness and knowledge about diversity and inclusion and how EDI policies and leading practices can be embraced and practiced creating a culture of inclusiveness and belonging for all people.

Moving from intention to action...

Creating a sense of belonging...

Building inclusive communities where diversity thrives

Report Organization

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- **Section Three: The Case for Change:** describes why diversity and inclusion matters
- **Section Four: Learnings from the Community Forum:** provides a synopsis of information presented by the co-hosts and each speaker
- **Section Five: Post-Community Forum Findings:** provides the key findings about the Community Forum experience and identifies the priority areas for moving forward
- **Section Six: AAG Future Directions for Promoting Healthy Aging in a Future of Diverse Communities:** describes areas where the AAG, providers, policy leaders and citizens, can take action to further the agenda on diversity and inclusion

3 The Case for Change

The Healthy Aging Summit 2023, *Reimagining Ageing; Moving Forward Together* (October 10-12, 2023) created the case for change. The following information is taken from the information provided by the Summit speakers.

Four Key Lessons Learned

Learning 1: The future of increasing diversity is multi-faceted and real

- Canada is a multi-cultural country; Canada's immigration policies are increasing the diversity of Canadians; public expectations are raising the importance of recognizing diversity in all its forms
- According to Statistics Canada, in the 2012 Census, 5% of the population identify as Indigenous peoples, 0.33% of persons aged 15 years and older living in a private household identified as transgender or non-binary, and 23% of the population are immigrants with permanent residence status. The annual immigration in Canada is almost 500,000 new immigrants, one of the highest rates of any country in the world.
- The 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability showed that 27% of Canadians aged 15 years and older had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities, an increase of 5% since 2017.
- Taken from a different perspective, these numbers point to concerns regarding vulnerability. According to one of the Summit speakers:
 - a. 26% of seniors die because of loneliness
 - b. 56% of Canadians experience ageism

According to Alzheimer Calgary, persons living with dementia still experience stigma (Calgary statistics)

Learning 2: The need to move from labels for different aspects of diversity (which divide) to a focus on appreciating differences to allow us to focus on key concepts important to a future of living well with diversity

- Summit attendees were challenged to live the expectations of person-centred care/service by thinking about the individual, and the understanding required to accept/feel comfortable with each person.
- The final challenge was to identify system barriers to inclusion and belonging and change these so that people across the spectrum of needs can experience inclusion.

Learning 3: Needs and Opportunities from Lived Experiences

A Lived Experience Panel of individuals were consistent in their messages:

- 1. Community members and employees in community and continuing care services need to listen and understand each person/their situation and to respect them as individuals.**
 - Older adults/grandparents have much to offer to others in developing this understanding
 - Many community resources/resource persons (many of whom participated at the Summit and more) can be of help.

- Cross-generational initiatives build and sustain new understanding and mutual respect
 - Cross-cultural exchanges enhance community understanding (e.g., across seniors centres).
2. **A consistent call was made for RESPECT among all parties to the other.** Organizational expectations need to be specified regarding respectful behaviours in their community of interest, with consequences if not followed.
 3. **Key competencies for employees were identified:** cultural sensitivity, trauma-informed care, and person-centred practice/emotional intelligence.

Learning 4: The Future Needs to Be Powered by Asset-Based Community Development

Attendees were challenged to **move their thinking from “services IN community” to “people feeling like they are WITH/OF community”**, the essence of inclusion.

The Case for Change and Call for Action Are Clear

Diversity is a fact, equity is a choice, inclusion is an action, belonging is an outcome.

Source: Speaker at ACCA Conference that preceded the Summit on Oct 4th & 5th

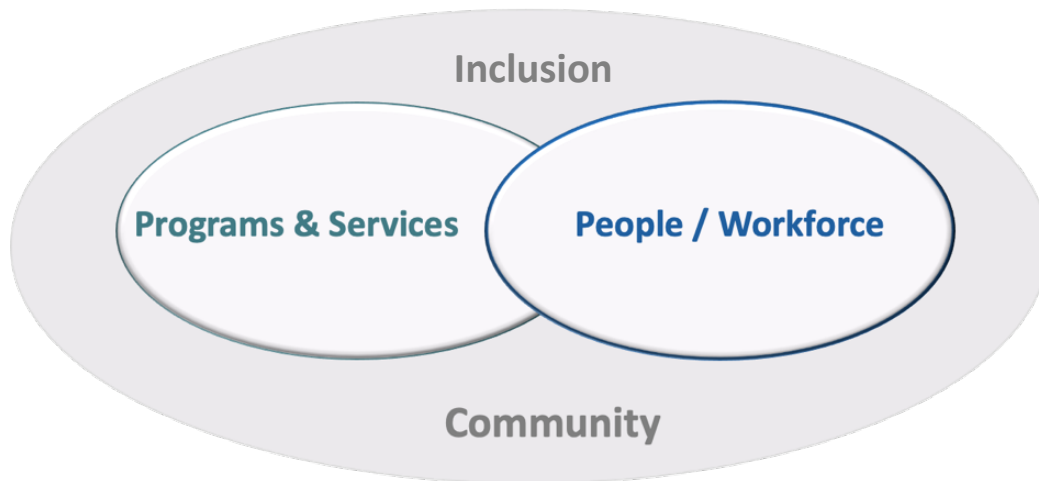
1. Alberta is the third most diverse province in Canada

- Alberta is home to 45 First Nations in Alberta and 8 Metis settlements. From the 2021 federal Census of Population, Indigenous people in Alberta make up 6.8% of the population. The Indigenous population is younger and growing at a faster rate than the non-Indigenous population. Reflecting this reality and national expectations related to the Truth & Reconciliation report, a Ministry of Indigenous Affairs has been set up in Alberta. It has a mandate to work with provinces, territories, indigenous organizations, and communities to end racism, discrimination and violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ1+ people.
- The latest release from the 2021 Census shows that more than a quarter (28%) of Albertans are part of a racialized group (persons, other than Indigenous persons, who are non-white in color).
- The initiative to bring increasing numbers of foreign-educated workers for all industries to meet workplace demands is driving this number up, as is the opportunity to welcome increasing numbers of immigrants/refugees into communities and workplaces.
- The need to create workplaces that support EDI strategies for a diverse workforce was a priority in AAG’s Workforce Think Tank, Dec 2022. Finally, diversity encompasses perspectives regarding gender and personal preferences (e.g., 2SLGBTQ+)

2. Many definitions exist for inclusion... the following description links the concepts of diversity, equity, and belonging and the concepts of person-centred practice which underpins desired approaches to service delivery as well as work with meaning...

Inclusion for all: A sense of belonging & dignity, as well as the experience of meaningful engagement, empowerment, & equality of opportunity in any community

This concept is advanced by planning, programming, and policy for the two interconnected areas of focus operating within the community ecosystem.



3. The Cultural Change Project will continue its focus on enhancing the capacity of community and continuing care organizations to be agents of transformation for a future of healthy aging and quality of life for older Albertans.

Person-centred approaches will enhance inclusion for individuals and families seeking/ receiving services and for individuals in the workforce.

4. EDI initiatives are underway across community and continuing care organizations to shift their cultures and practices toward person-centered care and services and to create inclusive workplaces.

This project aims to advance change by creating opportunities to learn from promising practices across our communities, co-creating and role modelling the way forward just as we learn from persons with diverse backgrounds and experiences to co-create positive futures.

The Gains can be REAL...

- For People being served/ looking for services: improved access, service linkages & service quality
- For Persons in the workforce/ seeking to be in the workforce: welcoming and belonging in the workforce and improved economic potential
- For Providers of service: improved outcomes and productivity
- For Partners in service delivery: improved interconnections and service outcomes; stronger communities

4 Learnings from the Community Forum

Introduction

The Community Forum, *Enhancing Individual Well-Being in Diverse Communities: From Intention to Action for Inclusive Living*, was a two-hour webinar held on March 6, 2024. The forum consisted of the following content and speakers:

Two Co-hosts:

- **Rev. Travis Enright**, Archdeacon for Reconciliation and Decolonization and Rector of Lodgepole Sacred Circle
- **Dr. Shanika Donalds**, Director of Housing and Client Services, GEF Seniors Housing

Circle of Learning:

- **Community-Based Organizations: Connecting and Supporting People in Diverse Communities.** Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council: **Sheila Hallett, Executive Director**
- **Building Bridges: Cultivating an Inclusive Experience for Clients and Employees:** CBI Health: **Kim Mansbridge, Regional Director, Northern Alberta; CBI Health: Kirstan Reynolds, Regional Director, Southern Alberta**
- **Culturally Responsive Programming: Making a Difference in Continuing Care:** Wing Kei Care Centres: **Kathy Tam, Chief Executive Officer**
- **Preparing Employees for Culturally Sensitive Practice and Community Integration:** NorQuest College: **Jennifer Mah, Dean, Faculty of Health Studies**
- **Moving Forward Together: Reconciliation and Opportunities in Continuing Care for Meaningful Living and Working:** Good Samaritan Society: **Dr. Katherine Chubbs, President and Chief Executive Officer**

Frontline Perspectives:

- **Member of the Queer Community, Lara Pinchbeck**
- **College Student, Hazellynn Lagmay**
- **Family Caregiver, Bryan Gilks**

In the next section we provide a synopsis of each speaker's presentation and words of those with lived experience who provided testimonials about being on the "frontline" and their experience of feeling included.

Opening Perspectives from the Co-Hosts

Rev. Travis Enright, Archdeacon for Reconciliation and Decolonization and Rector of Lodgepole Sacred Circle and **Dr. Shanika Donalds**, Director, Housing and Client Service, GEF Seniors Housing



Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge all the people who have come, worked, played, and sweated from Indigenous communities, including the Nehiyawak, Nakota, Blackfoot, Sioux, Métis, and Inuit, and all those who make up our province and the places where you reside. We also acknowledge the diverse peoples who continue to be part of this land and the Treaty, including newcomers, refugees, and all those who contribute to making this land diverse and beautiful.

We recognize the good work done by everyone who comes to this land, being part of a larger community, ecosystem, and body of knowledge. This acknowledgment extends to all those who have come and will continue to come to this land.

Most importantly, I acknowledge the land itself, our greatest dialogue partner. Whether it is through rain, fire, or drought, we have a profound relationship with this land and its creation.



Engaging about Diversity

As AAG undertakes the important work of pulling together the community and recognizing its diversity, this conversation is very timely. It is timely for communities across the province to engage in these discussions, as we are increasingly becoming more diverse. Diversity is truly a fundamental aspect of our existence today. By engaging with each other and with the land, we respect and share knowledge, celebrating and uplifting the differences that bind us together.



Community-Based Organizations: Connecting and Supporting People in Diverse Communities

Sheila Hallett, Executive Director, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC), shared that the ECSS is an organizing body that includes among other services:

- Supporting a network of collaborative efforts that include mostly non-profits providing direct services and resources to older adults in Edmonton
- Creating opportunities for collective impact to address issues that interfere with people's ability to thrive in their homes in community

Recognition of increasing diversity in Edmonton's older adult population. As diversity increases, programs and services designed to address the needs of older adults can reach more people and improve quality of life by *embedding equity and inclusion as foundational elements for both the organization and the people it serves*. ESCC has been working internally on how to embed equity, diversity and inclusion into their organization's policies and practices. This includes training and guided learning for their Board and Staff through courses, articles, books, discussions and listening to voices of lived experience. Adapting their policies, procedures, and strategic plan is ongoing work.

Development of coordinated outreach model. The diversity reality prompted the development of a coordinated model of outreach, with a focus on equity, working with 26 separate community-based seniors serving organizations in Edmonton. Outreach was defined collectively as a supportive service to help older adults (age 55 and older) connect with supports they need to improve their wellbeing. Outreach services can include case finding, assessment, information and referral, case management, system advocacy and community engagement.

Shared values became bedrock values, putting equity at the core of coordinated services helps to ensure that seniors with diverse experiences receive support:

- Honouring First People
- Anti-Oppressive
- Social Justice
- Culturally Responsive
- Honouring Diversity

Coordinated Outreach model implementation started July 2023. Ten partner agencies are involved, along with ESCC and the Canadian Mental Health Association. A data warehouse to enable sharing of data, using the same tools to collect the shared data, is planned for the 2024 spring. Race-based data is also included given older adults' consent for same

Core Message: Living the values of diversity, equity and inclusion is both an individual and an organizational responsibility.



Building Bridges: Cultivating an Inclusive Experience for Clients and Employees

Kimberley Mansbridge and Kristan Reynolds, Regional Directors Northern and Southern Alberta respectively, CBI Health, described their nation-wide organization, the home health and rehabilitation work they do, serving over 325,000+ clients annually by a workforce of about 12,000 team members.

CBI has been evolving their diversity, equity, and inclusion practice since mid-2020:

- **June 2020:** identified the need,
- **July 2020:** conducted employee census
- **October 2020:** formed a EDI Advisory Committee nationally, conducted focus groups and best practice research in developing their DEO plan.
- **Feb 2021:** launched EDI plan and published the first cultural celebrations communications
- **April 2021 to present,** partnering with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) and incorporating EDI into existing functions across the organization

CBI Health strategic priorities for Client and Employee Experience include EDI specific actions:

- **Recruitment & Retention:** Belonging: Employee Resource Groups (ERGS)/Communities of Practice
- **Growth:** EDI in Clinical Practice, Cultural Awareness, Gender Inclusivity, Difficult Conversations, Unconscious Bias and Power & Privilege
- **Leadership/Management Development:** Management/Leadership 101: Cultural Awareness, Gender Inclusivity, Difficult Conversations, Unconscious Bias and Power & Privilege
- **Operational Excellence:** Onboarding and Storytelling (sharing and inspiring change/impact)

Client & Employee Experience in Action....

- Community of Practicing Reconciliation
- Life through my Eyes
- Client/Family Advisory Council





Culturally Responsive Programming: Making a Difference in Continuing Care

Kathy Tam, CEO, Wing Kei Care Centres, shared their belief, *Hope is Connection*. In Kathy's words, "We believe with the fullness of our hearts and guided by our professional practice and collective experience, that a resident is alive—thriving even—until their last breath."

Wing Kei has learned that one of the most potent ways to foster hope and connection is by offering culturally responsive care. Our cultural identities are shaped by what we believe to be important and how they inform our decisions. Wing Kei Care Centres was borne from an immense desire our founders held dear to provide culturally responsive care to seniors. A video, *Circle of Love*, was shown to demonstrate the sacredness of their work and to underscore the meaningfulness of culturally responsive care.

Wing Kei actively promotes an environment of cultural humility and responsiveness:

- **Cultural humility** is about asking curious questions to gain a better understanding of what is culturally important to residents. It recognizes that culture is constantly evolving and that how a person expresses their culture is unique, even in the same family.
- **Cultural responsiveness** is about attending to the resident and their families or caregivers based on what they share and by actively leaving our own assumptions and biases aside.

Interactive Educational Experience three-month pilot is underway involving staff, families, and caregivers, and guided by an expert advisory committee, *to strengthen the comfort and confidence of frontline staff to engage in culturally responsive conversations about palliative and end-of-life care with residents, their families and caregivers, and each other.*

Wing Kei's philosophy about compassion is best reflected by a quote by Henri Nouwen:

It is not a bending toward the underprivileged from a privileged position; it is not a reaching out from on high to those who are less fortunate below; it is not a gesture of sympathy or pity for those who fail to make it in the upward pull. On the contrary, compassion means going directly to those people and places where suffering is most acute and building a home there.



Preparing Employees for Culturally Sensitive Practice and Community Integration

Jennifer Mah, Dean, Faculty of Health Studies, NorQuest College, spoke to the types of diversity: cultural, racial, religious, age, sex/gender, sexual orientation, and disability and provided pertinent statistics from the 2021 Canada Census.

Diverse learners in an increasingly complex and challenging health environment.

NorQuest College also serves a diverse student body: 2135 international learners, 102 countries of birth and 77 first languages on campus. This reality combined with the current health environment (e.g., health care shortages, retention, and burnout due to high patient workloads, fewer workers and fear for personal safety have led to unprecedented levels of burnout, absence and turnover; complexity of clients and health professionals) reinforced the need to address diversity and skills to manage in today's health workplace.

Student outcomes. Their goal is for students to be hired for skills and attitude. Hence, student outcomes were articulated as:

- Profession-specific technical knowledge and skills
- Power skills (soft skills) – Resilience (Grit); empathy
- Confidence

BLOOM

Be Anti-racist
Lift Up BIPOC
Voices
Optimize
Opportunities
Manifest
Equity,
Diversity, and
Inclusion

BLOOM is an initiative to look at the health program through a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) lens to provide an environment where all students can succeed. BLOOM focuses on equity not equality. Jennifer noted that *“Some believe equity means the outcomes change but it’s about coming from behind because students don’t have the same starting line.”* Equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism (EDIAr) competencies built through simulations scenarios and instructors have an Anti-racism toolkit to create curriculum to build EDIAr knowledge and skills.

No perfect environment. It’s more important to start and learn than to achieve perfection. Considerations for creating an environment for people to flourish:

- It’s a journey, not a destination
- Embed a focus in the Strategic and Academic plans
- Build cultural competence
- Ensure meaningful representation

What’s Up Cycle. Building and approaching situations with curiosity and suspending judgement



Moving Forward Together: Reconciliation and Opportunities in Continuing Care for Meaningful Living and Working

Dr. Katherine Chubbs, President & CEO, Good Samaritan Society (GSS), shared a Land Acknowledgment and her background as an Indigenous woman. The Good Samaritan began its journey in 2021 to demonstrate its support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Under her leadership, their journey is being spearheaded by their Director, Mission, Ethics, Research and Reconciliation whose role is to lead the development of an organization-wide Indigenous Health Strategy.

The Indigenous Health Strategy started with:

- **Addition of the Reconciliation portfolio** to our senior leadership roles
- **Formation of an internal Indigenous Advisory Group**
- **Strategic initiatives undertaken across our locations** on Indigenous Peoples Day and Day for Truth & Reconciliation.

The Indigenous Health Strategy continues as a priority as the Good Samaritan works to increase the cultural awareness & competencies of our staff and to further support our Indigenous residents with cultural & spiritual care relevant to their needs.

Good Samaritan recognizes that the health and wellness for Indigenous people encompasses the physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, economic, environmental, social, cultural, and traditional well-being of the individual, family, and community.

The Good Samaritan also:

- **Recognizes the value of Indigenous healing practices**
- **Supports skills-based training** in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism
- **Is committed to increasing the number of Indigenous staff** who provide service to our Indigenous elders and clients

Relationship Cultivation. The Good Samaritan is also cultivating relationships externally with Indigenous leaders, nations, and organizations, which currently include:

- Multiple First Nations, including the largest in Canada
- Other Indigenous organizations
- Indigenous Elders and leaders serving in capacities in Alberta, British Columbia, and from across Canada

The Good Samaritan is actively working in partnership with Indigenous peoples on strategies related to long term care of Indigenous elders affordable housing solutions, and so on.

Those with Lived Experiences: Messages from the Frontline



Lara Pinchbeck

*Diversity:
Disabilities and
Gender
Identification*

I bring two perspectives to this conversation on how Alberta can support its aging population. First, as a household with diverse disabilities, we have unique experiences that often make us hesitant to engage with organized services, facilities, or institutions. Despite having a fantastic healthcare system, medical care can be traumatic for some, influencing how people choose to interact with their own health and the healthcare system. It is crucial for organizations to consider the perspectives of those receiving care, ensuring their feedback is integral to evaluating and improving person-centered care.

Second, we often feel misunderstood and labeled based on one aspect of our experience, ignoring our complexity as individuals. Demographic simplifications used in program planning and population health can overlook the multifaceted nature of human beings. We should strive to respect all parts of our identities.

Additionally, as queer individuals in Alberta, we have advocated for basic human rights for 30 years. While progress has been made, stability and safety in accessing services remain concerns. As we age, we want to feel safe and enjoy our later years without constantly advocating for our rights. We need safety not only in built environments but also in cultural and social environments.

Lastly, the principle of "nothing about us without us" should be expanded to ensure that it truly works for us, encompassing both people with disabilities and those who identify differently.



**Hazellynn
Lagmay**

*Diversity:
International
Student*

As an international student who arrived in Canada with my children in April 2023, I was initially filled with fear and anxiety about adapting to a new culture and facing potential rejection. However, my fears were quickly alleviated as I was warmly embraced by the community without judgment. Enrolling at NorQuest College was one of the best decisions I made. The college provides a safe environment where everyone is nurtured and valued, making me feel important and boosting my self-esteem.

I am deeply grateful to Canada and NorQuest College for helping me appreciate the true value of diversity and inclusion. This experience has been both professionally and personally rewarding, as I have found a new family here. The respect and acceptance I received made my transition to Canada much easier. Canada and NorQuest have opened numerous opportunities for me, and I will always cherish my journey from humble beginnings to a confident future in a nation that values diversity and inclusion.



Bryan Gilks

Diversity:

Family

Caregiver

I am dedicated to incorporating the lived experiences of caregivers into healthcare decision-making and policy. I am passionate about transformational change and leadership development. My journey focuses on building social, community, medical \social support networks, resolving conflicting policies, and finding solutions that enhance quality of life. My mission is to empower caregivers by creating supportive networks and meaningful choices, moving away from crisis management to preventive measures.

Addressing these challenges can be complex, often requiring significant policy or cultural shifts. Caregivers and agency staff may lack the time, energy, or skills to advocate, and fear of losing services or funding can stifle their voices. Recognizing this, I have actively engaged community care representatives to address caregiver challenges. This led to the creation of a caregiver-driven informational kiosk at the Airdrie Public Library, launched in January 2024. The project, led by Alberta Caregivers, provides accessible options for caregivers without replacing existing services. Libraries are ideal settings for these kiosks due to their safe, inclusive, and person-centered environments. The model can be replicated in any community with a library, offering a welcoming space for caregivers to find support and resource options.

Closing Comments

Summary of the closing message from The Rev. Travis Enright:

“People are sometimes afraid of the word, advocacy, but standing for and standing with is very much a part of what it means to be a human being. Where have we been... the journey we all need is here, especially in a time when we think that inclusivity is at the forefront of people’s imagination. We also know that the potential of inclusivity is being threatened.

I appreciate the opportunity to find space for someone like me—an Indigenous person working with marginalized communities, including the poor, vulnerable, queer, and elderly. These groups often feel unsafe, unheard, and uncared for. Your work helps these individuals feel safe and advocated for.

Looking forward, collaborative efforts are key. Collaboration can be daunting, but it involves seeing, hearing, and including each other, breaking down barriers, and creating new opportunities. Your work as a voice for the voiceless is invaluable. Thank you.”

Summary of the closing message from Dr. Shanika Donalds:

“This conversation has been incredibly important, especially for someone like me who works in the contested space of housing for older adults. There is much work to be done, both individually and collectively, to better understand the needs of those we serve and support the people within our organizations. I am committed to continuing this work and implementing the ideas discussed today. I hope the participants have also found inspiration to initiate positive changes in their own organizations or lives.”

5 Post-Community Forum Findings

The Survey

An online survey was conducted following the webinar. The survey was sent out to all forum participants, except for those who had registered and were unable to attend.

The survey consisted of seven questions ranging from general perspectives to more specific perspectives focused on forum satisfaction, content relevance, learning outcomes, intent to share knowledge, types of support needed to continue to develop environments of equity, diversity, and inclusion and suggestions for advancing inclusion for belonging across communities and services. The final survey question focused on the geographical location of the respondent.

The results follow in the remainder of this section.

Survey Respondent Profile

Level of response

38% response rate (38 completed responses) out of a total of 101 webinar participants

Types of organizations most represented

%	Type of Organization
33	Continuing Care Home Providers
13	Community Service Providers
12	Community-based Organizations
11	Education

Geographical Location of Respondents: Top Three Areas

53%: Edmonton and Area

24%: Southern Alberta

21%: Calgary and Area

Survey Findings

Top Combined Ratings for Select Questions

85% Very relevant/ relevant	Relevance of Topics to Respondents
79% Very satisfied/ satisfied	Level of Satisfaction with the Overall Webinar
79% Very likely / likely	Likelihood of Sharing New Knowledge or Learning
79% Very likely / likely	Likelihood of Sharing New Knowledge or Learning
58% Very relevant / relevant	Extent of New Knowledge or Information Learned from the Webinar

Extent of New Knowledge/Information Learned

Respondents were asked to rate eight sessions on the extent to which they learned new knowledge or information using a Likert scale for each ('A great deal', 'A lot', 'A moderate amount', 'A little', 'None at all')

Top Combined Ratings of Learned 'A great deal' and Learned 'A lot'

63%	Culturally Responsive Programming: Making a Difference in Continuing Care
63%	Moving Forward Together: Reconciliation and Opportunities in Continuing Care for Meaningful Living and Working
58%	Building Bridges: Cultivating an Inclusive Experience for Clients and Employees
58%	Preparing Employees for Culturally Sensitive Practice and Community Integration
52%	Community-based Organizations: Connecting and Supporting People in Diverse Communities
48%	Experience as a member of the Queer community
42%	Experience as an International Student
48%	Experience as a Family Caregiver

Types of Support Needed to Continue to develop Environments of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Cluster #1: topics selected by 50% or more of respondents

In community and continuing care organizations:

- Development of **inclusive policies & procedures**
- **Leadership commitment and championing of EDI (EDI)**

Overall:

- **Mentorship and sponsorship programs to support professional development and advancement of underrepresented groups in organizations and communities**

Cluster #2: topics selected by 45% to 47% of respondents

- More information on **development of formal relationships with First Nations or other culturally diverse groups**
- Development of **inclusive policies and procedures within all orders of government, unions, professional organizations, etc.**
- **Comprehensive education and training programs on EDI (EDI) topics**

Cluster #3: topics selected by 42% of respondents

- **Employee Resource Groups that provide a supportive community for individuals from diverse backgrounds**
- **Leadership commitment and championing of EDI (EDI) by all orders of government, unions, professional organizations, etc.**

Feedback for Future Learning Events

Met/Exceeded Expectations: Representative Comments

“Informative mix of presentations, short and to the point”

“Great diversity of speakers”

“Found out about different organizations making a difference in improving the lives of older Albertans, helping to build relationships, acceptance and inclusion”

Areas for Improvement/ Consideration: Summary of Comments

- **Enhance presentation style of speakers** to be more engaging, allow more time or have fewer speakers
- **More information on concrete actions to be taken** about how or what others could do to replicate promising practices
- **More interaction with time** for questions and conversations

- **Include more content from persons with lived experience/ testimonials**, more training as a part of employee onboarding, including mental health diagnosis and stigma

Suggestions to Advance Inclusion for Belonging

- **Continue education, increasing the amount, topics and audience reach** to heighten awareness, inform, share EDI-focused innovative approaches, programs, success stories and learn about EDI community supports and activities
- **Promote and provide for more open conversations, discussions and action** without being judgmental, creating safe spaces
- **Consider other initiatives** such as Continuing Care Standard with a requirement for EDI policies and practices, promoting relationship building partners, advisory groups on EDI in the workplace, incentives and recognition of leading practices, mechanisms for people to share their feedback on experience of inclusion/belonging, cultural days in the workplace
- **Foster respect for one another**

6 AAG Future Directions for Promoting Healthy Aging in a Future of Diverse Communities

The Stakeholder Collaborative Committee is a unique cross-section of partners bringing perspectives from community-based senior services, housing, continuing care and health providers, policy makers, educators, caregiver supports, and older adults themselves.

The SCC reinforced that diversity, equity and inclusion are important, challenging and complex topics but attention and time are needed to change the culture given the reality of increasing diversity in the older adult population.

Supporting and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the places where older adults receive services and care is one of the top priorities. These places include community-based seniors service organizations, housing, continuing home care and continuing care homes. The individuals providing these services also need to be equipped and empowered to deliver person-centred care that respects the diversity of the older adult population and enables equitable services and practices that ultimately create a sense of belonging.

Future Directions for Promoting Health Aging in a Diverse Person-Centred Community Ecosystem

Overarching Philosophy

Diversity is a fact, equity is a choice, inclusion is an action, belonging is an outcome

Inclusion for all means... a sense of belonging & dignity, as well as the experience of meaningful engagement, empowerment, & equality of opportunity in any community

Future Directions for Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

1

Champion person-centred care

- Develop a common understanding of what person-centred care means and how it looks in action
- Facilitate development of strategies to address systemic inequalities, disparities and barriers

2

Facilitate learning and knowledge mobilization

- Facilitate a common understanding of the many facets of diverse community
- Facilitate the development of strong and interconnected community ecosystems in which diversity, equity and inclusion are core values in attitudes and actions
- Facilitate development of strategies to support changes in practice that support equity, diversity, and inclusion for those identifying with a diverse community. Strategies include:
 - Inclusive policies and procedures
 - Inclusive programming and activities
 - Ant-discrimination and anti-bias education and training for students and workers
 - Development of cultural competence and proficient communication skills

APPENDIX A: Community Forum Poster

A community forum poster with a circular graphic design. The top features a large title and a quote. Below are sections for 'CIRCLE OF LEARNING CO-HOSTS' and 'CONTRIBUTORS', each with circular portraits and text descriptions. The bottom includes the event details, the Alberta Association on Gerontology logo, and a 'Register Now!' button.

Enhancing Individual Well-Being in Diverse Communities: From Intention to Action for Inclusive Living!

Where inclusion means a sense of belonging and dignity, as well as the experience of meaningful engagement, empowerment, and equity of opportunity

CIRCLE OF LEARNING

CO-HOSTS

Rev. Travis Enright, Archdeacon for Reconciliation and Decolonization, Rector of Lodgepole Sacred Circle
Dr. Shanika Donalds, Director of Housing and Client Services, GEF Seniors Housing

CONTRIBUTORS

Community-Based Organizations: Connecting and Supporting People in Diverse Communities
Sheila Hallett, Executive Director, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council

Building Bridges: Cultivating an Inclusive Experience for Clients and Employees
Kim Mansbridge, Regional Director, Northern Alberta, CBI Health
Kristan Reynolds, Regional Director, Southern Alberta, CBI Health

Culturally Responsive Programming: Making a Difference in Continuing Care
Kathy Tam, CEO, Wing Kei Care Centers

Preparing Employees for Culturally Sensitive Practice and Community Integration
Jennifer Mah, Dean, Faculty of Health Studies, NorQuest College

Moving Forward Together: Reconciliation and Opportunities in Continuing Care for Meaningful Living and Working
Dr. Katherine Chubbs, President & CEO, Good Samaritan Society

A FREE Webinar, Wednesday March 6th, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

 ALBERTA ASSOCIATION ON GERONTOLOGY
Improving the Lives of Older Albertans
<https://albertaaging.ca>

Register Now!