

QUALITY OF LIFE REPORT



By Sara Woodruff

10/19/2011

The report includes data from the Quality of Life Network consultations that took place between April-July 2011. Information regarding the key quality of life issues identified is included along with recommendations to address these issues

All comments made in the report are the opinions of the individuals who participated in the focus groups and written questionnaires. Some of the comments have been summarized to protect confidentiality.



MEMBERS 2011

Big Brother and Big Sister Association
Boys and Girls Clubs of Thunder Bay
Canadian Hearing Society
Canadian Mental Health Association
Canadian Red Cross Society
Catholic Family Development Centre
Children's Centre Thunder Bay
Clothing Assistance Mission
CNIB
Community Living Thunder Bay
Elizabeth Fry of Northwestern Ontario
Faye Peterson Transition House
Hospice Northwest
Independent Living Resource Centre

John Howard Society of Thunder Bay
Lakehead Social Planning Council
Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre
Ontario March of Dimes
Our Kids Count
Regional Food Distribution Association
St. John Ambulance
Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoan
Thunder Bay & Area Victim Services
Thunder Bay Counselling Centre
Thunder Bay Food Bank
Thunder Bay Literacy Group
United Way of Thunder Bay
Volunteer Thunder Bay!

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Sara Woodruff

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Executive Summary

Quality of Life Network Background

The Quality of Life Network (QOLN) consists of twenty-seven non-profit organizations, funded by the United Way of Thunder Bay's Community Fund. These organizations support children, youth, adults, seniors, families and couples in Thunder Bay in multiple ways, addressing the concerns of food, clothing, housing, mental health and addictions, palliative care, social justice, abuse, trauma, violence against women, financial concerns, Aboriginal issues, etc. The purpose of the Network is to work together to improve the quality of life for people in Thunder Bay by collaborating to provide services, share assets, educate the community and engage the community to finding positive solutions. The QOLN believes in helping to create a community where no one is forgotten, that all individuals need opportunities to attain their chosen quality of life and everyone has the right to develop their full potential. By respecting differences and celebrating diversity there should be equal access to community resources and reliable information. The Network believes it will be more effective through positive collaboration and partnerships, as each agency has something to contribute to the mission.

Project Summary

In the development of the QOLN's strategic path, the identification of key issues affecting the quality of life of consumers of the Network's agencies was set as one of the goals. Through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, the Quality of Life Network initiated consultations to determine these issues. The study provided the Network with the opportunity to obtain direction from their consumers as to where to focus their efforts. The Network hired an intern to conduct the consultations and report on the findings. The Network plans to use their collective knowledge and strengths to make a difference in the issues identified through the consultations and use the information obtained through the study to be strategic in their direction as a network of agencies.

Process

A total of 213 participants provided feedback on their quality of life by attending a focus group or by completing a written questionnaire. The participants were from diverse backgrounds and represented a broad range of cultural diversity, income level, age and education. Participants were asked what they like about living in Thunder Bay, what they believe contributes to a high quality of life and the challenges they face in achieving a high quality of life.

Results

An observation of the focus groups and questionnaires is that participants believe overall Thunder Bay is a great place to live. Numerous participants expressed their satisfaction with the pace of life in the community and the opportunities to enjoy the natural environment. Thunder Bay was often described as being a supportive community with friendly, helpful people. Participants also expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the services provided by the agencies in the Network.

Participants also acknowledged a number of areas where improvements could be made to enhance their quality of life. Many participants identified having a low income which made it difficult to provide the necessities of life. The stress of providing for basic needs on a limited income causes much hardship and prevents an individual from participating in activities that could potentially contribute to a higher quality of life. Participants also identified barriers in the community that prevent equal access to services and opportunities. People reported facing discrimination and stigma due to poverty, mental illness, race, criminal background, having a disability and physical appearance. For these reasons, the issues most identified as negatively impacting someone's quality of life in our community are:

- a) Poverty
- b) Limitations to access based upon personal circumstances

Recommendations

Participants provided 130 suggestions they believe would help improve their quality of life. The recommendations stress the importance of providing resources to help people maintain independent lives and also the importance of respecting individual differences and needs. Considering the suggestions put forward by participants and the identified issues, the following recommendations are being proposed to the Network:

1. The consultation participants generated over 100 possible solutions to the identified top issues. It is recommended that the Quality of Life Network take these suggestions into consideration when moving forward and developing a plan for collaboration and partnerships.
2. The Quality of Life Network held a strategic planning session on August 31st to move forward its work and discuss preliminary findings. It would be beneficial for the Quality of Life Network to continue the work begun during this meeting on promoting respect and demonstrating respectful service.
3. The Quality of Life Network should embrace opportunities for dialogue and discussion with community partners regarding barriers to inclusion that go beyond physical barriers. It is recommended that the Network inventory strategies that address accessibility accommodations that goes beyond the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This report

could include service accommodations in areas including hours of operation, wait times, eligibility requirements, volunteer restrictions, food, language, communication, culture, interpreting services and subsidies for transportation and child care, together with values and the meaning behind organizations mission, creating welcoming environments.

4. There are many initiatives in our community that could provide opportunities for collaboration. It is recommended that the Network work with other community alliances/coalitions/networks and look for opportunities to advocate for improvements in the identified quality of life issues. Together the work can be focussed and successful. The Network should consider the recommendations of other community studies when addressing the identified issues.
5. Barriers to employment can create both financial struggles and feelings of low self-worth. It is recommended that the Network communicate success stories of individuals who have overcome barriers or stigma to potential employers. Education to employers may assist them in challenging their own philosophies regarding hiring practices, volunteer policies and inclusion.
6. Needed services may not be utilized due to a lack of public awareness. It is recommended that the Network look into the barriers that prevent access to this information and look for opportunities to provide education and promote the available resources that provide information on services.
7. It is recommended that the Network develop a communication strategy that broadly communicates findings to appropriate service providers and systems such as, LHIN, Ontario Works, ODSP, Housing, justice system.

Introduction

The Quality of Life Network (QOLN) consists of twenty-seven non-profit organizations, funded by the United Way of Thunder Bay's Community Fund. The purpose of the Network is to work together to improve the quality of life for people in Thunder Bay by collaborating to provide services, share assets, educate the community and engage the community to finding positive solutions. The QOLN believes:

- In helping to create a community where no one is forgotten
- All individuals need opportunities to attain their chosen quality of life
- Everyone has the right to develop their full potential, respecting differences and celebrating diversity
- In equal access to community resources and reliable information
- The Network will be more effective through positive collaboration and partnerships
- Each agency has something to contribute to the mission.

The Network's organizations support children, youth, adults, seniors, families and couples in Thunder Bay in multiple ways, addressing the concerns of food, clothing, housing, mental health and addictions, palliative care, social justice, abuse, trauma, violence against women, financial concerns, Aboriginal issues, etc. Each agency has their own unique approach to improving quality of life in the community. However, all agencies work in the human service field and target their services toward those who are marginalized.

The QOLN's strategic plan outlines the goals of the Network which include building strong links between agencies, identifying issues that affect quality of life and uniting with a common voice. Through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, the Quality of Life Network initiated consultations with consumers of their agencies to determine the challenges they face to attaining a high quality of life. The purpose of the consultations and the report is to direct the Network's efforts to the needs that are most significant to the individuals they assist and allow the Network to be strategic in their direction as a network of agencies. The issues identified through this research may not fall within any one agency's direct mandate but provide the Network with a common message and an opportunity to work collaboratively on prevalent quality of life issues.

Quality of Life

Quality of life is a difficult concept to define. The QOLN decided to measure quality of life in both contexts of individual and community. The individual context is defined by an overall sense of well-being with a strong relation to a person's health perceptions and ability to function. The community must be compassionate, mutually supportive and working toward social justice to enhance quality of life.

Research Methodology

The Network chose focus groups and written questionnaires as their methods of consultation in order to receive direct feedback from consumers. Focus groups allowed the participants the chance to expand on comments and engage in discussions regarding quality of life issues. Written questionnaires allowed the participation of individuals who may not have been able to participate in a focus group and the inclusion of agencies who were not able to host a focus group for a variety of reasons.

Each agency in the Network was approached to organize a consultation with their consumer group. The agency was responsible for deciding which method of consultation would be most appropriate and to invite consumers to participate. Accommodations were made to ensure that the focus groups were accessible to all participants who wished to contribute, such as, child care, transportation, incentives and interpreters.

The questions asked during the focus groups and written questionnaires were developed through research on quality of life indicators and consultation with community researchers, supervisors and the Quality of Life Network. The wording of the questions was carefully considered to avoid leading the participants toward identifying certain issues.

At the time of the study, 29 agencies were members of the Quality of Life Network. Out of these 29 agencies, 14 held focus groups, 6 distributed written questionnaires, 3 did both and 6 did not participate for various reasons. A total of 213 participants were consulted during the study.

Data Collection

Focus Groups

Seventeen focus groups were conducted which represented 58% of the agencies in the Network. A total of 146 participants took part in the focus group consultations. The number of participants in each focus group ranged from 3 to 19. The length of the focus groups ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours. The average length of the groups was 1.5 hours.

Questionnaires

Nine agencies, 31% of the Network, distributed written questionnaires and seven were able to collect and return responses. In total, 67 written questionnaires were returned for analysis.

Format

The format of the questions used in the focus groups and written questionnaires was similar. The focus group participants were asked an additional question as a warm up to introduce participants to each other and become familiar with the concept of quality of life. The remaining questions were used in both the written questionnaires and focus groups and were designed to assess the necessary conditions for a high quality of life and quality of life challenges in Thunder Bay. The participants were informed that all responses would remain confidential and that no identifying features would be used in the report. The following questions were used during the consultations:

- What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about your quality of life? (Focus groups only)
- What makes Thunder Bay a good place to live?
- In your opinion, what contributes to a high quality of life? Speak from your experience.
- What is the biggest challenge that prevents you from having a high quality of life?
- What are your experiences with this challenge and how does it affect your quality of life?
- What could be done to improve this challenge?

Each focus group was conducted using the same guidelines. Some of the groups were adapted due to time constraints or to accommodate the needs of the participants. The format included questions and answers and a voting component to identify priority issues for the group. All answers were recorded in detail.

To determine the top issues for each focus group, a list of issues was generated from the question, “**What is the biggest challenge that prevents you from having a high quality of life?**” Participants were asked to vote on issues they felt most significantly impacted their quality of life. The voting process was accomplished using a dotmocracy in most groups and voting by hand or through collectivism if a dotmocracy was not appropriate. A dotmocracy is a voting system that uses dots to determine priorities. Collectivism involves building consensus to come to agreement on priorities. Regardless of which voting method was used, the intent was for the group to agree on the issues they felt were most important.

The written questionnaires’ top issues were identified in a different manner. The issues were determined by coding the responses to the quality of life challenges question according to theme and the two themes that came up the most were the priorities used for the group.

The questions, “**What are your experiences with this challenge and how does it affect your quality of life?**” and “**what could be done to improve this challenge?**” were used to discover how the issues were affecting the participant’s lives and generate possible solutions to the challenges.

Limitations

There are limitations associated with this study that must be considered. The consultations were conducted over the summer which may have reduced access to the client population and affected agency participation. There were inconsistencies in the selection of participants as some were invited to participate and others were randomly chosen. Agencies were advised to recruit consumers and clients for the focus groups and questionnaires but a small number of the groups also included staff members, students and volunteers. The analysis of the demographic surveys collected from the written questionnaires and focus groups revealed notable differences which could have been a result of this discrepancy in the selection of participants. Also, not all agencies chose to participate in the consultations, which may affect the ability to generalize the findings across the Quality of Life Network.

Demographics

The participants in the focus groups and questionnaires were from diverse backgrounds and represented a broad range of cultural diversity, income, age and education. 87% of the participants completed an optional demographic survey. The following information gathered from the survey was compared to demographic information for the City of Thunder Bay.

Comparison of The Quality of Life Study demographics and Thunder Bay (CMA) demographic information

Demographic	Quality of Life Study	Thunder Bay
Sex	Female: 72% Male: 28%	Female: 51% Male: 49%
Age characteristics	15-24: 14% 25-39: 38.5% 40-64: 39.7% 65 and over: 7.8%	15-24: 13.2% 25-39: 17.5% 40-64: 36.4% 65 and over: 12.9%
Aboriginal Identity	25%	8.2%
Occupied private dwelling characteristics	Owned: 46.3% Rented: 49.4%	Owned: 72.8% Rented: 27%
Educational attainment	University: 26.1% College: 29.9% High School: 33.7% No degree or diploma: 10.3%	University: 14.8% College: 20.2% High School: 25.4% No degree or diploma: 25.4%
Marital status	Single (never married): 39.5% Married: 34.5% Separated or divorced: 18.1% Widowed: 4% Unspecified: 4%	Single: (never married): 32.4% Married: 48% Separated or divorced: 11.5% Widowed: 7.8% Unspecified: N/A
Citizenship	Canadian Citizen: 98.9%	Canadian Citizen: 98%

Lived in Thunder Bay five years or more	82.7%	89.5%
Median income for persons 15 years and over (2005)	67% of participants earned \$25,000 or less	\$27, 546

Statistics Canada. (2007). *2006 Community Profile of Thunder Bay (CMA)*. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Demographic	Quality of Life Study	Thunder Bay
Receiving ODSP or Ontario Works	37.4%	2.28%

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board. (2011). *2011 Caseload Statistics*. Retrieved from <http://www.tbdssab.on.ca/Assets/TBDSSAB+Folder/ontarioworks/docs/2011+Caseload+Statistics.pdf>

Demographic	Quality of Life Study	Thunder Bay
Source of income	Wages and salaries: 37% Government Transfer Payments: 48% Other: 15%	Wages and Salaries: 71.5% Government Transfer Payments: 13.6% Other: 14.8%
Government transfer payments: Old Age Pensions, Guaranteed Income Supplement, allowance and allowance for the survivor, CPP or QPP, Employment Insurance, Child Benefits and other income from government sources		

City-data.com. *Thunder Bay, Ontario Earnings and Income*. Retrieved from <http://www.city-data.com/canada/Thunder-Bay-income.html>

Demographic	Quality of Life Study	Thunder Bay
Identified as living with a disability	37.8%	17%

City of Thunder Bay. (2010). *Moving Beyond Barriers: The City of Thunder Bay's Eighth Annual Accessibility Plan*. Retrieved from [http://www.thunderbay.ca/Assets/Living/Accessibility/docs/Accessibility+Plan+2010-2011\\$!2c+55+pages\\$!2c+320+kb.pdf](http://www.thunderbay.ca/Assets/Living/Accessibility/docs/Accessibility+Plan+2010-2011$!2c+55+pages$!2c+320+kb.pdf)

Results

The questions asked during the consultations assessed the current factors that were enhancing quality of life for participants and also the circumstances that were negatively affecting quality of life. The responses to each question are included in Appendices A-E. Some of the most common themes that emerged from the question, “**what makes Thunder Bay a good place to live?**” were the city’s proximity to nature, beautiful scenery, opportunities to participate in outdoor activities (fishing, camping, swimming, hiking), the size of the city, short commute times and educational opportunities. The most common themes that emerged from the question, “**In your**

opinion, what contributes to a high quality of life?” were having a support system of family, friends and co-workers, secure employment, adequate and affordable housing and adequate income.

Each focus group and set of questionnaires identified unique challenges to quality of life; however, once the issues were analyzed common themes emerged. These commonalities produced two top issues; poverty and limitations to access based upon personal circumstances. The full list of quality of life challenges is included in Appendix D. Below is the breakdown of selected top issues by the participants in the focus groups and questionnaires. The full list of selected top issues is included in Appendix E.

Issue	Number of times selected as a top issue	Percentage of focus groups and questionnaires
Poverty	22	46%
Limitations to access based upon personal circumstances	16	34%
Relationships	3	6.3%
Addictions	2	4.2%
Issues chosen once	Appearance of the city, climate, safety, maintenance of parks and roads	

Poverty

“Well it’s been hard finding a job so my funds have dwindled to nothing and therefore I have nothing.” – Consultation Participant

The majority of the respondents addressed the issue of poverty. Poverty negatively impacts quality of life in many ways. Poverty can affect an individual’s ability to provide basic needs and create feelings of shame. The difficulties faced by participants living in poverty made it the most discussed issue in this study. Poverty was chosen as a top issue in 46% of the focus groups and questionnaires. The comments made regarding poverty fell into six categories. Each category is described in detail below.

1. ODSP and Ontario Works income support is not adequate

A significant number of the participants in this study (37%) rely on ODSP or Ontario Works income support as their main source of income. Many participants expressed the difficulty they have providing basic needs with the amount of support they

receive. Participants felt that the struggles they face financially are extremely challenging to their quality of life. Some of the comments made by participants about their experience with Social Assistance were:

- *People who survive on ODSP and OW live under the poverty line*
- *When on ODSP you must learn how to tightly budget to afford expenses*
- *Difficult to navigate the application process for Social Assistance*
- *ODSP seems to work against you because you can only make \$100/month extra before your ODSP support decreases*
- *Need to have the drug and dental card from ODSP, which is a deterrent to getting off of the program as many jobs do not offer these benefits*
- *Negative cycle with ODSP if you have a mental illness. Medications help to improve your condition so you can get a job and get off ODSP. However, once off ODSP you lose your medical coverage and as a result stop taking meds. Your condition worsens to the point where you lose your job and must go back on ODSP*
- *If ODSP raises even 1%, agencies increase rent*
- *Difficult to juggle daily living expenses*
- *Cannot afford a car or insurance*
- *Obtaining medications is difficult when ODSP won't cover the cost, must rely on samples*
- *ODSP does not cover all medical treatments and services and it is hard to find out exactly what is covered*
- *ODSP support was almost reduced because son got a part-time job. What is the use of working if the money will be lost elsewhere?*
- *Live in fear of losing ODSP*
- *Difficult to maintain a healthy lifestyle on ODSP. Healthy food and exercise facilities are expensive*

2. High cost of living

Comments were made regarding the high cost of living in Thunder Bay, which is especially difficult for those who have a low income. The importance of a healthy lifestyle was acknowledged but most participants felt that it is financially out of reach. The ability to afford safe and adequate housing and healthy food emerged as an important contributor to quality of life. Some of the comments made regarding cost of living were:

- *Affordable rent is very important*
- *Must tightly budget to afford groceries*

- *Gas prices are too high which increases the cost of everything and makes it difficult to afford a vehicle*
- *Junk food is much easier to afford than healthy food so tend to eat a lot of it*
- *The exercise options that are available are expensive*
- *Middle class needs assistance with child care costs*

3. Lack of employment opportunities

Participants expressed discouragement with the employment opportunities in Thunder Bay. Many cannot find employment in their field or feel that because of personal circumstances their chances of finding meaningful work are limited. A lack of employment causes stress and can diminish quality of life.

- *Poor mental and physical health makes it impossible to keep a job*
- *A lack of employment can lead to poor choices such as stealing or selling drugs to survive*
- *Job competition is high, it may be difficult to find a job in the field in which you studied*
- *There are many more candidates than jobs available*
- *Husband lost his job. Other companies now refuse to hire him because either he is too qualified or out of fear he will return to his old job*
- *Losing a job is very difficult on a family financially*
- *Many people associate their identity with their job. When a job is lost they may become depressed and unmotivated.*
- *Can get trapped in a negative cycle: If you must go on stress leave or compensation other employers may not be inclined to hire you*
- *It can take a long time to get a job in certain professions*
- *Some people refuse to retire even when they would be paid a decent pension which takes jobs away from younger workers*

4. Inadequate income from employment

Some participants who were able to secure employment also struggled financially due to inadequate income. Part-time, contract and minimum wage jobs usually do not offer benefits and due to limited hours and low pay many participants are forced to work multiple jobs. Many participants felt the strain of living paycheck to paycheck and not being able to afford any extras. They also struggle with a lack of time to spend with family and enjoy life. Specific comments made regarding cost of living made by participants were:

- *Minimum wage jobs and part-time jobs do not pay enough to survive, people may need to work multiple jobs to compensate*
- *The large gap between minimum wage jobs and well-paying jobs causes frustration*
- *Employers do not want to pay what people are worth*
- *When working part-time...you are only paid while you are working. When you are off you do not get paid but it is necessary to take time off to maintain a quality of life*
- *Many companies would rather hire part-time staff rather than full-time to avoid providing benefits*
- *Many companies are getting rid of full-time positions and replacing them with part-time positions*
- *You cannot collect a pension from a part-time job which makes retirement impossible and employers tend not to hire employees over a certain age*
- *Increasing costs may force people to continue to work past retirement age*

5. High cost of education

The costs associated with pursuing post-secondary education make it out of reach for many people. Tuition, textbooks, childcare and transportation are some of the costs that make education inaccessible. Many participants felt that OSAP was inadequate and experienced difficulty accessing and repaying the loan. A lack of education limits job prospects and earning potential. Comments made regarding costs of education were:

- *Lack of an education affects employment opportunities*
- *OSAP needs to make it easier to pay back loans*
- *Better funding is needed to go back to school*
- *Textbooks and supplies are expensive*
- *May need to rely on family assistance to afford to go to school*
- *Cannot get employment support while in school, must rely on OSAP but if you begin to struggle with mental illness you may be unable to work and pay back the loan*
- *OSAP has begun to run credit checks. If you do not have a good credit rating you cannot get a loan to further your education to get a job*
- *OSAP has strict restrictions on how much money you can make before they limit your loan amount or deny your application. However, the amount of money received from OSAP is not enough to afford tuition and live comfortably*
- *Without an education you are forced to take a low paying job and as a result cannot afford school*

6. Discrimination

An issue that cut across all categories of poverty issues was the discrimination faced by those who live in poverty. Participants spoke of the shame they feel because of their financial situation. Many felt that they had not been treated respectfully by the agencies that provide them with financial assistance, health care and other services. It was commented that many people in our community treat those who are struggling with indifference. Participants believe that many employers engage in discriminatory employment practices and as a result have difficulty finding employment. Some specific comments that were made regarding experiences of discrimination were:

- *Stigmatization of those living in poverty*
- *Blaming the victim- it is the individual's fault if they are struggling financially*
- *Indifference toward the poor*
- *People feel shame and embarrassment about their financial situation*
- *The application for Social Assistance should maintain confidentiality and consider parts of the application that do not respect confidentiality ex. Verification of school enrolment*
- *Criminal record may be a deciding factor in whether you get a job*
- *Employers may not hire an applicant if they know they have a mental illness*
- *Employers may not hire an applicant based on a credit rating, but it is hard to prove that it is the reason.*
- *Some online job applications force you to agree to a credit check if you want to apply for a job*

Limitations to access based upon personal circumstances

"I have experienced racism first hand and am aware of some agencies trying to make change to better this but still again the general population makes statements that Natives should go back to where they came from." – Consultation Participant

The second issue that emerged through the consultations was limitations to access based upon personal circumstances. This was chosen as a top issue in 34% of the focus groups and questionnaires. Many participants felt they face barriers to services, which negatively affects quality of life. These barriers can be physical, but there are also systemic barriers. Participants have experienced racism and discrimination first hand, which can affect job prospects and have a negative effect on self-worth. Barriers to accessing services were a cause of much stress and frustration. The majority of these barriers fell under seven main themes, which are discussed below.

1. Difficulties accessing services

Participants expressed difficulties accessing services in Thunder Bay. Certain health services are limited and participants voiced concerns about the availability of these services. Participants also commented on the difficulty of finding out about available services and who is eligible to access them. Comments were also made regarding the lack of services for those on wait lists. Samples of participant comments regarding this issue were:

- *Doctors are overworked and cannot give all patients the time they need*
- *Individuals who lose their job need access to counsellors if they feel depressed*
- *Lack of private rooms in the hospital*
- *People on wait lists may experience feelings of helplessness, discouragement, frustration, not belonging*
- *By the time a person receives a service it may be too late*
- *Mental and physical illness may go untreated while on a wait list*
- *A lack of services can lower self-esteem and lead to feelings of depression and loneliness*
- *Doctors work independently and as a result patients feel that they are, “sent from one door to the next” and it is frustrating and distracting to repeatedly have to tell their story. Speaking to different doctors can also result in conflicting information*
- *Patients tend to feel that their voices have not been heard by medical professionals*
- *Caregivers are afraid to leave the room in case they miss the doctor and are not able to advocate on behalf of the patient*
- *There is a need for assertive patient advocates who “kick doors down” and make doctors and nurses responsible for the care they are providing the patient*
- *Difficult to arrange for personal requests regarding death, for example, wanting to die at home*
- *Transportation of patients on weekends and holidays is extremely limited*
- *Social Service staff assumes people already have all of the information they need to access available services*
- *Families are unaware of the services that are available for end of life care and grief and loss*
- *Hard to find out about yard work, house work and transportation services*
- *There are many services that could be used but if you don’t know about it or have anyone to tell you about them it is useless*

2. Lack of accessibility accommodations

A pressing issue for many of the people who contributed to the focus groups and questionnaires is the lack of accessibility of services and community events. Many

participants felt that their rights were not being respected and expressed frustration with having to continually fight for equal access. Inaccessible services caused participants to experience loneliness and to feel that they are unable to fully participate in the community. Some of the comments made regarding a lack of accessibility accommodations were:

- *Constantly have to educate people about accessibility legislation and it is often not followed (government offices, banks, hospitals)*
- *Accessibility is extremely limited in Thunder Bay*
- *Cannot access services and feel like the “bad guy” when fighting for rights, people don’t understand and need to realize that these rights are laws*
- *Can’t see the tiny print on drive-thru screens and with hearing loss this makes it difficult to order food*
- *Events need interpreters to ensure accessibility and participation of the Deaf community*
- *Patients who are Culturally Deaf are forced to negotiate their rights to an interpreter with emergency room doctors and medical specialists. It is very difficult to access interpreting services and it usually becomes a fight*
- *When sent to specialist appointments an interpreter has rarely been scheduled so the appointment is cancelled*
- *Hospital staff (nurses and doctors) will try to get children to act as interpreters when pen and paper would be preferable to using children. Children can make mistakes and it is too much to ask of a child*
- *Deaf people only hire interpreters for significant reasons (doctor’s appointments, mortgage negotiations, job interviews), in everyday situations it is sufficient to communicate by writing things down*
- *Cannot fully participate at work as an interpreter is not present at staff meetings*

3. *Barriers created by a criminal record*

Participants who had criminal records discussed the difficulties they face securing employment, traveling and with child protection services. Participants felt they had done their time and deserve to be treated equally and given the chance to improve their situation. Specific comments made by respondents regarding criminal records were:

- *Cannot have a criminal background to be hired for many jobs*
- *Criminal record is often the deciding factor in whether you will be offered a job*
- *Creates stress*
- *Creates issues with child protection service agencies if you want to move in with a partner who has children*
- *Makes it difficult to travel*

4. Transportation challenges

Issues with the transportation system were discussed in many of the consultations. For many of the participants transportation allows for freedom and independence. Many comments were made about the length of time it takes to travel by transit. The expense of a bus pass and taxis made transportation a challenge financially for some participants. Participants also encountered unique transportation challenges due to their individual needs. Comments made regarding transportation challenges were:

- *Bus tickets are expensive*
- *Difficult to travel by bus with a stroller. Bus drivers drive by mothers with strollers and claim to be too full*
- *It is dangerous and difficult to get to some bus stops*
- *The transit system is slow and it takes a long time to get where you are going*
- *It is difficult to know which bus stop you are getting off at if the radio is too loud or there are stops between main stops if you have vision loss*
- *The transit system does not serve rural areas. It is not possible to enjoy all of the nature Thunder Bay has to offer if you cannot get there*
- *Feel unsafe using transit at night*
- *Taxis are too expensive to use to get to appointments – up to \$60 per appointment*

5. Education and training issues

Some participants felt that their quality of life challenges resulted from gaps in the education system. Participants discussed the lack of special education resources for their children. Participants also struggle with the lack of alternatives to formal classroom style learning. Participants felt that the education system is not being respectful to individual needs. Other participants discussed the lack of training for medical professionals in terms of end of life care, which causes patients to suffer. Comments made by participants regarding gaps in education and training were:

- *Nursing students should be taught how to work with patients who are dying
Many nurses learn most of what they know about death through their patients and their families once they are on the job*
- *Nurses and doctors must build relationships with patients as it is generally lacking and causes patients to suffer*
- *Lack of job experience and no way to gain it*
- *There is a need for on the job training that does not require formal classroom style learning*
- *Special education classes are more available now then years ago, however, there are still students who could benefit from these classes but are not able to access them*
- *Student Support Services are lacking in schools*

6. Stigma, discrimination and racism

Focus group and questionnaire participants discussed their experiences with stigma, discrimination and racism and how it affects the treatment they receive from the community and how they access services. Participants who access mental health services expressed fear that if others find out they will be looked at differently. Participants with vision or hearing loss felt that they were not treated equally and their abilities were largely being ignored. Some participants shared their experiences with racism and being judged for their appearance. Discriminatory attitudes lead to unfair hiring practices and create barriers to inclusion. Some of the comments made regarding this issue were:

- *Keep mental health treatment a secret from family in fear you won't be looked at the same way*
- *Lack of support, everyone just expects you to get better*
- *Workplaces are not understanding, do not want to tell employers about mental health treatment*
- *Leads to feelings of alienation*
- *People blame the individual even though they don't want to be sick*
- *People tend to believe that meds are a cure and ignore mental illness*
- *Afraid to be upfront and encounter bullying and violence*
- *Embarrassment to talk to doctor about symptoms. Some doctors have the attitude that you should heal yourself*
- *You are who you hang out with, so you are judged accordingly*
- *How you look affects employment opportunities*
- *Are targeted by mall security based on appearance. Security follows you around the store and assumes you will shoplift*
- *Face bullying when using a white cane*
- *People assume that those who have hearing loss are unintelligent*
- *People think that because you don't die from being deaf that it isn't important*
- *People claim to know what people who have hearing loss are going through but they can't*
- *Thunder Bay is still a very racist community and is not accepting of the fact that there is a high population of Aboriginal people living here*

7. Unfair hiring practices

Lack of adequate, sustainable employment was a recurring theme throughout the consultations. Some participants felt they face barriers to employment based on their personal circumstances. Participants with a disability, hearing loss, vision loss and a criminal background expressed difficulties accessing meaningful employment. Other participants felt that although they are well qualified for certain positions, job opportunities are not available. Without employment, participants struggled both financially and with the feeling that they are unable to meaningfully contribute to the community. Some of the comments made regarding unfair hiring practices were:

- *Criminal record may be a deciding factor in whether you get a job*
- *Employers may not hire an applicant if they know they have a mental illness*
- *Employers may not hire an applicant based on a credit rating, but it is hard to prove that it is the reason.*
- *Online job applications force you to agree to a credit check if you want to apply for a job*
- *Lack of meaningful employment for those with visual impairment*
- *Lack of job opportunities for those dealing with illness/disability*
- *Hard for people to find work, lack of educational opportunities for Deaf people*

Remaining Issues

The remaining issues that were chosen as top issues during the consultations were not significant. Unhealthy relationships was chosen as a top issue in 6.3% of the consultations and addictions in 4.2% of the consultations. Appearance of the city, climate, safety and maintenance of parks and roads were chosen as top issues in one focus group or questionnaire each. The comments made regarding these issues are listed in Appendix E.

Discussion

The purpose of the focus groups and questionnaires was for the respondents to determine for themselves which factors most affect their quality of life. The intention was to avoid leading participants toward any specific issues. This method provides a good indication that the issues identified are of greatest need to the individuals consulted.

Secure employment, adequate income and having basic needs met were all identified as important contributors to quality of life during the consultations. However, many respondents expressed disappointment in the opportunities available to obtain employment and struggle to survive on a limited income.

A sense of belonging and equality were also identified by participants as being important factors that affect quality of life. Many participants shared experiences where they did not feel that they had been treated with respect or given equal opportunities.

These gaps between factors that contribute to a high quality of life and the actual experiences of the consultation participants suggest that the potential is there to improve quality of life in the community. The QOLN is well positioned to work collaboratively as a Network and with other community partners to make a difference in the identified issues. Some community initiatives that may be beneficial to collaborate with are listed in Appendix F.

Participant Recommendations

After determining the top issues for the focus groups, participants were asked to come up with possible solutions. The questionnaires also asked participants to provide solutions to the challenge they identified as being the largest to quality of life. Many suggestions stressed the need for the community to be accepting and respectful and to promote the inclusion and active participation of all community members. Participants also expressed the need for increases to Social Assistance and minimum wage. Some of the specific suggestions regarding the identified top issues made by participants were:

Employment

- *Training programs and incentives*
- *Co-op programs to gain work experience*
- *Increased volunteer opportunities to gain work experience*
- *Skills workshops that lead to some sort of certification*
- *More places that help you find work. There are currently not enough*
- *Employment services should be advertised more as there are misconceptions about who can access these services.*
- *Financial programs for those who have lost their job*
- *Keep work history confidential (how many sick days, stress relief)*
- *Employee Assistance Programs*
- *Government assistance that provides education upgrades*
- *Increase the number of available jobs*
- *More economic development in Thunder Bay*
- *Better incentives and resources for the unemployed*
- *Try to create better jobs and make post-secondary education more affordable*
- *Common sense skills should be valued as well as post-secondary education*

Inadequate income from employment

- *The government could assist financially*
- *Take on a part time job/second income*
- *Increase the number of higher paying jobs*
- *Pursue an education*
- *Larger employers should be required by law to hire a certain amount of full time workers*
- *Affordable benefit options for part-time workers*
- *Raise minimum wage*
- *Encourage self-employment by reducing the restrictions placed on grants given by the government to help a business startup (Ex. let people of all ages apply)*

Cost of pursuing an education

- *Better funding to go back to school*
- *OSAP needs to make it easier to pay back loans*
- *Free tuition to colleges and universities. This would allow people to try post-secondary education without fear that they will fail and be unable to pay off school debt*
- *Provide child care help by increasing the number of child care centres*
- *Free upgrading to receive high school diploma*
- *Make it easier to access funding to further education*
- *Community agencies could provide funding for education*
- *Programs in College that make it accessible (bus pass, gas money)*
- *Free tutoring to help students get scholarships*
- *Grants for students who do not get involved in alcohol and drugs (act as an incentive)*

High cost of living

- *More geared to income housing*
- *Bring essential items to people in need*
- *Programs in schools (Breakfast programs)*
- *Affordable, decent places to rent*
- *Assistance from banks for those who have been hanging by a thread to their houses and families*
- *Take money dedicated to the waterfront and use it to convert closed schools into affordable rental units*
- *List of free recreation activities and events sent to agencies so they can distribute it to their clients*
- *Free recreation options for children (all sports, arts and activities)*
- *Help with the cost of child care for the middle class*
- *Supply of affordable housing*
- *Look to community resources and sales*
- *Teach people how to budget*

Social Services

- *Involvement of the federal government*
- *When on assistance must learn to tightly budget*
- *Everyone should receive a basic living allowance*
- *Avoid temptation to spend on non-essential items*
- *ODSP should increase the amount of income you can receive from other sources before your support decreases*
- *First contact staff should have thorough training including sensitivity training*
- *Process to anonymously report disrespectful treatment*

- *Children's money they earn on their own should not affect income support*
- *Make use of appeals if you feel that you deserve something*
- *ODSP should give a certain allotment just for food, or have food available all year round*
- *Bus passes should be provided by ODSP*
- *All medications and medical equipment should be covered*
- *Pilot guaranteed income that provides more than Social Assistance, the income received would need to double to live comfortably*

Difficulties accessing services

- *Streamline process to apply for OW, ODSP, housing, etc.*
- *Have one office where a person can apply for all support (OW, ODSP, OSAP, housing)*
- *Have audio copies of The Key available at community centres*
- *Doctors should provide referrals to agencies when signing off on ODSP applications, provide pamphlets on what agencies do*
- *Social service employees should make referrals to agencies*
- *Increased number of credit counselling programs*
- *Health care should be coordinated and not fragmented*
- *More patient advocates*
- *Smooth transitions to palliative care programs*
- *Any place that provides care should have a code of ethics that is enforced*
- *Educate people about the barriers to services*
- *Post information on services at senior locations (55+), hospital, family doctor, church, Knights of Columbus, Stroke Club and other Clubs, Complex, community centres*
- *Build a residential hospice and run a walk-in palliative care clinic out of it*
- *More publicity and awareness of agencies*
- *Information sharing of community events*

Lack of accessibility accommodations

- *Hire more qualified interpreters and captionists and have them available to the public*
- *Enforce disability legislation, ensure access is maintained*
- *Bigger screens on cash registers with the total cost showing on the customer side or have a paper and pen by the register for communication purposes*
- *Mandatory captioning of all town meetings*
- *Workshops and awareness raising regarding accessibility issues*
- *Ensure the proper organization does the speaking for those with accessibility concerns*
- *Hire people who care about accessibility*
- *Politics: prioritize funding for accessibility*

- *Should design a list of communication needs that can be distributed to the public*
- *It would be great to have an interpreter that works events, concerts, and activities*

Discrimination

- *Be respectful*
- *Show common courtesy- if someone needs something, see if you can help, don't just walk by*
- *Be yourself and proud of who you are*
- *Any food given out should be private to avoid embarrassment*
- *Stop stigmatizing hearing loss as a disease of the old*
- *The balance of power must change between the professional and consumer*
- *Move away from the term "consumer" as it is considered to be a label*
- *Educate people about mental illness*
- *Don't treat people as helpless*
- *Don't judge a book by its cover*
- *Help families support each other*
- *Provide training for ER staff so they provide services in a way that is respectful*
- *"I've been there" campaign- show how people have managed to overcome obstacles to succeed*
- *Safe high schools that are free from violence and bullying*
- *Learn about and respect culture*
- *Supportive communities provide comfort*
- *Programs should be open to everyone*

Criminal Record

- *Do everything you have to do (community service, jail) and get your life back to where you want it to be*
- *Look for ways to change your life*
- *Programs to get charges dropped*

Transportation

- *Transportation providers should return phone calls when someone leaves a message with a concern*
- *Increased number of bus stops*
- *Mothers with children should be a priority*
- *People on buses should be more accommodating to mothers with strollers*
- *Patrol bus stations to ensure safety*
- *Put a speaker outside of buses that announces stops*
- *Faster bus service*
- *An express bus for those with disabilities*

- *More traffic birdie audio (pedestrian) signals*
- *Transit drivers should confirm that people are getting off at the right stop*
- *Use various transportation programs offered by agencies as it is much less expensive*

Lack of supports on a wait list

- *Partnerships in communities*
- *More programming*
- *Increase funding to existing programming*
- *More staff*
- *More government supports*
- *Partnerships between organizations serving the same clients*
- *Service hubs that can make referrals*
- *Increased number of programs for children and families*
- *More support groups*

Education

- *Increase the number of special education classes in schools*
- *Focus on life skills in high school*
- *Increase the availability of classrooms for young mothers*
- *Don't take funding away from schools*
- *Wellbeing should be a focus of lessons in medical and nursing programs*
- *Palliative care courses and clinical for nursing students prior to graduation*
- *Doctors and nurses should receive sensitivity training*

Many of the recommendations stress that participants wish to be independent and be equal members of the community. Participants felt that there are many barriers in the community that prevent people from maintaining optimal levels of independence. Improvements to the transportation system, Social Assistance and education system all help people maintain independent lives.

The recommendations also reinforce the notion that having a sense of security regarding basic needs allows for the pursuit of activities that enhance quality of life. Constant worrying about providing food and adequate shelter places undue stress on individuals and families. These recommendations reflect Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the importance of addressing basic needs before focus is placed on higher level needs. Breaking down the barriers present in our community and allowing people access to adequate levels of income are necessary in order to focus on other factors that allow for further development of quality of life

Recommendations Based on Analysis

Considering the challenges identified by participants and the suggested ways to improve on these issues, the following recommendations and next steps are proposed to the Network:

1. The consultation participants generated over 100 possible solutions to the identified top issues. It is recommended that the Quality of Life Network take these suggestions into consideration when moving forward and developing a plan for collaboration and partnerships.
2. The Quality of Life Network held a strategic planning session on August 31st to move forward its work and discuss preliminary findings. It would be beneficial for the Quality of Life Network to continue the work begun during this meeting on promoting respect and demonstrating respectful service.
3. The Quality of Life Network should embrace opportunities for dialogue and discussion with community partners regarding barriers to inclusion that go beyond physical barriers. It is recommended that the Network inventory strategies that address accessibility accommodations that goes beyond the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This report could include service accommodations in areas including hours of operation, wait times, eligibility requirements, volunteer restrictions, food, language, communication, culture, interpreting services and subsidies for transportation and child care, together with values and the meaning behind organizations mission, creating welcoming environments.
4. There are many initiatives in our community that could provide opportunities for collaboration. It is recommended that the Network work with other community alliances/coalitions/networks and look for opportunities to advocate for improvements in the identified quality of life issues. Together the work can be focussed and successful. The Network should consider the recommendations of other community studies when addressing the identified issues.
5. Barriers to employment can create both financial struggles and feelings of low self-worth. It is recommended that the Network communicate success stories of individuals who have overcome barriers or stigma to potential employers. Education to employers may assist them in challenging their own philosophies regarding hiring practices, volunteer policies and inclusion.
6. Needed services may not be utilized due to a lack of public awareness. It is recommended that the Network look into the barriers that prevent access to this information and look for opportunities to provide education and promote the available resources that provide information on services.

7. It is recommended that the Network develop a communication strategy that broadly communicates findings to appropriate service providers and systems such as, LHIN, Ontario Works, ODSP, Housing, justice system.

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Appendix A

“What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about your quality of life?”

Focus Group 1

- Stability- no struggles, able to pay pills, living comfortably, employment
- Safe environment for children
- Security
- Good role models for children
- Living a healthy lifestyle- exercise
- Having employment
- Learning respect for others and yourself
- Community recreation for kids and adults
- Variety of sport activities (soccer, baseball, etc)
- Inexpensive sports
- A positive way of living
- Freedom to practice your religion regularly
- Sense of community
- Sense of belonging

Focus Group 2

- Safe, decent place to live
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Environment that fits individual needs and contributes to a safe and happy life
- Family and friends
- Community without crime or violence
- Safe environment, the ability to not feel fear in public places
- Having many friends
- Living life to the fullest

Focus Group 3

- Safe, supportive neighbourhoods
- People who are engaged and involved in the community
- The elderly who are on a limited budget may not be able to afford devices that increase safety (personal alarm, etc.)
- Access and equality of services
- Everyone has the opportunity to provide basic needs
- Good housing (location, able to walk places, fair rent)
- Sense of purpose (a reason to get up in the morning)

- Free from undue stress
- Good health
- Sense of giving back to the community and being involved in the community
- Enough income to live comfortably and to have financial independence
- Positive support network (family and friends)
- Sharing
- Access to healthy food
- Air and water quality
- Having what makes you happy and is important to you
- Community support
- Businesses within walking distance
- Opportunity to grow (education/partnerships)

Focus Group 4

- Not having to struggle financially and being able to provide food and shelter
- Not having to face discrimination and people who are racist
- Having everything you need
- Being happy with your life as it is
- Being happy with who you are and what you have

Focus Group 5

- Living
- Affordable rental units
- Being happy

Focus Group 6

- Sunshine
- Well-being
- Second hand shop sales
- Having the means to purchase good, nutritious food
- Nature
- Feelings of accomplishment
- Comfort
- Having goals
- Good health
- Living close to grocery stores and food banks
- Affordable accommodations
- Having a doctor
- Having the option of education
- Adequate income
- Friends for support
- Strong neighbourhood
- Social life
- Happiness

- Being accepted
- Freedom
- Money
- Leisure opportunities
- Transportation system
- Drop in centres
- Supportive staff at agencies
- Healthy sex life
- Sense of belonging
- Employment
- Relaxing, leisure opportunities
- Feeling care free
- Green space
- Surviving
- Exercise
- Adequate housing
- Spiritual outlet
- Free to be who you want to be

Focus Group 7

- Education (devices that can be purchased to allow a person with limited vision to participate in classes)
- New technology (iPad)
- Agencies that help those in need
- Helping others (Health issues can prevent a person from being able to help which can negatively affect quality of life)
- Relaxing and enjoying life
- Educating people about vision loss so they feel less timid around those with limited vision
- Awareness of people with limited vision and the issues they face
- Nice weather
- Audio events (Blues Fest, Auditorium)
- PAL card (requires more awareness)
- Freedom
- Building accessibility in both public and private sectors
- People generally experience a high quality of life in Northern Ontario
- Nature and outdoor recreation
- Accessibility to information in other ways than newspapers and visual news to avoid feelings of isolation
- Communication between people who are blind and those that are not
- Accessible buildings
- Safety- being able to walk paths and answer your own door without fear
- Funds for accessible information radio
- Education about white canes so people know what they are for

- Quiet neighbourhoods
- The preservation of aboriginal healing exercises and language
- Community music events
- Bullying, especially when using white cane
- Racism
- Independence, not allowing others dictate what you can and can't do
- Confidence (won't use cane in fear of being judged, teased by others)
- Safety issues with bikes and cars
- Being actively involved with agencies and volunteer groups
- Public transit
- Being considerate of other people's needs
- Being unafraid to be yourself

Focus Group 8

- Nature and beauty, unless it is vandalized
- Safety- well-lit areas, free from violence
- Community participation
- Getting along with each other
- Working to make life better for yourself and your children
- Health (achieving goals depends on health)
- Going through good and bad times
- Not judging by appearance
- Respect
- School/education is a must
- Employment and unfair hiring practices (based on who you know, prejudices)
- Post-secondary education
- Education is expensive
- Air quality
- Population size
- Lack of confidence
- Everyone getting along
- Equality

Focus Group 9

- Amount of stress in your life
- Money/income
- Having to rely on outside places for opportunities (food banks,, Social Services)
- Relying on ODSP puts you below the poverty line
- Family and friends
- Doctors/nurses
- Living pain free (access to medications)
- Content and happy with your situation

- Commitment to improving lives for those with disabilities
- Employment opportunities for those with disabilities, need to be given a chance by employers

Focus Group 10

- Balance between work, family, friends, hobbies
- Healthy lifestyle
- Inclusive
- Containment- life not fragmented
- Purposeful

Focus Group 11

- Stable, no emergencies
- Good health
- Limited
- Different- new baby
- Affordable education
- Finances
- Living circumstances
- Family
- Attitudes of others
- Feeling misunderstood
- Relaxing
- Feeling frustrated

Focus Group 12

- Health- the ability to function
- Feeling safe and secure
- Overall happiness
- Sense of community

Focus Group 13

- Family
- Health
- Balance (mental, physical, spiritual, emotional)
- Well-being
- Access to resources
- Treatments (complimentary therapies) lead to balance
- Health of family members
- Unhealthy family members

Focus Group 14

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with what you do • Inclusion- public events must have a captionist or technology to enable those who cannot hear to be included |
|---|

Focus Group 15

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior assistance to stay in the home • Need assistance to stay in the home and keep up with indoor and outdoor chores • Quality of life is high when you live in the country even though it is more difficult to get help out in the country • The country provides peace and quiet and safety • Love Thunder Bay as it is a city within the country • Feeling independent • With stroke found it hard to ask for help- too proud, it is awkward and lowers self-confidence |
|--|

Focus Group 16

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realize you are lucky in comparison to others • Keep eye on the future • Good life • Good health and well-being • Balance- 2 kids, depression, husband leaving, having balance is key • Quality of life sucks right now but still happy • Broken • In the process of healing • Life will bring adversity but can still have positive aspects • Meaning and purpose • Things to look forward to • Emotional aspect (emotional scars continue to haunt) • Basic needs (money, housing) • Only allowing yourself to ruminate on certain events for a predetermined amount of time • Write out feelings and thoughts in a notebook |
|--|

Focus Group 17

Question not appropriate for this group

Appendix B

“What makes Thunder Bay a good place to live?”

Focus Group 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camping • Waterfront- access to the lake and parks • Many places to camp • Offers many different health programs (ex. For addictions) • Has much to offer geographically- a lot of green space • A lot of support programs (parenting, women’s groups) • Women’s Shelters • Multicultural city • Many places to get food so you should never go hungry • Bingos • Many non-profit organizations helping the community • Good hospital • College and University • Education system • Aboriginal programs for children
Focus Group 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city is the right size, close to a lot of things and is not too far to travel • Beautiful, free activities, close locations • Close shopping, it is easy to get what you need without having to travel too far from your house • The city is becoming more aware of accessibility limitations • Having good friends • Good community • The transportation system is quick • Fulfilling volunteer and paid positions
Focus Group 3
Number of participants: 14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people are friendly and welcoming • It is easy to get involved and meet people • Neighbourhoods • Sense of pride in the community • Friendly competition among neighbours • History • Ability to walk to resources • Sense of community and the ability to work together

- Community driven people
- Potential for tourism
- College and university not overly expensive
- Employment opportunities for graduates
- Medium sized city
- Transportation options
- Easy to get flights to northern communities
- Short commutes to places in the city
- Diversity in people and interest groups
- Medical forefront
- Wide reaching effect (always know someone when travelling)
- Environmental aspect (fishing, camping)
- Wildlife and nature
- Lake Superior and access to fresh water
- Cultural diversity
- 55+ Centre

Focus Group 4

- The size- it is big yet feels small
- The police are nice and helpful
- Hospital
- Transit system
- Many resources and supports
- Less crime than a big city
- No serious gangs
- Victim programs
- Women's shelters- always will have somewhere to go in an emergency
- Thunder Bay has a big heart
- Provides a good feeling
- Can get political help
- A participant shared a story where a local politician called Social Assistance to advocate on her behalf when she was denied assistance
- Close to family
- Many famous acts have performed in the city
- Many events (Blues Festival)
- Many free events (Summer in the Parks, Canada Day)
- Powwows
- Many stores are expanding
- Many volunteers
- Support groups for mothers and children
- The city comes together in times of crisis (benefits for those in need ex. a sick child, missing person)
- Have access to all services that you may not get in smaller communities (speech therapy)

- Programs for those on limited incomes that allow children to participate in recreation activities
- The community wants people to get help- food banks, housing

Focus Group 5

- Living
- Affordable rental units
- Being happy

Focus Group 6

- Many restaurants
- Air quality
- Ample opportunities (recreation, employment)
- Good size
- Centrally located
- Nature
- Trails
- Post-secondary education
- Good people (friendly, helpful)
- Better health care than small communities
- Accessibility (easy to get around)
- Inclusive
- Cultural diversity
- Close to the border
- Architecture
- Entertainment options
- Lake Superior
- Wildlife
- Skiing
- Swimming, parasailing
- Baseball games
- Coffee shops
- Hockey
- Beautiful scenery
- Parks
- Do not experience natural disasters
- Affordable and available housing
- Clean water
- Hiking trails
- Possible multiplex
- Exercise facilities
- Going to be getting a good trail system for biking
- Small town feel
- Libraries

- Close to nature and the country
- 4 seasons
- Law enforcement (lots of police)
- Education system
- Neighbourhoods
- Second hand book shops
- Recreation
- Local business
- Good transit system
- Good senior care/homes
- Bike paths
- Hospital
- Cancer research
- Great Lakes network
- Hub for the rail system
- Auditorium
- Potential for economic growth
- Winter activities
- Movie theatre
- Possible law school
- Community conscious
- Integration
- Chippewa and Centennial Parks
- Camping
- Will help those who are displaced
- Airport
- Alternate energy sources
- Friendly/open people
- Leisure activities (bowling, shooting pool)
- No nuclear power plants
- Shopping and stores open for 24 hours
- Close to Mall of America
- 24 hour crisis lines
- Charitable organizations
- Music schools
- Casinos
- Tele-Nurse and ER
- Public golf courses
- Community centres
- Accepting and accommodating of all religions
- Good mental health facilities
- Fishing, hunting
- Recycling
- Marina upgrades

Focus Group 7

- The transit system allows for independence
- Persians
- The history of the city
- Diversity of people and Aboriginal community
- Willing to stop racism
- Health care specialists
- The hospital is quick and efficient
- 4 seasons
- Hunting and fishing
- Scenery
- Lakes
- Improved accessibility, but there is still a long way to go
- People are friendly
- Family
- Good location
- Malls
- Airport
- You can drive 5 minutes and be in nature
- Walking trails, outdoor life
- Wildlife
- Laid back lifestyle
- Less pressure than Toronto
- Many activities for a community our size
- Cultural organizations
- Promotion of local activities
- Educational opportunities
- Youth recreation
- Transit system is good for a city this size
- Caring community- tries to be accessible, concerned about racism and ageism
- Large geographically and a small population
- Hiking, kayaking, walking
- Can be involved in protests
- Much happiness, love life
- Friendly, helpful neighbours who watch out for one another
- Feel safe in your own neighbourhood
- Friends and family are here
- Close to the border and Duluth
- Rich arts scene
- Rich in culture
- Easy to get around
- Parks

- Minimal traffic
- Clean, open city
- Should be more of a tourist destination
- Air quality

Focus Group 8

- Nature
- Wildlife
- Not overly crowded
- Sense of community is better than Toronto where it can be lonely as you never see familiar faces
- The streams for fishing as long as they are kept clean
- Spacious
- Friends provide love and support (one big family)
- Camping and fishing, “everything is in your backyard”, “down south you must travel hours”
- Outdoor activities in and out of the city
- Camping and fishing
- Campgrounds
- Indoor and outdoor pools
- Activities in and out of the city
- Mini-putt, golf, sports dome
- Malls, theatre
- College
- Places to shop indoors
- Having people to talk to
- Educational opportunities
- Coffee shops
- No smog or unpleasant odors
- Parks and recreation
- Summer in the Parks
- Accessibility for those with a disability
- Thunder Bay does a lot to support people to live independently (personal support workers)
- Transit
- Acts of kindness

Focus Group 9

- Outdoors and nature
- Scenery
- Lakes
- Paths and free recreation
- Moderate temperature
- Good bus service (quick and efficient)

- Quick and easy to get around by car
- Small town feel
- Strong community
- Entertainment at the Auditorium
- Many activities available
- TV and radio advertise events well
- Easy to find out what is going on

Focus Group:10

- Diversity: cultural, entertainment (Summer in the Parks, etc)
- Healthy lifestyle, not sick
- Outdoor activities
- Nature is so close, do not need to travel far to get to green space
- Green space
- Working on making Thunder Bay more inclusive
- Free events so everyone can participate (ex. Kite Festival)
- Size (better than a small town)
- Cost of living (better than Southern Ontario)
- Possible law school
- Thunder Bay is growing, higher number of professionals

Focus Group 11

- Transit system
- Water quality (tastes good)
- Scenery (Mt McKay, Hillcrest)
- Country feel
- Free programs
- Health Care (doctors, free)
- One big neighbourhood, everyone knows everyone
- Arts
- Culture
- Good schools (small, get to know everyone in your program, not treated as a number)
- College and University
- Elementary schools (balanced day)
- Financial aid, "no way to have nothing"
- Mayor

Focus Group 12

- Outdoors (trails, rivers)
- Close to nature
- Not too far from other big cities and the States
- Small (sense of community, everyone knows everyone)

Focus Group 13

- The people, “we’re different”, “get on with what we have to do”, “we’re Northerners”
- The size of the community (not big enough to become impersonal)
- Easy to get around
- Relatively safe
- Recreation- everything to do
- Close to nature
- Surrounded by water, Lake Superior
- Good fishing
- Family oriented
- Helping agencies available in all situations
- Medical care
- Room for growth

Focus Group 14

- Family
- Close to fishing, nature, scenery for photography

Focus Group 15

- Country side
- Help for survivors of stroke, travel to conferences
- More accessible services (Hospital). Do not have to travel to a different city to get certain health services
- Many things to get involved in
- Caring city- you just have to ask

Focus Group 16

- Not a crazy city in terms of population (few people)
- Nature
- Established here (income and friends)
- Family is here
- Not crowded, personal space unlike Toronto
- Accessibility to lakes, Sleeping Giant and other things unique to Thunder Bay
- Persians
- Perogies and ethnic foods
- Family centered community
- People are accepted regardless of culture, race
- Short commute times
- Creativity
- Amethyst mine
- Professional hockey players

- Free community programs for kids
- Support groups ex. For those leaving their husbands

Focus Group 17

- Moved here last year and enjoying work here better than in Toronto
- Like small towns rather than a big city
- Less crime than a big city
- Living in Ottawa had a lot of traffic, stressful life, schedule was so busy there was never any free time for yourself, whereas working in Thunder Bay allows you to take your time at work, chat, feel less isolated, more friendly faces
- Thunder Bay is a small community that offers flexibility, easy to work within the workplace
- Like the area, no stress, easy to get around, less traffic, never bored, kids love it too
- Thunder Bay is awesome, able to afford a home, manage finances, live comfortably, hiking, camping, nature, whereas in Southern Ontario it is more expensive
- Thunder Bay is a good place to raise kids
- Happy life (house, husband has a business, generally enjoy living in Thunder Bay)
- Small town environment
- Marina Park, Sleeping Giant, hiking
- In Thunder Bay we have respect for others differences
- Regardless of difficulties it is worth it to live here because it is beautiful, opportunities to hike and camp

Questionnaire 1

- It's home- nothing else to compare it to

Questionnaire 2

- Love Thunder Bay, cannot see myself living anywhere else
- Sense of security
- People are friendly and helpful
- Parks are beneficial for children and an opportunity to relax
- Feels like home
- Good schools
- Many beautiful parks
- Beautiful scenery
- Good sense of community
- Small town feel
- Amount of nature available around the city
- Location
- Small enough to know at least one person for a significant amount of time

- Access to necessities (mall, groceries)
- Many activities in the summer (Parks, camping, swimming)
- Only takes 20 minutes to get anywhere

Questionnaire 3

- Endless possibility of things to do
- Endless entertainment possibilities
- College and university
- Family
- Has necessities (job, doctor)
- Good combination of rural and urban opportunities to live, work and play
- More affordable than a big city
- Cleaner than a big city
- Awesome local music and arts scene
- Small enough to still have the friendliness factor, yet big enough to access everything that is needed
- Community events are constant and varied
- Great education system
- Outdoor activities are plentiful (fishing, camping)
- Close to nature
- Not as fast paced as Toronto
- Friendly people
- Nice parks and paths
- Four seasons allows for a range of activities
- New programs are fairly developed
- Small community
- Good air quality
- Beautiful surroundings/scenery
- Outdoor activities
- Cheaper to live than a northern community
- Geographical location
- Cultural diversity
- Moderate temperature due to the lake
- Nature
- Aboriginal culture
- Employment opportunities
- Sense of community

Questionnaire 4

- Outdoors
- Fresh water
- Trees
- Clean air
- Proximity to nature

- Many social programs
- Cost of housing
- Community activities (Teddy Bear Picnic/Kite Festival)
- Sense of community
- Small town feel

Questionnaire 5

- Open and welcome community
- Beautiful and natural environment
- Quality educational opportunities
- The people
- Opportunities in the community
- Good schools
- Safe
- Has a good location in relation to things to do
- Plenty of parks
- Acceptance of culture
- Many funded programs relating to health, education and spirituality
- Small town feel
- Close to great shopping (Minneapolis, Duluth)
- University and College
- Transit system
- Outdoor activities (ex. Fishing, hunting, camping)
- Air quality is better than Southern Ontario
- Lake Superior
- Short driving distances to everything
- Strong community
- Cost of living, Thunder Bay is a great place to purchase a home compared to British Columbia or Toronto
- Large enough to own a home in a friendly neighbourhood with a large backyard
- Weather- you can experience all 4 seasons
- Melting pot of different cultures
- Mix of different socio-economic backgrounds

Questionnaire 6

- Good school system
- Supportive community
- Entertainment (nature/outdoor, community events)
- Affordable/low cost of living
- Access to lakes, outdoors
- Beautiful Lake Superior
- Scenic
- Family

- Smaller sized city, but not too small
- Easy access to all daily living necessities
- Strong focus on volunteerism and community fundraising for important services
- Positive connections between the social service system supporting the more vulnerable persons in our community
- Many great opportunities for young people to participate in and excel at (academics, sports, arts, culture)
- Water recreation
- Various options for cultural experiences
- Good opportunities for furthering educational goals
- Affordable homes
- Short travel times
- Low pollution
- Many activities to watch and participate in
- Access to services that are not available in smaller communities
- Summer and winter activities
- Relatively small population
- Great sports and recreation facilities
- Access to many lakes and rivers
- Great city for children to grow up
- Small town atmosphere
- Close proximity to beautiful natural resources
- Influx of culture and ethnicity- probably due in part to the University
- Post-secondary options available in the city
- Slow pace
- Safe
- Summer
- People
- Work
- Ability to escape easily
- Many parks and forested areas
- Easy and affordable to travel to national and international destinations
- Medical school
- New hospital
- Charitable city
- Strong linkages among health and social service organizations
- Pride in the city
- Business
- Hiking, swimming, sailing
- Great coffee houses
- The city does what it has to do to make the community happy
- Clean
- Recreation

- Diversity

Questionnaire 7

- Very adequate shelter
- Sufficient funds to go on holidays
- Friends and volunteer opportunities
- Size is manageable
- Nature and environment
- Feeling safe
- Affordable place to live, beautiful community with many activities and events
- Quality and quantity of support systems here
- Easy access to outdoor recreation
- Adequate entertainment
- Strong sense of community (although seems to be weakening)
- Adequate employment opportunities
- Dedicated individuals working to make Thunder Bay a great place to live
- It's not a big city
- It has many things a larger city has, such as theatre, music, sports, but it's in smaller city with a friendlier feel
- A lot of wilderness to enjoy
- Lower cost to purchase a house
- Educational opportunities

Questionnaire 8

- Friendly neighbours
- Many activities for children
- Everything is close- I can cross town in 10-15 minutes, there are no long commutes
- Beautiful city
- amazing lakes
- Close to the border to shop
- Group of people and businesses providing quality food dining which includes a focus on vegetarianism/veganism, fresh local food
- Local post-secondary institutions
- Small- easy to get around
- Small town feeling
- Fishing, swimming, camping
- Nice weather in the summer
- 4 seasons which allow for a variety of activities
- Many parks and ski hills
- Sense of community (community comes together)
- Access to outdoor activities

- Access to concerts
- Less racial problems
- Easy to access recreational facilities
- A lot of trees and water
- Parks that remind of home
- Many cultures within the city that everyone could benefit from

Appendix C

“In your opinion what contributes to a high quality of life?”

Focus Group 1

- Money
- Having a job
- Having an education
- Health services (mental, physical, spiritual, emotional)
- Having a balanced lifestyle
- Healthy relationships
- Healthy friendships- your friends should have a positive influence on your life
- Sober lifestyle
- Detox centers
- Keeping your distance from shady people
- Live clean- this must be a decision you make for yourself, until you are ready no one can help you
- A government that makes good decisions
- Ensuring programs for kids do not get shut down
- Funding available for recreation activities for kids

Focus Group 2

- Good support system- family, friends, organizations, co-workers
- Having a job to get money
- Having a safe place to live with family support
- Increase Social Assistance support and provide bus passes
- Regardless of employment status, everyone should have access to quality foods and housing
- Everyone should be guaranteed a base level of income
- Barrier free services (limitations should not be placed on food banks)
- Family and friends are more important than money
- Having activities/a job to keep busy during the day

Focus Group 3

- Safety
- Freedom of choice
- Adequate income for all
- Feeling that you are valued
- Positive support system (friends, family, co-workers)
- Sense of belonging
- Respect- knowing how to deserve respect
- Daily human interaction

- Supportive neighbourhoods
- Gathering places
- Green space to gather and hold activities
- Cultural, social and educational opportunities
- Hierarchy of Needs (basic needs must be met)
- Inclusion (start with citizens to make everywhere more inclusive)
- Communication
- Church based community groups
- Sense of belonging to an ethnic group
- Ethnic roots celebrated not lost
- Trying to get back what we've lost in terms of cultural identity
- Know what it means to be Canadian
- Ability to self-express
- Curiosity of other cultures
- Inclusivity within schools
- Including those with disabilities (don't segregate)
- Not having to fight for rights
- Not being afraid to talk and ask questions

Focus Group 4

- Stability (financial, emotional and physical)
- Not having to worry month to month about finances
- 211 can help direct people to services when they are in need
- Support from different groups (counsellors)

Focus Group 5

- It is a beautiful place if you can look past the drugs
- Opportunities to join programs
- Small town
- Nice looking city
- Not much
- It's home
- Educational system (College and University)
- Many places to get help with addictions (drugs and alcohol)

Focus Group 6

- Government funding
- Self-esteem
- The kindness and acceptance of those around you
- Not being afraid to give and accept help
- Good health care system
- A doctor and psychiatrist that will work with you
- Doctors who ask "what do you need?"
- Connections between services

- Safe place to be the person that you are
- Friendship
- Pets
- Enough doctors and nurses
- Connection to family
- Local foods and farmer's market
- Farms and gleaning
- Comfortable enough to be creative
- Helpful neighbours
- Charity events
- Affordable housing

Focus Group 7

- Family
- Organizing charity bingos
- Volunteering for charities
- Crafts
- Fighting for the underdog
- Grandchildren
- Classmates
- Supports- family, teachers, friends
- Staying positive
- Able to feel connected to people in Thunder Bay even if you can't see them all of the time
- Technology- Computers, iPhone, Satellite Radio
- Networking possibilities
- Networks between agencies
- Independence through technology
- Better roads and sidewalks also allow for independence
- Completing a degree, even at an older age
- Adequate income
- Supportive friends and family who help with skills
- Challenging yourself
- Agency support to apply for work
- A job that allows you to be financially independent
- Close knit community
- GPS systems on buses
- Cell phones with large buttons
- Involvement in meaningful activities
- Being accepted for who you are
- Put the person first

Focus Group 8

- Sobriety from drugs and alcohol
- Self-esteem
- Support from family and friends
- Quality education
- Happiness
- Animals
- Nature
- Children
- Hobbies (painting, drawing, bowling) that help build self-esteem
- Continuing education
- Gardening
- Feeling that you contribute to the community
- Being satisfied with what you have
- Being yourself
- Not envying what others have
- Self-awareness and control
- Not competing with others
- Don't be influenced by others (drinking, drugs)
- Have positive influences in your life
- Freedom to practice religious beliefs and culture
- Living life according to your own values
- Free from rumours
- Family support agencies
- Counselling services for girls
- Crisis counsellors

Focus Group 9

- Money
- Healthy food (expensive, especially on a limited income)
- Exercise (expensive)
- Fresh air
- Essentials must come first
- Good friends
- Positive outlook
- Health
- Access to medical care
- Car
- Family

Focus Group 10

- Family
- Money
- Friends

- Support network
- Trained professionals in all areas
- Inexpensive resources for youth to express themselves (ex. skate park is a good idea but it is too small)
- Would be beneficial to focus on youth and what they have to offer (youth are our teachers)
- Free programs

Focus Group 11

- Self-control
- Patience
- Finances
- Feel safe and secure
- Community supports and resources
- Reasonable cost of living
- Family and friends to support you
- Unity in community (community that comes together)
- Equality for everyone (stop racism)
- Enjoy what you have
- Love and happiness
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom to be you and speak your mind
- Law and order, guidelines
- Individuality

Focus Group 12

- Finances
- Good Health
- Adequate shelter
- Food
- Transportation (public/car/rollerblading, biking)
- Opportunities to improve (education and employment)
- Family
- Social network (people around you)
- Sense of belonging
- Motivation/ambition
- Safe community
- Activities (recreation, culture) all ages
- Availability of support

Focus Group 13

- Spirituality
- Everyone must have the same rights and access services equally
- Respect and understanding

- Grief and bereavement services must be easier to access
- The right to die. Doctors are worried about how much medication to give in case they are accused of assisting the death
- Support groups provide a positive experience
- Staying in touch with family and friends
- Having good friends and a pet
- Being as healthy as you can be
- Time alone when dealing with a loss
- Respect for culture. The aboriginal community sees the entire community as family and needs time off when a member of the community passes away. One participant shared a story where someone they knew only got one day off when their aunt died. It was such a difficult time she had to quit her job.
- Supportive employers
- Holistic care (patient centered)
- The ability to die well, truthfulness, respect, dignity
- Inclusive of the whole family
- Pain management

Focus Group 14

- Family
- A job that is respectful of individual needs and allows those with hearing loss to function effectively
- Not being alone, being included with other people
- Not feeling isolated

Focus Group 15

- Family
- Having assistance- people to help (neighbours, friends, social life, grandkids)
- Keep helping yourself
- Learning about technology
- Be flexible and enjoy what you are doing
- Do not isolate yourself
- New technology makes tasks easier (ex. Auto snow blower is easier to drive than older models)
- Good health
- Managing in your own home
- Remaining in the home and managing
- Assistance programs that help you to stay in the home
- Security alert devices that allow you to alert family members if you fall or are hurt

Focus Group: 16

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Moderate to warm temperature • Social connections-interdependence • Meaningful activities that give purpose to the day (ex. Work and volunteering) • Sunlight • Meaning • Stability (emotionally, physically, spiritually) • Spirituality • Economic health • Access to services when needed • Having a family doctor and access to different medical services and specialists |
|--|

Focus Group 17

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on accessibility for the Culturally Deaf and breaking down barriers they encounter • My home and meeting new friends • The transit system • Joking around with friends • Good experiences with the drivers of the transit system • The Culturally Deaf community is a tight network with common goals • Can go to the store and coffee shops and know everyone. The people working are aware that they need to provide pen and paper for communication • The community is open to different communication methods |
|--|

Questionnaire 1

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends and family |
|--|

Questionnaire 2

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to financially support your children without worrying about where your next meal is coming from • Ability to afford activities with your children • Strong morals/values • Strong work ethic • Sense you can actually enjoy life instead of working hard and not achieving the benefits • Exceeding the basics of life and surpassing goals and expectations. It is a state of being rather than a specific item or need |
|---|

Questionnaire 3

- The decisions you make
- Outlook, if everything is perceived as negative it will be negative, same for positive
- Knowing that things will be OK in the end and if they are not OK it is not the end
- Education
- Good job
- Money
- Having a place to call home
- Enough money to afford food and clothing
- Meaningful employment
- Strong, healthy relationships
- Good support systems (family and government)
- Cleanliness
- Well-paying job with at least a decent minimum wage
- Caring doctor and medical system
- Happiness
- Good health
- Good food and shelter
- Comfortable salary
- Safe community
- Family
- Nice home
- Healthy living
- Adequate income
- Support of family and outside agencies
- Enjoying a career
- Having a family to enjoy
- What I choose to put in it
- Understanding
- Exercise
- Good friends
- Mix of cultures
- Climate
- Working toward and building your dreams

Questionnaire 4

- Inexpensive to live
- Good infrastructure
- Clear air and water
- Nice scenery
- Access to resources
- Ability to connect with other people

Questionnaire 5

- Opportunity to earn a living wage
- Safe environment for family
- Community supports
- Relationships with friends and family
- Helping and encouraging others
- Learning new things
- Doing things that you enjoy (reading, listening to music, funny movies)
- Interacting and relating to others regardless of whether those interactions are good or bad
- Balanced work life
- Health care
- Education
- Money
- Job opportunities
- Networking opportunities
- Financial security
- Health
- Family
- Love
- City transit
- Ability to pay rent and buy groceries
- Housing/living conditions within your house and outside your front door
- Positive attitude and not taking things for granted
- Giving back to the community- it feels good to do nice things for others
- Happiness
- Choices

Questionnaire 6

- Positive, forward thinking
- Basic needs are met (food, shelter, clothing)
- Able to focus on positive aspects of life rather than survival
- Opportunities for growth
- Safety- emotional and physical
- Security- job and family
- Progressive community
- Openness and acceptance, tolerance
- Having people in your immediate and extended family who you love and respect and who love and respect you
- Having good friends and coworkers who help make difficult days easier
- Having a responsible and caring doctor to help with the medical needs of you and your family

- Having the opportunity to work and make money to support your family and enjoy the extras in life
- To have the opportunity to help and support others so that they can experience a higher quality of life
- Choices- personal autonomy
- Support from friends and family
- Disposable income
- Participating and accomplishing goals
- Happiness
- Sense of belonging
- Sense of community
- Love
- Involvement in many activities
- Healthy eating
- Having a local university
- Green space
- Lakes and rivers near by
- Access to goods and services
- The international airport makes travel easy
- Enjoying work
- Being exposed to many different cultures and experiences
- Ethnic foods and restaurants
- Proximity to nature
- Adequate income
- Opportunities for recreation
- Opportunities to play
- Opportunities to learn
- Strong, vibrant cultural community
- Powwows and arts are wonderful
- Cycling clubs and cross country skiing
- Being physically, mentally and spiritually healthy

Questionnaire 7

- Not having to worry about basics (shelter, finances, friends)
- Mobility- easy to get around
- Having choices
- Having the basic necessities required to survive (housing, food, enough money to pay bills, plus a little extra for entertainment)
- Adequate health care
- Access to resources
- Support systems
- Safety
- Affordable housing
- Financial stability (job security)

- Community engagement
- Proper planning and vision
- Acting on the vision
- Full time employment and wages
- Recreation
- Cost of services
- Roads
- Not having to worry about paying the bills or eating
- Supportive family and friends close by
- Having hobbies or entertainment

Questionnaire 8

- Job security
- Supportive family and friends
- Appreciating everyday life and making the best of all situations
- A change in focus on our diet to be local, vegan, organic
- Affordable housing, which makes it possible to buy
- Better highways, like the new highway west
- Being close to nature (Lakes, trees, wildlife)
- Quick commute to work
- Slower pace of life in general
- Having four seasons to enjoy camping and fishing in the summer and sledding and ice fishing in the winter
- Feeling safe in your community
- Transportation
- Good job
- Childcare
- Well-paying job
- Family supports
- Community supports for services for those with special needs
- Community supports for childcare
- Reasonable rent

Appendix D

“What is the biggest challenge that prevents you from having a high quality of life?”

Focus Group 1

- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Unhealthy friendships (shady people)
- Unhealthy relationships (friends who are jealous or cause trouble)
- Lack of money
- Lack of education
- High unemployment
- Racism/injustice
- Negative choices
- Internet bullying
- Bullying
- Transportation system- takes a long time to get where you are going
- Criminal system- not enough programming to prevent reoffending, being in jail
 - Reoffending
 - Probation-high stipulations, not a lot of understanding, too many rules
 - Not enough programming in jail (need anger management, stress reduction)
- Judgmental people- you are who you hang out with
- Guilty by association

Focus Group 2

- Not enough spare time
- Too many working hours required in order to pay bills
- Job security (not enough permanent positions)
- Transportation when living in rural areas (If you live outside of the city you may have to rely on family for transportation)
- Not enough paid work
- Lack of education (expectations are too high on the student)
- Unable to get the sleep required to be healthy

Focus Group 3

- Racism
- Assimilation
- Lack of cultural identity
- Elderly stuck in their ways

- Lack of curiosity
- Bigotry
- Class discrepancies
- Economic divisions
- Bullying
- Afraid to ask questions about different cultures
- Gulf between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people
- Poverty
- Stigmatization
- Addictions
- Mental health issues
- Family breakdown
- Loss of values
- Legal supports for the average person
- Lack of resources
- Too focused on material things
- Too focused on personal problems
- Perceptions
- Access to medical services can be slow

Focus Group 4

- Financial difficulties
- Transportation
- Housing
- No family support
- Not having your children with you
- Stress
- Alcohol and drugs
- Education takes too long and is expensive

Focus Group 5

- Inequality
- Barriers to housing, work and education
- Discrimination
- Addictions to alcohol and drugs
- Difficult to get out to do things
- Negative people and environment
- Discarded needles and dangerous streets
- Having a criminal record
- Probation
- Too much work (working multiple jobs to survive)
- Social Assistance has not increased enough to keep up with raising prices
- Social Assistance has many offices dedicated to different tasks and it becomes confusing

Focus Group 6

- Social Assistance falls below the poverty line
- Money
- Not having transportation
- People “falling through the cracks”
- Negative attitudes toward those less well off
- Discrimination
- Addictions
- Stigma (mental illness)
- Lack of beds in ER
- Lack of low income housing
- Poverty
- Racism
- Equality of services
- Job opportunities for those dealing with illness or disability
- Unemployment
- Lack of infrastructure updates
- Cost of living
- Litter
- Lack of respect for the community
- Recycling system
- Using plastic bags
- Lack of volunteers for those with a disability
- Lack of support to help get an education
- Gaps between agencies
- Inexperienced workers
- Government is working to reduce duplication, but duplication may be necessary to meet the need
- Blaming the victim
- Psychiatric Nurses decide what kind of assistance a person with a mental illness will receive in the ER, which is unfair
- Supports for children with mental illness are inadequate
- Cannot afford housing
- Health crisis should be separate from mental health crisis
- Agencies exist just to exist
- Inadequate rural transportation
- Long winter

Focus Group 7

- Having to deal with being legally blind everyday (eye injections/relearning how to do every day loss/accepting vision loss/straightening out the house to know where everything is)

- Feelings of seclusion
- Unable to read or do crafts
- Lack of recreational opportunities for those with vision loss
- Health issues
- Lack of independence
- Not being able to see faces
- Lack of meaningful employment for those with visual impairment
- Lack of mobility- unable to drive with vision loss
- Always depending on someone else to get where you want to go
- Difficult to find out about technological advancements
- Taxes are high which makes it difficult to be motivated to work
- Inadequate income
- Fighting for Social Assistance
- Bullying
- Ignorance
- Limited volunteer opportunities
- Lines on road are difficult to distinguish
- Difficult to judge distances
- Lack of freedom
- Have to plan for everything
- Feeling unsafe
- Avoid certain neighbourhoods due to concerns about safety
- Cars too quiet, do not know how close they are
- Drivers ignore walking signs
- Transit drivers should confirm that people are getting off at the right stop
- It is hard to hear bus stops over the radio
- Feel unsafe travelling by bus at night
- The buses can be unclean
- People ignore blindness
- Poorly lit stairways
- Being aboriginal and visually impaired is difficult

Focus Group 8

- Inequality in programs
- Judging people based on their family size, income, language
- Disrespecting cultures
- Lack of communication between people who are well off and those that are not
- Judgmental people
- Being judged based on appearance
- Difficulty scheduling transportation
- Inequality
- Harassment
- Disabilities (lack of understanding)

- Reckless driving
- Traffic
- Employment
 - Unfair hiring practices
 - It is difficult if you do not know anyone in the city to help get a foot in the door
 - Need certification
- Fear of others (talking to people with money if you do not have it)
- Fear of the unknown
- Getting to and from programming
- Transit (issues with strollers, cost of bus passes, buses being late and early, the bus driving right by bus stops)
- Lack of youth programming
- Lack of programming for teenage mothers
- Cleanliness of the city
- Housing
- Lack of education
- Having a learning disability- people become frustrated if you do not understand, this in turn causes frustration for both parties. More patience is needed
- Put-downs
- Difficulty receiving band funding
- Difficult to get money to go to school
- Feeling too shy to express opinions

Focus Group 9

- Physical pain
- Lack of funds
- Depression
- Embarrassment to share disabilities with others
- Emotional regulation
- Lack of education regarding people with disabilities
- People struggle to expand their view of “normal”
- First contact staff are not well trained and lack sensitivity
- Judgment
- Lack of adequate Social Assistance
- Difficult to get information on activities that are available
- Community does not show compassion
- Entertainment and restaurants are out of reach on a limited budget

Focus Group 10

- Inclusive- Special needs children and adults. Hard to find programs especially for sports that are truly inclusive. Most programs still require a facilitator, which is not fully inclusive

- Not all places are wheelchair accessible. Some places won't make their buildings accessible or will often make 1 location accessible but not all. One participant found it difficult to find a place to hold her wedding reception because many of the available options were not wheelchair accessible
- Not enough activities for youth
- People complain about youth
- Arts taken out of schools
- Sustainable income- not relying on contract or part-time positions. Steady paycheck
- Spouse having to work out of town
- Lost jobs
- Food security. Food banks are struggling to meet the need
- middle class is generous but the middle class is dwindling

Focus Group 11

- Needles everywhere, must teach your children at a young age how to identify and avoid needles
- Low income housing needs a clean up
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of education
- Legal issues with family
- Harassment and abuse and nothing is done about it
- Lack of classes and counsellors for men teaching how to treat women that are enforced
- Lack of resources
- Lack of sexual education in schools and lessons on how to form healthy relationships
- Recycling- how to reuse
- Lack of resources for teen moms (need hands on classes)
- Transit systems (difficulty with strollers, more bus stops)

Focus Group 12

- Finances
- Employment
- Food/shelter
- Bad health
- Lack of access to services/long wait lists
- Lack of support while on a wait list
- Feeling like you don't belong
- No friends or family in the city
- High crime rate
- Addictions
- Lack of support/knowledge (child care)

- Education
- Lack of supports in schools for those with learning disabilities
- Lack of programs/services/activities for youth and children
- Bullying
- Lack of culture/cultural supports for people moving into our community from a reserve

Focus Group 13

- Lack of services on the weekend
- Education regarding end of life care
- Lack of access to expertise/poor coordination/patient advocates
- Lack of resources (Beds, walk-in clinic for palliative care)
- Resident centered care (fear of long-term care, management ensuring staff is aware of and working according to policies)
- Limited access to culturally specific services for the First Nation community
- Misconceptions regarding services (hospice)

Focus Group 14

- Loneliness
- Unable to function in certain situations at work due to hearing loss (meet and greets, meetings)
- Degeneration in being deafened
- Attitudes toward being deafened, ex. deafness is caused only by old age
- Not seen as useful anymore
- People do not accommodate the needs of those with hearing loss
- Being judged as dumb or an “idiot” due to hearing loss
- Stigmatized as a symptom of being old
- Facing negativity and isolating oneself to cope

Focus Group 15

- Difficult to find out about available services
- Difficult to schedule transportation, must book too far in advance
- Need to make use of services that only charge nominal fees
- Difficult to keep up with yard work
- Difficult to rely solely on family and it's hard to ask for help (“can't rely on kids”- they will pop in and help but they have busy lives- feel bad asking kids to give up their work and time)
- Too proud to ask for help
- Lack of an internet/pamphlet service that describes available programs
- Hard to keep up with technology
- The port allows for the transport of drugs into the city
- Old buildings (ice cream shop) turned into methadone clinics
- Programs that do not serve areas in the country to help with housework or snow removal

Focus Group 16

- Stupid husbands
- Unhealthy relationships (selfishness, dishonesty)
- Oppression related to disability, gender, education) barriers
- Cycle of poverty
- Illness and poor mental health
- Lack of mental health services for youth
- Addictions
- Increased homelessness
- Aging populations and gaps in service for the elderly which puts increased responsibility on the family which can cause stress
- Gossip
- Men taking advantage of women and strategize together on the best ways of doing it (“generation of cop-outs”)
- Men who do not honour commitments
- The city is dangerous with an increase in direct crimes
- Feel unsafe and as a result avoid certain areas and check out people’s friends
- Lack of assimilation with rural populations
- Stigma surrounding mental health passes down through families
- Racism and discrimination (racism felt by all races)
- Sustainable employment
- Youth migration- increased mobility of families poses a challenge to the aging population
- Gangs
- Panhandling
- Violence

Focus Group 17

- Must negotiate rights to an interpreter in health care settings- hard to access interpreting services, becomes a fight
- When sent to specialist appointments an interpreter has rarely been scheduled so the appointment is cancelled
- Constantly educating people about accessibility legislation and it is not followed (government offices, banks, hospitals)
- Thunder Bay needs more varied activities
- Events need interpreters to ensure accessibility and participation of the Deaf community
- Hard for people to find work, lack of educational opportunities for Deaf people
- All kinds of courses for different interests but because interpreters are not available the Culturally Deaf community cannot access them
- It would be great to have an interpreter that works events, concerts, and

activities. The Deaf community needs to be able to have access to entertainment as well, especially in the winter when it is boring and cold

- The Culturally Deaf community is tired of fighting for basic rights
- Toronto is overwhelming but there is a lot going on in the Deaf Community
- Difficult for people who are Deaf to find jobs, it is difficult to get interpreting services for interviews
- Need educational opportunities to learn about health issues
- Accessibility is extremely limited in Thunder Bay
- Cannot access services and feel like the “bad guy” when fighting for rights, people don’t understand and need to realize that these rights are laws, Deaf individuals have a legal right to an interpreter
- A Deaf individual who is knowledgeable about legislation to educate service providers
- Concerned for future, don’t want to die alone, The Deaf Community needs to be strong and quality nursing homes need to be available
- Most places will not hesitate to set up a wheel chair ramp, but interpretation services are no different
- Hospital staff) try to get children to act as interpreters, pen and paper would even be preferable to using children, children can make mistakes and it is too much to ask of a child
- First doctor appointment attended with an interpreter was a great experience, could have privacy
- Police officers should have an interpreter or basic knowledge of ASL for RIDE programs, road blocks
- Awareness campaigns to show Thunder Bay that the Deaf community is capable
- Should design a list of communication needs that can be distributed to the public
- Sometimes feel like going out in public is a waste of time
- There is a lack of resources for elderly people who want to stay at home but require assistance to do so
- Younger people get priority funding
- The Deaf community does not want to be viewed as a problem because they need a bridge for communication
- Hate the term “ hearing impaired” would prefer “Culturally Deaf” a linguistic cultural group
- Not given the opportunity to perform certain tasks at work as the boss thinks that it is unsafe
- Technology is very expensive, would like to instill a visual fire alarm in the home but it is too much money
- Tired of signing papers to state that you are deaf, should have a card that could be presented
- Should have a local school for the Deaf to provide parents with more options for their children, instead of feeling like the only option is to put your child through mainstream school and relying on implants and lip reading

- Lack of understanding of deaf culture
- Employment struggles- many people lose jobs as they are seen as a liability or that it is unsafe, need a coach to educate and assist employers

Questionnaire 1

- Alcohol

Questionnaire 2

- Finances, activities can be expensive
- A simple trip to the park can become expensive once you factor in a bus ticket and snacks and drinks
- Must work too hard and do not have enough time or money to enjoy life's "quality" time
- Holding yourself back and preventing individual success
- Not having a suitable place to live
- Not a lot to do for kids. There is a need for a variety of activities
- Other than working, shopping, sports and the movie theater there is not much to do for young people or adults

Questionnaire 3

- There are no challenges, it is up to you
- Possible shortfall would be mental/physical disabilities
- Work
- School
- Drugs
- Wish there were more employment opportunities for those who are struggling
- Money to raise a family and provide as many perks as possible
- Having a good and happy life
- Happiness
- Income is not always enough for extra money once bills are paid
- Mental illness and addictions
- Stress
- Hard to find work
- Only one income
- Everyday expenses
- Unable to communicate with children who have chosen a different lifestyle
- Having a grandchild live with you
- Myself- feelings of low self-worth
- Money
- Negative attitudes prevent progress
- Financial difficulties due to the reduced wages obtained on maternity leave, plus paying for food and necessities for the baby

Questionnaire 4

- Cold, dark winters
- Shortage of gainful employment and available income
- Much of the work available is temporary
- Young people leaving the community for better careers

Questionnaire 5

- Limited economic opportunities
- Cost of living
- Discouragement
- Stress
- People who are not open minded
- Limited employment opportunities
- Money/finances
- Too many expenses
- Not enough time to work
- Being away from friends and family
- Relationships
- School stress
- Paying bills on a low income
- Being “broke”
- Constantly moving and leaving friends and family often
- Having to work two jobs and going to school can impact social life
- There aren't enough full time jobs so many people are forced to work more than one job to feed families
- Time- not enough time to get things done
- Lack of employment for spouse

Questionnaire 6

- Health care (lack of family doctors)
- The limited opportunities for career advancement in Thunder Bay
- Concerns about the future for children in Thunder Bay
- Time constraints (“not enough time in the day”)
- Working a full time job and raising a family leaves little time to focus on the extras to help improve quality of life (volunteering, time with children, time for yourself)
- Poverty and age. Partner has the money. Too old to work or get hired but not receiving enough of a pension
- No family or friends nearby
- Fear- abuse, failure
- Working long hours
- Divorce with wife is sometimes hard on the children
- Racism, especially toward First Nations people
- Lack of employment

- Poor transit system
- High gas prices
- Long wait lists for services, particularly child care and addiction, mental health, occupational therapy, physical therapy
- Inadequate housing/homelessness
- Poverty
- Homophobia
- Small number of ethnic restaurants in Thunder Bay
- Availability of high paying, permanent jobs
- Work/life balance
- Stress
- Costs for events can limit young people
- There aren't any centres for youth that have quality facilities
- Boredom

Questionnaire 7

- I feel sad and it affects me to see and know that there are many residents who do not work and cannot choose their own shelter and food due to of lack of money
- Happy with quality of life and don't face any challenges
- Nothing, lucky like that
- None
- Bad roads, too many potholes, uneven old roads, which have damaged my car which I now have to pay to fix and do not make a lot of money
- Cost of monthly parking
- The feeling that there isn't quite enough money to pay for all my necessities and to have fun as well

Questionnaire 8

- When crime happens close to your home
- Parks being vandalized
- The level of violence and lack of real safety on the streets
- A sense of fear in many parts of our community
- The number of people I see struggling with both mental health and substance use
- Murders, break and entries, personal violence against people
- Dangerous city to live in
- Lack of career opportunities for young people
- Feel frustration when Thunder Bay has a chance to change and grow and people fight the progress
- Lack of funding to keep roads and parks maintained
- High rate of crime
- Feeling unsafe in the community
- Does not pertain to me as I am contented with my job

- Thunder Bay is still a very racist community and is not accepting of the fact that there is a high population of Aboriginal people living here

Appendix E

Top issues selected by participants and possible solutions

Focus Group 1	
Top Issue #1 Relationships	Top Issue #2 Poverty
Unhealthy relationships (shady people)	High unemployment
Experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor communication skills • Abuse- verbal, physical, mental • The abuse causes depression and emotional breakdowns • The abuse also forces you to make poor choices • Peer pressure • Friends are jealous when you are making progress and try to influence you to make bad decisions • Unwanted pregnancies and rape • Violence • Affects finances • You are who you hang out with so you are judged accordingly • Unloving home/environment negatively affects self-esteem • Unclean living situation • Poor hygiene 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have to steal to get what you need • Leads to drug use/selling drugs • Lack of education • Transportation- no way to get to a job • Lack of experience- no way to gain it • Not allowed to have a criminal background in many jobs • Poor physical health/mental health- makes it impossible to keep a job
Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get help (shelters, hospitals) • Outreach programs • Open communication- talk to each other • Change your group of friends • Find different hang outs • Take part in affordable recreation activities to meet new people • Change lifestyle- be healthier • Take part in physical activity • Awareness groups/Women's 	Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programs/incentives • Co-op programs • Volunteer experience • Skills workshops that lead to some sort of certification • Better funding to go back to school • OSAP needs to make it easier to pay back loans • Understanding employers (provide support)

groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to affordable housing 	

Focus Group 2	
Top Issue #1 Access	Top Issue #2 Poverty
Lack of education	Too many work hours and not enough spare time
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to sit in a classroom • College and university is too expensive • Job competition is high, may not be able to find a job in your field • Some groups may experience a limited education which can lead to missed opportunities • When someone is placed into a category they may not reach their full potential • There is a need for on the job training that does not require formal education. This is due to a fear of classroom style learning. • More apprentice training • Special education classes are more available now then years ago, however there are still students who could benefit from these classes but are not able to access them 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some buildings are not equipped to handle everyone's needs • Some workplaces do not put enough focus on individual differences and needs • Difficult to have a balanced life • Increasing costs may force people to continue work • People should have the freedom to retire when they choose and not be forced to work to pay bills • Stressful work can affect the quality of your spare time • Minimum wage jobs do not pay enough to survive, some people may need to work multiple jobs to compensate • The large gap between minimum wage jobs and well-paying jobs causes frustration • Housing costs are high, many people cannot afford to purchase a home • People who receive Social Assistance live under the poverty line
Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe high schools that are free from violence and bullying • Schools that are free from vandalism • Free tuition to colleges and universities. This would allow people to try post-secondary 	Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government could assist financially • More geared to income housing • Help people realize the importance of focusing on yourself • Reach out and talk to friends who

<p>education without fear that they will fail and be unable to pay off school debt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common sense skills should be valued as well as post-secondary education • Equality of wages, people would seek out jobs they enjoy rather than enter the field based on pay 	<p>are in a similar situation</p>
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Focus Group 3	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Poverty
Finances	Lack of resources
<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigmatization • Blaming the victim • Indifference • Word of mouth advertising is extremely important to agencies with limited resources • Poverty may be a choice and those living in poverty may choose to contribute to society in other ways • People should have the right to choose for themselves • People may want to help but are unsure how • Cannot live well on Social Assistance • Don't expect the upper classes to help • Shame • Prices are too high for essential services 	
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of the federal government • Neighbourhoods must work together • Support from the government • Opportunities for engagement • Society must care • An honest, representative government • Ability to express needs • Bring essential items to people in need • Programs in schools (Breakfast programs) • Be aware of community needs • Don't be critical • Be supportive • Everyone should help within their means • When on Social Assistance must learn to budget 	

- Look to community resources and sales
- Everyone should receive a basic living allowance
- Partnerships in communities
- We cannot rely on everyone else to help all the time. We can only do so much
- Help your own neighbourhood first
- Politicians must look out for more than their own personal interests
- Lobby for effective change
- Localized approach
- Supportive communities provide comfort
- Avoid program dependency
- Do not dehumanize those who live in poverty
- “I’ve been there” campaign
- Cannot say “it is not your problem”
- Do not wait for someone else to do the work (grassroots organizations)

Focus Group 4	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Access
Financial Difficulties	Transportation
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Assistance does not provide enough money. If your partner works you may be able to get by but it is difficult • Affordable rent is very important • Must budget to buy groceries 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus passes are difficult to get because of the locations where they are sold • Limited bus schedules (takes too long to get where you are going and wait times are long especially on the weekend) • Bus tickets are expensive • Difficult to travel by bus with a stroller • Accessibility of bus stops. Some bus stops are dangerous to get to • Bikes are not safe on the roads, drivers are not careful enough • Gas prices are too high which increases the cost of everything and makes it difficult to afford a vehicle
Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach people how to budget • Avoid temptation to spend on non-essential items 	Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to what people are saying and their concerns • Return phone calls when someone leaves a message with a concern

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More bus stops • Mothers with children should be a priority • People on the bus should be more accommodating to mothers with strollers • Patrol bus stations to ensure safety
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As the second top issue was a tie and there was time to discuss three issues there are 3 priorities for this group:

Lack of education Poverty	
Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need child care • It is difficult to get bussed to the school • Cost of textbooks and supplies • May need to rely on family assistance • Difficult to find the motivation and balance time • Substance use can make it difficult to go back to school • Some have been forced to leave school to take care of children 	
Potential Solutions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower costs associated with receiving an education • Provide child care help by increasing the number of child care centres 	

Focus Group 5	
Top Issue #1 Access	Top Issue #2 Access
Having a criminal record	Inequality and barriers
Experience	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining factor in whether you get a job • Causes issues with child protective services (if you are moving in with a partner) • Stress • Difficult to travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism, there is too much division (Aboriginal schools) • Personal experience- everyone experiences it differently • Lack of job opportunities because people are judged based on appearance • Lack of education • Applying for Social Assistance is a difficult process
Potential Solutions	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do everything you have to do (community service, jail and get your life back to where you want it to be) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take money dedicated to the waterfront and use it to convert closed schools into affordable rental units

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for ways to change your life • Programs to get charges dropped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline process to apply for Social Assistance, housing, etc. • Diverse schools • More integration • Programs should be open to everyone • Accept people as they are • “It is what it is” • Don’t judge a book by its cover • Offer free classes at the College • Free upgrading to receive high school diploma • Make it easier to access funding to further education • Have one office where a person can apply for all Social Assistance and student loans
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Focus Group 6	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Access
Money	Stigma associated with mental illness
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get money for school but it is barely enough to get by • Social Assistance seems to work against you because you can only make so much money (\$100/month) extra before your support decreases. Makes it difficult to find the motivation to work • Need to have the drug and dental card from Social Assistance, which is another deterrent to getting off the program as many jobs do not provide these benefits • Cycle: meds improve condition, get a job, get off assistance, lose medical coverage and stop taking meds, condition worsens, lose job, back on assistance • Social Assistance support is too restrictive on income 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep mental health treatment a secret from family in fear they will look down on them • People always ask “how are you feeling” once they know you have struggled with mental illness • Try to be upfront with people about your mental illness • It is only a problem if you let it be • Lack of support, everyone just expects you to get better • Workplaces are not understanding, do not want to admit using mental health agencies • People who treat you differently are uneducated • Feel alienated • There is acceptance out there • Selective hiring • Denying anything is wrong • People blame the individual and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot get employment support while in school, must rely on student loans but if you get sick you will be unable to work to pay back the loan • If Social Assistance raises even 1%, agencies increase rent • Can't afford a car or insurance • Have to juggle expenses 	<p>they don't want to be sick</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People think meds are a cure • Some people will be supportive if you reach out to them • Afraid to be upfront and encounter bullying and violence • People ignore disabilities • Doctors are overworked and cannot spend the time needed with each patient • Feel embarrassed to tell a doctor about symptoms • Some doctors have the attitude that you should heal yourself • Exposure can combat ignorance • Stigma even among those with a mental illness, "you are not as sick as me"
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from other sources • Social Assistance should increase the amount of income you can receive from other sources before your support decreases • The balance of power must change between the professional and consumer • Move away from the term "consumer", seen as a label • Scholarships and other funding opportunities for school 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of free recreation activities and events sent to agencies so they can distribute • Be open about your mental illness • Educate people on mental illness • Education in public elementary and secondary schools • Help kids get help when they need it • Don't treat people as helpless • Don't judge a book by its cover • Help families support each other • Provide recreation in hospitals for adults • Learn coping skills • Give everyone a chance

Focus Group 7	
Top Issue #1	
Access	
Lack of independence	
Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must rely on others to get where you are going • The transit system is slow • It is sometimes difficult to know which bus stop you are getting off at (Loud radio, stops between main stops) • The transit system does not serve rural areas. Cannot enjoy nature if you are unable to get there • Face bullying when using white cane • Feel unsafe using transit at night • Difficult to keep up with technology 	
Potential Solutions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iPad applications that have GPS functions • Information sharing of community events • Learning about technology from one another • Put a speaker outside of buses that announces stops • Transportation = independence • Faster bus service • Adequate income • An express bus for those with disabilities • More traffic birdie audio (pedestrian) signals • Drivers should give people enough time to cross the street • Have audio copies of The Key at community centres 	

Focus Group 8	
Top Issue #1	Top Issue #2
Access	Appearance of the city
Being judged based on appearance	Cleanliness of the city
Experience	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judged at the mall based on appearance and are targeted by security • Security follows you around the store, assumes you are there to shoplift • Security makes shoplifting accusations based on little evidence, then has to apologize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism • Graffiti • People throw their garbage and cigarette butts on the ground • People smoking in Playgrounds
Potential Solutions	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to the person • Don't judge people based on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated smoking areas- use the ash trays provided

<p>clothes, cleanliness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat people as you want to be treated • Be respectful • If you are being judged smile and keep your head up, don't let it get to you • Show common courtesy- if someone needs something see if you can help, don't just walk by • Be yourself and proud of who you are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the garbage cans and recycling bins, don't just throw trash on the ground • Hard to change people's habits, people have to want to change • People have to think about what they do at home and show the same respect for the environment • Respect others • Begin to teach about respecting the environment at an early age • Set a good example (clean own backyard, participate in road clean-ups, recycle, teach neighbours) • Have people in authority positions teach children the importance of recycling and cleaning up garbage • Participate in Earth Day activities (light shut off) • Turn lights off to conserve energy
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Focus Group 9	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Poverty
ODSP	Lack of funds
<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining medications is difficult when Social Assistance won't cover the cost, must rely on samples • Speech therapy and sign language lessons are not covered by Social Assistance • Social Assistance won't cover all medical equipment • Social Assistance does not make it clear what is covered • Applying for Social Assistance is a confusing process • Fear of losing assistance • Not asking much only to be fair and be above poverty line • Confidentiality must be 	<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to afford healthy food • Junk food is much easier to afford so tend to eat a lot of it • Exercise options are expensive

<p>respected in regards to various forms that must be signed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost had assistance support reduced due to son getting a part-time job. What is the use of working if the money will be lost elsewhere? 	
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors should provide referrals to agencies when signing off on Social Assistance applications, provide pamphlets on what agencies do • Social services employees should make referrals to agencies • First contact staff should have thorough training including sensitivity training • Process to anonymously report unhelpful, rude staff • Children's money they earn on their own should not affect assistance • Make use of appeal process if you feel that you deserve something • Any food given out should be private to avoid embarrassment 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Assistance should give a certain allotment just for food, or have food available all year round • Bus passes should be provided to those on assistance • Free recreation options for children (all sports, arts and activities) • More recreation options for youth • All medications and medical equipment should be covered

Focus Group 10	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Poverty
Lost jobs	Sustainable income
<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are way more candidates than jobs available • Husband laid off at his job. Other companies will not hire him because he is "too qualified" or they fear he will go back to his old job. • Losing a job is very difficult on a family financially • There are no jobs out there 	<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When working part-time at certain jobs you only are paid while you are out of town working. When you are off you do not get paid but need to take time off to maintain a quality of life. • Many companies would rather hire part-time staff rather than full-time to avoid having to provide benefits • Many companies are getting rid of

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers do not want to pay what people are worth • Many people associate their identity with their jobs, When a job is lost they may become depressed and unmotivated. • May become trapped in a negative cycle: If you must take a stress leave or compensation other employers may not want to hire you • Employers may discriminate based on credit rating but it is impossible to prove • Online applications state that if you apply the company has the right to run a credit check • OSAP has begun to run credit checks. If you do not have a good credit rating you cannot get a loan to further your education to get a job. 	<p>full-time positions and replacing them with part-time positions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't survive on part-time pay • Can't live off of minimum wage, especially with rising costs • You cannot collect a pension from a part-time job so cannot retire, but employers tend not to hire employees over a certain age • Some people refuse to retire even when they would be paid a decent pension which takes away jobs from younger workers
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial aid to support education • Employment services will help with resume building and interviewing skills. There are misconceptions about who they help. The services should be advertised more • Access to a counsellor if feeling depressed • Financial programs for those who have lost their job • Keep work history confidential (how many sick days, stress relief) • Employers can reduce sick days by increasing morale (gyms in workplaces, longer lunches) • Employee Assistance Program • Help with the cost of child care for the middle class 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger employers should be required by law to hire a certain amount of full time workers • Affordable benefit options for part-time workers • Raise minimum wage • Encourage self-employment by reducing the restrictions placed on grants given by the government to help a business startup (Let people of all ages apply)

Focus Group 11	
Top Issue #1 Relationships	Top Issue #2 Poverty
Lack of enforced classes and counsellors for men	Lack of an education
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all men are bad • Men who seem nice still force themselves on you • Many men have issues, but few will admit it • Men don't seem to learn/change after classes • If men take these classes by choice they are more likely to be respectful to begin with • Men who have had abusive childhoods tend to fall back into bad habits. Will only change if that's what they want to do 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition is expensive • Difficult when taking care of children (lack of childcare especially for babies 18 months and under) • Long wait lists for day care at the college and university • Women need to be taught how to build self-esteem when they are young • It is difficult to get educational supports in schools • Cut backs in elementary schools are hurtful to the children • Strict restriction on OSAP- if you make a certain amount of money they will not give you any assistance, but you still cannot afford to go to school and live • Without an education you are forced to take a low paying job and then are unable to afford school
Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every guy should be forced to take these classes if on probation • Focus on healthy relationships and skill building in schools • Look at family dynamics and childhood • Men need to realize and admit their own problems • Women tend to have low self-esteem 	Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must catch learning problems early (special education classes, one-on-one instruction) • Children with disabilities should not be pushed through school, do not move on until they are ready. Shouldn't pass grades until they are at a certain level • Have text books that can be loaned from the library • Programs in College that make it accessible (bus pass, gas money) • Focus on life skills in high school • Classrooms for young mothers • Don't take funding away from

	<p>schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-secondary education should be affordable • Free tutoring to help students get scholarships • Students should be aware of scholarships • Affordable tutoring for younger children • More subsidized daycare • Grants for students who do not get involved in alcohol and drugs (act as an incentive)
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Focus Group 12	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Access
Finances	Lack of support while on a wait list
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot afford adequate food and shelter • Limits recreation activities • Causes stress which can lead to health issues • Can be a cause of domestic violence • Can be a cause of crime • As more people are struggling with finances wait lists get higher. There is a need for more services in the community 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of helplessness, discouragement, frustration • Feeling of not belonging • Sometimes by the time a person receives services it is too late • Higher crime rates • Homelessness/lack of food and shelter • Untreated mental and physical illness • Can lead to addictions • Lower self-esteem • Depression • Feelings of isolation and loneliness • Can cause hoarding • Can lead to hostility and violence • Diminishes trust with the agency • Causes the cycle of people being in the system and not being able to get out • Suicide
Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More services (credit counselling) • Free programs and activities 	Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More programming • Increase funding to existing programming

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government assistance (education upgrades) • More jobs • More training • Knowledge of services • Promoting the importance of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More staff • Supports available while on a wait list • More government supports • Partnerships between organizations serving the same clients • Service hubs that can make referrals • Increased number of programs for children and families • Stronger community • Stronger sense of culture • More publicity and awareness of agencies • More support groups
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Focus Group 13	
Top Issue #1 Access	Top Issue #2 Access
Education regarding end of life care	Lack of access to expertise/poor coordination/patient advocates
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of education for families on what services available to them • Families feel that they need to know the right questions to ask to get the optimal care • Nurses need to be taught in Nursing School how to work with patients who are dying. Many nurses learn most of what they know about death through patients and their families once they are on the job • People need to feel that they can talk about death • There are misconceptions about the care that is provided at a hospice. Most people think it is a place people go to die but a hospice also provides pain management along with other services and many people return home 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors work independently, “sent from one door to the next”, it is frustrating for patients to repeat their story. It is also distracting and causes negative energy • Patients tend to feel that their voice has not been heard • Having to talk to multiple doctors can result in conflicting information • Lack of a palliative care walk-in clinic • Caregivers are afraid to leave the room in case they miss the doctor and are not able to advocate on behalf of the patient • Need assertive patient advocates who “kick doors down” and make doctors and nurses responsible for the care they are providing the patient • There is a need for more private

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurses and doctors need to build connections with patients as it is generally lacking and it causes patients to suffer • Caregivers are afraid to leave the room in case they miss the doctor and are not able to advocate on behalf of the patient • Need assertive patient advocates who “kick doors down” and make professionals responsible for the care they are providing the patient • Patients fear recrimination if they report mistreatment 	<p>rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to arrange for personal requests regarding death (prefer to die at home) • When trying to arrange for requests it feels poorly organized and is a long process • Transportation of patients on weekends and holidays is extremely limited, patients suffer while they wait to be moved home
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing should be a focus of lessons in school • Nurses should have to take a palliative care course and clinical before they graduate • Many nurses rely on experience with families and patients to provide them that knowledge, however this cannot be used an excuse for poor care • Medical/nursing schools must utilize creative approaches to educate students • Public needs to be educated, get away from the belief that we will live forever • Learn about and respect culture • Build a residential hospice and run a walk-in palliative care clinic out of it • Disconnect between the front line staff and managers. Policies are not properly implemented due to lack of resources • People are afraid of the word ‘hospice’ they associate it with a death sentence • Cannot learn how to treat dying 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care should be coordinated and not fragmented • More advocates • Smooth transitions to palliative care programs • Any place that provides care should have a code of ethics that are enforced • Educate people about the barriers to services • Palliative care programs where everyone works together • Everyone working toward the needs of the clients • Agencies should not feel that they are being pitted against each other for funding • Politics, talk to the LHIN (local control)

patients through a book, learn through the families about cultural preferences	
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Focus Group 14	
Top Issue #1 Access	Top Issue #2 Access
Inclusion	Negative attitudes toward those with hearing loss
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a family members funeral cannot communicate and share in memories of the deceased • Feel lonely, talk to the dog • Talk “peoples’ ears off” when you get a chance to talk to someone • Afraid to try to function in the hearing world with hearing aids. Ex. if you are in the hospital and the nurse does not properly insert the aids • Thunder Bay is losing in access • If laws are not enforced, what good are they? • Can't see the tiny print on drive-thru screens 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying in school due to a speech impediment and hearing loss, administrators wanted to send the participant to a special school but his/her father refused • People assume that those who have hearing loss are unintelligent • People think that because you can't die from being deaf it isn't as important. You can die due to an accident or your quality of life being severely impacted by isolation (which can lead to depression) • People say that they know what you are going through but they can't
Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire more qualified interpreters, captionists and have them available to the public (City meetings, etc) • Enforce disability legislation, ensure access is maintained • Bigger screens on cash register with cost showing on the customer side or have a paper and pen by the register • Mandatory captioning of all town meetings • Workshops, awareness raising • Educate the public • Have people available to provide services 	Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People need to be educated on assisted devices: cost, work • Stop stigmatizing hearing loss as a disease of the old • Educate youth on dangers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire people who care about accessibility • Tell people that you are hard of hearing and remind them • More interface with the deaf community • Politics- prioritize funding for those with hearing loss and accessibility 	
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Focus Group 15	
Top Issue #1 Access	Top Issue #2 Access
Lack of an internet/pamphlet service that describes available programs	Need to make use of services that only charge nominal fees
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to find out about yard work, house work and transportation services • There are many services that could be used but if you don't know about it or have anyone to tell you about them it is useless 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snow removal services would come to get rid of the snow even when it wasn't enough snow to be necessary. Grass cutting services operate in the same way • These services take advantage • Taxis are too expensive to use to get to appointments (doctor appointments costing up to \$60)
Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post information on services at senior locations, hospital, family doctor, church, community centres 	Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snow removal services should have a standard of how much snow needs to fall before they charge you to remove snow • Use the transportation programs for transportation as it is much less expensive • Ask people for help and do not feel bad for asking • Stand up for yourself

Focus Group 16	
Top Issue #1 Relationships	Top Issue #2 Addictions
Violence	Addictions
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patriarchal society which has given men a sense of entitlement 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction is a large problem in our community • Addiction can destroy lives,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of respect for women • Emotional violence in times of stress which can lead to depression • Bullying • People with alternate lifestyles face violence • Online violence • Violence becomes a vicious cycle • Blaming the victim and denial • Society desensitized due to technology • Abuse tolerated in the past • Respect, self-respect and values taught to kids at a young age • Increased stress, finances, addiction, ego, job loss can lead to violence • Dependence on others to make you happy 	<p>families, communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptom of a larger issue (ex. Underlying anxiety, depression) • Nicotine addiction can be caused by anxiety, early modeling from family members • Increase in crime and violence to feed addictions • Addictions to gambling, pornography • Innocent people are negatively affected • There is discrimination and stigma associated with addiction (only one kind of person does drugs, people deserve bad things to happen to them) • Feel empty, looking for stimulation • Youth are facing more potent drugs and certain drugs are more accepted in our society • Clean needles reduce disease infections but not drug problem, Band-Aid solution
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences that force you to change (having children) • Accountability and personal responsibility • Education- respect, values, self-respect • Focus on the golden rule • Respect for adults 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to learn how to feel again and appreciate things • Need stimulation and outlets to express yourself (music, dance, art) • Government should fund meditation guides and teachers • Street Nurse services • Changes need to be internal • More supports for those with addiction and their families • Adequate methadone prescriptions • Support groups for families • Education and prevention programs

Focus Group 17	
Top Issue #1 Access	Top Issue #2 Access
Access- unwillingness and lack of knowledge of service providers, medical professionals and government agencies that it is their responsibility to ensure access	Lack of interpreters
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must negotiate rights to an interpreter in health care settings- hard to access interpreting services, becomes a fight • When sent to specialist appointments an interpreter has rarely been scheduled so the appointment is cancelled • Constantly have to educate people about accessibility legislation and is not followed (government offices, banks, hospitals) • The Culturally Deaf community is tired of fighting for basic rights • Accessibility is extremely limited in Thunder Bay • Cannot access services and feel like the “bad guy” when fighting for rights, people don’t understand and need to realize that these rights are laws, Deaf individuals have a legal right to an interpreter • Hospital staff try to get children to act as interpreters, pen and paper would even be preferable to using children, children can make mistakes and it is too much to ask of a child 	Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events need interpreters to ensure accessibility and participation of the Deaf community • All kinds of courses for different interests but because interpreters are not available the Culturally Deaf community cannot access the courses • First doctor appointment attended with an interpreter was a great experiences, could have privacy • Deaf people only hire interpreters for significant reasons (doctor’s appointments, mortgage negotiations, job interviews), in everyday situations paper and a pen are sufficient • Not given the opportunity to perform certain tasks at work as the boss thinks that it is unsafe and does not provide an interpreter for staff meetings
Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Deaf individual who is knowledgeable about legislation to educate service providers • Awareness campaigns to show Thunder Bay that the Deaf 	Potential Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be great to have an interpreter that works events, concerts, and activities. The Deaf community needs to be able to have access to entertainment as

<p>community is capable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a list of communication needs that can be distributed to the public 	<p>well, especially in the winter when it is boring and cold</p>
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Questionnaire 1	
Top Issue #1	
Addictions	
Alcohol	
Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink too much 	
Potential Solutions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with drinking problem 	

Questionnaire 2	
Top Issue #1	
Poverty	
Financial challenges	
Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having a vehicle and support for children • Work is too hard and limits quality time with family and friends. Feel as if there is no choice but to work that hard to make ends meet. It does not leave much time to relax and enjoy life. • Living in a two bedroom house with parents and two children because a decent place to live is not affordable 	
Potential Solutions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable, decent places to rent • Enough money to live a comfortable life 	

Questionnaire 3	
Top Issue #1	Top Issue #2
Poverty	Poverty
Financial struggles	Employment difficulties
Experience	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 children and 3 exes so money is always tight • Husband had to file bankruptcy • May not do any extras if there isn't extra income • Feel stuck without having an income • Enrolled in a debt management program <p>Credit rating has suffered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to find a job so funds have dwindled to nothing and therefore I have nothing

<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance from banks for those who have been hanging by a thread to their houses and families • Taking on a part time job • Second income 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More jobs for everyone • Higher paying jobs • Furthering education • More places that help you find work. There are currently not enough
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Questionnaire 4	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Climate
Employment	Cold, dark winters
<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated from University and College and do not have permanent, full-time employment. My husband, a College graduate, works in retail and we qualify as being low income. We make use of several social programs but often find it difficult to afford all the things we need 	<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAD in the winter months
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to create better jobs and make post-secondary education affordable 	

Questionnaire 5	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Poverty
Financial challenges	Employment difficulties
<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hard times provide encouragement to do better 	<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment struggles have led to undue stress economically • Cannot find employment in educational field
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More economic development in Thunder Bay 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better incentives and resources for the unemployed • Advancing your education

Questionnaire 6	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	Top Issue #2 Poverty
Work/life balance	Financial difficulties
<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints are a challenge. This sometimes leads to overcompensating in areas and restricting areas of life. This begins to feel like life is about what you have to do and should do rather than what you want and need to do. It can also lead to feelings of guilt for not putting the energy and time into yourself and child. Time creates routine which can create rigidity to meet daily demands. • Sometimes it seems that work takes up most of available time. On days off must take care of children to avoid child care costs and it is hard to find time for activities for your own enjoyment and house renovations • Too much work and not enough time with family and friends • Not enough opportunities to play and learn • Need time to relax 	<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personally well-resourced but sees many people (including children) living in unsafe and substandard housing • Many Aboriginal youth in Thunder Bay don't have the financial resources to do sports or arts and have underdeveloped talents • Feels like I have nothing
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule time in date book for yourself and stick to it as if it were an important meeting • Schedule 1-2 "Fun Nights" with the family preferably outside and stick to it • Work more collaboratively with employer to address and meet workload issues • Make the topic of quality of life important in family, with friends and in the workplace. This can open up discussion though an honest forum allowing for more functional problem solving 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More places to go that don't require money, membership fee or "knowing someone"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased work hours and more time with family and friends 	
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Questionnaire 7	
Top Issue #1 Poverty	
Finances	
Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing there are so very many who daily struggle to maintain an existence with a minimum quality of life • Poverty disrupts people's ability to choose for themselves • Through volunteer work I am confronted with my relative privileges and have's and there are way too many have-nots • Parking is expensive but it is cheaper than a monthly buss pass • Not frivolous or reckless with money and still rarely have anything extra • All things considered very fortunate have shelter, heat, job, car and enough to eat, however mother buys clothes because I can't afford to without a credit card • Can't afford to go on vacation • Depressing to think that have been to college and university and can't find a job that pays enough for me to splurge without feeling guilty or adding to my debt 	
Potential Solutions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of affordable housing • Pilot guaranteed income, need to double the amount received from Social Assistance • Lower cost of parking for long time users • Learn to be satisfied with less 	

Questionnaire 8	
Top Issue #1 Safety	Top Issue #2 Maintenance of the city
Safety	Maintenance of parks and roads
Experience	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have put an alarm system into home for added security and comfort • I see the violence every day, I see it in the work but also on the street • "Back in the day I could hike to trowbridge and go trout fishing, now it is unfortunately not safe to be alone enjoying the solitude that I once did. Being a woman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not take children to parks where vandalism is continuous, have put a play set in backyard to avoid public playgrounds • Volunteer to fix damaged facilities

<p>coupled with our crime rate makes it difficult to feel emotionally safe”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high rate of crime, at times, makes me nervous being in the community 	
<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to put cameras on the streets • Focus work on prevention and understanding the root causes of crime (poverty, racism, lack of programming for perpetrators and families around the issues of violence, mental health, substance abuse) • More awareness of what it means to be a safe city. Get the community on board to brainstorm what that might look like • More visible police officers (although there are more officers on foot patrol than in previous years) 	<p>Potential Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More police on duty to respond to basic calls (ex. vandalism)

Appendix F

Studies and Community Initiatives

Thunder Bay District Healthy Communities

(2011). Pathway to Healthy Communities in the Thunder Bay District. A Summary of Community Recommendations. Retrieved from www.healthythunderbaydistrict.ca.

This report includes recommendations generated from community consultations in the Thunder Bay district regarding what should be done to create a healthy community. Many of the recommendations generated from this report are similar to the findings of the quality of life study. The Healthy Communities report includes recommendations on:

- Employment and income
- Culture
- Access to health services
- Physical environments
- Transportation

Social and Healthy Community Services

(2011). LSPC. Social and Healthy Community Services Available in the District of Thunder Bay. Retrieved from <http://www.lspc.ca/pdfs/SocialHealthyCommunities.pdf>.

LSPC prepared a report that provides information on services in the district of Thunder Bay related to basic needs, mental health and addictions, youth focused services, senior focused services and disability services in Thunder Bay. Services related to food and healthy eating, mental health promotion, alcohol and substance abuse, physical activity, tobacco cessation and injury prevention are also listed in the report.

Thunder Bay Economic Justice Committee

(2007). Karli Brotchie. Poverty in Thunder Bay: Rich Conversations with the poor. Retrieved from <http://www.kalc.ca/karli/poverty-report-tbecj-2007.pdf>.

This report is based on consultations completed with low income participants about their experiences with poverty and how they believe the issue should be addressed. The recommendations in the report include:

- Actions to reduce the stigma associated with living in poverty
- Improvements to existing programs or new programs that assist those who are low income
- Improvements to social housing

- Improvements to Social Assistance application process and amount of income support provided

Diversity Thunder Bay

Website: www.diversitythunderbay.ca

Mission: "Diversity Thunder Bay fosters an equitable community free of racism and discrimination"

Objectives

1. To develop partnerships with other community organizations to work on broader issues of diversity.
2. To ensure that Diversity Thunder Bay is a true reflection of Thunder Bay's population.
3. To develop and provide feedback on policies, procedures and action plans that will further the interests of Diversity Thunder Bay.
4. To encourage Diversity Thunder Bay member organizations to become more inclusive of diverse groups in Thunder Bay.
5. To undertake initiatives that will improve diversity and inclusion in Thunder Bay.
6. To share information, network and offer mutual support to municipal, regional, provincial, national and international groups who are interested in the areas of diversity and inclusion.

(2009). Leisa Desmoulins. Thunder Bay Committee against Racism and Discrimination: A Report on the Thunder Bay Plan for Action. Retrieved from <http://www.diversitythunderbay.ca/uploads/documents/TBCARD-FinalReport.pdf>

Recommendations made to City Council based on the research from this study include:

- Acknowledge the harmful effects of racism and discrimination within Thunder Bay
- Demonstrate leadership by working with community partners to create a welcoming and inclusive community
- Establish a Standing Committee of Council to work with community partners to develop a plan of action with measurable success indicators
- Develop and communicate an equity vision to overcome racism and discrimination
- Communicate annually with CCMARD and the community

(2002). Diversity Thunder Bay. A Community of Acceptance: Respect for Thunder Bay's Diversity. Retrieved from [http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/ccrc/html/CCRC_PDF/CommunityOfAcceptance\(Walid\).pdf](http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/ccrc/html/CCRC_PDF/CommunityOfAcceptance(Walid).pdf)

This study aimed to describe the effects of racism, the social practices involved and the effects on the community. The researchers generated recommendations based on

participant's suggestions and analysis of the data in the study. Some of the recommendations include:

- Education
- Improving morals and values
- Multi-culturalism and personal experiences
- Improvements to the media
- Systemic changes
- Improving race relations in Thunder Bay at the levels of institutional culture and social practices

City of Thunder Bay Strategic Plan 2011

<http://www.thunderbay.ca/Assets/City+Government/News+!26+Strategic+Initiatives/docs/2011-2014+Strategic+Plan+PDF.pdf>

The City of Thunder Bay's Strategic Plan aims to create a connected, healthy, vibrant and strong city within the next ten years. The Plan includes a section on lifestyle to foster a high quality of life. The goals set regarding lifestyle and quality of life in the strategic plan are:

- A safe city
- Active and engaged children, youth, families and people of all ages
- A caring, welcoming, inclusive city
- Provide and promote effective, affordable, sustainable transportation options
- A strong and celebrated arts, heritage and culture sector

The results of the quality of life study relate well to the goal of creating a caring, welcoming, inclusive city. The actions under this goal include:

- Develop a multi-year Accessibility Plan that meets or exceeds new Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act regulations and community priorities (5.1(e))
- With community partners, develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy (5.2 (a))

MESH Initiative

www.meshtbay.ca

MESH is a community led engagement process that aims to unite all of Thunder Bay with a common cause and inspire people into committing to making our city a better place for everyone. MESH stands for measure, empower and strengthen happiness. There are many ways to get involved including volunteering, sponsoring and participating in a work group.

Advisory Committee of Anti-Racism

http://www.thunderbay.ca/City_Government/Get_Involved_In_Your_City/Committees_and_Boards/Advisory_Committee_of_Anti-Racism.htm

The Advisory Committee on Anti-Racism was established to develop a plan of action to combat racism in the community of Thunder Bay. The Committee will be available to Administration and City Council to provide advice on current policies and practices, diversity and racism, and such new initiatives that might from time to time be developed.

Thunder Bay Drug Strategy (2011)

<http://www.thunderbaydrugstrategy.ca/>

Vision: To improve the health, safety and well-being of all citizens by working together to reduce the harm caused by substance abuse

Mission: To create a drug strategy for the City of Thunder Bay that reflects the needs and strengths of its citizens. The strategy will focus on humane approaches that address the causes and effects of harm associated with substance use.

The Drug Strategy used results-based accountability to determine conditions of well-being that would be present if progress was made in reducing substance use-related problems in Thunder Bay. Some of the conditions of well-being are related to what was found in the quality of life study:

- Thunder Bay is an inclusive city with accessible and appropriate services for its diverse population
- All people in Thunder Bay have access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing
- Federal and provincial governments set public policy and determine spending priorities that support optimal health for all citizens
- All children and youth have optimal success and health
- Community members are safe in their neighbourhoods

It's About Respect Confederation College

<http://succci.com/its-about-respect/>

Confederation College's Respect Campaign began in 2006 and targets students, faculty and the college community at large. The campaign involves programs and strategies to raise awareness of how people should treat one another. The website offers materials designed to promote the respectful treatment of all.

Thunder Bay Accessibility Plan 2010

[http://www.thunderbay.ca/Assets/Living/Accessibility/docs/Accessibility+Plan+2010-2011\\$!2c+55+pages\\$!2c+320+kb.pdf](http://www.thunderbay.ca/Assets/Living/Accessibility/docs/Accessibility+Plan+2010-2011$!2c+55+pages$!2c+320+kb.pdf)

Information is provided on the work the City is completing to improve accessibility and what work needs to be done. It also includes information on the accessibility of Thunder Bay Transit and what needs to be improved.

Thunder Bay Accessibility Guide

http://www.thunderbay.ca/Living/Accessibility/Accessibility_Guide.htm

This report includes information on Inclusion Services and a list of the accessibility accommodations provided by community services and centres.

Our Quality of Life Report

(2008). David Tranter. Our Quality of Life Report. Retrieved from http://www.unitedwaytbay.on.ca/files/2008QualityofLifeReport_000.pdf

This report provides data on 12 social and economic indicators and demographic information about Thunder Bay to provide a look at the quality of life in Thunder Bay. The report also provides information obtained from a survey on quality of life. The report details which quality of life factors are doing well in Thunder Bay and what needs to be improved. One of the areas in need of improvement identified in the report is the income gap experienced by many.

YOUth: A Call to Action

(2011). LSPC and the United Way of Thunder Bay. YOUth: A Call to Action. Retrieved from http://www.unitedwaytbay.on.ca/documents/YOUthA_Call_to_Action_Report_Sept_8_2011.pdf

This research focused on youth needs in the community. It serves to provide direction in the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Youth Strategy for the City of Thunder Bay. Some of the 58 recommendations in the report are related to the Quality of Life research including:

- That all stakeholders attempt to source-funds in order to provide affordable housing for youth as required... More affordable housing is required for single parents; all possibilities should be explored to provide this basic need
- That since 50% of the youth surveyed indicated that the basic needs of food and housing were not met on a sustainable basis, these social and basic human rights issues be resolved as much as possible by all stakeholders

- That since 90.5% of the youth surveyed indicated that transportation to and from activities was a huge barrier, the issue must be addressed by all stakeholders as soon as possible; and/or, locate youth hub activity sites in areas of concentrated youth populations
- That the recommendations identified in the analysis of Thunder Bay Transit be incorporated as much as quickly as possible, especially those concerning bus safety, lighting and the availability of service
- That “211”, a “one-stop” phone-in social services strategy of the Lakehead Social Planning Council be extended in its services, including comprehensive advertising, in order that all Thunder Bay citizens, including youth, will realize its value and effectively utilize the full extent of this support system
- That the various government departments that impact Aboriginal peoples and other minority groups meet with representation of these groups to connect and discuss issues and changes needed to enhance quality of life and youth engagement services
- That representatives from Post-Secondary Institutions continue to present workshops to high school students concerning the value and importance of education and employment
- That the various city and provincial and federal government departments that impact Aboriginal peoples and other minority groups, meet with representation of these groups to connect and discuss issues and changes needed to enhance quality of life and youth engagement services

EarthWise Thunder Bay

(2008). EarthWise Thunder Bay. EarthWise Thunder Bay Community Environmental Action Plan. Retrieved from

<http://www.thunderbay.ca/Assets/Living/Environment/docs/EarthWise+Thunder+Bay+Community+Environmental+Action+Plan.pdf>

This plan promotes a more sustainable community, recognizing that environment, economy, society and culture are linked. The plan provides goals for active transportation, air, community greening, energy, food, green building, land use, pesticides, waste and water. The recommendations for food are related to this study as they aim to reduce food costs and improve food security. The recommendations include:

- Use the Thunder Bay Food Charter to guide related decision-making and policy development within the city
- Increase the amount of food grown, hunted, gathered, processed, and consumed locally
- Reduce the transportation requirements and environmental impacts of the food system
- Support and develop sustainable energy initiatives for local food production and processing industries