

Overview of the Wet'suwet'en Wellness Working Group:

The Wet'suwet'en Wellness Working Group (WWWG) is a unique and powerful collaboration of Wet'suwet'en Chiefs spanning both Hereditary (Nation focused) and electoral (Band) governance structures and key organizational leaders. The health and wellbeing of Wet'suwet'en children, which is inextricably linked to the health of the territories, represents an area of common ground to which Hereditary and electoral decision-makers are both strongly committed and fiercely protective. The purpose of WWWG is to develop range of holistic wellness programs and services founded upon Wet'suwet'en traditions, principles and values. The Wet'suwet'en have been negotiating with the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia regarding the health and wellbeing of Wet'suwet'en children, youth, and families since 1989. Since 2012 the WWWG has moved away from the narrow focus of the 20-1 delegation (child welfare) negotiation process and instead re-asserted a distinctly Wet'suwet'en holistic approach to wellness. The Wet'suwet'en have a fundamentally distinct way of conceptualizing and understanding the world and their socio-economic place in it. The WWWG has begun to articulate the ancient wisdom of the Wet'suwet'en in order to create a contemporary pathway to restore social and economic wellbeing for all Wet'suwet'en. **Wet'suwet'en Wellness Working Group Theory of Change: *By reconnecting to their cultural systems of wellness, the Wet'suwet'en will heal from the negative impacts of colonization and fully realize their human potential.***

Membership of the Wet'suwet'en Wellness Working Group:

Hereditary: Na'Moks (Tsayu); Madeek (Gitdumden); Hagwilnegh (Laksilyu)

Electoral: Chief Dora Wilson (Hagwilget Village), Carol Eichsteadt (Executive Director of Hagwilget Village), Chief Barry Nikal (Morictown Band), Lucy Gagnon (Morictown Band Manager)

OW Staff support: Debbie Pierre (Executive Director), Gretchen Woodman (ANABIP Manager/Clinical Advisor), Jacquie Bowes (ANABIP Administrative Assistant).

Wet'suwet'en Wellness Development Process.

Wet'suwet'en Wellness Development Process			
Phase	Focus	Description	Timeframe
1	Research & Development	<i>Participatory action research process to define holistic wellness from a Wet'suwet'en perspective</i>	Sept 2012 – June 2013
2	Practice Application	<i>ANABIP – practice application of conceptual framework Compare conceptual model to the real world</i>	June 2013 – Phase 4
3	Interface with BC & Canada	<i>Enlist support from BC & Canada to build Wet'suwet'en Wellness Organization</i>	June 2013 – Phase 4
4	Build Wellness Organization		TBA
5	Service Delivery Of Wellness Organization		TBA

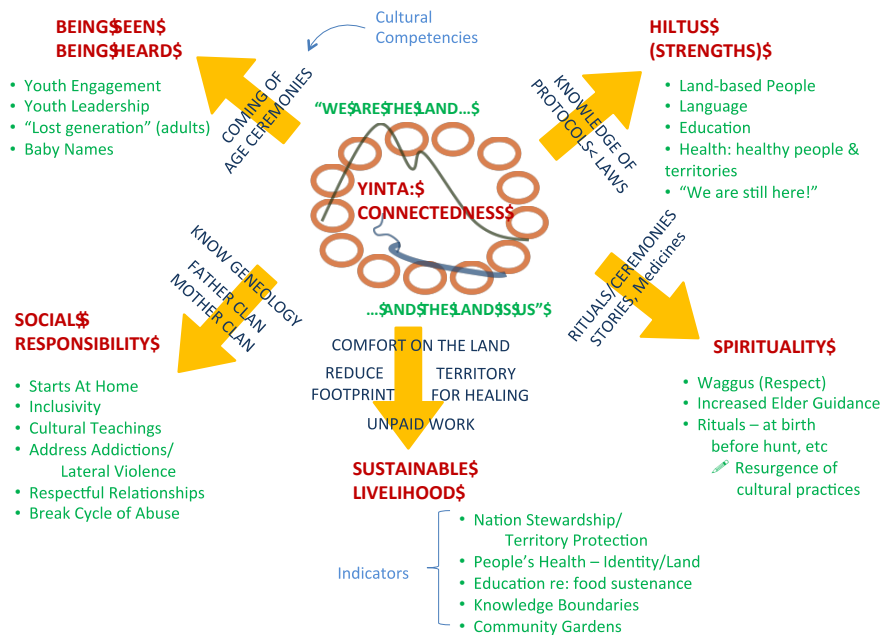
Table 1: Wet'suwet'en Wellness Development Process

Table 1 provides an overview of the Wet'suwet'en Wellness development process including descriptions of phases and timeframes. In 2012-3 the Wet'suwet'en Wellness Working Group undertook an extensive participatory action research project involving over 200 Wet'suwet'en to define and build a distinctly Wet'suwet'en holistic wellness conceptual framework. In Phase 2, the WWWG has used the ANABIP program (Indigenous Approaches contract 2010 – 2013 and currently the Aboriginal Services Innovation (ASI) contract) as an intentional practice-application prototype for the Wet'suwet'en holistic wellness conceptual framework. The purpose of Phase Two has been to apply Wet'suwet'en principles, values, concepts and practices, articulated in the holistic wellness conceptual framework, to a practice setting. The WWWG is tied to the service delivery work of ANABIP. The ultimate goal of the WWWG is inclusive of but not limited to the ANABIP program.

Overview of the Wet'suwet'en Holistic Conceptual Framework:

Wet'suwet'en Holistic Wellness Conceptual Framework

As noted in the previous section regarding the Wet'suwet'en Wellness Development Process, the Wet'suwet'en Wellness Working Group has undertaken an extensive participatory action research process involving over 200 Wet'suwet'en to develop the following conceptual framework (see figure below). The current iteration of the Wet'suwet'en holistic wellness framework defines the key elements of wellness. The centerpiece of the framework is Yinta, meaning people connected to the land, as captured by the statement "We are the land and the land is us". Five **key themes** radiate from the Yinta center: **1) Being Seen/Being Heard**, **2) Hiltus (Strengths)**; **3) Spirituality**; **4) Sustainable Livelihood**; and **5) Social Responsibility**. **Cultural competencies** relating to each of the key themes are beginning to emerge. For example, cultural competencies relating to Sustainable Livelihood include: comfort being on the land, reducing ecological footprint, being on the territory for healing, and the importance of unpaid work. Finally, **outcome indicators**, both qualitative and quantitative, relating directly to the 5 key themes, are listed in the conceptual model.



Wet'suwet'en holistic Wellness Conceptual Framework.

Overview of the ANABIP Program: The *Anuk Nu' At'en Ba'glgh'iyi z'ilhdic* Program (ANABIP) translates as: We are Talking About Our Laws/Our Ways. ANABIP has been providing direct service to Wet'suwet'en since May 2012. This highly successful program has been closely monitored and guided by the Wet'suwet'en

Wellness Working Group and maintains an active caseload of family and individual files. The focus of ANABIP's work has been to balance/blend direct family work with community wellness and cultural education. Additionally, ANABIP has focused on removing barriers between cultural protocols/practices and "clinical practice" (western) in wellness planning. ANABIP staff members are community organizers and facilitators, focused on strengthening and restoring Clans and house groups to utilize cultural protocols and practices relating to the health and wellbeing of Wet'suwet'en across the lifespan. Many of the services and activities facilitated by ANABIP take place on the Wet'suwet'en traditional territories. ANABIP staff members have developed strong working relationships with cultural experts from all of the Clans who have worked closely with the ANABIP team to ensure services and activities are conducted in accordance with Wet'suwet'en laws, protocols and practices. ANABIP staff members use the wellness conceptual model to design, plan, implement and evaluate all service activities.

ANABIP Team:

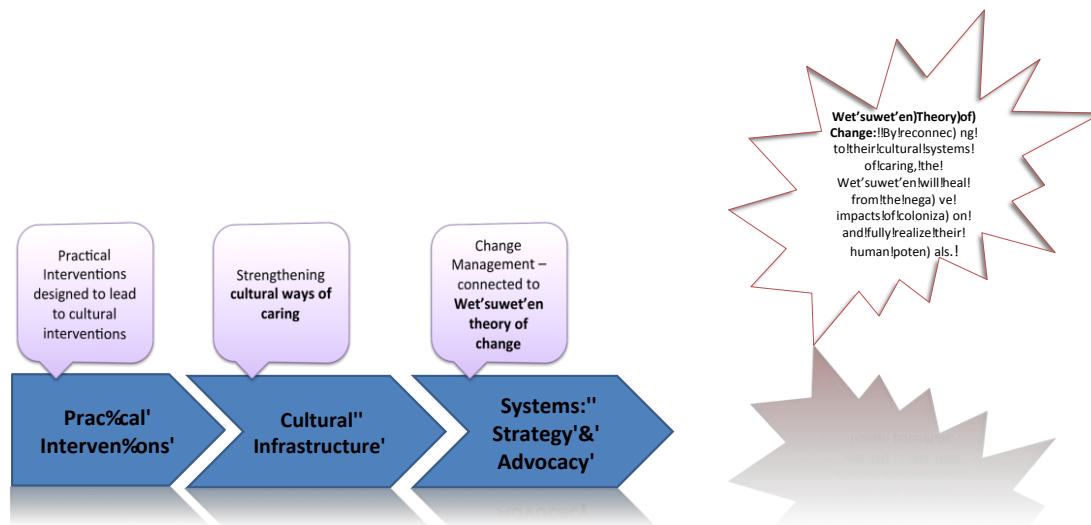
ANABIP Manager/Clinical Advisor: Gretchen Woodman

ANABIP Coordinator: Lorraine Naziel

ANABIP Frontline Workers: Ian Michell and Diana Creyke

ANABIP Administrative Assistant: Jacquie Bowes

Listing of Services & Key Activities: All services are designed and provided based upon the Wet'suwet'en Holistic Wellness Conceptual Framework.



Practical interventions are designed to "meet people where they are" and include practical supports such as case planning, family meetings, developing wellness plans, liaising with social workers and other community professionals, and advocacy and support for court appearances. Practical interventions are an important first phase in working with vulnerable children, youth and families.

Family and Individual Client Work – the ANABIP team provides wellness support and practical interventions with individuals and families on a one-on-one basis. Wet’suwet’en involved with MCFD are a particular focus for this wellness support work. Currently we are able to offer these services to people residing in Hagwilget, Moricetown and Smithers.

Cultural Infrastructure refers to strengthening of our cultural systems of caring. Clan engagement and empowerment activities are examples of this area of practice as well as community development activities such as territory-based camps (i.e.: Youth Cultural Camps, Women’s Empowerment Camps, Men’s Wellness Camps).

ANABIP Individual Family Camps – the ANABIP team provides territory-based wellness camps custom-designed for families. These family camps provide the opportunity for clinical support work to happen in a culturally-relevant way on the territories. These camps are built based on the Wet’suwet’en Holistic Wellness Conceptual Framework.

ANABIP Collective Events and Territory Camps – the ANABIP team provides many territory-based wellness camps. These camps include both clinical and cultural elements. Participants experience opportunities for healing and growth through the land-based activities and workshops. Please see the ANABIP photo library to get a glimpse of what happens at these camps!

Systems: Strategy/Advocacy involves structural interventions that challenge existing power structures and power imbalances, which are resultant of our colonial history. Prior to colonization and for thousands of years, the Wet’suwet’en ensured the health and wellbeing of all members from cradle to grave. It is that wellspring of cultural experience and expertise that this level of service/practice draws upon. This work is primarily undertaken by the Wet’suwet’en Wellness Working Group.