



**DIVERSE***city*  
community resources society

# STORIES OF STRENGTH TRAINING FOR THE COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Addressing and preventing  
violence in our communities

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# INTRODUCTION TO DIVERSECITY

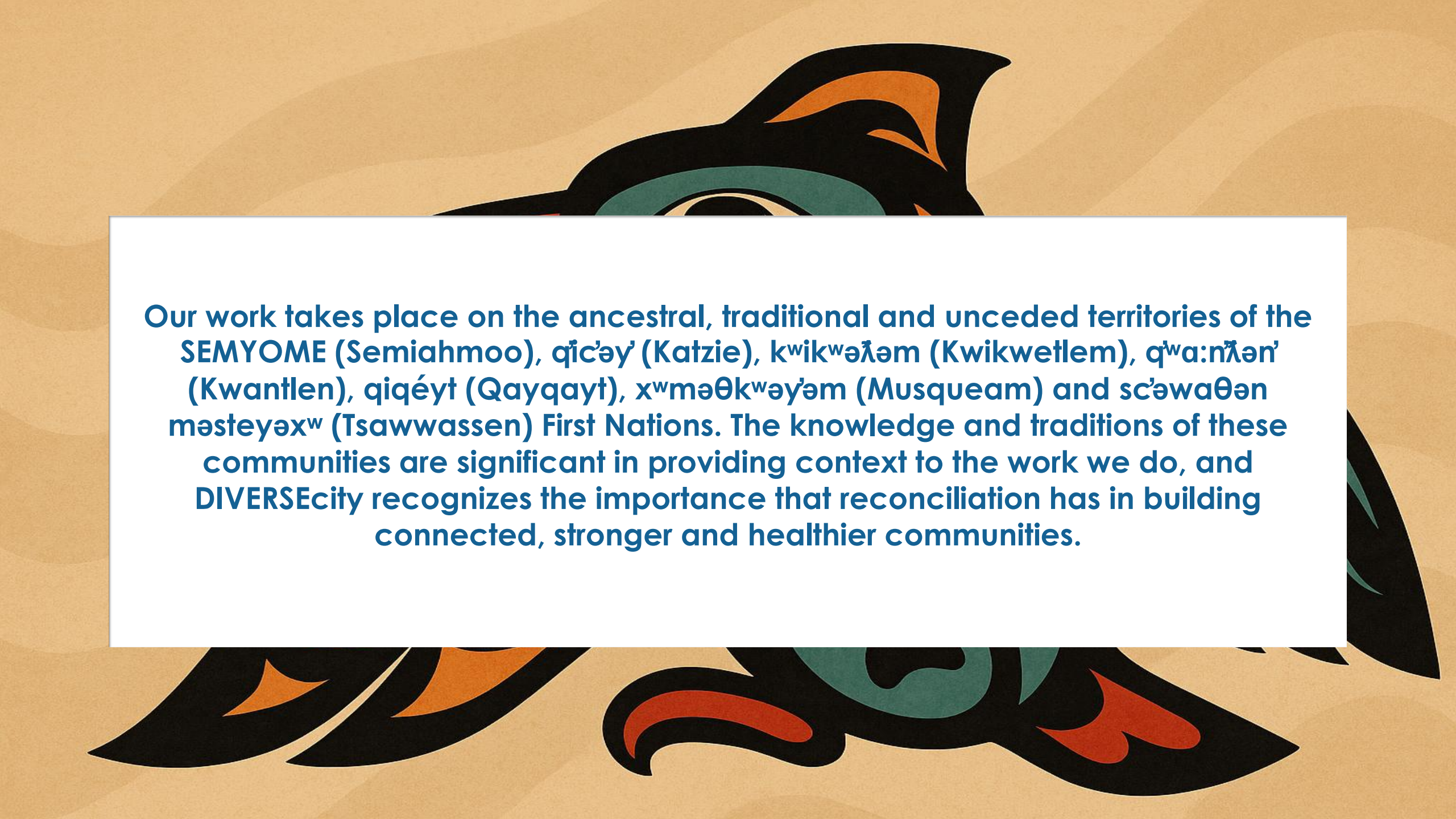
At DIVERSEcity, strengthening communities starts with helping people build the life they want. We listen with open hearts and minds to connect people to inclusive, innovative and culturally safe programs and services as they navigate their life in Canada.

From resources for their education and employment goals, to their health and wellbeing, we are here to support people's journeys, creating pathways for all to be a part of connected, stronger and healthier communities.

We help newcomers, BIPOC and other diverse communities, from children and youth to adults and seniors with programs and services in settlement, language, employment, self-employment, community connections, mental health and gender-based violence. We have assisted tens of thousands of newcomers to find employment, learn English, find housing, deal with family challenges, work through mental health issues and access medical care.

DIVERSEcity is also an experienced community convener, creating networks to build capacity in our communities for collective impact. We do this by leading local immigration partnerships and community hubs, and elevating equity-serving grassroots organizations through the sharing of knowledge.

As a registered charity in British Columbia since 1978, we work together with Indigenous, community and business partners to elevate voices and advance change for an equitable and sustainable world. For people. For communities.



Our work takes place on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), q'íc'əy' (Katzie), kwik'wəłəm (Kwikwetlem), q'w'a:n'łən' (Kwantlen), qiq'éyt (Qayqayt), x'w'məθk'wəy'əm (Musqueam) and sc'əwaθən məsteyəx'w (Tsawwassen) First Nations. The knowledge and traditions of these communities are significant in providing context to the work we do, and DIVERSEcity recognizes the importance that reconciliation has in building connected, stronger and healthier communities.

# CORE PROGRAM OVERVIEW



# STORIES OF STRENGTH COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS PROGRAM

A community-led, culturally grounded initiative addressing family violence and its mental-health impacts

Built on DIVERSEcity's Roots of Safety (ROS) model

Addresses violence affecting youth, adults, and seniors in African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities

Uses the Three Columns / Three Windows Framework to explore Strengths → Challenges → Empowerment Plans

Designed to restore voice, dignity, and connection through storytelling, cultural values, and community leadership

# INTRODUCTION TO ROOTS OF SAFETY

- ▶ Adapted from parent model “Signs of Safety”™; and funded by WAGE
  - ▶ Signs of Safety is a Australian child protection tool that has been adopted in various communities across the world including Alberta and BC’s Indigenous child welfare agencies
- ▶ Shifts from “child-centered” approach to “women centered” approach
  - ▶ Seeks to meet the needs within the settlement sector in supporting survivors of violence through culturally appropriate Safety Planning
  - ▶ Helps to develop a collaborative relationship between the professional and Immigrant and Refugee women that is guided by client
  - ▶ Focus on what women can change such as a specific “behavior” and what is within women’s control
  - ▶ Non-blaming, non-shaming and non-judgmental
  - ▶ Use of “existing strength” and “existing safety”

# FROM ROOTS OF SAFETY TO STORIES OF STRENGTH

- ▶ **How SOS Evolved Into a Community-Led Innovation**
- ▶ **Roots of Safety (ROS) as the foundation:** A proven safety-planning model that began with women-centered work
- ▶ **Community & partner feedback:** Revealed ROS was highly effective and adaptable beyond women's programs
- ▶ **Expanded lens:** Now used with **youth, seniors, adults,** and diverse family systems
- ▶ **PHAC-supported model:** SOS was presented to PHAC as an innovation—expanding ROS into a community-wide mental health & safety approach
- ▶ **Focus communities:** African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities experiencing mental-health impacts of family violence
- ▶ **SOS emerged to:**
  - ▶ Address broader demographics
  - ▶ Respond to culturally specific needs
  - ▶ Build community-driven empowerment, not only individual safety



Storytelling opens doors to truth-telling in places where silence has been normalized.

Community Champions are trusted cultural bridge-builders who hold deep relational ties

Their stories uplift cultural values, historical resilience, and collective strengths

Storytelling reduces stigma around violence by shifting conversations from blame to cultural pride, healing, and hope

Champions use lived experience to support families in developing self-determined safety and empowerment plans

# WHY STORYTELLING? WHY COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS?

6 Champions (2 per community) trained through a 5-step facilitation model:

Curriculum Development — Based on Roots of Safety

Training in the Three Columns / Three Windows – mapping strengths, challenges, empowerment

Community Dialogues & Debriefing – reflections, learnings, cultural insights

Expert Support – clinical supervision when deeper issues emerge

Individual Support – champions refer participants for 1:1 empowerment planning

# THE COMMUNITY CHAMPION MODEL

A series of three parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.



In every dialogue, participants first explore: “What makes our community shine?”

Examples from sessions:

Respect for elders

Devotion to family

Harmony, courage, justice

Intergenerational wisdom and community unity

When people reconnect to their strengths, they feel safer discussing sensitive realities like:

Trauma after migration

Generational gaps

Mental-health pressures

Relationship violence

# THE POWER OF CULTURAL VALUES





### Where healing meets cultural safety.

Held in familiar places:

Homes, temples, gurdwaras, mosques, churches

Seniors' programs, youth groups, cooking programs, LINC classes

These dialogues:

Use storytelling to normalize conversation about violence

Explore strengths before challenges

Generate **community-led Empowerment Plans**

Build trust, connection, and collective belonging

# KITCHEN TABLE DIALOGUES



# Roots of Safety: Three Columns Framework™

The science behind it...

| What are we worried about?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | What's working well?                                     | What needs to happen?                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <div>Past Harm</div> <div>Complicating Factors</div> <div>Worry Statement</div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <div>Existing Strengths</div> <div>Existing Safety</div> | <div>Empowerment Goals</div> <div>Next Steps:</div> |
| <div><b>Empowerment Scale:</b><br/>On a scale of 1–10 where 10 means everyone knows the women and children are safe enough for the family to continue independently to support their safety and well-being and 1 means that things are so bad that the women and the children cannot live at home where do we rate this situation?</div> |                                                          |                                                     |

| What are we worried about?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | What's working well?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | What needs to happen?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Past Harm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify past harm in terms of duration, frequency and type of violence.</li> <li>- Be behavior specific and focus on the anchoring event</li> <li>- Past harm may also include worrisome behaviors by the client (can include self-harm)</li> </ul> <p><b>Complicating Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examples include low English,</li> <li>- protracted time in a refugee camp,</li> <li>- no social support,</li> <li>- disability/chronic illness of any family members,</li> <li>- unemployment,</li> <li>- mental health issues, and more</li> </ul> <p><b>Worry Statements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present one worry statement in behavioral-specific, jargon-free, understandable language that:</li> <li>- Clearly describes what you or the woman is worried will happen if nothing changes</li> <li>- Describes the partner (or others') behaviour that is causing the harm and where past harm has occurred</li> </ul> | <p><b>Existing Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the existing people, plans and actions by the woman or others that contribute to the woman's empowerment and well-being</li> <li>- e.g.: woman has applied for English classes</li> <li>- e.g.: Woman's neighbor has invited her to tea and she has accepted</li> <li>- e.g.: Woman completed studies in home-country despite gender-based barriers</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the existing people, plans and actions taken by the woman and/or others that contribute to woman/children's safety</li> <li>- e.g.: woman has talked to her Mother-in-law about the violence and asked to stay with them when feeling unsafe.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Empowerment Goal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on the Worry Statement, identify a high-level goal for empowerment that describes in behaviorally-specific, jargon-free, understandable language:</li> <li>- <u>What</u> you or the woman needs to see that she and the children are safe /empowered enough to exit service</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Steps taken – by client &amp; the worker – to maintain existing safety, and to get to the point that a long-term empowerment plan is in place.</li> <li>- Includes: Referrals to cultural resources and services and reaching out to these referrals.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Main Empowerment Scale:</b></p> <p>On a scale of 1–10 where 10 means everyone knows the women and children are safe enough for the family to continue independently to support their safety and well-being and 1 means that things are so bad that the women and the children cannot live at home where do we rate this situation?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

# THE THREE COLUMNS AND THE THREE WINDOWS FRAMEWORK

## **Champions guide groups through:**

- ▶ Strengths & Cultural Values
- ▶ Challenges & Vulnerabilities
- ▶ Empowerment Goals & Actions

## **Participants create:**

- ▶ Community Empowerment Plans
  - ▶ Individual & Family Empowerment Plans
  - ▶ Safety strategies guided by cultural values and lived realities
- 
- A series of white diagonal lines of varying lengths and thicknesses, located in the bottom right corner of the slide, extending from the right edge towards the center.

A woman in a dark vest over a light-colored shirt is standing and presenting to a group of people seated in a meeting room. She is gesturing with her right hand towards a large whiteboard on an easel behind her. The whiteboard contains handwritten notes and diagrams. The room has large windows in the background, and several stacks of chairs are visible. In the foreground, the backs of several people's heads are visible as they sit at a long table. On the table, there are coffee cups, papers, and a smartphone. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter and several white diagonal lines on the right side.

# STORIES OF STRENGTH IN ACTION



## CHAMPIONS REPORTED

- ▶ People **open up** when asked about strengths first
- ▶ Stigma reduces when conversations centre cultural pride rather than deficits
- ▶ “Violence” reframed as **conflict**, encouraging more people to speak
- ▶ Communities organically adopt the Three Columns as an everyday problem-solving tool
- ▶ Champions become trusted facilitators, receiving ongoing requests for support

**3–4 psychoeducational sessions** for individuals needing private support

Strength and resilience assessments

Development of **family empowerment plans**

Referrals accepted from agencies and self-referrals

BEYOND GROUP  
SESSIONS:  
INDIVIDUAL  
EMPOWERMENT  
SUPPORT

Several thin, white, parallel diagonal lines are positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, extending from the bottom edge towards the right edge.

# IMPACT SNAPSHOT





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THANK YOU