

## Transcript of Interview with Mariette Sutherland

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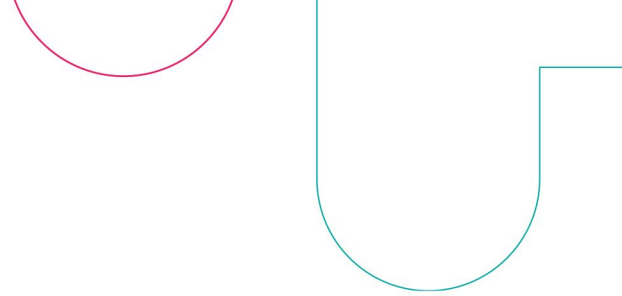
[Greeting in traditional language] I'm Mariette Sutherland, and I come from Whitefish River First Nation in Ojibwe territory in Northern Ontario. And I've been really fortunate to be a part of the PLT Collaborative in a number of different capacities. I think I came on board in the very early phase one relationshipbuilding- stages and have done some work with the project throughout its implementation, on through to evaluation, and then now in the knowledge sharing process. So, I've been involved as a support to the guidance group and to the Northern and Indigenous health teams, and have worked at, for example, supporting them with an evaluation workshop for the teams when they initially came together, and have developed or supported the process of developing the knowledge sharing protocol. And so it had a bird's eye view throughout the learning journey that the collaborative has taken and have been really gratified to be part of that.

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It's been, I think, an aim of the project since inception to make sure that the lessons learned and the constructive findings that are emerging out of the project are shared more widely than just the teams themselves or beyond the hosting organization and can be instrumental and instructive for learning for other organizations. CFHI, or at the time it was called the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, worked closely with the Northern Remote Health Network, and they were really interested in sharing widely, that comes from the project within that network and beyond. But I think the most important thing, and you'll recognize that from some of the guiding groups that established principles, were that it's really important to transmit this knowledge and to make sure that the authentic voice of the people behind the project emerge in those lessons learned and in the evaluation products and the knowledge products, if you want to call them that, to really make sure that key lessons about the project, especially around process being important and storytelling being an important means of conveying lessons and knowledge, are part of that knowledge sharing protocol. I think the other thing that was really important to the guidance group was recognizing that interwoven into the approach to the project and the work were a lot of concepts and teachings and Indigenous knowledge. And though it didn't set out to necessarily share those teachings, they became part of the, I guess, the essence of the way that the Northern and Indigenous Health Team was working with the guidance group, and they were woven into all of the coaching and the learning and the work of the teams themselves.

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So I think that's an essential premise to understand. And so in the knowledge sharing protocol, it was important to delineate how that information would look and what would be appropriate to



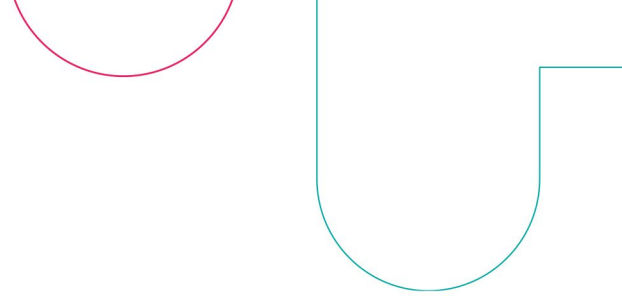
share and what also is best shared and remembered at— close to the heart rather than on paper. So there's some things that you'll see in the knowledge sharing products that really relate to Indigenous knowledge and the Indigenous knowledge is foundational, but it's not necessarily per se written up in that fashion. So that's just a little bit about the knowledge sharing protocol.

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The knowledge sharing protocol was developed, I guess over the space of a year and a bit, and it really was the logical next step after the outcome evaluation was completed, where the guidance group recognized that there were so many amazing stories and incredible learnings and outcomes from the project, and they really wanted to communicate that in a really culturally sensitive and appropriate way. And so work began on a knowledge sharing protocol where we described what would be the vision and goals of the knowledge sharing protocol, and what are some of the appropriate means by which knowledge should be shared? And so one of the essential promises is that the knowledge sharing protocol is also guided by the original guiding principles, and the guidance group even took and elaborated those further in the context of knowledge sharing. So what does cultural humility look like in knowledge sharing? What does authentic voice look like in knowledge sharing? What does the process and all of those steps being relational look like in knowledge sharing? Those had to be embedded in the knowledge sharing protocol. The other thing about process is that they established the Knowledge Sharing Working Group, and the original task was to develop some of the information and the knowledge products that they wanted to use, such as a story, which I'm going to mention story many times, but also using different means, like video vignettes, similar to what we're doing right now, and making sure that those knowledge sharing products linked back and corroborate the overall findings of the project. So the knowledge sharing protocol is guided and certainly in alignment with the work of the Knowledge Sharing Working Group.

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A draft of the knowledge sharing protocol was developed in April of 2020 and then further refined later on throughout the summer, and then now it's been presented to both the Knowledge Sharing Working Group and the guidance group for adoption and taking forward. And it contains, like I say, you know, a vision for knowledge sharing, some overarching goals, some appropriate means and mechanisms and venues for sharing information, some specific knowledge sharing principles, and finally, a note about Indigenous knowledge and how important that is and how best to share information of that nature. So, I feel like it's a pretty sound product, and the reason I think that is because there was a really well-thought-out and comprehensive process to develop it, and many voices had input to that, and so I think they can be satisfied going forward that it will reflect the spirit and intent of the work of the PLT Collaborative.



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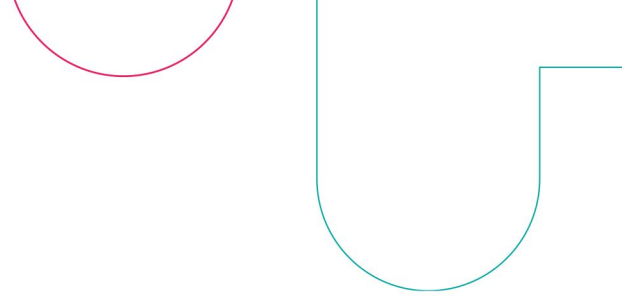
I think the Northern and Indigenous Health Team and the guidance group were really thoughtful about the way that they would share and disseminate knowledge about the PLT Collaborative for a couple of really important reasons. One, there's some, you know, working in the area and the space of life promotion and suicide prevention is, one, you want to think about it very carefully. The second, as I mentioned earlier, is that there is specific approaches and premises based on Indigenous knowledge woven into the PLT Collaborative. And the third is that there isn't any, there's no handy checklist that can be created from the information and the knowledge generated. Much of it, as I've relayed earlier, is highly dependent and really an outcome of the process by which they chose to work together. And so some of those steps, though they may be instructive to others, might look quite different in their setting or context, and the way that they take those actions will look somewhat different. But the story behind it and the idea of being relational and using process to learn together and to co-create new knowledge and to find a new path forward within that ethical space of Indigenous people working with non-Indigenous entities is really exciting to learn about, and it's also challenging to learn about. It requires that in knowledge sharing, you put aside any kind of biases or notions. It involves being self-reflective. It involves understanding and situating stories and then linking them to behaviours, attitudes, practices and even systems. So, it's more than just a simple recipe that can be taken up by others.

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So for that reason, it was really helpful to situate the KDE strategy, if you want to call it that, within a more formalized knowledge sharing protocol. And I'm not aware that too many organizations take that step necessarily. A lot of times they might just really just, you know, rush out the products out the door or, you know, just take it as a perfunctory step. But I think in this case we would lose the lesson of process if we didn't follow the development of the knowledge sharing protocol in the way that the organization was willing to do, and to dedicate the time to do that, just as they did with every other process and learning journey throughout. So, just a little bit about why knowledge sharing protocol is helpful in this instance.

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Yeah, I want to say that it's been a learning journey for all involved, and I've had the privilege to work with many other organizations, especially around organizational change management, and knowing that people are at a different place in their understanding and their knowledge and their learning journey. And I think the guidance group was really exceptional in their leadership in approaching this in a way where people can join that learning journey from wherever they are



at. And so I really have valued being— and felt privileged to be part of the work, because I got to hear from thought leaders and people who are working in the space of mental wellness and communities and working in a very difficult issue, take and translate their many years of knowledge and help to make it accessible and real for people who are just learning about that. And I feel that's going to translate really well into the knowledge sharing that ensues after the completion of the project. And it's really for me been a gratifying experience. And I know at times it felt, and really, like, you know, a time, it took a lot of time, and that's just a function of establishing that place in your relationship where you begin to have those insights.

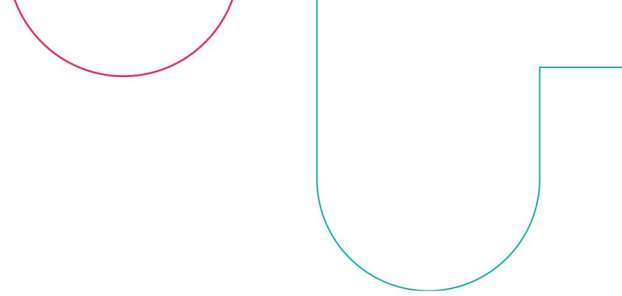
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And I think that the dedication of the Northern and Indigenous Health Team is reflected in that, their willingness to put aside the usual planning cycles and deadlines that mainstream often likes to try and abide by and really take the time to listen and develop trustful, respectful relationships and then take their cues and imagine each step together rather than, you know, try to approach it in sometimes the, you know, tactical ways that organizations do. So for me, that was really innovative, for one thing, and really, as well, courageous. And I know that, you know, that's what it takes to get to a place where new knowledge and new ways of approaching things are generated. So, someone has to do that. And I see leadership all around the table in that regard. The PLT Collaborative really stood by their principles and acted on their word.

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I wanted to share a little bit about the seventh guiding principle, which is really about system change, and again, link it back to the idea of the learning journey and the process undertaken in the PLT Collaborative. Really, the guidance group was thinking long and hard about, you know, how does change happen. And I spoke earlier a little bit about change management process, and you know, there's certainly a lot of, you know, mainstream models and approaches to that. I think, though, the PLT Collaborative was able to look at change management in a much more relational and spirit-centred way. And I think that will have way more traction in the long run, because often, I think change management processes happen to be couched or framed in very tactical and strategic ways. And missing from that is that notion of the spirit and intent behind it, you know, how people are feeling. So when you understand that change management is not an organization with disparate parts and, you know, units of service or departments or programs, but it's actually people, when you understand that change is driven by people, then coming at it from a relational and spirit-centred approach absolutely makes sense. And I think for Indigenous people just generally, we've always known that before any change happens, you establish a relationship and acknowledge one another's spirit and understand where they're coming from.

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And the fact that the PLT Collaborative chose to approach change in this way is, I think, really profoundly important, especially if you're talking about system change within mental health in communities. And if you, you know, if you think about the long history of where we've arrived at in our mental health and wellness in communities, and if you don't acknowledge that the place where change happens, even on an individual basis, is from within that spirit-centred approach, then change and improvement in mental wellness is very difficult to engender. And so I think they've modelled a really important approach in change management that isn't often taken up in mainstream environments and settings. And so, for me, that was really profoundly important to know that they were approaching it that way, especially on a topic that's so very, you know, profoundly important in our communities. And so understanding that change can happen, but you have to start from that place of relationship and from spirit becomes increasingly important. And I think that would be a really phenomenal learning for people to grasp as they go through their own processes of change management.