

2020 Coming Together Forum Report



Brett Freake

CFRC Community
Developer

Introduction

On November 18 and 19, 2020 The Coastal Family Resource Coalition (CFRC) hosted the ninth biennial Coming Together Forum. The Coming Together Forum is a regional forum for service providers, decision makers, and community to plan for the future of child, youth, senior/elder, and family services on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

CONTEXT

This year the Coming Together Forum included a series of presentations, small table discussions, break-out sessions, and large group discussions about regional health needs and priorities, service integration efforts, and planning for next steps and implementation.

The format of the Coming Together Forum was much different than in previous years. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic the forum had to shift to an online format. The event was held over two afternoons via Zoom. There were some benefits to this format change such as allowing people based in other regions to join from afar. However, it lacked in opportunities to visit or network with friends and colleagues. Additionally, due to the ongoing and changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, many healthcare professionals were unable to take time away from their work. This means that there were a number of important voices who were not present to provide their perspectives.

About the Coastal Family Resource Coalition

Approximately 6,000 people live on the west coast of Vancouver Island, occupying nine communities scattered over more than 350,000 hectares. The communities are the District of Tofino and the District of Ucluelet, and several Nuu-chah-nulth communities: Macoah, Hitacu, Esowista, Ty-Histanis, Opitsaht, Ahousaht and Hot Springs Cove.

In 2003 service providers banded together to form the Coastal Family Resources Coalition (the Coalition). The Coalition is a strong committee of representatives who provide services for local children, youth and families in west coast communities. The Coalition comes together for monthly meetings are held from September until June, due to the COVID-19 pandemic Coalition meetings were required to shift to an online format rather than being hosted in alternating communities. The Coalition's goal is to see progress in the overall health in our communities.



Forum Attendees

Name, Title, Organization

Toni Buston – Community Outreach, Westcoast Community Resources Society

Tsimka Martin – Literacy Coordinator, Coastal Family Resource Coalition

Brooke Wood – Coordinator, Rural and Remote Divisions of Family Practice and Outreach Coordinator, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

Alyssa Fleishman – Child and Youth Mental Health worker, Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council

Andrea McQuade, Municipal Councilor, District of Tofino

Anita Charleson-Touchie,

Carrie Ho, Manager of Operations, Westcoast Community Resources Society

Barb Gudbranson, Recreation Programmer, District of Ucluelet

Carrie Nahorney, Early Years Navigator, SD70 - Pacific Rim Children and Families

Hilary, Recreation Programmer, District of Tofino

Erika Goldt, Eat West Coast, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

Faye Missar, Program Coordinator, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

Hélène Dufour, Dietician, Island Health

Jane Osborne, Regional Mentor, BC Community Response Network

Janine Croxall, Research Assistant, Pacific Rim Hospice

Jason LeFevre, Child and Youth Mental Health

Kathy Devries, Manager, Ucluelet Children's Centre

Kathy Stuart, Child and Youth special needs family support worker, Westcoast Community Resources Society and Ministry of Child and Family Development

Kevin Hawker, Child and Youth Mental Health worker, Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council

Josie Osborne, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Mid Island- Pacific Rim

Katherin Charbonneau, SD 70 Pacific Rim Children and Families, Early Years Navigator, SD70 - Pacific Rim Children and Families

Lindsay Whitefield, Tofino resident

Margarete Wagner, TFN

Maggie Hodge Kwan, Community Liaison Coordinator, Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island

Marcie DeWitt, Coordinator, Alberni Clayoquot Health Network

Mary Ruff, Employment Counsellor, Work BC Tofino and Ucluelet

Melissa Trowbridge, Regional Educator, BC Schizophrenia Society

Rebecca Hurwitz, Executive Director, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

Rhiannon Davis, Unit Chief and Community Paramedic, Tofino BCEHS

Robyn Monrufet, Project Manager, West Coast General Hospital,

Sarah Hagar, West Coast Childrens Resilience Initiative

Shaun McCumber, Project Manager, First Nations Health Authority

Tara Souch, Counsellor, Pacific Rim Hospice Society

Stacey Manson, District Principal/ Community Developer, SD 70 Pacific Rim Children and Families

Tarni Jacobsen, Executive Director, Pacific Rim Hospice Society

Taryn Coates, Community Dental Hygienist, Island Health

Ursula Banke, Community Liason /Employment Centre Coordinator Work BC, West Coast Seniors Network

Waylon McLeod, Child and Youth Worker, Westcoast Community Resources Society

Colin Robinson, Office and Communications Coordinator, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

Myles Morrison, West Coast Restorative Justice

John Enns, President, Tofino Fish and Loaves Humane Society

Jillian Duggan, Tofino resident

Margareta Posavec, Coordinator, West Coast Mental Health and Substance Use, Island Health

Rachelle Cole, Unit Chief and Community Paramedic, Ucluelet BCEHS

Sandra Tate Community Engagement Coordinator, FNHA

Bruce Greig, Manager of Community Planning, District of Ucluelet



Welcoming and Introductions

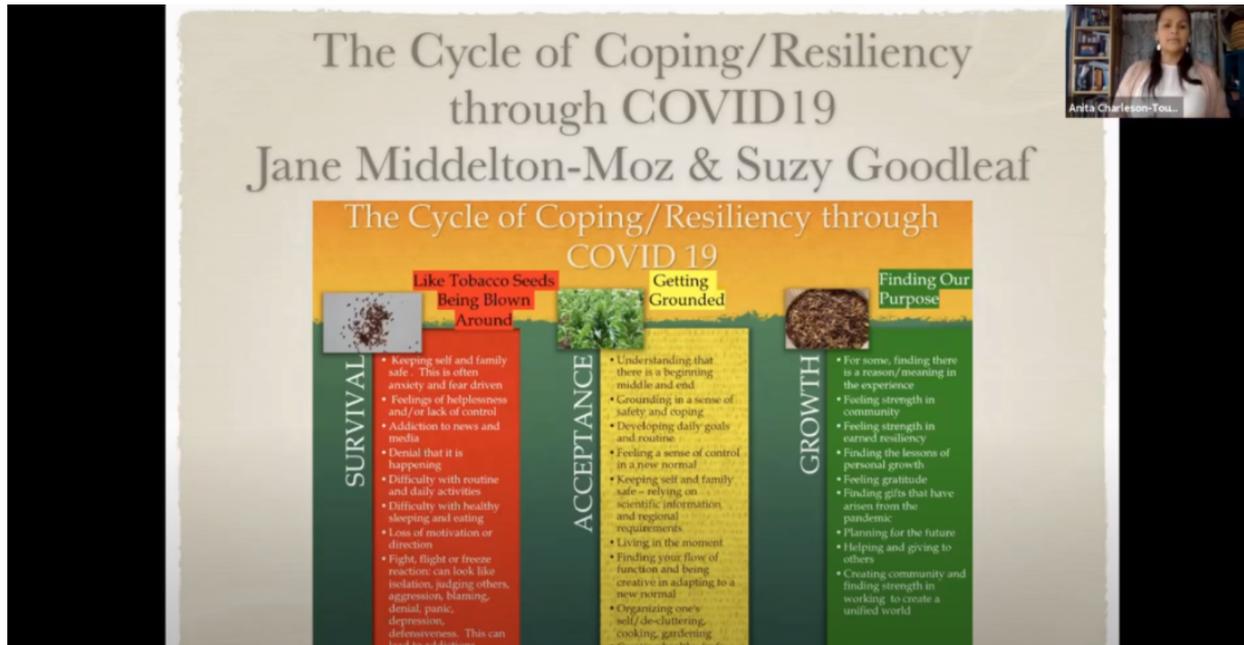
Tsimka Martin, welcomed the group, acknowledged the five Nuuchahnulth territories served by the CFRC and spoke to the importance of working together. Tsimka set the tone for the work ahead and spoke to the value of collaboration.

After the opening, each participant was asked to introduce themselves and their affiliation in order to demonstrate the wealth of knowledge and expertise in the room.

Presentation from the Coalition

Brett Freake, Community Developer, for the Coastal Family Resource Coalition, presented on the CFRC mission, model, goals and guiding principles, core activities, history, successes and overview of current activities of working groups. Brooke Wood, Literacy Coordinator gave an update on Dual Language Literacy Plan and welcomed Tsimka Martin into the Literacy Coordinator role, and Sarah Hagar gave an update about the West Coast Children's Resilience Initiative. Finally, Brett reviewed the top community health priorities that have been voiced at the 2019 and 2020 monthly Coalition meetings.

Presentation from Anita Charleson-Touchie



Anita Charleson-Touchie presented to the group on Trauma and the COVID 19 Pandemic. She explained trauma to be unresolved grief and that through the COVID19 pandemic we are experiencing collective grief. These experiences trigger unresolved past traumas and loss of connection to ourselves like a frog in pot of water heating up to boil we often don't realize we are shifting into a state of trauma or responding from a place of trauma. She explained that Indigenous Peoples and communities have been experiencing trauma since the time of first contact with settler society. Unresolved trauma from the past triggers survival response. People are dealing with first hand and intergeneration experiences with residential school, foster care, prison systems, systemic racism, MMIWG, and the continuing exploitation of people and lands.

Anita described the Stages of trauma:

- Survive/fear, terror, hypervigilance, collapse
 - Anxiety/fear driven
 - Feeling of Helplessness, loss of control, denial, hard time sticking to any routine, can't focus, difficulty with healthy eating, sleeping, can lead to addiction/ use of substances as a coping mechanism
 - ! Covid19 is always looming over us and acts as a trigger
 - Response: addiction to coping mechanisms alcohol/drugs, media, shopping, food, etc.
- Acceptance
 - Analogy: like getting stable footing
 - Grounding, understanding that there's a beginning middle an end

- Shift to ways that you can cope through the pandemic, develop goals and routines i.e. developing a self-care plan
- Shift to a sense of control, accept that there is a new normal
- Example: limit the news, going to trusted sources, living in the moment, coming back to the here and now, takes us out of survival state
- Organizing, decluttering, cooking, gardening, healthy safe connections
- Growth
 - Finding purpose, meaning and learning in the experience, finding strength in the community i.e. Italians singing from balconies, knowing we are not alone
 - Strength and earned resilience, we are working hard to bounce back from this
 - Planning for the future, helping and giving to others, building community and creating a unified world

When the brain is going through a trauma response the brain can't tell if the trauma that you are responding to is from a current event or from a past experience. Moving through trauma is a skill that requires recognizing the triggers and the signs/signals that we are behaving from survival response. Once we recognize the signs we need to connect with people we trust, find safe spaces to be comfortable while self regulating. We can protect ourselves from being trigger by limiting stress, developing structure and routine in our lives and creating self-care and wellness plans. Through this we can start treating our triggers as a gift that reminds us to work through trauma with compassion rather than re-enactment.

Presentation from Dr. Carrie Marshall

Dr. Marshall provided an update on the COVID19 Pandemic situation in our coastal communities and presented on the successes and challenges coast during the pandemic

Concurrent pressure of pandemic and heavy tourism highlighted many of the long existing weak points in our systems. Some of the positives outcomes the pandemic highlighted were the Innate resiliency of the coastal communities, we have not seen system failure on the coast. In actuality we have seen the pressure strengthened many of our systems through collaboration, cooperation that has not necessarily been reflected in other regions of the province

It has been challenging being in a rural and remote community navigating urban centric policies that don't reflect the reality here. The Pandemic has highlighted this disconnect but we have shown that being rural and remote is very powerful, we know our communities well, we have strong networks in place and a culture collaboration.

The strong working relationships between wide ranging interests created opportunity to work towards common good. We saw the local economy rebound so strongly and quickly compared to other regions which has come with a lot of challenges. We can be proud of that and push the conversation of how do you protect our community members and promote tourism to benefit everyone.

Regional Health Priorities

On day one of the Coming Together Forum the group was separated into five break out rooms to discuss issues that are facing the region.

Each break out group was hosted by a facilitator and were asked three questions:

1. What are the most significant health/ social wellbeing challenges facing west coast communities?
 - ! what do you see as the priority in the next 2 years/ 5 years/ 10 years?
2. What are the root causes (causes of the causes) of these challenges?
3. Given our context, available resources etc. what can be done to address the root causes? What assets can be harnessed, what strengths can we utilize?
 - ! Are there lessons learned from the COVID19 pandemic response that could apply to resolving the root causes of these challenges?

Through these dialogues the themes that emerged were:

- ! Housing
 - o Affordability, availability, accessibility and safety
 - o Losing essential workers
 - o Need for community advocacy and for community to show support to initiatives
- ! Access to care/services
 - o Adult guardianship
 - o Gap in services and supports for 18-20 year old's
 - o Better access to Specialist services
 - o Improve access to long term care- difficult to access especially for offshore communities
 - o Outreach services for isolated communities and individual
- ! Mental health and substance use
 - o Harm reduction supports for substance users

- ! Youth
 - Youth emergency shelter
 - Support for youth transitioning into adulthood/ independence
 - Foster care network – there is a shortage of local foster families
- ! Maternal health
 - A need for birthing options on the coast/in community
- ! Food security
 - Food system and affordability
- ! Transportation
 - Addressing challenges of medical travel
 - Transportation access for individuals from boat access/ remote communities ie getting to and from appointments in town
- ! Language and culture
 - Culturally relevant education
- ! Senior's services
- ! Recreation
- ! Poverty - Addressing the increase in socio-economic disparities
- ! Caregiver supports
 - Increasingly need for in home supports and caregiver supports
 - Respite for caregivers
- ! Childcare
 - Afterschool Programming
 - Infant and toddler care
- ! Connection/isolation
 - Opportunities for connection within communities and within families
- ! Future focused planning
 - Looking at the future demographics and planning services for them
- ! Navigational supports for accessing services

Open Space Conversations

On day two participants were given the opportunity to host open space conversations on topics that are important to them. Three Conversations were put forward.

Older Adults supports Facilitated by Tarni Jacobsen and Janine Croxall

There is a negative impact of losing older adult generation when they leave the community. Losing our older adult population happens for a variety of reasons beyond not having long term care, seniors selling their high value west coast property/home and downsizing across island. If people are missing the family/friends/social supports, then they have to leave.

There is a need to support those seniors who want to live at home/stay in community longer through programs such as friendly visiting, help with light household chores, grocery shopping, transportation and activities. Additionally, there is a need for building relationships with seniors so that they are familiar with service providers and comfortable accessing more essential services when the time comes.

Service providers are struggling to access funding for this age group. Outside funders don't see the impact of funding programming out here because of the smaller population. What's not being seen/quantified is the amount of caregiving from family members that's going on the coast. Those caregivers are not receiving the supports that they need.

Youth Focused Discussion Facilitated by Toni Buston

In order to keep youth active, engaged and fulfilled they need places where they can hang out. Service providers should prioritize continued and expanded access to youth rooms and opportunities to access fun spaces like the new Hotel Z arcade when its complete. Youth also need more opportunities for self directed activities and to be able to access the large number of outdoor activities that are available in our region. Youth worker positions need secure funding to ensure that they can maintain relationships with youth and that there is consistency in programming. Additionally, there is a need for strengthening communication and relationships between service providers and youth.

There is a gap in health and safety for youth in the absence of an emergency youth shelter. Youth have few options available to them escape unsafe living conditions. There is a lack of available foster families especially for children under three and due to low barriers for becoming a foster family and limited training some children are being put at risk by being placed in unsafe situations. Youth with disabilities and their families are making due with limited supports and there is a need more opportunities for assessment of youth.

Youth need to be empowered with knowledge to make healthy choices and support their friends to do the same. This can be achieved through Increasing substance use education and including harm reduction programs, sexual education with strong LGBTQ2s+ components and restorative Justice and trauma informed training for students, youth workers and school staff. Finally, at risk youth would benefit from a local youth focused probation officer.

Family outreach and community support - Facilitated by Jason LeFevre and Brett Freake

The dialogue in this open space covered many of the topics in the youth focused open space. Youth are reaching out to counsellors more than ever in order to deal with the isolation and loneliness that has been brought on. One possible opportunity is the ever-growing number of online resources for mental health support. Unfortunately, most youth are using their electronics to distract/numb themselves. Families are struggling to find connection within home life.

An obstacle that counsellors are highlighting is the lack of outdoor covered gathering spaces. Counsellors supporting students and clients in both Ucluelet and Tofino have been having a difficult time finding covered places to have socially distant session while being protected from the weather. Additionally, having covered places to bring youth together for activities are lacking in all west coast communities

Break Out Sessions

Two break out session periods were held with three topics in each session.

CFRC Dual Language Literacy Plan facilitated by Tsimka Martin and Brooke Wood

The Coastal Family Resource Coalition's Dual Language Literacy Plan is being updated. This discussion was an opportunity for the Literacy Coordinators to present the current plan and gain input on the direction of the plan.

Life in (un)balance: tourism on the west coast facilitated by Faye Missar

In response to the tensions that emerged in our coastal communities as a result of the perception of conflict between the tourism industry and protecting the community from the COVID19. Faye Missar hosted this discussion to gather input for a discussion paper on this topic.

Housing - Brett Freake

It is no secret that housing continues to be a huge challenge on the region. Brett Freake hosted a discussion on how to address the lack of housing with a focus on filling gaps on the housing spectrum.

First Nations Led Primary Care Initiatives- Presented by Shaun McCumber

Shaun McCumber from First Nation Health Authority presented about the First Nations Led primary Care Initiative that is being rolled out in Nuu-CHah-Nulth communities in our region

Resilient Self/Resilient Community Facilitated Sarah Hagar

Sarah Hagar presented on trauma and methods for building resilience in our own lives and the broader community.

Building Regional Prosperity – Action Planning for Regional Prosperity Facilitated by Marcie Dewitt

Marcie Dewitt led a planning session in regards to combatting poverty and growing disparity. This was part of an initiative that she is leading on behalf of the Alberni Clayoquot Health Network

Moving forward: next steps for the Coalition in 2021

The regional health priorities that emerged from the Coming Together Forum will be communicated to a broad range of service providers, agencies, organizations, and community residents and leadership in an effort to raise awareness of these social and health issues and mobilize action towards addressing them. Organizations are encouraged to cite this report in grant applications and communities are encouraged to use report findings to develop healthy public policies. The regional health priorities will also inform the direction of CFRC working groups.

