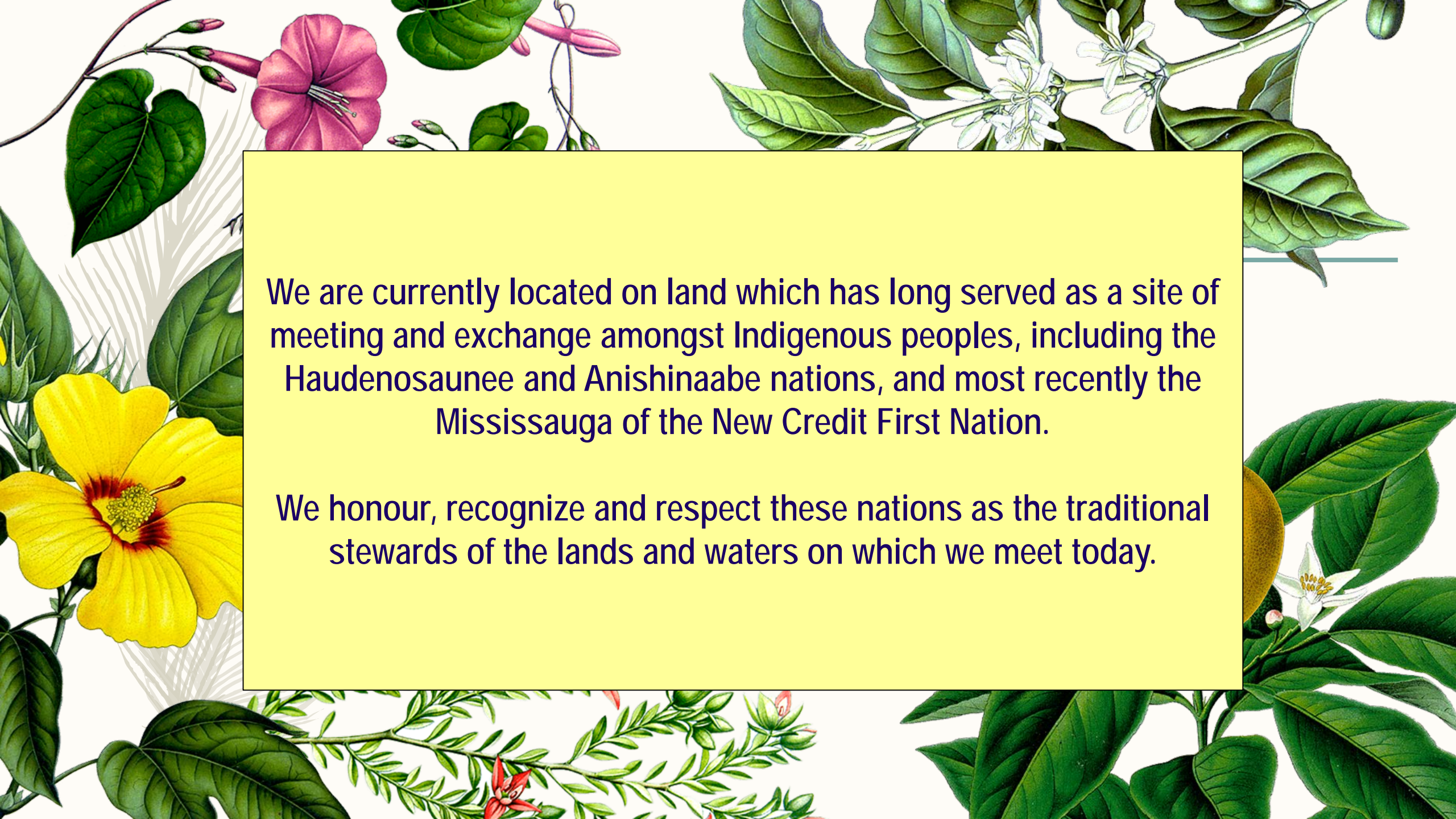


Young Indigenous Parenting and Pregnancy

Dr. Angela Mashford-Pringle,

Associate Director, Waakebiness-Bryce
Institute for Indigenous Health, University
of Toronto

A detailed botanical illustration background featuring various plants. On the left, there are large green leaves and a prominent yellow hibiscus flower with a dark red center. Above it is a pink flower with a white center. On the right, there are green leaves and a cluster of small white flowers. At the bottom, there are green leaves and a small red flower. The central text is contained within a yellow rectangular box.

We are currently located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations, and most recently the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation.

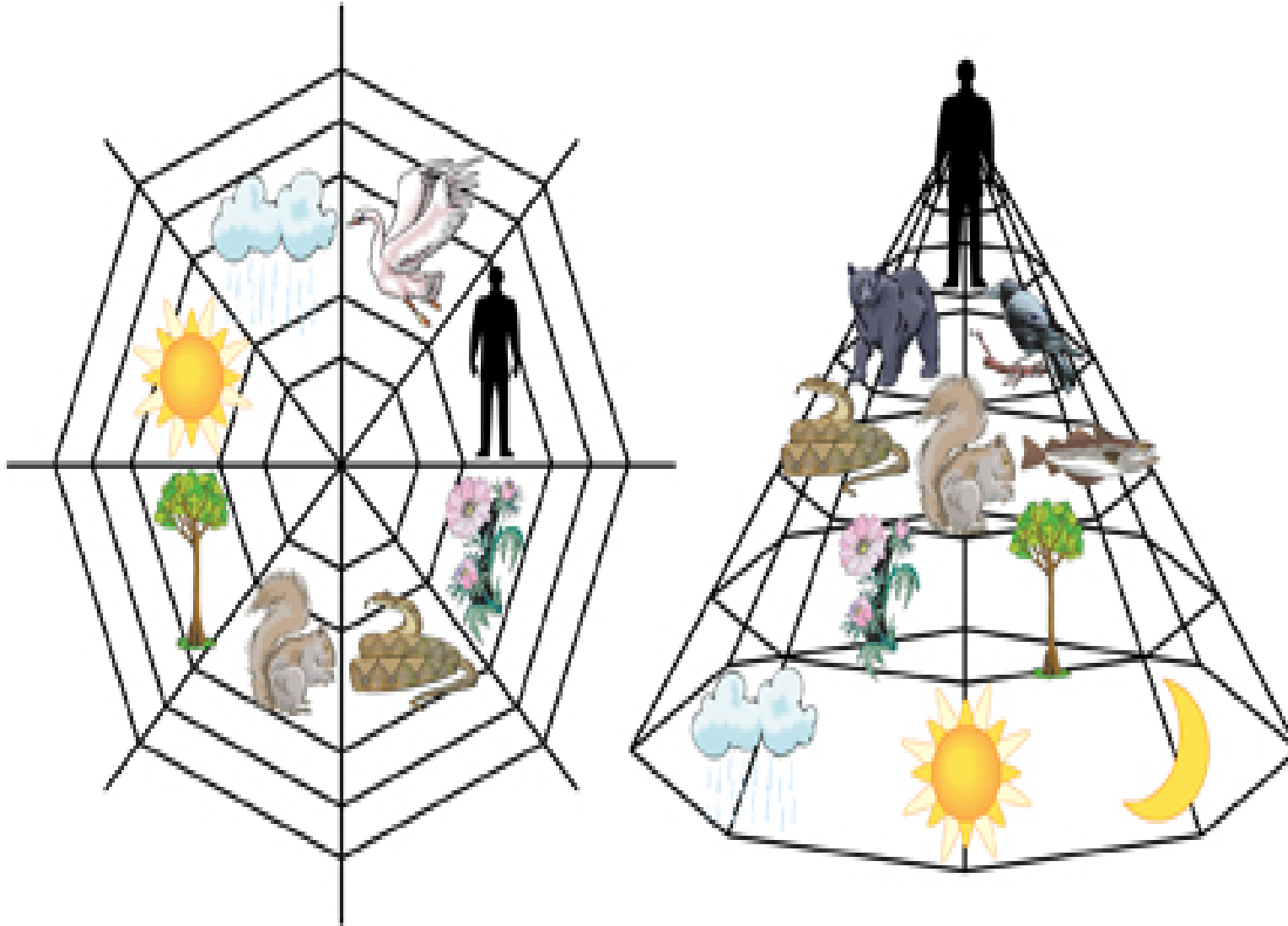
We honour, recognize and respect these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.



Who are we talking about?

- First Nations – largest population of Indigenous people in Canada
 - Status and Treaty First Nations – registered under the Indian Act
 - non-status First Nations – cannot be registered under the Indian Act
 - In community (on reserve) and off reserve (rural, towns, large urban areas)
- Metis – “means a person who self-identifies as Metis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Metis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Metis Nation” (MNC, 2018).
- Inuit – original inhabitants of the North American Arctic (Bering Strait to East Greenland), northern Alaska and Greenland, with relatives in Russia – common cultural heritage and language

Collective Rights of Aboriginal Peoples



- Indigenous groups traditionally believed and continue to believe that humans are but one part of the whole system and that all pieces should be respected.
- The western world often see themselves as superior to everything else in the pyramid (including Indigenous people).

Two-Eyed Seeing? Changing your lens



Education -> using the formal Euro-centric education system forces Indigenous people to reconnect with the original traumas.

This is one setting that Indigenous people must navigate between the two cultures. Many structural institutions force Indigenous people to balance.



A Quick History Lesson

– **18 & 19th century:**

- 1) **Fur trade** declined in 19th C, so Indigenous partners were no longer needed
- 2) **Settlements** increasing & wanting more land – settlers began to outnumber Indigenous
- 3) **Military allies** decreasing after War of 1812
- 4) **Formation of Canada as State** – **1867 *British North America Act*** to mark confederation. In Section 91, European writers made Indigenous Peoples “wards of the state” without even consulting them
- 5) ***Indian Act of 1876 & following amendments:***
 - ✓ *Indian self-government abolished*
 - ✓ *All services, including education, responsibility of federal government*
 - ✓ *Lands reserved for Indians would be controlled by the government*
 - ✓ *Not allowed to practice cultural ceremonies*
 - ✓ *Not allowed to hire lawyers*
 - ✓ *Not allowed to vote unless you give up Status*
 - ✓ *If you become a doctor, lawyer, teacher, you lose your Status*

20th Century Changes



- ❖ The **Pass System** phased out beginning in **1940s...**
- ❖ **Residential schools** begin closing in the **1960s**, and most children have integrated into mainstream schools by the **1980s...**
- ❖ Status First Nations given an unconditional **right to vote between 1960 and 1969 depending on the province**
- ❖ 1951 amendments to *Indian Act* impacted registration and moved child welfare to provinces – start of the Sixties Scoop which led to Milleninum Scoop
- ❖ All policies and legislation were to rid the ‘Indian’ in the person – specifically aimed at children



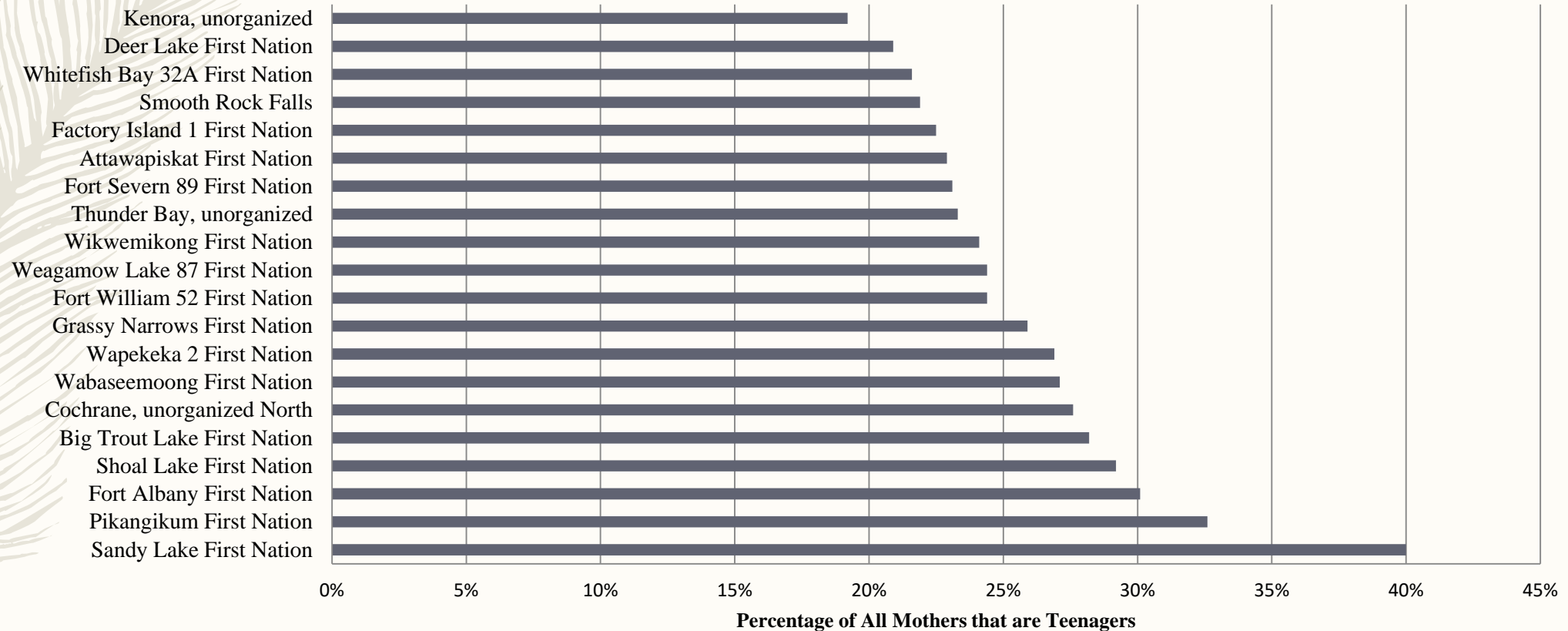
Statistics about Teen Pregnancy

- Statistics Canada (2013) reports there were 3.1% (11,645) of all live births to mothers aged 15 to 19 years in Canada and 0.1% (78) of live births to mothers under 15 years old; the highest number of mothers were aged 30 to 34 years old (34.4% or 130,744 births)
- MOHLTC (2007) had a teen pregnancy rate in Ontario of 25.7 per 1,000

TEEN PREGNANCY RATES ARE DECREASING ACROSS ONTARIO INCLUDING FOR FIRST NATIONS , but there are no accurate birth statistics by race or ethnicity as it is not collected on birth certificates.

Most recent statistics - 2011

Communities with the Highest Rates of Teen Mothers



Why do Indigenous teens get pregnant?





So what are your thoughts?

- What are some risks for having a baby when a young woman is in her teens?
- What are the long-term issues with teen pregnancy?
- Who might be at higher risk of teen pregnancy?



Age is just a number, right?

- Teen moms have higher rates of: mental health disorders, repeat pregnancies, substance use, domestic violence
- Teen moms often have: lower self-esteem, lower socio-economic status, lower income, and lower educational attainment
- Teen moms may not seek prenatal care until later in their pregnancy (if at all), they have higher rates of infant mortality and birth defects



Risks to Children of Teen Moms

Scholars have found that children of teen moms are at risk of:

- Growing up without a father
- Low birthweight and prematurity
- School failure
- Insufficient health care
- Abuse and neglect
- Poverty
- Incarceration
- Teen parenthood

Adolescent Development

Mainstream/Western view of adolescent development:

	Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Social-Emotional Development
Middle Adolescence: 14-18 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Puberty is completed• Physical growth slows for girls and continues for boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued growth of capacity for abstract thought• Greater capacity for setting goals• Interest in moral reasoning• Thinking about the meaning of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intense self-involvement, changing between high expectations and poor self-concept• Continued adjustment to changing body, worries about being normal• Tendency to distance self from parents, continued drive for independence• Driven to make friends and greater reliance on them, popularity can be important issue• Feelings of love and passion

Adapted from American Academy of Child and Adolescent's Facts for Families (2008).



Activity: Teen Pregnancy Quiz

Part 1

True or False:

1. Teen moms are twice as likely to die in childbirth.
2. A child born to a teen mom is twice as likely to die before their 1st birthday.
3. Teen moms are twice as likely not to finish high school.
4. 20% of teen moms will become pregnant again within 2 years.
5. 82% of girls who had a baby before 15 years old were born to teen parents.



Teen Pregnancy Quiz Part 2

6. If a boy has already made plans for his future (like education), he should not have to worry about marrying a girl even if she is pregnant.
7. If a mom decides to keep her baby, but the father doesn't want to, he is not financially responsible for the baby.
8. If a father does not have a regular job, he is not responsible for child support.
9. If a couple breaks up after finding out about the pregnancy, the father has no responsibility for the child.
10. The divorce rate is greater for couples with a pre-marital pregnancy than for those who conceive after marriage.

Children are Gifts from Creator





Children are GIFTS from Creator

- It takes a village...
- Each child brings unique knowledge to provide their family...
- Indigenous family members will learn different teachings about family, creation, and ways of being by interacting with the child
- Children are to be the centre of the family and community as they provide meaning, purpose, and goals



Culture, language and tradition

- We create our identities at a young age.
- We are aware if the family has little or no money from a very young age. This affects what we can do, how we do it, and when we can do it.
- How does your worldview affect your socialization? Or education? Or health?



What is Cultural Competency? What is Cultural Safety

- Culture is the process by which knowledge, values, beliefs and worldview are transmitted from one generation to the next.
- Cultural transmission is the process of modelling and teaching of culture from parents to children.
- Cultural Safety
- Cultural Competency
- Cultural Continuity
- Cultural Sensitivity

Self-identity helps with Cultural Safety

Cultural Awareness

Recognize your culture & behaviours are different from other peoples.

Cultural Competency

Educational phase to gain competence in cultural awareness and understanding for working with others not from your culture/worldview

Cultural Safety

Transformation in relationships between oneself and those from other cultural groups, especially for groups who are marginalized and oppressed.



Possible Program Elements

- Provide positive social and cultural influences
- Encourage alternative activities and education about life choices
- Provide support and meet the teen parents where they are (for their age and stage of life)
- Having a cultural safe space that doesn't force culture as its primary goal

A decorative graphic of a feather, rendered in a light beige color, is positioned on the left side of the slide. It has a central rachis with numerous barbs extending outwards, creating a fan-like shape. The feather is oriented vertically, pointing downwards.

Themes for the Program

- Realities of teen pregnancy
- Enhance or develop culturally safe community-based programs about pregnancy and sexuality
- Provide contraceptives
- Use messaging that reflects the local First Nations/Metis/Inuit youth
- Discuss healthy relationships



At your tables...

- In small groups or at the tables, pick 1, 2, or 3
 - 1) Design a teen pregnancy and parenting program that will have mixed participants (Indigenous and other people) – remember to be cultural safe and sensitive and provide at least 10 weeks for approximately 2 hours a week programming.
 - 2) Design a local First Nations and Metis program for high school students who are not pregnant (or at least have not identified as such) that can be offered outside of the education system – remember to be culturally safe and sensitive with at least 6 weeks of 1 or 2 hour meetings
 - 3) Design an Indigenous teen pregnancy program for teens living in Thunder Bay



Ideas to Engage Indigenous Teen Parents

- Welcome the teens
- Have traditions/cultural elements available, but do not assume everyone will want these
- Build relationships with each person and ensure they know that you are there for them
- Plan and develop the program with teens and community members
- Focus on the positive as there is already enough issues facing these new parents
- Build links to Indigenous communities