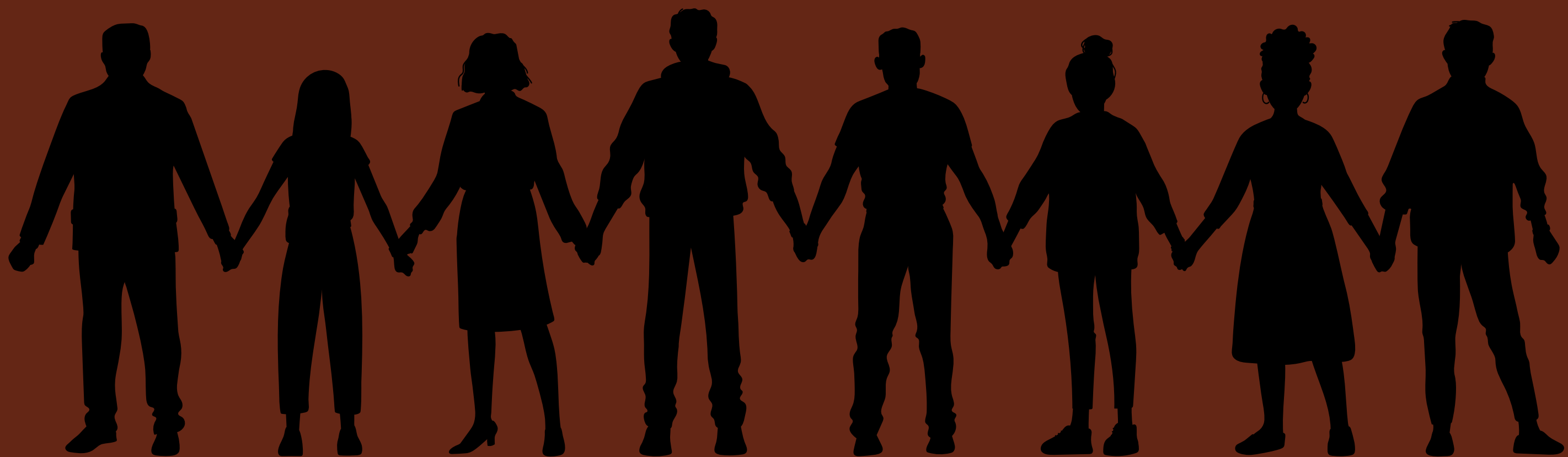




Cultural Connections

Elder & Knowledge Keeper Network



Existing Services

BC Corrections

- Indigenous Cultural Liasons
- Aboriginal Justice Workers
- Indigenous Programs

(Government of British Columbia, n.d.-a; Government of British Columbia, n.d.-b;
Government of British Columbia, 2025a; Government of British Columbia, 2025b)

Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)

- Commitment to providing culturally safe care

(Provincial Health Services Authority, n.d.)

BC First Nations Justice Council:

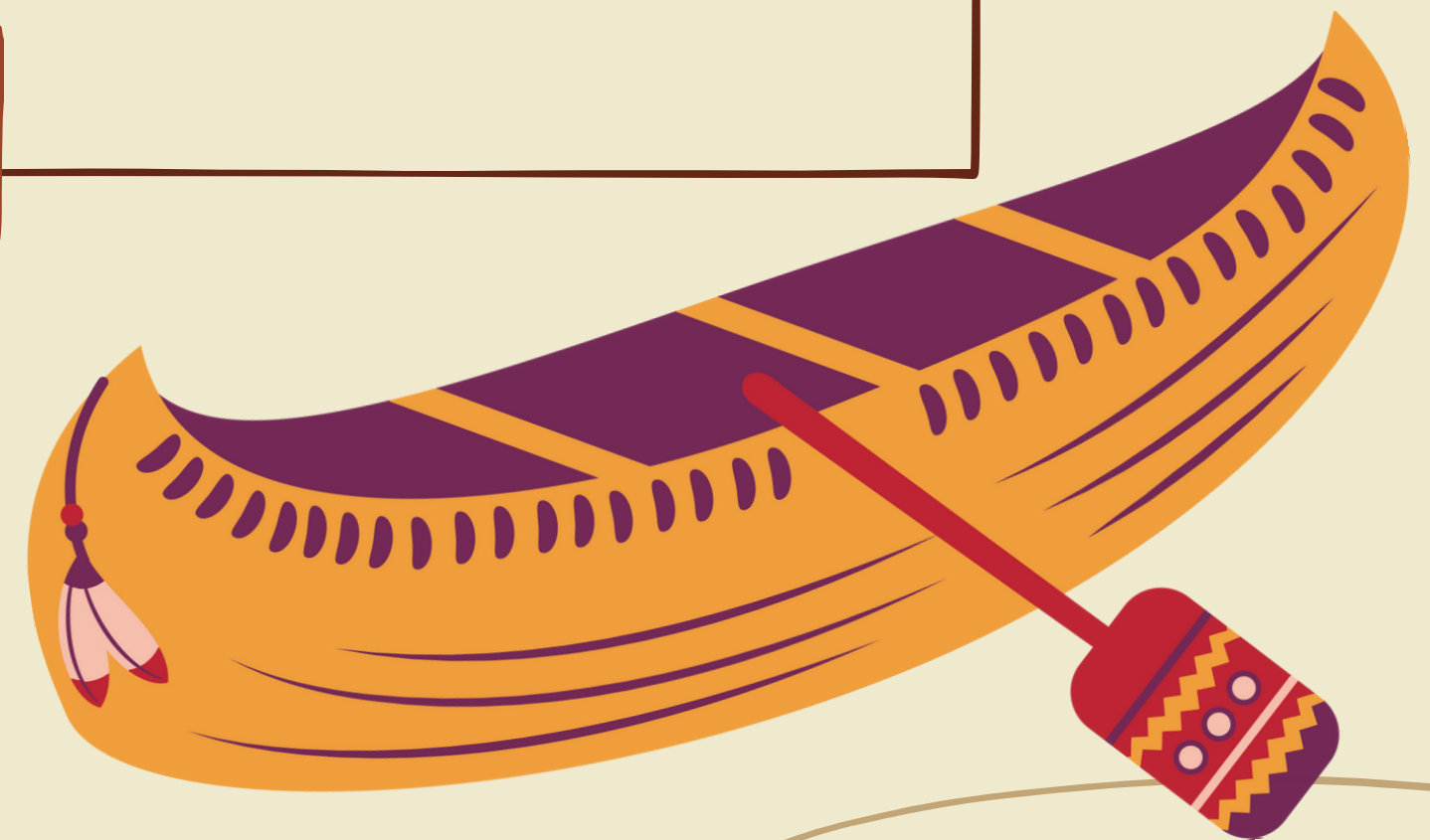
- BC First Nations Justice Strategy
 - 25 strategies
 - Strategy 21: Strengthening Traditional Knowledge in First Nations Laws in the Justice System
- Elders & Knowledge Keepers Council

(BC First Nations Justice Council, 2024a)

Program Gaps

- Non-indigenous person in indigenous specific roles
- Staffing concerns: contracted position, too few positions
- Lack of appreciation for cultural roles
- Homogenised Indigenous services

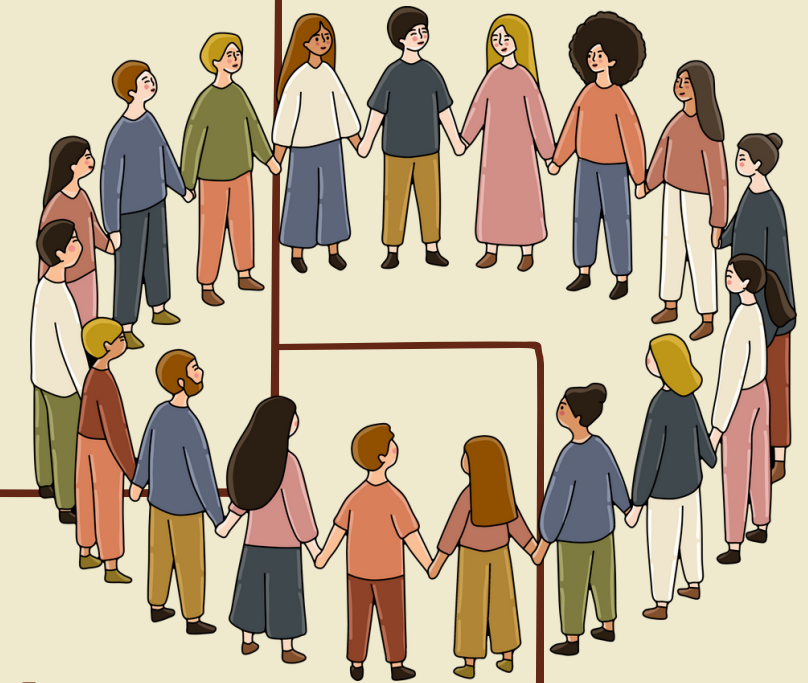
(Government of British Columbia, n.d.-a; Government of British Columbia, n.d.-b; Government of British Columbia, 2025a; Government of British Columbia, 2025b; Interior Health, n.d.; Thunderbird Partnership Foundation et al., 2015; Zinger, 2023).



Elder & Knowledge Keeper Network: Interior Region

Solution:

- Creation of an Interior Region Elder & Knowledge Keeper Network
 - Members from different Indigenous Interior Communities
 - Offer group and one-to-one teachings, ceremonies, and support to provincially incarcerated Indigenous folks in this region.



Rationale

- Elders play an important role in sharing knowledge, culture, language, values, and life philosophies.
- Western perspectives on their own are ineffective in improving wellness of Indigenous peoples.
- Aligned with UNDRIP, Government of BC Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls to

action. (Department of Justice, n.d.; Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, 2022; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012; Viscogliosi et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2023)

Strengths

- Improved cultural connection & re-connection
- Improved relationship with home community
- Improved overall wellness
- Reduced harms from substance use
- Increased opportunity for cultural connections

(First Nations Peoples Wellness Circle & Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, 2024; Public Health Ontario, 2023; Thunderbird Partnership Foundation et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2023)

Implementation

Stage 1:
Collaborative
Development

Collaborators:

- FNHA
- Indigenous Communities in Interior, BC
- BC Corrections
- BC First Nations Justice Council
- PHSA

Stage 4:
Evaluation of
Pilot Program

Stage 2:
Infrastructure
Development
(Plenary, n.d.)

Stage 3:
Implementation of
Pilot Program



Feasibility

Challenges	Solutions
Funding	Advocate for reallocation of funds
Lack of appreciation for cultural roles	BC Corrections collaboration & staff education
Recruitment of Elders and Knowledge Keepers	Time, fair wages, & appreciation
Security measures at correctional settings	BC Corrections collaboration & Virtual modalities
Restrictions on who can attend ceremony	Plan with elder for other activities the individual could participate in

(First Nations Health Authority, 2025; Hyatt, 2019; Landry, 2025; Zinger, 2023)

