



**CHILDREN MATTER**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES (C.M.C.S.) INC.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY FRAMEWORK**

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## **Land Acknowledgement**

At Children Matter Community Services, we recognize that we are situated on the ancestral and unceded lands of numerous Indigenous peoples in British Columbia. These territories have housed a variety of nations, and we honor their enduring ties to this land. We express gratitude for the opportunity to live, work, and learn on these lands and commit to fostering respectful relationships with the various Nations.

## **Commitment to Truth & Reconciliation**

At Children Matter Community Services, our organizational commitment to working alongside and learning from Indigenous children, families, and communities is rooted in a profound understanding of the importance of cultural significance and reconciliation. We are dedicated to actively engaging with Indigenous perspectives, traditions, and values, recognizing their intrinsic role in the well-being of children, youth, and families.

In alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Actions 1-5, we pledge to collaborate with Indigenous communities, respecting their self-determination and actively seeking their input in the development and implementation of our services. This commitment extends to creating a safe and inclusive space where Indigenous children can thrive, maintaining connections to their heritage.

In line with the Calls to Actions, we emphasize community-based solutions, aiming to strengthen family ties and support systems. This involves collaborating with Indigenous Elders, leaders, and community members to establish culturally relevant services that promote healing, resilience, and empowerment.

Moreover, Children Matter Community Services is committed to accountability and transparency. We will regularly assess and reassess our practices, seeking feedback from Indigenous partners to continuously improve our approach. By actively contributing to the journey of truth and reconciliation, we aim to create a lasting, positive impact on the lives of Indigenous children in British Columbia.

# Children Matter Community Services Vision, Mission, and Values

## Vision

Our vision is a world where children, families, and communities work together toward a brighter future, one where your culture is honored, voice leads the way, and we move forward together in partnership ensuring no one gets left behind.

## Mission

Mission is to strengthen individual, family, and community identities through meaningful relationships. We foster empowerment, encourage curiosity, and champion advocacy so people of all ages can build the skills and confidence needed to thrive.

## Values

**CMCS - WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE IN**

<p><b>RESPECT</b></p> <p>Maintain a positive regard for the rights, opinions, dignity, and worth of individuals</p>	<p><b>INTEGRITY</b></p> <p>Hold yourself to the highest standard. Unwavering commitment to honesty, ethical conduct, and reliability in all professional interactions</p>		<p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b></p> <p>The open-minded and inclusive acknowledgment of diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and ideas, fostering a collaborative and supportive work environment where differences are embraced and valued.</p>	<p><b>ADVOCACY</b></p> <p>Actively supporting and promoting the interests, rights, and well-being of one another and those we serve striving to ensure fair treatment, equity, and positive outcomes.</p>	<p><b>TRANSPARENCY</b></p> <p>Fostering trust for all. Transparent business practices contribute to accountability, ethical conduct, and the establishment of a positive reputation.</p>
<p><b>Unacceptable</b></p> <p>Microaggressions Bullying/Harrasmen Ignoring boundaries Talking over one another Gossiping Insensitive jokes Disregarding others opinions</p>	<p><b>Unacceptable</b></p> <p>Dishonesty Unethical decision making Breaching confidentiality Selective Reporting Falsification of Records Failure to fulfill commitments Lack of accountability</p>		<p><b>Unacceptable</b></p> <p>Discrimination Insensitive language Failure to acknowledge diversity Cultural Insensitivity Refusing to learn Failure to adapt Lack of empathy</p>	<p><b>Unacceptable</b></p> <p>Favoring Personal Interests Avoiding Difficult Conversations Passive Indifferences Silencing Others Refusing to Speak up Exclusivity Lack of Solidarity Undermining Team Efforts</p>	<p><b>Unacceptable</b></p> <p>Selective Communication Hidden Agendas Secretive Decision Making Avoiding Disclosure of mistakes Lack of Timely Updates Resistance to Feedback Failure to Document Processes</p>

## “The Why”

*Our overarching goal is to empower and support children and youth in transitioning back to their families and community, residing in a less intrusive environment, and navigating the path into adulthood equipped with the necessary skills for success.*

*Our commitment lies in meeting children where they are at and facilitating a smooth and holistic transition that enables young individuals to thrive, build resilience, and embrace their journey towards independence and personal growth.*

## “The Who”

The creation of Children Matter Community Services (CMCS) arose from a heartfelt commitment to make a meaningful difference and nurture the spirit of community. What started as a conversation about coming together to support and protect young lives blossomed into a shared journey guided by core values. CMCS is dedicated to walking alongside those it serves—children, youth, families, and staff—offering compassionate support and building strong, respectful relationships with the communities it is honoured to be a part of.

The founding partners of CMCS have walked alongside youth through moments of deep loss and hardship—especially among young people impacted by the opioid crisis, suicide, and street violence. Heartbreakingly, over half of those lost have been Indigenous youth and adults. With two of our partners identifying as First Nations and Métis, this lived experience has further strengthened our resolve to be advocates for change, particularly for Indigenous young people in care. Together, we strive to uphold guiding principles that honour every child, youth, and family’s unique story and journey, supporting them as they find healing, learning, and meaningful connection within their communities and the wider world.

These guiding values are not just for those we directly support—they extend to our staff, who are valued members of our circle. By fostering relationships rooted in respect, care, and shared growth, CMCS nurtures an environment where everyone—children, youth, families, and staff—can thrive and walk their paths together. Through these shared commitments, the spirit of compassion and belonging radiates beyond CMCS, weaving stronger bonds throughout the whole community.

It was through this vision of relational support and community that three partners—Shawn Enns, Katelynn Nicholls, and Julie Pariseau—came together. What began as a conversation and

flourished into a vision, together, they have co-created Children Matter Community Services (CMCS), grounded in shared values and a commitment to walking with and uplifting all those they serve.

The partnership among these three individuals is founded on principles of trust, respect, transparency, and relationships. Each partner brings unique skills to the table, creating a balanced team that thrives on hard work, camaraderie, and shared laughter.

Who are the three partners that helped bring CMCS from a conversation to a reality?

### Who are the CMCS Partners?

**Shawn Enns**, a proud Red River Métis from Winnipeg, Manitoba, grew up rooted in community and the spirit of helping others. His journey reflects a deep commitment to supporting those around him—whether through personal connections, volunteer efforts, or his professional path. Although Shawn first set out to become a Computer & Electrical Engineer, he soon felt called to serve in the social services field, where he could make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. This shift led him to complete his Community Support Worker certificate, blending practical skills with a foundation in Business Administration.

Shawn's approach is guided by relational values that honour connection, respect, and shared learning. He is a self-taught musician who draws inspiration from time spent in nature, enjoys camping, cooking, and is always eager to learn from new experiences. His adventurous spirit has carried him across three Asian countries on a solo backpacking journey, always seeking opportunities to build relationships and expand his understanding of the world. Shawn's commitment to walking alongside others, uplifting their voices, and celebrating their unique stories is at the heart of all he does.

**Katelynn Nicholls**, who is Cold Lake First Nations descent, born in New Westminster and raised in Lumby, BC. Her story began with a calling to care for others, starting as a Care Aide focused on Dementia and Acquired Brain Injury. This path inspired her to deepen her skills and knowledge as a Psychiatric Nurse, driven by a desire to walk alongside those facing mental health challenges. Katelynn's leadership is grounded in reflection, empathy, and commitment to uplifting children and youth, especially those navigating challenging times. She completed her master's in leadership at Royal Roads University, where she further developed her dedication to fostering safe, supportive spaces for healing and growth.

Beyond her professional journey, Katelynn is a community builder—actively coaching hockey and embracing the outdoors through hiking and promoting physical wellness. Her approach is relational, rooted in respect and reciprocity, always striving to make a lasting, positive impact. Guided by the belief that every child and youth deserves compassion and connection; Katelynn

is devoted to contributing to a future where Indigenous and non-Indigenous children alike are supported and celebrated within their communities.

**Julie Pariseau**, born and raised in Calgary, brings a spirit of adaptability and openness to new experiences, having called communities across Canada—from Halifax, NS to British Columbia—home. Julie’s early journey was shaped by her time in government care, where she lived in foster homes, group homes, and secure residential settings. These experiences have given her a deep understanding of the challenges faced by young people in care and inspired her to pursue a path in Child and Youth Care with a focus on compassionate support and relational connection.

Throughout her life, Julie has shown a natural ability to lead and build relationships, drawing strength from the guidance of influential female mentors. Her commitment to lifelong learning led her to complete a master’s in leadership at Royal Roads University. Julie’s work has spanned support for people of all ages and leadership in various organizations, but her heart remains devoted to walking alongside youth—especially those navigating complex journeys.

Julie embraces growth, healing, and adaptability, valuing each person’s story and fostering a sense of belonging wherever she goes. She finds joy in reading, golfing, and connecting with her family around a campfire, cherishing moments of togetherness and reflection. Through these passions and her lived experience, Julie continues to uplift and empower young people, creating spaces where every voice is heard and every journey is honoured.

## Staff Are Our Greatest Asset

### *Life Work Balance*

*“Balance is a feeling derived from being whole and complete; it’s a sense of harmony. It is essential to maintain quality in life and work.”*

*Joshua Osenga*

The nature of our work in the social services sector can be both challenging and emotionally demanding, and lived experience as well as research shows a heightened risk of burnout. At CMCS, we recognize that when we care for our staff, they can care for our children and youth in deeper, more meaningful ways. Our approach is guided by Indigenous values of reciprocity, respect, and shared responsibility. We understand that supporting the well-being of our team honours the interconnectedness between every member of our community.

A central teaching we embrace for fostering balance is the importance of setting and honouring boundaries. We encourage every staff member to find harmony between their personal and professional lives and support them in maintaining these boundaries. This approach, rooted in respect and self-care, helps our staff remain strong and resilient, so they can offer their best to the youth and families we serve.

## Caring for Our Staff

At CMCS, the same principles that guide our work with young people shape how we care for our staff. We strive to walk alongside our team members, recognizing their strengths and listening with open hearts. Here are a few ways we nurture and support our staff:

1. **Partnership:** We value the voices of our staff and work in partnership to create a workplace rooted in mutual respect. Leadership at CMCS welcomes suggestions and feedback from everyone, ensuring that staff contributions shape our practices. Learning together is part of our shared journey, and honest conversation is encouraged across the organization.
2. **Connection & Belonging:** We are committed to building a culture where every staff member feels seen, heard, and valued. Recognizing the importance of laughter, fun, and positive relationships, we strive to create a workplace where everyone can bring their whole selves. Our "ZERO" tolerance for gossip and toxic behaviour helps protect this environment. We honour boundaries by respecting how personal information is shared, being mindful of social media interactions, and supporting a clear distinction between work and home life. By doing so, we nurture a sense of belonging and wellbeing for all.

3. **Identity Building:** We encourage each team to connect with our organization’s Vision, Mission, and Values, weaving them into the fabric of their daily work. By fostering trust, open communication, and courageous conversations, we build strong teams who are united in their commitment to care. This shared identity supports mutual accountability and the pursuit of excellence, while celebrating the unique gifts each person brings.
4. **Knowledge & Learning:** Growth is a continuous process, and we actively support the learning journeys of our staff. We believe in planning for the future and nurturing aspirations, whether professional or academic. Across CMCS, we lift each other up by encouraging development opportunities and approaching mistakes as teachings for improvement. Reflective practice is woven into our culture—staff are invited to consider:
  - What did I do well?
  - What could I do differently next time?
  - What support do I need?

Through these reflections, we learn from one another and move forward together on the path of growth and understanding.

By embracing these relational practices, we strive to build a workplace where every staff member is empowered to grow, contribute, and feel a sense of belonging. Together, we create a caring community that honours each person’s journey and ensures the children, youth, and families we serve receive the best possible support.

### *Staff Training*

At CMCS, we recognize that the children and youth we support are at the heart of our community—they deserve care that is grounded in respect, cultural understanding, and relational practice. We are committed to welcoming staff who bring their strengths, lived experiences, and willingness to learn into our circle. Before beginning work alongside children and youth, every team member completes CARF training, ensuring that everyone is equipped to uphold a safe and supportive environment. Our two-day MANDT training introduces a relationship-based approach to de-escalation, focusing on compassion and understanding when children are experiencing emotional distress. This approach honours each individual’s story and can be adapted across diverse ages and backgrounds.

Beyond these foundational requirements, we ask all staff to participate in the Art & Science of Youth Work Certificate through the Youth Intervention Program Association. This learning

journey deepens our collective knowledge, weaving together best practices, so we can walk alongside those we serve with greater wisdom, humility, and care.

This comprehensive certificate program includes competency-based modules focusing on:

- The Field of Youth Work
- Youth Development
- Communications
- Ethics
- Intercultural Engagement
- Behavior Intervention
- At Risk Behaviors
- Mental Health Basics

Ongoing learning and training are foundational to honouring the unique journeys of each child and youth we walk alongside. By upholding these standards and nurturing the continuous growth of our staff, we strive to equip our team with the wisdom, skills, and cultural understanding needed to provide compassionate and relational care. We see this commitment as a way of supporting our staff holistically, helping to prevent burnout, fostering personal and professional growth, and strengthening our collective competence. Investing in the development and well-being of our team members not only uplifts those who work here but also enriches the lives and outcomes of the children, youth, and families we serve, building a caring and sustainable environment for all.

*“If we take care of our staff, our staff will take care of our children, youth and communities.”*

### “The Where”

CMCS honours the diverse communities across BC by extending our services wherever they are needed. Recognizing the importance of relational connection, our leadership team actively fosters accessibility, showing up in person and gathering virtually through platforms such as TEAMS and on-site visits through the year. This dedication to staying present and open to dialogue supports a sense of belonging, collaboration, and unity among our staff, children, youth, and families—no matter the distance. By prioritizing meaningful relationships and open communication, we strive to walk alongside each community as one circle, supporting and learning from one another in an effective way.

## “The What”

At CMCS, our homes are guided by Indigenous-friendly and relational values, offering person-centred, holistic, trauma-informed, and strength-based supports that honour each child’s journey to connect, heal, learn, and embrace their identity and resilience. We understand the profound impact that frequent moves and disruptions can have on a child’s spirit, affecting their physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and developmental well-being. In response, we commit deeply to nurturing attachment and building lasting relationships. When a child joins CMCS, we walk alongside them with unwavering support, remaining present until they choose to leave, reunite with family, or transition into adulthood.

Our services are rooted in a circle of care that is always present—offering 24-hour support and connection for young people. An on-call manager supports staff after hours, ensuring crisis help and guidance are available whenever needed and that serious concerns are responded to promptly. This steadfast commitment to our young people’s well-being and stability reflects our belief in creating safe, welcoming spaces that foster healing, growth, and belonging. We also focus on helping young people find their place within their community, recognizing the importance of connection and cultural identity in their overall wellness.

Equally, we recognize that our staff are part of this circle. They are supported, empowered, and encouraged to make decisions, knowing that help is always available when challenges arise. By centring staff well-being and confidence, we nurture a work environment grounded in trust, empowerment, and relational accountability. This approach strengthens not only our services but also the spirit and resilience at the heart of our organization and all those we serve.

We strive to ensure every home is a warm, welcoming space that truly feels like a home, not just a worksite. Our spaces are kept clean and well cared for, with furnishings that create a sense of comfort and belonging. While meeting necessary requirements such as signage, we thoughtfully incorporate these elements, so they blend seamlessly with the décor and do not detract from the homelike atmosphere.

Children and youth are encouraged to express themselves, decorating shared spaces and making their bedrooms their own, honouring their individuality and cultural identity. Each home is equipped with toys, games, and recreational options to support healthy development and joyful living. We warmly welcome friends and family into the home, weaving a sense of community, love, and care that reflects the values of relationship, connection, and inclusion.

## What Do We Mean?

**Person-Centred:** Within our relational framework, “person-centred” means truly honouring everyone’s unique voice, values, and connections. At CMCS, this looks like walking alongside young people and their families, recognizing them as the experts of their own stories and lives. Our approach is rooted in deep respect and compassion, where decision-making is shared and shaped by the individual’s desires, cultural identity, community ties, and life circumstances. Together with Elders, support networks, and professionals, we support young people in setting and reaching their self-identified dreams and goals, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.

**Holistic Approach:** Our holistic approach flows naturally from our person-centred values, recognizing that every individual’s healing journey is unique and interconnected. At CMCS, we embrace the whole person—body, mind, heart, spirit, and community—by tailoring our supports and services to nurture every aspect of their well-being. Drawing on relational and Indigenous principles, we work to strengthen cultural identity, foster meaningful connections, and address each young person’s physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and developmental needs. Our guidance is flexible and responsive, always shaped by the voices and strengths of the young people and families we serve.

**Strength-Based:** Being strength-based at CMCS means truly honouring the gifts, talents, and resilience that each young person carries—sometimes shaped by their lived experiences and culture. Rather than focusing on deficits, we look for and celebrate each person’s strengths, nurturing and building upon them in every aspect of our organization, from our homes to our daily practices. We empower youth to recognize their own abilities, fostering pride in their achievements and cultural heritage, and supporting them on their paths to growth and self-discovery.

**Trauma-Informed Care:** We recognize that many young people have experienced trauma, including the deep impacts of intergenerational trauma within Indigenous communities. At CMCS, we strive to create spaces of safety—emotional, physical, cultural, and spiritual—by cultivating trust-based, caring relationships. Our trauma-informed approach is grounded in the values of partnership, choice, empowerment, and compassion. We honour each young person’s resilience and adaptive strengths, viewing their behaviours as responses to their challenging journeys. By offering a nurturing, homelike environment that recognizes cultural traditions and

stories, we walk alongside youth as they heal, grow, and reconnect with their identities and communities.

### **The Principles of Service**

At CMCS, our approach is rooted in Indigenous-friendly and relational principles, honouring the wisdom, strength, and interconnectedness of all individuals and communities we serve. We weave four guiding values—Partnership, Connection & Belonging, Identity-building, and Knowledge & Learning—into all our relationships, collaborations, programming, and services. These values are lived out intentionally, shaping every moment as an opportunity for young people to heal, discover their gifts, and develop the skills and knowledge needed for a healthy, holistic life as they journey toward family, community, or adulthood.

We walk alongside young people with a focus on their strengths while also acknowledging and gently working through the challenges they face. Our support is offered without judgment or blame, ensuring no one feels isolated or inadequate. We recognize that true healing and empowerment is deeply connected to community, cultural traditions, and natural supports. By respecting and amplifying these connections, we strengthen the role of community in nurturing the growth and well-being of young people at CMCS.

### **Partnership**

Partnership means growing relationships built on trust, respect, and shared wisdom. At CMCS, we walk in circle with children, youth, families, caregivers, and communities, listening deeply and ensuring every voice is valued. We honour each person’s lived experience and perspective, knowing that our stories shape the way we see the world. Through collaboration, we bring together diverse viewpoints and gifts, creating space for collective decision-making that uplifts the whole community.

Our commitment to partnership extends beyond direct care, reaching out to funders, service agencies, and stakeholders. By working together in good faith, we align our goals, coordinate our efforts, and build a strong, supportive network that benefits everyone. This spirit of cooperation enriches the foundation of our services and amplifies the positive impact we have within the broader community.

### **Connection & Belonging**

We understand that every young person needs to feel rooted and cared for to thrive. CMCS is a welcoming home where everyone is accepted, valued, and respected. We nurture belonging through meaningful relationships—with peers, families, Elders, spiritual leaders, and community members—creating space for connection and healing.

- Honouring traditional cultures, values, and spirituality.
- Connecting young people with community Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- Celebrating strong family ties and community networks as protective forces.
- Acting as allies to the LGBTQ2 community, supporting each young person's unique journey.
- Encouraging peer support, mentorship, and natural relationships within each person's circle.
- Actively building relationships with communities, professionals, and Elders to expand support networks.

By fostering cultural diversity and meaningful relationships, we empower young people to honour their heritage and find their place within the circle of community and care.

### **Identity-Building**

At CMCS, we lift up the unique spirit and identity of each young person. Our strength-based, trauma-informed approach creates spaces for self-expression, growth, and belonging. We support young people in exploring who they are and where they come from, nurturing confidence and pride in their cultural roots.

- Using strength-based, trauma-informed practices that honour resilience.
- Facilitating connections to family, peers, and natural support networks.
- Providing opportunities for self-expression through art, storytelling, and personal decoration.
- Organizing experiences that teach life skills, build confidence, and nurture the inner child.
- Encouraging connection to the land through outdoor activities, mindfulness, and stewardship.
- Supporting the celebration of culture, language, and tradition.
- Exploring spirituality and inner wisdom.
- Creating opportunities for volunteering and giving back in community.
- Fostering a love for learning and knowledge through engaging activities.

We are dedicated to helping young people build a strong sense of self and pride in their identity, empowering them to walk their path with confidence and purpose.

### **Knowledge & Learning**

We recognize that learning is a journey, unique to each individual. At CMCS, we nurture a love for learning by adapting to unique styles and creating space for natural, experiential growth.

We walk alongside schools and communities to support graduation and lifelong learning, treating mistakes as valuable lessons and opportunities.

- Guiding young people through hands-on activities and subtle teaching moments.
- Celebrating successes to build confidence and self-worth.
- Connecting learning to the land, teaching essential life skills through experience.
- Offering mentorship and role-modelling in areas of personal interest and growth.
- Reading aloud and sharing stories to inspire curiosity and understanding.
- Setting aside dedicated time for homework and life skills, tailored to each person's needs.
- Building partnerships with mentors and Knowledge Keepers in areas of interest.
- Encouraging staff to model that learning is joyful and lifelong.

By weaving these approaches together, we create a nurturing environment where every young person can discover their gifts, develop essential life skills, and journey into adulthood with confidence and curiosity—supported by the wisdom of their community.

### “The How”

CMCS incorporates intentionality into every home, using an adaptable approach that considers each young person's individuality, the home's needs, community input, and cultural context.

Here are a few key aspects of our approach:

1. **Relationships** – At CMCS, authentic relationships form the cornerstone of trauma-informed care, serving as the essential foundation for healing, growth, and lasting success. We recognize that many young people have experienced adversity and trauma, and we are committed to fostering trust, safety, and respect through every interaction. By prioritizing open communication, emotional safety, and cultural humility, we create supportive environments where individuals feel valued, understood, and empowered. Through intentional connection, active listening, and genuine care—always mindful of each person's unique history and needs—we build bridges that help young people navigate challenges, celebrate achievements, and develop resilience. Our relational approach is rooted in partnership and collaboration, recognizing that trauma recovery and personal development flourish within the context of meaningful, consistent relationships—both within our homes and the broader community. By nurturing these bonds, honouring lived experiences, and maintaining a strengths-based perspective, we empower young people to discover their gifts, embrace their identities, and journey

confidently towards adulthood, supported by a network of caring and trustworthy individuals.

2. **Organizational Culture** – At CMCS, we recognize that the well-being, satisfaction, and growth of our staff are fundamental to achieving positive outcomes for young people. By nurturing an organizational culture that exemplifies continuous learning, open communication, collaboration, inclusivity, and ongoing professional development, we empower our staff to model and instil the values we wish to see in the youth we serve. When staff feel supported and valued, they are better equipped to build authentic relationships, serve as mentors, and create nurturing environments that foster curiosity, resilience, and personal development. In this way, our commitment to a healthy organizational culture directly impacts the success and well-being of young people—encouraging them to discover their strengths, embrace lifelong learning, and journey confidently into adulthood, supported by a caring and capable team.
3. **Decision Making** – At CMCS, we approach decision making through a trauma-informed lens, recognizing that each young person’s history and experiences shape how they assess choices and outcomes. Our role is to gently guide youth in understanding the potential impacts of their decisions, fostering accountability in a supportive manner, and nurturing their skills and confidence as decision makers. Through open, non-judgmental conversations and intentional teaching moments, we provide a safe and reliable foundation—serving as their safety net regardless of the choices they make. By prioritizing trust, emotional safety, and partnership, we empower young people to reflect critically, learn from mistakes, and grow into resilient adults, supported by caring relationships and community wisdom.
4. **The word “No” is not part of our vocabulary**—instead, at CMCS, we empower youth to be the architects of their own lives. Our role is to walk alongside them, providing tools and support that foster problem solving, critical thinking, and confident decision-making. Every situation becomes an opportunity for growth, reflection, and learning. Rather than defaulting to “no, you can’t, that’s not safe,” we invite open dialogue: “Let’s explore the possible outcomes of that choice together,” or “How might we help you achieve that safely?” We honour each young person’s autonomy, encouraging them to make their own choices and learn from their experiences within a safe and supportive environment. By nurturing and guiding without judgment, we create space for youth to

try, stumble, and grow—knowing they are trusted and respected as the leaders of their own journey.

5. **Boundaries:** While “no” is not part of our vocabulary at CMCS, we recognize the importance of teaching and supporting healthy boundaries as a fundamental aspect of trauma-informed care. Our approach emphasizes harm reduction—meeting young people where they are and supporting them to make choices that minimize risk while respecting their autonomy. Rather than imposing rigid restrictions, we engage in open, non-judgmental conversations about personal limits, safety, and mutual respect. This means guiding youth to recognize their own boundaries and the boundaries of others and helping them develop the skills to communicate and uphold these boundaries in a way that feels safe and empowering.
6. **Harm Reduction Approach:** By taking a harm reduction approach, we acknowledge that risk-taking is a natural part of growth and learning, especially for youth navigating complex histories. Expanding on this foundation, harm reduction with youth involves not only meeting young people where they are but also actively working to reduce negative consequences associated with risk taking behaviours without judgment or punishment. This approach recognizes that expecting complete avoidance of all risk is unrealistic and that supporting youth in making safer choices is both pragmatic and compassionate.

At CMCS, harm reduction is woven into daily interactions and decision-making processes. Staff engage youth in honest, age-appropriate conversations about potential risks—such as substance use, relationships, or online activity—offering practical information and collaboratively exploring strategies that can minimize harm. Furthermore, we understand that harm reduction is deeply rooted in respect for each individual’s autonomy, culture, and lived experience. We honour young people’s voices in policy and program development, seeking their input when creating guidelines around safety, boundaries, and support. By recognizing the strengths and wisdom that youth bring, we empower them to take ownership of their decisions and encourage them to reach out when they need help, knowing they will be met with understanding rather than judgment.

Ultimately, harm reduction at CMCS is not about condoning risky behaviours but about recognizing the realities youth face and giving them the tools, knowledge, and support to navigate those realities safely. This approach aligns with our commitment to trauma-informed care, relationship-building, and empowerment, ensuring that every young person feels respected, capable, and supported on their unique journey to adulthood.

7. **Community Integration:** At CMCS, we recognize that we are just one part of each young person’s broader community, and that true healing and personal growth are deeply rooted in their wider connections and cultural identity. We approach community integration with curiosity and respect, actively seeking out and welcoming the support of every young person’s unique community—whether that means local neighbourhoods, Indigenous communities, LGBTQ2Q networks, neurodiverse groups, or other meaningful affiliations. Guided by the voices and choices of the youth themselves, we listen closely and intentionally include the communities they identify as important. Our role is to nurture relationships and foster the development of life skills that empower each young person to live, learn, and thrive within their own community. By honouring lived experience, encouraging participation, and building bridges to community resources, we support youth to strengthen their sense of belonging, deepen cultural connections, and confidently pursue their goals as valued members of their larger community.
  
8. **Day to Day Living:** At CMCS, daily life is intentionally designed to meet the unique physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and developmental needs of every young person. We employ individualized structures, activities, and strategies that reflect not only the specific needs and preferences of each youth, but also the input of their communities, cultural backgrounds, and personal histories. Our approach integrates trauma-informed care principles, emphasizing authentic relationships, emotional safety, and open communication. Each day, staff foster environments where youth feel respected, understood, and empowered to make choices that support their well-being and personal growth. Activities and routines are adapted in partnership with youth, ensuring that their voices guide the development of meaningful experiences—from building life skills and nurturing cultural connections, to facilitating opportunities for community engagement and self-discovery. Through collaboration, harm reduction, and strengths-based support, we create a foundation where youth can develop resilience, celebrate achievements, and journey confidently towards adulthood, surrounded by a caring and empowering network.
  
9. **Mentorship:** Many of the young people we support have experienced challenges such as poverty, substance use, unhealthy relationships, and generational trauma, which may limit their exposure to new opportunities and role models. At CMCS, we strive to foster meaningful connections rooted in relational and Indigenous-friendly approaches by decreasing reliance on paid professionals and expanding natural support networks that

continue well beyond our formal care. Our approach involves actively inviting Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members to participate as mentors, helping to create pathways to new possibilities, nurture healthy relationships, explore diverse activities, and celebrate each young person's unique strengths and gifts.

10. **Peer Mentorship:** Recognizing that adolescence is a period when peers have a profound influence, we are committed to building partnerships with other service providers, Indigenous communities, and local organizations to co-create a peer mentorship program. This program will honour the wisdom, lived experiences, and cultures of the youth and their communities, and provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, support, and leadership. Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to grow this initiative in respectful partnership with our youth and their communities.

CMCS is dedicated to fostering an environment where youth are not only supported but also genuinely empowered to shape their own lives. Through a steadfast commitment to trauma-informed care, harm reduction, inclusivity, and meaningful community engagement, we champion a holistic approach that recognizes the strengths, voices, and dreams of every young person. Our staff play a vital role in modeling these values, drawing on their own growth and well-being to nurture authentic relationships and create spaces of trust and respect. We are especially committed to integrating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and relating by engaging Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members, and ensuring our practices honour cultural traditions and lived experiences. By collaborating with youth, their communities, and a diverse circle of support, we ensure that every individual is respected, valued, and given the tools to thrive—today and into the future.

CMCS adheres to CARF accreditation standards, as well as funder and internal policies, to ensure the health, safety, and quality of service for all individuals. While upholding these requirements, we remain steadfast in our commitment to a comprehensive and community-oriented approach that empowers young people towards healing, growth, and positive life trajectories—never compromising the integrity or authenticity of our philosophy and methods.