



Stories from Piloting the Well-being Toolkit

# McMan South: Understanding Staff Well-Being and Supervision

June  
feature



*This month we feature Brittany Anderson's experience of piloting the toolkit at McMan South. Brittany is a Therapeutic Caregiving Specialist, and she started using the toolkit to better understand staff well-being and supervision.*

## How did you get started with using the ALIGN Well-being Toolkit?

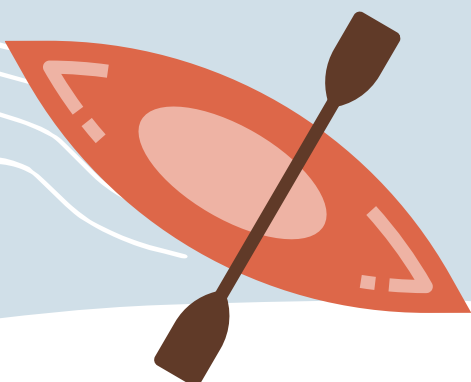
I am currently working on a project to review our supervisory practices. The goal is to enhance supervision to improve professional quality of life for staff and provide high-quality services. It was great timing to be a part of the pilot group because I thought this toolkit fits nicely into the project I am working on. The toolkit helps us see whether our staff is getting what they need from the organization, their supervisor, and their

managers to be able to have a positive impact on child, youth, and family well-being. My hope is that managers and supervisors will collaborate on their findings, and discover some programs have an abundance of resources in one area that another program needs more of to improve their impact. Working together like that, the agency overall may be able to make a greater impact.

**“Because the toolkit has indicators for caregivers and staff, it can help us understand what staff wellness, training, and supervision has to do with the well-being of the children and youth we’re caring for.”**

### Using the toolkit to assess supervision

I developed a Microsoft Form to collect stories of impact through oral conversation or written responses. I started with the descriptions of each well-being domain, followed by the indicators listed for staff, to provide examples for what sort of responses we might be looking for. I used the questions from the Wayfinding with Lobsticks section to ask staff, “What do you have an abundance of?” and “What more do you need in order to have an impact?”. This provided an easy guide for gathering information for each domain of well-being.



## How does the ALIGN Well-being toolkit fit with what you are doing at McMan South?

Funders often want quantitative data to prove that programs work, however the impact of our work is often better captured through stories and experiences. This toolkit can help us do that, based on research into what child and youth well-being means. It's interesting because it takes away that Western prescription of what well-being is and focuses on each individual across different worldviews and across different relationships around the child. I like that this toolkit looks at child and youth well-being from an ecological systems perspective,

which fits so well with our Therapeutic Foster Caregiving program. This program views the caregiver as the therapeutic change agent for the child. It focuses on how the relationships around the child influence the child's ability to make changes and have improved well-being, instead of putting all that responsibility on the child. Because the toolkit has indicators for caregivers and staff, it can help us understand what staff wellness, training, and supervision has to do with the well-being of the children and youth we're caring for.

## What did you learn from the first couple months of this experience?

It was interesting. We got some very meaningful responses and great stories of impact. But some staff asked what any of this has to do with supervision. I realized that not everyone saw the connection between staff well-being and participant well-being, and how supervision fits into improving the well-being and experiences of the people we

serve. This is what I like about the toolkit. It is so straight forward – it shows altogether beside each other what would we see from a child or youth, caregiver, and staff to demonstrate positive well-being of a child or youth. It really connects how each person that's a part of this service world impacts the well-being of children and youth and families.



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Being Toolkit**

Access the toolkit and its resources, videos, and Well-being Impact Portal at [www.alignab.ca/well-being](http://www.alignab.ca/well-being)

# Gathering Stories to Assess Supervision

Below is an image of one page of the Microsoft Form Brittany developed at McMan South. It incorporates the well-being domains, the agency and staff indicators, and the Wayfinding with Lobsticks questions from the the ALIGN Well-being Toolkit. There is one page for each well-being domain. Staff have a choice between written responses through the form or individual conversations to share their stories.

 Enhancing Supervisory Practices Project

## Connection to the Land

Connection to the land means cultivating relationships with the land, water, food sources, and the natural environment. For Indigenous communities, connection to the land and the opportunity to practice land-based activities are essential to identity. They also support living in a good way, which includes connecting with positive aspects of life and gratitude for the land. For children from immigrant, migrant, and refugee communities, connecting to the land builds relationship and a sense of belonging to their new homeland. For all children and youth connection to land is vital for well-being and builds awareness about environmental health, which in turn is necessary for life and well-being.

Indicators:

- Organization connects staff, children, youth and caregivers to the land.
- Organizations secures external resources to connect staff, children, youth, and caregivers to the land.
- Organization practices connection to land in their programs.
- Staff are offered learning opportunities on land, plants, animals, and waterways teachings.
- Staff increase their understanding of land, plants, animals, and waterway teachings.
- Staff understand the importance and significance of land acknowledgements.
- Organizations have policies and practices that demonstrate respect of land and living creatures.
- Organizations provide physical space connecting to and learning about plant teachings.
- Programs or services offer or connect to medicine picking activities and training on medicines and practices.
- Staff are comfortable and knowledgeable in creating safe spaces for Indigenous youth. For example, staff feels comfortable smudging, or staff understand cultural practices for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and youth.
- Organization provides welcoming environment for Elders, knowledge keepers, and Circle Keepers.
- Organizations have connections and receive information about events and activities that build a sense of place early enough for families and agencies to plan for them.
- Programs and staff model comfort with natural and environment and basic survival skills.

2. What do you have an abundance of? Share a story of change or impact in this domain.

Enter your answer

3. What would you need more of? What would you need to better support this domain?

Enter your answer