

Stories from Piloting the Well-being Toolkit

# WJS: Using Well-Being Domains to Share Stories & Build Community

August  
feature

WJS  
Canada

*This month we feature Aaron Hachkowski's experience of piloting the toolkit at WJS. Aaron is a Program Director and oversees sites across Alberta and Ontario. He found that gathering stories for each of the toolkit's seven well-being domains was a way to support learning and community between very diverse sites.*

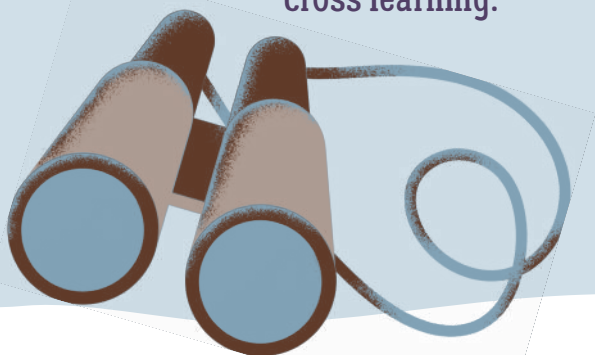
## How did you get started with using the ALIGN Well-being Toolkit?

I decided to start by looking at two of the well-being domains. We chose **Caring & Stable Relationships** and **Cultural Connection**, because we felt we would be able to gather the most information from these. At WJS we already have a system in place where managers gather stories about impact in a database. There are a lot of really great stories that we use for our reporting. So, I chose one rural and one urban WJS program site and looked through the stories gathered there over the past year to see how they would fit under those two domains. As we moved along with the pilot I decided to try

a self-assessment using the Wayfinding with Lobsticks section with all our sites in Alberta to start gathering stories about the work.

We also want to start using the toolkit's seven domains to nurture a community of practice across all our programs and sites. WJS is really spread out across the province, and it can be hard to know what everyone else is doing. Our plan is to use some of the well-being domains to share internally the good things that are happening across different sites and spark cross-learning and cross-teaching.

**“Gathering the stories and using those to see where we're at in different domains really brings that cross learning.”**



### **Example: Cultural Connection Impact Story**

It's a really simple thing we did. Our staff transported some young people to their local band office to get their treaty card. There, they ran into a sister who they hadn't seen for a while. So they made a connection, and things took off from there. It is a real simple thing that staff can do to enhance **Cultural Connection**.

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

At WJS we have been intentional about reconciliation long before this project started. For example, at a board level we've been trying to do land acknowledgements that are more connected to our personal and professional stories. Also, when it comes to collecting feedback from families and youth, we really centre storytelling. Our sites have been collecting stories for the last year and a half, which we submit in our reporting to

fundors. When we have gone through accreditation, our surveyors have commented on these stories and interviews from the people we serve. We've been focused on getting more stories, and then sharing them with our groups. So that is one way how we've been able to integrate the well-being domains and the self-reflection piece from the toolkit with what we're already doing.

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

At our manager meetings, we discuss information about the programs, but I don't think we always do a great job sharing some of the real practice pieces. I have started adding well-being as a standing agenda item for those meetings. Gathering the stories to see where we're at in different domains really supports that cross learning. And certain stories stand out.

I would say we do not yet have stories that reflect impact in all the domains. In some domains, like **Supportive & Safe Environments** and **Meaningful Knowledge**, we have a lot of great examples.

I know we do a great job of connecting our families to resources, getting treaty cards, helping with transport, being with them for funerals and just, you know, really listening to their stories. All that creates **Supportive & Safe Environments**.

We also see where we could improve. For example, **Connection to the Land** - that one really depends on the staff that we have. Sometimes we have staff that takes the youth out, to pick berries or teach them about different medicines on the land. So going forward, we're trying to make connections to local people to do that.



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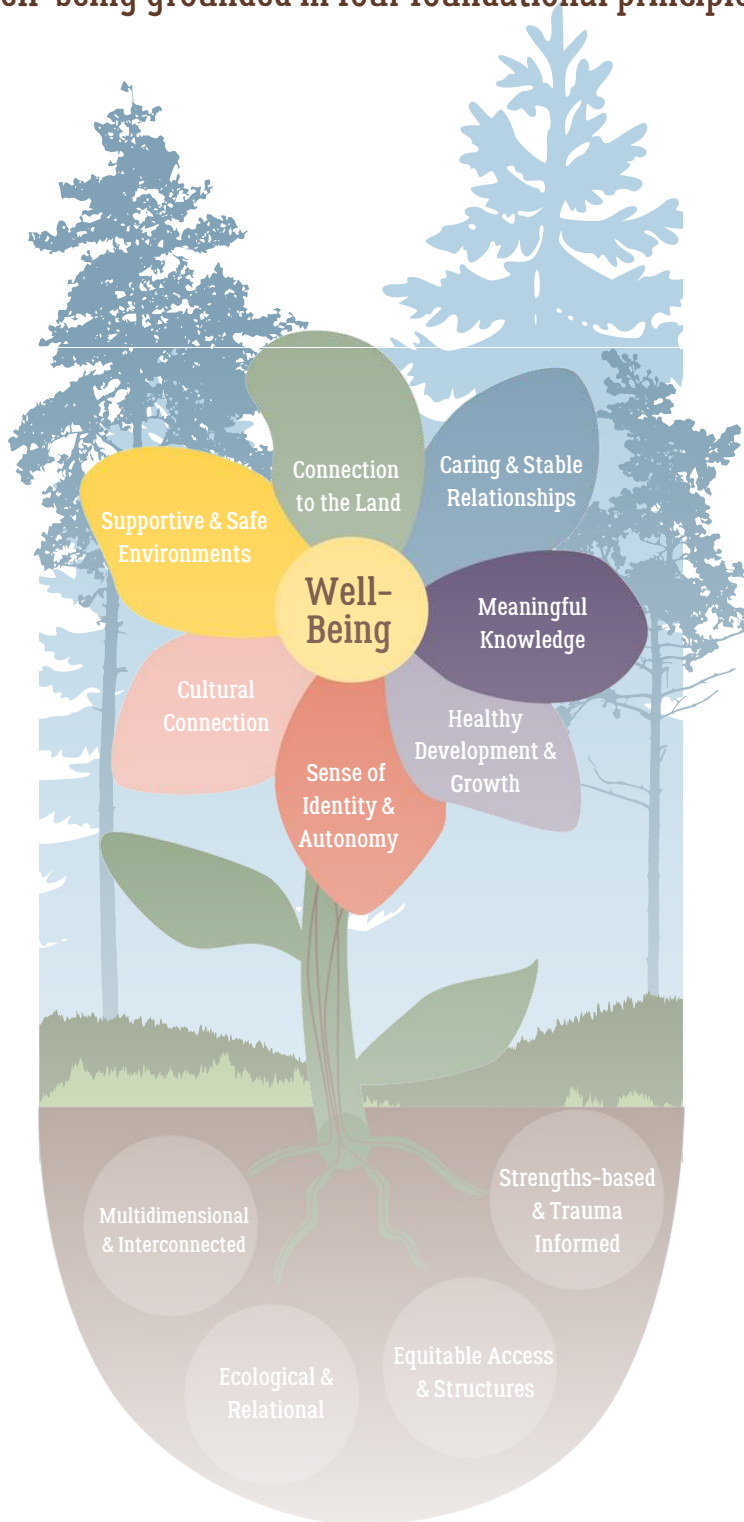


Learn more  
about the Well-  
Being Toolkit

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

Example Resources from Piloting the Well-being Toolkit

Model of child well-being with seven intersecting domains of well-being grounded in four foundational principles.



[Download the full resource here](#)