



# Strengthening the Circle:

## Building Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategies

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) collaborated in planning an engagement event with the GTA Aboriginal community at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. Participants represented Aboriginal agencies and programs throughout the GTA - the LHINs and the community connected based upon a shared vision of improving the health status of urban Aboriginal peoples.

Utilizing a cultural approach to community engagement, the LHINs presented recommendations on foundations for a collective approach to future engagement strategies, based upon key informant interviews conducted in 2008. These recommendations were the basis for the breakout group discussions surrounding the foundation for future engagement.

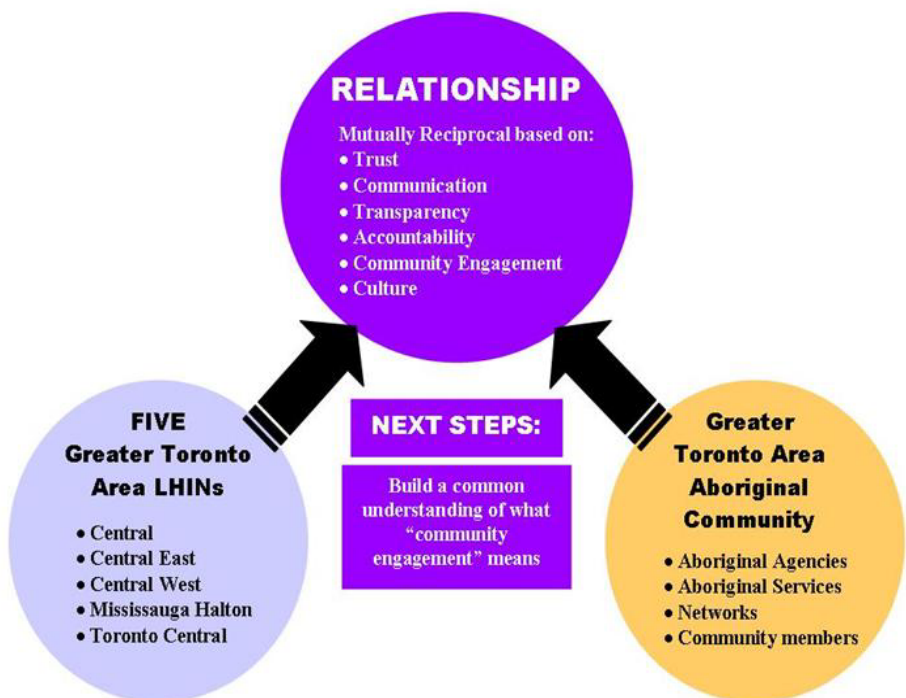
The outcome of the event was very positive: 90% of the participants felt that the session “gave them the opportunity to participate and express their views”, and over 80% of the participants felt that the “session was a success”.

### Key recommendations include:

- GTA LHINs continuing to work collaboratively with the GTA Aboriginal community
- Ongoing relationship building based on accountability, transparency & trust

### Next steps:

- Build a common understanding of ‘community engagement’



Based upon discussions at “Strengthening the Circle: Building Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategies” hosted by the GTA LHINs for the GTA Aboriginal communities at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, March 3, 2009

On March 24th, the Toronto Central LHIN hosted a community feast, serving up traditional foods such as venison stew, buffalo chili and salmon. Live entertainment accompanied the evening, including traditional pow wow and social dancing, Métis fiddling and performances from Juno nominated band ‘Digging Roots’. The event brought together Aboriginal people from across the GTA, as well as board and staff from the GTA LHINs.

