

SACY ABORIGINAL CAPACITY CAFE: NOVEMBER 2009



11/18/2009

Adult and Youth Perspectives

This report presents the findings from the fourth Aboriginal Capacity Café held in Vancouver in November 2009.

Report Prepared by: Arbor Educational & Clinical Consulting
www.arboeducational.com

SACY ABORIGINAL CAPACITY CAFE: November 2009

PERSPECTIVES OF ADULTS AND YOUTH

Aboriginal Capacity Café Background

On **November 19, 2009**, through partnerships made possible by the shared energies and contributions of the British Columbia/Yukon Society of Transition Houses (BCYSTH), Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), Vancouver Board of Education (VBE), School-Aged Children and Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Program (SACY) and Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), the fourth Aboriginal Capacity Café was hosted at Templeton Secondary in Vancouver. This Capacity Café was made possible through partnership and funding from the BCYSTH and Health Canada's Population Health Fund. In total, the attendees included: 66 adults who registered for the event, 25 unregistered adults, 17 youth participants, and 16 staff members from organizing agencies.¹ Of these attendees, 17 Aboriginal youth and 45 community members (parents, school board staff and social service agency staff) provided evaluation feedback.

What is a Capacity Café?

A Capacity Café is a unique opportunity for community members to hear about the lived experiences of youth. The overall goal is to encourage young people to feel listened to, respected, and valued in order that they view themselves as a needed resource within the community. By creating this youth-friendly environment, youth are willing to talk openly about their lives and issues they consider to be important. The key tenet of a Capacity Café is that the engagement of young people potentially forges intergenerational connections by helping adults and other community members understand and appreciate life from a youth's perspective (e.g., stressors and lived experiences).

Capacity Café Report Overview

Feedback regarding this Aboriginal Capacity Café is presented in two parts:

1. Adult feedback
2. Youth feedback

¹ In addition, there were approximately 30 children who had access to child care at the site.

Adult Participants

45 adults participated in the evaluation of the Aboriginal Capacity Café. Of the 45 adults, 21 identified themselves as parents, 9 as service providers, and 10 as individuals who have an informal support role with youth or who are family members supporting youth (an additional 5 adults did not identify their role).

Feedback from Adults

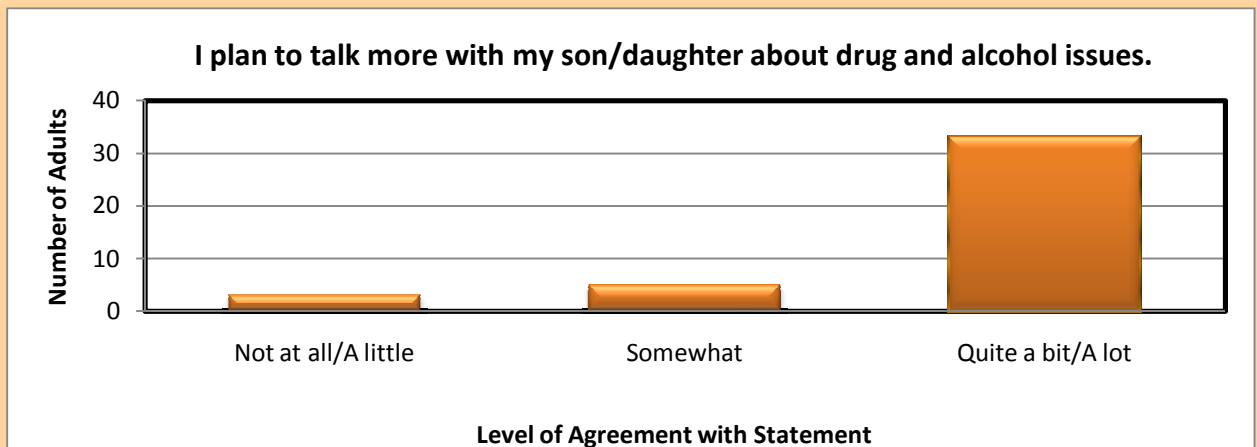
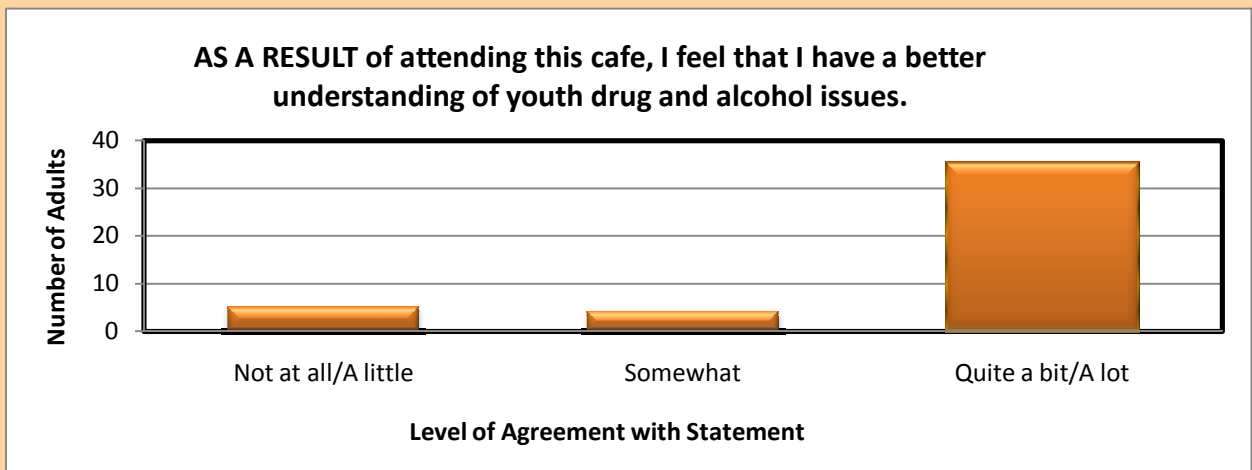
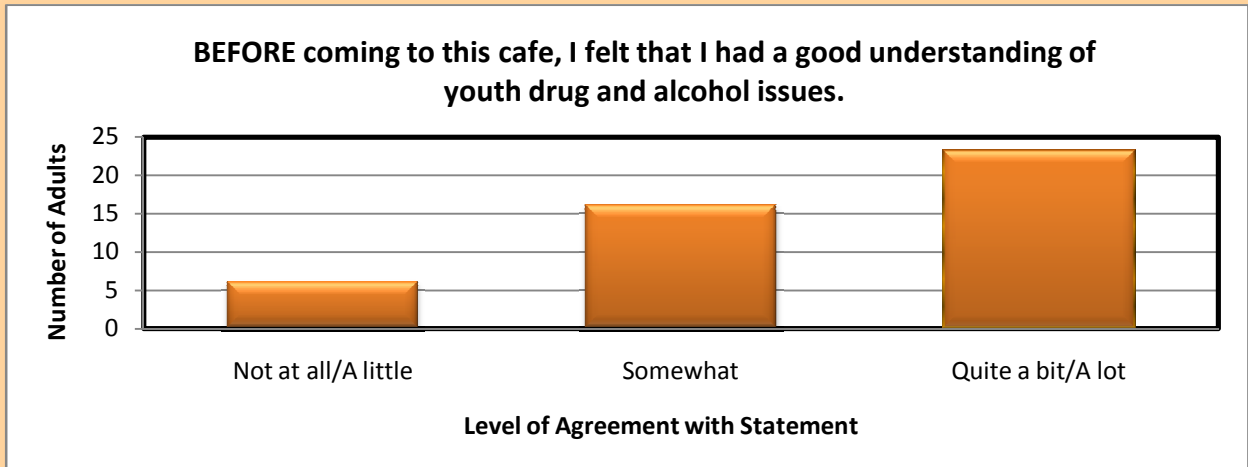
Adults responded to one open-ended question and 9 Likert-scale type questions in order to gather their perspectives on their involvement in the Aboriginal Capacity Café. Results of their feedback are presented below.

What was the best part about participating in the Aboriginal Capacity Café? 37 out of 45 adults responded to this question. Comments were analyzed in order to draw out themes.

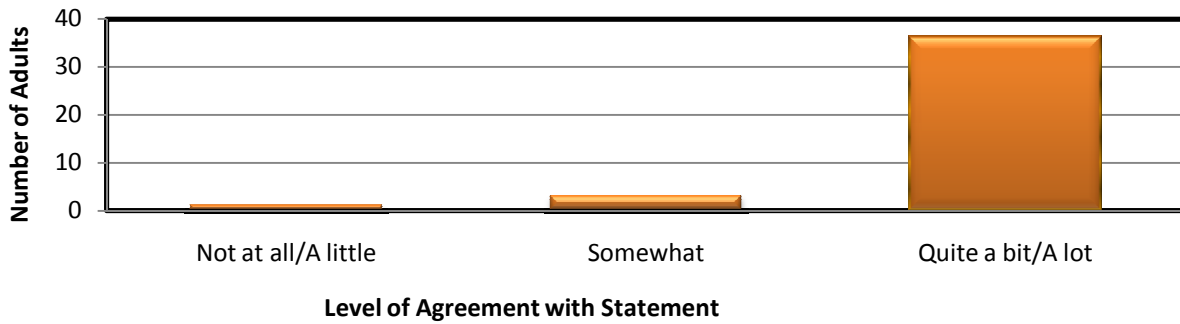
Best Part of the Cafe	Comments
Learning experience (20 comments)	<p>Listening to Youth as a Learning Experience (13 comments): Listening to our youths' voices - feelings, thoughts, wisdom; Hearing stories from the youth; Listening to youth and understanding troublesome times; The input from the youth, of what they are going through; The youth expressing youth issues and difficulties; Seeing how articulate and wise the kids are; Youth voice and knowledge; Listening with my heart and mind; Identifying that youth truly benefit from co-curricular activities (lots and lots), from time round the kitchen table to share, and a person who takes a sincere interest in their life; Listening!!;</p> <p>Listening about the Needs of Youth (7 comments): Learning and having a better understanding of the needs of our First Nation children and teens; Parents have to listen; Allow all teens to express their feelings; Be loving and supportive; Ways to better talk with them; I hear their needs! I'm sorry I didn't listen.</p>

Best Part of the Cafe	Comments
Youth Openness to speak (10 comments)	The openness of all the youth; Youth open floor freedom; Hearing youth speak up; Youth sharing experience, strength and hope; The candid sharing of opinions and ideas; Youth openness; Differing opinions; The youth speaking.; The youth presence and participation; Spontaneous sharing.
Respect (5 comments)	Absolute respect from and between all age groups; Love and respect is a priority and glad to hear it highlighted; Respect for elders, not getting bent when they go outside the lines/boundaries; The incorporation of culture; Traditional honouring.
Honesty (2 comments)	Honesty; Absolute safe honesty on part of youth.
Everything (3 comments)	The whole thing - all of it was important; So well done and such a powerful experience; I enjoyed everything.
Circle (2 comments)	The facilitated circle; The circle.
Other (6 comments)	That there was an elder involved; Meeting people; Excellent facilitators; Linked -fell into place - letting the creator planning is good - leave the result up to God; This one specifically - the other adults listened (this doesn't have to happen at every Capacity Cafe); I learned and heard my own life with the speakers.

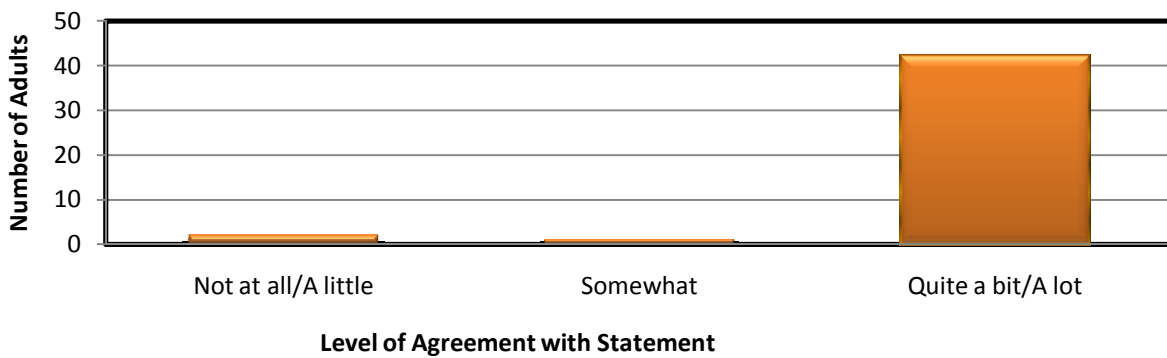
Adults were then asked to respond to 9 statements and indicate how much they agreed with each statement. Results are presented below.



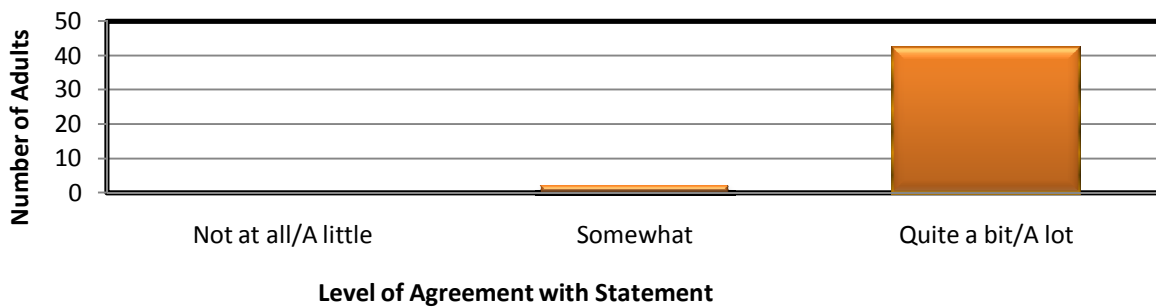
As a result of this cafe, I plan to spend more time talking with my children about day-to-day things.

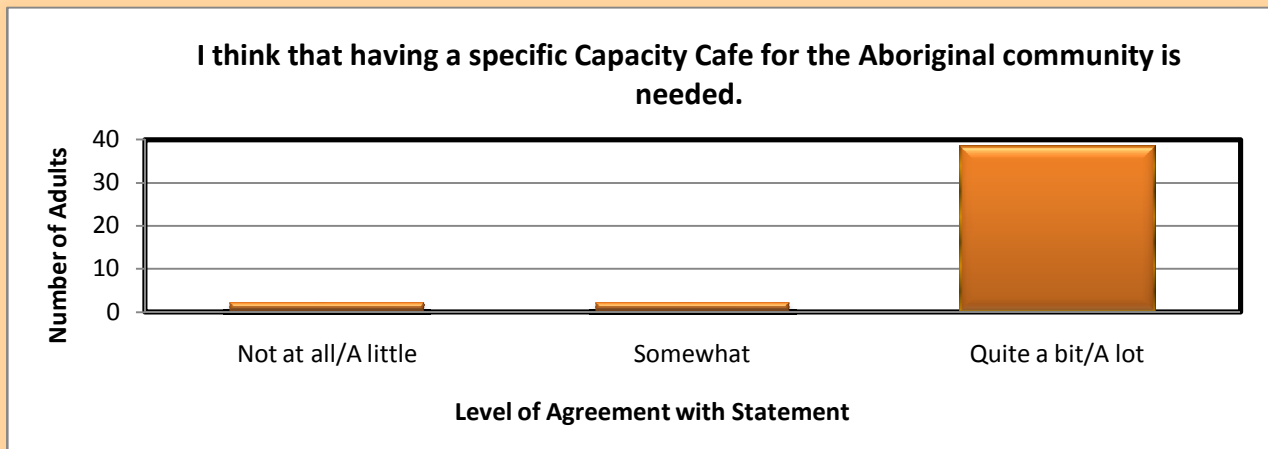
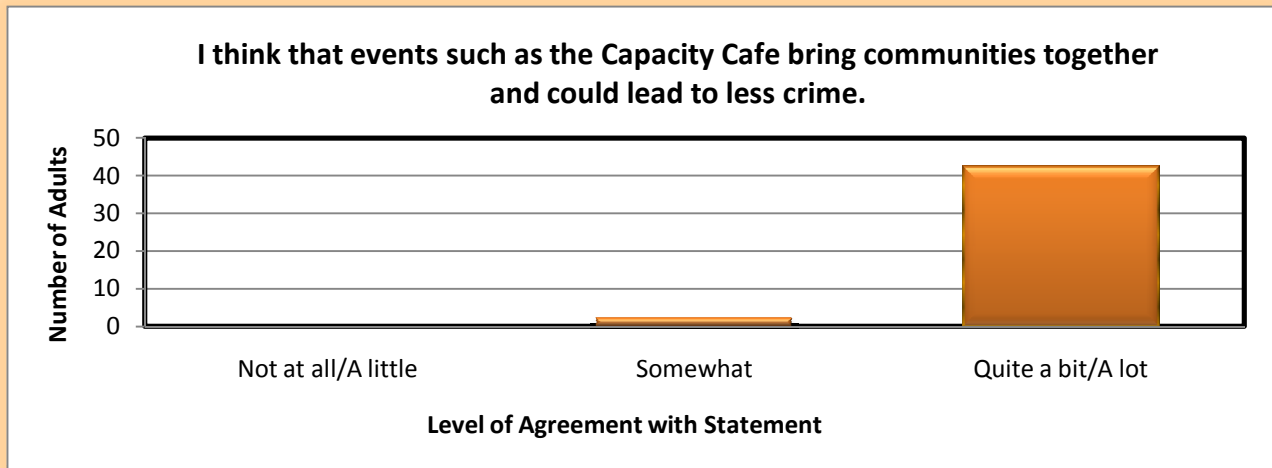
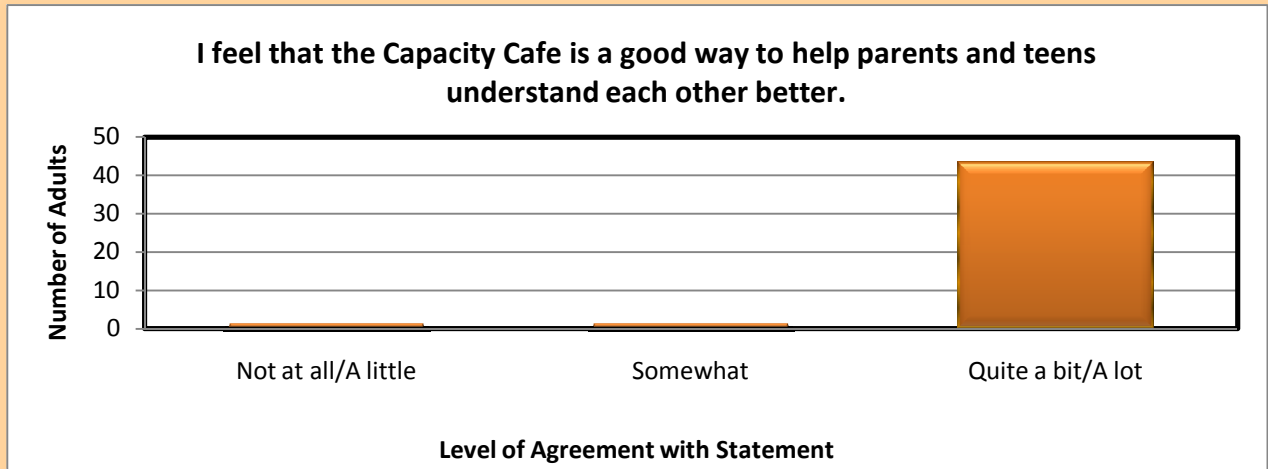


I gained valuable knowledge from attending this cafe.



I would be interested in attending other events that focus on bringing together teens and adults.





Comments from Adults

Adults offered some final comments. Comments were analyzed in order to draw out themes.

Comments	Comments
Overall appreciation of the event (11 comments)	Excellent idea!; Nice work!; This a good thing here; Keep it up; I feel so very proud to be here; Thank you; Thank you for organizing this; It was very well organized and insightful; Youth are appreciated; Real proud - bravo- cheering you; East Side Youth Love you!; All the facilitators, organizing committee, hands go out to you all; Keep up the good work; Continue education for as long as possible; Congratulations for being so open!!
Suggestions for Improvement (6 comments)	<p>Drugs and Alcohol (3 comments): More on the real problem of drugs and alcohol; More information needs to be given to our youth about consequences of drugs and alcohol; Consequences on drinking and driving to children.</p> <p>Allowing youth to have their voices heard (2 comments): I felt impatient when the adults took the floor; It was a shame to take time away from youth. An adult is monopolizing 2 -15 minutes blocks of time - impedes the time for the youth to speak out.</p> <p>Other (1 comment): I thought this event could have been more succinct.</p>
Aboriginal/ Cultural related Comments (3 comments)	Elders - helping youth; Cultural additions; Great to hear another fluent speaker; It was so encouraging to hear so many Aboriginal families saying they felt welcome - like their children, they are 'returning home'; So glad to bear witness to this important event.
Personal Related Comments (2 comments)	I raised 4 children on my own. They are adults now. People would ask if it was hard raising 4 children - I said no, it was fun even though it was hard; Almost didn't come tonight- death in family and stresses of life got in the way. But I am so glad I came. The knowledge and peace these young people gave me will help and are just what I needed to hear at this very sad time. Thank you for blessing me with these stories.
Other (2 comments)	I would like to have heard the youth speak on some other issues, i.e., crime, suicide, what parents/ caregivers have done right; Love the focus on breaking the cycle.

Feedback from Youth

17 youth provided their feedback about the Aboriginal Capacity Café by responding to 2 open-ended questions and 7 Likert-scale type questions. Results of their feedback are presented below.

What was the best part about participating in the Aboriginal Capacity Café? 16 of the 17 youth responded to this question. Comments were analyzed in order to draw out themes.

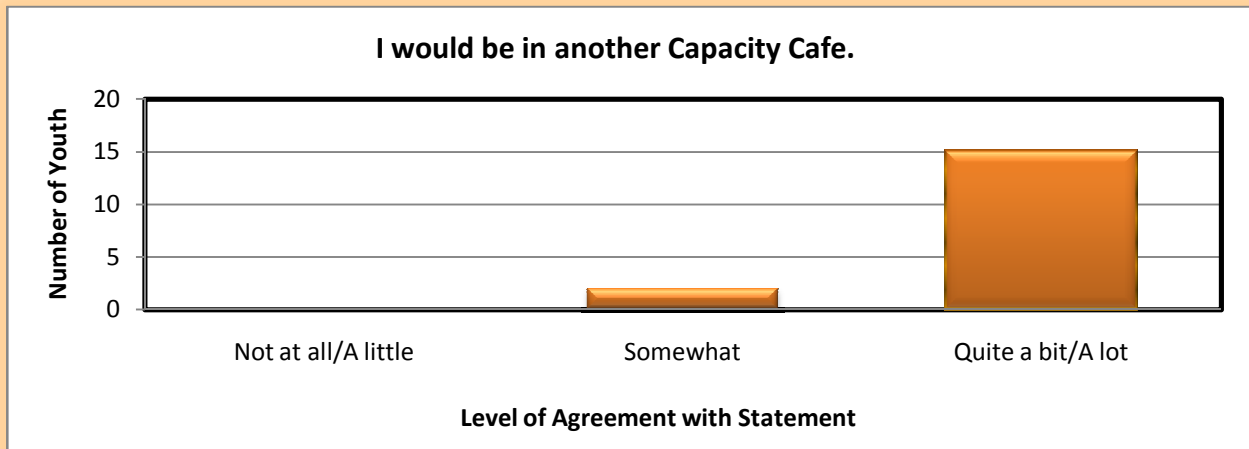
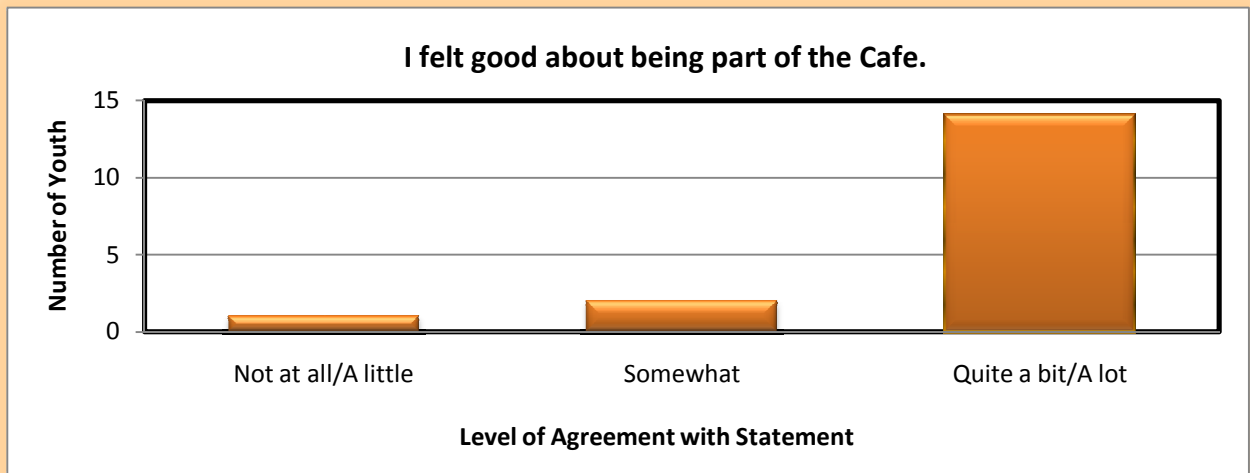
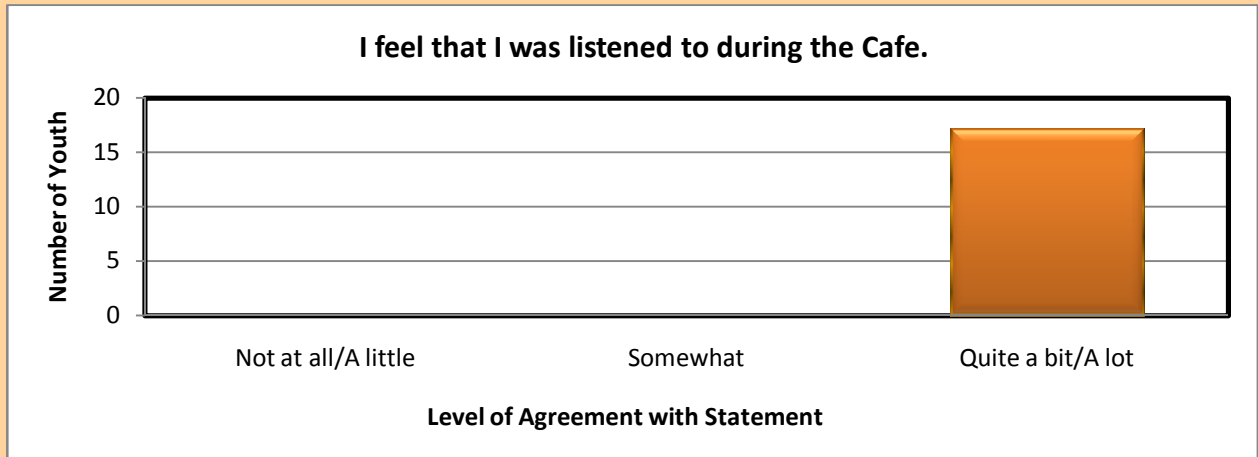
Best Part of the Cafe	Comments
Expressing and being heard (7 comments)	Talking about my feelings; Being able to talk about what I'm going through is a really good feeling especially talking with adults- it's good for us and them; Having adults listen to me; The best part about this Cafe is that I was able to speak out about things I couldn't say in the past; Letting my voice be heard; Being able to speak out and actually know someone heard me.
Listening to the experience of others and Learning from/about them (6 comments)	Being able to hear that most youth my age are going through the same thing; Hearing other stories; I like listening to the other people and learn what they have; Getting to know about what other youth go through; Knowing about them having paths that are harder than other people's roads; Knowing and understanding more about the fears of parents; Come together 'The Beatles' - that's a song that explains what I mean; Valuable information.
Problem solving/making better choices (3 comments)	Learn to make better choices; Changing to something good; Sharing the ideas to help parents and grandparents fix their problems.
Other (2 comments)	The food; All the love.

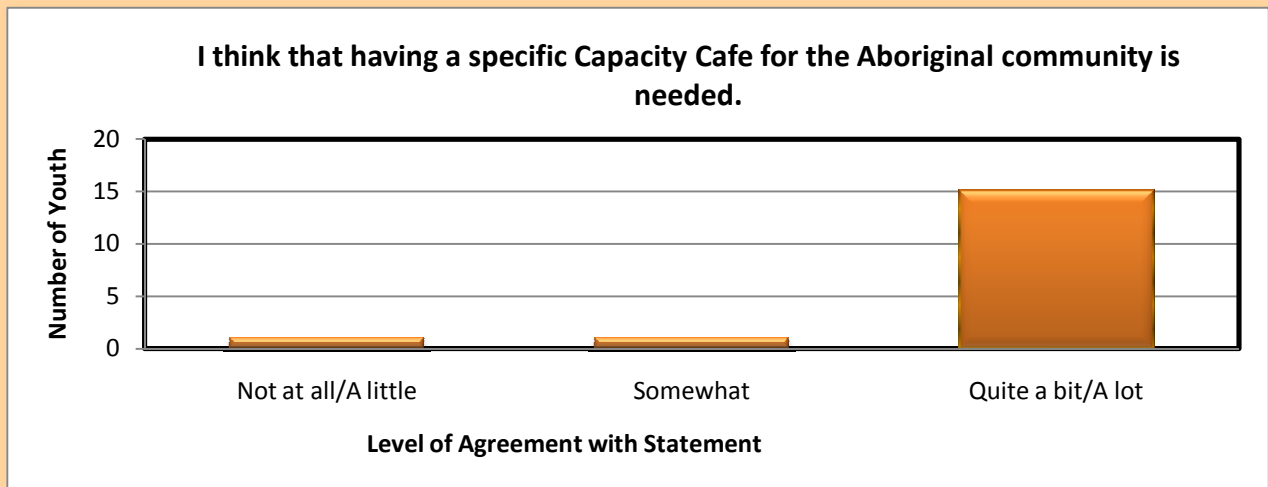
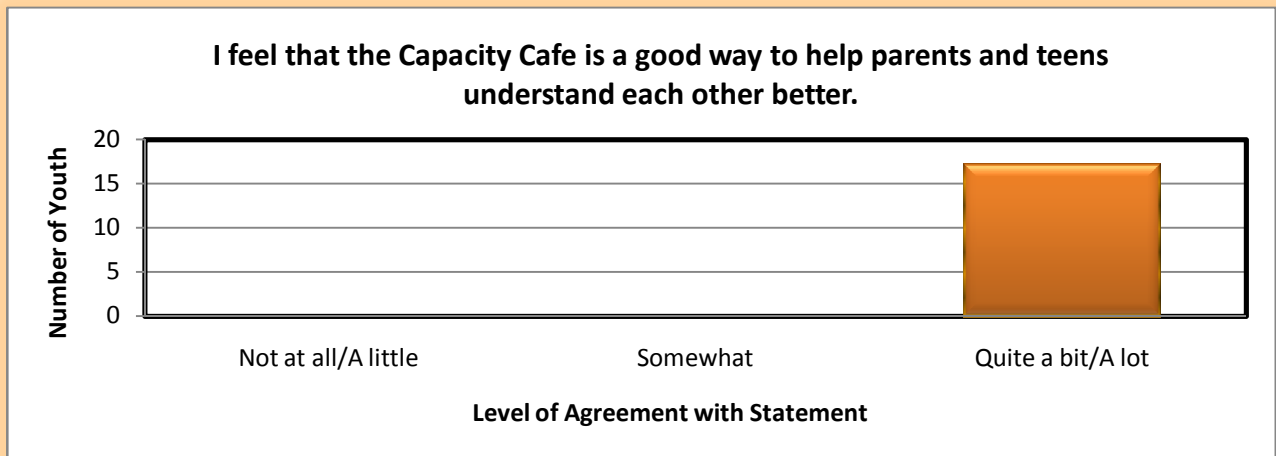
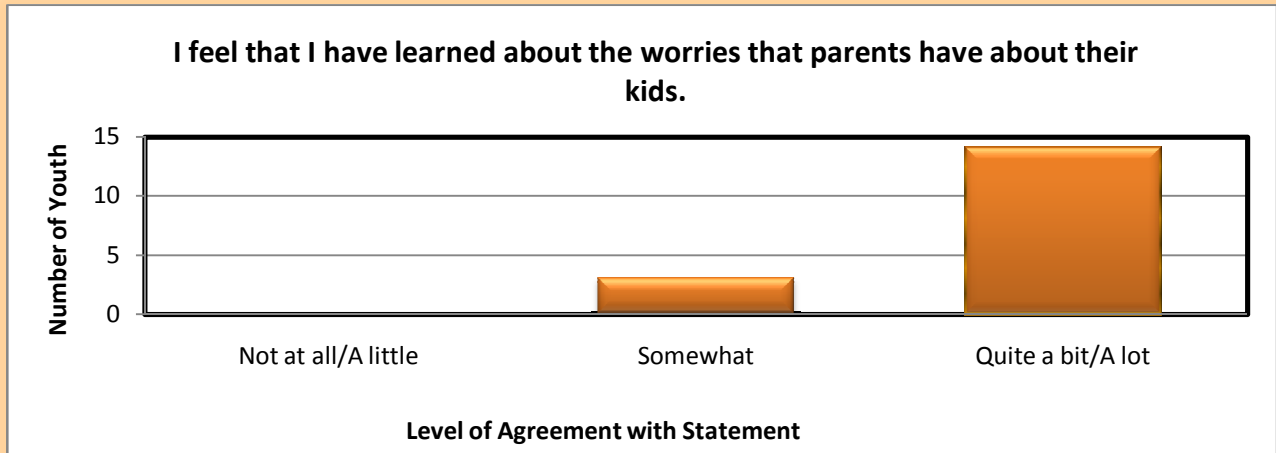
What do you like about having an Aboriginal-only Capacity Café?

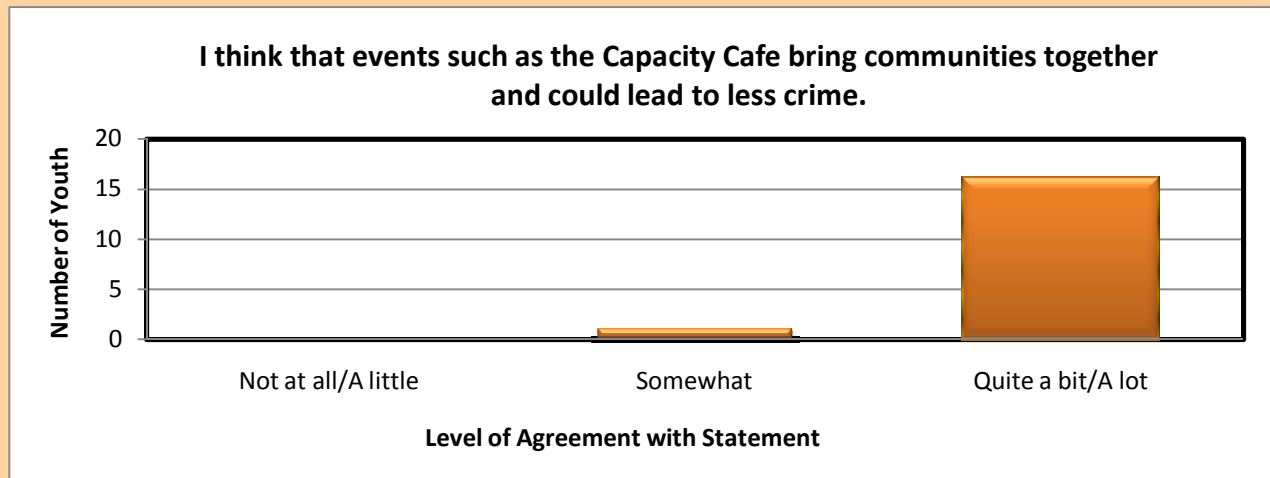
Once again, 16 youth responded to this question. Comments were analyzed in order to draw out themes.

What do you like about having an Aboriginal Only café?	Comments
Easier to relate to one another/shared identities, culture, history (6 comments)	More comfortable; Talking with your own people; That in some way we're all the same; They understand my history and what I go through in everyday life; I like how we can relate to each other and it feels good to be together you know; Doesn't make me feel left out.
Not Judged/Stereotypes (4 comments)	That we aren't judged but listened to; You can talk about things more freely to know you're not going to start a stereotype; That everyone is not here to judge. When some people aren't Aboriginal and they're learning about how much it pains us when the stereotype of Native people show up.
Community Building (3 comments)	It is very empowering and it brings our community together; Work together and make ourselves improve for health and well-being of our families and Nation; It's good because Aboriginals have something to say.
Other (6 comments)	I like they [adults] need help and we, as youth, give help to them; I let my feelings go; I feel really good; It was a nice experience; Meeting new people; Everything.

Youth were then asked to respond to 7 statements and indicate how much they agreed with each statement. Results are presented below.







Summary

The Aboriginal Capacity Cafés continue to be extremely well-received by youth and adults in the community. Youth clearly indicate that they appreciate having their voices heard by adults and feeling like they are potentially influencing the way that adults will interact and 'be' with youth. Among Aboriginal youth, there is a great deal of support for having a Capacity Café that allows them to focus on their culture and history. Overall, youth indicated that they feel more comfortable and understood in this environment.

Just as the youth report high levels of satisfaction as a result of their participation in the Capacity Café, so do the adults who are there to bear witness to youth voices. Adults overwhelmingly report feeling honored to have a chance to hear the experiences of youth. They respect the honesty and vulnerability that youth demonstrate in the Aboriginal Capacity Café through the sharing of their personal stories. Adults report feeling that they gained knowledge and understanding of the experience of youth through participating in the Capacity Café.

This fourth Capacity Café was the largest one to date. Over the course of the last two years, the interest in the Aboriginal Capacity Café has grown. Through this growth, it appears that greater understanding, compassion and desire of intergenerational connectedness has emerged among the youth and adults within the Aboriginal community.