

Wele'g Dwennimmen

Roots of Survivance Symposium



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In January 2026, Wele'g Dwennimmen Roots of Survivance hosted a symposium to bring together Elders, Knowledge Keepers, scholars, community leaders, and youth to imagine what Wele'g Dwennimmen can become as an institute dedicated to Black, Indigenous, and Afro-Indigenous wellbeing, cultural revitalization, and relational ways of knowing. The goal of the gathering was to build a collective vision and identify priorities that honour the interconnectedness of community, culture, and land. Below you will find the key priorities and themes, identified by the research team, from group discussions during the symposium:

Living well is grounded in relational and reciprocal community practices and collective care

Mutual care through reciprocity:

- Reciprocity & sharing resources as a core value

Connection to community:

- Community encompasses belonging, inclusivity, and connection

Collective wellbeing through mutual support:

- Intergenerational relationships and knowledge sharing
- Fostering justice & collective wellbeing

Land-based kinship and food sovereignty are pivotal to community practice and living well

Community practices that prioritize:

- Food sovereignty
- Community building initiatives

Living in relationship with the land:

- Land-based kinship
- Reconnection to Land

Creating inclusive, accessible, and intergenerational spaces that support knowledge sharing

Accessible support systems & knowledge exchanges:

- Holistic & accessible care
- Intergenerational relationships and knowledge sharing
- Specific identity-based & accessible spaces
- Fostering justice & collective wellbeing
- Community building initiatives

Ethical and community-led research practices grounded in relational accountability

Healing through critical awareness within cultural context:

- Critical awareness of power & systemic barriers
- Historical trauma & colonial context
- Ethical, community-led practice
- Intergenerational relationships and knowledge sharing
- Healing & restoration

What Will Be The Next Steps?

▶ **Building Community Partnerships**

Wele'g Dwennimmen Roots of Survivance will continue building relationships with community organizations, Land-based initiatives, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and local leaders across Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo to support collective wellbeing, reciprocity, and community-led action

▶ **Supporting Food Sovereignty & Community Gardens**

Next steps include understanding access to community gardens and food sovereignty initiatives across the Tri-Cities, while identifying barriers to participation and opportunities to strengthen Land-based food systems, sharing practices, and community connection

▶ **Advancing Land-Based Wellbeing**

The institute will continue supporting Land-based approaches to wellbeing that strengthen relationships to Land, culture, community, and intergenerational knowledge sharing through gatherings, research, and community-engaged initiatives

▶ **Contributing to Community & Regional Planning**

Wele'g Dwennimmen Roots of Survivance hopes to contribute to broader conversations around the importance of community gardens, food sovereignty, accessibility, and Land-based gathering spaces within community, regional, and municipal planning.

Next Steps At A Glance



Building
Community
Partnerships



Supporting Food
Sovereignty &
Community Gardens



Advancing
Land-Based
Wellbeing



Contributing to
Community &
Regional Planning

Visit our website at: <https://veris.wlu.ca/about/weleg-dwennimmen.html>

Connect with us at: Weleg@wlu.ca