



Pictou County Asset Mapping: Experiences of Sexual Violence

Delaney Collins, MORPH Navigator

May 30, 2018

Introduction

Mapping Our Road to Power and Healing, or MORPH, is a collaborative project between Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre, Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health, and Tearmann Society for Abused Women, and funded by the Nova Scotian provincial strategy to end sexualized violence. MORPH is overseen by the Pictou Sexual Assault Response Team (PSART), a group of 29 community service providers working with sexualized violence, and dedicated to its eradication. Through the grant opportunity, PSART and the key partner agencies of MORPH sought to identify the assets available in Pictou County for survivors of sexualized violence.

MORPH chose to utilize the Whole Assets Approach to asset mapping, identified as the ideal manner of exploring assets in a rural community such as Pictou County. Considering assets holistically, the Whole Assets approach explores natural, economic, social, built, and service assets for survivors and their allies. A total of 98 assets were identified by participants of the session, including Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre, Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health, Tearmann Society for Abused Women, MORPH funding, scenery and nature, the media, and hospitals and medical centres. Participants found the session highlighted the rich tapestry of options for survivors of sexualized violence. Participants then identified the threats and weaknesses to Pictou County's assets, naming time, funding, and human resources as the most daunting and frequent to overcome. Participants left the session reflecting on the need for continued unified partnerships between Pictou County's community organizations to ensure the greatest level of service for survivors, and the eventual end to sexualized violence.

Whole Assets Approach

The Whole Assets approach is a method of asset mapping ideally designed for rural communities (Fuller, Guy, & Pletsch, 2002). In whole asset mapping, the goal is for a wide cross-section of community members to convene and agree together on the assets available in their community (Fuller et al., 2002). Whole asset mapping views assets holistically, considering natural, economic, social, built, and service assets following the below definitions (Fuller et al., 2002):

- ❖ Natural – environment (i.e. geographic features, outdoor recreation opportunities, parks, farms, etc.)
- ❖ Economic – jobs, funding, and varied economy (i.e. sources of funding, incentive programs, banks, private foundations, etc.)
- ❖ Social – the social aspect of living in the community (i.e. civic organizations, agricultural organizations, youth groups, book clubs, choirs, spiritual groups, annual festivals, studio arts, etc.)

- ❖ Built – physical things we build including infrastructure (i.e. utilities, telecommunications, healthcare facilities, industrial parks, main streets, farmers markets, recreation centres, museums, historical places, etc.)
- ❖ Service – health, educational and social services (i.e. organizations that enrich the community, not-for-profit organizations, schools, government agencies, healthcare providers, economic developers, elected/appointed officials, representatives of political groups, etc.)

Following identification of the various assets available, participants work together to identify the most important assets in each category and overall (Fuller et al., 2002). This is a major step in establishing common cause, before moving on to identifying the threats to a community's assets, and the ways in which community can collectively moderate weaknesses in their assets (Fuller et al., 2002). Through a five-hour, facilitated, asset mapping session, the whole asset approach, "will summarize the many items that we cherish and are positive for the community," (Fuller et al., 2002, p. 13).

Results

On February 21, 2018 MORPH hosted an asset mapping session for members of the Pictou Sexual Assault Response Team (PSART) to explore the assets available in the community of Pictou County for survivors of sexual violence. The session was facilitated by Delaney Collins, the MORPH navigator, and was attended by seven community members working in service organizations with an invested interest in the issue of sexual violence. The session began by having each participant identify three known assets for survivors of sexualized violence that are available in Pictou County. Participants identified the following resources:

- ❖ 211
- ❖ 811
- ❖ Aberdeen Emergency Room
- ❖ Aboriginal healing centres
- ❖ Justice system
- ❖ Mental Health Support through the Pictou Landing Health Centre
- ❖ MORPH
- ❖ Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health
- ❖ Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre
- ❖ Private services
- ❖ Provincial/MORPH funding for sexualized violence
- ❖ PSART organizations (see Appendices for PSART organization list)
- ❖ RCMP
- ❖ Roots for Youth
- ❖ Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program
- ❖ Tearmann House
- ❖ Tearmann Society for Abused Women
- ❖ Trauma-informed professionals and individuals

Each resource on this initial list was then categorized into the different forms of assets. Some of these resources were deemed appropriate for more than one category. Notably, this initial exercise resulted in assets identified for each category excepting Natural Assets. Participants were then given an opportunity to reflect on the list developed for each category, and to consider other resources that were not initially identified. Using a dot democracy, participants identified the most important asset in each category (See Table 1), and the top assets overall (See Table 2). Tables 3-7 detail the complete list of identified assets for each category. The initial list of assets compiled included 18 community assets for survivors of sexual violence. The completed list across each asset category includes a total of 98 resources for survivors of sexual violence and their allies.

Participants then focused on threats and weaknesses for Pictou County's assets. Participants identified that Pictou County is rich in natural assets, however many of these are maintained by volunteer efforts. In an aging community, participants felt a potential threat to our natural assets could be retiring volunteers with inadequate replacements. Additionally, environmental threats; such as global warming, pollution, and possible pipeline projects; could damage the physical environment itself. Finally, some natural resources have fees associated with them (ex. Yoga, fishing equipment), meaning they are not accessible to the entire community.

In considering Pictou County's economic assets, participants felt the lack of stable funding for services to survivors of sexual violence to be a weakness, while the possibility of losing funding was a threat. Participants noted that the provincial funding for sexual violence grant period was coming to a close, and that no renewal opportunities had been offered thus far. Certain participants felt the province was shifting from focusing on sexualized violence to focusing on poverty reduction, and lamented the fact that sexualized violence remains a distinct presence in Pictou County and Nova Scotia. Participants took an opportunity to celebrate the strength and connection between the community's organizations, recognizing that they will have to rely on and trust each other to ensure continued dedication to this work.

For social assets, one of the major identified threats was time. Participants noted that, when considering social assets, you must consider the amount of work that is put in as a form of extra-curricular activity. Pictou County's community members have busy schedules, and without personnel dedicated and hired to work on the issues of sexualized violence, they are likely to fall to the wayside. Noting again the aging population, participants mentioned that as current workers, advocates and volunteers retire, there needs to be a replenishment of individuals committed to continuing the work. This became increasingly threatening when participants considered the number of youth choosing to leave Pictou County in search of better employment opportunities. Participants additionally identified the huge success of media campaigns as a social asset, with the complimentary threat of lack of funding. While some forms of media are free, such as Facebook pages, the more influential forms of media (ex. Websites, radio advertisements, Newspaper advertisements, online advertisements) can be quite costly. Finally, participants discussed the difficulty of the current cultural climate, mentioning aspects such as hatred, fear, racism and divisiveness. One participant stated that she felt it was becoming, "harder now to identify as a feminist", while another mentioned the continual difficulty in building trust between community members and service providers.

Moving on to built assets, participants identified transportation in a rural environment to be a large weakness. Without access to reliable transportation, residents of Pictou County are stranded and unable to access many or all of the assets available in Pictou County. Furthermore, time and funding were seen as a threat, as infrastructure and equipment can become outdated without repairs, updates, and replacements.

Finally, participants discussed the threats to service assets. One unanimously identified threat was the upcoming loss of MORPH funding. While there was recognition that there were remaining funds that would likely continue to be spent until they were depleted, there were no known opportunities for renewal. This creates a large threat for the designated project and staff working on sexualized violence in Pictou County. Another threat was seen to be the burnouts of non-profit organizations Executive Directors and service providers, many of whom work on sexualized violence as a passion project off the side of their desk, rather than as a key aspect of their role. Furthermore, there are a lack of mental health workers in Pictou County for survivors seeking therapeutic, one-on-one work. One participant noted that there was only one psychiatrist employed in Pictou County, and that they only worked two hours per week in the community. Another threat was in the lack of anonymity in Pictou County. In such a small community, people are heavily intertwined. This can make it difficult for survivors to reach out for any formal supports at all, and more difficult still to accept when group services are all that is available.

| Table 1 – Top Assets for Each Category | |
|---|--|
| Natural | Connecting with Nature |
| Economic | MORPH Funding |
| Social | Media |
| Built | Hospitals and Medical Clinics |
| Service | Pictou County Women’s Resource and Sexual Assault Centre |

| Table 2 – Top Assets Overall | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| #1 | Pictou County Women’s Resource and Sexual Assault Centre |
| #2 (tied) | Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health |
| #2 (tied) | Tearmann Society for Abused Women |
| #2 (tied) | MORPH funding (economic) |

| Table 3 – Natural Assets | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Connecting with Nature | Scenery |
| | Trenton Park |
| | Beaches |
| Yoga | |
| Earth Ark Horse Sanctuary | |
| Pictou SPCA | |
| Sporting Opportunities | |
| Hunting | |
| Fishing | |
| Community Gardens | |
| Kayaking | |

| Table 4 – Economic Assets | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| MORPH Funding | |
| Health Canada | |
| Department of Justice | |
| Aberdeen Health Foundation | Mental Health |
| | Children's Aid Society |
| SANE | |
| Active Pictou County | |
| United Way of Pictou County | |
| Department of Community Services | |
| Department of Health and Wellness | |
| Status of Women Canada | |
| Public Health | |
| Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network | |
| Nova Scotia Barrister's Society | Law Foundation |

| Table 5 – Social Assets |
|--|
| Media |
| Community/Private Circles |
| Trauma Informed Professionals and Individuals |
| Survivor Resilience & First Voice |
| MORPH |
| PSART Members |
| Take Back the Night |
| Sexual Assault Awareness Month |
| Slut: The Play, Social Action Group |
| Feminist Book Club |
| Religious Groups |
| 55+ Club |
| Roots for Youth Drop-in |
| Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre Drop-in |
| Narcotics Anonymous |
| Alcoholics Anonymous |
| Native Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselling Association of Nova-Scotia |
| Empowering Our People Retreats - Pictou Landing First Nations |
| Elders - Indigenous Community |
| Trenton Youth Group |
| Gay-Straight Alliance Clubs |
| Red Road - Pictou Landing First Nations |
| 4H |
| Brownies/Girl Guides/Scouts |

| Table 6 – Built Assets | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Hospitals and Medical Clinics | Aberdeen Emergency Room |
| Tearmann Society for Abused Women - House | |
| Community Rooms | Fire Halls |
| | Stellarton Sports Plex |
| | Churches |
| | Grocery Stores |
| Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre | |
| Pictou Landing First Nations Health Centre | |
| Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health | |
| NSCC - Stellarton Campus | |
| Pictou County Wellness Centre | |
| Libraries | Pictou |
| | New Glasgow |
| | Trenton |
| | Westville |
| | Stellarton |
| | River John |
| Free Wi-Fi Locations | Downtown |
| | MacDonald's |
| | Tim Horton's |
| Chad Bus | |
| Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility | |
| Summer Street Industries | |
| Highland Community Residential Services | |

| Table 7 – Service Assets | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| PSART Organizations | Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre | MORPH |
| | Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health | |
| | Tearmann Society for Abused Women | |
| | Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association | SANE |
| | Pictou County Crown Attorney's Office | Specialized Crown Attorneys |
| | Victim Services Program | |
| | RCMP – Pictou County Detachment | |
| | New Glasgow Police Department | |
| | Stellarton Police Services | |
| | Westville Police Services | |
| | Nova Scotia Community College- Pictou Campus | |
| | Emergency Department, Aberdeen Regional Hospital, | |
| | Department of Mental Health Services | |
| | Emergency Health Services | |
| Provincial Self-Referral for Abortion Services | | |
| Family Services | | |
| Archway Counselling | | |
| Primary Health Care Providers | | |
| Adult Protection | | |
| Private Counsellors | | |
| Employment Assistance | | |
| TREY | | |
| Private Lawyers | | |
| Local MLAs | | |
| Teen Health Centres | | |
| IWK | | |
| Child Protection | | |
| Schools Plus | | |
| 211 | | |
| 811 | | |
| 911 | | |
| Survivors | | |
| Roots for Youth | | |
| Mi'kmaq Crisis Intervention Phone Line | | |
| Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services | | |
| Kids First | | |
| New Leaf | | |
| Pictou Landing Health Centre | | |

Significant Learnings

Participants learned that Pictou County’s assets for survivors of sexualized violence are widespread and include a richness of choice for the individual. One participant shared that, “In the beginning I wasn’t

The resources in Pictou County are great and often aren’t even considered

- Session Participant

fully aware of what and all resources were available. But as the discussion continued – we have great resources! Partnerships that need to be fully unified,” while another expressed, “The resources in Pictou County are great and often aren’t even considered”. The recognition of a variety of unacknowledged resources became a major theme for the session, showing an appreciation for the holistic nature

of the Whole Assets Approach to asset mapping. Some participants mentioned the many supports available to indigenous survivors of sexual violence that they had previously been unaware of, and the importance of continued collaboration and unity in addressing sexualized violence. There was a sense of renewed dedication to PSART from participants by the closing of the session.

Participants also acknowledged overarching similarities in the threats to each asset categories. One participant stated that, “There are also threats to every asset that need to be recognized and addressed in each individual situation”. Time, money, and human resources were repeatedly mentioned. It seemed there was no lack of passion, dedication, or desire to end sexualized violence, however progress was repeatedly delayed due to lack of funding, time constraints, and limited roles centered on ending sexualized violence.

Participant Feedback

When asked how their organizations may benefit from the results of the asset mapping session, participants had a lot to say. One participant said that their organization would benefit from, “affirming and reaffirming commitment to collaborative work,” with many also mentioning new opportunities for referrals, partnerships, and self-care in addressing sexualized violence. Participants also noted increased awareness of Pictou County’s service options, and areas for improvement within these. One participant shared, “I believe it will start/continue with sharing what our [PSART] is up to and sharing concerns with how our members are handling files with victims of sexual violence. [We should] educate/share experiences and knowledge to better service those victims”.

[We should] educate/share experiences and knowledge to better service those victims

- Session Participant

Participants left feeling reflective and accomplished. Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and showed a desire to continue discussions like these, “This is great, [we] should do more meetings like this about the services and what are issues Pictou County is facing”.

Conclusion

The Whole Assets Approach viewed asset mapping holistically, considering natural, economic, social, built, and service assets for survivors of sexualized violence. Participants were able to compile a list of 98 resources available in Pictou County for survivors of sexualized violence and their allies. Assets that were identified to be the most important to Pictou County included the Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre, Tearmann Society for Abused Women, Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health, MORPH funding, connecting with nature, media resources, and hospitals and medical centres. Participants were able to expand their definition of an asset for sexualized violence healing, and learn more about their community. Upon examining the threats to Pictou County's assets, it was identified that assets in each category were threatened by a lack of time, funding, and human resources. Participants closed the session with a renewed commitment to organizational collaborations.

Appendix A: PSART Members

MORPH Pictou County: Pictou County Sexual Assault Response Team (PSART)/Community Support Network (CSN)

The following were members of PSART/CSN for MORPH Pictou County:

- Black Educators Association, Northern
- Region
- Emergency Department, Aberdeen Regional
- Hospital
- Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia
- Kids First Association
- Mental Health & Addiction Services, NS Health Authority, Northern Zone, Pictou County
- New Glasgow Regional Police
- New Leaf
- Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), Pictou Campus
- Nova Scotia Native Women's Association
- MORPH Pictou County, Sexualized Violence
- Therapist
- Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health
- Pictou County Crown Attorney's Office
- Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre (PCWRSAC)
- Pictou District Office Child Welfare, NS Department of Community Services
- Pictou Landing First Nation Band Office
- Pictou Landing First Nation, Chief and Council
- Pictou Landing Native Women's Association
- Public Health Services, NS Health Authority, Northern Zone, Pictou County
- Rainbow Community
- RCMP - Pictou County Detachment
- Roots for Youth
- Schools Plus and Mental Health and Addiction Services, NS Health Authority, Northern Zone, Pictou County.
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (SANE), Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association
- Stellarton Police Services
- Summer Street Industries
- Tearmann Society for Abused Women
- Town of Stellarton
- Victims Services
- Westville Police Services

Appendix B: Asset Mapping Infographic

Assets for Sexualized Violence in Pictou County



Service

- Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre
503 South Frederick Street, New Glasgow | 902-755-4647
- Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health
279 South Foord Street, Stellarton | 902-695-3366
- Tearmann Society for Abused Women
Anonymous Location, New Glasgow | 902-752-0132

Economic

- MORPH
navigator.morphpc@gmail.com | 902-755-4647
- Health Canada
info@hc-sc.gc.ca | 613-957-2991



Built

- Hospitals and Medical Clinics
Aberdeen Emergency Room
835 East River Road, New Glasgow | 902-752-7600
- Tearmann House
Anonymous Location | 902-752-0132

Natural

Connecting with Nature

- Trenton Park - 199 Park Road, Trenton
- Melmurby Beach - 6380 Little Harbour Road, Merigomish
- Waterside Beach - Caribou Island Road, Pictou
- Caribou Island Provincial Park - 2119 Three Brooks Road, Pictou



Social

- Media
Follow MORPH Pictou County on Facebook and Twitter
- Pictou Sexual Assault Response Team (PSART)
navigator.morphpc@gmail.com | 902-755-4647
- Survivor resilience
- Community and Private Circles

Asset Mapping

These are the top assets for survivors of sexualized violence and their allies as identified by community members of Pictou County. For information about resources for survivors, contact MORPH at navigator.morphpc@gmail.com or 902-755-4647



morphpictoucounty.ca

instagram

Resources

Fuller, T., Guy, D., & Pletsch, C. (2002). *Asset mapping: A handbook*. Retrieved from https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/asset_mapping_handbook.pdf