Public Health Governance:
Emerging themes from community engagements across Canada

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PROBLEM

There is a pressing need for better public health institutions, policies, programs, and practices so communities can flourish. Having heard from public health authorities (political and professional elites), we then set out:

- To collect and analyze the experiences of marginalized communities across Canada;
- To develop a public health framework that reflects the values, experiences, and needs of all communities on a planet where animals, plants, and environments matter to one another
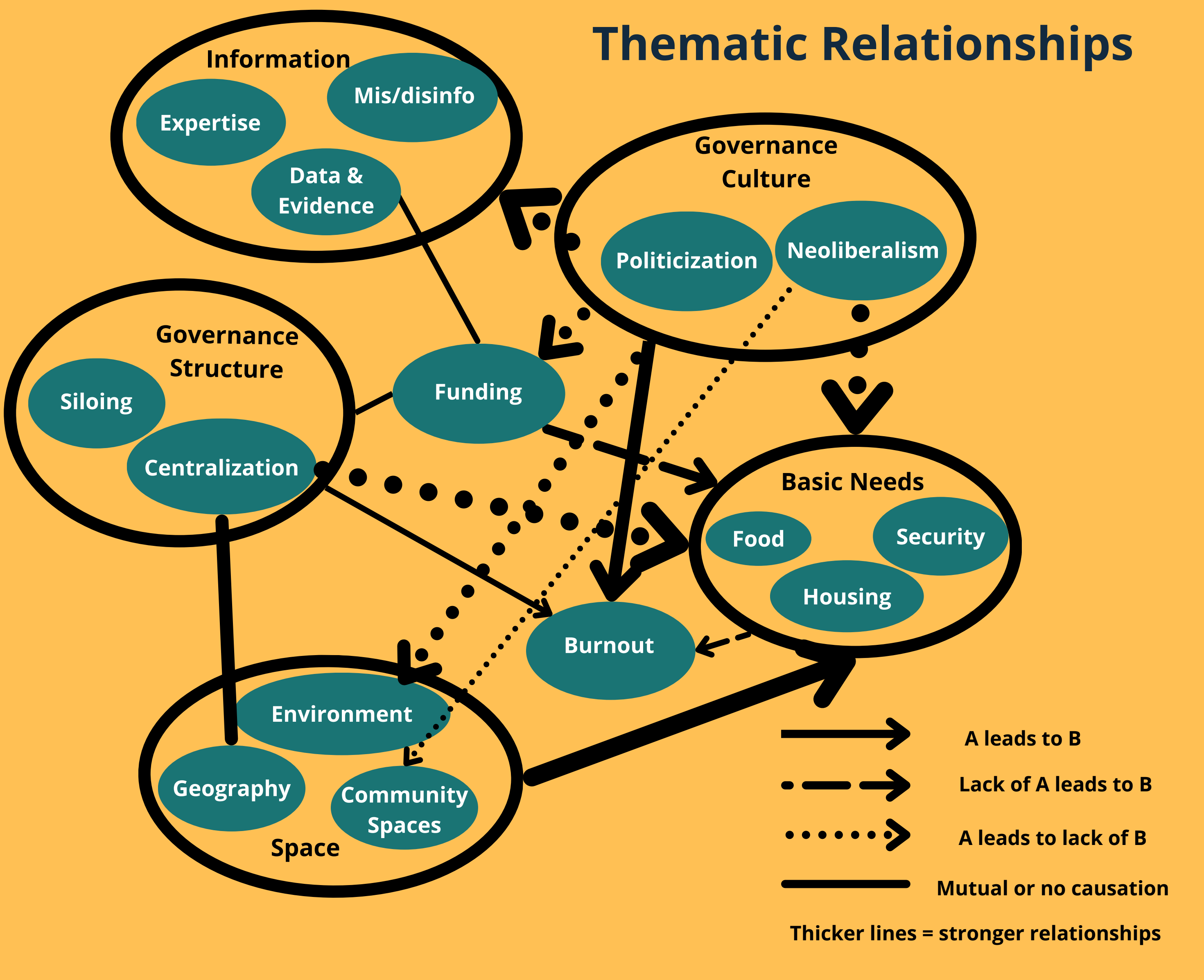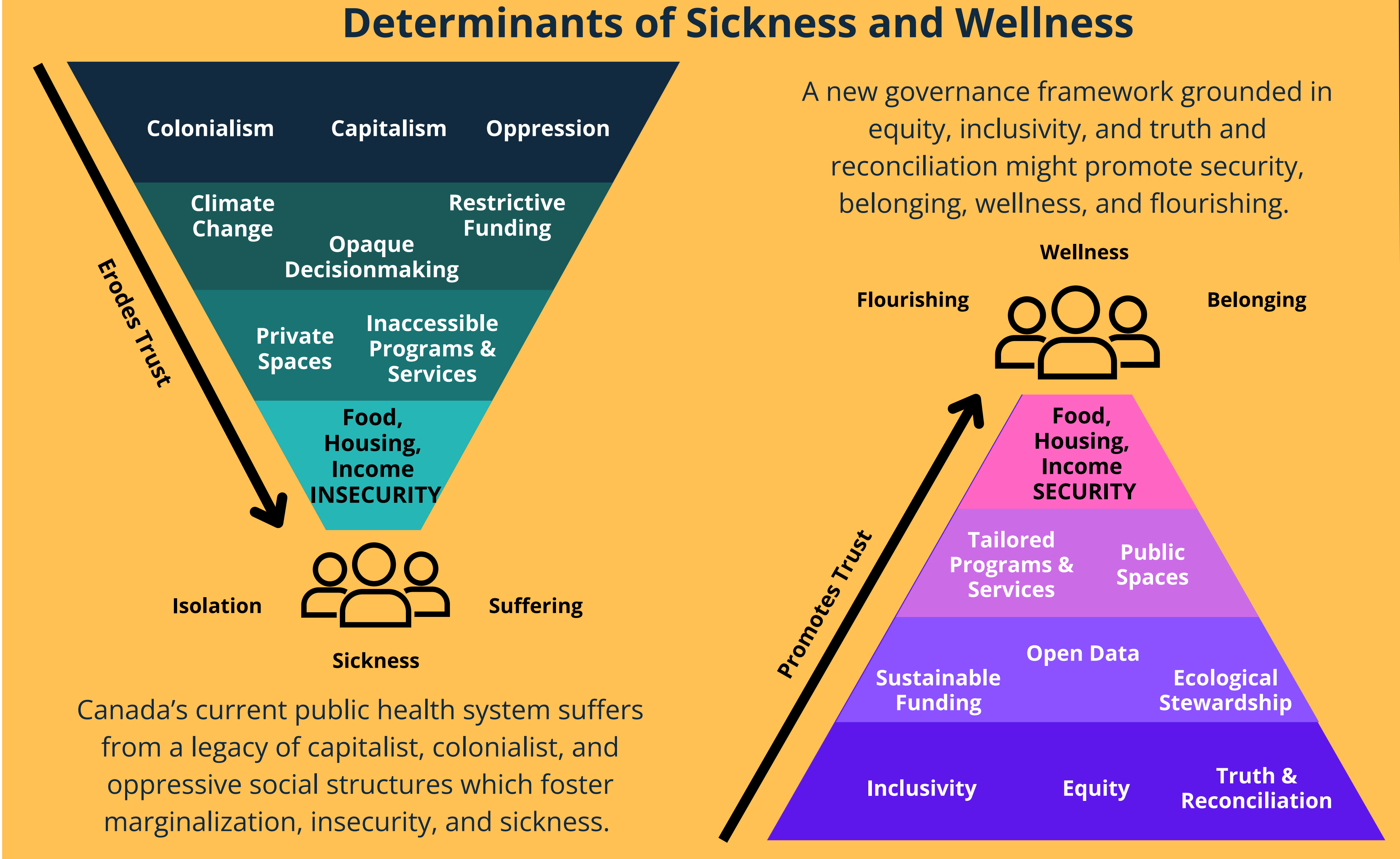
METHODS

- 7 semi-structured virtual **focus groups (FG)** between May 27 - June 19 2024
- FGs represented 5 provinces (NS, QC, ON, AB, BC), health workers and Indigenous voices.
- Structured discussion and real-time polling using Mentimeter and Google Jam Board:
  1. What supports wellbeing in your communities?
  2. What are your communities' strengths & weaknesses?
  3. What values and practices are critical to public health?
  4. Who do you trust to make good public health decisions?
  5. What might improve public health?
- Inductive and deductive thematic analysis
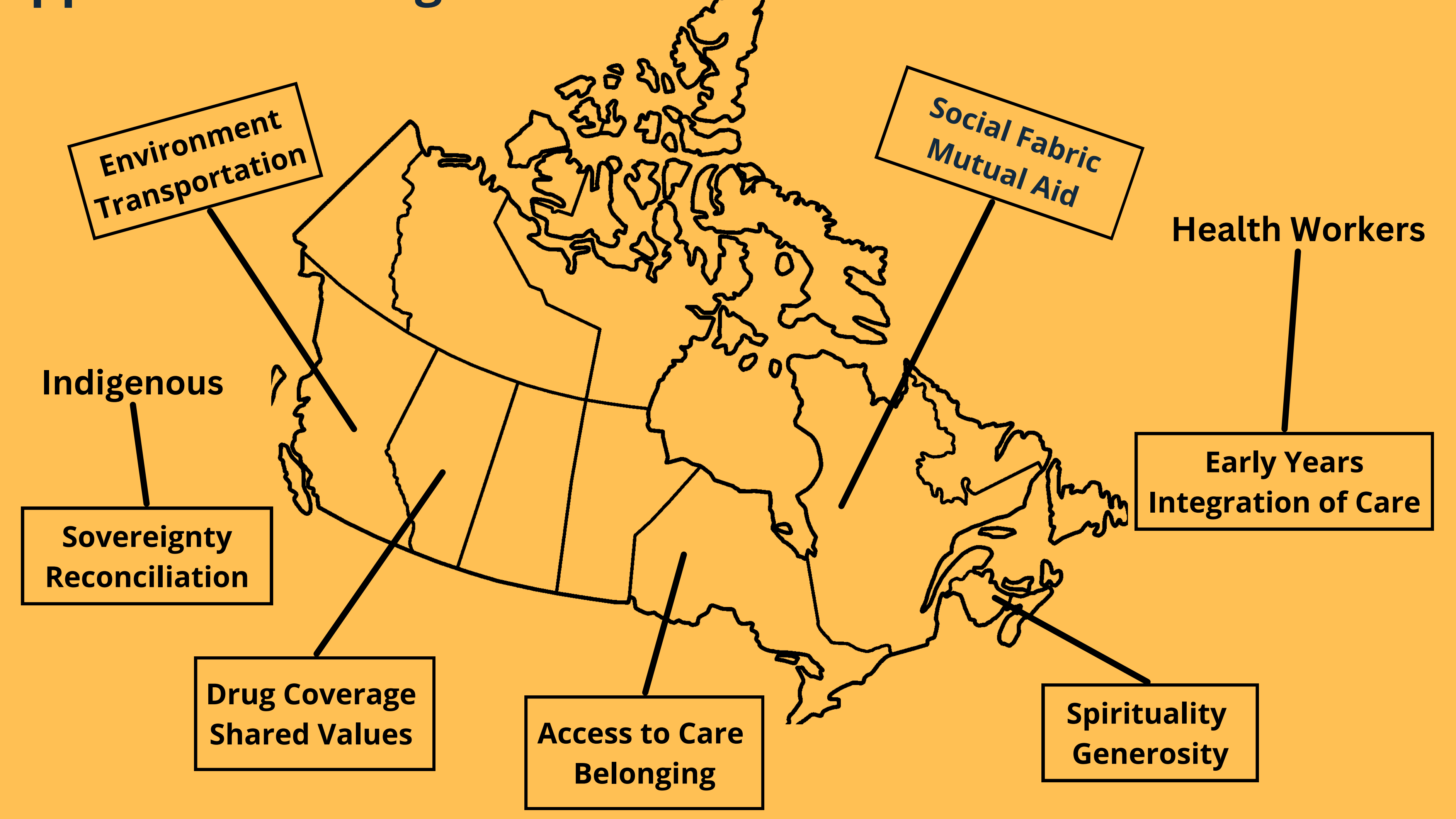
DEMOGRAPHICS (N=56)

Gender		Age	
Man	13	20-39	20
Woman	36	40-59	18
NB/2Spirit	4	60-79	9
No Answer	3	No Answer	9

Ethnic identity		Location	
Black/African	4	Alberta	8
S/E/SE Asian	6	BC	15
White/European	27	NS	11
Indigenous	16	Ontario	9
No Answer	2	Quebec	13

RESULTS - Thematic Analysis

Determinants of Sickness and Wellness

Colonialism, Capitalism, Oppression — Climate Change, Restrictive Funding, Opaque Decisionmaking — Private Spaces, Inaccessible Programs & Services — Food, Housing, Income INSECURITY → Isolation, Sickness, Suffering (Erodes Trust)

Canada's current public health system suffers from a legacy of capitalist, colonialist, and oppressive social structures which foster marginalization, insecurity, and sickness.

A new governance framework grounded in equity, inclusivity, and truth and reconciliation might promote security, belonging, wellness, and flourishing.

Wellness — Flourishing, Belonging (Promotes Trust): Food, Housing, Income SECURITY — Tailored Programs & Services, Public Spaces — Sustainable Funding, Open Data, Ecological Stewardship — Inclusivity, Equity, Truth & Reconciliation

Thematic Relationships

Information: Expertise, Mis/disinfo, Data & Evidence
Governance Culture: Politicization, Neoliberalism
Governance Structure: Siloing, Centralization
Funding
Basic Needs: Food, Security, Housing
Burnout
Space: Geography, Community Spaces, Environment

- → A leads to B
- ⇢ Lack of A leads to B
- ⋯→ A leads to lack of B
- — Mutual or no causation
- Thicker lines = stronger relationships

What Supports Wellbeing?

Participants' responses to Question 1 using real-time polling software. Larger text size indicates higher frequency. Participants submitted multiple responses.

- Environment Transportation
- Social Fabric Mutual Aid
- Health Workers
- Indigenous
- Early Years Integration of Care
- Sovereignty Reconciliation
- Drug Coverage Shared Values
- Access to Care Belonging
- Spirituality Generosity

DISCUSSION

- Trust in public health systems has been eroded by historic oppression and misinformation
- Essential needs and programs are too often unaffordable, unavailable or inaccessible
- Local knowledge, context, and lived experiences must be present and made integral to all public health decision making

CONCLUSIONS

- Secure housing, food, and income are pressing public health needs
- Public common spaces promote community belonging
- Co-creating programs in communities helps to address local need
- Openness, accountability, and reciprocity promote and sustain public trust, commonwealth and public health

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Interested in learning more about our public health governance project? Scan the QR code or visit www.trru.ca