

Assessment Tool for Personal and Relational Safety
Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board

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Revised: the acronym LGBTQ2S+ was updated to 2SLGBTQIA+ throughout the document in 2025

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PART 1: Introduction and Assessment Context

1.1 Purpose of the Assessment Tool for Personal and Relational Safety

This assessment tool has been prepared to guide YESAB assessors through a series of processes to pro-actively consider how an industrial development project might affect Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons at the Designated Office, Executive Committee and Panel levels of assessment.

The assessment tool is a living document, meaning it will need to evolve with new information and changing social and political environments. The assessment tool is a guide for YESAB assessors in their personal and the organization’s efforts to become more familiar with addressing issues of equity and diversity, and have a greater understanding of how Indigenous worldviews are fundamental to how effects are perceived and experienced.

The aim of this tool is to equip assessors to become increasingly attuned to issues of diversity and equity as well as to become more culturally competent. In the following pages, assessors will be supported to apply a series of lenses when assessing a project to ensure issues related to the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons are effectively considered in the assessment process.

The objectives of this assessment tool are to:

- Define personal and relational safety within the Yukon context and explain how the definitions can be applied to evaluating the effects of industrial activities on Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons.
- Build an assessor’s understanding of how values, assumptions, and biases shape decisions, often without awareness.
- Provide a series of questions to reflect upon and use in the analysis of a proponent proposal to identify how it might affect the personal and relational safety of Yukoners.

Figure 1. Summary of terms

Sex	The biological and physiological traits of a person or the biological construct of a person.
Gender	A category of roles, behaviours, and activities shaped by human activities, social practices and structures, and power dynamics
Gender Based Violence	Violence directed against a person based on gender. GBV is a breach to the rights of life, security, dignity and freedom from discrimination and physical and mental harm.
2SLGBTQIA+	Acronym for Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual and others. Acronyms used to describe non-binary communities are subject to change and project assessments should reflect these changes.

The information in this assessment tool speaks broadly to *CULTURAL COMPETENCY*. Cultural competency is when we have the ability to understand and appreciate the experiences of other people who are from cultures different, or have different values and belief systems, from ourselves. *CULTURAL SAFETY* is an outcome of cultural humility and our commitment to cultural competency at personal and organizational levels. It is important to remember that determining if an action is experienced as culturally safe relies on feedback from those to whom we are addressing.

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To further support the use of this tool, please reference the *Evaluation of the effects of industrial activities on the personal safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and LGBTQ2S+ persons in Yukon: Synthesis Research Report* (YESAB, 2022) and the accompanying literature review. Both include useful information that can be used to:

- Identify pathway(s) to adverse effects of industrial activities on personal and relational safety;
- Better understand the cause-and-effect relationships between industrial activities and personal and relational safety;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the recently recommended terms and conditions to mitigate the adverse effects of industrial activities on personal and relational safety; and
- Provide current Yukon-specific information to inform future assessments.

1.2 Personal Safety and Relational Safety Defined

Personal safety focuses on the conditions necessary to prevent harm and create spaces where individuals have freedom from worry about physical safety and being victimized by hostility, aggression, and harassment. Personal safety considers rules and programs necessary to protect the individual.

Definitions of personal safety often focus on the individual's behaviour and the rights and responsibilities of an individual. In the Yukon, personal safety has been described more broadly and to include a person's relationship with the community, the land, and others. *Relational safety* considers Indigenous peoples' worldviews. Fundamental to many Indigenous worldviews is a focus on the collective, the importance of context, and the relationship with land in a full ecological sense which includes deep connection to all things, including non-human entities. *Relational safety*, therefore, focuses on the broader relationships between an individual and their community, land/ecology, and other people.

Relational safety captures how Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons experience safe or unsafe situations in relation to their identity, other people, the land, their community, their culture, and the societal systems in which we all live. Relational safety refers to the ways in which a person's identity can expose them to different forms of discrimination, violence, harassment, or other harms as well as impact their relationship with the land, their family and their community.

Relational safety is a term that can facilitate YESAB assessors to analyze how different people (an individual or a community of people) can experience the same space differently. For example, the concept of relational safety can be used to help explain how harassment is likely understood by a male worker on a worksite much differently than by an Indigenous and female worker on the same worksite within the context of Indigenous rights, societal biases, and systemic barriers.

Relational safety is a term that evolved out of conversations with Yukon-based NGOs working on issues related to industrial development and Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons.

Relational safety focuses on the systems and factors contributing to a shared but differently experienced environment. Relational safety draws attention to how systems (e.g., policing by the RCMP, health care provision by the Yukon Government, etc.) respond to or are accessed by a person based on factors such as race, gender, income, education, and geography. Dynamics within peer groups and between workers and supervisors can also work to undermine or enhance safety.

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Importantly, assessing the effects of industrial development activities on the relational safety of Indigenous women and girls requires consideration of the ongoing impacts of colonization.

Table 1. Difference between Relational Safety and Personal Safety

Relational Safety	Personal Safety
Focuses on the relationship of a person, a community, or a group of people who identify through specific traits with the systems that afford access to safe spaces. Considers the relationship with land/ecosystems and culture and factors like race, identity, geography, education, and income in a population's ability to access systems, structures and processes.	Focuses on the conditions necessary to prevent harm or create spaces where individuals are not victims. Considers rules and programs necessary to protect individuals. Such definitions focus on the behaviour of individuals as well as the rights and responsibilities of an individual.

1.3 Rationale and Systemic Setting

Assessing the effects of an industrial project on the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons will require assessors to consider factors such as racism, colonization, homophobia, sexism, and transphobia and how these factors are systemically present in broader society and, in turn, affect access to safe environments. The final reports of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) draw clear connections (also referred to as pathways) between the effects of colonization and the increased dangers Indigenous women and girls experience in the face of industrial activity. Any assessment of the effects of industrial activity on the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons should consider the systemic setting that includes these factors.

To consider how the systemic setting may influence how different groups of people are affected differently by one project, we must first understand the beliefs and values we bring to our work. We all bring assumptions and biases to our work.

For example, we might presume that a mitigation that has worked in one rural community will have the same effect within another rural community. Or, that because a project is located at a far distance from a community, there are no personal or relational safety issues to consider.

To ensure that the systemic setting is considered when assessing issues related to personal and relational safety, one must consider a person's multiple and diverse worldviews, values, and experiences. Different worldviews, values, and experiences are based on factors such as gender, sex, income, race, ethnicity, geographic location, etc. Viewing a project proposal through these different worldviews, values, or experiences can help challenge our assumptions and biases and illuminate effects not previously considered.

Assumptions and biases are based on our values. Individually we have beliefs and biases, and so do the organizations we represent.

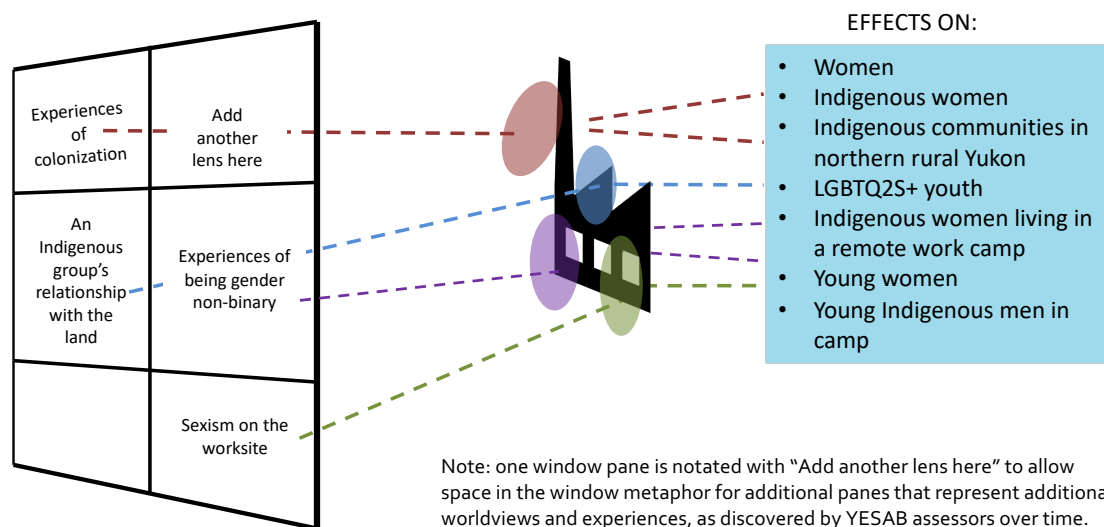
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To help understand our biases and assumptions, we can imagine looking through a window with many panes of differently coloured glass. If you look through each of the panes individually at the same object, that object will look slightly different depending on the colour of the window pane.

If you replace the colours of glass in each pane with a worldview or the experiences of different groups of people, you may see different effects of the proposed project (see Figure 1). As you identify different lenses (e.g., Indigenous men), you can add them as a window pane.

This exercise is part of developing cultural competency.

Figure 2. Example of looking at a project through the worldview and experiences of different groups of individuals



1.1.1 Understanding systemic issues

Working to understand systemic issues and how they intersect with assessing effects on personal and relational safety is part of developing cultural competency. The questions in the following text box are for self-reflection purposes and are not intended to be questions asked of a proponent. Working through this process will support efforts to develop appropriate questions for proponents.

To better understand the systemic issues, ask yourself:

- What communities of women (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), girls, non-binary, or gender diverse peoples are likely to be affected by the project?
- Do I know the perspectives and needs of the different gender, race, and other diverse community groups that I need to consider?
- How might access to personal and relational safety be different for each of the groups of people I am trying to consider?
- What has led me to the analysis of effects on personal and relational safety on this project?

- How does the effect of colonization affect the relationship between the human resources officer and Indigenous women in the face of potential situations of harassment and sexualized violence on the worksite?
- How do societally held beliefs affect the day-to-day experiences of girls in a community when there is an anticipated increase of male transient workers during community and holiday events?
- To what extent is the diversity of Yukon's population, including women and LGBTQ2S+ persons, represented in supervisory and senior positions?
- What are the legacy issues related to policies of assimilation and genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada and Yukon?

1.4 Reference and Assessment Data

This section will aid you in developing ideas on what data and research can be used to assess the effects of industrial development activities on personal and relational safety.

In general, there is a lack of available data to measure personal and relational safety.

Counts of incidences of sex and gender-based harassment and violence, and race-related incidents of harassment and violence are not readily available. Currently, no organization is known to be systematically documenting the relationship between changes to the land resulting from industrial development and violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls.

Underreporting of personal and relational safety-related data by gender, sex, and ethnicity results from societal assumptions, legislation, resources to report, and trust. Understanding some of the reasons for the underreporting will support YESAB in its efforts to locate relevant data, including enhancing access to, and use of, qualitative data.

Table 2. Reasons for Underreporting of Relational Safety

Societal assumptions	Affects what data is collected, what data is important, and how data is collected.
Legislation	Privacy acts preclude the publishing of disaggregated data and impact ability to monitor the frequency of gender-based crimes.
Trust	Historically based lack of trust in law enforcement hinders the reporting of incidences of harassment or violence experienced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons.
Resources to report	Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may capture data related to personal and relational safety, however, maintaining platforms, data collection, etc., may not be covered by O&M budgets or core funding.

Efforts by YESAB to establish and maintain relationships with community organizations will support efforts to build data banks for use in evaluating the personal and relational safety of a proposed project. Working with the RCMP and non-governmental organizations like Yukon Status of Women's Council

(YSWC), Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS), and Yukon Pride may facilitate accessing data unavailable on publicly accessible sites.

Qualitative evidence on the effects of industrial activities on the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women can be found here:

- *Evaluation of the effects of industrial activities on the personal safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and LGBTQ2S+ persons in Yukon: Synthesis Research Report* (YESAB, 2022).
- The Yukon Status of Women Council is developing a web-based resource to help assess a community's capacity to mitigate violence when proximate to industrial development activities.
- The Liard Aboriginal Women's Society published *Never Until Now: Indigenous and Racialized Women's Experiences Working in Yukon and Northern British Columbia Mine Camps* (2021).
- The Yukon Status of Women Council's submission to YESAB re: 2017-0083 KZK Mine Proposal (March 8, 2021).
- Submission from Liard Aboriginal Women's Society to YESAB regarding BMC Minerals Project 2017-0083 Mine Proposal (March 1, 2021).

PART 2: Assessment of Personal and Relational Safety

2.1 Effects Pathway

This section of the assessment tool is intended to help discern the effect pathways of a proposed project on the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons within the industrial workplace and in Yukon communities.

After considering the systemic setting and assessing the available (or unavailable) data, the following guiding questions will help you think through the project's effects on the personal and relational safety of different populations and subpopulations of people in Yukon.

The list of guiding questions presented below is not exhaustive. The list of questions can be augmented as YESAB assessors become more comfortable assessing personal and relational safety.

Understanding the effects pathways is considered through three perspectives, which can be applied to a wide variety of industrial development projects:

- General considerations
- Effects on the community
- Effects at the worksite and in camps

General considerations:

- How will Indigenous women and girls be specifically affected by project development?
- What personal and relational safety issues are 2SLGBTQIA+ persons likely to experience broader society that are likely to be exacerbated while working in a camp?
- What are some of the broader societal issues that may affect the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women on the worksite or in the camp?

Community-focused considerations:

- How is the project likely to result in stress among family members in the home?
- What land/ecology relationships will be stressed with the project?
- How frequently are the project's workers likely to visit Whitehorse or another community during their days off?
- What resources exist in proximate communities to support women and girls fleeing violent situations?
 - Is there an emergency or second-stage shelter in the community?
 - What are the transportation barriers to accessing a shelter?
- What resources regularly exist in the community to support workers and their families with mental health, substance use disorders, trauma and violence?
- How would you describe the current state of the relationships between services providers (e.g., RCMP, nurses, etc.) and a) Indigenous women and girls, b) non-Indigenous women and girls and c) 2SLGBTQIA+ persons in the community?
- What upstream mitigative efforts have been taken by the proponent (e.g., in an Impact and Benefit Agreement or otherwise) to address personal and relational safety?

Industrial worksite and camp-focused considerations:

- How is the safety of women or gender-marginalized persons working in isolated roles like housekeeping or cooks' helpers being addressed by the project proponent?
- What measures are in place to ensure the safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons while travelling to and from camp in vehicles with male workers and no supervision?
- What mental health supports are available at the worksite?
- How is the diversity of Yukon's population, including women and 2SLGBTQIA+ represented in the company's supervisory and senior positions?
- Has the proponent referenced existing trauma and assault when identifying risks to the personal and relational safety Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women or 2SLGBTQIA+ persons?
- How is obscenity and the use of pornography on private devices, but used in public spaces, being addressed?

Consider these questions as starting points. Some of these questions are for your reflection. Proponents may or may not answer all of these.

Assessors can be supported in this work by engaging in targeted professional development (e.g., taking courses on diversity, equity & inclusion; gender-based analysis, and Indigenous rights, worldviews, governance and development of cultural competency). Identification of relevant, current, and available training will require regular review. Check out resources at <https://www.criaw-icref.ca> and reach out to the community-based organizations in the Yukon that were part of the Research Advisory Committee (listed on page 3 of the *Synthesis Research Report*) for training options.

2.2 Promising Practices

This section identifies components to look for in a proponent's project proposal. The information in this section can also be used in communication materials issued by YESAB to support proponents better address issues of personal and relational safety.

Questions to ask of a proponent proposal:

- What communication systems have the proponent put in place to ensure the personal and relational safety of Indigenous women, non-Indigenous women, and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons?
 - Has the proponent described the location and hours of availability of telecommunications access (i.e., addressed the issue of a locked kitchen shack outside of mealtimes?);
 - What is the workaround where cell service is unavailable, or satellite connectivity is spotty?
- What type of training (and frequency) is provided to senior management, site supervisors, contractors and workers concerning cultural sensitivity and gender-based discrimination?
- What is the process for staff to report harassment and sexualized violence while on the worksite?
 - Where is the company representative receiving complaints located (onsite, offsite)?
 - What is the gender of the officer taking complaints? How might their position and gender affect trust?
- What mental health support is provided to male workers while on the job site and back in the community?
- What evidence is provided to show that project effects (positive and negative) are likely to be experienced equitably?
- How were gender and Indigenous-focused groups engaged in developing mitigations to adverse effects on personal and relational safety?
- Does the proponent identify training approaches and health and safety plans that address harassment and sexualized violence and human rights issues?
- Does the proponent identify human resources policies specific to hiring, firing, compensation and advancement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and other marginalized populations (i.e., gender-diverse and non-binary persons).

Table 3 presents a matrix that can be used to evaluate a proponent's proposal. The aim of the matrix is to elicit consideration of who and how each group is most likely to be (or not be) at risk. The list of factors to consider (left hand column) may be augmented over time as the assessment tool is implemented.

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Table 3. Matrix to evaluate risks to different groups of people

	Men*	Indigenous Women	Non-Indigenous Women	2SLGBTQIA+ Persons	Girls (Indigenous and non-Indigenous)
Access to social support services					
Access to onsite social support services					
Effects on site					
Effects in community (touchdown, workers returning home)					
Unintended effects of project					
Degree of influence over outcomes that directly impact target population					

*men are included to identify assumptions and specific needs to ensure the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and LGBTQ2A+ persons.

2.3 Effects Characterization and Significance Determination

This section provides questions to consider in order to better assess the interactions between the project activities and Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons.

A review of who made community-based contributions, collected during the 'seeking views' stage of an assessment, provides an opportunity to examine how personal and relational safety is being considered and addressed and by whom.

Please also see the list of suggestions from research participants in Section 6 of the *Synthesis Research Report* on how YESAB may advance its efforts to assess the effects of industrial activities on personal and relational safety.

The following questions can help assess *what* information is missing in a proponent's proposal and *who* has or has not commented on the project.

Example questions to evaluate community engagement in characterizing effects:

- Who has commented on the project? (helps address questions of power and structurally supported biases).
- Whose voices are missing in the submission of comments?
- Who has not commented on the project and why?
- What is the known capacity of women and queer groups to comment during this round of "seeking views"?
- Who has submitted reports to YESAB on issues related to personal and relational safety?
- Who would have been expected to submit comments (e.g., Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Yukon Status of Women Council, Yukon Human Rights Commission, Inclusion Yukon)?

2.4 Recommendations to Decision Bodies

This section outlines suggested personal and relational safety terms and conditions to accompany YESAA 56/58/72 1(b) recommendations.

Developing personal and relational safety terms and conditions will evolve with time and as new project-related situations arise.

The development of terms and conditions can be assisted by establishing YESAB's organizational goals of addressing the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons.

Example goals to be used to guide developing terms and conditions related to personal and relational safety are:

1. Support proponent engagement with non-governmental organizations who work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, First Nation governments, and community members who identify as having expertise in the area of personal and relational safety.
2. Enhance the capacity of proponents to preemptively address issues related to personal and relational safety.

Example terms and conditions specific to personal and relational safety:

- Proponent shall deliver training (bias, awareness and belonging training; cultural competency training; bystander intervention training; bullying and harassment training) to all on-site and offsite managers, employees, contractors and consultants working at the site.
- Proponent shall implement procedures to enable 24-hour access to telecommunications by women and gender-diverse populations working on remote sites.
- Proponent shall involve local women's groups, Indigenous groups, and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ in developing procedures to ensure the safety of community members during staff furloughs.
- Proponent shall track and describe progress towards increasing the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons employed (e.g., by year, length of employment and job title).
- Proponent shall develop, with a qualified expert, an Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy that outlines specific processes and actions to address any harassment or bullying which may take place within the Project's scope.
- Proponent shall develop, with a qualified expert, a gender appropriate and gender- and sexuality-specific policies and processes that promote a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for women and sexual minorities.

2.5 Effects Monitoring

For assessments where YESAA section 110(1) (monitoring of project effects) is being applied, a tracking tool for the monitoring of personal and relational safety recommendations is outlined below. The tracking tool is intended to provide insight at an aggregate level (instead of the project level). The tracking tool will help YESAB monitor progress towards ensuring the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons in industrial workplaces and communities, consistent with the relevant Calls to Action outlined in the final report of the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.

The Outcomes Tab, located on the internal section of the YESAB Online Registry, can serve as a starting point for monitoring the effects of industrial activities on personal and relational safety. The indicator data described below can also be collected, structured and visualized on an ongoing basis to help track the success of YESAB's efforts to ensure the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons in industrial workplaces and communities in the Yukon.

Tracking indicators

- Counts of evaluations and screenings which include the personal and relational safety VESEC.
- Counts of accepted, varied and rejected personal and relational safety terms and conditions, by Decision Body (including Decision bodies with delegated authorities) and by assessment level (Designated Office, Executive Committee, Panel).
- Proportions (percentages) of accepted, varied and rejected personal and relational safety terms and conditions among Decision Bodies (including Decision bodies with delegated authorities) by assessment level (Designated Office, Executive Committee, Panel).
- Coding and thematic analysis of the stated reasons for varying or rejecting personal and relational safety-related terms and conditions by Decision Bodies.
- Counts of the number of 'seeking views' submissions received that contain references to both personal safety and relational safety, by assessment level (Designated Office, Executive Committee, Panel).

An annual analysis and sharing of the visualized data is recommended.

APPENDIX 1: Ongoing Considerations for Improved Assessments of Relational Safety

Building a good foundation is a requirement for YESAB assessors and the Board to be better equipped to evaluate projects' effects on the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons.

This foundation will also support YESAB in its efforts to provide guidance to industrial development proponents looking to pre-emptively mitigate impacts on relational safety.

YESAB as an organization is advised to:

- Consider expanding the current worldview informing YESAB assessments to incorporate Indigenous worldviews and the impacts of violence and harassment experienced at a collective level.
- Clearly articulate and demonstrate YESAB's mandate and ability to assess socio-economic effects, specifically human-focused valued socio-economic effects, at both the Designated Office and Executive Committee levels.
- Consider the overall loss of resilience in rural Yukon communities as a result of COVID when assessing the effects of industrial activities on the personal and relational safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons.
- Determine how to receive comments and ensure anonymity involving harassment and sexualized violence outside of the Online Registry in order to hear from all voices on matters of personal and relational safety.
- Consider how a mechanism adjacent to the Online Registry that collects comments involving harassment and sexualized violence could be a way to enhance YESAB's relationship with organizations and individuals at the community level.
- Support all YESAB staff to understand and apply messaging related to personal and relational safety.
- Require assessors and the Board to participate in personal and relational safety related training that is being required by proponents. This can include but not be limited to bias awareness training and cultural competency training. Check out resources at <https://www.criaw-icref.ca> and reach out to the community-based organizations in the Yukon that were part of the Research Advisory Committee (listed on page 3 of the *Synthesis Research Report*) for training options.
- Include an information requirement in the Executive Committee pre-submission process that specifically refers to both personal safety and relational safety.
- Establish and maintain working relationships with organizations mandated to address inequities resulting from gender discrimination, racism, homophobia, and transphobia such as Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, Yukon Status of Women's Council, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Queer Yukon Society, Yukon Women and Mining, Yukon Women in Trades and Technology.