



Are you ready!

You now have the chance to bring attention to the issue that matters to you and call for change using the recommendation(s) as an example of how young people can help leaders create change.

It's time for you to dig deep, find your courage, believe in the wisdom you and other Indigenous youth carry, and walk in a good way to ensure adults, particularly those who are responsible to make decisions, hear your voice.

There are 18 recommendations in the report created by Indigenous youth from Atlantic Canada, and while they all are very important, determine which ones are the most important to you, your family, and friends.

So, when we want to share our ideas or opinions with others, there are lots of ways, and each serve a purpose.

Share Away

We can use **Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, or Instagram** to share our take on something. One of the strongest benefits of social media is its ability to raise awareness about important issues and bring together others who, like you, care about a particular cause. Using social channels, you can educate others about issues that matter to youth, the We're Listening 2024 recommendations and encourage them to join you in creating change.



The key to social media is that if you are wanting to create positive change, keep it positive. While it can be a great tool, it can turn ugly quickly.

When that happens, it's the poster (in this case, you), who wears the negative messaging on the issue. It's hard to create change with that approach, and too easy for misinformation to begin shaping folks' take on what you are trying to change.

This is a famous quote that we think of lots when we are posting online:

“BEFORE YOU SPEAK ASK YOURSELF IF WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO SAY IS TRUE, IS KIND, IS NECESSARY, IS HELPFUL.

IF THE ANSWER IS NO, MAYBE WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO SAY SHOULD BE LEFT UNSAID.”

Bernard Meltzer

That's a good series of things to think about it before hitting send, post, or share. It's like this Bernard fellow hung out with the Grandmothers in our communities: where we have been taught by listening, and watching how they walk in this world, that being courageous, and sharing our wisdom, (regardless of age – we all have it), in a humble and respectful way, that, that kind of truth telling and honesty can be love driven. We can disagree with someone's opinion, or how they are doing things, without being hurtful or mean. We can be kind, share only what's necessary, and what is helpful to what we are trying to change.

Here are some ways to get things happening.

Pick Up The Phone

You can call the office of someone whose job is to represent you in government: a Chief, Councillor, Mayor, Member of Parliament, (federal), MLA's or MHA's, (provincial), or those in jobs where they make decisions that directly affect you, like a school principal or leader at an organization in the community.



Start by introducing yourself and identify as a young person that has an issue you would like addressed.

Ask to speak to the person directly, though don't be too surprised if you must speak to another staff person first. Those folks can help move your comments and ideas forward and sometimes even champion your issue.

Again, be respectful and let them know what you are wanting to talk about.

Focus on one or two main points as you chat with them.

There is no need to dump or unload all your ideas and opinions or why you think the person isn't doing their job well. Pick one of two key facts and ask them direct questions about their take on the issue you are talking about. For example, *'what have been able to do so far to keep our community safer?'*

Wrap up your call, obviously with a thank you, though also ask for a commitment to action. From the example above, it might be, *'I am hoping you will work with us get more streetlights in the community. Can you commit to that?'*





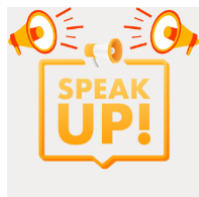
Write a Letter or an Email



Letters are powerful tools, and there's a thought they might carry a bit more weight than emails, (though both are super useful). Sometimes when leaders get letters in the mail, with questions or comments from folks in their community, speaking up on an issue that matters to them, it says something about how much it matters: the effort to sit down, write a letter, address an envelope, and walk it to a mailbox or drop it off at their office...those steps demonstrate how important this issue is to you.

When writing a letter, here are some tips. We'll pretend you are considered about community safety.

- Start by writing what you are wanting to happen because of this letter, (*I hope you will have us present this report*, for example), at the beginning and briefly introduce concerns.
- Are there one or two key recommendations from the We're Listening Report that matters most to you? Share it next...
- Describe why this issue matters to you and any how as a young person it affects you, your family, and friends.
- Thank them for anything they have done in the past on this issue that you know of.
- Ask for the persons opinion on the issue, for example, *'I would like to know what you think about community safety.'*
- Include questions that will hopefully have them needing to provide an answer, for example, *'will you schedule us to speak to Chief and Council?'*
- Ask for a commitment and share again why these matter to youth.
- Request that they respond to your letter.



Confidently Speaking Up

Lots of times, we know the folks who are in leadership roles. Sometimes it might even be family member. Maybe a letter or phone call is too much – and not needed.

When you are ready to make your pitch and ask for them to act on a recommendation(s) from the We're Listening 2024 Report, regardless of their role, how close you are with them, or if you have never met them before, here are some ideas that can make your ask a bit stronger.

In total, youth contributed approximately 600 hours collectively in the creation of the We're Listening 2024 Recommendations. Those recommendations were based on the contributions of more than 100 participants, where we received 65 completed surveys from Indigenous youth between 13 - 18 years old in Atlantic Canada that generated the data that shaped the overall recommendations.

We share that, a that's a lot of effort young people shared so far. As you come up with what your message is, you too will want to take time to determine how you will communicate and deliver your message.

Read the full report, including the youth's take on each recommendation, (why it mattered to them).

In doing so, you will feel more confident in speaking up. There might still be some butterflies or a feeling of nervousness, but confidence matters. Remind yourself, you belong in that space, sharing what matters to you, because it is important. Stand tall and proud and know you are supported by the hundreds of young people who have taken part so far. They've got your back from all over Atlantic Canada.

Start off with your strongest point / reason why that specific recommendation matters. Don't beat around the bush – be honest and upfront with what you want them to act on. They understand this dynamic so be open and direct.

Do you need them to make decision or commitment in the moment? Are you asking for more funding for an existing program or project that would address one of the recommendations? Do you have urgent questions that need to be answered? If so – start off with what you are asking of them.

All you need is two or three solid points for the recommendation you are sharing: it doesn't have to be long to be powerful. You can provide the link to the full report for them to read if they need more information.

Confidence is the belief or trust that this can be successful. Self-confidence is trust in yourself. Know that we have trust in you. We have seen, across Atlantic Canada, young people demonstrate bravery and courage, share wisdom, care, and compassion, be driven and motivated to create change for their communities. We know, you've got this.

Whether it's via social media, a phone call, an email, or a presentation, use your voice. You might have heard adults say, youth are tomorrow's leaders. You are the reminder, that youth are today's leaders.

Good luck!

We're Listening 2024 Indigenous Youth Voices Matter in Atlantic Canada