

Presentation
prepared for the NAN
Siigwan Education
Directors Forum
(MAY 2026)

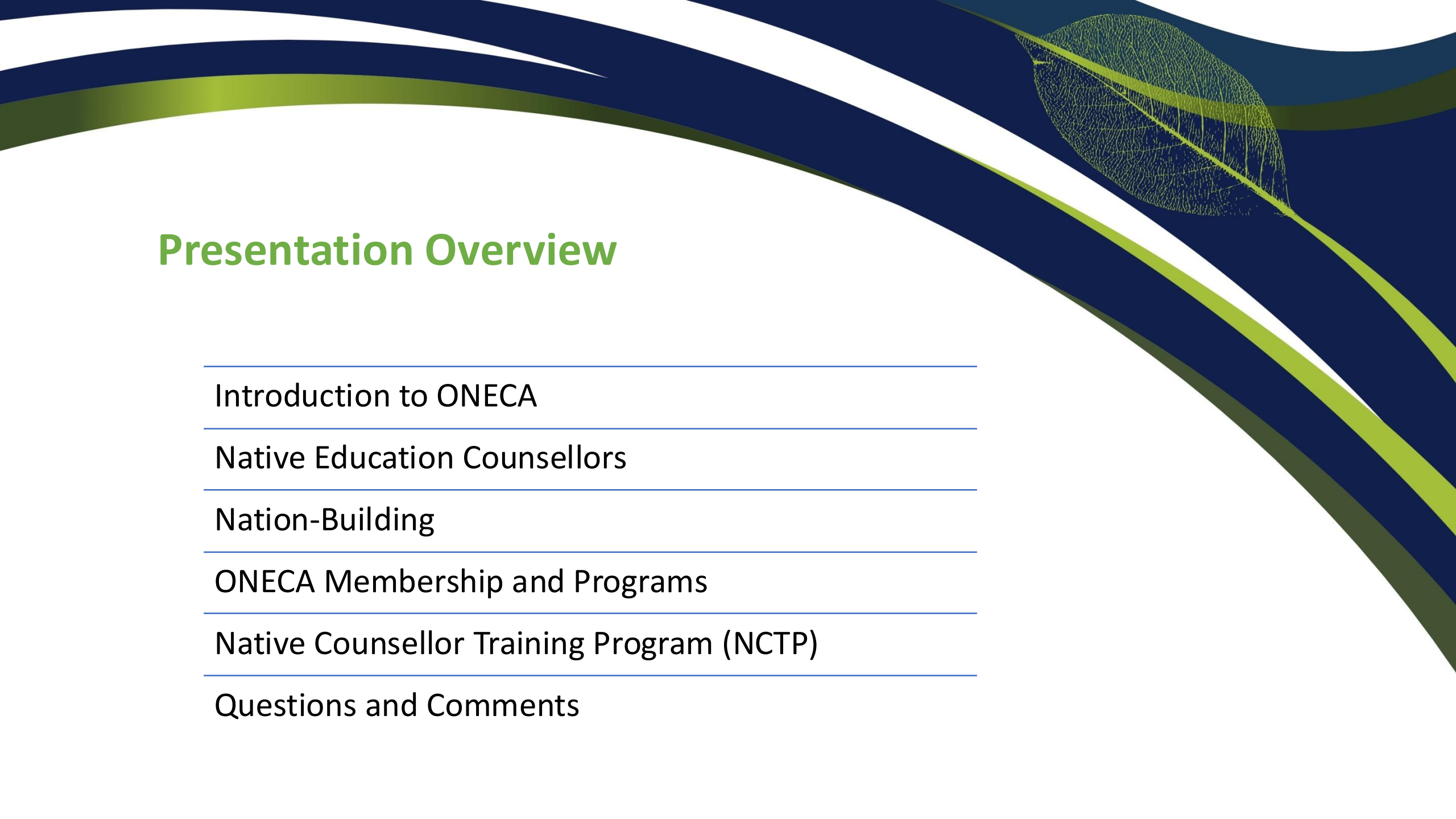


ONECA
Ontario Native Education Counselling Association

“Nation Building and the Native Education Counsellor”



Introductions, Gratitude & Intro-Activity



Presentation Overview

Introduction to ONECA

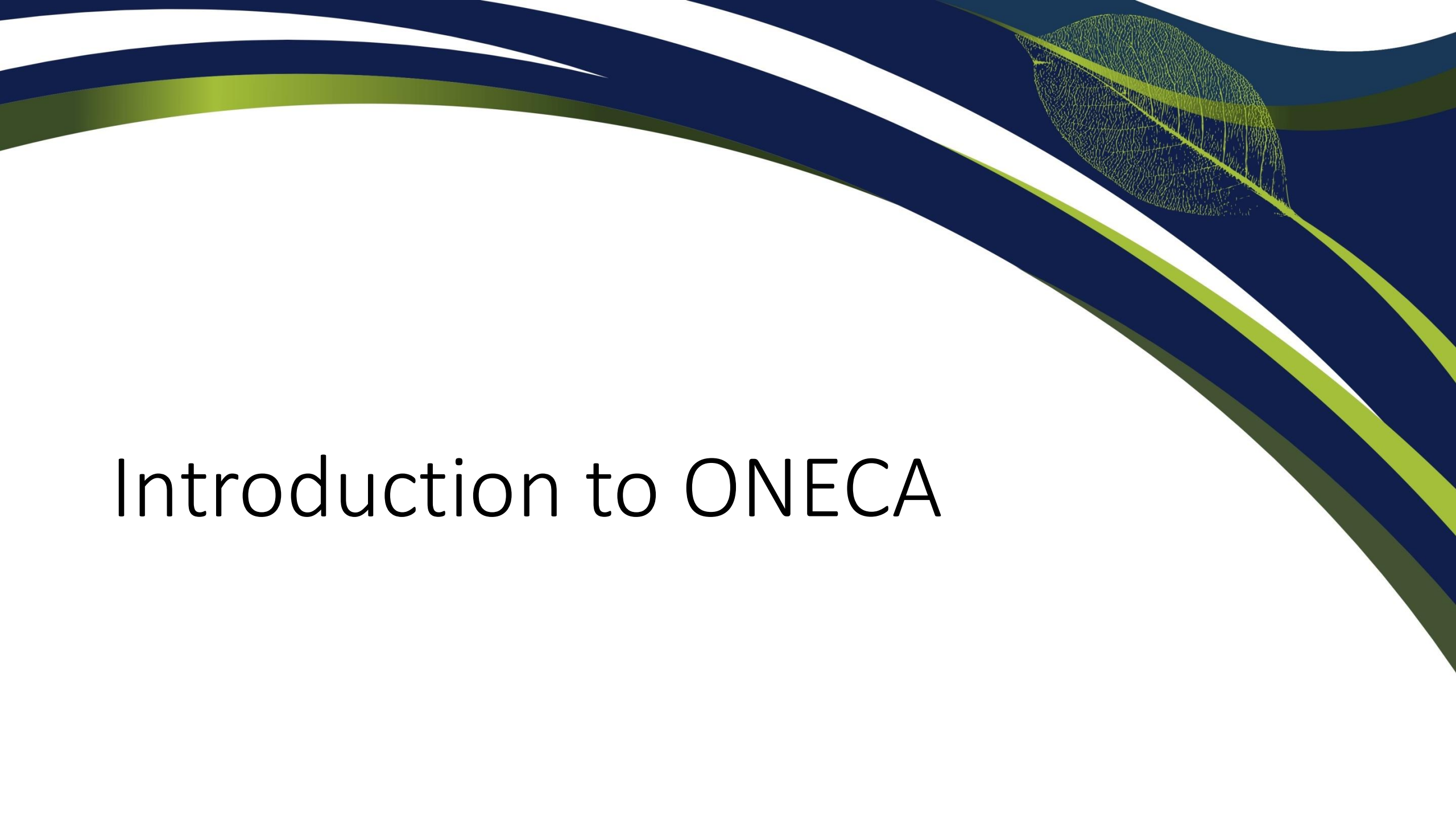
Native Education Counsellors

Nation-Building

ONECA Membership and Programs

Native Counsellor Training Program (NCTP)

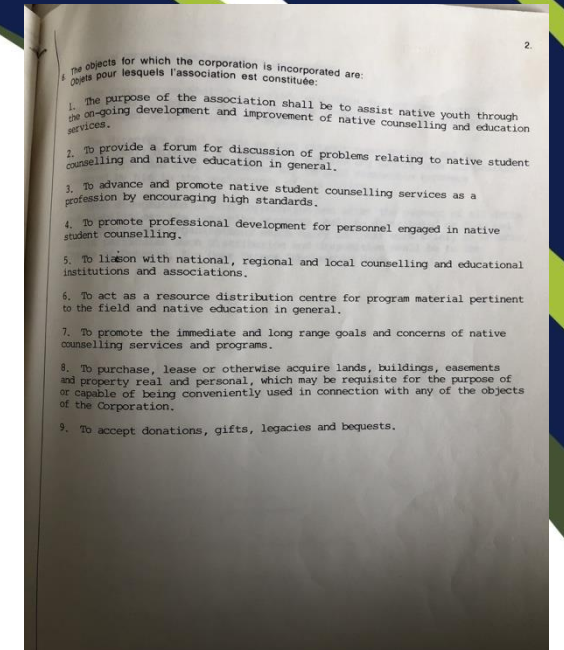
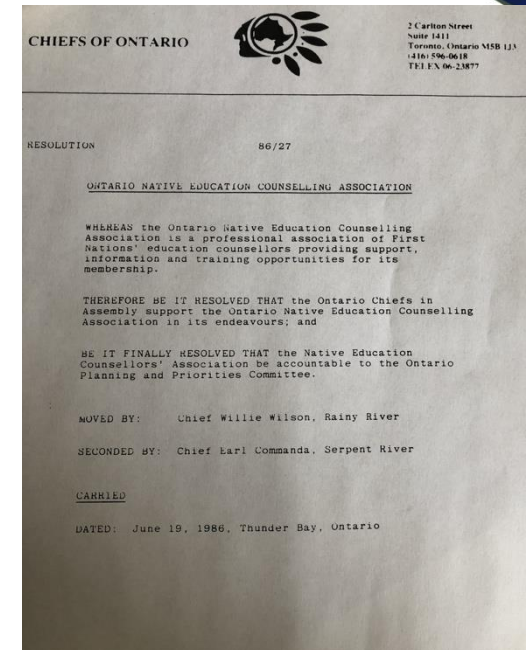
Questions and Comments



Introduction to ONECA

About ONECA

- ONECA is the only association of Indigenous education professionals in Ontario
 - Membership-based
- ONECA was incorporated in 1985
- Serves all 133 FNs in Ontario
- A multi-faceted Indigenous education organization, operating in a lifelong learning continuum (scholarship program, resource development, youth events, liaison with Ontario, ISC and others, NCTP)

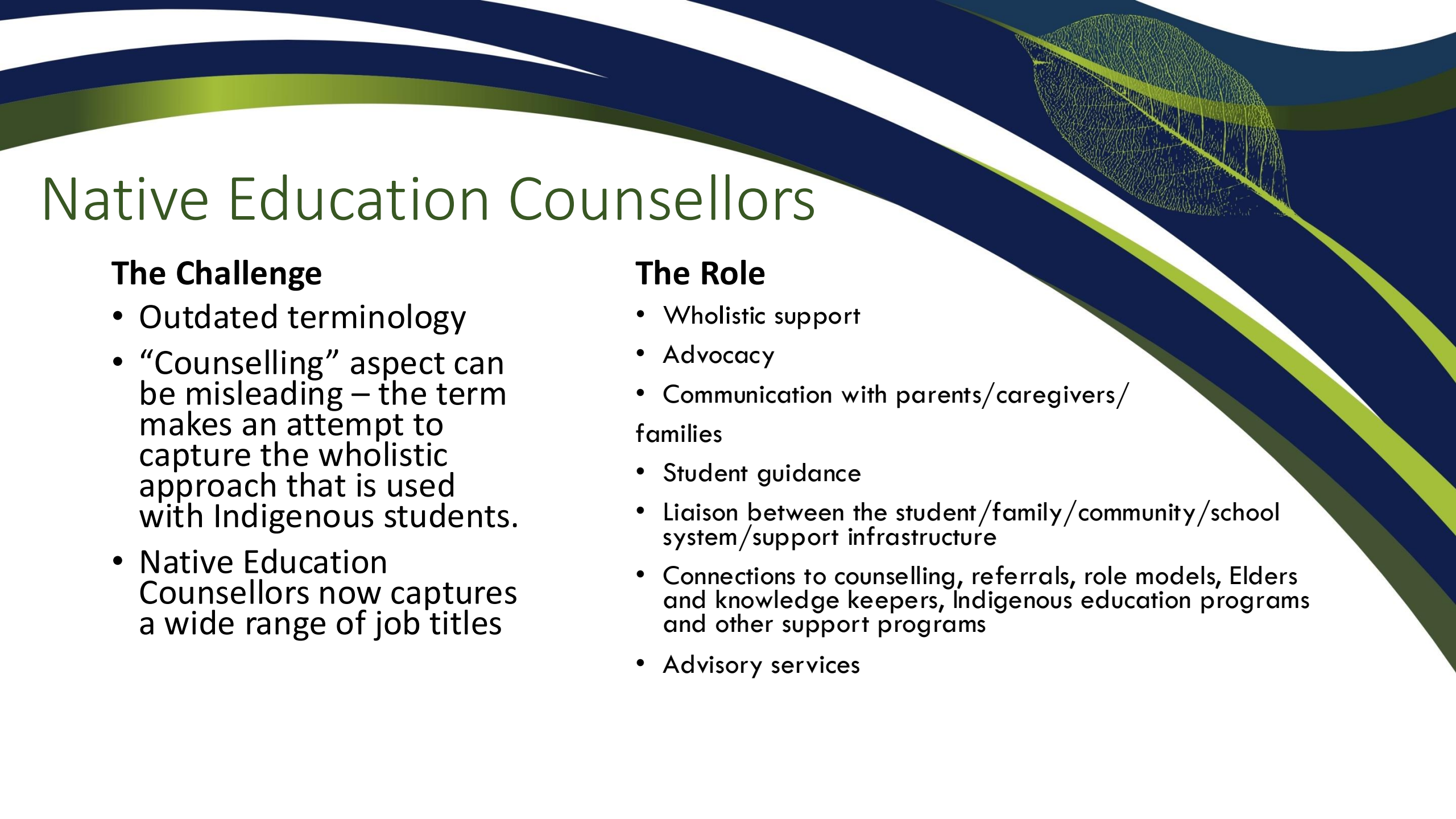


About ONECA

<https://youtu.be/asSFIMYZZeo>



Native Education Counsellors and Nation Building



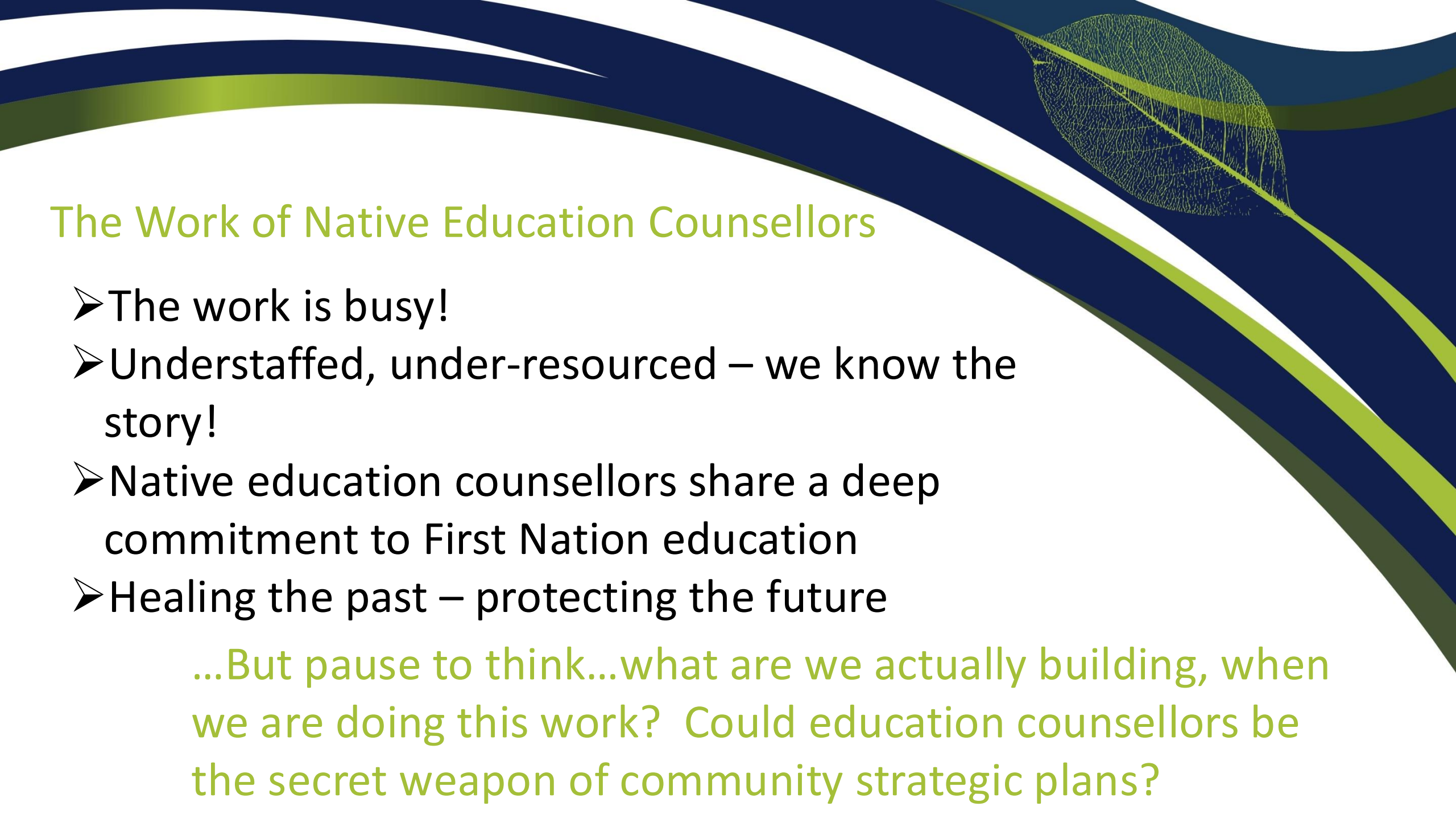
Native Education Counsellors

The Challenge

- Outdated terminology
- “Counselling” aspect can be misleading – the term makes an attempt to capture the wholistic approach that is used with Indigenous students.
- Native Education Counsellors now captures a wide range of job titles

The Role

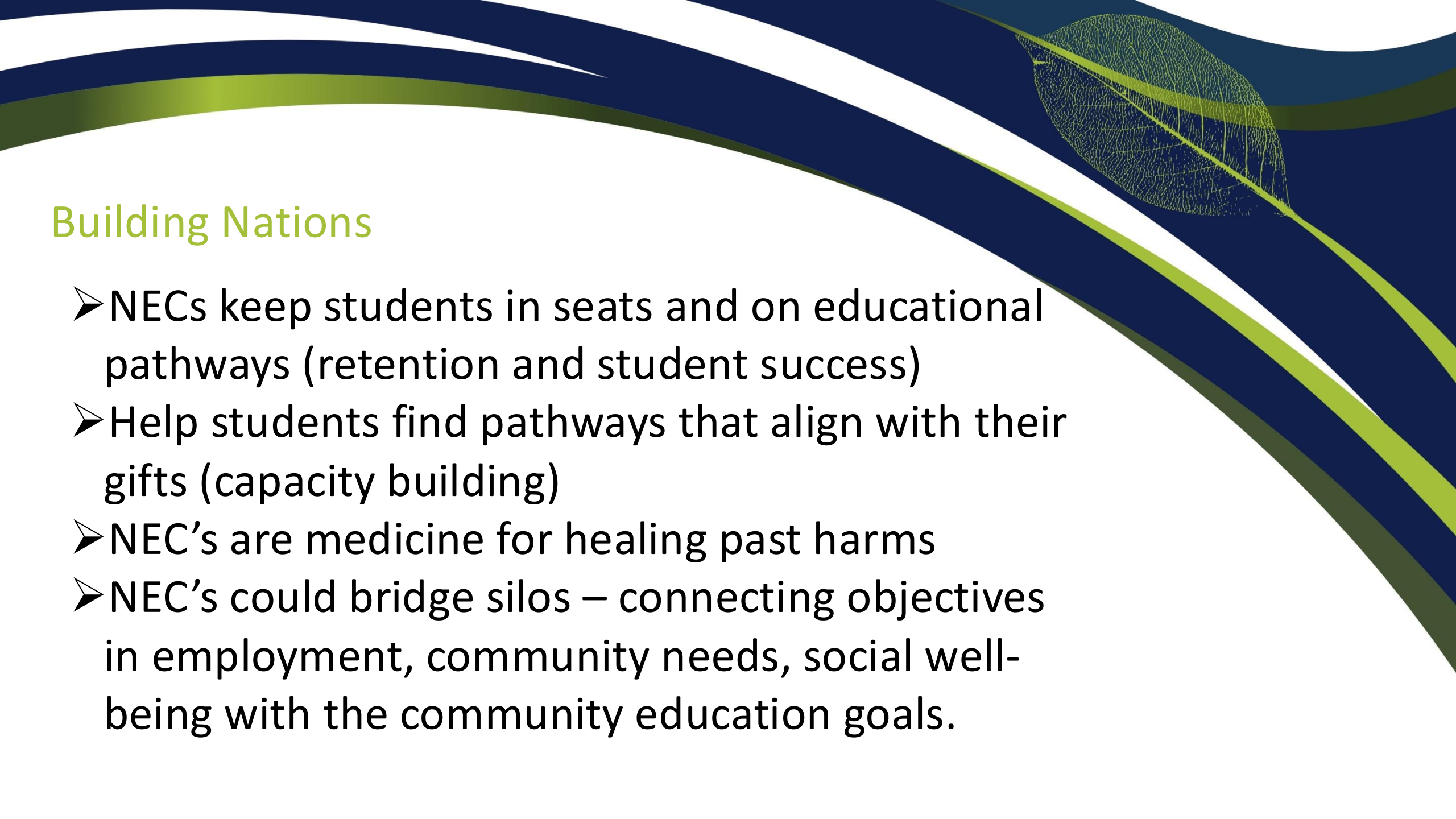
- Wholistic support
- Advocacy
- Communication with parents/caregivers/families
- Student guidance
- Liaison between the student/family/community/school system/support infrastructure
- Connections to counselling, referrals, role models, Elders and knowledge keepers, Indigenous education programs and other support programs
- Advisory services



The Work of Native Education Counsellors

- The work is busy!
- Understaffed, under-resourced – we know the story!
- Native education counsellors share a deep commitment to First Nation education
- Healing the past – protecting the future

...But pause to think...what are we actually building, when we are doing this work? Could education counsellors be the secret weapon of community strategic plans?



Building Nations

- NECs keep students in seats and on educational pathways (retention and student success)
- Help students find pathways that align with their gifts (capacity building)
- NEC's are medicine for healing past harms
- NEC's could bridge silos – connecting objectives in employment, community needs, social well-being with the community education goals.



Benefits to Contemplate

- Building community capacity with lived experience – lessening reliance on outside consultants
 - Minimize disconnect in results
 - Flow \$ back into community members
- Protect and uphold community knowledge
- Strengthen advocacy with community professionals that know the issues first-hand and are invested in developing solutions.



Pause for Questions –
Comments....



Membership and Programs



Annual
Membership
Fee:
\$150

BECOME A MEMBER



Benefits:

- ✓ Personal and Professional Support
- ✓ Network with other Indigenous education professionals
- ✓ Professional Development
- ✓ Advocacy and Voice in Indigenous education
- ✓ Organizational involvement and decision-making
- ✓ Reduced rates at Annual Conference and other events
- ✓ Access to Resources and Information

About the Step-By- Step Program

NEW PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY USE

STEP BY STEP: TAKING STEPS TO INCREASE MY SUCCESS IN POSTSECONDARY

About the program:

These resources were designed to assist communities with supporting learners with accessing postsecondary education.

The resources address the following:

- ▶ Postsecondary readiness
 - ▶ Confidence-building
 - ▶ Career exploration
- ▶ Navigating postsecondary systems
 - ▶ Creation of supportive, inclusive learning spaces where Indigenous learners can feel seen, heard, and empowered.

The program includes:

- ▶ a Facilitator Guide
 - ▶ a Learner Package
 - ▶ a Learner Workbook
 - ▶ 8 video resources.
- +

This program can be delivered by your own community facilitators. It is ready to go, complete with six modules/19 lessons (30 hours total).

Are you an Indigenous woman or adult thinking about college, university, trades, or training but not sure where to start?

Take your first step toward
postsecondary success!

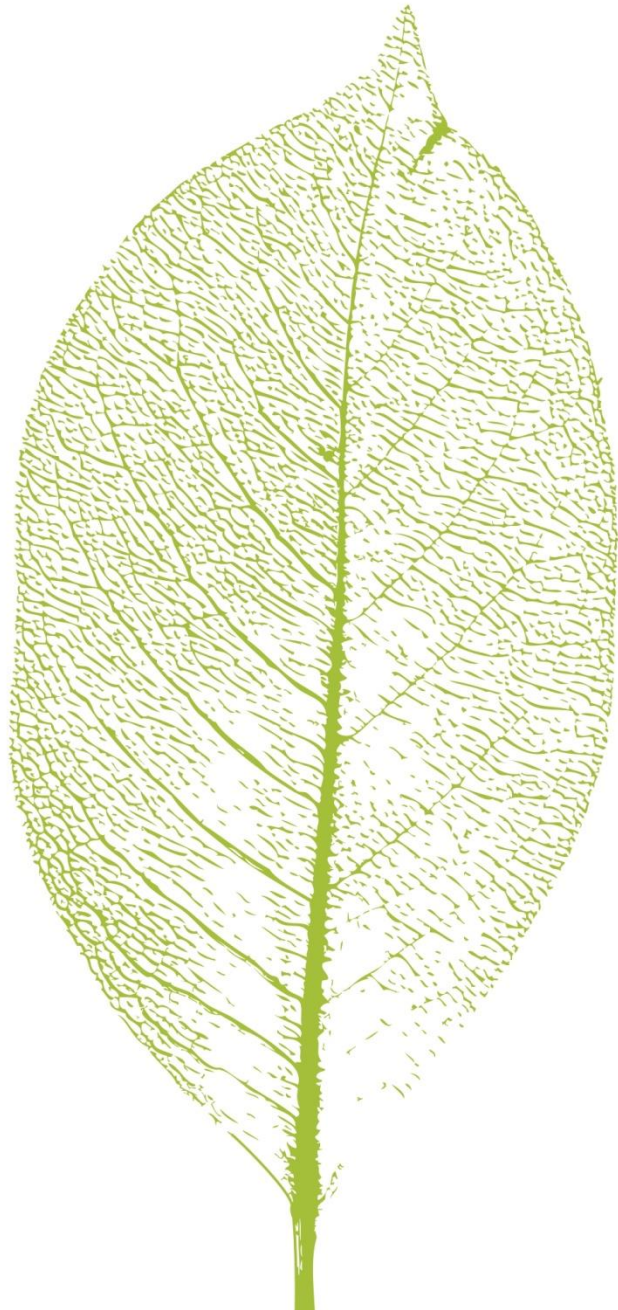


Step-By-Step
POSTSECONDARY GUIDE

How to Access:

Website: <https://oneca.com/pse-gathering/>

Email: oneca@oneca.com



native counsellor
TRAINING PROGRAM

LINK:



Native Counsellor Training Program

<https://youtu.be/VAD0QZcd6tI?si=dck8VJxqwz2VvGDj>



NCTP – Program Overview

3-year program which includes two years of online delivery followed by 200 hours of field placement.

The Program's goals are to prepare students to:

- be knowledgeable about the profession of counselling and competent in implementing culturally appropriate counselling techniques.
- provide opportunities for specialization in the techniques and processes of education counselling.
- To be knowledgeable about theories of counselling, career development, various cultural teachings, academic and personal support.



Course Offerings – Part I

- Counselling Practicum & Theory 1
- School & Career Guidance 1
- Education Systems in Ontario
- Sociology of Native People



Course Offerings– Part I I

- Counselling Practicum & Theory II
- School & Career Guidance II
- Information Process & Career Planning
- Indigenous Issues



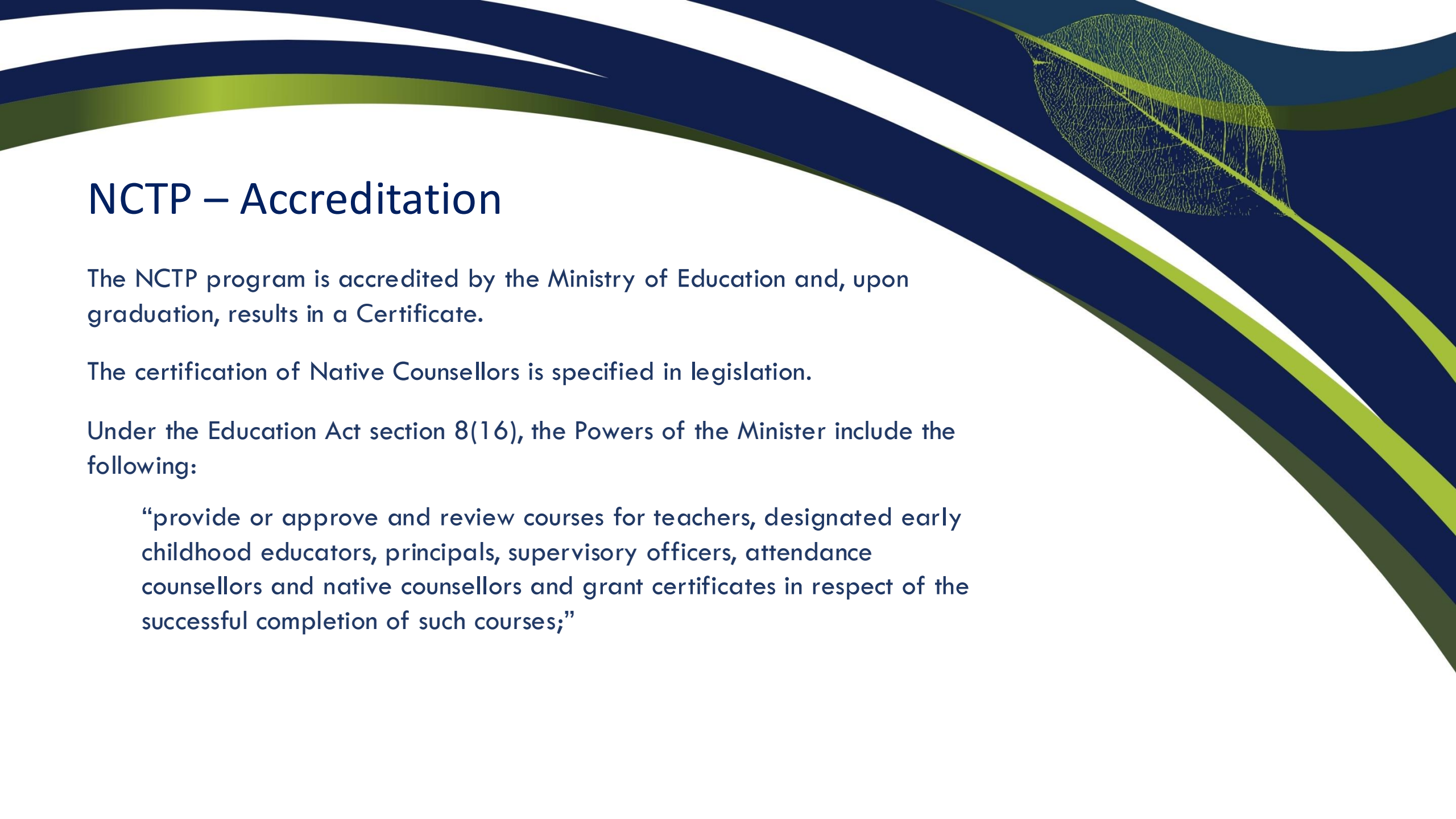
Course Offerings – Part I I I

- Counselling Practicum & Theory III



Career Paths

- Counsellors
- Youth workers
- Student Support Workers
- Elder Program Workers
- Health Care Workers
- Support Services: Guidance, Mentors, Tutors, Coaches



NCTP – Accreditation

The NCTP program is accredited by the Ministry of Education and, upon graduation, results in a Certificate.

The certification of Native Counsellors is specified in legislation.

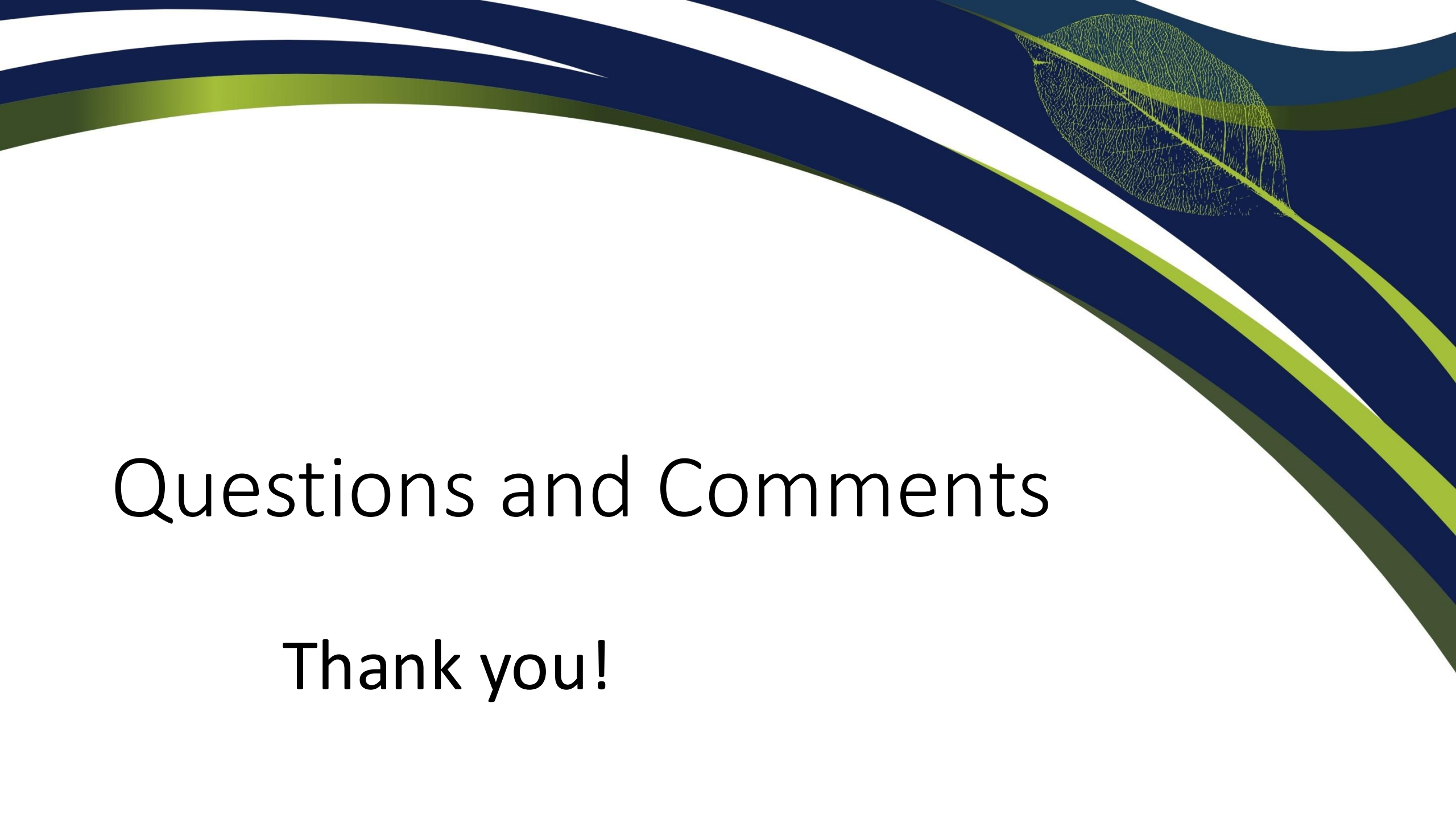
Under the Education Act section 8(16), the Powers of the Minister include the following:

“provide or approve and review courses for teachers, designated early childhood educators, principals, supervisory officers, attendance counsellors and native counsellors and grant certificates in respect of the successful completion of such courses;”

NCTP – Testimonials

- When I decided to sign up for the NCTP offered through ONECA I never imagined the kind of experience I would have. From the very first class I felt as though I was part of something very special. It only took a couple of classes to realize that I was seen and heard by my peers.
- I felt as though my thoughts and opinions mattered and were valued. Our discussions during class were of particular importance because I was given Indigenous curriculum that not only touched on aspects of my own life but offered broader up-to-date perspectives from other Indigenous peoples.
- There is no doubt in my mind that choosing to take this program was the best decision I ever made. Not only did it offer a different path for me to follow but it opened up opportunities to help others





Questions and Comments

Thank you!