

Assessing Impacts that Matter to People: practical examples of assessing psycho-social impact within environmental impact assessments



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Presentation Outline



I. What impacts are we talking about?

II. Context: the Mackenzie Valley

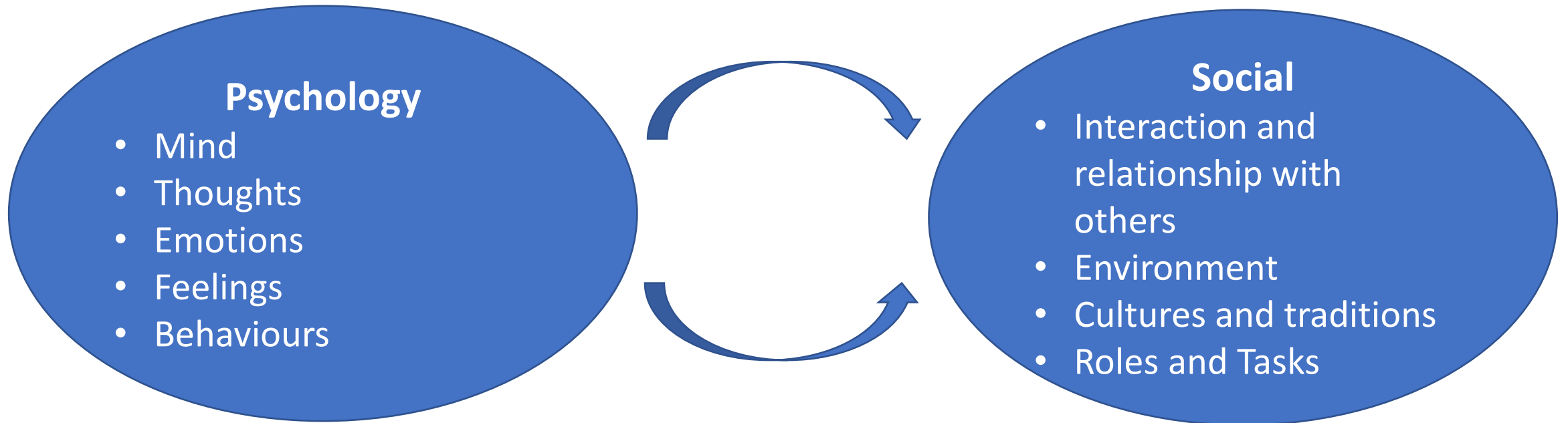
III. Case studies

- i. Acceptability of a transmission line crossing sacred water
- ii. Trust and anxiety about arsenic at Giant Mine
- iii. Importance of place and future aspirations of Lac de Gras

IV. Themes and what works well



What impacts are we talking about?



Recreated from: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-psychosocial-health-definition-components-traits.html>



I. Context: The Mackenzie Valley

Must consider:

- The environment
- Social, cultural, and economic well-being
- Way of life of Indigenous Peoples



“sharing decision making between communities and governments”



Case Study 1: Acceptability of a transmission line crossing sacred water

- Taltson Twin Gorges Hydroelectric Plant
- Expansion and new transmission line
- Traditional territory of Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation
- Proposed route crosses Desnethche and Tsanku Theda



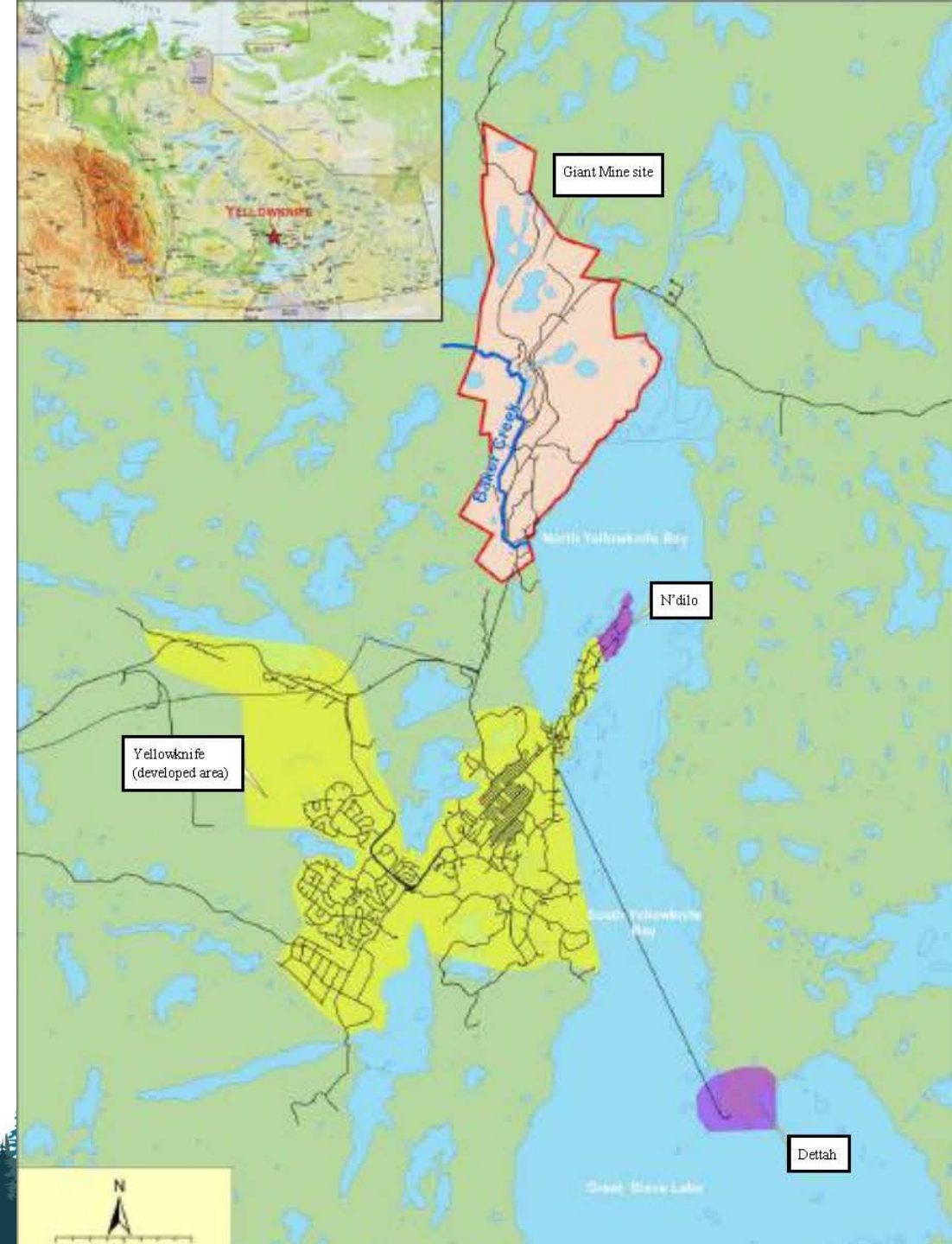
“You want to do something that takes something away from us that our ancestors have had since the beginning. We’ve been raised here. I don’t know what else to say. I just hope that you will find it in your heart to just let us live the way we want to live.”

(Review Board 2009, p108)



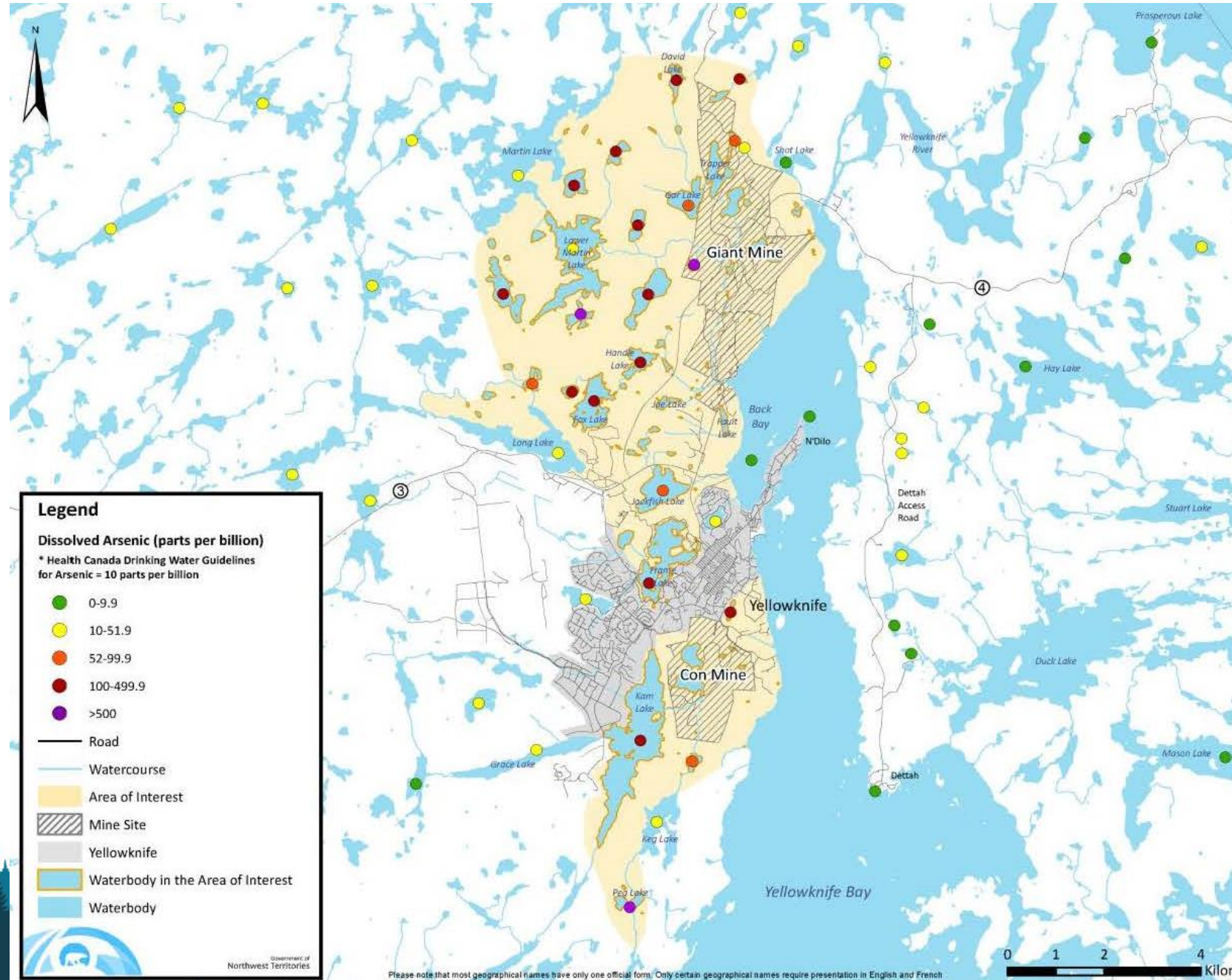
Case Study 2: Trust and anxiety about arsenic at Giant Mine

- Gold mine that operated for over 50 years
- Widespread arsenic contamination
- After bankruptcy, the mine reverted to federal care for closure
- Concern about arsenic from the mine was “psychologically pervasive and weighs on the mind” (Review Board 2012a, p372)



“Protect public health.
Keep people safe. Don't
make us live with the
anxiety of the ‘what if’”
(Review Board 2012a, p366).

“...all residents... deserve
to trust that our health
and interests are looked
after by the responsible
entities, and that the land
and water will not poison
us.” (Erica Janes 2012, p1).



Case Study 3: Importance of place and future aspirations of Lac de Gras



- Diamond mine on Lac de Gras
- Proposed putting excess tailings in pits
- Culturally important area must remain clean for future generations



- “...there’s a freezer and a bank over there for us” (Tłıchq Government 2019, p5)
- “...real or perceived socio-ecological impacts ...effectively alienate our members from continuing to practice our way of life in that area” (Łutsel K’e Dene First Nation 2019, p3)
- “[t]ensions, fear, and angst can arise when development is not in alignment with cultural values and perspectives” (Review Board 2019, p47)



Themes across case studies

Public and
Indigenous
concern reflect
real impacts

Qualitative data is
important and
comes from
different sources

Worldview affects
what impacts
people experience



What works well

- Engage early and often
- Think about how you communicate
- Respect different types of expertise
- Work with the community to find solutions

Let's listen well to each other. Let's listen... that's our land that we love that we're talking about. Let's share good stories and make good decisions.

Tłjchq Elder Dora Migwi



Conclusion



Meaningfully addressing the impacts that matter most to people will build confidence in the EA process and decisions

Masi! Thank You!



Let's continue the conversation!

Post questions and comments via chat in the IAIA22 platform.



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