



**Year 6**  
**ON NEIHR Annual Report:**  
Healing through Connection

**01 October 2024 – 30 September 2025**  
**Submitted to CIHR**

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**& Team**

**22 April 2026**



**Ontario Network Environments For  
Indigenous Health Research**

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# Message from the Nominated Principal Applicant

Year 6 marks a profound milestone for the **Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (ON NEIHR)**. Having successfully navigated our first five-year mandate, we enter 2025 not just as a continuation of what came before, but as a matured, renewed collective. This year is defined by three pillars: the commencement of our second five-year funding cycle; the full integration of virtual and land-based knowledge mobilization; and a deepened commitment to spiritual ceremony as the bedrock of our operational framework.

## Transition and Renewal

As we reflect on the successful submission and approval of our renewal proposal to CIHR in 2024, Year 6 serves as the inaugural year of our next chapter. We spent much of the previous year in a rigorous process of knowledge translation and evaluation—identifying the impacts of our work since 2019. This evaluation, which involved surveying and interviewing our membership of over 100 researchers, partners, and students, has provided us with a clear roadmap for the years ahead.

This journey is bittersweet as we carry forward the spirit of our late Elder, **Grandma Pauline Shirt**. Her leadership of our evaluation sub-team and her profound kindness remain the heartbeat of this network. While we continue to mourn her passing in June 2024, we celebrate her legacy by ensuring the "heart and spirit" she instilled in the ON NEIHR remains central to every project we undertake in this new cycle.

## Evolution of Knowledge Mobilization

While the global pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, Year 6 finds us thriving in a "new normal" that has expanded our reach. The infrastructure we built out of necessity has now become a permanent strength. Our monthly webinar series continues to provide international accessibility to Indigenous health research, and our acclaimed podcast, *Pihtikwê: Visits with First Nations Psychologists*, has set a new standard for grounded, Indigenous-led knowledge sharing.

What began as a response to crisis has evolved into a sophisticated, multi-modal KT strategy. In 2025, we are no longer "catching up" to the impacts of the pandemic; instead, we are leveraging these digital tools to ensure that Indigenous Knowledges are shared widely, safely, and effectively across Turtle Island, and beyond.

## Ceremony and Land-Based Foundations

The most significant achievement as we enter Year 6 is the firm entrenchment of ceremony and land-based activities as the "central nervous system" of the ON NEIHR. What was once a goal in our initial 2019 proposal is now our lived reality. All network meetings, trainings, and research processes are now held in ceremony or on the land.

The funding and infrastructure provided by the NEIHR program have allowed us to maintain the physical and spiritual spaces—wigwams, teepees, and sweat lodges—necessary for this work. These structures are more than just venues; they are the containers for sacred medicines, fires, and the wisdom of healers and Knowledge Keepers who have joined our evolving circle.

As we look forward into the next four years of this new mandate, we remain dedicated to ***Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigewin***. We continue to learn from Mother Earth and one another, seeking to promote Indigenous mental health and healing through a framework that is authentically ours.

**Mahsi cho / Chi miigwetch** for your continued support of the ON NEIHR.

Warmly,



**Dr. Suzanne (Ethsi) Stewart**  
Nominated Principal Applicant,  
ON NEIHR



# Executive Summary

The Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (ON NEIHR) has completed its inaugural year of its second phase, building upon a robust foundation established between 2019 and 2024. The network's primary mission is to address the profound mental health disparities faced by Indigenous Peoples in Canada—disparities rooted in centuries of colonization, systemic oppression, and discrimination.

By prioritizing **Indigenous Knowledges** as a primary driver of wellness, the ON NEIHR is transitioning health systems away from a reliance on purely western biomedical models and toward culturally grounded, evidence-based solutions.

## Key Findings & Historical Context

Research conducted across 25+ sites during the network's first five years confirms that Indigenous mental health is mediated by complex factors, including:

### **Systemic Failures**

Gaps in Canada's health policy and a "culture clash" between biomedical services and traditional healing.

### **Societal Barriers**

Ongoing racism, discrimination, and challenges related to cultural identity.

### **Empowerment through Knowledge**

Data identifies Indigenous Knowledges as a critical variable for positive mental health, offering a rare avenue for autonomy within an underserved healthcare landscape.

## Impact and Success Metrics (2019–2024)

The ON NEIHR entered this current phase with significant momentum between 2019 and 2024, having already influenced clinics, hospitals, and schools through:

### Scholarship

**100+**

Peer-reviewed publications.

### Knowledge Translation

**50**

Webinars and the launch of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).

### Capacity Building

**100+**

Students trained in partnership with the Ontario Indigenous Mentorship Network (ON IMN).

### Partnerships

**25+**

Active engagement with community partners.

## Strategic Objectives for the Current Phase

Moving forward, the ON NEIHR is deepening its impact through its original four primary research themes: Land-based and planetary health solutions, Healing from trauma and reducing addictions, Indigenous suicide prevention and crisis support services, Translating Indigenous Knowledges into policy.

# 1

## Addressing the Evaluation Gap

A critical finding from the first five years was the lack of evaluation data regarding Indigenous mental health services. The network is now implementing **mixed-methods research** (surveys, individual/group data, and meta-analyses) to document the availability and utilization of Indigenous-led care.

# 2

## Program Development & Evaluation

Teams are developing interventions that prioritize **evaluation tools rooted in traditional knowledges**, ensuring that "evidence-based" research is defined by the communities it serves.

# 3

## Regional and International Expansion

While primarily focused on Ontario, the network is scaling its reach through collaborations in:

- **Domestic:** NWT, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.
- **International:** Hawaii and Australia.

# 4

## Policy and Ethics Reform

The ON NEIHR is committed to a distinctions-based lens (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) and is working alongside other NEIHRs across Canada to develop coordinated national responses to research ethics and health priorities.

## Conclusion

In Year 1, the ON NEIHR successfully transitioned from "scratching the surface" to implementing systemic change. By bridging the gap between traditional knowledges and western biomedical mental health policy, the network, currently in Year 6, is positioned to reduce and ultimately end the cycle of intergenerational trauma and mental health challenges facing Indigenous communities through systemic oppressions in the health care system.

## In Memoriam

This report and impacts of the ON NEIHR are a dedicated tribute to **Elder Grandma Pauline Shirt** and the continuation of her legacy in the network's evaluation and spirit.



# Objective & Plan

The **ON NEIHR** is dedicated to advancing Indigenous health sovereignty through community-led research, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) capacity building, and the revitalization of traditional knowledges. Building upon a foundation of cultural safety, established during our first five-year phase, our purpose is to address the urgent mental health and wellness priorities defined by Indigenous communities, Elders, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers across Ontario.

By fostering **Indigenous relationality** and community-based research, we aim to:

**Innovate through Tradition:** Develop land-based and planetary health solutions that honor the connection between environmental and human wellness.

**Support Holistic Healing:** Address the root causes of trauma and addictions while promoting life-affirming strategies for complex crisis support.

**Influence Systemic Change:** Translate Indigenous ways of knowing into actionable policy to ensure health systems are responsive to Indigenous realities.

**Cultivate the Next Generation:** Expand the research capacity of Indigenous scholars and community members through co-learning and national collaboration.

Through these sustained efforts, the ON NEIHR serves as a bridge between community wisdoms and the National Research Agenda, ensuring that Indigenous health research is governed by and for the people it serves. The specific objectives, as guided by a National Research Agenda led by the NEIHR National Coordinating Centre (NCC), are to work from a distinction-based identity (FNMI) lens and develop a coordinated national response to research ethics and health priorities with the other NEIHRs across Canada to enact policy and systems change.

# The Team

The ON NEIHR team has grown from its original group of 16 in 2019 to 28 investigators in Year 6, mostly from Ontario, with some Indigenous mental health experts from across Canada, and internationally. The Year 6 team, identified in Table 1, includes one Nominated Principal Applicant, four Knowledge Users, six Co-applicants, and 13 Collaborators.

**Table 1. ON NEIHR Team Investigators**

Role	Name	Affiliation/Title
Nominated Principal Applicant	Dr. Suzanne (Ethsi) Stewart	University of Toronto
Principal Knowledge User	Elder Luana Shirt	University of Toronto, ON Rama First Nation, ON
Knowledge User	Keith McCrady	Director, 2-Spirited Peoples of the 1st Nation, Toronto, ON
Knowledge User	Dr. Renee Linklater	Senior Director, Shkaabe Makwa, CAMH, ON
Knowledge User	Pamela Hart	Director, Native Women's Centre of Toronto, ON
Co-Applicant	Dr. Jeffrey Ansloos	Associate Professor, OISE, University of Toronto, ON
Co-Applicant	Dr. Lynn Lavallee	Professor, Ryerson University (Toronto Metropolitan University), ON
Co-Applicant	Dr. Janet Smylie	Sex and Gender Champion, Unity Health Toronto, ON
Co-Applicant	Dr. Rod McCormick	Research Chair, Thompson Rivers University, BC
Co-Applicant	Dr. Chris Mushquash	Canada Research Chair, Lakehead University, ON
Co-Applicant	Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel	Research Scientist, Unity Health Toronto, ON
Collaborator	Elder Wendy Philips	Curve Lake First Nation, ON

Role	Name	Affiliation/Title
Collaborator	Dr. Alanaise Ferguson	Associate Professor, University of British Columbia, BC
Collaborator	Dr. Brenda Restoule	Director, First Peoples Wellness Circle, ON
Collaborator	Dr. Michael Hart	Vice Provost, University of Calgary, AB
Collaborator	Dr. Chantelle Richmond	Canada Research Chair, Western University, ON
Collaborator	Dr. Maile Taualii	Kaiser Permanente, Hawaii
Collaborator	Dr. Michelle Dickson	University of Sydney, Australia
Collaborator	Dr. Michael Doyle	University of Sydney, Australia
Collaborator	Dr. Vanessa Ambtman-Smith	Special Advisor, University of Victoria, BC
Collaborator	Michael Brown	PhD Student, University of Toronto, ON
Collaborator	Dr. Cathy Fournier	Research Scientist, York University, ON
Collaborator	Kimberly Fairman	Director, Institute for Circumpolar Health Research, NWT
Collaborator	Dr. Jaris Swidrovich	Associate Professor, University of Toronto, ON

# Governance Structure

Building on its 2019–2024 foundation, the **ON NEIHR** uses a circular governance model rooted in Indigenous Knowledges and spiritual ceremony. The model emphasizes ethical accountability through a leadership strategy that places community partners and Elders at the center of all operations.

Key oversight mechanisms include:

## The Leadership Circle

Comprising six Indigenous scholars; this group provides academic and strategic direction (see Table 2).

## Elders' Advising Council

Provides high-level guidance, ensuring that research, student training, and policy development remain grounded in Indigenous principles.

## Circular Partnership Model

A structure that depicts the relationship between researchers and community partners, ensuring that network activities—from data analysis to knowledge translation—meet community-specific needs.

**Table 2. ON NEIHR Leadership Circle Members (2019–2025)**

Name	Role/Affiliation	Specialization/Focus
Dr. Suzanne (Ethsi) Stewart	Nominated PI (Dene)	Senior Scholar & Leadership Lead
Elder Clayton Shirt	Principal Knowledge User (Cree/Metis)	Cultural Guidance & WIIH/UofT Elder-in-Residence
Dr. Janet Smylie	Co-Investigator, Sex and Gender Champion (Metis), Senior Scholar	Well Living House/ St Michael's Hospital
Dr. Chantelle Richmond	Co-Investigator, Senior Scholar (Anishnawbe)	Western University / Indigenous Mentorship
Dr. Chelsea Gabel (former member)	Collaborator, IMNO Lead (Metis)	McMaster University / Mid-career Scholarship
Dr. Holly Graham	Co-Investigator, Theme Group 2 Lead (Cree)	Trauma Healing & Reducing Addictions
Dr. Mikaela Gabriel	Co-Investigator, Theme Group 4 Lead (Mi'kmaq)	Policy Translation & Emerging Scholarship, Early Career Scholar

**Note:** The Leadership Circle provides a blend of senior academic expertise and traditional wisdom to guide the network's mental health initiatives.

## Year 6 Meeting Frequency

Continuing the successful schedule established in its first phase, the **Elders' Advising Council met four times in 2025** to direct the network's strategic operations and activities. Additionally, spiritual ceremony and Elder guidance remains embedded in the network's daily operations and research meetings throughout the year.

## The Heart of the Network: Ceremony & Land-Based Activity

- **Spirituality:** Throughout the first five years of the ON NEIHR, Master of Public Health courses in the Indigenous Health stream were facilitated in wigwams and teepees, on the land. Community events were hosted to bring people together to build and maintain the structures to further embed Indigenous Knowledges in the curricula. Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth Learning Lodge) is a wigwam maintained at St. George campus in downtown Toronto, with another learning lodge, a teepee, and sweat lodges maintained at Hart House Farm.
- **Ceremonial Integration:** There are multiple cultural and ceremonial events facilitated by ON NEIHR including biweekly Drum circles, monthly sweat lodge ceremonies, and weekly sacred fires and full moon ceremonies in Askaakamigokwewigamig. These events provide the grounding needed to conduct our research in a good way while staying connected to the traditional teachings and stories that guide our work.
- **The Circle Grows:** The existing Elders and Knowledge Keepers for the first five years included Elder Clayton Shirt, Elder Luana Shirt, Elder Jacqui Lavalley, Elder Wendy Phillips, and Elder Constance Simmonds. New members of the Elders' Council include Elder Sioux Lamure and Elder Dr. Deborah Wilson Danard.

## Knowledge Mobilization & Impact

### Digital Reach

#### Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin Webinar Speaker Series

Throughout Year 6 the Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin continued to host the Webinar Speaker Series to foster knowledge mobilization within Indigenous health research on a variety of important topics promoting Indigenous wellness. This included 13 scheduled webinars (see Table 3), with presentations from named collaborators, healthcare professionals, Indigenous PhD students and visiting Indigenous scholars from Australia and the United States. Out of the 13 scheduled webinars, 4 were held as hybrid events in the Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth Learning Lodge). The hybrid webinars were live streamed from Askaakamigokwewigamig and welcomed in person participation. This format increased access to traditional ceremony led by our Elders/Knowledge Keepers and created opportunity for relationship building and supported accessible Knowledge Sharing with the urban Indigenous community in Toronto. Each event was recorded and posted to the Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin YouTube Channel.

**Table 3. Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin Webinar Attendance**

Webinar Date	Presenters	Presentation Title	Link	Eventbrite Registrations	YouTube Views
3 Oct 2024	Dr. Cathy Fournier & Cohen Pinkoski	Journey To Reconciliation: Indigenous Homelessness Prevention	<a href="https://youtu.be/SE1RLfR1TOK">https://youtu.be/SE1RLfR1TOK</a>	100	282
16 Oct 2024	Dr. Cheryl Kickett-Tucker *Hybrid presentation	Baranginy ngalang noongar: Enhancing Children's Wellbeing Through moombaki Cultural Learnings in Schools	<a href="https://youtu.be/f-F5WmKggxo">https://youtu.be/f-F5WmKggxo</a>	21	98
7 Nov 2024	Angie Morris & Nghia Nguyen	Approaches to Community Wellbeing: AnishiniwugAjimoowin Animisewiinan - Mental Health and Substance Use Report.	<a href="https://youtu.be/a02E08WqHvc">https://youtu.be/a02E08WqHvc</a>	72	193
4 Dec 2024	Dr. Brenda Restoule	What Justice Looks Like: Confronting Anti-Indigenous Racism and Building Safe and Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Systems for Indigenous People	<a href="https://youtu.be/2mpwFBx82Gk">https://youtu.be/2mpwFBx82Gk</a>	65	89
14 Jan 2025	Louis Busch	Good Words are Medicine: Exploring the Psychological Impact of Forced Language Attrition and Possible Solutions	<a href="https://youtu.be/xf2EBvYlp4M">https://youtu.be/xf2EBvYlp4M</a>	33	62
6 Feb 2025	Dr. Brenda Restoule	First Nations Mental Wellness Workforce: A Realist Review	<a href="https://youtu.be/bd5j6CGAOKc">https://youtu.be/bd5j6CGAOKc</a>	37	78
4 Mar 2025	Dr. Carol Hopkins	Model of Care for Substance Use	<a href="https://youtu.be/NK9wpM64CNE">https://youtu.be/NK9wpM64CNE</a>	47	169
29 Apr 2025	Mike Auksi	The Time Traveler: Historical and Contemporary Understandings of Indigenous Education and Physical Health Determinants	<a href="https://youtu.be/AYuwbfip1Og">https://youtu.be/AYuwbfip1Og</a>	27	44
23 May 2025	Dr. Joseph Gone *Hybrid presentation	American Indian Traditional Healing: Expressions of Alter-Native Psy-ence	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v10DZCJn_U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v10DZCJn_U</a>	100	102
25 Jun 2025	Dr. Cornelia (Nel) Wieman	Greater Cultural Safety in Mental Health Services through Research and Traditional Knowledge	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-S0DT8ecY0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-S0DT8ecY0</a>	100	41
10 Jul 2025	Knowledge Keeper Constance Simmonds *Hybrid presentation	Health and Wellness Teachings	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qlz8hoci19k">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qlz8hoci19k</a>	25	46
25 Jul 2025	Dr. Michelle Johnson Jennings *Hybrid presentation	The Land Remembers the Teachings of the Ancestors: Honouring Health Wellness Through Sacred Connection	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9otW6wsjks">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9otW6wsjks</a>	98	81
22 Sept 2025	Dr. Victoria O'Keefe	Strengths-based Indigenous Health Research	<i>*Webinar cancelled – rescheduled in Year 7*</i>	-	-

## Social Media Engagement & Communications

Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin aims to provide accessible and barrier-free educational content. Social media is used as a knowledge mobilization tool, with the purpose of reaching as many people as possible across Indigenous communities in Ontario, circles of Indigenous health professionals and trainees. Knowledge Sharing events are advertised across all Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin social media networks (Instagram, Facebook, X, and LinkedIn).

Additionally, throughout Year 6, the team increased event promotion through the submissions to the Dalla Lana School of Public Health Event Digest Page, distribution of the ON NEIHR Seasonal Newsletter, and by sharing our events with a curated contact list of Indigenous Offices across Universities in Ontario.

## Pihtikwê Podcast

Throughout the reporting period of Year 6, named collaborators of ON NEIHR, Dr. Brenda Restoule (First Peoples Wellness Circle), Dr. Holly Graham (University of Saskatchewan) and Dr. Alanaise Ferguson (University of British Columbia-Okanagan) have continued their work on Pihtikwê: Visits with First Nations Psychologists Podcast Series. Pihtikwê is a key deliverable based on collaborations from the ON NEIHR Theme Group: Healing from Trauma and Reducing Addictions. The podcast serves as an accessible tool for community, psychology students and mental health professionals to hear firsthand the lived experiences of Indigenous professionals working in the mental wellness field. The aim of the podcast is to mobilize and share Indigenous knowledge relating to trauma repair, recovery from addictions, community survivance, successes and challenges in navigating the health care and mental health systems and Indigenous healing practices.

The new developments from Pihtikwê include a thematic data analysis of Season 1 of the podcast and further data collection regarding intergenerational trauma via interviews with 8-10 identified participants to inform a peer-reviewed journal article on Indigenous mental health. The team has also been working towards the release of Season 2 by recording interviews with a new line of Indigenous Clinical Psychologists guided by the theme: Sharing Responsibility. The podcast uses Indigenous research methodologies such as a narrative approach to support Storytelling.



## Knowledge Translation (KT) Products

A list of infographics, community toolkits, and policy briefs produced during the 2024–2025 time-period can be found below, with the corresponding appendices.

### **ON NEIHR Seasonal Newsletter**

Shanti Aguilar-Cardenas, Brianna Kitchener, Ariana Giulianelli, Taylor Faulk, Hugo Purdon and William O'Hare-Rennie

- Triannual ON NEIHR Newsletter (see Appendix B)

### **Impacts of the Climate Crisis on Indigenous Youths' Mental Health – Phase 1**

Dr. Suzanne (Ethsi) Stewart, Dr. Sabina Mirza, Michael Brown, Apt'sqi'gnn, Ethan Faulk, Tiara Ranasinghe, and Mimika Hazra

- Climate Crisis Community Newsletter (see Appendix E)
- Climate Crisis Policy Brief (see Appendix D)
- Climate Crisis Graphic Novel; Sneak Peek (see Appendix C)

### **Bridges and barriers: Exploring healthcare access and services for Indigenous Peoples**

Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel, Marc Gonsalves and Tina Liu

- Bridges and Barriers; Executive Summary (see Appendix F)

### **Supporting Agency, Facing Equity: An Environmental Scan of Indigenous Cultural Safety Training for Primary Care Providers**

Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel and Ariana Giulianelli

- SAFE Project; Executive Summary (see Appendix G)

# The Evaluation Report

An Evaluation Report for Years 1 to 5 of the ON NEIHR is currently in progress, with a completion date of Summer 2026. The preliminary findings come from both the interviews and surveys as well as informal consultations from the 2024 summer gathering, including feedback from across four main domains: Elders, Collaborators, Community Partners and Students. The ON NEIHR successfully developed in over 25 sites across Ontario, Canada, and at least three internationally, with over 20 academic members, 25 community partners (including organizations and governments). The network successfully began to transform the current Western biomedical-based crisis response system to a coordinated strategic system that is based in community, Indigenous Knowledges, and prevention by training, capacity building and knowledge translation, development of a governance model, and closing the gap in Indigenous mental health.

Based on the NEIHR development research in 2019, the ON NEIHR was established over the course of five years of funding (2019-2024), with a focus on foundational themes of cultural safety and prevention. To achieve this, network members were grouped into four specific research theme groups based on their expertise, experience, and community partnership directives. These themes embodied the research within the ON NEIHR as they addressed critical mental health issues and needs that remain relevant as articulated by the community partners and Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers that drive and guide the network:

**Theme Group 1:** Land-Based and Planetary Health Solutions;

**Theme Group 2:** Healing from Trauma and Reducing Addictions;

**Theme Group 3:** Indigenous Suicide Prevention and Complex Crisis Support;

**Theme Group 4:** Translating Indigenous Knowledges into Policy.

# Training

Over its first five years, the ON NEIHR exceeded its goal, which was to engage 130 trainees. From 2019 to 2024, the ON NEIHR engaged a total of 182 trainees across 12 universities – not including the 40+ graduate students funded by the Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario (IMNO) in the same period demonstrating the impact of FNMI mental health research capacity, including:

**28 Undergraduates,**

**99 Masters,**

**20 PhDs, PDFs,**

**24 CRAs.**

The Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario (IMNO) at McMaster University is a health training program started by ON NEIHR former Co-Applicant Dr. Chelsea Gabel that provides Indigenous graduate students with high-quality mentorship, training, and opportunities to engage in FNMI health and well-being research. The ON NEIHR worked with the IMNO to successfully meet its overarching goal to support and grow the next generation of FNMI health scholars in order to advance FNMI health equity in the province. The IMNO's goals and activities aligned closely with the ON NEIHR over the first five years, and they worked together to co-deliver webinars, fall and spring gatherings, and academic tools and resources for IMNO trainees, who will continue to be invited to join both networks. In 2021, Year 2 of the ON NEIHR, the IMNO received notification that its CIHR funding program would be discontinued. Working collaboratively with the IMNO was and remains a core aspect of the ON NEIHR's process and objective, thus in 2021, the ON NEIHR allocated 100k each year for 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 from its budget to ensure that the IMNO could continue to support Indigenous graduate students throughout the region.

From 2019 to 2024, the ON NEIHR engaged in a total of 535 knowledge translation activities, (publications, reports, & ceremony) including 72 referred publications, 15 non-referred publications, 20 reports, 38 community reports, 9 book chapters, 6 newsletters, 12 other publications, and 7 media appearances; 104 academic and community presentations were made by ON NEIHR researchers, 35 ON NEIHR Webinars, 16 conferences/symposiums, and 168 spiritual ceremonies. There are also currently 33 works in progress across the network in 2024; at the time of this proposal, KT activities for the network had yet to be gathered for 2024 and are thus included as works in progress only. Research conducted and shared in these activities by ON NEIHR community partners and researchers has demonstrated that Indigenous mental wellbeing improves when a coordinated approach to healing is taken, based in culture, spirituality, prevention, and moving beyond the impacts of colonial trauma on wellbeing (see FPWC Task Group on Mental Wellness, 2022; Gabriel, 2023; Huisman, Bene Watts, Arbour & McCormick, 2020; Mushquash et al., 2021; O'Grady, Roher, Kim & Fairman, K., 2023; Stewart, Gabriel & Teekens, 2021). Further, network researchers (see Ansloos, et al., 2019) identified that creating dedicated spaces and programs for training Indigenous students in psychology using Indigenous Knowledges is necessary to address unmet FNMI mental health needs and to remediate FNMI mental health crises.

### Development of a Governance Model

The Indigenous Knowledges framework of the ON NEIHR was firmly established in the first phase (2019-2024) and has served as the foundation for all aspects of the network's structure and activities in its first five years. This includes the effective and successful establishment and use of an Elders' Advising Council that meets four times per year to direct the activities and strategic operations of the NEIHR. This also include shaving Elders/Knowledge Keepers on the NEIHR team as part of its daily operations. This also includes the practice of ceremony as embedded in all network activities, including research meetings, data collection, data analysis, knowledge translation events, student training, and more; this has been an innovative and ground-breaking practice that has been documented and shared through publications and presentations by ON NEIHR members from 2019 to 2014.

### Closing The Gap in Indigenous Mental Health

An essential element of the network's milestones in Years 1 to 5 was generating immediate knowledge translation (KT) procedures in programs, interventions, and policies based on solutions and successes identified by community partners and Elders—this has been achieved. The ultimate objective was to eradicate Indigenous mental illness and support health and well-being by implementing comprehensive and adaptable changes to the healthcare systems, programs, interventions, and policies with widespread national and international influence. The ON NEIHR met this goal by developing programs and interventions based in Indigenous knowledge's that have been implemented, evaluated, and currently used at health centres, hospitals, community organizations, by governments, and more. After Year 5 it is expected that these programs, policy, and interventions will continue to refine and evaluated by ON NEIHR members and others who will be engaged in this critical work in years 6 to 10.

# Research Excellence & Scholarly Contributions

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## **Publications:**

**Year 6 Total: 91** (please see Table 4 for breakdown)

**Table 4. Number of publications and presentations**

<b>Peer-reviewed Journal Articles</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Books</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Book Chapters</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Research Reports</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Book Reviews</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Non-Peer Reviewed Publications</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Policy Documents</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Refereed Conference Presentations</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Invited Keynote &amp; Panel Presentations</b>	<b>11</b>

## **Peer-reviewed Journal Articles**

- Ajiboye, W., Tharao, W., Owino, M., Soje, L., Tian, J. M., Ly, A., Piyesis, M. K., & Swidrovich, J. (2025). Racial disparities in HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) awareness and uptake among white, Black, and Indigenous men in Canada: Analysis of data from the I'm Ready national study. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 116(2), 243–253.
- Ambtman-Smith, V. N., Linklater, R., & Richmond, C. A. M. (2025). "They're not just fire pits, they're Sacred Fires": Traditional healing spaces as sites of anticolonial resistance in a Toronto hospital. *Social Science & Medicine*, 382, 118365.  
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## **Books**

Richmond, C., Coombes, B., & Pualani, L. (2024). *Because This Land is Who We Are: Indigenous Practices of Environmental Repossession*. *Bloomsbury Academic*.

## **Book Chapters**

Ferguson, A. (Submitted October 15, 2025). Culturally Relevant and Trauma Informed Interventions and the Canadian Justice and Correction and Youth Protection Continuum. A chapter submitted to M. Jaccoud & L. St. Louis (Eds.), *Justice and Indigenous peoples: Toward a decolonization of practices*. Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Naidoo, K., Fournier, C., Mirza, S., Rumboldt, J., Cameron, S., Green, S., Shirt, C., Stewart, S., Gaetz, S. Chapter 4: Endaayaang Indigenous Housing First for Youth: Exploring Service Provision and Planning During the Global Pandemic in Schiff, R., Wilkinson, A., Cullingham, S., & Buccieri, K. (Eds). (2024). *Pandemic preparedness and homelessness: International lessons from COVID-19*. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

Naidoo K., Fournier C. Mirza S., Rumboldt J., Green S., Shirt C., Stewart S. & Gaetz S. (in press). Endaayaang Indigenous Housing First for Youth: looking at the service provision and planning during the global pandemic. In *Pandemic planning and homelessness: lessons from COVID-19*. Schiff, R., Wilkinson, A., Cullingham, S., & Buccieri, K. (Eds). *Pandemic planning and homelessness: Lessons from COVID-19*. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

## **Research Reports**

- Fournier C., Labancz-Vye A. and Pinkoski C. (2024). Indigenous Shelter Diversion and Eviction Protection: An Environmental Scan. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.
- Morkem R., Singer A., Jansen N., Grandy M. (March 2025) CPCSSN Case Definition Report. Kingston, ON. Canadian Primary Care Sentinel Surveillance Network; (Kimberly Fairman, Contributor).
- Pan-Canadian Training Modernization Task Force (2024). Enriched (Refreshed) Core Competency Framework for Health Systems and Policy Research. Toronto (ON) (Kimberly Fairman, Contributor).

## **Non-peer reviewed Publications**

- Ambtman-Smith, V. (2025, September 29). Fast-tracking past justice: Why the Major Projects Office threatens real reconciliation. The Hill Times Policy Briefing.
- Ambtman-Smith, V., & Brunette-Debassige, C. (2025, August). Indigenous Cancer Care Education Evaluation Framework. First Nations Health Managers Association (FNHMA).
- Gabriel, M. D., Gonsalves, M., & Liu, T. (2025). Bridges and Barriers: Exploring Healthcare Access and Services for Indigenous Peoples. Wellesley Institute. ISBN: 978-1-998595-08-24.
- Gabriel, M. D. & Giulianelli, A. (2025). Supporting Agency, Facing Equity: 5. An Environmental Scan of Indigenous Cultural Safety Training for Primary Care Providers. Wellesley Institute. ISBN: 978-1-998595-09-9
- Graham, H. (2025 December). Health is wealth. Futurum: Inspiring the next generation, 35, 28-31. <https://futurumcareers.com/issue-35>
- Advisory Committee Member (2025). Cultural Humility and Cultural Safety Standards for Nursing Education. Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing. ISBN e-book: 978-1-989648-72-8 CASN\_Cultural\_Humility\_Safety\_Standards\_2024\_EN.pdf
- Habkirk, E. & Ferguson, A. (2025, November 26). Untangling the web: Church and public accountability in national reconciliation. Active History. <https://activehistory.ca/blog/2025/>.
- Stewart, S., Russell, D., Ranasinghe, T., Hazra, M., & Apt'sqi'gnn. (2025). Adverse Childhood Experiences and Health Outcomes Among Indigenous Communities. Wellesley Institute.

## **Policy Documents**

Advisory Committee Member (2025). Cultural Humility and Cultural Safety Standards for Nursing Education. Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing. ISBN e-book: 978-1-989648-72-8 CASN\_Cultural\_Humility\_Safety\_Standards\_2024\_EN.pdf

The Indigenous Harm Reduction FNIM Strategic Actions Roadmap for LHSC; Ambtman-Smith, V. (Co-Chair, Advisory Committee). (2025, October). Quality Standards: Equitable and Culturally Safe Care for Indigenous Peoples. Ontario Health.

Gabriel, M. D., Gonsalves, M., Liu, T., & Noordermeer, J. (2025). Bridges and barriers: Exploring healthcare access and services for Indigenous Peoples. Executive summary.

Gabriel, M. D., Giulianelli, A., & Noordermeer, J. (2025). Supporting Agency, Facing Equity: An environmental scan of Indigenous cultural safety training for primary care providers. Executive summary.

Graham, H. (2024) CPR RACISM: A Guide for Health Care Providers to Address Racism in Health Care. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, 19 (1), 1-10.  
<https://doi.org/10.32799/ijih.v19i1.42574>

## **Refereed Conference Presentations**

Ahmed, N.; Gabriel, M. D.; Tadrous, M.; Persaud, N.; Marwaha, S. (2025, November). Invited Co-Panelist. Panel 1: The Advocate. Solutions for Health Cities Symposium, MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, Unity Health Toronto.

Ambtman-Smith, V. (2025, April 30). They're not just fire pits, they're Sacred Fires: Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff describe the meanings of traditional healing spaces at Canada's oldest and largest mental health hospital [Panel presentation]. Reclaiming Indigenous Ecologies of Love Conference, New Mexico.

Ambtman-Smith, V. (2024, October). "They're not just fire pits, they're Sacred Fires": Making meaning of traditional healing spaces in one hospital context in Toronto, Ontario Canada [Conference presentation]. National Gathering of Graduate Students (NGGS), Vancouver.

Ambtman-Smith, V. (2025, September 16). Why CKD, why now? [Presentation]. Indigenous Health Equity Roundtable: Advancing Kidney Health Together, PATHWAYS Indigenous Health Collaborations & Boehringer Ingelheim Canada.

- Chan, R., Kirk, E., Smye, V., Macphee, M., & Restoule, B. (2024, December 4). First Nations Mental Wellness Workforce in Canada - A realist review: Lessons learned along the journey. The Realist Hub. Virtual oral presentation.
- Dunn, K., Jacko, M. & Gabriel, M.D. (2024, November) Invited Co-Panelist. Get Talking: Healing and Justice: Indigenous Perspectives on Healthcare. Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto.
- Fairman, K. et al., (2025). *ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting, Plenary Panel presentation.*
- Fournier, C. & Pinkoski C. (2024.). Invited speaker, Ontario Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research webinar series [Webinar]. Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- Ferguson, A. & Graham, H. (2025). Pihtikwe: Visits with First Nations psychologists. 23rd Annual Hawaii International Conference on Education, January 4-7, Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Ferguson, A. & Habkirk, E. (2024). Opening Diocese Archives for Local Reconciliation: A Student Project Based Approach. Abstract Accepted to the Canadian Society of Church History Annual Meeting, June 17-19, McGill University, Montreal.
- Ferguson, A. & Habkirk, E. (2024, April). So you have access to an archive, now what? Maintaining research partnerships with religious institutions. Abstract Accepted to the Owing Histories Conference, Winnipeg Manitoba. Available at: [https://winnspace.uwinnipeg.ca/bitstream/handle/10680/2195\\_Owning%20History%20Conference%20Proceedings%20Final%202024.pdf?sequence=1](https://winnspace.uwinnipeg.ca/bitstream/handle/10680/2195_Owning%20History%20Conference%20Proceedings%20Final%202024.pdf?sequence=1)
- Gabriel, M., & Stewart S. (2025) Indigenizing Psychology for Systems Change: Reviewing the Need and Reclaiming Approaches for Indigenous Mental Health Training and Interventions. Paper presentation at The Canadian Psychology Association 86th Annual National Convention. St. John's, NL.
- Gabriel, M.D. (2025, December) Invited Lecturer. EDI, IR, and U [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Indigenous Reconciliation] MitoRevolution EDI Event. University of Toronto.
- Gabriel, M.D. (2025, December) Ars Medicina: Exploring Safety & Safer Strategies for Indigenous Patient Engagement in Primary Care. Sinai Bioethics Grand Rounds. Toronto, Ontario.
- Gabriel, M.D. (2025, November) Invited Lecturer. Indigenous Health, the Public Health System, Policy, ....and Problems [updated]. CHL5300: Public Health Policy Guest Lecture. Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

- Gabriel, M.D. (2025, 22-25 July). Introduction to Indigenous Mental Health Research & Applications & Exploring Establishing Safety for Indigenous Women & 2-Spirit Peoples [Workshop Presenter (2) & NAMHR Lead]. Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research (NAMHR), Research Intensive, Toronto, Ontario.
- Gabriel, M.D. & Smylie, J. (2025, 22-25 July). Applied Indigenous Mental Health Research Methods [Workshop Presenter & NAMHR Lead]. Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research (NAMHR) Research Intensive, Toronto, Ontario.
- Gabriel, M. D., (June 12-14, 2025). Presenter. Indigenizing Psychology for Systems Change: Reviewing the Need and Reclaiming Approaches for Indigenous Mental Health Training and Interventions. Canadian Psychological Association, 86th Annual Conference, St. John's, Newfoundland.
- Gabriel, M.D. (2025, April). Invited Keynote. Traditional Teachings, Future Frameworks: Applying Indigenous Teachings to Cultural Safety for Healthcare Intersections for Indigenous Women & 2-Spirit Peoples [Presenter]. Indigenizing Health Symposium 2025: Being Safe With Our Culture Again, Terra Cotta, Ontario.
- Gabriel, M. D., (February 24-26, 2025). Presenter. Health & Wellbeing for Indigenous Youth Navigating Homelessness: Culture, Community, & Spiritual Cultivation. Making the Shift Youth Homelessness Prevention Conference, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- Gabriel, M. D., (January 2025). Presenter. Apaja'si: Ceremony And Wellbeing For Indigenous Peoples In Western Academia. Hawai'i International Conference on Education, Hawai'i, USA.
- Gabriel, M. D., (2024, November). Invited Lecturer. Indigenous Health, the Public Health System, Policy, ....and Problems. CHL5300: Public Health Policy Guest Lecture. Dalla Lana School of Public Health, Toronto, Ontario.
- Gabriel, M. D., (October 2024). Invited Presenter. Truth First, Then Reconciliation: Indigenous Colonial History, Impact, and Consequences on Employment, Homelessness and Mental Health. Ontario Public Service.
- Graham, H., Ferguson, A., & Restoule, B. (2025, January 3-6). "Pihtikwe: visits with First Nation's psychologists". Oral paper presentation at Hawaii International Conference on Education, Honolulu, HA, USA.
- Lickers Xavier, A., Lori Davis Hill & Kitty R. Lynn Lickers. "Indigenous Knowledge; Mentorship, Culture and Creation". Generational knowledge, language, cultural and food sharing. The Hawaii International Conference on Education; January 4-8, 2025, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

Mirza, S., Brown, M., & Stewart, S. (2025). Impacts of climate crisis on Indigenous young adults' mental health. 2025 Indigenous Health Research Symposium. Memorial University, Faculty of Medicine.

Mushquash, C., Banerji, A., Gabriel, M. D., Richardson, L., & Smylie, J. (2024, November) Invited Co-Panelist. 14th Annual Ori Rotstein Lecture in Translational Research. Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, Unity Health Toronto.

Restoule, B., Chan, R., Smye, V., Macphee, M. & Kirk, E. (2025, February 6). First Nations Mental Wellness Workforce: A realist review. ON NEIHR webinar. Virtual oral presentation.

Stewart, S. & Caruso, G. (2025). Indigenous Evaluation of the Return of the Salmon: Art for Healing, Wellness, and Positive Change for Indigenous Youth in Canada. Paper presentation at Hawaii International Conference on Education, Hawaii, USA.

Stewart, S. & Shirt, C. (2025). Mental health Impacts of Climate Crisis on Indigenous Youth in Canada: Implications for Education and Beyond. Paper presentation at Hawaii International Conference on Education, Hawaii, USA.

Stewart, S., Mushquash, C., Henry, R., Conners, E. (2024) Indigenous Youth Mental Health. Panel presentation at 2024. National Summit on Indigenous Mental Wellness, October 16th and 17th, 2024, Calgary, Alberta.

### ***Invited Keynote and Panel Presentations***

Ambtman-Smith, V. (2025, September 30). Cultural medicine requires cultural spaces: Evidence-based approaches for designating and protecting Indigenous authority in pediatric healthcare settings [Keynote address]. SickKids Hospital, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Toronto.

Ambtman-Smith, V. (2025, August 19). From harm to healing: How sacred spaces transform hospitals into places where our people can thrive [Keynote address]. Cultural Practitioners Gathering, Aamjiwnaang First Nation.

Ambtman-Smith, V. (2024, October 20). Cultivating INDequity through Indigenous-led pathways to eHealth using an innovative P3 model to partnership [Panel presentation]. CAPT Pre-Conference Workshop, Institute of Health Economics, Toronto.

Ambtman-Smith, V. (2024, October 15). Indigenous harm reduction sharing circle [Facilitation]. LHSC Indigenous Health Team and Harm Reduction Team, Indigenous Healing Space, London, ON.

- Chan, R., Kirk, E., Smye, V., Macphee, M., & Restoule, B. (2024, December). First Nations Mental Wellness Workforce: A realist review. First Peoples Wellness Circle AGM. Virtual oral presentation.
- Stewart, S. (2025, September). Indigenous Reconciliation and Mental Health. Keynote Address. National Day for Truth & Reconciliation at Strides Toronto, Ontario.
- Stewart, S. (2025, May). Indigenous Psychology. Keynote Panel. Inaugural Conference on Critical Social Justice, University of British Columbia, BC
- Stewart, S. (2024, September). An Indigenous Knowledges Perspective on Homelessness in Canada: Solutions? Keynote Speaker at Namerind Housing Corporation - Reaching Home Community Engagement Event, Regina SK.
- Stewart, S. (2024, March). Indigenous Mental Health & Climate Crisis. Invited Speaker, Poche Centre, University of Queensland, AU.
- Stewart, S. (2024 March). Indigenous Mental Health & Research Ethics. Invited Speaker, Poche Centre, University of Sydney, AU.
- Tri-Academy Partnership on Indigenous Engagement: A Research Summit on Cultural Heritage in an Era of Reconciliation (November 4-6, 2024, in Vancouver, BC). – Dr. Jaris Swidrovich panelist on the Indigenous Engagement and the Future of the Academy: Acting Now for Future Generations panel. <https://rsc-src.ca/en/events/tri-academy-partnership-indigenous-engagement/tri-academy-partnership-indigenous-engagement>
- Whitinui, P. (2025, April). Keynote: If Cultural Safety is the Solution, What is the Problem? Indigenous Health Symposium: Being Safe with Culture Again. April 23-24, University of Toronto. ON.
- Whitinui, P. (2025, January). Guest Lecture and Panel Discussion ED592: Indigenous, Decolonizing and Action Based Research Methods (hybrid course). University of Idaho, US.
- Whitinui, P. (2024, November). "Culture Counts": Advancing and Assessing Indigenous cultural safety training impact assessment in Canadian post-secondary settings. Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga International Indigenous Development Conference, November 12th-15th (In-person), University of Auckland, NZ.

# Grants & Funding

The ON NEIHR team has utilized internal seed and student funding to strengthen its academic and community excellence. These internal funds have been leveraged by the team to receive over 50 external financial grants and awards totalling over \$9,112,669.78. An overview of the grants and awards is presented in Table 5. Collaborative external faculty funding can be found in Table 6.

**Table 5. Number of Grants and Awards Received**

<b>Internal Faculty Subgrants</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Internal Student Awards</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>External Student Awards</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Faculty Award</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>External Faculty Funding</b>	<b>16</b>

**Table 6. Collaborative External Faculty Funding**

Year	Name & Role	Grantor	Purpose: (research, contract)	Amount
2022-2027	Ambtman-Smith, V. (NPI) & Richmond, C. (co-applicant)	Weaving Indigenous knowledge into pain research [Sub-study]. SSHRC PEPR Partnership Grant	Research	\$51,300
2024-2029	Richmond, C. (Principal Investigator), & Ambtman-Smith, V. N. (Co-Principal Investigator)	Planting seeds for urban Indigenous food sovereignty: Growing SOAHAC's Traditional Food Bag Program. CIHR Project Grant	Research	\$1,866,600
	Ferguson, A.	Mitacs	Research	\$30,000
	Ferguson, A.	Internal Funding	Research	\$35,000
	Graham, H.	SSHRC	Research	\$74,355
	Graham, H.	Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation	Research	\$149,559.78
	Restoule, B.	Mitacs	Research	\$15,000
2024-2025	Stewart, S., NPI	Wellesley Institute: Research on Indigenous Adverse Childhood Experiences	Contract	\$75,000

Year	Name & Role	Grantor	Purpose: (research, contract)	Amount
2024-2025	Stewart, S., co-applicant	Connaught Community Partnership Research Program – University of Toronto: LGBTQ2S Health in Community	Research	\$100,000
2024-2029	Stewart, S., NPI	Canadian Institute of Health Research, Operating Grant: Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR): Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin ON NEIHR	Research	\$4,000,000
2024-2029	Stewart, S., NPA	Canadian Institute of Health Research, Project Grant: Climate Crisis and Youth Mental health: Identifying Local and National Impact Solutions.	Research	\$1,438,200

Year	Name & Role	Grantor	Purpose: (research, contract)	Amount
2024-2029	Swidrovich, J., NPA	A Culturally Responsive Prospective Study to Improve Education and Access to HIV Preexposure Prophylaxis for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Project Grant Fall 2024.	Research	\$76,500
	Swidrovich, J., NPA	Improving Education and Access to HIV PrEP for Indigenous Peoples. Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) HIV Endgame Funding Program.	Research	\$150,000
	Swidrovich, J., co-applicant	Formative research on Long-Acting PEP (FLAP). Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) Breaking New Ground.	Research	\$284,400

Year	Name & Role	Grantor	Purpose: (research, contract)	Amount
2024-2029	Tan DHS, Ajiboye W, Arkell C, Cox J, Fahim C, Hull M, Johnston C, & Swidrovich, J., Co-Investigator	Canadian Guidelines on HIV PrEP and PEP: From formulation to implementation. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Planning and Dissemination Grants - Institute Community Support.	Research	\$20,000
	Swidrovich, J., PI	Digital Chronic Pain Recommend- ations Map: Consolidation and Systematic Appraisal of Guideline Recommendatio ns Regarding Management of Chronic Pain (e- ChronicPain RecMap). Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Project Grant Fall 2023	Research	\$746,755

# Internal Faculty Subgrants

**Dr. Chantelle Richmond**, ON NEIHR Collaborator

**Research Project Title:** Native Women Run: Strength and Sisterhood at Ottawa Marathon 2026

In 2009, Verna Volker moved from her home in New Mexico to Minnesota. As a Navajo woman, she found herself culturally isolated, and searching for opportunities to connect with other women in a journey of wellness. Verna founded Native Women Run (NWR) a digital platform that connects more than 10,000 people globally in a running movement created to support wellness and belonging for native women runners. NWR's slogan "Run the Land" offers a shared cultural philosophy and sense of purpose that connects its members around cultural strength through movement and representation, and the celebration and expression of Indigeneity, in all the places this unfolds.

NWR uses both in-person gatherings (generally races) and online connections (Instagram, Facebook) to "build and nurture a community that features and encourages Native women runners on and off the reservation." Their overall goal is to increase visibility in the running world for historically excluded runners. In 2020, after the discovery of the 215 children's bodies at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, Dr. Chantelle Richmond partnered with NWR to create a social media campaign to share messages of support, learning and action among its followers, many who are related to victims of the Indian Residential Schools and Boarding Schools.

In this instance, the NWR community became a space of healing and discussion about their shared history, and the ongoing traumas Native women carry. Dr. Richmond is an avid runner and long-time member of the NWR community. The growth and success of NWR means that there are various unmet needs, one of them being to document and share stories about Native women runners across Turtle Island. Funding provided from the ON NEIHR Subgrant will support the creation a short film about the Native Women Run Team experience at, and in the months leading up to, Ottawa Marathon 2026.

Five women, selected to form the Team for Native Women Run at Ottawa Marathon (May 25, 2026) will participate in an in-person interview in January and June 2026, they will document their training via weekly video-journaling and document their participation in the Ottawa Marathon. The short film will be shared by Native Women Run for their own institutional planning and grant applications, and the stories will also be written in support of Dr. Richmond's Canada Research Chair and wider research program, focused on the concept of environmental repossession and Indigenous healing and wellness in unexpected places.

**Lynn Lavallee**, ON NEIHR Co-investigator

**Research Project Title:** Gathering – Reclaiming Ceremony: Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-spirit, Trans, and Non-Binary

Funding from the ON NEIHR Subgrant is supporting a series of community-based gatherings of Indigenous women, two-spirit, trans and non-binary people who participated in a prior research project led by the Principal Investigator (PI) and co-PI, Dr. Percy Lezard. The earlier project examined the experiences of inclusion and exclusion among Indigenous healers, helpers, and ceremony participants, generating important insights into how ceremonial spaces can both affirm and marginalize. These gathering represents a critical next step: it will create a culturally grounded, relational space for participants to share the work they are leading in their communities, engage in ceremony together, and strengthen a network of Indigenous practitioners and community members committed to inclusive ceremonial practice.

The project aims to convene Indigenous women, two-spirit, trans, and non-binary healers, helpers, and ceremony participants in a supportive gathering and to foster community-building through shared meals and collective ceremonial practice, and to honour participants' knowledge and contributions through gift-giving. These aims align with Indigenous methodologies that prioritize relational accountability, reciprocity, and the integration of ceremony as a site of both knowledge generation and community healing.

The central methodological approach is a community-based gathering that integrates ceremony, dialogue, and collective reflection. Key components will include Sharing Circles, where participants may speak to their community work, healing practices, and ceremonial experiences.

Additionally, ceremonial practices, with firekeepers and helpers ensuring adherence to cultural protocols and creating a safe, inclusive space for all. Other key components include community meals, emphasizing relationality, care, and the nourishment of body and spirit, the facilitation of knowledge exchange, enabling participants to articulate priorities for future research, and community action. The PI, co-PI, and project partners bring significant expertise in Indigenous resurgence, community-engaged research, and ceremonial practice. Their collective leadership ensures that the gathering will be conducted in accordance with Indigenous protocols and academic standards of ethical engagement.

These gatherings are expected to strengthened networks, reinforcing connections among Indigenous women, two-spirit, Trans, and non-binary healers, helpers, and participants engaged in ceremony. The gatherings create safer ceremonial spaces, advancing models of inclusive ceremonial practice that can inform both community and scholarly discourse. Lastly, the gatherings ensure sustainability as they will establish a foundation for future collaborative projects that support Indigenous healing, resurgence, and research. A community report to share insights and outcomes with participants, partners, and academic audiences will also be developed.

**Dr. Vanessa Ambtman-Smith**, ON NEIHR Collaborator

**Research Project Title:** Ceremonial Protocols and Mental Wellness: Indigenous Healing Spaces as Sites of Health System Transformation

Indigenous healing practices are deeply rooted in relationality and local ecosystems, incorporating natural remedies, ceremonies, and cultural practices that address health physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Evidence shows Indigenous peoples experience negative healthcare encounters from discrimination, with historical traumas from residential schools and Indian hospitals contributing to widespread mistrust of hospital care. Traditional Healing Spaces (THS) within healthcare institutions function as sites of environmental repossession through power negotiation, physical space transformation, and adaptive implementation. However, current research has primarily documented staff perspectives, leaving critical gaps in understanding patient experiences and how ceremonial protocols within these spaces contribute to healing journeys.

This research addresses the need to center Indigenous voices in understanding how THS support cultural reclamation and wellness transformation within colonial healthcare settings. This project aims to develop culturally safe methodologies for understanding how ceremonial protocols and environmental elements within Traditional Healing Spaces support Indigenous mental wellness journeys. The research will: 1) Co-develop arts-based research methodologies with Indigenous patients who have accessed THS; 2) Examine how ceremonial protocols within healing spaces facilitate environmental repossession and mental wellness transformation; 3) Create visual knowledge translation tools that honor oral traditions while making research findings accessible to healthcare institutions and Indigenous communities; and 4) Establish foundation for larger SSHRC Insight Development Grant application expanding to multiple hospital sites and/or CIHR Project Grant.

This research employs Indigenous methodologies grounded in relational accountability and ceremonially guided practices. Methods include sharing circles, collaborative framework development, and arts-based approaches that honor Indigenous knowledge systems. Primary deliverables include co-developed research protocols, culturally safe engagement frameworks, wall-sized visual representations of healing journeys for CAMH, community summary reports, and foundation materials for future SSHRC IDG and/or CIHR PG applications. The project will produce new methodological approaches for arts-based Indigenous health research, strengthen partnerships between academic institutions and Indigenous communities, and create accessible knowledge translation tools that can inform policy development for traditional healing spaces in hospital contexts. This work directly supports healthcare reconciliation efforts while advancing Indigenous health sovereignty through community-led research practices.

# Internal Student Awards

**Darienne Russell** MPH, PhD student,  
IMN Scholarship Recipient (2025/26)



*I was awarded the Indigenous Mentorship (IMN) Scholarship of Ontario in the first year of my PhD studies. Receiving this award helped to ease financial pressures and allowed me to focus more fully on my studies, mentorship, and personal growth. It created space for me to engage more deeply in learning, build relationships, and show up with greater confidence in academic and community spaces. Knowing that my contributions were recognized and invested in was incredibly motivating. The IMN Scholarship strengthened not only my academic journey, but also my sense of belonging and commitment to giving back.*

# External Student Awards

**Michael Brown** BSc Hons., M.Ed, PhD(c), Vanier Scholar (CIHR; 2025)

*The support received from the ON NEIHR in my work experience in cultural and spiritual events, Indigenous health research and academics and the community supports all facilitated the application of the Vanier Scholarship award. Without the supports from mentors, peers, supervisors, and community, I would not have ever even thought to apply. I credit the award to the collaborative efforts of the ON NEIHR to support students as they enter into the Indigenous health research space, providing opportunities to continue ceremonial involvement and academic excellence. Chi miigwetch to everyone at the ON NEIHR. Dr. Ethsi Stewart, Dr. Sabina Mirza and Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel, I couldn't have done it without you! I hope to continue this work to continue promoting the health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island and beyond.*



# Faculty Award

## **Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel**

PhD, C. Psych., Clinical and  
Counseling Psychologist,  
Research Scientist, Canada  
Research Chair Indigenous  
Women and Two-Spirit  
Mental Health and  
Homelessness,  
Tier 2



*Across Canada, Indigenous Peoples experience disproportionate societal, systemic, and colonial barriers that result in their overrepresentation among homeless populations. Indigenous women and Two-Spirited (IW&2S) Peoples—who are holders of traditional, sacred roles in Indigenous communities and ceremonies—face vulnerabilities, isolation, violence, and barriers to sustained safety that threaten their mental health, well-being and even survival.*

*As Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Mental Health and Homelessness, Dr. Mikaela Gabriel aims to address the national Indigenous homelessness and housing crisis. She and her research team are working to understand trends in homelessness for IW&2S Peoples and to establish a housing, services, and safety database for this population. They are also identifying their needs and gathering IW&2S and Elders' voices to identify and address persistent barriers and explore culturally safe supports. Finally, they are co-creating and evaluating policy, education, and service interventions to dismantle systemic barriers and decolonize transitions out of homelessness.*

# Capacity Bridge Building

**Apt'sqi'gnn** ᐱᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ

Ph.D. Student, M.S.W.,  
B.S.W., B.A.

*The mentorship provided by Dr. Stewart has been more than just Ph.D. supervision; it has been a transformative experience that grounded my first year in the Social and Behavioural Health Sciences Ph.D. program at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH). The academic environment can frequently feel unwelcoming or alienating for First Nation, Inuit, or Métis (FNIM) scholars in Canada, but Dr. Stewart's mentorship served as a vital bridge, creating a sense of cultural safety that allowed me to be myself. Her belief in my vision was a major catalyst in my decision to enroll, and she has consistently empowered me to succeed in spaces where FNIM perspectives are often marginalized.*

*By encouraging me to lean into my L'nu identity and my lived experiences, she has helped me refine my research focus on the intersections of 2SLGBTQIA+ identity, health equity, mental health, and the impacts of the climate crisis. A truly pivotal moment in this first year was receiving the Indigenous Mentorship Network (IMN) scholarship. Dr. Stewart helped to connect me with the IMN, and she provided me opportunities to mentor graduate students in the Indigenous Master's Public Health stream at the DLSPH.*



*Receiving the IMN scholarship felt like a shared success; it helped me financially so I could take a leave of absence from my full time position at Shkaabe Makwa, at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) and focus on meeting Ph.D. candidacy requirements, and is also testament to her commitment to building capacity within the next generation of Indigenous health researchers, for whom there are significant financial and social barriers to pursuing doctoral level education. Dr. Stewart is a fierce Indigenous professional and her advocacy and genuine love for community has provided the security I needed to thrive in a high-level research environment. I am eternally grateful, Wela'lin, Dr. Stewart!*

**Michael Brown** BSc Hons., M.Ed, PhD(c), Vanier Scholar (CIHR; 2025)  
 Research Officer & Cultural & Spiritual Events Coordinator  
 Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health

*I have been so deeply supported by the ON NEIHR and especially by Dr. Ethsi Stewart. Since having asked to join the team, I have been holistically empowered and encouraged to pursue further education, enrolling in the Social and Behavioural Health Science doctorate stream at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. I have been able to successfully navigate both academics and cultural work, being involved in ceremonies and research projects, eventually working up to the Vanier Scholarship award 2025 (CIHR).*

*My successes are due to the supports to develop and strengthen my CV, personal wellbeing, cultural and community connections, and academic excellence. I have always felt supported and that I have a place in the ON NEIHR, being given opportunities to conduct the research, analyze results, publish academic articles, guest lecturing, and conference presentations. The environment created and upheld by Dr. Stewart has been an incredible workplace, as I have also been given opportunities to mentor and support more recent members of the ON NEIHR team, where I am able to share what I have learned and help other Indigenous youth feel just as supported and empowered.*

**Kimberly ᓄᓕᓄᓕᓄᓕᓄᓕ Fairman** PhD(c), Research Associate, Institute for Circumpolar Health Research, Yellowknife, NT.

*Kimberly was on the committee of 3 PhD students, Roshanna Ragbar and Rebecca Bourgeois, Kaeleigh Brown. Rebecca finished her degree and Roshanna finished her project and is now writing her dissertation, Kaeleigh is finishing her data analysis and moving to wrap up her project. Your [the ON NEIHR] support has also helped in the completion of my dissertation and research project related to my PhD.*

*Kimberly Fairman also served as guest editor on the International Journal of Health, Special Issue. The focus of the issue explored the support needed to include language, culture and land learning in the practice of childbirth in Inuit communities.*

**Brittany C. Skov** HBSc., MA  
 (Clinical Psychology Student; Supervisor: Dr. Mushquash)

*My name is Brittany Skov, and I am a PhD student in clinical psychology at Lakehead University, a Vanier Scholar supported by the CIHR, and Mississauga-Nishnaabekwe and a member of the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation. I belong to the King family and the Eagle clan. At the end of my Bachelor's degree at the University of Victoria, I was fortunate to receive several offers to pursue graduate school in clinical psychology.*

*I heard back from Lakehead University last, and when the offer came, I felt it in my gut – what I now know to be my spirit – that this was where I needed to go. Still, my mind got in the way. After moving many times, I was tired of uprooting my life and moving across the country again. After meeting with Dr. Christopher Mushquash again, connecting with his graduate students, re-reviewing his webinars and research, and spending time with the ocean, I came to terms with what I already knew: returning to Nishnaabe territory to learn with and from a Nishnaabe clinical psychologist was the right decision. It felt like a risk at the time – but looking back, it was the best decision that I could have made.*

*The choice of a graduate program and supervisor greatly shapes your trajectory – who you become as a researcher, clinician, and community member. For me, it was never just about becoming a clinical psychologist; it was about becoming a Nishnaabe clinical psychologist. I understood then, and more so now, that there was a large difference between the two. It mattered to me that, after seven years of schooling in a non-Indigenous academic institution, I would still be Nishnaabe. I would remain recognizable to my community and my Nation. I have been beyond fortunate to learn from Dr. Christopher Mushquash, who has guided my growth in an autonomy-supportive, culturally grounded, and culturally relevant way.*

*In research supervision, he has ensured that my work is community-engaged and responsive to community priorities. He has helped me navigate community dynamics and think carefully about how research can genuinely serve community needs in both the process and the outcomes. He has created a space that weaves together Nishnaabe ways of being and knowing, professional ethics, and empirical research. In clinical supervision, he provides a space where I feel trusted, competent, and autonomous, where I can ask questions, explore new lines of thinking, and even risk looking a little foolish at times.*

*A recent example of Dr. Mushquash's supervision comes from when I was grappling with questions about intellectual property. I shared concerns about openly sharing knowledge that has not yet been published. His approach was familiar in its non-direct, autonomy-supportive approach. He shared a story about a conversation he once had with an Elder he worked with on research. Without telling me what to do, he created the conditions for me to find my own path forward that honoured my cultural integrity, including my clan responsibilities to share knowledge with others. I left our supervision reminded that if we sacrifice our cultural integrity to succeed or win in academia, then whatever we do is actually a loss.*

*The conversation with Dr. Mushquash allowed me to reframe the issue and reaffirm that cultural integrity matters more than another line on a CV. As I continue this academic journey, I know that I will not only be successful within non-Indigenous academic standards but will also do so while remaining grounded in my cultural values and who I am as a Mississauga Nishnaabekwe. I will be able to call myself a Nishnaabe clinical psychologist – fully and without compromise. This is in part due to the supervision and mentorship I receive from Dr. Christopher Mushquash. Miigwech.*

# Community Engagement & Events

## Regional Gatherings

### Indigenizing health symposium 2025: Being safe with our culture again

In 2025, Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research, Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health Research, & Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario hosted an Indigenizing health symposium on the land at Hart House Farm titled: *Being Safe With Our Culture Again*.



## Partnership Spotlights

- 2-Spirited People of the First Nation (2S): Annual Youth Conference: ON NEIHR staff participation (Elder Clayton Shirt and other ON NEIHR research assistants) in Healing Space & survey distribution for Climate Crisis Research project
- Red Pepper Spectacle Arts – Treaty Teachings
- Native Women’s Resource Centre of Toronto (NWRCT) – mental health groups/counseling with Dr. Mikaela Gabriel
- Melbourne Poche Centre; Australia Poche Group 2025 Knowledge Exchange
- Ceremonial Work funded by ON NEIHR subgrant funds Dr. Lynne Lavallee
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) – Traditional Healing Spaces research project Dr. Vanessa Ambtman-Smith
- Indigenous Primary Healthcare Council - Dr. Jeffrey Ansloos; Research project: Strengthening FNMI Suicide Prevention through Data Justice, Media Transformation and Community-Led Program Evaluation in ON

# Community Partner Project Spotlight

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**Project Title:** Walking the Path of the Ancestors: Youth Land-Based Resiliency

**Partner Organization:** 2-Spirited Peoples of the 1st Nation

## ***The Goal***

Project goal was to evaluate the impact of traditional storytelling and land-based cultural experience on the mental wellness and identity of Indigenous youth in urban settings.

## ***The Ceremony/Land-Based Connection***

This project did not take place in an office. All data collection—which we call "sharing circles"—occurred at the ON NEIHR spiritual structures on the land. Under the guidance of Knowledge Keepers/Elders, the youth participated in the spiritual protocols before engaging in the research process. Every session began ceremony, ensuring the research was conducted in a culturally safe and culturally based ways.

## ***The Impact***

**For the Community:** The project resulted in a Youth mental health and wellness protocols to be used by the local and national organizations to better meet the mental health needs of Indigenous youth

**For the Network:** This partnership supported a PhD Candidate's dissertation and a Post Doctoral Fellow's project and trained six master's students in Indigenous community driven research and provided the data for a high-impact paper on "2-Spirited youth mental health in an urban Indigenous community."

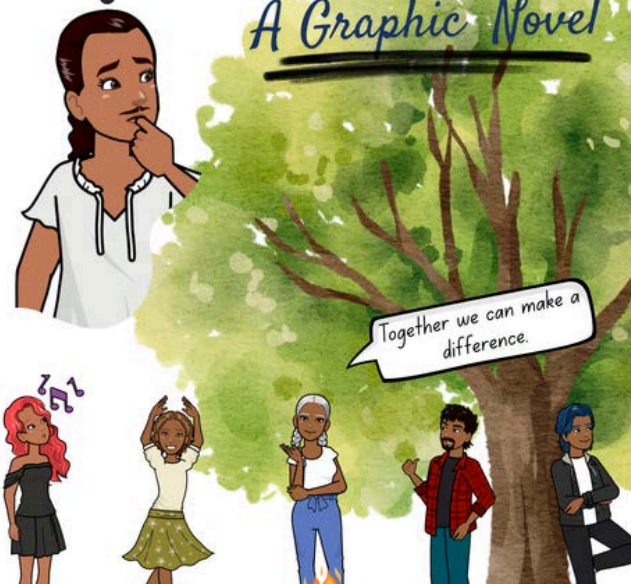
## In Community Member's Words

# 2-Sprited Community Youth Lead on Climate Crisis Graphic Novel

*"With guidance from Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders, Luana Shirt and Sioux Lamure, we came up with a culturally sound narrative to translate our data from indigenous youth into a story that made sense. There were many story boarding sessions; the whole process took around 10 months, from initial data from Phase 1 to story boarding and to putting pen to paper and coming up with graphics and characters. The final draft shows the diversity of indigenous youth through the character designs and their stories.*



### Impacts of the Climate Crisis on Indigenous Youth Mental Health: *A Graphic Novel*



*It was integral from the team to represent every walk of indigenous life and to ensure that our most marginalized communities were represented such as 2S and Indigi-queer youth. The final draft is something that we feel translates the data into a tangible and accessible way for Indigenous youth to understand what is being presented to them as well as a way for them to connect to the source material. This project was made possible with facilitation from the ON NEIHR team! Thank you ON NEIHR team for supporting Indigenous youth"*

*- (2S Youth Lead)*

(see Appendix C for the Graphic Novel Sneek Peek)

## **In ON NEIHR Student's Words**

*"The opportunities the ON NEIHR has presented me with have been invaluable to my academic and professional career progression as well as my personal development*

*"As a reconnecting Indigenous person in a westernized institution in a highly urban city, ON NEIHR has provided abundant opportunity to foster spiritual, physical, mental and emotional well-being throughout and beyond my masters degree. Through monthly sweat ceremonies, weekly sacred fire teachings, and drum circles, been provided many opportunities that foster well-being and growth as an Indigenous student."*

*- (Student 1)*

*"Was a doctoral student, later a post-doc, part of ON NEIHR. Worked across variety of projects, opportunities, all events – supporting core NEIHR team's organizational format, annual reports, theme group activities, presentations, and ceremonies. In ON NEIHR, I ended up connected to a lot more than just research – I was connected and had the opportunity to grow in research, in ceremony, and contribute and build connections to the community.*

*I got to hear about amazing work others are doing across the network, so I was constantly learning about different approaches and tools for research that other folks are finding success in, and supporting each other through barriers they encountered. Been a very supportive network for growth, provides thorough consideration and understanding of the lived barriers that exist in Indigenous care providers and researchers."*

*- (Student 2)*

*The ON NEIHR entirely supported my holistic well being and growth, 100%. Across every conceivable dimensions, the NEIHR contributed and cared for my growth and understanding of Indigenous knowledges and wellbeing, giving me tools to implement in my daily life, opportunities to practice it together, and information I can cite and return to (webinars and live teachings) for promoting and understanding Indigenous knowledges. Most places may offer information of Indigenous knowledges, which is also provided by the NEIHR, but most importantly it provided the medicines, healing experiences, and ceremonies to offer a totally immersive experience – it's literally walking the talk and keeping culture in the focus.*

*On the land gatherings are especially valuable, because it brings culture and community into the academic sphere, but also makes sure we balance with time spent on the land. it's a game changer, and I think will inform how I want to have any meaningful research/land connection time – why would I want to stay in a stuffy board room when I can be connected to the land with others? My emotional growth came from supportive check ins, relational growth, and connections. I've grown a number of beautiful relationships & tattoos! that have quite literally changed my life. I think, too, knowing that the NEIHR is there as a resource and point of connection to other communities is a powerful one.*

*It helps to feel less isolated/alone when challenging/facing non-Indigenous institutions – to know there's so many of us out there committed to the work and the people. It's changed and molded my life in huge ways. The relationships and medicine brought together by the NEIHR have helped me feel more connected, aware, and grounded in my life. It's literally like a web of connection, but what binds us is spirit and culture.*

*- (Student 2)*

*“ Being part of the ON NEIHR was special time in my personal and professional life. Was student in MPH-program & worked as research assistant on ON NEIHR projects, an evaluation of the Red Pepper Spectacle Art's The Return. I learned so much about how to use Indigenous research methods to evaluate program implementation and how relationships are reflected in all aspects of the research process, from consultation to analysis.*

*Being part of ON NEIHR provided me a meeting place to learn from Elders, community members, scholars, and friends...working at the ONNEIHR is like being a part of a family where the health of all team members, and collective is priority. Team has been an emotional support system in many ways. ”*

*- (Student 3)*

# Global Indigeneity

Dr. Stewart's team also engages in international work with collaborator Dr. Maile Taulii in Hawaii and Drs. Michael Doyle and Micelle Dickson at University of Sydney in Australia. In Year 6, with Dr. Maile Taulii, there was a knowledge exchange event for community partners, Elders, students, and faculty for spiritual ceremony and data sharing regarding plant medicines and mental health impacts.

With the Indigenous Australian team at the University of Sydney, Dr. Stewart's team engaged in annual student training exchanges and collaborative publications and grant applications for student knowledge mobilizations when the Australian team visited Canada for conference presentations and on the land spiritual ceremony.



# Financial Overview

**Table 7. Year 6 Budget Summary**

**Total Project Budget:** \$1,091,500

**CIHR Portion:** \$800,000 | **Cash (Other):** \$274,200 | **In-Kind (Other):** \$17,300

## 1. Research Staff (Excluding Trainees)

Salaries and benefits for core research personnel.

Personnel Type	No.	Salary	Benefits	CIHR Request	Cash*	In-Kind*	Total
Research Assistants	1	\$70,000	\$4,000	\$64,000	\$9,000	\$1,000	<b>\$74,000</b>
Technicians	1	\$55,000	\$3,000	\$48,000	\$9,000	\$1,000	<b>\$58,000</b>
Other Personnel	5	\$40,000	\$2,000	\$40,000	\$1,800	\$200	<b>\$42,000</b>

## 2. Research Trainees

Funding for students and fellows contributing to the research.

Trainee Level	No.	Stipend	Benefits	CIHR Request	Cash*	In-Kind*	Total
Postdoctoral Fellows	1	\$65,000	\$5,000	\$60,000	\$9,000	\$1,000	<b>\$70,000</b>
Graduate Students	20	\$20,000	\$2,000	\$15,000	\$6,000	\$1,000	<b>\$22,000</b>
Summer Students	10	\$15,000	\$1,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$1,000	<b>\$16,000</b>

### 3. Materials, Supplies, and Services

Costs associated with the practical execution of the research.

Category	CIHR Request	Cash*	In-Kind*	Total
Animals	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Expendables	\$11,000	\$400	\$100	<b>\$11,500</b>
Services	\$29,500	\$10,000	\$1,000	<b>\$40,500</b>
Other (specified in details)	\$60,000	\$2,000	\$500	<b>\$62,500</b>

### 4. Travel, Equipment, and Final Totals

The largest single line item in this budget is travel.

Category	CIHR Request	Cash*	In-Kind*	Total
Travel	\$447,500	\$221,000	\$10,000	<b>\$678,500</b>
Total Operating	\$785,000	\$273,200	\$16,800	<b>\$1,075,000</b>
Total Equipment	\$15,000	\$1,000	\$500	<b>\$16,500</b>
<b>TOTAL REQUEST</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$274,200</b>	<b>\$17,300</b>	<b>\$1,091,500</b>

**Note:** The "Other Funding Sources" (Cash and In-Kind) represent approximately 26.7% of the total project budget, with CIHR covering the remaining 73.3%.

## Budget Justification: Year 6

### 1 Personnel and Trainees (\$280,000 Total)

The ON NEIHR uses a tiered staffing model to ensure both high-level technical oversight and broad data collection capabilities.

**Core Staff:** We require one **Research Assistant** (\$74k) and one **Technician** (\$58k) to manage laboratory operations and data integrity.

**Other Personnel:** Five additional staff members (\$42k total) will provide administrative and logistical support.

**Trainees:** A significant portion of the budget is dedicated to the next generation of researchers, including one **Postdoctoral Fellow, 20 Graduate Students, and 10 Summer Students**. This large cohort is essential for the high-volume data collection and field work activities planned for this phase.

### 2 Travel (\$678,500 Total)

Travel represents the largest expenditure in the Year 6 budget (62% of the total request). This high cost is justified by the following requirements:

**Field Research & Site Visits:** The project involves extensive multi-site data collection across geographically dispersed areas.

**Student Deployment** The mobilization of 30+ students (Graduate and Summer) to various research locations accounts for a significant portion of these costs, including transportation, lodging, and per diems.

**Collaborative Meetings** Funding covers essential travel for the core team to meet with international partners and present preliminary findings at major conferences.

**Cost Sharing** Of the total travel costs, **\$221,000** is covered by external cash contributions, reducing the burden on CIHR funds while maintaining the necessary scale of operations.

## 3 Materials, Supplies, and Services (\$114,500 Total)

**Services (\$40,500):** Covers specialized external laboratory testing and data processing that cannot be performed in-house.

**Other/Miscellaneous (\$62,500):** This covers specific project-related costs (as detailed in the Employment History/Financial Assistance sections) including software licenses, specialized equipment maintenance, and participant honoraria.

**Expendables (\$11,500):** Basic laboratory consumables and field supplies.

## 4 Equipment (\$16,500 Total)

A modest request was made for Year 6 to purchase necessary field-testing hardware and high-performance computing units for data analysis. The majority of this (\$15,000) is requested from CIHR, with \$1,500 provided by other partners.

## 5 Other Funding Sources

This project leverages significant external support, with **\$291,500** (Cash and In-Kind combined) contributed by partner organizations. These contributions are primarily directed toward **Travel** and **Personnel**, demonstrating strong institutional and partner buy-in for the project's objectives.

## Budget Impact Statement: Strengthening Health Research Capacity Through Integrated Knowledge Translation

This initiative addresses a critical gap by leveraging a high-capacity, multi-disciplinary team to execute a robust Year 6 work plan. With a total budget of **\$1,091,500**, this project is strategically designed to maximize CIHR's investment through three primary areas of impact:

### 1 Cultivating Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)

In alignment with CIHR's commitment to capacity building, the ON NEIHR supports a cohort of **31 trainees and staff**.

**Mentorship Pipeline:** By funding 20 Graduate and 10 Summer students, we are creating a rigorous training environment that prepares the next generation of Canadian health researchers for careers in academia, policy, and clinical practice.

**Technical Excellence:** The inclusion of dedicated Research Assistants and Technicians ensures that trainees operate within a high-standard environment of data integrity and methodological precision.

### 2 Multi-Site Integration and Geographic Equity

The substantial allocation for **Travel (\$678,500)** is a direct response to the need for inclusive, representative health data.

**Expanding Reach:** This funding enables the deployment of research teams to diverse [Urban/Rural/Indigenous] communities, ensuring that the study's outcomes are generalizable across the Canadian population and do not reflect "lab-only" biases.

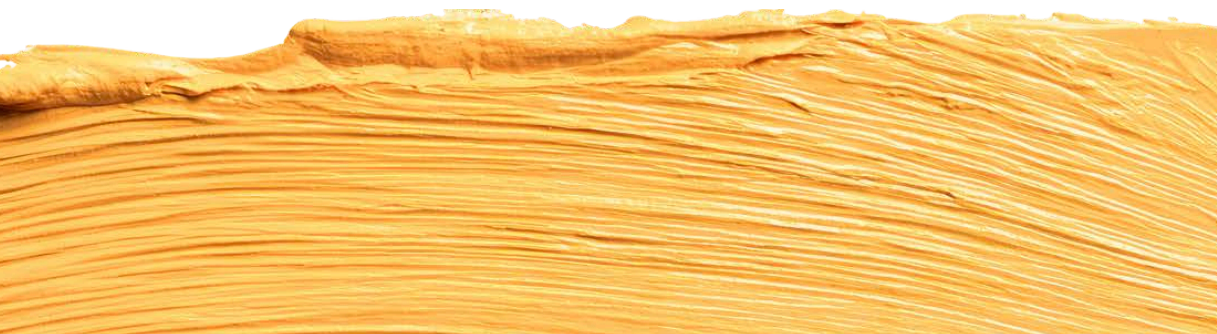
**Integrated Knowledge Translation (iKT):** Travel facilitates face-to-face engagement with stakeholders, patients, and healthcare providers at the outset. This ensures that the research remains responsive to the needs of the end-users, a core requirement for high-impact CIHR-funded projects.

## 3 Demonstrating High Value and Partner Synergy

This project exhibits strong fiscal responsibility and institutional buy-in, leveraging \$291,500 in non-CIHR cash and in-kind support.

**Resource Optimization:** Every dollar of CIHR funding was amplified by partner contributions, particularly in the high-cost areas of field mobilization and personnel stipends.

**Scalability:** The infrastructure established in Year 6 —supported by a **\$16,500** equipment investment—provides the baseline for a sustainable, multi-year research program capable of delivering long-term improvements to the Canadian healthcare system.



# Looking Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

## Strategic Priorities

The ON NEIHR's strategic priorities in 2026 will include expanding land-based research methodologies and enhancing data sovereignty (OCAP® principles) across all projects. Strengthening and expanding international relationships will also be a priority going forward, as stronger together is an important concept and practice in the on-going fight against colonialism and asserting self-determination in health and health care.

Securing funding and working towards grants and resources outside the funder to begin to set in place a financial succession plan for the ON NEIHR to remain in vibrant success beyond government funding mandates.

## Closing Words

By prioritizing a massive mobilization of personnel and field-based data collection, in Year 6 the ON NEIHR delivered high-resolution evidence that informs Indigenous mental health education, care, programs, and policy. The ON NEIHR did not merely support studies and trainings; we are building a collaborative network that accelerates the transition of Indigenous evidence into practice for the benefit of all Canadians.

# Year 6 Highlights

**Table 8. Year 6 at a Glance (2024–2025)**

Category	Impact Metric	Key Highlight
Network Reach	120+ Members	Includes academic faculty, students, and community partners.
KMb Outreach	5,000+ Interactions	Combined webinar attendees, podcast downloads, and site visits.
Ceremony	100% Integration	Every major network meeting held on the land or in ceremony.
Scholarly Output	45+ Publications	Peer-reviewed articles and Indigenous knowledge-sharing papers.
Funding	\$9,112,669.78	Secured through CIHR renewal and leveraged partner grants.

## Research Excellence & Capacity Building

In Year 6, the ON NEIHR moved beyond establishing a foundation toward a model of **sustained excellence**. Our research agenda is driven by the principle that Indigenous health research must be led by, with, and for Indigenous Peoples.

## Peer-Reviewed Publications & Scholarly Impact

This year, our members contributed to the global body of knowledge through high-impact publications that prioritize Indigenous methodologies.

**Key Theme:** Mental Health & Land-Based Healing: A significant cluster of publications emerged this year focusing on the efficacy of land-based interventions for youth wellness.

**Special Issues:** Members of the ON NEIHR guest-edited a special collection on research from the 10 NEIHRs across Canada in the International Journal of Indigenous Health featuring 16 papers from across the 10 NEIHR networks.

## Grant Success & Financial Stewardship

The successful **CIHR Renewal (2024-2029)** has stabilized the ON NEIHR operations, allowing the team to pivot from "planning" to "performing."

## Leveraged Funding

For every dollar of core NEIHR funding, our members secured an additional **\$2.50** in external and tri-agency grants.

## Sub-grants

We awarded 13 internal "sub grants" to community-led projects that bridge traditional knowledge with clinical health practices.

**Table 9. ON NEIHR Subgrants Awarded (2024 – 2025)****ON NEIHR Subgrant: Holistic Indigenous Mental Health and Wellness: Transforming Health Care Strengths and Solutions****University of Western Ontario****Dr. Chantelle Richmond****Youth Climate Crisis Project –  
2 Spirited Peoples of the First Nation****Mr. Keith McCrady****Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario  
McMaster University****Dr. Adrienne Lickers-Xavier****University of British Columbia****Dr. Alanaise Ferguson****University of Western Ontario****Dr. Vanessa Ambtman-Smith****Toronto Metropolitan University****Dr. Lynn Lavallee****Thompson Rivers University****Dr. Roderick McCormick****University of Western Ontario****Dr. Vanessa Ambtman-Smith**

**University of Toronto,  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education**

**Dr. Jeffrey Ansloos**

**University of Toronto,  
Faculty of Pharmacy**

**Dr. Jaris Swidrovich**

**First Peoples Wellness Circle**

**Brenda Restoule**

**Ceremony - Wasauksing First Nation**

**Elder Wendy Philips**

**Ceremony - Na Pualei o Likolehua**

**Dr. Maile Tualii**

## **Training the Next Generation**

### ***Mentorship Model***

Moving away from the western individualistic model to a collective one, we implemented mentorship gatherings where students, early-career researchers, and Elders learn together in a collaborative setting. Capacity building is about increasing the number of Indigenous health researchers and practitioners through mentorship.

Mentorship opportunities for students and early-career researchers, with Elders included Indigenous research methods and training, supporting conference presentations and workshop facilitation, guidance with award and scholarship applications, and practicum placements made available through the ON NEIHR.

Cultural, ceremonial, and spiritual mentorship has also been provided through lodge teachings, fire keeping, sweatlodge ceremonies, pipe ceremonies, and inclusion in the Elders council, where Elders provide advice and give feedback to student researchers about how to move forward in their work and with community.

Mentorship is also provided to students and early-career researchers through leadership opportunities; examples include lead/corresponding authorship on publications, public facing documents and reports.

Elders, students, and early-career researchers have also worked together on knowledge translation projects, such as quarterly newsletters, policy briefs, and a graphic novel related to the impacts of the climate crisis on Indigenous youth mental health.

**Table 10. Indigenous Mentorship Network (IMN) of Ontario Activities (2025)**

<p><b>IMN Launch, welcoming new Academic Lead</b>  <b>McMaster University (Hamilton, ON)</b></p>	<p><b>March 2025</b></p>
<p><b>2025 IMN Summer Institute</b>  <b>Food Sovereignty &amp; Photovoice Methodologies</b>  <b>McMaster University (Hamilton, ON)</b>  <i>Hybrid</i></p>	<p><b>28 July – 1 Aug 2025</b></p>
<p><b>Health in Humanities Program</b>  <i>Sharing Circles &amp; workshops</i></p>	<p><b>30 September 2025</b></p>
<p><b>Truth and Reconciliation Day Event</b>  <b>Mohawk Institute (Brantford, ON)</b></p>	<p><b>30 September 2025</b></p>
<p><b>IMN Writing Groups</b></p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>IMN Newsletter Launch</b></p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>IMN Bi-weekly Labs</b></p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>Connecting &amp; partnership opportunities with Indigenous Health</b>  <b>Learning Lodge McMaster (IHLL)</b></p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>

# Total Number of Students Mentored: [100]

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## ON NEIHR HQ

15 Research Assistants (October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025)

## Dr. Ambtman-Smith

4 1 graduate, 3 undergrad, 1 non-Indigenous

## Dr. Gabriel

4 1 Indigenous graduate, 3 non-Indigenous (1 graduate, 2 undergraduate)

## Dr. Ferguson

48 4 graduate, 2 graduate non-Indigenous, 25 graduate, 15 undergraduate, 2 community research assistants

## Dr. Fournier

2

## Dr. Restoule

3

## IMN

23

## ***Student Scholarships***

Through the ON NEIHR work and a collaboration with the Ontario Indigenous Mentorship Network, we supported 23 Indigenous graduate students (master's and PhD) whose work directly informs community health priorities.

**Graduate Students funded by the Indigenous Mentorship Network: [2]**

**Apt'sqi'gnn**

**Darienne Russell**

# The Student Stories

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## Naomi Epp

B.Sc. M.A Trainee, Clinical  
Psychology, Lakehead  
University

*Engaging with Indigenous perspectives and mentors during my undergraduate coursework was a catalyst for my success in my first degree and eventual graduate training. Course content highlighting Indigenous epistemologies while I was studying away from home was particularly meaningful to me, especially in the context of imposed cultural erasure within my own family. Through Indigenous mentorship, I was able to connect my interests in clinical psychology and Indigenous epistemologies, an intersection I had not previously considered. This integration shaped my decision to pursue work with boys and men from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities serving sentences in Canadian federal institutions.*

*Although this path did not reflect the traditional trajectory of an aspiring clinical psychology graduate student, where admissions committees often prioritize extensive empirical research experience, it allowed me to engage in work aligned with my values and contribute meaningfully to the ongoing development of Indigenous youth mental health and wellness initiatives. My work experience outside of formal research contexts subsequently led me to engage with Indigenous research methodologies and to develop my own research as a trainee with the ACCESS Open Minds Indigenous Youth Mental Health and Wellness Network (AOM-IYMHWN), co-led by Dr. Chris Mushquash.*

*The team's commitment to creating opportunities for young Indigenous students and valuing diverse life experiences within and beyond research was evident. Being part of AOM-IYMHWN has allowed me to engage with key voices advancing Indigenous youth mental health, providing invaluable opportunities for learning and growth. Through this work, I built connections and experience that supported my admission to the clinical psychology program at Lakehead University and strengthened my confidence in my abilities as both a researcher and future clinician.*

*Dr. Mushquash has cultivated a lab environment composed of supportive Indigenous and non-Indigenous graduate students, where mentorship and collaboration are central. Through the Ontario NEIHR I have also been afforded invaluable opportunities to travel and disseminate my findings, including attending the National Gathering of Graduate Students (NGGS) 2025 in Banff, Alberta. At NGGS, I met students and mentors from within Ontario NEIHR and beyond who offered critical and valuable feedback, challenged my thinking, and strengthened my development as a researcher.*

*Engaging with other passionate Indigenous scholars in these spaces has allowed me to feel a sense of home within academia, build friendships, and confidence. Mentorship, ranging from individual faculty relationships to broader community connections, has been a cornerstone of my success. Spaces that cultivate and sustain these relationships are essential.*

## **Kendall Garlow**

**Mohawk Nation from Six Nations  
of the Grand River (recent McMaster  
graduate, & IMN Coordinator,  
supervised by Dr. Lickers-Xavier)**

*I am deeply grateful for the mentorship and support I have received from Dr. Adrienne Xavier at the Indigenous Mentorship Network and the Ontario NEIHR network. Dr. Xavier's guidance has significantly strengthened both my academic studies and my confidence as an Indigenous scholar. Through ongoing mentorship, thoughtful feedback, and impactful community engagement opportunities, I was encouraged and supported to continue my work on Haudenosaunee identity and food systems beyond my MA research.*

*This support directly influenced my decision to pursue doctoral studies, as my experience with the IMN has been valuable and highlighted the potential impact of my work within Indigenous health research. The community events and ongoing support from the ON NEIHR have contributed to my academic success and reinforced the importance of relational, community-rooted Indigenous health scholarship. I am incredibly appreciative of the support the ON NEIHR and IMN provide for graduate students, and I look forward to a continued relationship in my doctoral studies and community work.*

## Appendix A

### **Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin Webinar Feedback Survey Data Year 6**

**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** Journey to Reconciliation: Indigenous Homelessness Prevention – Dr. Cathy Fournier & Cohen Pinkoski. October 3, 2024

**No available data.**

**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** Baranginy ngalang noongar: Enhancing Children’s Wellbeing Through moombaki Cultural Learnings in Schools – Dr. Cheryl Kickett-Tucker. October 16, 2024

**No available data.**

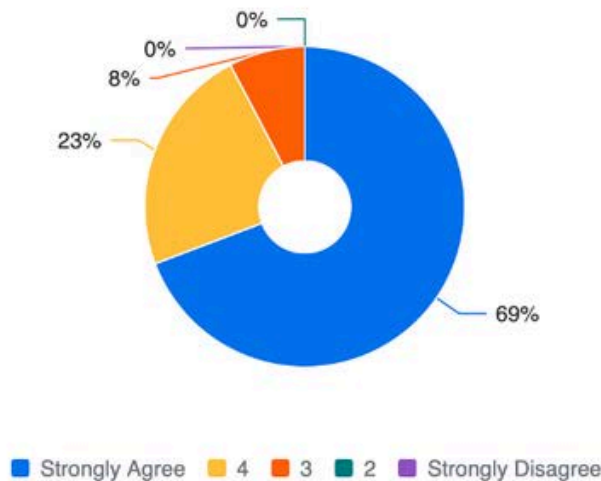
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** Approaches to Community Wellbeing: AnishiniwugAjimoowin Animisewiinan - Mental Health and Substance Use Report – Angie Morris & Nghia Nguyen. November 7, 2024

**Figure 1.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract

1. The content was as described in materials. (Rating scale)

13/13 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

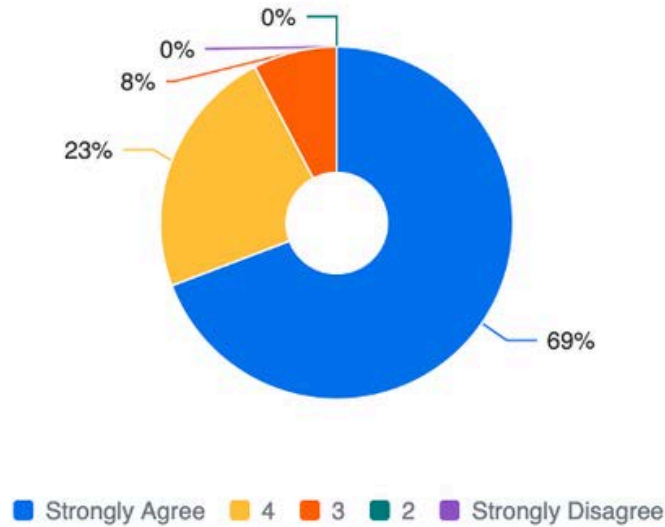


**Figure 2.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

**2. The presentations were applicable to my work.** (Rating scale)

13/13 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

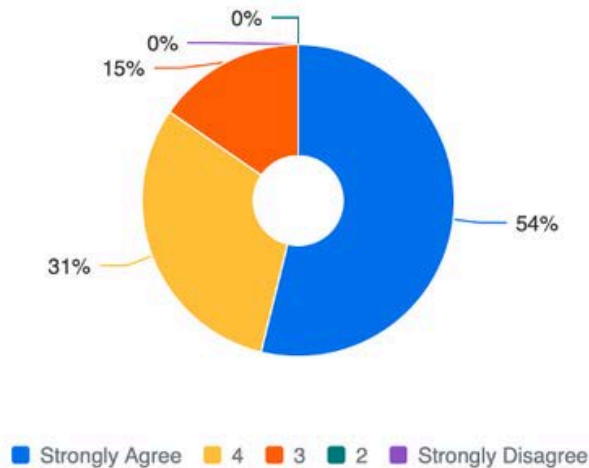


**Figure 3.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

**3. I will recommend this conference to others.** (Rating scale)

13/13 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

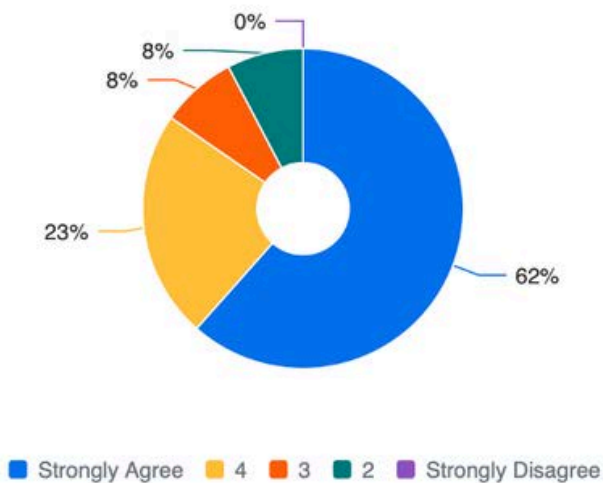


**Figure 4.** The webinar was well paced within the time.

**4. The webinar was well paced within the time.** (Rating scale)

13/13 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

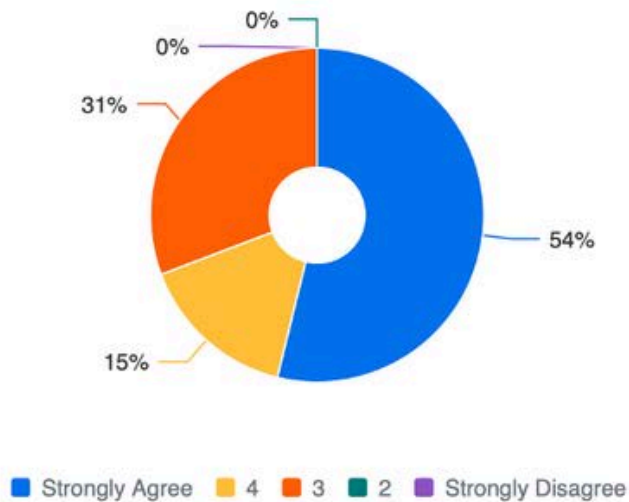


**Figure 5.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

**The speakers were good communicators.** (Rating scale)

3/13 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

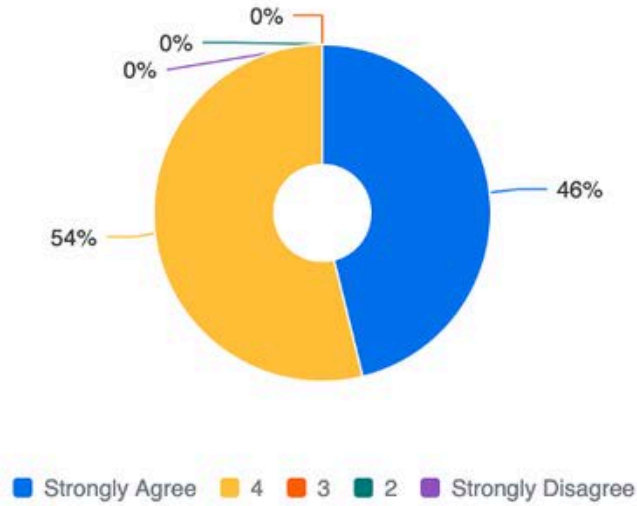


**Figure 6.** Members review of speaker organization.

**6. Material was presented in an organized manner.** (Rating scale)

13/13 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

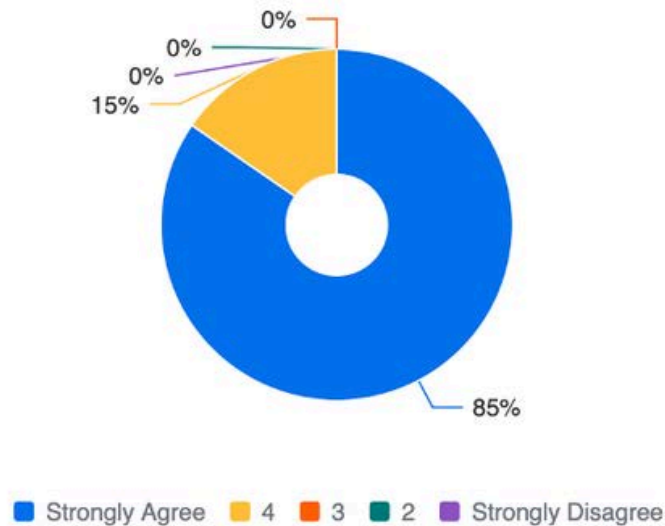


**Figure 7.** Members' review of speaker knowledgeability.

**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics.** (Rating scale)

13/13 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



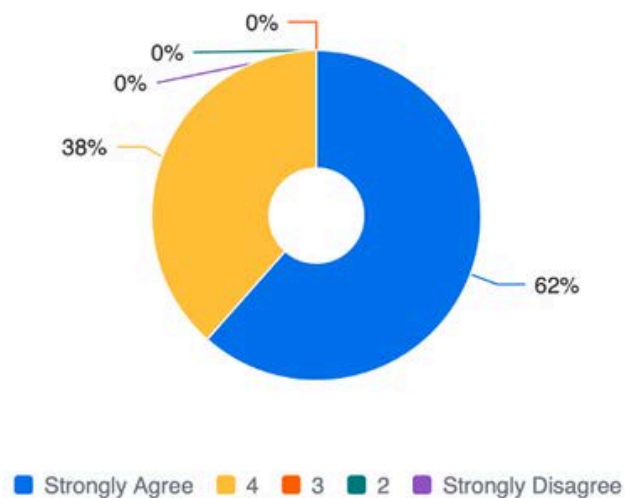
**Figure 8.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

13/13 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 9.** Responses and Feedback from members.

**What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?**

6 Responses

Nothing.

Unfortunately, presenter audio quality was an issue

Perspective of real experience (i.e., Angie describing the nursing station visit process).

It was a great webinar. Perhaps a bit more tech support/prep for the presenters would help? It was difficult to hear Angie for a lot of the presentation and a distracting popup on the shared screen...

I really appreciated the context and stories that Angie shared to accompany the data

I really wanted to stay and listen to the talk, but the audio feedback was unfortunately way too much and distorted.

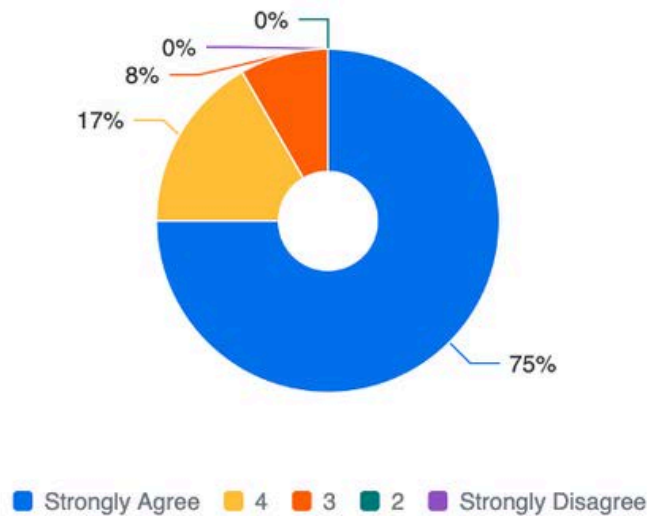
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** What Justice Looks Like: Confronting Anti- Indigenous Racism and Building Safe and Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Systems for Indigenous People Report – Dr. Brenda Restoule. December 4, 2024

**Figure 10.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract

1. The content was as described in materials. (Rating scale)

12/12 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 11.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

2. The presentations were applicable to my work. (Rating scale)

12/12 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

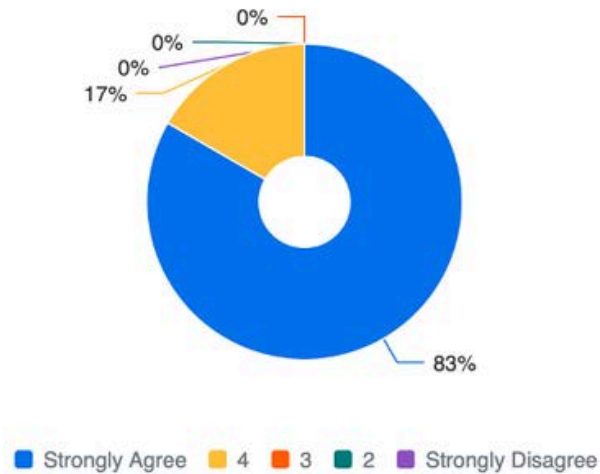


**Figure 12.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

**3. I will recommend this conference to others.** (Rating scale)

12/12 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

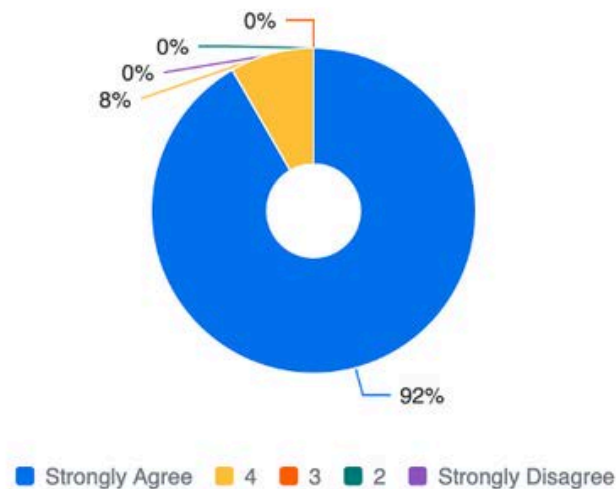


**Figure 13.** The webinar was well paced within the time.

**4. The webinar was well paced within the time.** (Rating scale)

12/12 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

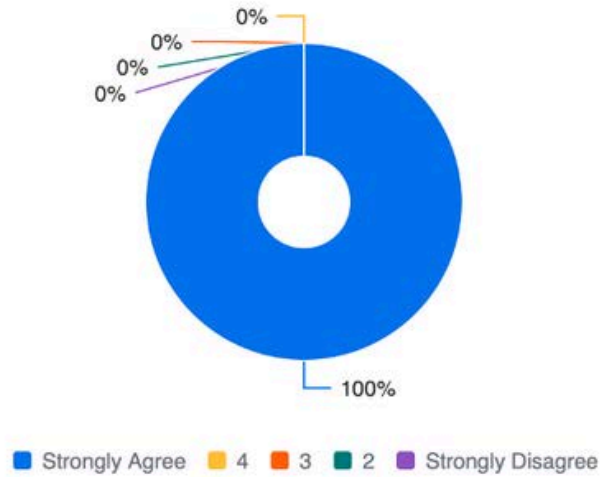


**Figure 14.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

**5. The speakers were good communicators.** (Rating scale)

12/12 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

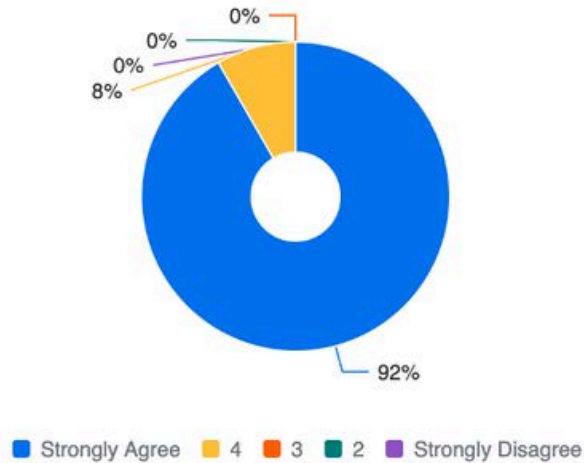


**Figure 15.** Members review of speaker organization.

**6. Material was presented in an organized manner.** (Rating scale)

12/12 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

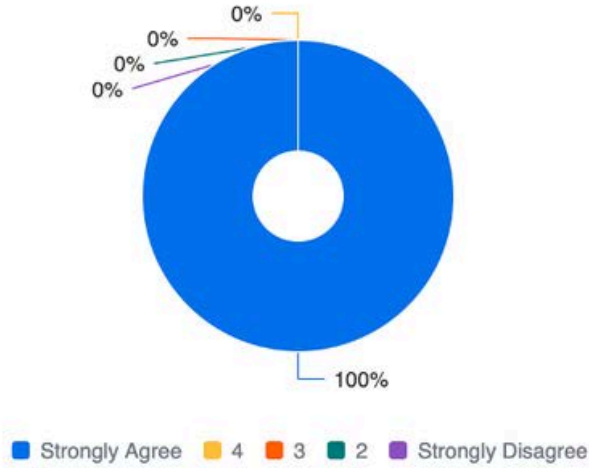


**Figure 16.** Members' review of speaker knowledgeability.

**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics. (Rating scale)**

11/12 (92%) answered · 1 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



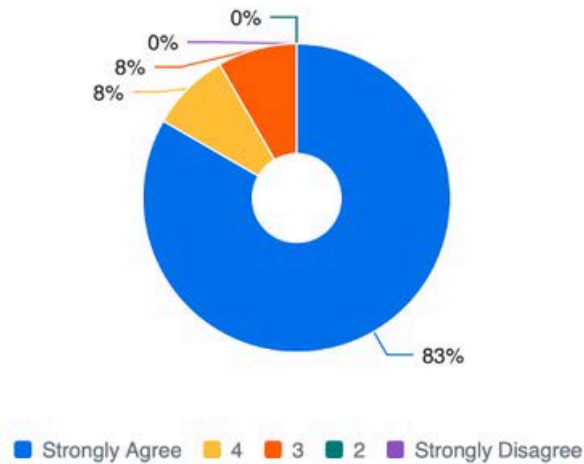
**Figure 17.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

12/12 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 18.** Responses and Feedback from members.**What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar? Do You have any suggestions for improvement?**

6 Responses

Slides were clear. And it was good to see the overall recommendations.

There were too many recommendations - rightly so. These recommendations should have objectives, timetable, needed resources and yearly evaluations; otherwise like most reports, it would collect dust.

NA

I heard the experience of the speaker in her presentation of what has been done and also why it was done. There was mention of follow up reports. I have directions to inform myself.

Dr. R said when she started in this field, there were <100 Indigenous psychologists & this year, there are <100 Indigenous psychologists across Can. That was startling to me and I emailed youth after

It was a great presentation, and I really like the recommendations.

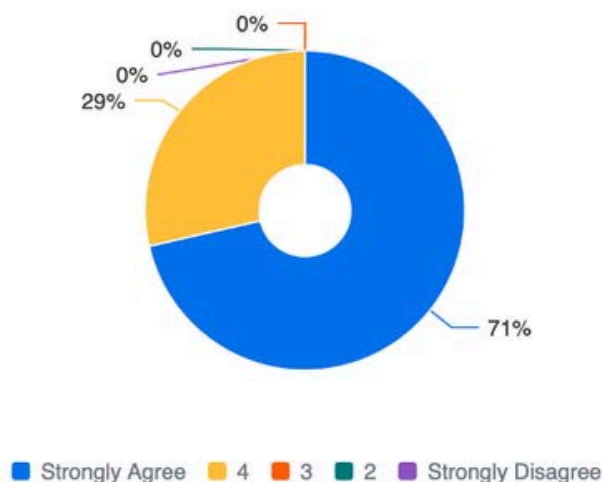
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar: Good Words are Medicine: Exploring the Psychological Impact of Forced Language Attrition and Possible Solutions**  
– Louis Busch. January 14, 2025

**Figure 19.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract

**1. The content was as described in materials.** (Rating scale)

7/7 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

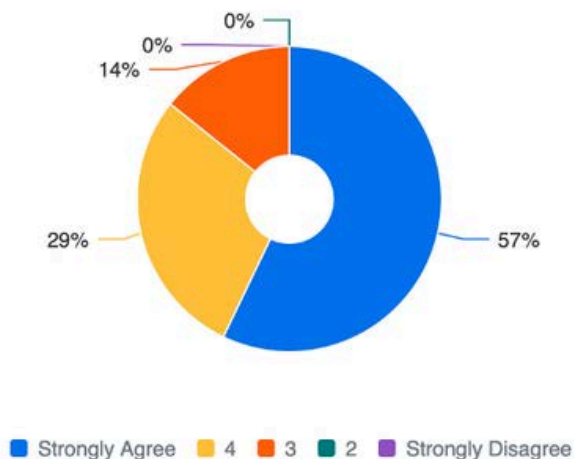


**Figure 20.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

**2. The presentations were applicable to my work.** (Rating scale)

7/7 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

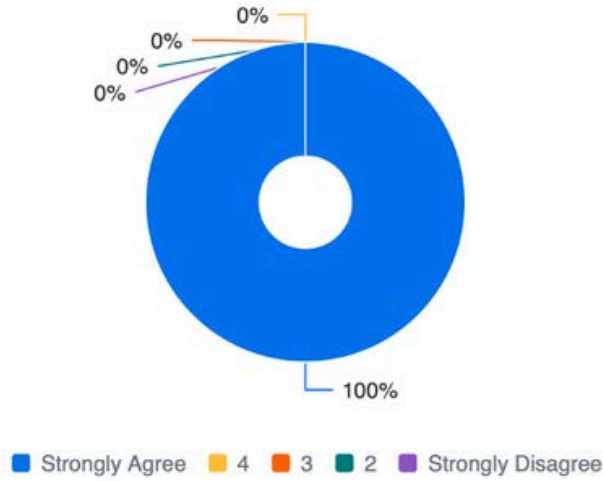


**Figure 21.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

3. I will recommend this conference to others. (Rating scale)

7/7 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

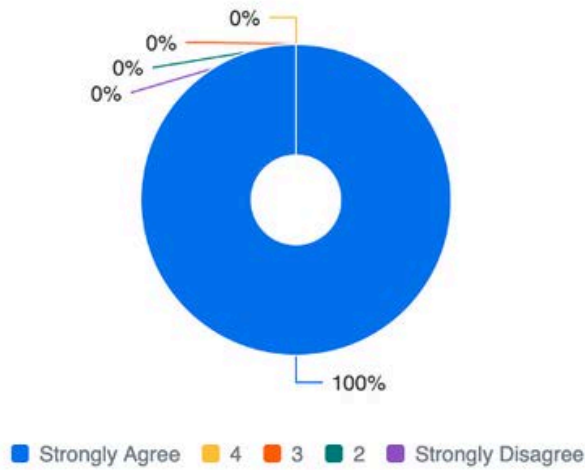


**Figure 22.** The webinar was well paced within the time.

4. The webinar was well paced within the time. (Rating scale)

7/7 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

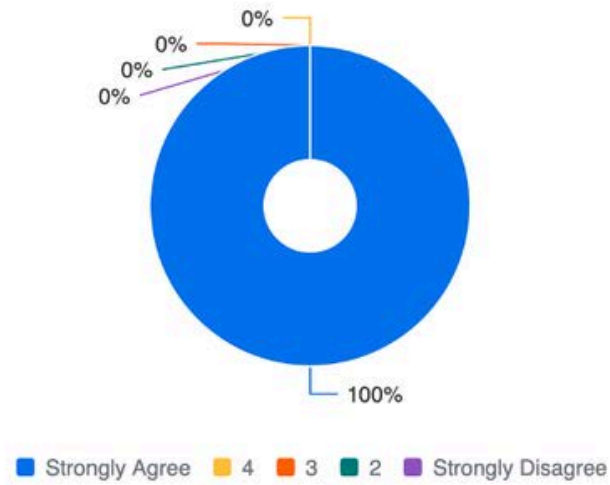


**Figure 23.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

**5. The speakers were good communicators.** (Rating scale)

7/7 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

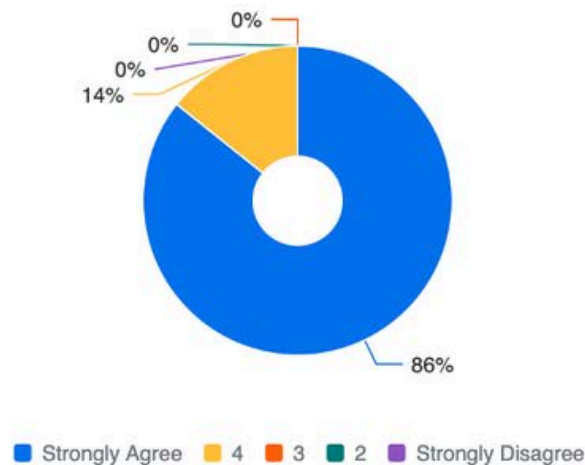


**Figure 24.** Members review of speaker organization.

**6. Material was presented in an organized manner.** (Rating scale)

7/7 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

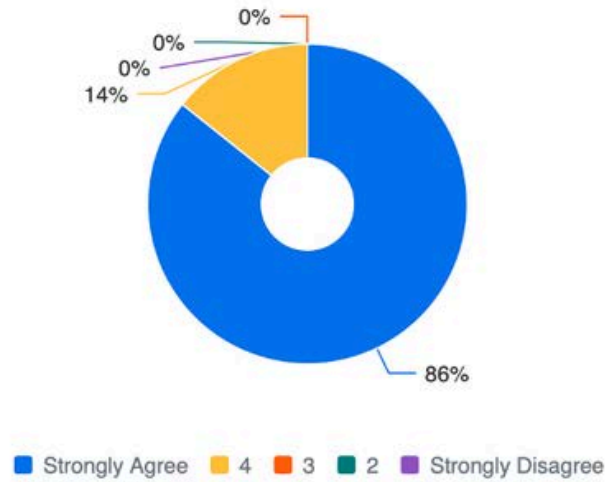


**Figure 25.** Members' review of speaker knowledgeability.

**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics.** (Rating scale)

7/7 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



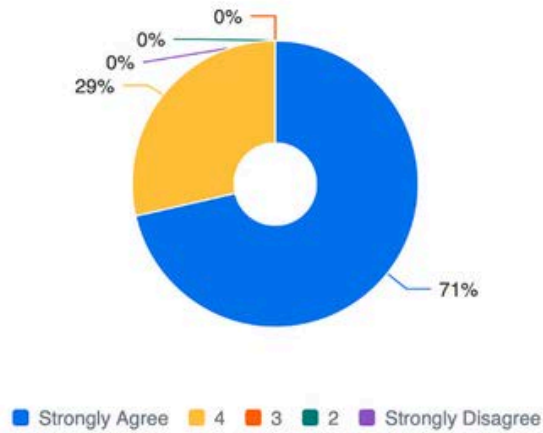
**Figure 26.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

7/7 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 27.** Responses and Feedback from members.**What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar? Do You have any suggestions for improvement?**

6 Responses

Hearing the language used in the presentation.

The visuals were complementary, rather than distracting or insufficient, and helped make the presentation all the more engaging than the speaker already was

The speaker was clear and engaging

Some improvement could be in allowing attendees to have their camera on and to access chat to make it feel more inclusive

enjoyed discussions on language

Nothing can be improved on. Beautiful Opening, amazing speaker, great moderator. The knowledge that was shared was relevant to every human being anywhere.

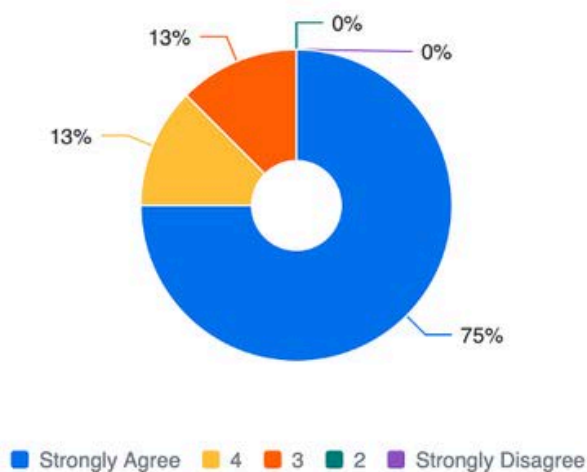
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar: First Nations Mental Wellness Workforce: A Realist Review** – Dr. Brenda Restoule. February 6, 2025

**Figure 28.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract

1. The content was as described in materials. (Rating scale)

8/8 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

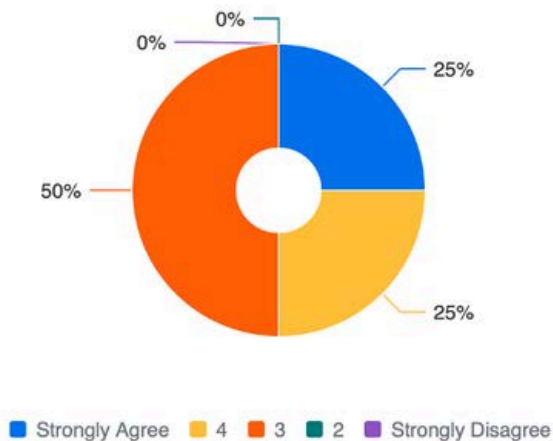


**Figure 29.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

2. The presentations were applicable to my work. (Rating scale)

8/8 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

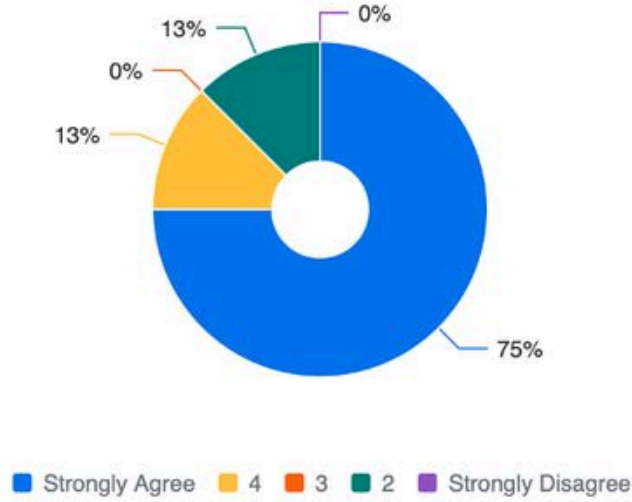


**Figure 30.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

**3. I will recommend this conference to others.** (Rating scale)

8/8 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

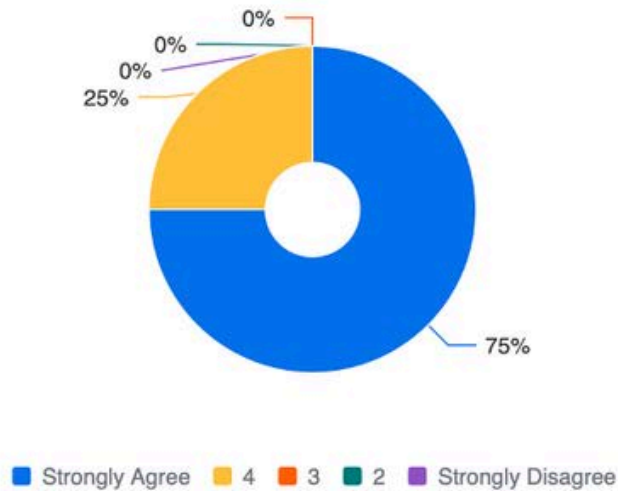


**Figure 31.** The webinar was well paced within the time.

**4. The webinar was well paced within the time.** (Rating scale)

8/8 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

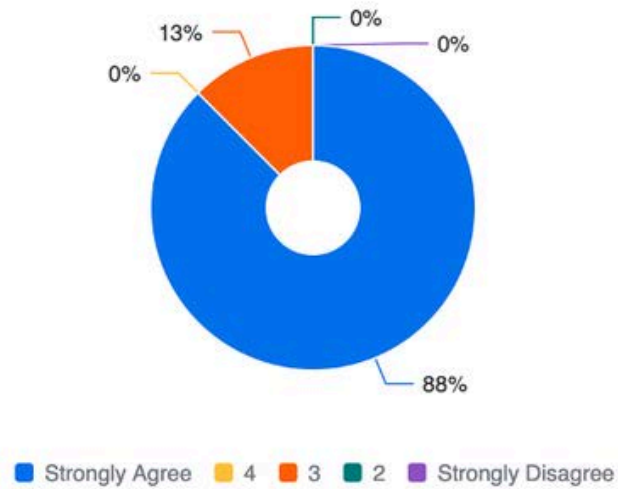


**Figure 32.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

**5. The speakers were good communicators.** (Rating scale)

8/8 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

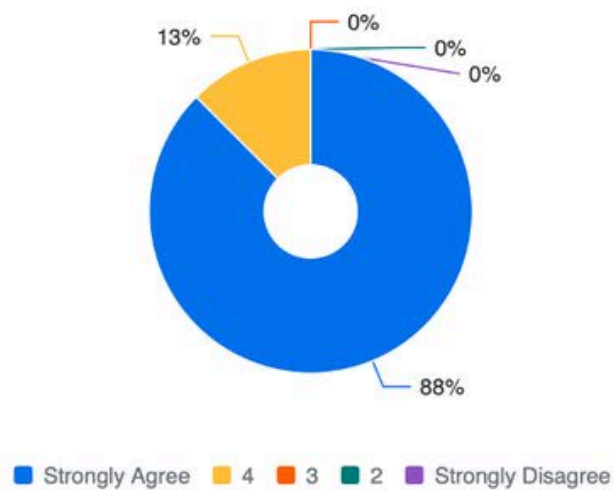


**Figure 33.** Members review of speaker organization.

**6. Material was presented in an organized manner.** (Rating scale)

8/8 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

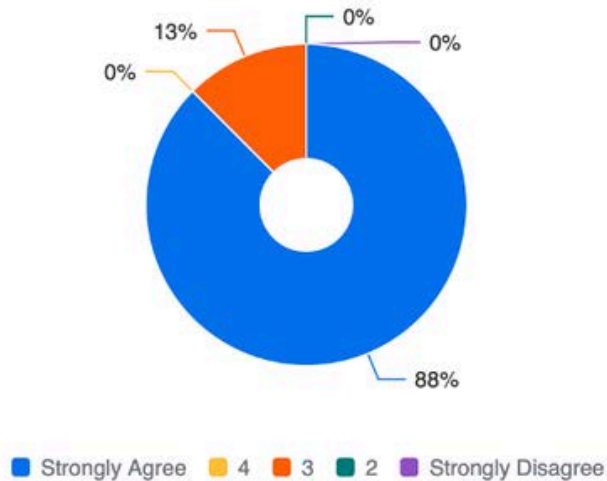


**Figure 34.** Members' review of speaker knowledgeability.

**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics.** (Rating scale)

8/8 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



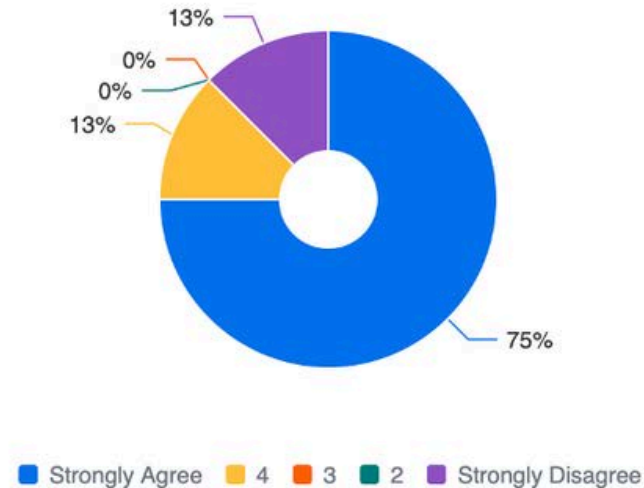
**Figure 35.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

8/8 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 37.** Responses and Feedback from members.

<b>What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar?</b> <b>Do you have any suggestions for improvement?</b> 3 Responses
It wasn't particularly engaging or informative.
NA
I enjoyed learning about the work Dr. Restoule was dealing with and hearing about the evidence she used to formulate her theories and hypotheses.

**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** Model of Care for Substance Use – Dr. Carol Hopkins. March 4, 2025

**No available data.**

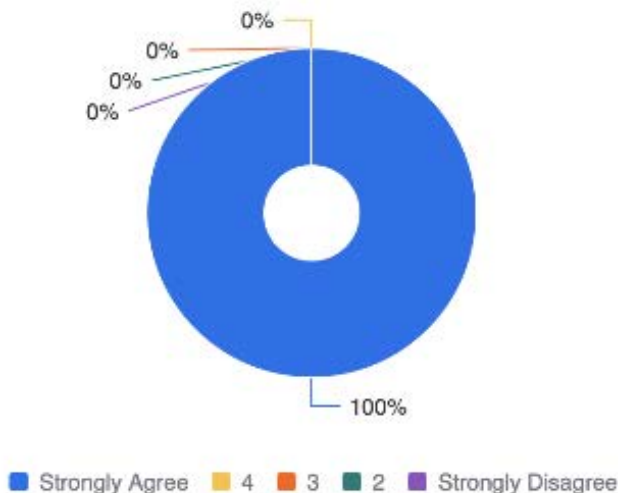
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** The Time Traveler: Historical and Contemporary Understandings of Indigenous Education and Physical Health Determinants – Mike Auksi. April 29, 2025

**Figure 38.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract

1. The content was as described in materials. (Rating scale)

1/1 (100%) answered - 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

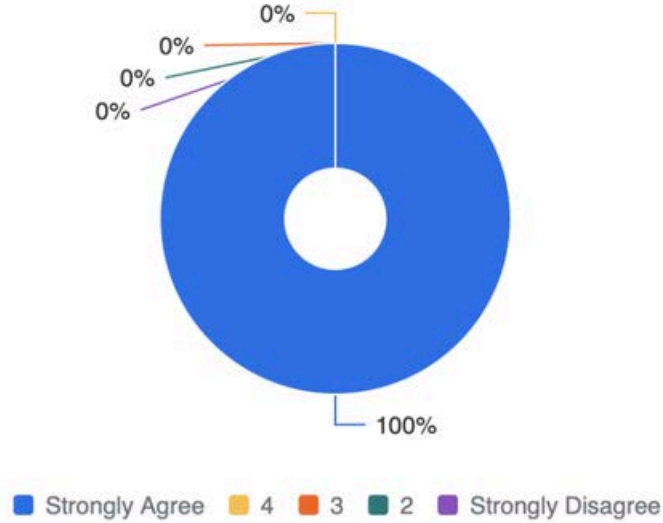


**Figure 39.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

**2. The presentations were applicable to my work.** (Rating scale)

1/1 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

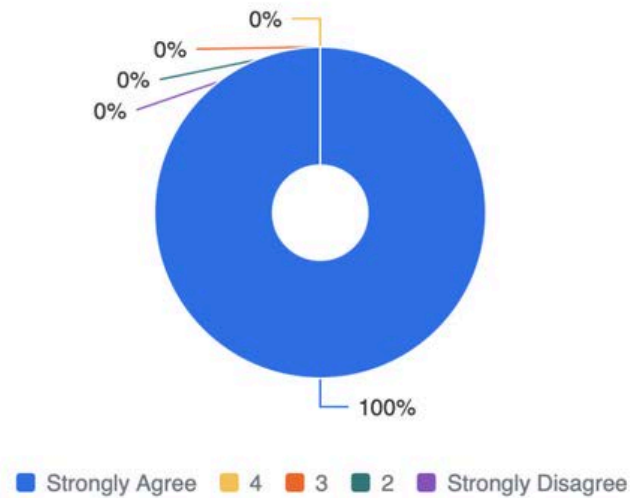


**Figure 40.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

**3. I will recommend this conference to others.** (Rating scale)

1/1 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

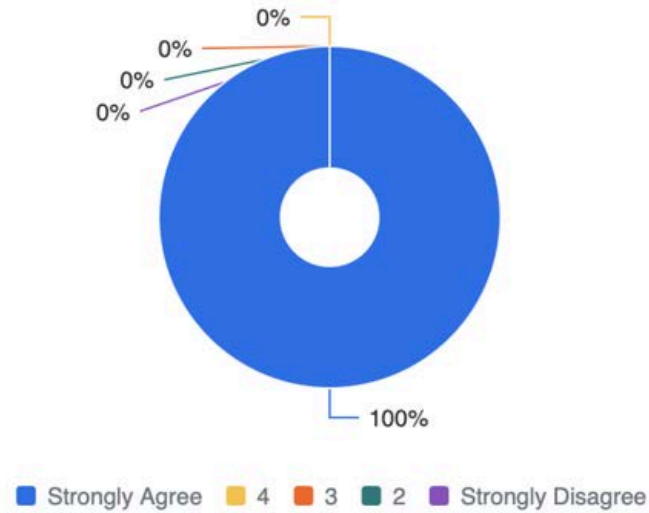


**Figure 41.** The webinar was well paced within the time

**4. The webinar was well paced within the time.** (Rating scale)

1/1 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

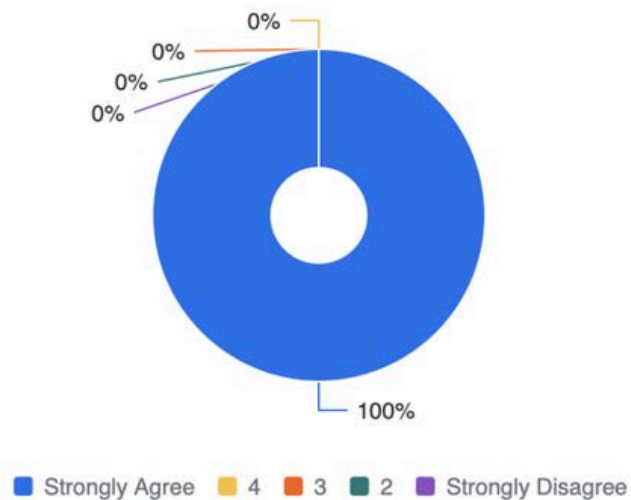


**Figure 42.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

**5. The speakers were good communicators.** (Rating scale)

1/1 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

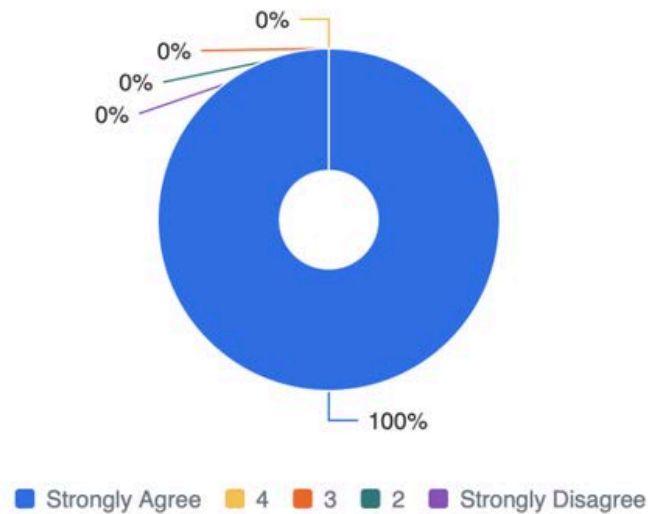
5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 43.** Members review of speaker organization.**6. Material was presented in an organized manner.** (Rating scale)

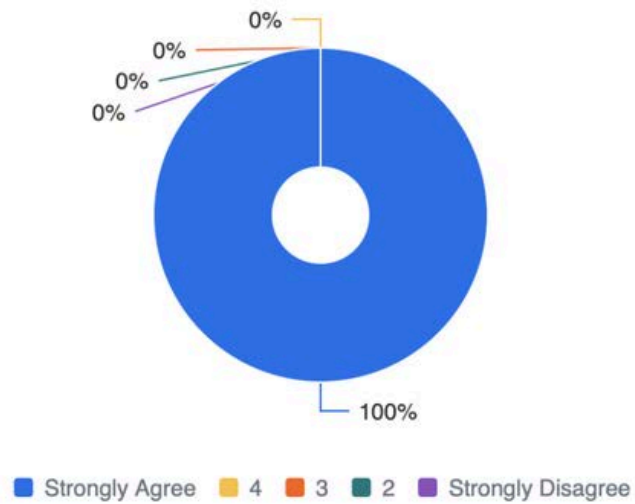
1/1 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

**Figure 44.** Members' review of speaker knowledgeability.**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics.** (Rating scale)

1/1 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



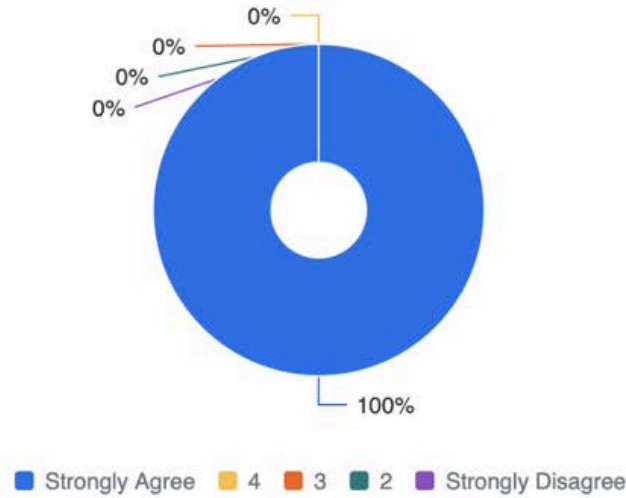
**Figure 45.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

1/1 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 46.** Responses and Feedback from members.

**What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar? Do You have any suggestions for improvement?**

1 Responses

the style of the presentation was great especially for someone who is neurodivergent. it was very engaging and different to the regular approach to presentation that people usually take.

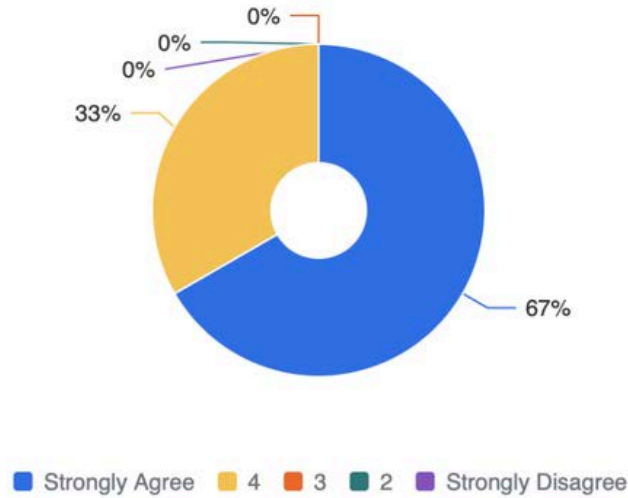
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** American Indian Traditional Healing: Expressions of Alter-  
Native Psy-ence – Dr. Joseph Gone. May 23, 2025

**Figure 47.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract

1. The content was as described in materials. (Rating scale)

6/6 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

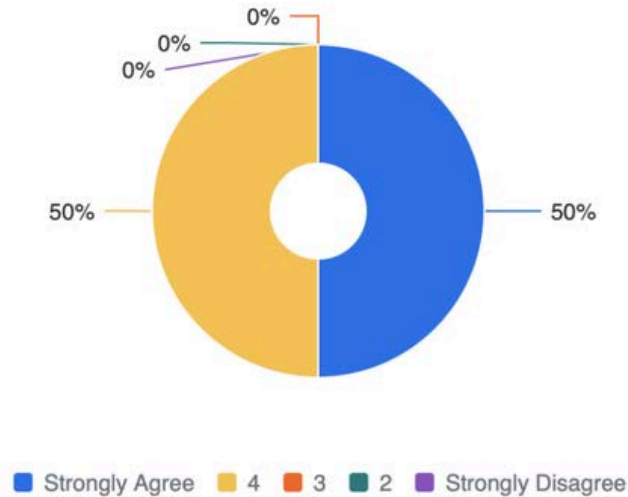


**Figure 48.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

2. The presentations were applicable to my work. (Rating scale)

6/6 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

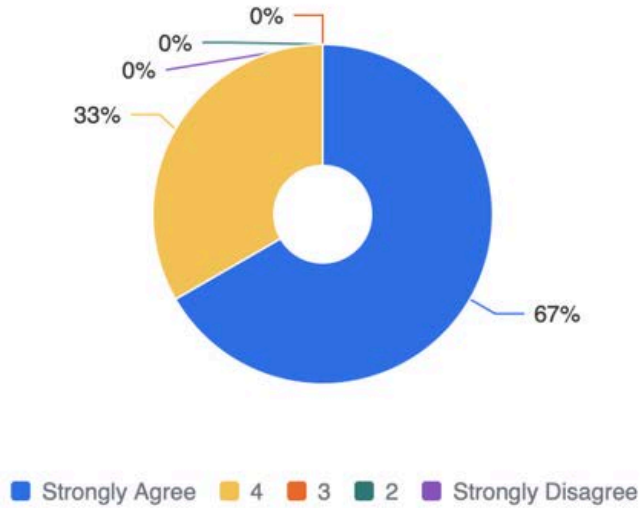


**Figure 49.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

**3. I will recommend this conference to others.** (Rating scale)

6/6 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

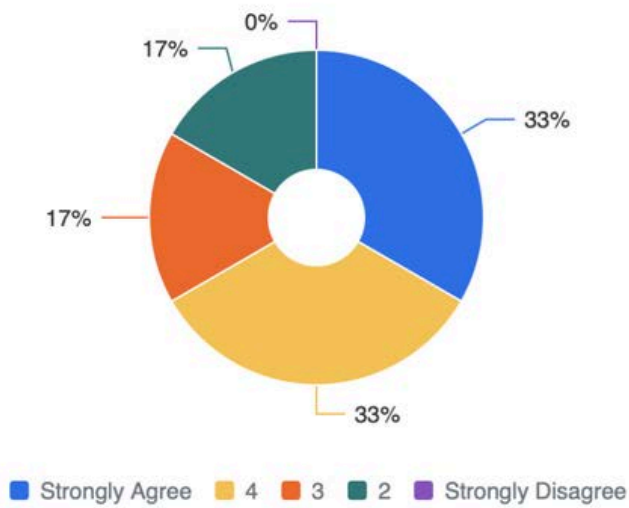


**Figure 50.** The webinar was well paced within the time

**4. The webinar was well paced within the time.** (Rating scale)

6/6 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

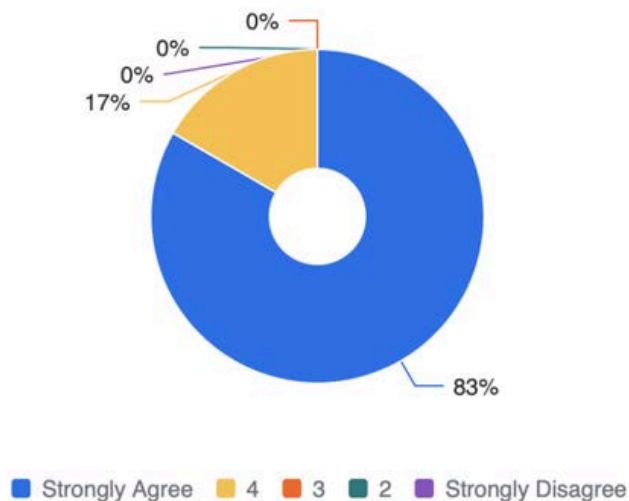


**Figure 51.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

5. The speakers were good communicators. (Rating scale)

6/6 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

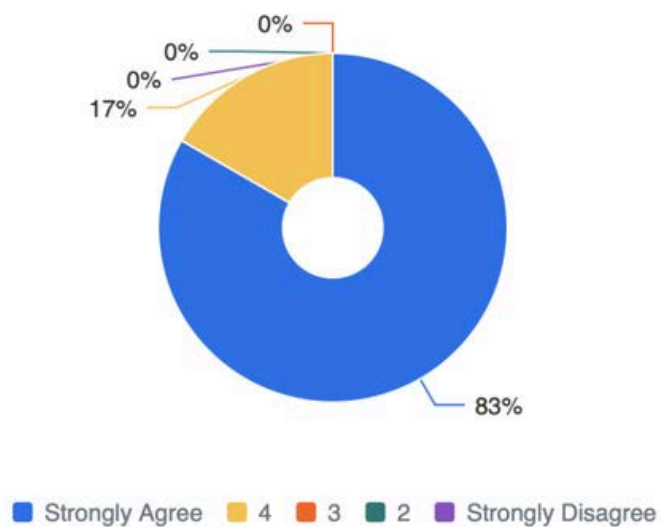
5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

**Figure 52.** Members review of speaker organization.

6. Material was presented in an organized manner. (Rating scale)

6/6 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

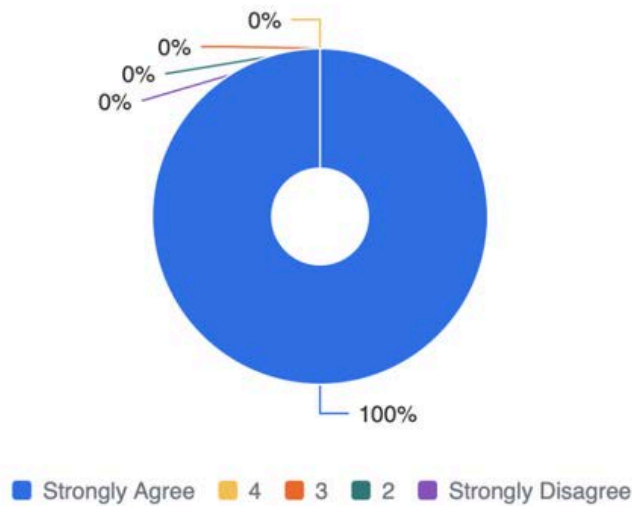


**Figure 53.** Members’ review of speaker knowledgeability.

**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics.** (Rating scale)

6/6 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



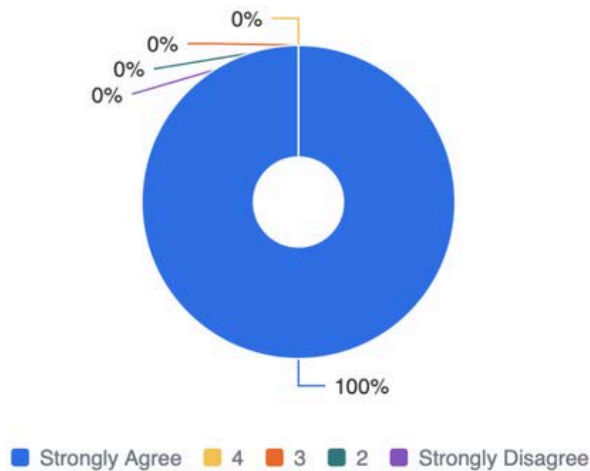
**Figure 54.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

6/6 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 55.** Responses and Feedback from members.

**What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar? Do You have any suggestions for improvement?**

1 Response

I was really tapped in with the story of the medicine man. Amazing, I'm actually speechless and I believe it. I believe it happened that way. Very captivating story. Thank you for sharing.

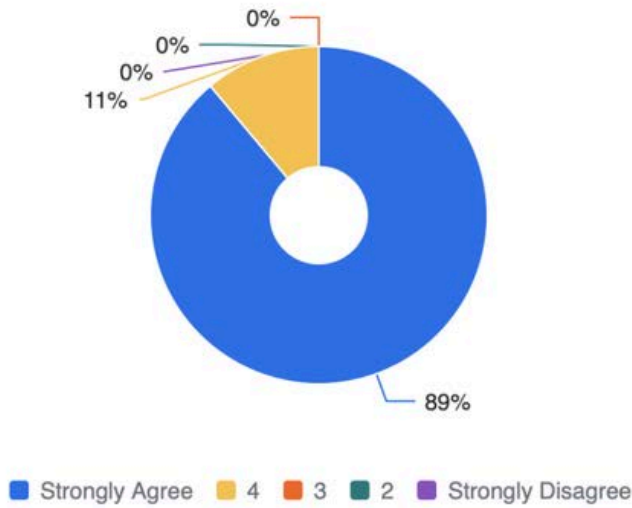
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar: Greater Cultural Safety in Mental Health Services through Research and Traditional Knowledge – Dr. Cornelia (Nel) Wieman.**  
June 25, 2025

**Figure 56.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract.

**1. The content was as described in materials.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

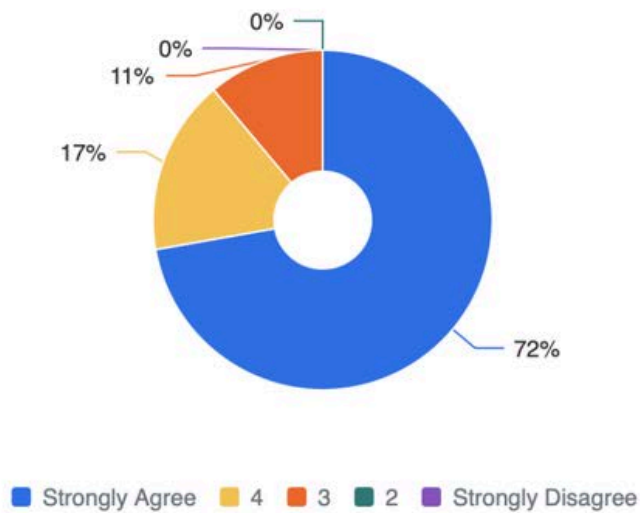


**Figure 57.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

**2. The presentations were applicable to my work.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

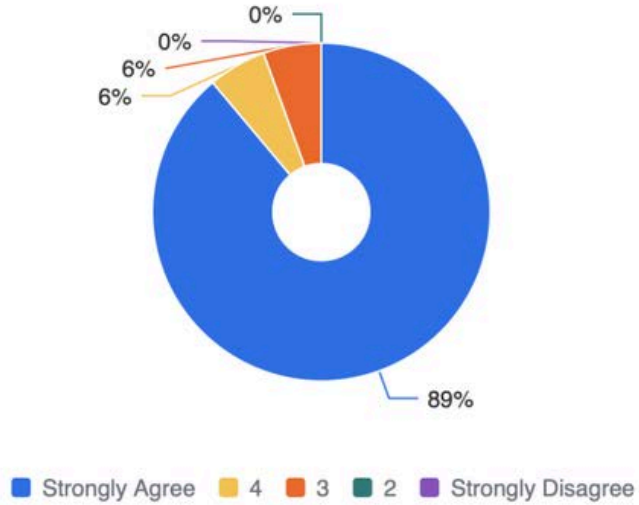


**Figure 58.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

**3. I will recommend this conference to others.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

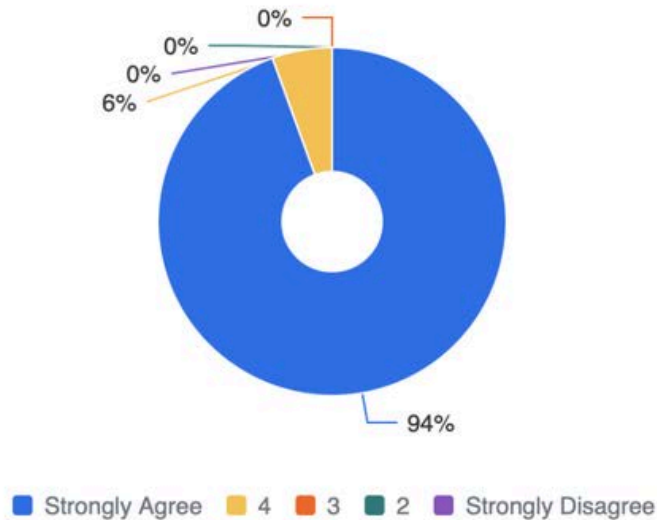


**Figure 59.** The webinar was well paced within the time

**4. The webinar was well paced within the time.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

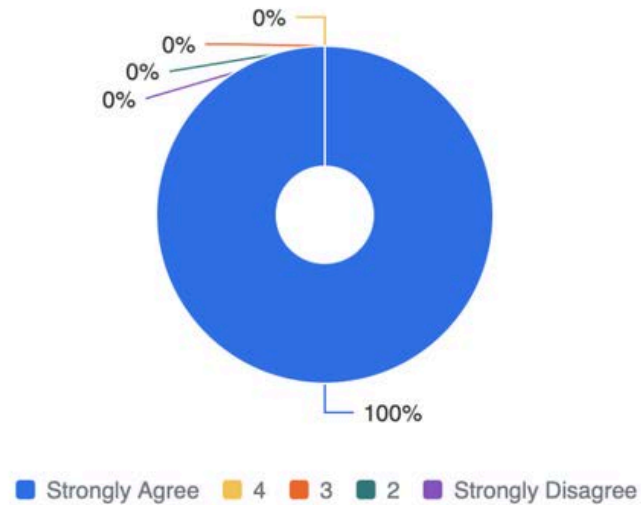


**Figure 60.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

**5. The speakers were good communicators.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

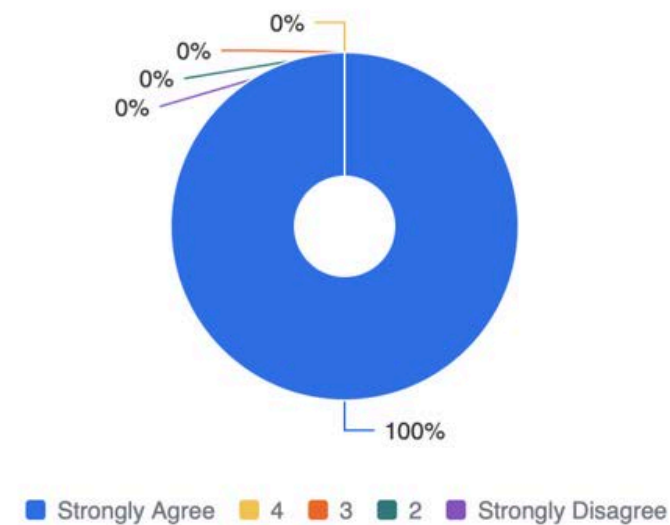


**Figure 61.** Members review of speaker organization.

**6. Material was presented in an organized manner.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

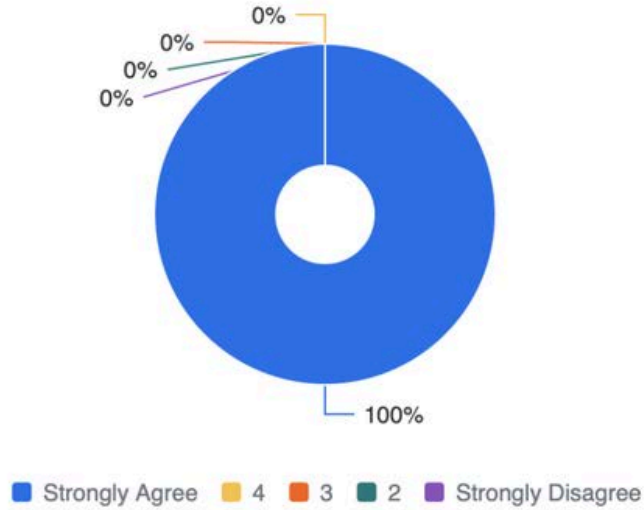


**Figure 62.** Members' review of speaker knowledgeability.

**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics.** (Rating scale)

17/18 (94%) answered · 1 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



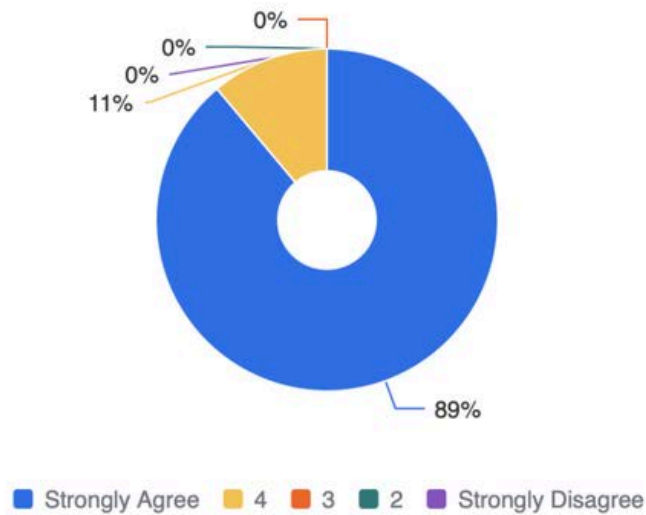
**Figure 63.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 64.** Responses and Feedback from members.

<p><b>What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar? Do You have any suggestions for improvement?</b></p> <p>8 Responses</p>
<p>background of how Keegan's legacy and cultural safety and humility standards were arrived at - important and sadly recent history - honest description of current systemic racism of health system Thx</p>
<p>Dr. Wieman is amazing &amp; engaging &amp; speaks from the heart... I sometimes have webinars going while I'm working, but I was riveted to this one and can't wait to share the recording with colleagues! &lt;3</p>
<p>The presentation was amazing. It's shocking how around the First Nations there is the same with health and drugs. Among our people, I know I've gone through a lot with family and friends. But I agree.</p>
<p>it was so nice to see Nel again after such a long time, looking and sounding well.</p>
<p>Maybe more time focused on the toxic drug response and how communities are influencing the actions.</p>
<p>The presentation introduced me to a number of resources I was not previously aware of. Thank you for a very informative and thought-provoking presentation.</p>
<p>Nel is amazing!</p>
<p>I appreciated the speaker's constant referring back to the need for the individual and community to decide what they want. Thank you.</p>

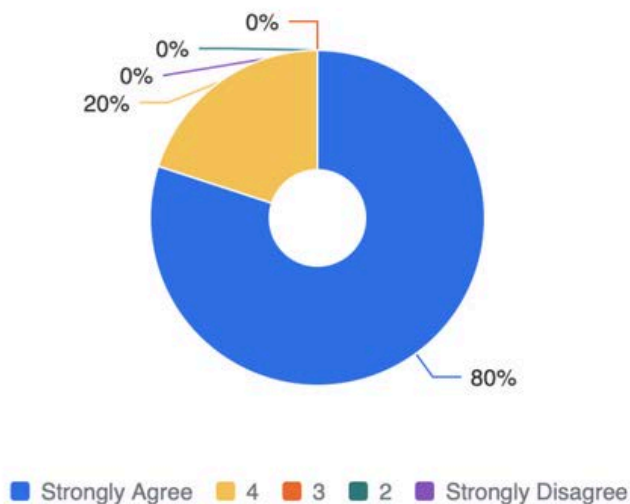
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar: Health and Wellness Teachings – Knowledge Keeper**  
Constance Simmonds. July 10, 2025

**Figure 65.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract

**1. The content was as described in materials.** (Rating scale)

5/5 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

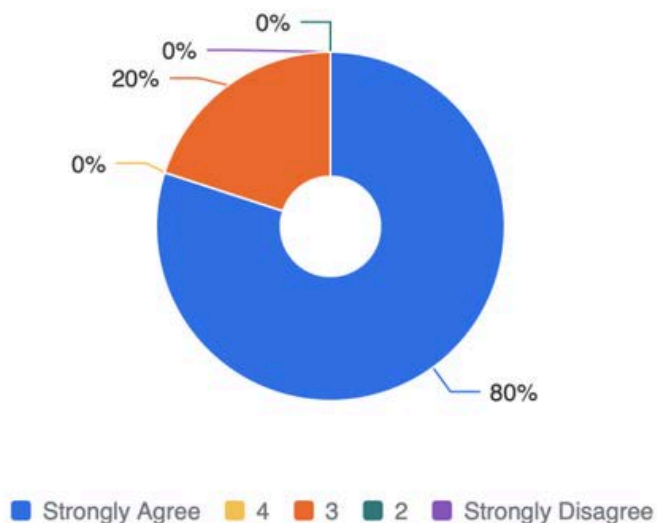


**Figure 66.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

**2. The presentations were applicable to my work.** (Rating scale)

5/5 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

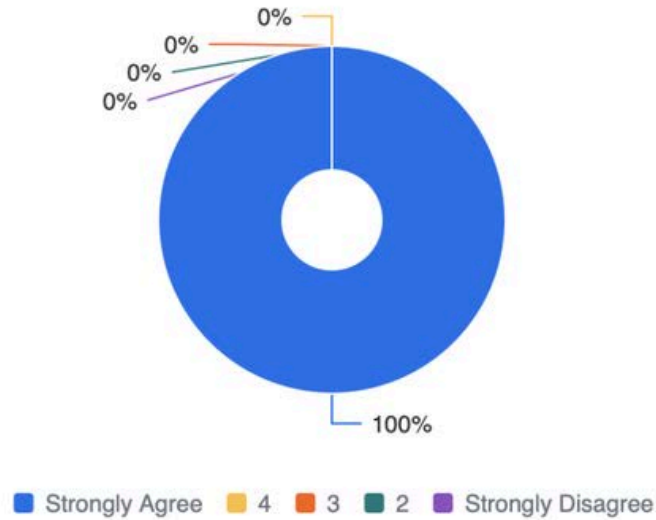


**Figure 67.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

**3. I will recommend this conference to others.** (Rating scale)

5/5 (100%) answered - 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

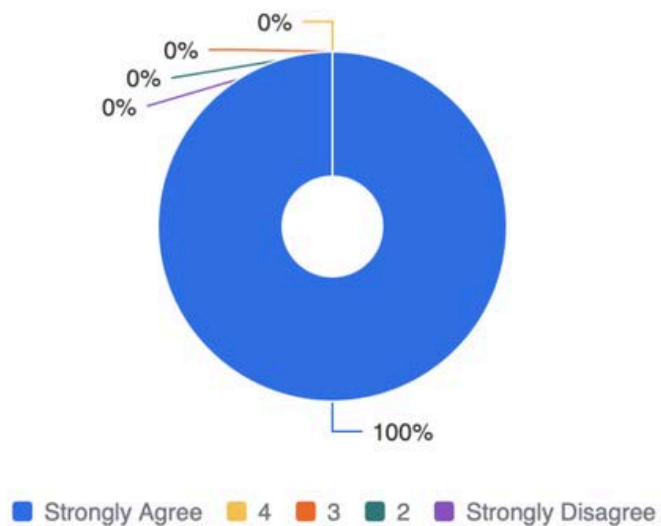


**Figure 68.** The webinar was well paced within the time

**4. The webinar was well paced within the time.** (Rating scale)

5/5 (100%) answered - 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

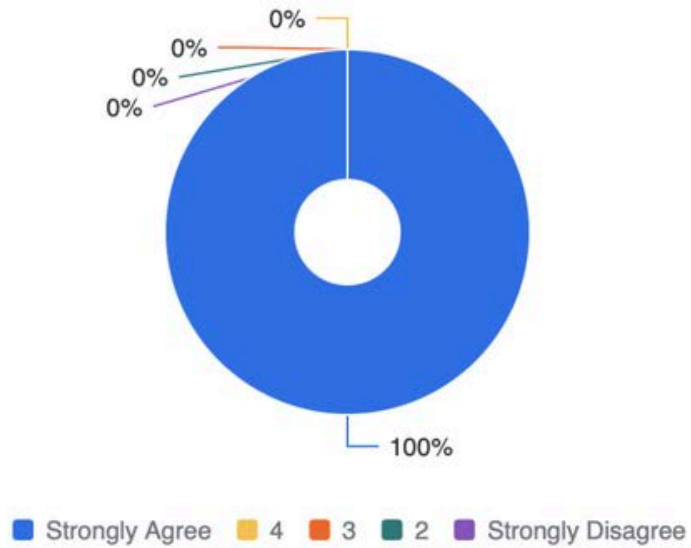


**Figure 69.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

**5. The speakers were good communicators.** (Rating scale)

5/5 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

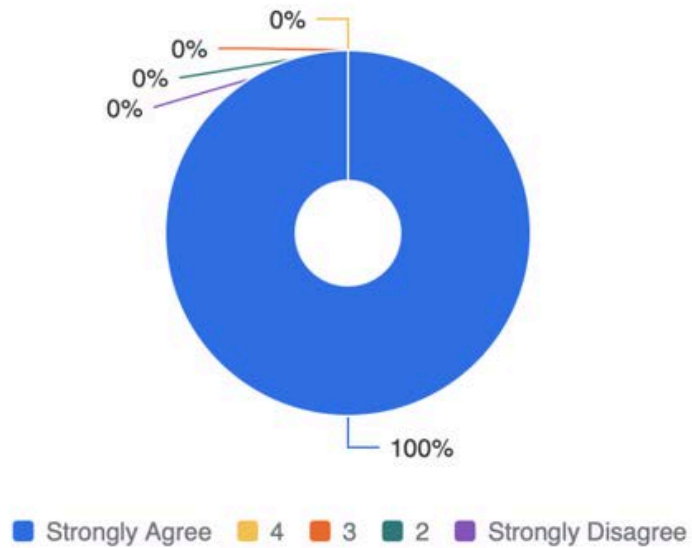


**Figure 70.** Members review of speaker organization.

**6. Material was presented in an organized manner.** (Rating scale)

5/5 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

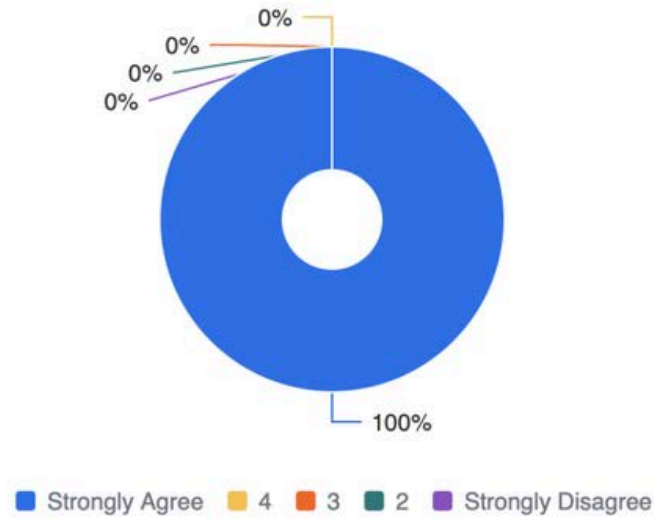


**Figure 71.** Members' review of speaker knowledgeability.

**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics.** (Rating scale)

5/5 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



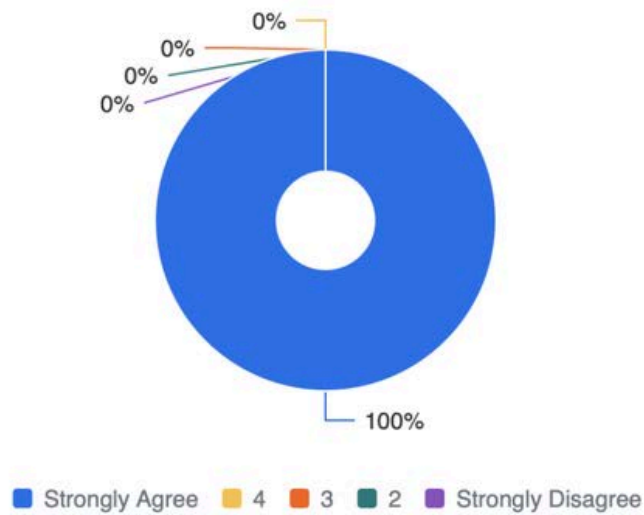
**Figure 72.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

5/5 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 73.** Responses and Feedback from members.

<p><b>What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar? Do You have any suggestions for improvement?</b></p> <p>5 Responses</p>
<p>It hit home re: modelling disability confidence and being so open about her hearing loss and navigating the space; the comment about how you've done your piece and it's o.k. to move on.</p>
<p>It was beautiful! Miigwetch Constance for sharing your wisdom and love and kindness</p>
<p>Not at this present time</p>
<p>Constance's honesty, integrity, and humility with a view point the person within the client is of utmost important. Thank You</p>
<p>How everybody introduced themselves and created a welcoming environment :)</p>

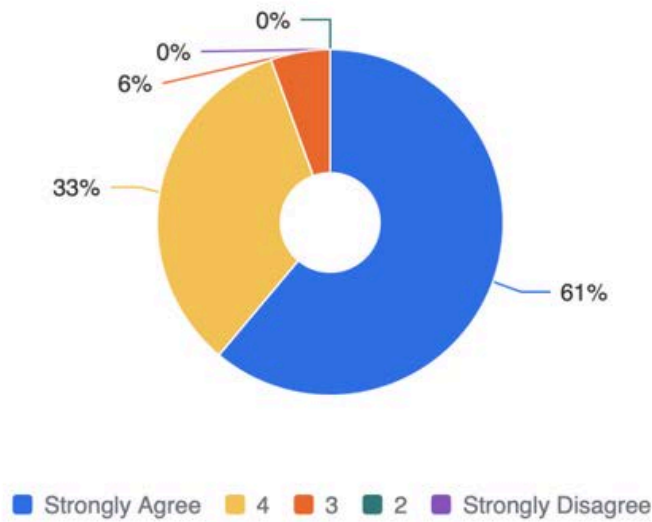
**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** The Land Remembers the Teachings of the Ancestors: Honouring Health Wellness Through Sacred Connection – Dr. Michelle Johnson Jennings. July 25, 2025

**Figure 74.** Members perception of webinar consistency with advertised abstract

**1. The content was as described in materials.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

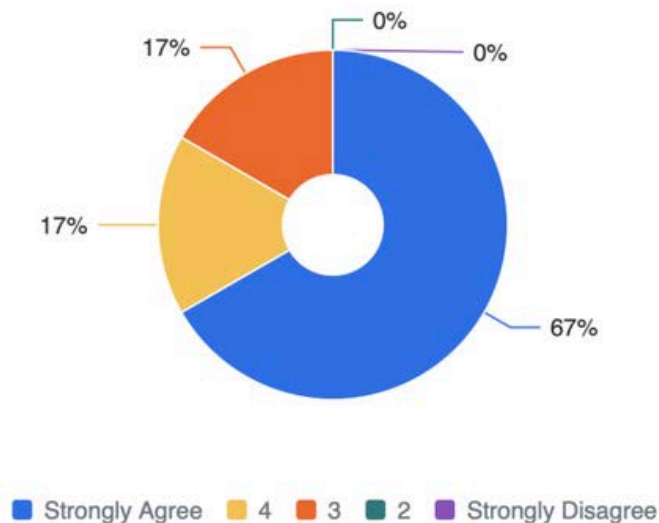


**Figure 75.** Members perception of webinar applicability to their work.

**2. The presentations were applicable to my work.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

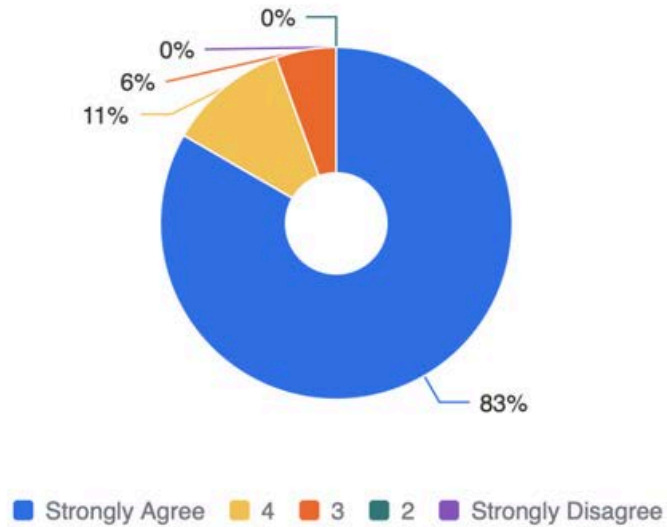


**Figure 76.** Members' reports of recommending webinar series to others.

**3. I will recommend this conference to others.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

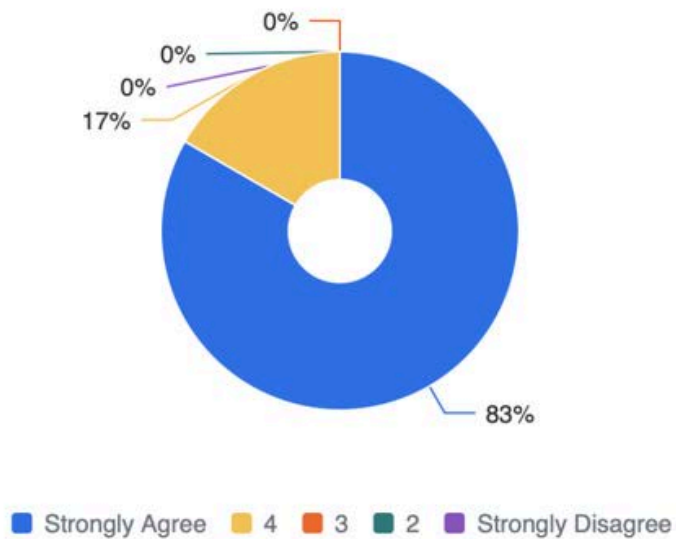


**Figure 77.** The webinar was well paced within the time

**4. The webinar was well paced within the time.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

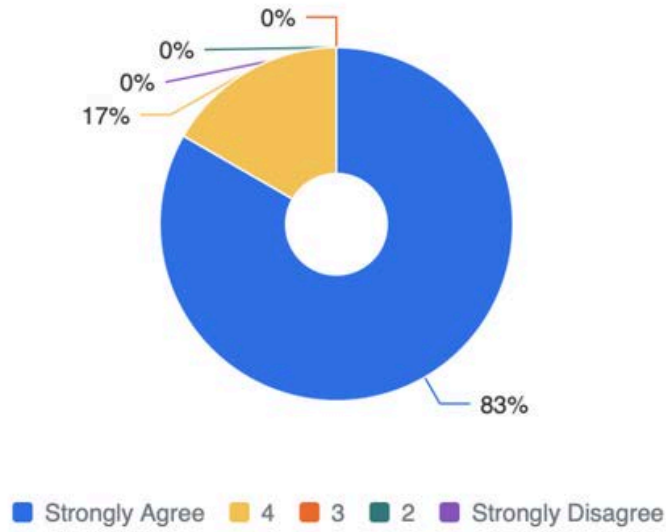


**Figure 78.** Members review of speaker communication skills.

**5. The speakers were good communicators.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

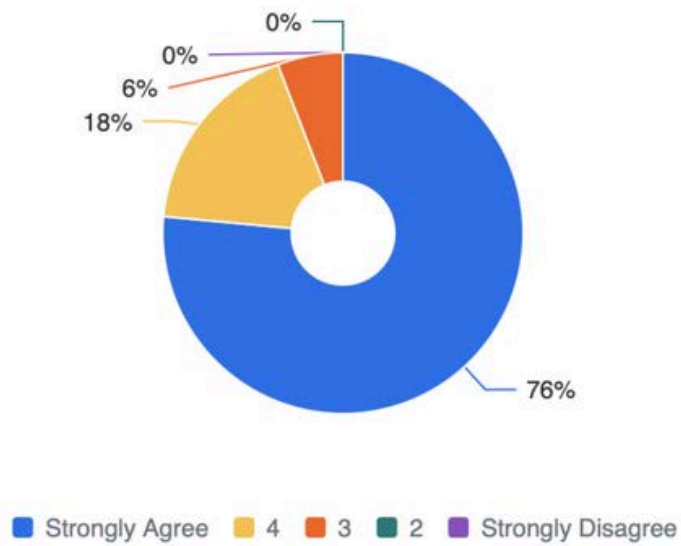


**Figure 79.** Members review of speaker organization.

**6. Material was presented in an organized manner.** (Rating scale)

17/18 (94%) answered · 1 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree

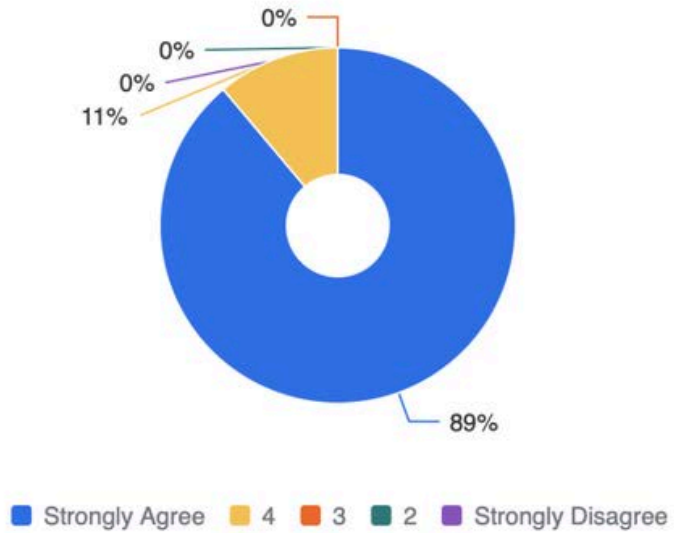


**Figure 80.** Members' review of speaker knowledgeability.

**7. The speakers were knowledgeable on the topics.** (Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



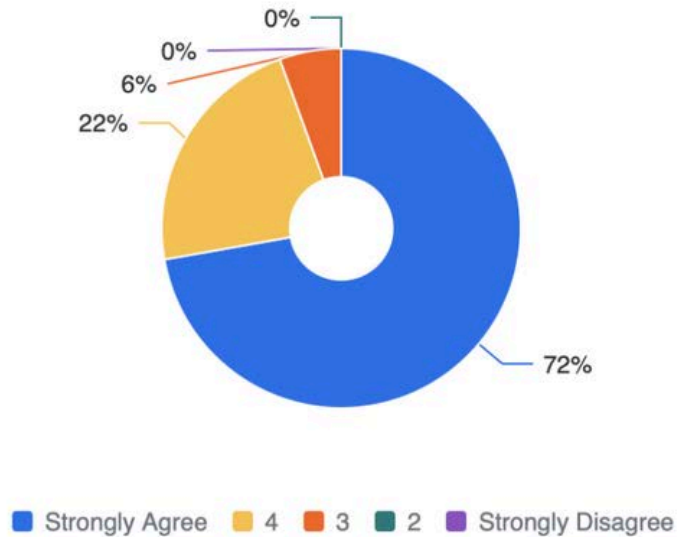
**Figure 81.** Members perception on attending follow-up sessions.

**8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up session on this same subject.**

(Rating scale)

18/18 (100%) answered · 0 skipped

5: Strongly Agree 1: Strongly Disagree



**Figure 82.** Responses and Feedback from members.

<b>What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the webinar? Do You have any suggestions for improvement?</b> 12 Responses
I love the focus on strengths-based healing approaches and restoring to decenter oppression and trauma. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and stories.
Was very very beneficial thanks for such a great session
I found the NAMHR 2025 Research Intensive workshop incredibly insightful and eye-opening as a public and mental health researcher. It greatly enhanced my understanding of Indigenous health research.
Loved the stories and Indigenous knowledge to medical connections
All the speakers were very respectful and passionate about their work. Thank you for this great opportunity to learn.
Knowledge and learning about the Native healing within our 7 Grandmother and mother earth
the information
This week has been amazing! The topic is difficult and at times heartbreaking, the speakers bring not only personal experiences but love, caring, and kindness to their research and professions. Thank
She was amazing. Are all of these talks available online, I missed a few ?
The notice for the webinar stated that it started at 1 p.m. but the actual link was for a different time and it started 10 minutes early from the link. Interesting about traditional medicine.
I found the storytelling connection to healing/ land-based healing to be really interesting. I feel looking to one's communities stories and to dreams to be a profound way of making sense of the world
The speakers were so knowledgeable, and appreciated opportunities for small group discussion and sharing with one another. I think I would have like small group discussion after each speaker..

**Ontario NEIHR Webinar:** Strengths-based Indigenous Health Research – Dr. Victoria O’Keefe. September 22, 2025

**No data available.**

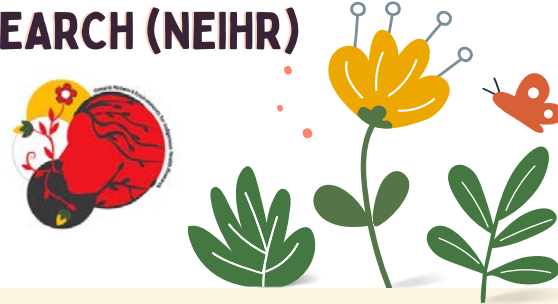
## Appendix B

### *Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin* Seasonal Newsletter Fall 2024 Edition

#### ONTARIO NETWORKS ENVIRONMENT FOR INDIGENOUS HEALTH RESEARCH (NEIHR) SEASONAL NEWSLETTER

#### Fall Edition

September 2024



#### **AANIIN, BOOZHOO, SEKON, WACHAY, HELLO:**

\* \* Welcome to the newest issue of the *Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin* seasonal newsletter, marking the seventh edition of our publication. In this issue, we will be highlighting the ongoing work taken place at the Ontario Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research. From research studies and presentations to community knowledge-sharing events with international partners, we have many accomplishments to share and celebrate.

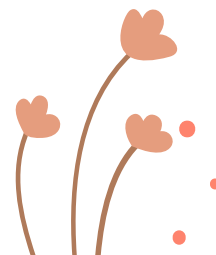
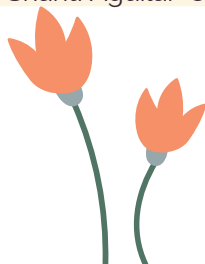
These events and publications have been empowering in numerous ways, and we are excited to continue our journey toward improving the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical health and well-being of individuals and communities. We also remain committed to honouring and respecting the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who generously share their teachings with us. \* \*

We sincerely hope you will enjoy reading about our progress and will continue to support us as we strive to make a positive impact. We extend our gratitude to all of our supporters and look forward to your continued engagement.

Chi Miigwetch,  
The ON-NEIHR Research Team

--

Darienne Russell, Research Assistant, ON NEIHR, Co-Editor  
Shanti Aguilar-Cardenas, Research Assistant, ON NEIHR, Co-Editor



# UPCOMING EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENTS



## DRUM CIRCLE

Led by spirit wind

First and Third Tuesday of Each Month,  
5-7 pm

Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health  
Invites you to traditional Drum Circles led  
by Spirit Wind.

- \*
- \*
- All are welcome!
- Bring your drum, or use the drums provided.  
Food and refreshments will be shared.

Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth  
Learning Lodge, 20 Willcocks St., Courtyard,  
University of Toronto).



## DROP-IN CEREMONY & SACRED FIRE

Led by Dr. Gokoomis (Grandmother)  
Jacqueline Lavallée and Dr. Hopi

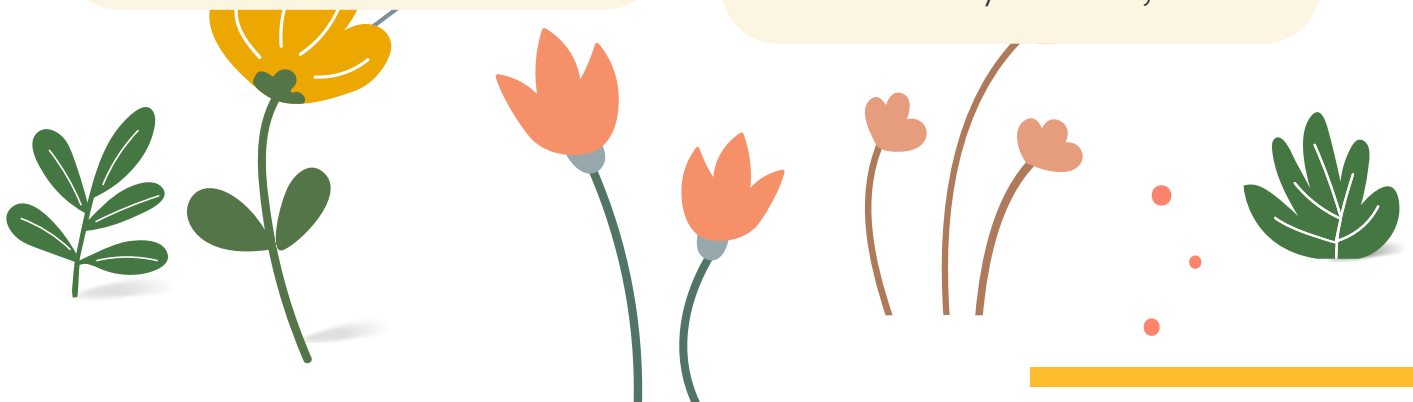
Every Wednesday  
6-8 pm (excluding August)

Join us for Ceremony, Medicine Teachings  
and Sacred Fire at the Mother Earth  
Learning Lodge!

This event is open to UofT staff, students,  
faculty, and community from all Four  
Directions (Everyone is welcome!)

Food and drinks will be available (apologies  
for any inconvenience for those with food  
sensitivities) \*

Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth  
Learning Lodge, 20 Willcocks St., Courtyard,  
University of Toronto).



# UPCOMING EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENTS

## HART HOUSE FARM SWEAT CEREMONY

September 26, October 24,

Community members joined Elders & Knowledge Keepers at Hart House farm for Sweat Ceremony.

For protocols, RSVP's and additional information please email [wbiih.dlspheutoronto.ca](mailto:wbiih.dlspheutoronto.ca) or [researchofficer.wiuh.dlspheutoronto.ca](mailto:researchofficer.wiuh.dlspheutoronto.ca)



# PAST EVENTS ON NEIHR WEBINARS



ON-NEIHR WEBINAR SERIES 2024-25

## CPR RACISM: A Guide for Health Care Providers to Address Racism in Health Care

\* with Dr. Holly Graham, PhD, R.D. Psychologist, RN, BA, BScN, MN, Associate Professor Psychiatry, University of Saskatchewan



Tues. June 18, 2024  
11 am - 12 pm



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
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ON-NEIHR WEBINAR SERIES 2024-25

## Working Towards Better Programs for First Nations Australians in Prison

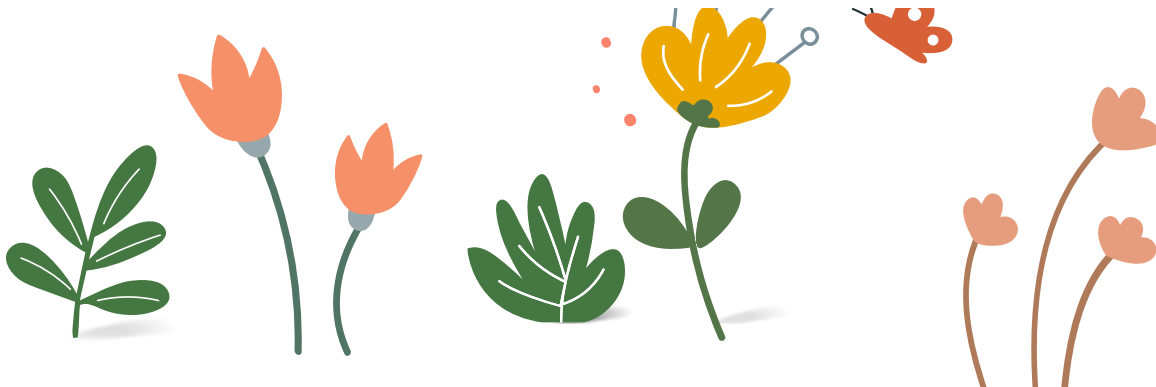
With Dr. Michael Doyle, Associate Professor, University of Sydney

Tuesday July 9, 2024 1 - 3 pm

Hybrid event online and in person  
with a light lunch at Waakebiness Institute 1 - 1:30  
and Presentation via Zoom 1:30 - 3 pm



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



# PAST EVENTS ON NEIHR WEBINARS

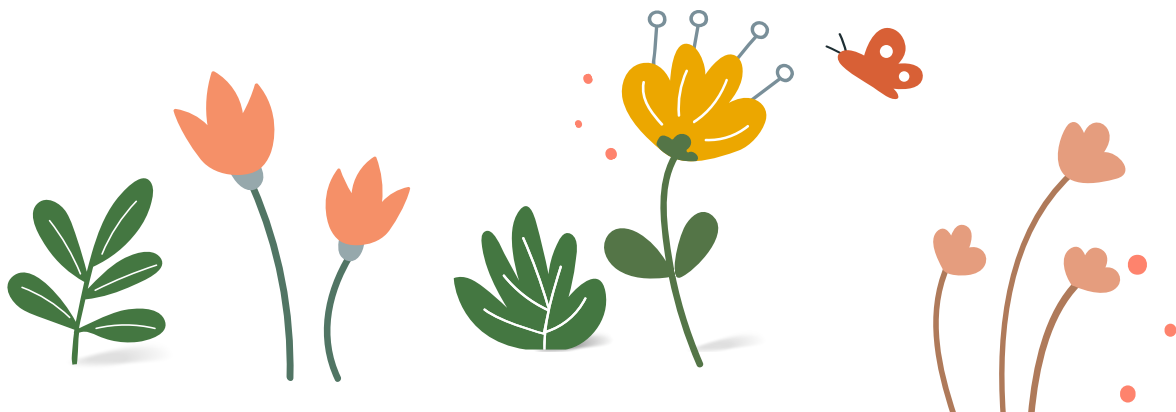
ON NEIHR, WIIH, and OISE Critical Health and Social Action Lab Present

## Māori Experiences of Pandemics: Learning from the past to strengthen pandemic preparedness among Indigenous populations

With Dr. Clive Aspin, Associate Professor at Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington, Aotearoa

**Tuesday 30 July 2024, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM EST**

\* Hybrid event, online via Zoom, and in-person at Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health  
*Light breakfast provided*

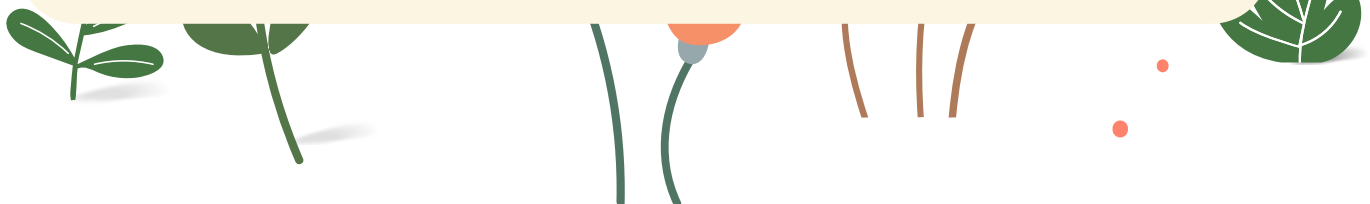


# ONTARIO NEIHR KNOWLEDGE SHARING EVENT JUNE 2024

This past June the Ontario NEIHR hosted a Knowledge Sharing Gathering at Hart House Farm for all NEIHR collaborators for the 2023-2024 year. The event's purpose was to engage in knowledge sharing where the group explored and discussed the successes and challenges faced within and across the NEIHR network. Theme leaders, Elders, community partners and students shared their research, what worked well and where improvements can be made as the NEIHR moves forward with the common goal of improving Indigenous health.



One of the NEIHR's international partners, Dr. Maile Taulii, and her team from Hawaii shared a traditional ceremonial Hula. Dr. Taulii works to remove barriers to accessing ceremony for her community, including revitalizing medicinal and traditional plants. Additionally, the two-day gathering hosted other cultural and spiritual activities such as a drumming circle, a Sweat Lodge Ceremony, and Talking Circles.



# ONTARIO NEIHR KNOWLEDGE SHARING EVENT JUNE 2024



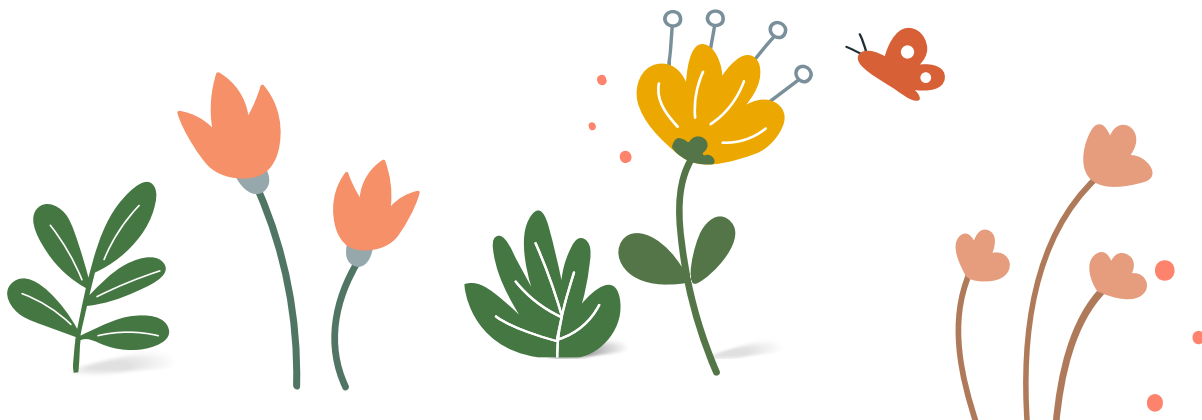
# PUBLICATIONS

Brown, M., Mirza, S., Lu, J., & Stewart, S. L. (2024). Walking Forward Together—The Next Step: Indigenous Youth Mental Health and the Climate Crisis. *Psych*, 6(1), 210-220.

Fournier, C., Mirza, S., Naidoo, K., Green, S., Cameron, S., Shirt, C., Stewart, S. and Gaetz, S. (2024, in press). Endaayaang: The Importance of Indigenizing Housing First for Youth. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*.

Ponton, S. J., Gabriel, M. D., Lu, J, Stewart, S., Strelbel, R., & Mirza, S. (2024). The mental health of Indigenous Peoples during the COVID-19 pandemic: A scoping review. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 9(2), 94-103.

**Networks Environment For Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR)**  
**Waakabiness Institute for Indigenous Health**  
 155 College Street, Fourth floor  
 Toronto, ON, M5T 3M7  
[ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca)



## Seasonal Newsletter Winter 2024 Edition

# AANIIN, BOOZHOO, SEKON, WACHAY, HELLO!

Welcome to our Winter 2025 Edition of the Ontario  
Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research  
Newsletter

The Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (ON NEIHR) team is thrilled to release the Winter 2025 edition of the Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin (Mother Earth's Gifts) newsletter. As we enter the new year we are taking the time to reflect on the incredible work of our team and celebrate their brilliance. From monthly webinars to publications, presentations, and various projects, there are many accomplishments to share with you and many more to look forward to.

Our team has worked intentionally and diligently through the summer and fall to prepare for a wonderful winter. Their work has been empowering, uplifting, and aligns with our journey towards ending illness and promoting the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being of Indigenous individuals and communities.

We humbly acknowledge that this work would not be possible without the generosity of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who graciously share their teachings with us. We work to honor them in all we do. We extend our gratitude to the land, all of our supporters, near and far, and look forward to your engagement this winter.

We are so glad you're here!

With humility,  
Chi Miigwetch,

Ariana Giulianelli, Research Assistant, Co Editor  
Brianna Kitchener, Research Assistant, Co Editor  
Shanti Aguilar-Cardenas, Research Assistant, Co Editor



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Ontario Networks Environment For Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR)  
Waakabiness Institute for Indigenous Health  
155 College Street, Fourth floor, Toronto, ON, M5T 3M7  
ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca

# Upcoming Events

## Indigenizing Health Symposium 2025: Being Safe With Our Culture Again April 23-24 2025, Hart House Farm

The ON NEIHR in partnership with the Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health (WIIH) at the University of Toronto and the Indigenous Mentorship Network (IMN) of Ontario is proud to hold the third land-based gathering at Hart House Farm. **This gathering will bring together a diverse group of keynote speakers and attendees, including Indigenous scholars, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, graduate students, health professionals, and community members.** Attendees will be able to participate in ceremony, and other cultural activities throughout the two-day event. The insights shared by the keynote speakers will pertain to the importance of policy grounded in Indigenous Knowledges and the processes of increasing the accessibility of policy work to Indigenous community. Scan the QR code below for more information about the event and our incredible keynote speakers. To request more information, please get in touch with [ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca).

### Keynote speakers:

**Dr. Wayne Clark, Inuglak Clark ᐅᐱᐱ<sup>a</sup> ᐃᐃᐃ<sup>b</sup> ᐃᐃᐃ<sup>c</sup>**  
**Dr. Janet Smylie**  
**Dr. Paul Whitinui**  
**Elder Françoise Paulette**  
**Kimberly Fairman**

Follow the QR code above to read more about our amazing keynote speakers and information about the event, or [click here](#) to register on Eventbrite



**Ospwagon - Pipe Ceremony**  
**January 30th, 2025, Hart House Farm**  
**February 27th, 2025, Hart House Farm**  
**March 27th, 2025, Hart House Farm**  
 Led by Traditional Knowledge Keeper  
 Clayton Shirt

SPARKS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES IN ACADEMIA

### OSPWAGON PIPE CEREMONY

led by  
Clayton Shirt

In-Person Event

Thursday	JAN	30	2025
Thursday	FEB	27	2025
Thursday	MAR	27	2025

1PM-5PM

Location available  
after RSVP

all U of T students, staff, and faculty are welcome  
wear appropriate winter clothing, skirt protocol recommended but optional  
food and drinks provided

for more information please contact  
[wiih.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:wiih.dlsph@utoronto.ca) or [ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca)

# Upcoming Events

## Monthly Webinar Series

The ON NEIHR offers monthly one-hour live webinars with Indigenous academics, health professionals, community members, Knowledge Keepers and Elders to speak on Indigenous community mental wellness topics. This series is guided by the desire for relationship-building between community organizations, students, and academics and is grounded in Indigenous community-driven research. The ON NEIHR research team acknowledges and honours the importance of our Indigenous community organizations and partners and strives to center cultural and spiritual frameworks.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025, 11 AM WITH DR. BRENDA RESTOULE**



**Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (ON NEIHR)**  
**Webinar Series and Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health**

Present  
**First Nations Mental Wellness Workforce: A Realist Review**  
With **Dr. Brenda Restoule**

Thursday 6 February 2025, 11 AM -12:00 PM EST



 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DELTA LINA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Online via Zoom

[Register here on Eventbrite](#)

## Past Events

### **Indigenous Treaty Education: Intercultural Dialogues**

Hosted by Red Pepper Spectacle Arts, Kensington Market Community Land Trust, and Kensington Market Business Improvement Area

*November 25th*, with Elder Clayton Shirt and Michael Brown

*November 29th*, with Dr. Gokoomis (Grandmother) Jacqueline Lavallée and Dr. Hopi Martin



[Watch on YouTube](#)

### **Indigenous Health Research Knowledge Exchange with the Poche Centre**

*May 29, 2024*

WIIH (DLSPH, University of Toronto) and the ON NEIHR participated in a knowledge exchange with the Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health. This knowledge exchange took place at The Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth Learning Lodge).



[Watch on YouTube](#)

# Past Events

## **Past Monthly Webinars:**

### **January**

Good Words are Medicine: Exploring the Psychological Impact of Forced Language Attrition and Possible Solutions with Louis Busch

[Watch on YouTube](#)

### **December**

What Justice Looks Like: Confronting Anti-Indigenous Racism and Building Safe and Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Systems for Indigenous People with Dr. Brenda Resoule

[Watch on YouTube](#)

### **November**

Approaches to Community Wellbeing: Anishininiwug Ajimoowin Animisewiinan – Mental Health and Substance Use Report among Sioux Lookout area First Nations community members with Angie Morris & Nghia Nguyen

[Watch on YouTube](#)

### **October**

Enhancing Children's Wellbeing Through Cultural Learnings in Schools with Dr. Cheryl Kickette-Tucker

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Journey to Reconciliation: Indigenous Homelessness Prevention with Dr. Cathy Fournier and Cohen Pinkoski

[Watch on YouTube](#)

### **September**

Indigenous Youth Mental Health – New Data and Directions with Dr. Eths (Suzanne) Stewart

[Watch on YouTube](#)



Scan the QR  
code to  
watch past  
webinars!



# Publications & Engagement

## Announcements

Dr. Mikaela Gabriel announced as Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Women's and Two-Spirit Mental Health and Homelessness

## Conference Presentations

### National Gathering of Graduate Students (NGGS)

**Aguilar-Cardenas, S. & Brown, M. (October, 2024).** The Role of Spiritual Ceremony in Indigenous Mental Health Education & Research: Student Experiences.

**Russell, D. (October, 2024).** Indigenous Youths Perspective on the Climate Crisis: Engaging Youth and Elders in Reserve Areas.



#### What is NGGS?

Every year there is a national meeting of Indigenous graduate students who are carrying out Indigenous health and wellness research. The NGGS is an opportunity for students, academics, and community to connect, collaborate and participate in cultural activities.



## Conference Presentations

### Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research Conference (NAMHR) Indigenous Mental Health Research in Canada: Past, Present, Future

**Aguilar-Cardenas, S., Brown, M., Mirza, S., Gabriel, M., Pinkoski, C., & Shirt C. (August, 2024).** The Role of Spiritual Ceremony in Indigenous Mental Health Education & Research: Elder & Student Experiences

**Mirza, S. & McDonald, C. (August, 2024).** Impacts of Climate Change on Indigenous Young Adult's Mental Health.

**Fournier, C., Mirza, S., Naidoo, K., Green, S., Shirt, C., Cameron, S., Stewart, E., & Gaetz, S. (August, 2024).** Endaayaang: The Importance of "Indigenizing" Housing First for Youth.

**Stewart, E. (August, 2024).** Journey of Indigenous Mental Health through Research.



## Journal Articles & Reports

**Moran, P., Chandler, A., Dudgeon, P., Kirtley, O. J., Knipe, D., Pirkis, J., Sinyor, M., Allister, R., Ansloos, J., Ball, M. A., Chan, L. F., Darwin, L., Derry, K. L., Hawton, K., Heney, V., Hetrick, S., Li, A., Machado, D. B., McAllister, E., ... Christensen, H. (2024).** The Lancet Commission on self-harm. *The Lancet (British Edition)*, 404(10461), 1445-1492. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)01121-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)01121-8)

**Naidoo, K., Fournier, C., Mirza, S., Rumboldt, J., Cameron, S., Green, S., Shirt, C., Stewart, S., Gaetz, S.** Chapter 4: Endaayaang Indigenous Housing First for Youth: Exploring Service Provision and Planning During the Global Pandemic in Schiff, R., Wilkinson, A., Cullingham, S., & Buccieri, K. (Eds). (2024). *Pandemic preparedness and homelessness: International lessons from COVID-19*. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

**Stewart, E., Mirza, S., Brown, M. & Aguilar-Cardenas, S. (September, 2024).** Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (ON NEIHR) Annual Year 4 Report.

**Waakebiness Administration. (November, 2024).** Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health Annual Activities Report.

Check out this new publication on the Lancet Commission on Self-Harm. This report is the culmination of five years of international collaboration, featuring contributions from ON NEIHR members who are a part of the Theme Group: Suicide Prevention, Life Promotion, and Complex Crisis Response, including co-author, Dr. Jeffrey Ansloos.

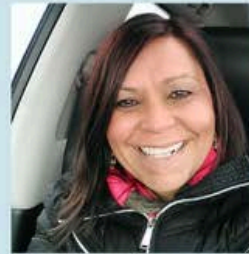
The commission explicitly addresses concerns related to Indigenous Peoples and offers recommendations for governments, media, service delivery systems, wider society, and research funding bodies to better meet the needs of Indigenous communities in Canada.

## Pihtikwê: Visits with First Nations Psychologists

We are honoured to feature the podcast series **pihtikwê**, which means “come on in” and “welcome” in Cree. Hosted by Dr. Brenda Restoule, Dr. Holly Graham, and Dr. Alanaise Ferguson, the **pihtikwê** podcast series is a product of their collaborative work in the ON NEIHR Theme Group: Healing from Trauma and Addictions.

The **pihtikwê** podcast centres the voices of Indigenous psychologists and leaders working in the mental wellness field. Through conversations they share their stories to promote collective learning and mobilize Indigenous knowledges related to trauma repair, recovery from addictions, and community survivance. Discussions include challenges and successes in navigating and working within systems of care, and strength-based and cultural approaches to healing for Indigenous communities.

[CLICK HERE](#) to listen to Episode 9 - Therapy Begins and Ends with Ceremony with Dr. Etsi Stewart



**Dr. Brenda Restoule is a member of Dokis First Nation, Clinical Psychologist, and CEO of First Peoples Wellness Circle.**



**Dr. Holly Graham is a member of Thunderchild First Nation, Psychologist, RN, and Associate Professor at the College of Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Saskatchewan.**



**Dr. Alanaise Ferguson is an Indigenous scientist-practitioner and educator in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan.**

**Happy New Year! We hope your holidays were filled with love and warmth!**



**To extended network of kin and research communities,**

We want to express our deepest gratitude for our partners and the work done together throughout 2024. Working with our communities continues to be a great privilege and source of happiness.

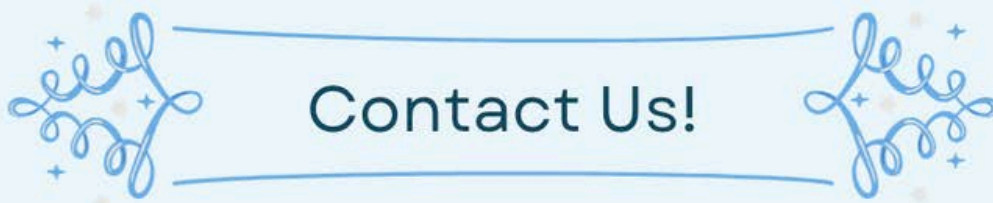
As we move into 2025, we are excited to continue the journey together in creating meaningful relationships and supporting community based research. We are teeming with excitement and anticipation of the upcoming opportunities that 2025 will hold. We look forward to sharing some of those moments with you.

All the best to you and your families this 2025!

**Mahsi Cho/Miigwetch/Marsi/Nia;wen/Thank you**

**ON NEIHR Research Team**





### Social Media

Keep Up to Date With Us! Follow Our Social Media Channels for the Latest News & Updates.

Facebook: [@NEIHRON2020](#) | [@wbiih](#)

Instagram: [@neihr\\_on](#) | [@wbiih](#)

Linkedin: [@Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health, University of Toronto](#)

Youtube: [@Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health](#)

Website:

<https://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/institutes/wiih/research-initiatives/network-environments-for-indigenous-health-research-neihr-ontario/>

### Email

[\*\*ontaroneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca\*\*](mailto:ontaroneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca)

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## Seasonal Newsletter Spring 2025 Edition

Spring 2025

Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research

# SPRING NEWSLETTER



## Aaniin, Boozhoo, Sekon, Wachay, Hello

The Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR) at the Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health (WIIH) looks forward to sharing the Spring 2025 edition of the Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin (Mother Earth's Gifts) newsletter.

We hope you enjoy a snapshot of our work and collaborations over the course of the last few months. We are honoured to have had the opportunity for profound Knowledge Exchange at several of our events, and look forward to welcoming you to more this spring and summer.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to the land, the waters, and all our relations who make this journey possible. Chi miigwetch to the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who walk alongside us, and to our esteemed readers and partners, for your unwavering support. We are truly delighted to have you join us this season.

With humility and appreciation,  
 Brianna Kitchener, Co-Editor, Research Assistant  
 Taylor Faulk, Co-Editor, Research Assistant  
 Shanti Aguilar-Cardenas, Co-Editor, Research Officer & Ontario NEIHR Coordinator



Ontario Network Environments For Indigenous Health Research  
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[ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca)

# Upcoming Events and Webinars

Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health Invites you

## Drum Circle Led by Spirit Wind

**Askaakamigokwewigamig**  
(Mother Earth Learning Lodge,  
20 Willcocks St., Courtyard,  
University of Toronto)

May 7 & 21  
June 4 & 18  
July 2 & 16  
August 6 & 20  
September 3 & 17  
5 – 7 pm

All are welcome! Bring your own drum, or use the drums provided. Food and refreshments will be shared.  
For more information scan the QR code or contact: [wbiih.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:wbiih.dlsph@utoronto.ca)





**Drum Circle Led by Spirit Wind**  
The **Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health** invites you to join them on the **first and third Wednesday of the month** at the *Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth Teaching Lodge, 20 Willcocks St., Courtyard, University of Toronto)*. All are welcome! Bring your drum or use the ones provided. Food and refreshments are provided.

Click this [link](#) or scan the QR code to register



## Indigenizing Health Symposium 2025 II Special Lecture

Part of 2025 Annual Indigenizing Health Symposium  
at ON NEIHR - WIIH/University of Toronto

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Joseph Gone, Harvard University**  
**Ceremony by Knowledge Keeper Clayton Shirt**

Friday 23 May 2025 9:30am to 12:00pm EDT

Register on Eventbrite

Hosted at Askaakamigokwewigamig  
Mother Earth Learning Lodge at  
WIIH/University of Toronto




**Dr. Joseph Gone –  
Indigenizing Health  
Symposium  
Continuation Special  
Lecture**

**Register here!**



The Ontario NEIHR and WIIH invite you to attend a continuation of the 2025 Annual Indigenizing Health Symposium with an instalment from **Dr. Joseph Gone**. A hybrid event, hosted in person at *Askaakamigokwewigamig Mother Earth Learning Lodge (20 Wilcocks St., Toronto, ON M4S 1C6)* and online via Zoom. A light breakfast will be provided and Ceremony led by **Knowledge Keeper Clayton Shirt**. Learn more about this event and register by clicking on the link below or scanning the QR code.

**[Eventbrite for Dr. Joseph Gone Special Lecture](#)**

SPRING 2025

# Past Webinars

## April

Michael Mahkwa Auksi PhD (c)

The Time Traveller: Historical and Contemporary Understanding of Indigenous Education and Physical Health Determinants

[Watch Now on Youtube](#)

## March

Carol Hopkins, CEO of Thunderbird Partnership Foundation

Model of Care for Substance Use

[Watch Now on Youtube](#)

## February

Dr. Brenda Restoule

First Nations Mental Wellness Workforce:  
A Realist Review

[Watch Now on Youtube](#)

## January

Louis Busch, M.Ed., BCBA, RBA (Ont.), RP  
Good Words are Medicine: Exploring the  
Psychological Impact of Forced Language  
Attrition and Possible Solutions

[Watch Now on Youtube](#)

Click this [link](#) to catch up on  
all our past webinars.



SPRING 2025

# Publications & Presentations

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Brown, M. & Shirt, C. (2025). Impacts of climate crisis on Indigenous young adults mental health. Guest Lecture. Faculty of Global Health, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada (Invited Speakers).

Gabriel, M. D. & Stewart, E. (2025). Indigenizing Psychology for Systems Change: Reviewing the Need and Reclaiming Approaches for Indigenous Mental Health Training and Interventions. Canadian Psychological Association, 86th Annual Conference, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. June 12-14, 2025.

Gabriel, M. D. (2025). (Heal)th & Wellbeing for Indigenous Youth Navigating Homelessness: Culture, Community, & Spiritual Cultivation. Making the Shift Youth Homelessness Prevention Conference, Toronto, ON, Canada.

Gabriel, M. D. (January 4 2025). *Apaja'si*: Ceremony and wellbeing for Indigenous people in Western academia. Hawaii International Conference on Education. Honolulu, Hawaii.

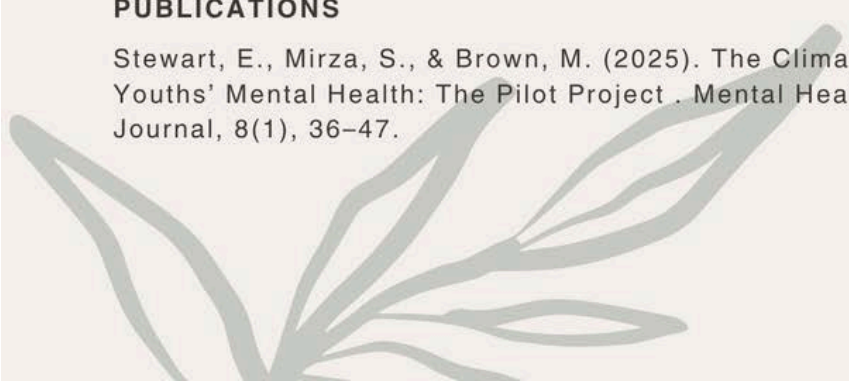
Mirza, S., Brown, M., & Stewart, E. (2025). Impacts of climate crisis on Indigenous young adults mental health. 2025 Indigenous Health Research Symposium. Memorial University, Faculty of Medicine.

Stewart, E., & Mirza, S. (2025). Impacts of climate crisis on Indigenous young adults mental health. Hawaii International Conference on Education. Honolulu, Hawaii.

Stewart, E., & Shirt, C. (2025). Mental health impacts of climate change on Indigenous youth in Canada: Implications for education and beyond. Hawaii International Conference on Education. Honolulu, Hawaii.

## PUBLICATIONS

Stewart, E., Mirza, S., & Brown, M. (2025). The Climate Crisis and Indigenous Youths' Mental Health: The Pilot Project . *Mental Health: Global Challenges Journal*, 8(1), 36-47.



# Highlights

## Indigenizing Health Symposium: Being Safe with Our Culture Again April 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> 2025

The **Ontario NEIHR** and the **WIIH** in partnership with the **Indigenous Mentorship Network** hosted the annual land-based **Indigenizing Health Symposium at Hart House Farm**. The event was open to academics, health professionals, students, and community members to share knowledge and foster dialogue and collaboration around Indigenous health and cultural safety.

The event brought together a diverse group of keynote speakers who presented on Indigenous perspectives on health. Attendees engaged in collective dialogue about Indigenous public health, the role of traditional and cultural healing practices, partnerships, ethics, and health policy and administration. Attendees participated in ceremonies and drumming circles while engaging with Indigenous scholars, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and students.

## Message from symposium attendee

*"I wanted to say miigwetch and extend my deep gratitude to all the organizers, helpers, caterers, fire keepers, singers, drummers, and community who made this symposium possible. It was incredibly nourishing to be surrounded by so many community members who are actively working towards creating safer and more intentional spaces and places for people to seek care and connect. It was inspiring and grounding to hear all the good work that is being done in and with community, and created space for my own reflections on how to deepen how I exist in relation with one another.*

*I am deeply grateful for the generosity and care that was shared, through energy, medicine and ceremony, and stories." ~ Calista Barber*

## Key Note Speakers

- **Dr. Michael Hart**, Fisher River Cree Nation in central Turtle Island. Vice-Provost of Indigenous Engagement and Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at University of Calgary.
- **Dr. Janet Smylie**, Métis woman with roots in the prairies, and a member of the Ontario Métis Nation. She is a Family Physician, and Research Scientist at St. Michael's hospital, Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute and Director of the Well Living House Applied Research Centre. She holds a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Advancing Generative Health Services for Indigenous Populations, and is a Professor at the University of Toronto at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health and the Department of Family and Community Medicine, at the Faculty of Medicine.
- **Dr. Paul Whitinui** (he/him), Maori from the Confederation of Tribes in the Far North of Aotearoa New Zealand (Ngā Puhī, Te Aupōuri, and Ngāti Kuri) on his father's side and Irish, French, English and Welsh on his mother's side. He is the Special Advisor to the Vice President Indigenous, and a Professor in the School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education at University of Victoria, BC, Canada.
- **Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel**, Italian-Mi'kmaq is a Psychologist, Scientist, Professor and auntie. She holds a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Women & Two-Spirit Mental Health and Homelessness, and is a Research Scientist at Unity Health Toronto across Well Living House & MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions.



# Highlights

## 23rd Annual Hawaii International Conference on Education January 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> 2025

Several members of the Ontario NEIHR team attended and presented at a global conference where academics and professionals from all over the world come to exchange a diverse range of knowledge. Ontario NEIHR member Dr. Gabriel presented on ceremony and wellbeing for Indigenous students, and Drs. Stewart & Mirza presented on the impacts of the climate crisis on Indigenous youth mental health with Ontario NEIHR community partner, Ms. Gabriella Caruso from Red Pepper Spectacle Arts. Dr. Maile Tualii and her Hula Halau hosted a sunrise ceremony and hula dancing, chants, and knowledge exchange for Ontario NEIHR members.



[Click here to learn more](#)

## Prevention of Indigenous Youth Homelessness February 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> 2025

Members from the Waakebiness team, Knowledge Keeper Clayton Shirt, Michael Brown, Dr. Ethsí (Suzanne) Stewart, Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel, and Ontario NEIHR member Dr. Cathy Fournier, attended the Prevention of Youth Homelessness International Conference in Toronto.

Knowledge Keeper Clayton Shirt provided attendees with a spiritual opening, sharing traditional teachings and Michael Brown shared a hand drum song. They both spent their time in the healing room, providing cultural and spiritual support throughout the two day event.



[Click here to learn more](#)

## Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health 10th Anniversary, March 6<sup>th</sup> 2025

This season the Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We were able to spend time in circle with community partners, students, the WIH team, and Institute donors. The team showcased the accomplishments of WIH, from the development of the Indigenous Health stream in the Masters of Public Health program at Dalla Lana School of Public Health, to receiving over \$27 million in research grants and awards. Everyone took a moment to reflect on the history of WIH, celebrated the collaborations and collective efforts that have brought us to where we are today.



SPRING 2025

# CONTACT US

## Follow Us On Social Media!

For the latest news, upcoming events and other updates!

**Facebook:** @ [Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health](#)

**Instagram:** @[neihr\\_on](#) | @[wbiih](#)

**LinkedIn:** @ [Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health, University of Toronto](#)

**Youtube:** @[Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health](#)

**Website:** [Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health](#)

Email us [ontaroneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:ontaroneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca)

*Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research  
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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

# Seasonal Newsletter Fall 2025 Edition

Fall 2025

Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research

## Fall Newsletter



### Aaniin, Boozhoo, Sekon, Wachay, Hello

The Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (ON NEIHR) at the Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health (WIIH) welcomes you to the Fall 2025 edition of the Shkaakaamikwe gchi twaa miigwewin (Mother Earth's Gifts) newsletter.

We are grateful for the lands, waters, and relationships that make our work possible. Chi miigwetch to the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, readers, and partners for their guidance and support.

As autumn begins, we invite you to explore recent highlights and upcoming plans, and we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

With gratitude,

Hugo Purdon, Co-Editor, Research Assistant

William O'Hare-Rennie, Co-Editor, Research Assistant

Shanti Aguilar-Cardenas, Co-Editor, Research Officer & Ontario NEIHR Coordinator



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Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health

Ontario Network Environments For Indigenous Health Research

Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health

155 College Street, Suite 400, Toronto, ON, M5T 3M7

[ontarioncihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:ontarioncihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca)

# Upcoming Events

## Drum Circle Led by Spirit Wind

The Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health invites you to join them on the first and third Wednesday of the month at the *Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth Teaching Lodge, 20 Willcocks St., Courtyard, University of Toronto)*. All are welcome! Bring your drum or use one available on site. Food and refreshments will be served.

[Click this Link to register and for Fall Schedule](#)

## Lodge Learning and Ceremony with Dr. Deb Danard

The Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health welcomes you to join Dr. Deb Danard at the *Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth Teaching Lodge, 20 Willcocks St., Courtyard, University of Toronto)* for teachings and ceremony. These are held most weeks, even throughout the winter, with no need to sign up! Food and refreshments are provided.

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SHARING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES IN ACADEMIA  
Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health invites you

## Drum Circle Led by Spirit Wind

First and Third Wednesdays  
at  
**Askaakamigokwewigamig (Mother Earth Teaching Lodge)**  
20 Willcocks  
(New College Courtyard)  
Toronto, ON M5S 1C6

Wednesday October 1  
Wednesday October 15  
Wednesday November 5  
Wednesday November 19  
Wednesday December 3  
Wednesday December 17

All are welcome! Bring your own drum, or use the drums provided. Food and refreshments will be shared. For more information scan the QR code or contact: [wbiih.dlsp@utoronto.ca](mailto:wbiih.dlsp@utoronto.ca)




SHARING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES IN ACADEMIA  
Hosted by WIIH, and ON NEIHR

## Lodge Teaching and Ceremony

Led by Elder Dr. Deb Danard & Knowledge Keeper

Life Teachings (Teaching Lodge)  
Tuesday, September 23 (5-7 pm)  
Thursday, October 16 (11 am-2 pm)  
Tuesday October 21 (5-7 pm)  
Thursday November 13 (11 am-2 pm)  
Tuesday November 18 (11 am- 2 pm)

Weekly at  
**Askaakamigokwewigamig**  
(Mother Earth Learning Lodge  
20 Willcocks St., Courtyard,  
University of Toronto)

Full Moon Ceremony (Teaching Lodge)  
Tuesday October 7 (5-7pm)  
Tuesday November 4 (5-7 pm)  
Thursday December 4 (5-7 pm)




For more information please contact:  
[researchofficer.wih.dlsp@utoronto.ca](mailto:researchofficer.wih.dlsp@utoronto.ca) or [wbiih.dlsp@utoronto.ca](mailto:wbiih.dlsp@utoronto.ca)  
This event is open to Indigenous community members.



# Upcoming Events



**Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research  
Pop Up Research-to-Policy Event  
10:00am to 4:00pm, 20 November 2025  
155 College Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor Lounge, Toronto, ON M5T 3M7**

This Research-to-Policy Forum is an in-person **drop-in event** at the University of Toronto where research findings from across the CIHR Funded Ontario Network Environments in Indigenous Health Research (ON NEIHR) will be presented and discussed with the aim of informing healthy Indigenous mental health policy decisions.

The **intended audience** is policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and representatives from urban and rural, and reserve First Nations, Metis, and Inuit governments and organizations, as well as municipal, provincial, and federal settler governments.

[Register on Eventbrite](#)



From 2019 to currently the ON NEIHR has produced hundreds of research results in:

- **Land-Based and Planetary Health Solutions;**
- **Healing from Trauma and Reducing Addictions;**
- **Indigenous Life Promotion and Complex Crisis Support (for suicide)**
- **Indigenous Mental Health Knowledges Translation**
- **Indigenous Homelessness/Houselessness Prevention**



## Event Schedule

**10:00am to 3:00pm**

20+ research project booths for drop-in knowledge sharing with researchers.  
*Spirit Wind Drummers in attendance.*

**3:00pm to 4:00pm**

Sharing Circle to discuss knowledge translation and policy. Led by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Youth

*Hot and cold beverages will be provided all day, and a light breakfast and lunch.*

For more information please contact: [ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca](mailto:ontarioneihr.dlsph@utoronto.ca) or [suzanne.stewart@utoronto.ca](mailto:suzanne.stewart@utoronto.ca)


# Upcoming Webinars

**Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research Webinar Series at the Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health**

**Presents**


*Policy & Practice Prescriptions from the People: Healing & Health for Indigenous Peoples Accessing Primary Care Settings*

**With Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel, PhD**



Tuesday 21 October 2025  
11:00am - 12:00pm EDT

[Online via Zoom](#)  
[Register on Eventbrite](#)



[Register Here](#)

**Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research Webinar Series at the Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health**

**Presents**

**Indigenous Youth Mental Health & The Climate Crisis: Recent Findings and Next Steps**

**With Sabina Mirza, Michael Brown & The Climate Crisis Team**

Tuesday 25 November 2025  
12:00PM - 1:00PM EDT

Online via Zoom  
[Register on Eventbrite](#)




[Register Here](#)



# NEW COURSE

## COMING SOON TO DLSPH!

### **Course Title:**

**Justice For The Next Generation: Global Climate Health, Youth Homelessness, Diversity and Equity**

**When: Winter 2026**

**Who can register: Graduate Students ONLY**

**Seats are Limited!**

For more information, please email the course director  
Dr. Sabina Mirza at [sabina.mirza@utoronto.ca](mailto:sabina.mirza@utoronto.ca)



# Past Events

## Melbourne Poche Group Visit



The Waakebiness Institute warmly welcomed the Melbourne Poche Group—an Indigenous-led initiative from the Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health that supports emerging Indigenous health leaders and researchers. The visit began with a Welcoming Ceremony, followed by a Yarning Circle and a shared community dinner. These gatherings created a meaningful space to exchange knowledge, experiences, and diverse perspectives. It was a powerful opportunity to build friendships and strengthen professional relationships grounded in culture, respect, and collaboration.

## 2025 Na-Me-Res Pow Wow

The Waakebiness Institute held an information booth at the Na-Me-Res Pow Wow & Indigenous Arts Festival. The team welcomed everyone to the stand and shared about all the amazing research projects and programs hosted by the WIH! It was an incredible opportunity to make connections with new people and support Indigenous culture and community.

Fall 2025

# Past Webinars

## May -Hybrid Event

Joseph P. Gone (Aaniiih-Gros Ventre)

American Indian Traditional Healing: Expressions of  
Alter-Native Psy-ence

[Watch Now on YouTube](#)



## June

Dr. Cornelia (Nel) Wieman

Achieving Greater Cultural Safety in Mental Health  
Services through Research and Traditional Knowledge

[Watch Now on YouTube](#)

## July

Constance Simmonds, Traditional Knowledge  
Keeper

Health and Wellness Teachings

[Watch Now on YouTube](#)

Dr. Michelle Johnson-Jennings

The Land Remembers the Teachings of the  
Ancestors

[Watch Now on YouTube](#)



Click this **link** to catch up on  
all our past webinars.

# Highlights

## NAMHR 2025 Research Intensive

The Ontario NEIHR, in collaboration with the Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research (NAMHR), hosted the Research Intensive Workshop at the WIIH. The workshop was a collection of presenters discussing Indigenous Health, Medicine and Decolonialism. The event was open to everyone, and a certificate was awarded to those who attended all four days!

The event was an amazing opportunity to learn and discuss with colleagues. With a variety of speakers, participants gained diverse perspectives on Indigenous health and decolonial practices.

## About NAMHR

In 2001, the NAMHR was developed as a collaboration between Indigenous communities and academic researchers. The network aimed to expand its research capabilities through additional pilot projects, research training and networking.

The NAMHR organizes many activities, workshops, and conferences to obtain feedback on recent research. These events include the yearly NAMHR Research Intensive.



Poster design by Tina Liu

Click this [link](#) or scan the QR code to learn more about NAMHR





Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research  
**NAMHR**  
 welcomes a **new lead** &  
 is joining the **Ontario NEIHR!**  
*After celebrating 25 years of supporting Indigenous research, education, and training in mental health, the NAMHR is joining the ON NEIHR network with a new lead!*  
**Meet Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel, C.Psych**  
*Italian-Mi'kmaq psychologist, scientist, professor, and auntie*

- Dr. Gabriel holds a Canada Research Chair in **Indigenous Women & Two-Spirit Mental Health and Homelessness**.
- She is a Research Scientist at Unity Health Toronto with Well Living House & MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions.
- Her clinical and research efforts seek to provide culturally-centered, trauma-focused, and ceremonially enriched care for Indigenous Peoples in urban settings navigating housing, healing, and health.


Together with the ON-NEIHR, Dr. Gabriel continues to cultivate rich roots across Turtle Island, focusing on:

- ☞ Indigenizing health and psychology
- ☞ Uplifting and protecting Indigenous voices in mental health research
- ☞ Supporting culture, healing, and community to allow us to flourish.

What's next?

- ☞ Expanding our listserv to stay connected
- ☞ Launching our social media presence
- ☞ Hosting our annual Research Intensive Workshop  
— this Summer 2025!

QR code and [namhr.ca](http://namhr.ca) logo are also present.



Poster design by Tina Liu

## 2025 Tâpwewin Symposium

June 11-13 2025

Members of the Ontario NEIHR team and from 2-Spirited People of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nation attended the Tâpwewin Symposium conference hosted by the University of Victoria. The event brought diverse speakers and aimed to address Indigenous-specific racism in the academy.

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## New NAMHR Lead - Dr. Mikaela Gabriel

The NAMHR is excited to join the Ontario NEIHR in welcoming Dr. Mikaela D. Gabriel as the new lead! Dr. Gabriel is a Research Scientist at Unity Health Toronto and holds a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Women & Two-Spirit Mental Health and Homelessness. She brings a wealth of experience and vision, with many upcoming plans to grow NAMHR and advance its goals. Together with the ON-NEIHR, NAMHR remains committed to supporting Indigenous health, culture, community, and healing.

**Tâpwewin:**  
 Confronting Indigenous-Specific Racism in the Academy

WEDNESDAY to FRIDAY  
 JUNE 11 to 13, 2025  
 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

University of Victoria, BC

Internationally Renowned Scholars  
 Gathering to Discuss Indigenous-specific racism in the Academy and Policies for Change

To register: [upwewin@uvic.ca](http://upwewin@uvic.ca)



Logos for sponsors: SSHRC CRSH, University of Victoria, and others.

Poster design by Dr. Marlyn Bennett

# The Work of Dr. Mikaela Gabriel

## Dr. Mikaela Gabriel, NAMHR Workshop and Presenter & Lead

- Gabriel, M. (2025, July). *NAMHR introduction to Indigenous mental health research & applications* [Workshop]. National Summer Research Workshop Intensive, Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research & Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- Gabriel, M. (2025, July). *Applied Indigenous mental health research methods* (with J. Smylie) [Workshop]. National Summer Research Workshop Intensive, Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research & Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- Gabriel, M. (2025, July). Exploring & establishing safety for Indigenous women & 2-Spirit peoples [Workshop]. National Summer Research Workshop Intensive, Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research & Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.

## Research Publications

- Gabriel, M. D., Gonsalves, M., & Liu, T. (2025). *Bridges and Barriers: Exploring Healthcare Access and Services for Indigenous Peoples*. Wellesley Institute. ISBN: 978-1-998595-08-2
- Giulianelli, A., & Gabriel, M. D. (2025). *Supporting Agency, Facing Equity: An Environmental Scan of Indigenous Cultural Safety Training for Primary Care Providers*. Wellesley Institute. ISBN: 978-1-998595-09-9

## Executive summaries for policy makers

- Gabriel, M. D., Giulianelli, A., & Noordermeer, J. (2025). *Supporting Agency, Facing Equity: An environmental scan of Indigenous cultural safety training for primary care providers*. Executive summary.
- Gabriel, M. D., Gonsalves, M., Liu, T., & Noordermeer, J. (2025). *Bridges and barriers: Exploring healthcare access and services for Indigenous Peoples*. Executive summary.

# Guest Lectures

## Guest Lectures:

- Auksi, M. (2025, June 17). *Perspectives on Indigenous physical wellness and education health determinants* [Guest lecture]. Master of Public Health, Indigenous Stream, University of Toronto.
- Auksi, M. & Brown, M. (2025, July 7). *What it means to practice cultural safety*. Master of Public Health, Indigenous Stream (MPH-IH). Guest lecture at Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.
- Brown, M. & Shirt, C. (2025, March 4). *Impacts of climate crisis on Indigenous young adults mental health*. Global Health (CHL5700), Dalla Lana School of Public Health. Guest lecture at Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.
- Gabriel, M. & Stewart, S. *Indigenous Mental Health*, Invited Speaker for Mental Health & The Law LAW266H1S, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto, 4 March 2025.
- Mirza, S., & Brown, M., (May 29, 2025). Guest Lecture. *Impact of Climate Crisis on Indigenous Youth Mental Health*. Indigenous Health and Social Policy (land-based) course, Master of Public Health - Indigenous Health, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Canada.

# Conferences Presentations and Workshops

## Conference Presentation:

- Gabriel, M., & Stewart S. (2025) *Indigenizing Psychology for Systems Change: Reviewing the Need and Reclaiming Approaches for Indigenous Mental Health Training and Interventions*. Paper presentation at The Canadian Psychology Association 86th Annual National Convention. St. John's, NL.
- Mirza, S., Brown, M., & Stewart, E. (2025, March 27). *Impacts of climate crisis on Indigenous young adults mental health* [Conference Presentation]. 2025 Indigenous Health Research Symposium. Memorial University, Faculty of Medicine.
- Stewart, S. (2025, May). *Indigenous Psychology*. Keynote Panel. Inaugural Conference on Critical Social Justice, University of British Columbia, BC
- Stewart, S. (2025, September). *Indigenous Reconciliation and Mental Health*. Keynote Address. National Day for Truth & Reconciliation at Strides Toronto, Ontario.

## Workshop:

- Brown, M., & Mirza, S. (2025, July 4). *Research as ceremony* [Workshop]. Student Mentorship Program, University of Toronto.

# Published Articles and Reports

## Published Articles and Reports:

- Apt'sqi'gnn. (2025). Is multidimensional treatment foster care (MTFC) more effective at reducing externalizing behaviours exhibited by youth in foster care than group or institutionalized care? *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, 20(2).
- Hazra, M., Ranasinghe, T., Apt'sqi'gnn., Brown, M., Mirza, S., Shirt, C., & Stewart, E. (2025, in press). Hemp as a Sustainable Solution for Climate Crisis Action: A Review of Literature. *Journal of Global Indigeneity*.
- Jenkinson, J.I.R. & Wigle, J. & Richard, L. & Tibebu, T. & Orkin, A.M. & Thulien, N.S. & Kiran, T. & Gogosis, E. & Crichlow, F. & Dyer, A.P. & Gabriel, M.D. & Hwang, S.W. (2025). Structural violence as a driver of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and low vaccine uptake among people experiencing homelessness in Toronto, Canada: A qualitative study. *Social Science & Medicine, Elsevier, vol. 365(C)*.
- Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research, Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health Research, & Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario. (2025). *Indigenizing health symposium 2025: Being safe with our culture again* [Conference report].
- Stewart, E., Mirza, S., & Brown, M. (2025). The Climate Crisis and Indigenous Youths' Mental Health: The Pilot Project. *Mental Health: Global Challenges Journal*, 8(1), 36–47.



# Thank You

To our readers and partners,

Since Fall is here, we welcome you to our upcoming events and hope you enjoyed our past ones! As the days grow shorter and colder, we hope you continue to enjoy our Mother, the Earth.

We thank you so much for all your amazing support,

See you this winter!



Fall 2025

# Contact Us

## Follow Us On Social Media!

For the latest news, upcoming events and other updates!

Facebook: @ Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health

Instagram: @neihr\_on | @wbiih

LinkedIn: @ Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health,  
University of Toronto

Youtube: @Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health

Website: Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health at the Dalla  
Lana School of Public Health

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Appendix C  
Graphic Novel Sneak Peek

COMING SOON  
Impacts of the Climate Crisis on  
Indigenous Youth Mental Health:  
*A Graphic Novel*



Together we can make a difference.



## Appendix D

### Climate Crisis Policy Brief

# Impacts of Climate Crisis on Indigenous Youths' Mental Health



## Summary & Rationale

This research study explored the impacts of the climate crisis and its disproportionate effects on Indigenous youth in Tkaronto, Ontario, Canada. The results demonstrated clear impacts on the wellness of urban Indigenous youth as well as the need for immediate action with Indigenous youth voices involved in decision-making processes. This research paper contributes to the growing evidence regarding the impacts the climate crisis has had, and continues to have, on the mental health and wellness of Indigenous youth.

## Key Recommendations

- An immediate revision to the strategic responses to extreme weather events (e.g., evacuations) that address the disruptions and safety concerns of Indigenous communities.
- An urgent need to include intercommunity counsels to establish strong connections and support networks in case of extreme weather events.
- Land-based programming and services; especially for urban youth.
- Education regarding climate change should include discussion about policies and corporate responsibilities.
- There may be a need for partner organizations to address knowledge gaps and increase environmental policy awareness for youth and non-youth.
- There is an urgent need for policymakers to listen to youth voices for guidance on how to address the industrial and corporate operational guidelines that do not safeguard against the concerns outlined.
- More education and communication are needed for our community partners on the politics and government responsibilities regarding climate justice. Other complex social issues should also be included (e.g., homelessness, tokenism).
- There is a need for better mental health services that are based in Indigenous cultures and Traditions and that are responsive to the needs of urban Indigenous youth.
- More spaces are needed for youth to express themselves and share their teachings in decision-making spaces, increasing autonomy.
- Immediate reinforcement of community-based Indigenous youth homelessness services in Tkaronto

## Policy Implications

- Acknowledge the mental health impacts of climate change on Indigenous youth, including disconnection from the Land and increased anxiety and hopelessness.
- Support culturally grounded mental health programs that center Indigenous spirituality, teachings, and Land-based healing as sources of resilience.
- Involve Indigenous youth in climate and mental health policymaking, recognizing their knowledge and lived experience as vital to effective solutions.

## Appendix E

### Climate Crisis Newsletter



## Impacts of Climate Crisis on Indigenous Youths' Mental Health

Mother Earth is in crisis and the next seven generations of Indigenous youth are asking for our immediate help. This research study explored the impacts of the climate crisis and its disproportionate effects on Indigenous youth in Tkaronto, Ontario, Canada.

The research questions were: What are the mental health impacts of climate change for Indigenous youth and what services are needed to support youth?

This study aims to:

- Determine the impact of climate change on the mental health and wellbeing of Indigenous youth
- Create a positive, strengths-based and culturally-rooted experience for Indigenous youth to learn skills, engage in artistic expression and contribute meaningfully to research
- Develop recommendations for mental health supports for Indigenous youth, including the development of additional programming, identifying key supports and barriers and contributing meaningfully to the Indigenous youth mental health research field, as well as policy and practice

## Methodology

The research involved Talking Circles with two community partners and survey data from the Tkaronto community to analyze themes and trends. This project was guided by an Indigenous Knowledges framework (Kovach, 2009; Marshall, Marshall, & Bartlett, 2015; Stewart 2008; 2009) and Indigenous cultural safety principles (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Gerlach, 2012; Papps & Ramsden, 1996; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012) to safeguard the community and participants against continued colonial assaults.

The study used a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative (Indigenous talking circles) and quantitative (online survey) methods. The content of both data collection tools was created by consultations with Elders and youth from community partners to determine the project's intention and youth involvement.

## Key Talking Circle Results

The Talking Circles generated 20 themes that fell into 5 distinct categories, these included:

- Environmental genocide and pollution
- Direct and indirect impacts on health, including mental health and emotions
- Systemic challenges related to capitalism, colonialism, resource development and social issues
- Community solutions including collective social change and individual resistance
- Hopes and fears on the future

## Key Survey Results

**Survey Items with Highest Rates of 'Strongly Agree' Responses on youth survey:**

- The land is important to my overall health
- When on the land, I notice positive changes in my spiritual, physical, mental, and/or emotional health
- When I go on the land, I feel connected to Mother earth/environment
- I believe the climate crisis is real

**Survey Items with 70%+ Agreement by Youth Survey Respondents include:**

- I often feel anxious about the future for Mother Earth
- I think about the climate crisis often
- My cultural identity is connected to Mother Earth, the land and the environment
- I feel grief related to the suffering of Mother Earth

## Summary and Discussion

- **Extreme Weather Concerns:** Indigenous youth are increasingly worried about disruptions caused by extreme weather events, which affect their daily lives, education, and connection to the Land.
- **Awareness of Environmental Policies:** Indigenous youth show a deep understanding of the climate crisis, linking it to capitalism and colonialism.
- **Feelings and Emotions:** The climate crisis has led to a growing sense of disconnection from nature among Indigenous youth, contributing to feelings of hopelessness and despair.
- **Spiritual Connection to the Land:** A significant majority of participants reported a profound understanding and spiritual connection to Mother Earth/environment. Despite genocide and assimilation and despite Toronto's urban environment, participants maintain their respective Indigenous spiritual beliefs and teachings, which indicates a facilitator of wellness
- **Call for Action and Collective Solutions:** Youth emphasize the importance of community, collaboration, and cultural safety in programming aimed at supporting them. They advocate for actions that include better access to cultural supports and the inclusion of Indigenous voices in decision-making processes. They stress the importance of reducing bureaucratic barriers and demand government accountability concerning climate justice

# Appendix F

## Bridges and Barriers Executive Summary



### Bridges and barriers: Exploring healthcare access and services for Indigenous Peoples

Mikaela D. Gabriel, Marc Gonsalves & Tina Liu

Indigenous Peoples in guiding and providing feedback for policymakers. Similarly, culturally safe policy requires different skills, tools, and implementation than direct patient support. Active, invested change is crucial across all levels of healthcare delivery to ensure consistent efforts for patient care.

Policy recommendation for services	Recommendation for policy development
Increase IPNs to teams	Partnership and engagement with Indigenous staff, patients, communities in policy development
Increase funding for Indigenous health programs	Indigenous community leadership as part of hospital leadership
Include Elder support in service delivery	Indigenous history education for policymakers
Increase cultural representation (e.g., languages, signage, murals, construction)	Share successes across hospitals
Flexible accommodations and spaces for medicine	Policy review and feedback by Indigenous Peoples
Dedicated, flexibly available spaces to allow ceremony for Elders	Youth engagement in hospital programming

*"That is, traditionally, what we do. It's not something we might do, it's **what we do**, either in the hospital, morgue, or at the funeral home."*

**Conclusion:** Indigenous healthcare barriers are perpetuated in the actions and inactions of not only individuals, but service limitations and systemic barriers that restrict patients' health and safety needs. The disproportionately inequitable quality of care they are at risk of receiving, is simply too dire to leave to the chance of patchwork policy, and too dangerous to let slip through the cracks. Without mandated, Indigenous-led education, students, healthcare workers, and policymakers will continue to miss the realities of Indigenous history, colonial policies, and their impact on

the holistic health outcomes of Indigenous Peoples. The enablers are clear: Indigenous education that enriches, engages, and fosters empathy through common humanity; flexible approaches to the diverse needs and backgrounds of Indigenous patients; skills for person-focused, trauma-informed care; cultural representation and sovereignty in medical directions; cultural safety that is training-specific, and scientifically substantiated, to improve relationships across all domains of hospital systems; and community engagement and feedback to the realities and barriers created by uninformed policies.

The report on which this summary is based is funded by the Ministry of Health of the Province of Ontario, Grant #739. The views expressed are the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of Wellesley Institute or those of the Province. Read the full report at [www.wellesleyinstitute.com](http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com).





## Bridges and barriers: Exploring healthcare access and services for Indigenous Peoples

Mikaela D. Gabriel, Marc Gonsalves & Tina Liu

Colonial policies have irrevocably shaped the health of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island. Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Knowledge understands health is holistic, with a balance between the personal (e.g., mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical domains) as part of reciprocal relationships (e.g., family, community, flora, fauna, earth, time). Ceremonies and cultural practices assist in

*For Indigenous Peoples, there is no social safety net that is free from racism.*

maintaining balance while celebrating the individual's growth, contribution to community, and place in the universe<sup>1</sup>. National health data identifies persistent health, housing, and well-being disparities across urban centres in Ontario, and across Canada for decades. However, Western

health research is distrusted due to unethical, unconsented medical experimentation, often employing nutritional deprivation employed in residential schools or extractive practices<sup>2</sup>. A review of the literature for this project found primary barriers to accessing health as: **cultural disconnect**, including lack of cultural awareness, Indigenous healing metrics, health realities, and approaches to healing; **systemic discrimination and mistrust**, due to personal and historic experiences of racism, experimentation, exploitation, and harm; **socioeconomic barriers**, and **geographic isolation and logistical issues**.



**Participants:** Three Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Keepers (EKK), four Indigenous patient navigators (IPNs), and one community member (CM) participated in narrative, trauma-informed interviews. Data sharing, access, and management is aligned with OCAP® principles.

**Themes emerging from the interviews:**

**Inhospitable hospitals:** All participants attested to fear of judgment, outdated forms, literacy challenges and fear of police presence and the need to **“brace for racism”** when arriving to centres. IPNs described how adaptive racism occurs through ignoring or infantilizing Indigenous patients and minimized the value or role of ITK/IPN roles. All participants strongly expressed that **Traditional Knowledge is healthcare** and needs to be recognized as an essential part of holistic care. To address these barriers, participants described the need for **evolving education**, both for healthcare providers, and for patients to understand systems and make informed choices about their care.

Medical need	Medicine use
ER	Smudging for de-escalation, emotional support
ICU	Smudging, cedar water for cleansing
Patient room	Singing, smudge, cedar water, teas, tropical treatments, hydrosols
Birth	Smudging, celebration, care for parents
Death	Singing, drumming, cedar water preparation

**Prescriptions for policy** were strongly recommended to uphold the invested efforts of Indigenous patient navigators, challenge systemic barriers to patient care, noting the crucial importance of

*“A lot of hospitals treat Indigenous health programming as ‘extra’ instead of seeing it as essential.”*

<sup>1</sup> Absolon, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Hyett, Marjerrison, Gabel, 2018.

## Appendix G

### SAFE Project Executive Summary



#### Supporting Agency, Facing Equity: An environmental scan of Indigenous cultural safety training for primary care providers

Mikaela D. Gabriel & Ariana Giulianelli

that their delivery, efficacy, and specificity of training be continually assessed and guided by Indigenous voices and researchers to address further ICS interventions. Ensuring appropriate uptake of learning outcomes, and their translation to safe behavioural change, is an

Institutional & management level	Indigenous cultural safety engagement
<b>Policy</b>	Long-term Indigenous prioritization and engagement; mandating of ICS training for all staff
<b>Leadership</b>	ICS training for hospital management; Indigenous community leaders as health leadership members
<b>Space</b>	Indigenous spaces for medicine use, language signage, décor, artistic representation
<b>Community outreach</b>	Engagement with Indigenous community centres, service providers, and leadership
<b>Traditional Knowledge</b>	Long-standing relationships; teaching and connection with medicines, traditional foods; safe referrals
<b>Human resources</b>	Indigenous capacity building, employment, onboarding; safe complaint & feedback systems
<b>Data management</b>	OCAP® supports; Indigenous community oversight and protection
<b>Patient care</b>	Patient-centred supports; trauma-informed care

important goal of ICS trainings; however, minimal studies assessed the uptake of learning outcomes that demonstrate efficacy. Checklists, performance reviews, and self-reflections can be of assistance. Unannounced Indigenous standardized patient visits<sup>3</sup> have been found to be valuable, effective methods of assessing ICS training to behavioural change in care staff.

**Conclusions.** Personal demonstrations of cultural humility and safety practices are necessary; however, ensuring cultural safety and humility on systemic, political, and structural levels remain to be seen. Policy, research, and Indigenous community feedback and directions are of the most value in informing and improving these practices. The pillars necessary for creating safe environments for Indigenous health to thrive require providing the necessary education and depth of knowledge of Indigenous colonial history in Canada; fostering meaningful reflection and change; educational and institutional co-direction with Indigenous leadership, Elders, and community members; and ongoing feedback from patients themselves. Implementation of tools with guiding frameworks, skills, and feedback of ongoing skill development are instrumental and crucial in ensuring the safety of practice; just as cultural safety is an ongoing learning process, implementation of culturally safe skills should be supported by spaces of feedback and support.

*Evolving Indigenous education is essential to ensuring safe, equitable healthcare.*

The report on which this summary is based is funded by the Ministry of Health of the Province of Ontario, Grant #739. The views expressed are the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of Wellesley Institute or those of the Province. Read the full report at [www.wellesleyinstitute.com](http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com).

<sup>3</sup> Smylie et al., 2024



## Supporting Agency, Facing Equity: An environmental scan of Indigenous cultural safety training for primary care providers

Mikaela D. Gabriel & Ariana Giulianelli

**Background.** Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations; FNMI) face ongoing systemic care barriers in ensuring their physical health and well-being, alongside daunting unemployment rates, disproportionate overrepresentation across homeless populations, complex health needs, and continual acts of genocide.<sup>1</sup> Indigenous-led research has identified significant disparities in healthcare seeking and preventative care due to experiences of racism, leading more Indigenous peoples to seek emergency, rather than preventative and ongoing care<sup>2</sup>. Indigenous cultural safety (ICS) training has transitioned from being an optional goal, to a mandatory, legally-enforced requirement. This **environmental scan** explored and analyzed peer-reviewed and grey literature, policies, programs, and practices programs that aimed to mitigate anti-Indigenous racism within primary healthcare services in Ontario at individual, team, and organizational levels.

**Findings:** programs fell across two metrics: the *spectrum of cultural safety*, and the *scope of applicability* to **individual development, team-based application, and institutional and organizational change**. The spectrum of cultural safety explored developing individual

**Challenge:** individual trainings did not include understandings of Indigenous diversity; specialized approaches for on-site and occupation-specific tools' community engagement; or tools for safe and effective communication.

cultural awareness, sensitivity, competency, and safety. Once achieved, **cultural safety for individuals** meant they: identified and understood bias; identified and challenged stereotypes; reviewed Indigenous history and understanding as to the current impacts of colonization to Indigenous healthcare systems and outcomes.

**Cultural safety for teams** are necessary for ensuring individual efforts are maintained and uplifted. Examples include connecting with local Indigenous communities and service centres; participate in local traditional practices, community gatherings, and ceremonies; practice trauma-informed care; facilitate community and patient engagement through strengths-based approaches and collaborative healthcare goals; and cultural humility in co-learning from Indigenous knowledge systems. Patient advocacy, inter-team support, and supporting each other in addressing racism are also valued to strengthen teams. In order to demonstrate application of ICS foundations into active clinical care, trainings recommended efforts to provide applications of principles such as narrative and case examples; strategies and models for patient communication and community engagement; patient perspectives; and how to safely communicate (i.e., inquiring about identity, community networks, and discharge plans).

Systemic racism has been identified as a pervasive, perpetuating barrier of Indigenous racism, and **cultural safety for system-level managers** and staff are essential to ensure mandatory ICS training; creating meaningful partnerships and collaborations with nearby Indigenous cultural service and friendship centres, signage, space design, and patient care (table 1). As ICS trainings become increasingly mandated and more widely available, it will be crucial

*This research highlights three important themes for decreasing anti-Indigenous racism in primary healthcare services: a need for an **integrated approach**; the value of **community-led initiatives**; and the underscoring of **continuous learning**.*

<sup>1</sup> Allan & Smylie, 2015; Kitching et al., 2019; Monchalin, Smylie & Nowgesic, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Snyder et al., 2024

## Appendix H

### ON NEIHR Team Members' Annual Activity Survey Year 6

Please answer the following questions specific to your work within the Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (ON NEIHR) between the reporting period of: **1 October 2024 – 30 September 2025**

Your full name, including relevant credentials and ON NEIHR role:

1. Please provide a list of grants you were awarded between 1 October 2024 - 30 September 2025
2. How many individuals from your community research partnerships and research team contributed as members of ON NEIHR work?
3. How often did your ON NEIHR-related research teams meet?
  - a. More than once per week.
  - b. Once per week.
  - c. Once biweekly.
  - d. Once per month.
  - e. Once bi-monthly.
  - f. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many ON NEIHR-related research projects did your research team work on? List in APA format:
  - a. The number of Academic peer reviewed articles (please list in APA format)
  - b. The number of non-peer reviewed articles (please list in APA format):
  - c. The number of book chapters (please list in APA format):
  - d. The number books (please list in APA format):
  - e. The number of non-peer reviewed reports (please list in APA format):
  - f. The number policy documents (please list in APA format):
  - g. The number of academic presentations (please list in APA format):
  - h. The number of non-academic or community presentations (please list in APA format):
  - i. The number of other types of works your ON NEIHR-related research teams used to share research in academia and the community (not previously mentioned):  
Please list in APA format.
5. The number of media posts (link to social media, media, or media files)?
6. If applicable, please list the number of ON NEIHR-related educational or professional development activities your research team hosted.
  - a. How many learners attended each professional development /educational activity?
  - b. Who were the learners (select all that apply)?
    - i. Who were the learners (select all that apply)?
      - a) Students

- b) Community Members
- c) Professionals
- d) Organizational leadership
- e) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Has your ON NEIHR-related research team engaged in any evaluation projects? Please list in APA format.
8. How were Indigenous epistemologies/methodologies/approaches applied to your ON NEIHR-related research projects? Please explain:
9. How many Elders or Traditional Knowledge Keepers have contributed as members of your ON NEIHR-related research team?
10. How often did Elders or Traditional Knowledge Keepers attend your ON NEIHR-related research meetings? (check one)
  - a. They attended every meeting. We do not meet without an elder or knowledge keeper present.
  - b. Most of the time, although we have met a few times without them present.
  - c. Occasionally they are present.
  - d. No Elders or Traditional Knowledge Keepers attended.
11. How did your ON NEIHR research team incorporate Indigenous spirituality and/or ceremony into research activities? Please explain.
12. How did your ON NEIHR team address anti-Indigenous racism and systemic discrimination? Please explain and provide examples.
13. What barriers, if any, impeded your research team from incorporating Indigenous Knowledges (Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, spirituality, ceremony) into research activities? Please explain.
14. What supports were in place for your research team for incorporating Indigenous Knowledges (Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, spirituality, ceremony) into research activities? Please explain.
15. Not including academic works, has your ON NEIHR research contributed to non-academic Indigenous cultural activities, and/or traditional knowledge translation (e.g., talking circles, teaching circles, community events, retreats, drop in events, open houses, land-based activities)? How many and what were they? Please explain.
16. Explain how your ON NEIHR research team has included Indigenous youth (ages 15-29) in research activities:

17. How many Indigenous graduate students have been engaged with your ON NEIHR research team?
18. How many non-Indigenous graduate students have been engaged with your ON NEIHR research team?
19. How many Indigenous undergraduate students have been engaged with your ON NEIHR research team?
20. How many non-Indigenous undergraduate students have been engaged with your ON NEIHR research team?
21. How many Indigenous community research assistants (CRAs) have been engaged with your ON NEIHR research team?
22. How many stipends, scholarships, bursaries, or other financial supports, have been provided to Indigenous students involved in your ON NEIHR team? What is the total dollar amount that you paid out to these?
23. How many stipends, scholarships, bursaries, or other financial supports, have been provided to non-Indigenous students involved in your ON NEIHR team? What is the total dollar amount that you paid out to these?
  - a. [For non-academic members] Do you have any research partnerships with post-secondary institutions? What are the benefits, challenges, barriers, and/or obstacles?
24. How many Indigenous community partners are on your ON NEIHR research team? List these community partners:
25. How many non-Indigenous community partners are on your ON NEIHR research team? List these community partners:
  - a. [For academic members] Explain how your ON NEIHR research teams have provided funding to community partners. Who? How much, and for what reasons?
26. Explain any ON NEIHR research team community engagement efforts not identified above:
27. How did your ON NEIHR team engage in knowledge translation & knowledge mobilization amongst researchers and knowledge users, including community members, the public, policymakers, clinicians, and other stakeholders? Explain.
28. What barriers, if any, were there for your ON NEIHR research team in engaging in knowledge translation & knowledge mobilization amongst researchers and knowledge

users, including community members, the public, policymakers, clinicians, and other stakeholders?

29. Explain what services, programs, and/or initiatives were developed from ON NEIHR-research projects?
30. Explain how services, programs, and/or initiatives developed from ON NEIHR research projects were funded?
31. How many research ethics board (REB) approvals were received and from where:
  - a. University REBS \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Indigenous community (organizations, First Nations, communities) REBs \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Non-Indigenous community (organizations, governments, etc.) REBs \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (List: \_\_\_\_\_)
32. Are there currently any ON NEIHR research projects in the development stages, that have not yet received research ethics board approval? If yes, how many?
33. Please describe any challenges or supports experienced during REB application and approval processes:
34. Anything else we need to know? (please provide any general feedback, or any items that have not been captured throughout the survey).