

Northern Health Updates Indigenous Health

Spring 2021



There is No Vaccine for Stigma

Stigma has the potential to lead to discrimination, which can negatively impact health outcomes for Indigenous Peoples. [*There is No Vaccine for Stigma*](#) is a new resource available from the [National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health](#) (NCCIH) and Northern Health. Recognizing that public health responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have the potential to generate or prevent stigma, this publication focuses on evidence-based recommendations to counteract COVID-19 related stigma in Indigenous, rural, remote, and Northern communities in Canada.¹ The research for this review was

first conducted in May 2020, with a second round of research undertaken in October 2020 to include the most recent available evidence.

The review was collaboratively developed with expert guidance from members of the COVID-19 Public Health Working Group on Remote and Isolated Communities, which is made up of several member organizations (e.g., Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Métis National Council, BC First Nations Health Authority). The authors identified, gathered, and analyzed 179 articles before synthesizing findings from 25 of those articles.

Drawing on the pertinent articles, the report identifies and analyzes best practices to address stigma

Highlights

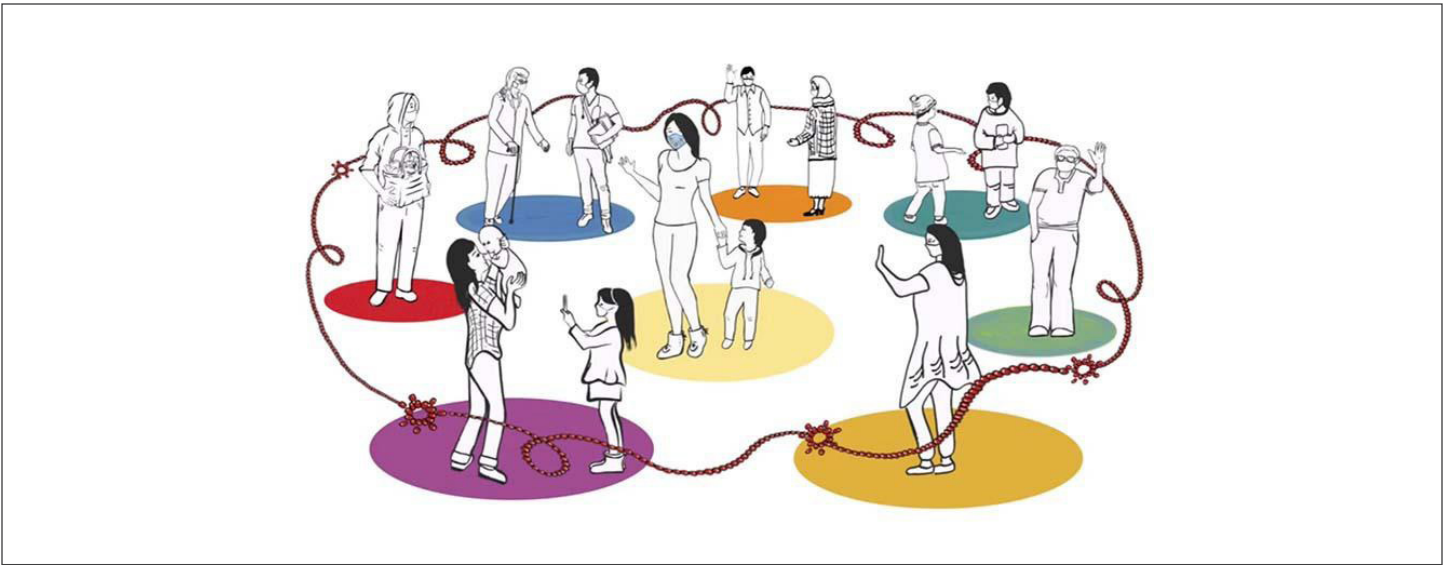
Healing in Pandemic Times: Indigenous Peoples, Stigma, and COVID-19

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond provides an update to In Plain Sight report

Nanki Nezulne (Our Two Spirits) – CSFS announces new website for the adult LGBTQ2+ community and its allies



¹Ward, V. and MacDonald, J. (2021). There is no vaccine for stigma: A Rapid Evidence Review of stigma mitigation strategies during past outbreaks among Indigenous populations living in rural, remote and northern regions of Canada and what can be learned for COVID-19. Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health.



Together, everyone can keep the circle strong. Watch the video today!

that Indigenous Peoples and communities used during previous epidemics, pandemics, and infectious disease outbreaks. These were grouped into six broad themes:

- Pathogen factors
- Fear, anxiety, and misinformation
- Stigmatised identities
- Structural and systemic drivers
- Culture and community
- Public health and media

The report also details stigma mitigation strategies identified in the literature. These include providing education and information to address fear and anxiety, sharing personal stories to tackle stigma, and implementing systemic and structural plans to mitigate racism and stigma within workplaces (Ward & MacDonald, 2021). It also highlights gaps in knowledge and opportunities for future research. While there is a lack of literature in relation to stigma, COVID-19, and Indigenous communities, there is much to be learned from the available evidence related to other infectious diseases and prior epidemics, including the drivers and impacts of stigma.

Finally, the report makes eight broad recommendations with respect to combating stigma,

including the following: develop context specific, strengths-based, and resilience focused strategies; recognize Indigenous People's sovereign rights; and develop partnered approaches to create culturally specific strategies to mitigate stigma.

Healing in Pandemic Times: Indigenous Peoples, Stigma, and COVID-19

Indigenous Health, Northern Health, and the [National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health](#) (NCCIH) present [Healing in Pandemic Times: Indigenous Peoples, Stigma and COVID-19](#). The video features animation by Joanne Gervais and music by Renae Morriveau and M'Girl.

Intended for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences, this short, animated video draws on the report, [There is No Vaccine for Stigma](#), to address the ongoing stigmatization experienced by Indigenous Peoples in the health care system. The video reviews key terms, such as stigmatization, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, in an easily understandable way.

Central to this video is a comment by the narrator, Dr. Evan Adams (Tlesla II). Adams, a physician, actor, and Deputy Chief Medical Officer of Public Health,

Indigenous Services Canada observes, “Healing starts with empathy. Each of us can step up to address stigma and discrimination. Together we can put an end to historic patterns of prejudice and exclusion.”

Dr. Margo Greenwood, VP Indigenous Health, NH, and Academic Leader for the NCCIH, notes, “As the video illustrates, the combination of pandemics and stigma is an old story for Indigenous people. But the pain is always new. And the ill effects can last for generations unless we all, Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, support each other to take positive healing action. Everyone should feel safe and supported in their communities.”

“

It is time to recognize and treat racism directed at Indigenous people as a health crisis.

”

Dr. Greenwood also remarks, with specific reference to Dr. Mary-Ellen Turpel-Lafond’s [In Plain Sight](#) report, that it is time to recognize and treat racism directed at Indigenous people as a health crisis. This new video is an important resource to support urgently needed dialogue and action to change this situation.

BC’s Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, who has viewed Healing in Pandemic Times, said, “COVID-19 has shown us that Indigenous communities continue to carry a disproportionate burden of stigma and discrimination in our health care system. We must continue to promote education and cultural sensitivity to address this ongoing challenge.”

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond provides an update to In Plain Sight

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, alongside Health Minister Adrian Dix, provided an update to [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous Racism in B.C. Health Care](#), a report which reveals that discrimination is a painful reality not only for Indigenous people seeking health care but also for Indigenous health care workers in British Columbia.

Turpel-Lafond, a former judge, was initially appointed to investigate anti-Indigenous racism in British Columbia’s health care system in

Upcoming Events

OUR MEDICINES: A CULTURAL HUMILITY WORKSHOP FOR HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS
April 28, 2021

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK
May 3-9, 2021

NATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH DAY
May 7, 2021

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK
May 10-16, 2021

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH
June 2021

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY
June 21, 2021





response to allegations that hospital emergency staff were playing “games” where they would try to guess the blood-alcohol level of Indigenous patients. This investigation analyzed the health outcomes of approximately 185,000 First Nations and Métis patients, interviewed 150 people, and surveyed 2,780 Indigenous people and 5,440 health workers. The survey found 84 percent of Indigenous respondents reported discrimination in health care, an issue that disproportionately affected Indigenous women and girls.

While Turpel-Lafond’s investigation team was not able to find evidence to substantiate the abovementioned allegations, they were able to uncover evidence of prejudice, including “extensive profiling of Indigenous patients based on stereotypes about addictions.”

Data report released

The [data report](#) (2021) accompanying the full report above includes comprehensive data gathered during Turpel-Lafond’s 2020 investigation. Specifically, it addresses health disparities for Indigenous communities relating to child and maternal health.

Turpel-Lafond concluded that the evidence shows that Indigenous people in BC are receiving services that are skewed away from primary, preventative care, which results in them being pushed to secondary or tertiary care and treatment.

Turpel-Lafond also called for the appointment of an Indigenous Health Officer in BC.

Immediate steps being taken

During a news conference, Health Minister Adrian Dix commented on several immediate steps being taken by the provincial government to better meet the recommendations laid out in Turpel-Lafond’s report.

Immediate steps include:

- The provision of funding for 5 new Indigenous health liaison positions to be added in each Health Authority as well as within Providence Health Care
- The requirement that each Health Authority board now have at least two Indigenous members
- The continuation of an [email and telephone line](#) to report issues of racism and share experiences
- The appointment of Dawn Thomas as the new Associate Deputy Minister of Indigenous Health

Access full reports and learn more:

- Read the summary report
- Read the full report
- Read the February 2021 data report



Nanki Nezulne (Our Two Spirits) – CSFS announces new website for the adult LGBTQ2+ community and its allies

[Carrier Sekani Family Services](#) (CSFS) announced a new [website](#) for the LGBTQ2+ community and its allies. The website aims to be a safe space for LGBTQ2+ members and provide holistic health and wellness support for adult (18+) members of the LGBTQ2+ community in the nations served by CSFS.

The project adopted a “Two-Eyed Seeing Approach,” which seeks to combine Indigenous and Western philosophies and knowledge. Brittany Clark-Wakefield, Mental Health Clinician of the LGBTQ2+ program, says, “We have sought out Carrier and Sekani Knowledge Holders, Elders, health care providers, and community members to assist us with first-hand knowledge and experience of cultural and traditional practices to incorporate within our programs, activities, events, celebrations, and therapeutic practices.”

The website provides community members with access to counselling services and education specific to LGBTQ2+ people. It is also a place to learn about upcoming LGBTQ2+ events, activities, and celebrations.

The website will also be the landing page for the

Nanki Nezulne program. Nanki Nezulne (Our Two Spirits) prioritizes mental health and wellness accessibility and offers the entirety of its program online to Indigenous adults residing in British Columbia, with priority given to Carrier Sekani members. Clients can receive both individual and group counseling through virtual video conferencing.

The development and implementation of the website and its accompanying program were determined through partnerships and collaboration with Carrier and Sekani people. Clark-Wakefield says that as the program continues to grow, the emphasis on Carrier and Sekani culture will continue.

Visit the new [website](#) today.



UPDATES FROM INDIGENOUS HEALTH

New Indigenous Health Team Member

Please join us in welcoming Taylor Turgeon to the Indigenous Health Team



Taylor previously worked with the Northern Health Primary and Community Care Team, where she spent the last year and a half supporting critical initiatives as a Regional Care Process Coach. In this role, she also spent a significant amount of

time working on the Northern BC Rural and Remote and First Nations Communities COVID-19 Response Framework.

Born and raised in Vanderhoof, Taylor moved to Prince George in 2010 to attend university. While at UNBC, she obtained her undergraduate degree in history. Before joining Northern Health, she worked as a legal assistant in both family and personal injury law.

When not working, Taylor likes to camp, fish, and spend time outdoors with her family and two little girls.

Taylor started her role with the Indigenous Health team on January 8th, 2021. She is located on the 3rd floor of the Scotiabank Building.

Taylor can be reached at 250-640-2478 or email taylor.turgeon@northernhealth.ca

Dr. Roseann Larstone appointed as Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research post-doc



Northern Health, Indigenous Health, is excited to announce that Dr. Roseann Larstone has received a post-doc appointment with the [Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research](#) (MSFHR). Dr. Larstone will work in

partnership with the [Health Arts Research Centre](#) (HARC) for this post-doc appointment.

Dr. Larstone is a member of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). She was previously [Research Associate at the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health](#) (NCCIH) and Northern Medical Program, UNBC. Her research has focused on adolescent mental health, program evaluation, and more recently, partnered community-based work exploring patients' and informal caregivers' experiences of cancer care in Northern BC. In her current role as Lead, Research and Community Engagement – Northern Health, Indigenous Health – she leads and supports research, education and engagement activities across the organization focused on cultural safety and humility.



FEATURED INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

You might have noticed that each newsletter features an Indigenous language from Northern British Columbia. But, did you know that there are also several apps available for download to your iOS or Android device?

These apps have been developed in partnership with participating communities and First Peoples' Cultural Council. Language apps are great for learning on the go and can make learning more accessible for those who do not have access to in-person lessons. A full list of available language apps can be found on the First Voices website.

In addition to these language apps, First Voices also has a "keyboard" app that includes software for over 100 languages that will allow you to text and email using the necessary characters and letters that are not available in an English keyboard.

The **Nisga'a app** is a media-rich bilingual dictionary and phrase collection comprised of words and phrases archived at the online Aboriginal language database FirstVoices.com.

Word and phrase definitions are illustrated with audio recordings, images and videos. Editing features allow users to customize content by replacing default multimedia with personal pictures, videos and sounds using either the camera and microphone built into their device or images from their onboard photo collection.

Here are some of the phrases you could learn using the app:

Gosiy ni dim haw'tinhl hat'isway

I can't stop sneezing.

Gaxgu di k'otkw níin?

When did you have your operation?

Naa-hlee^hhl an'unt.

She/he has a bister on his/her hand.

Gandeex-goodim hanak'

She is a strong-minded woman.

nidii di'akhlgiwíyhl dim woga^y gaxkw.

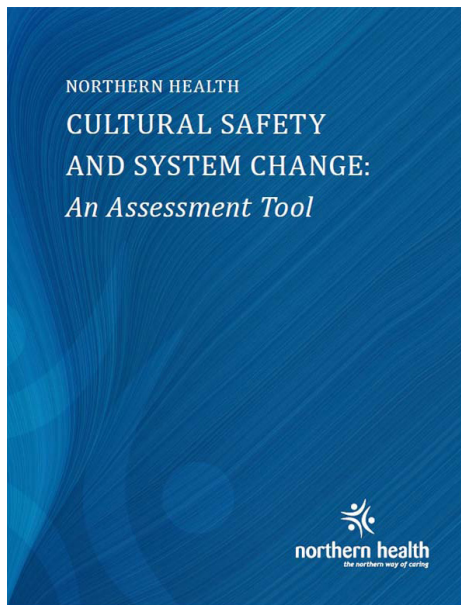
I could not sleep last night.

K'oomaxgumhl dim t'ílt mootgwin

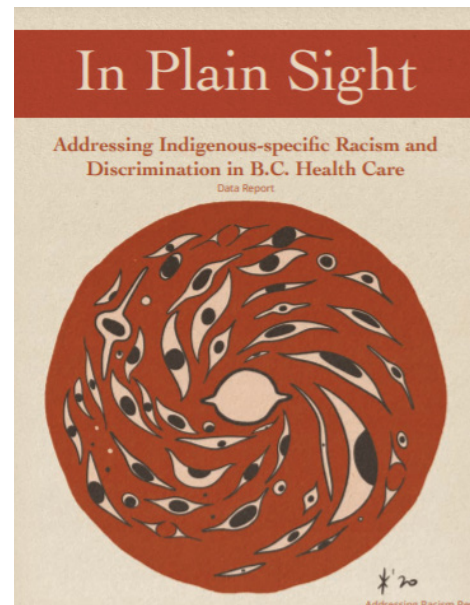
We hope you get better soon.

Resources

Cultural Safety and System Change: An Assessment Tool



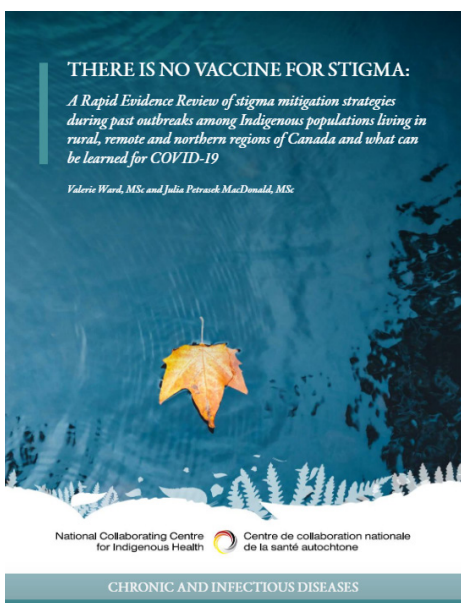
In Plain Sight: Data Report



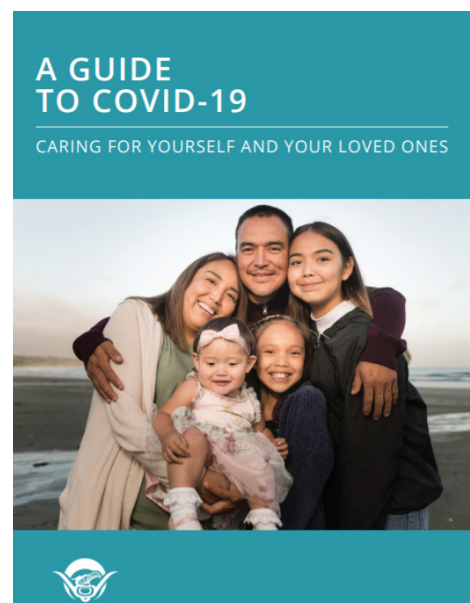
Maintaining the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and teens during COVID-19



There's No Vaccine for Stigma



FNHA: A Guide to COVID-19



Supporting Indigenous self-determination in health

