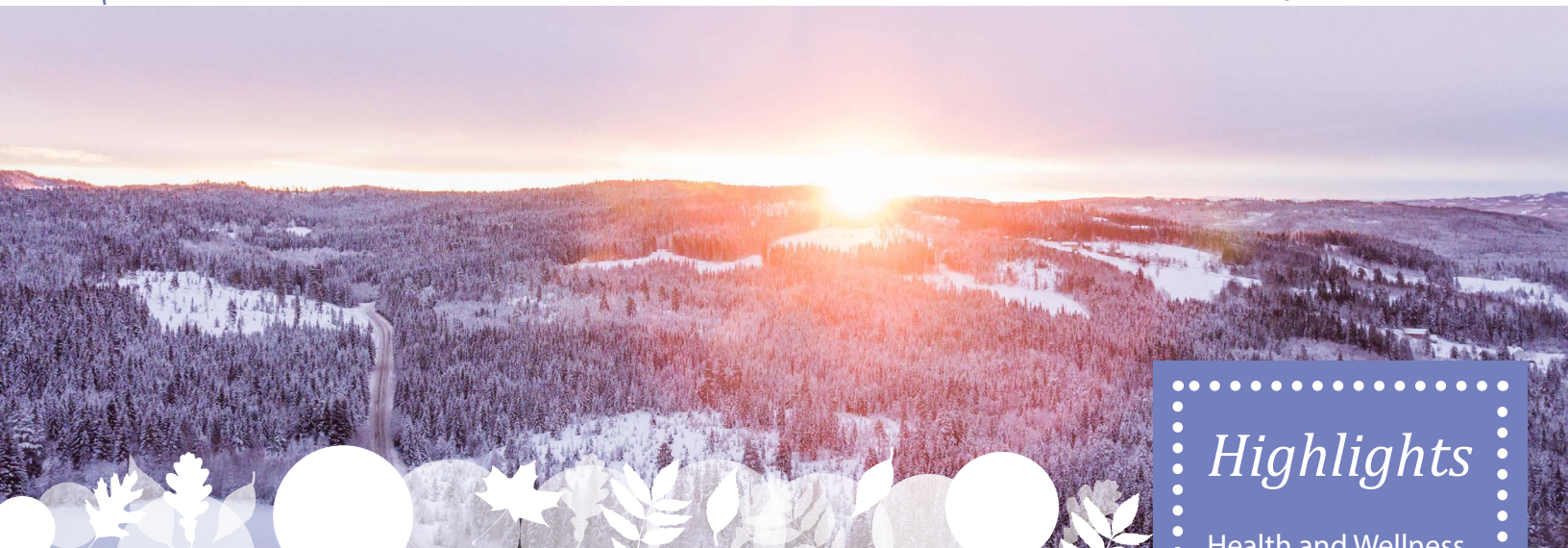
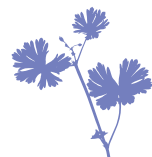




# Indigenous Health

Fall 2020/Winter 2021



## Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's report released on addressing Indigenous racism

On November 30, 2020, the Hon. Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (Aki-Kwe) released her final report, [\*In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care\*](#).

### Key findings from the investigation include:

- Widespread Indigenous-specific stereotyping, racism, and discrimination exist in the BC health-care system.
- Racism limits access to medical treatment and negatively affects the health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples in BC.

Led by Dr. Margo Greenwood, VP, Indigenous Health, the Indigenous Health team is supporting Northern

Health leadership in reviewing and digesting the report and clear recommendations. Dr. Greenwood will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Health, as well as with the Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee, the Métis Nation of BC/Northern Health Leadership Committee, and Indigenous health-serving organizations to address the recommendations in the report.

"This is a national issue. Our health systems reflect our society at large," Greenwood says. "Society continues to perpetuate racism against Indigenous Peoples. So it should be no surprise that systemic racism is pervasive in health care systems across this country. The number of disturbing incidents in BC documented in this report is evidence of this. As is the shameful treatment of Joyce Echequan in a Quebec hospital."

## Highlights

Health and Wellness Support for Indigenous People - Following Release of Addressing Racism Investigation Report

Cultural safety: A note from Margo Greenwood, VP Indigenous Health

What does Phase 3 mean for First Nations – FNHA podcast

Tablet Initiative connects Elders and Knowledge Keepers with Expectant Mothers



As noted in the [joint statement](#) on behalf of B.C. health authorities, the report's first finding bears repeating. Widespread Indigenous-specific stereotyping, racism and discrimination exist in the B.C. health-care system. Racism has no place in our facilities, programs and services, or our society.

"We need to build and support respectful relationships between all people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The work that we do today is going to impact the lives of generations to come. It is for them that we have to do better," Greenwood emphasizes.

Indigenous Health has tremendous appreciation for reviewer Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (Aki-Kwe) and her team for their work, and the almost 9,000 indigenous peoples and health-care workers whose courage to share their stories and experiences help shape this critically important report and blueprint for change.

**For more information, see the following links:**

- [In Plain Sight full report](#)
- [In Plain Sight summary report](#)
- [Ministry of Health statement](#)
- [National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health statement](#)
- [Joint Health Authority statement](#)
- NH Indigenous Staff Wellness Support Line: **250-645-7870 (local 507870)**

## Health and Wellness Support for Indigenous People - Following Release of Addressing Racism Investigation Report

The release of Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's report, [In Plain Sight: An independent investigation into Indigenous-specific discrimination in B.C. health care](#) may trigger distress, bring back traumatic memories or feelings resulting from negative experiences in health care for many Indigenous people, for providers and others involved in the health system. Call the Northern Health Indigenous Staff Wellness Support Line: **250-645-7870 (local 507870)** if you feel like you need support.

Acknowledging that thousands of individuals bravely came forward to share their stories, FNHA wants those individuals to know trauma-informed and culturally safe help is available.

FNHA and other organizations provide culturally safe and trauma-informed cultural, emotional, and mental health counselling services. Elders or Traditional Healers provide cultural supports or Indigenous healing practices. Clients are supported in reclaiming ways of taking care of themselves, their families, their communities and their nations.

**The following resources are available:**

**Tsow Tun Le Lum:** Phone 1-888-403-3123 to access the following cultural supports Levi Martin, James Quatell and Mike Kelly.

**Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS):** at 1-800-721-0066 or 604-985-4464 to access the following cultural supports: Sadie McPhee, Gertie Pierre or Yvonne Rigby Jones. Emotional mental health and counselling services will be accessible from the IRSSS Resolution Health Support Workers.

**The KUU-US Crisis Line Society:** operates a 24-hour provincial Aboriginal crisis line for adults and Elders at 250-723-4050, children and youth at 250-723-2040. Toll-free 1-800-588-8717.

**First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line and On-line Counselling Service:** toll-free at 1-855-242-3310 or through [www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca).

**The Métis Crisis Line:** available 24 hours a day at 1-833-MétisBC, 1-833-638-4722.

Wellness resources are also available on FNHA's [COVID-19 web page](#).

Anyone who is experiencing distress at this time is encouraged to access these resources and to share them with your communities, families, Elders and any other loved ones who may need support.

## Cultural safety: A note from Margo Greenwood, VP Indigenous Health

Please join me in reflecting on [cultural safety](#) and our collective responsibility in creating culturally safe spaces and interactions for all. I would like to share these documents widely, with the hope that they may assist in thinking about and approaching cultural safety. Cultural safety is a broad and complex topic that represents approaches to care, and, outcomes of care. This is especially important during this unprecedented time, the COVID-19 pandemic, which is challenging and pressuring all of us. Even during chaotic and uncertain times, it's so important we think about our actions and how we approach each other.

At Northern Health, the Indigenous Health team is working with leadership, and across the organization to develop and support culturally safe practices across all the work we do, and for the people we serve. It's not just about looking inward, it's about sharing information and assisting others in recognizing their role in making our workplaces and communities safe for everyone and free of negative discrimination and diminishment.

The materials I am sharing here are intended to assist those on this journey. The Indigenous Health [website](#) has additional information, as well as links to provincial and national resources.

Each of us will step into this journey on our own, however, the Indigenous Health team is here to be a part of that journey through providing advice, guidance, and information to staff, physicians, and Northern communities to assist in these times of transformational change.

Cultural Safety resources:

- [Thinking about cultural safety](#)
- [Practical tips during COVID-19](#)



## Federal Government introduces bill to implement UN Indigenous Rights Declaration

The Liberal government has introduced a bill that will begin the process of bringing Canadian law into alignment with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People](#) (UNDRIP).

Bill C-15 was tabled in the House of Commons on December 3, 2020 by Justice Minister David Lametti who said that the bill would chart a path forward for implementing individual and collective rights set out in the declaration.

### What is UNDRIP?

UNDRIP consists of 46 articles which were ratified by the United Nations (UN) that recognize the basic human rights of Indigenous Peoples along with rights to self-determination.

Some of the articles included are: the right of Indigenous Peoples to create their own education system; receive restitution for stolen lands; and to participate in all decision-making that affects their interests.

First introduced at the UN in 2007, 144 countries adopted UNDRIP while 11 countries abstained and four voted against the declaration. The four countries that voted against UNDRIP were Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America.

The Federal government later endorsed UNDRIP in 2010, but the declaration was still not legally binding legislation. If Bill C-15 is passed, federal Canadian law will be more inline with UNDRIP.

### What's next?

If passed, the bill would require the federal government to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the declaration's 46 articles.

The bill also would require the federal government to prepare an action plan within three years of the bill's passage to achieve the declaration's objectives, and to table an annual report detailing progress made.



Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde praised the introduction of the legislation. However, he also noted that the three-year timeline for tabling an action plan is too long.

Bellegarde urged MPs to make improvements to the bill through the legislative process — particularly by spelling out which government department would be responsible for UNDRIP's implementation, and by committing to a periodic review of the legislation.

### **BC first province to adopt UNDRIP**

British Columbia is the first province in Canada to formally adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into law. Bill 41 was passed unanimously in November 2019, and ensures policies and laws within the British Columbia provincial government are in harmony with UNDRIP.

BC's Bill 41, which was developed collaboratively with the [First Nations Leadership Council](#), mandate that each provincial government department create an action plan and provide annual reporting on their progress toward fulfilling the rights specified in the declaration. The BC government said that the legislation will help to create a framework for shaping policies from child welfare, to the environmental

### **Carrier Sekani Family Services opens Sk'ai Zeh Yah Centre in Prince George**

November 20th was [National Child Day](#), and to celebrate, [Carrier Sekani Family Services](#) (CSFS) hosted a grand opening for their new [Prince George Youth Services Building](#), Sk'ai Zeh Yah Centre, in Prince George. Sk'ai Zeh Yah means "children of chiefs" in the Carrier language. National Child Day recognizes Canada's commitment to upholding the rights of children everywhere. CSFS wanted to commemorate the day with the grand opening of the youth centre.

First established in Canada in 1993, National Child Day marks the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. This day is to commemorate and honor



the protection of children's rights as part of this United Nations Convention.

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) outlines the definitive rights that each child is entitled to, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, and so forth. Such rights include the right to survive, develop, and live, and the protection of the law. These are rights not afforded to many Indigenous children living in Canada.

"We want to use this prestigious day to raise awareness about Indigenous Children and the rights they have," says Mary Teegee, CSFS Executive Director of Child and Family Services. "Not only through the UN Convention on the rights of the child – but also through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Really, there should be a National Day of the Indigenous Child."

The state-of-the-art facility provides 24/7 support to at-risk Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from ages eight to 29. The facility will also provide wrap-around supports for at-risk youth and young adults including after school programs, Elder mentorship, employment counselling, and activities that help Indigenous youth connect with their cultural roots.

Watch the grand opening video and learn more about the services offered: <https://youtu.be/sTX95qx2GNk>

## Human Rights Tribunal expands funding criteria for Jordan's Principle



On November 29, 2020 the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) released a ruling that says First Nations children who live on or off-reserve, who do not have Indian Act Status, but who are recognized by their respective Nations for the purpose of applying for funding through Jordan's Principle, can now apply for support.

In addition, the ruling also allows children living on or off-reserve who "are not eligible for, Indian Act status, but who have a parent or guardian with, or eligible for, Indian Act Status."

With the Tribunal's new ruling, a child can qualify by passing any one of these requirements:

- The child is registered or eligible to be registered under the Indian Act;
- The child has one parent/guardian who is registered or eligible to be registered under the Indian Act;
- The child is recognized by their Nation for the purposes of Jordan's Principle; or
- The child ordinarily resides on reserve.

The ruling comes after pressure from [First Nations Child and Family Caring Society](#) and the [Assembly of First Nations](#) (AFN) to address health service inequalities, including delays or denial of services, that First Nations children experience.

### What's Jordan's Principle?

Jordan's principle was put into place to prevent First Nations children from being denied or experiencing delays in receiving health services.

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. Born with complex medical needs, Jordan spent more than two years unnecessarily in hospital while the Province of Manitoba and the federal government argued over who should pay for his at home care. Jordan died in the hospital at the age of five years old, never having spent a day in his family home. Jordan's Principle aims to make sure First Nations children can access all public services in a way that is reflective of their distinct cultural needs, takes full account of the historical disadvantage linked to colonization, and without experiencing any service denials, delays or disruptions because they are First Nations.

Read more about Jordan's Principle on [The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society](#) website.



## Voices from the Field – NCCIH COVID-19 podcast series

Voices from the Field is a podcast series produced by the [National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health](#) (NCCIH), based at the University of Northern BC (UNBC). The podcast focuses on innovative research and community-based initiatives promoting the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada.

The podcast has been in production since 2017, inviting health care professionals from across the country to speak in their areas of expertise. In more recent months, the podcast has become a rich resource for ideas and conversations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Voices from the Field 16 – Supporting grief, mourning, and mental health during COVID-19

Dr. Jeffrey Ansloos discusses everyday foundations of Indigenous Peoples' mental health, well-being, and healing, both broadly as well as specific to the current pandemic.



### Voices from the Field 14 – Doris Young on respecting our Kiteyak during COVID-19

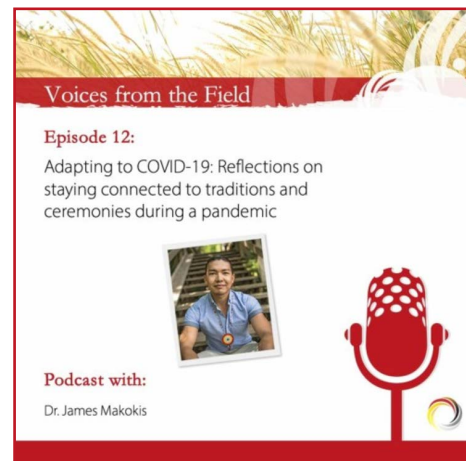
This episode is focused on Doris Young's April 30, 2020 op-ed in the Winnipeg Free Press, *We must remember our responsibility to our Elders*. In the following episode, Ms. Young shares Cree concepts on Elders and reminds us of their significant role for cultural continuity and community well-being. She does this so that we remember our responsibilities to them during a pandemic like COVID-19.



### Voices from the Field 12 – Adapting to COVID-19: Reflecting on staying connected to traditions and ceremonies during a pandemic

Dr. James Makokis, proud Cree and member of the Saddle Lake First Nation, shares ideas about how Indigenous people can stay connected to their Elders and traditions while respecting public health guidelines on social distancing. He also offers thoughts about how ceremonial practices may need to adapt, moving forward, to ensure the continued health and safety of Indigenous people

and communities during this pandemic.



You can listen to these episodes and many more on the NCCIH's [website](#).

## What does Phase 3 mean for First Nations – FNHA podcast

Acting Chief Medical Officer for the [First Nations Health Authority](#) (FNHA), Dr. Shannon McDonald, and Media Relations Specialist, John Moody discuss BC's Phase 3 pandemic response. In this episode, they ask questions like: what does it mean and what can First Nations people do to stay safe and support each other.

Dr. McDonald shares guidance and encouragement for those who may be itching to get out and to travel stating, "stay the course" during this difficult time. "COVID-19 isn't going away, in fact, Dr. Theresa Tam has done modeling that reflects the need to continue responding to COVID-19 the way that we have until an effective vaccine has been developed."

This means continuing to keep your social bubble small with



## Tablet Initiative connects Elders and Knowledge Keepers with Expectant Mothers

A [new project](#) to support Indigenous parents in rural and remote communities is also connecting new and expectant parents throughout the province with Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

For many Indigenous Peoples, the impending birth of a baby is a community celebration, with Elders and Knowledge Keepers sharing love, wisdom and strength to help welcome a new life into the world.

But for many expectant mothers caught up in the COVID-19 pandemic, this time has been one of stress, anxiety and even isolation, as women have physically distanced themselves to protect their health.

It's a situation which Toni Winterhoff, whose traditional name is Ey Cla:ney, can relate to. That's why the mother of three, who is a Health and Children's Specialist at FNHA, recently recounted her own experience in a video intended to share with expectant First Nations mothers.

"I was pretty scared when I found out I was pregnant," said Winterhoff. "I thought I would love this baby, but I wasn't certain if I would know what to do. I wasn't certain if I was a nurturer. I had never witnessed the birthing process. I had no members in my family who had that I could remember. I had no connections to my home. So, I

am so grateful to the Elders who took the time to pour knowledge and love and patience into me to prepare me for the sacred ceremony."

Winterhoff reached out to Elders and Knowledge Keepers interested in providing video messages of encouragement to expectant mothers who may be facing isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, or those who live in rural or remote communities.

Many Elders said when a woman becomes pregnant in the community, the would-be parents, family, and community members would come and sing, tell stories and speak to the child in the womb to prepare him or her for their welcome into the world.

The messages encouraged calmness around the mother, to ensure the Ancestors will come and witness the birth. The mother has to first ensure her own mental, emotional and spiritual health, which in turn will protect the child.

Parents can use these tablets to stay in touch with their families, access apps and websites to support them in the time before, during, and after the sacred ceremony of birth, and connect with medical specialists in maternal and child health.

You can view the videos [here](#).

## Virtual Events

### Alzheimer Awareness Month

January

### Webinar: Indigenous governance and self-determination in planning and responding to COVID-19

January 13, 2021

### Heart Month

February

### World Cancer Day

February 4, 2021

### Pink Shirt Day

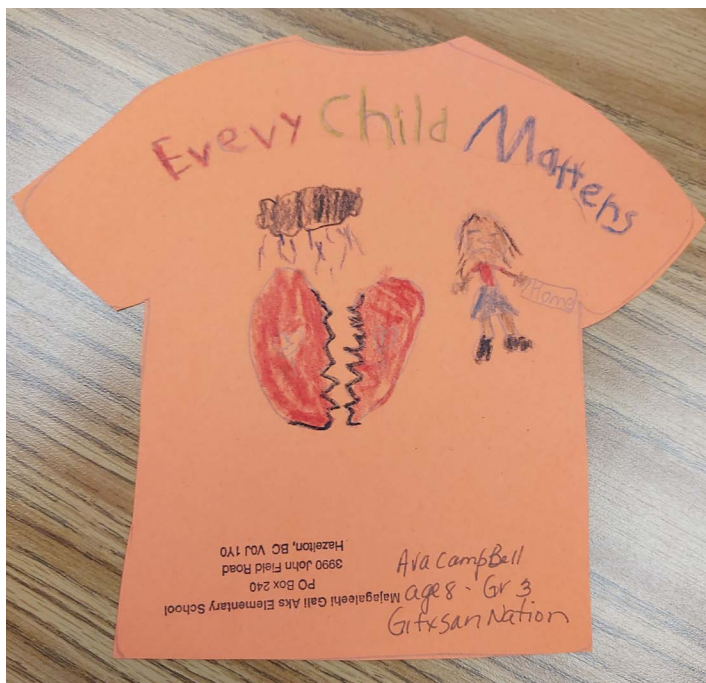
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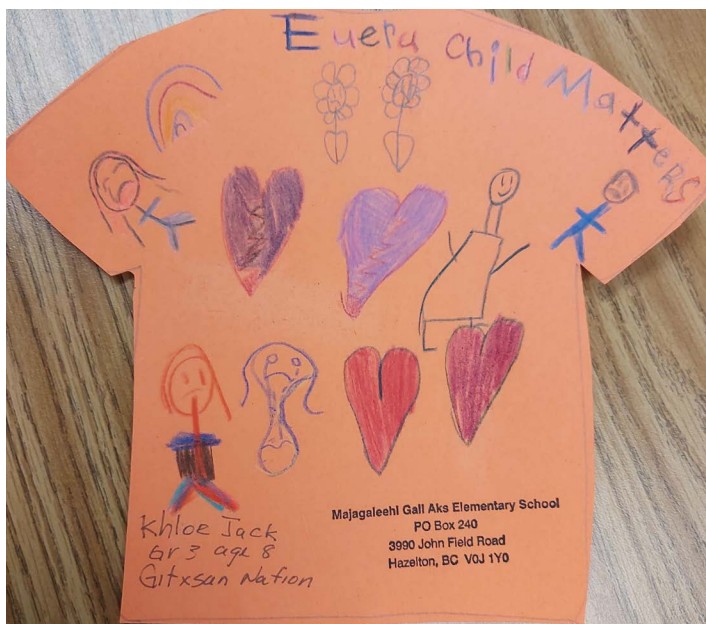
## What does Orange Shirt Day mean to you – t-shirt decorating challenge

In honour of [Orange Shirt Day](#), [First Nations Health Authority](#) (FNHA) and [Indigenous Health](#), NH hosted a t-shirt decorating challenge!

The challenge involved decorating a t-shirt to show what Orange Shirt Day means to you. Submissions from across the North were sent in and here are the three winners.



^ Ava Campbell, Gitksan Nation



^ Khloe Jack, Gitksan Nation



^ Judy April, Dawson Creek

## What is Orange Shirt Day?

[Orange Shirt Day](#) is a day to remember, to witness, and to honour the healing journey of residential-school survivors and their families, and to demonstrate a commitment to processes of reconciliation.

The day celebrates the resilience of Indigenous Peoples and communities and provides an opportunity for all people in Canada to engage in discussions or provide acknowledgement and support in addressing the brutal legacy of the residential school system.

Phyllis' story reminds us everyday of the children that were taken from their families and sent to residential schools. Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year.

Residential schools are a dark part of Canadian history and learning about them can be hard for many people. As hard as it may be for some to learn about residential schools and our shared colonial history, it's critical to acknowledge and recognize these topics in a spirit of reconciliation and for future generations of children.



## 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 [Nazko-Dakelh app](#) is a media-rich bilingual dictionary and phrase collection comprised of words and phrases.

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 [phrases](#) you can learn using the app:

hulhda da dube whunank'uz.

it was very cold yesterday.

a'ah, ndi lhes sut'e dube bat'en.

yes, this fry bread is very delicious.

'aba sulik lhi koo yuba'uhoonla.

dad built a dog house for my dog.

'ama ndi 'indak 'i yudultsis.

mom is smelling the flowers.

datsan mai chun be'unetilh.

the crow is carrying a branch of berries.

a'ah duni ka'utest'ilh.

yes, I am going to hunt moose.

suyats'e 'en nye hatsunulhyeh 'et 'ut'en.

my oldest daughter is working in the garden.

## UPDATES FROM INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Please join us in welcoming two new employees to the [Indigenous Health Team](#), Dr. Roseann Larstone and Ryan Dirnback.

### Dr. Roseann Larstone



Dr. Roseann Larstone is Lead, Research and Community Engagement. Roseann is a Métis woman born and raised in British Columbia with ancestral and family roots in the communities of St. Laurent, Manitoba and Skownan First Nation (Treaty 2).

Roseann comes to Indigenous Health from the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH) where she worked for the last Two and a half years as a Research Associate supporting the NCCIH's activities including knowledge translation and exchange across all areas of public health and coordinating/co-leading partnered projects. Prior to that she was a Research Associate and Lecturer with the Northern Medical Program (NMP).

Roseann began her role on November 16th and is located on the 3rd floor of the Scotiabank Building in Prince George.

She can be reached at [Roseann.Larstone@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Roseann.Larstone@northernhealth.ca) or 250-649-4815.

### Ryan Dirnback



Ryan Dirnback is Lead, Capacity Development and Education. Ryan is of Métis ancestry on his mother's side in the Red River Valley and of Austrian ancestry on his father's side. Ryan was born in Terrace and raised in Burns Lake.

Ryan comes to Indigenous Health from First Nations Health Authority, where he worked for the past three years as a Community Health Practice Consultant for All Nations in the Northern Region. His prior work included directly supporting health leadership with programs and services. Ryan provided direct education and practice support for Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, and Allied Health, with COVID-19 as the most recent focus.

Ryan resides on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh people in Prince George with his wife and dogs. Ryan began his role on November 27th and is located on the 3rd floor of the Scotiabank building.

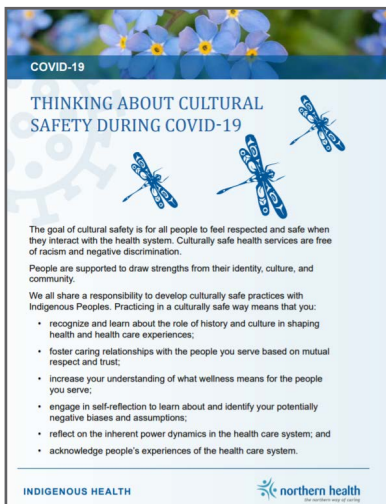
Ryan can be reached at [Ryan.Dirnback@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Ryan.Dirnback@northernhealth.ca)



# Resources



## Thinking about cultural safety during COVID-19



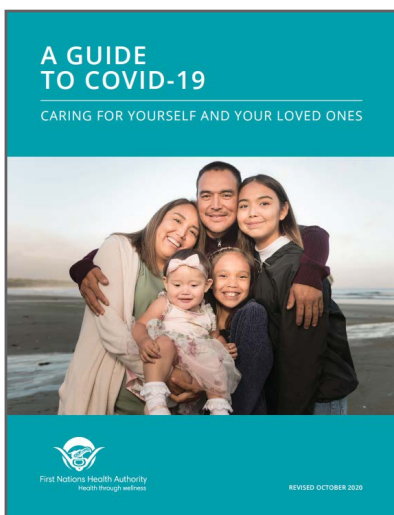
## Disaggregated demographic data collection in British Columbia



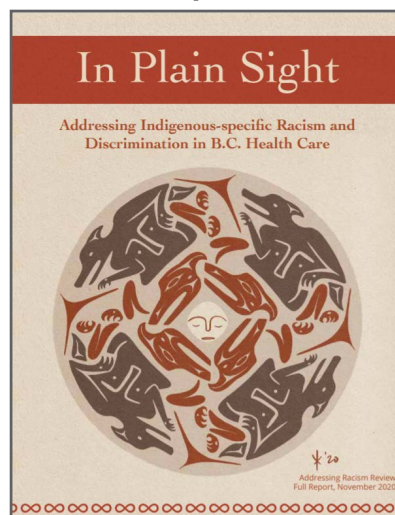
## Maintaining the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and teens during COVID-19



## FNHA: A Guide to COVID-19



## In Plain Sight Report



## Connecting with loved ones in long-term care facilities during COVID-19

