



National Collaborating Centres
for Public Health
Centres de collaboration nationale
en santé publique

Influence-in-action: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health

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Located on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAHA) is the only organization in Canada dedicated to Indigenous health and knowledge translation. Their groundbreaking contributions integrate Indigenous knowledge into public health research, policy and practice, and inform the work of the other NCCs.

Indigenous peoples in Canada experience significant and persistent health inequalities, caused by colonization, intergenerational trauma and racism. To address these complex issues that underpin Indigenous health, the NCCAHA 'walks in both worlds', working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across the country and collaborating with non-Indigenous public health to share information and build capacity. NCCAHA has created significant partnerships with researchers, including an international collaboration to develop a set of core competencies for Indigenous public health.

Opening a space for Indigenous people to have their own voice

- NCCAHA's national gatherings are often held in traditional places such as long houses, and always include traditional food and cultural performances.
- Dialogue circles engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge holders to explore how Indigenous knowledge and western science can be used together.

THREE PRIORITIES TO MOVE THE AGENDA FORWARD

1. Determinants of health

NCCAH recognizes that colonization and colonialism cross-cut and influence all other social determinants of health for Indigenous individuals, families and communities. They have produced a number of resources on [racism in Canada](#), fact sheets on [specific determinants of health](#), and other key resources that explore health inequalities:

- [Determinants of Indigenous peoples' health in Canada - beyond the social](#)
- [Health inequalities and social determinants of Aboriginal peoples' health](#)

2. Emerging issues

NCCAH acknowledges the diverse priorities for Indigenous people who live in urban, rural, remote, and northern communities across Canada. Here are some examples:

- Underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in research, including [randomized controlled trials](#) and [research designs](#).
- [Art and wellness](#) for Indigenous health and healing.
- [Intergenerational](#) trauma and its connection to [mental health and wellness](#).

3. Children, youth and families

NCCAH recognizes that rebuilding Aboriginal health and well-being starts with children. They have created a large number of resources including a series of [four parenting booklets](#) in collaboration with the BC First Nations Health Authority.

Other examples:

- Four [videos based on national gatherings](#) to address challenges faced by Indigenous parents and caregivers and to foster healing and strength across generations.
- Health care providers participated in a series of Indigenous cultural competency training webinars including webinars on [trauma-informed care](#), [cultural safety](#) and [anti-Indigenous racism](#).





CASE STORY

Opening a space to integrate Indigenous perspectives and build cultural awareness

One popular video series developed by the NCCAH is helping public health and other audiences across Canada understand traditional and contemporary Indigenous roles. The videos reveal how Indigenous children, parents, and families can be strengthened and better supported. The series also opens the door for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to play a greater role in public health.

Videos expand the reach and impact of national gatherings

Four videos, each about 20 minutes long, are based on information shared at national gatherings convened by the NCCAH over six years. The content addresses challenges faced by Indigenous parents and caregivers, particularly the negative effects of residential schools and child welfare policies that fragmented relationships for mothers, fathers and families, and interrupted the flow of traditional cultural practices from one generation to another.

Each video is accompanied by a comprehensive summary:

- *Messages from the heart: caring for our children* highlights successful programs and strategies for Indigenous parents, families and communities. Elders and young parents share their wisdom and experience in raising children.
- *Family is the focus* describes the process to develop a collective consensus statement on how to strengthen support for the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families and communities.

With Dad video engages wide range of audiences

Shared at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this video has brought the issue of involvement of Indigenous fathers to the forefront of mainstream media, academic literature, and policy development across Canada.

- ***Sacred space of womanhood: Mothering across the generations*** explores cultural transmission from grandmothers to mothers-to-be in the post-residential school era.
- ***With Dad: strengthening the circle of care*** examines the urgent need for a stronger role for Indigenous fathers in communities, programs, research, and policies.



A bridge to share knowledge and build cultural safety

The videos have sparked a dialogue on topics that are not usually discussed, by addressing important and difficult issues in a safe and culturally-appropriate way. The visual format is also particularly effective in engaging groups with low literacy, and Elders who speak only their Indigenous language.

Interest in the videos has been very strong, thanks to widespread promotion at national and provincial conferences, on NCC websites, and through social media. They have been used as a training resource in a variety of settings, from academic to community level parenting and family programming, and in training workshops, and postsecondary curriculum for early childhood education, social work, and counselling programs.

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Strengthening public health across Canada: The influence of the National Collaborating Centres for Public Health is available in its entirety in electronic format (PDF) at www.nccph.ca.

La version française est également disponible au www.ccnsp.ca sous le titre *Appuyer la santé publique partout au Canada – l'influence des Centres de collaboration nationale en santé publique*.

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