



Acknowledging the Impact of Residential Schools on Indigenous Peoples

Recent confirmations of unmarked graves of Indigenous children have impacted us all in different ways. The Ministry of Health must acknowledge the impact on Indigenous peoples including First Nations, Inuit and Métis throughout Canada. We extend our condolences to the families who lost their loved ones and survivors of the residential school system. We lift our hands and hearts to the Indigenous leadership and communities as they continue to go through the investigations, confirmations, identification and mourning.

This validates what many survivors have spoken about for years¹ and serves as a stark reminder of the devastating injustices done through the residential school system. We know this has resurfaced painful memories and feelings. The ministry's Indigenous Health and Reconciliation team continues to work with the [First Nations Health Authority](#), other regional health authorities as well as Indigenous partners to support community directed needs.

Indigenous people in B.C. who would like support can reach out to the following:

- First Nations Health Authority – [Mental Health Benefit](#)
- Indian Residential School Survivors Society – [24 Hour Crisis Line](#)
- KUU-US Crisis Line Society – [24 Hour Crisis Line](#)
- Métis Nation BC – [Mental Health Services](#)
- Visit [FNHA's website](#) for additional mental health and wellness resources

The ministry is committed to meaningful reconciliation and supporting Indigenous health and wellbeing. We also know that Indigenous peoples continue to experience inequities and racism within the health system.

We are working with First Nations, Métis and Urban Indigenous health service organizations to transform how B.C.'s health system serves Indigenous peoples. We continue to support the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, B.C. health authorities including the First Nations Health Authority and other Indigenous partners in ensuring culturally safe health programs and services for Indigenous peoples.

In addition to implementing the [Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), we are committed to implementing the cross-ministry recommendations from the [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#) report and promoting cultural humility within the Ministry of Health and in health services throughout the province. We also continue to honour key agreements with Indigenous partners and strive to fulfill the [Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) and [Calls to Justice from Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) as foundations for our approach to reconciliation.

There is still much work to do. We must address Indigenous-specific racism by listening to hard truths with dedicated attention and compassion. This requires us to hold ourselves accountable to make sure we do not perpetuate a culture of racism as well as oppressive systems, and that we support humility as we work towards equality and safety for all British Columbians.

¹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) noted that large numbers of Indigenous children who were sent to residential schools never returned to their home communities. Some children ran away, and others died at the schools. The students who did not return have come to be known as the Missing Children. The Missing Children Project documents the deaths and the burial places of children who died while attending the schools. To date, more than 4,100 children who died while attending a residential school have been identified. (Source: <http://www.trc.ca/events-and-projects/missing-children-project.html>)

We welcome your input and feedback. Contact us at: MOHNewsletter@gov.bc.ca

