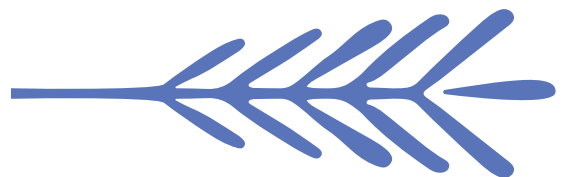




# Annual Report

Meaning and Transition

2021 / 2022



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

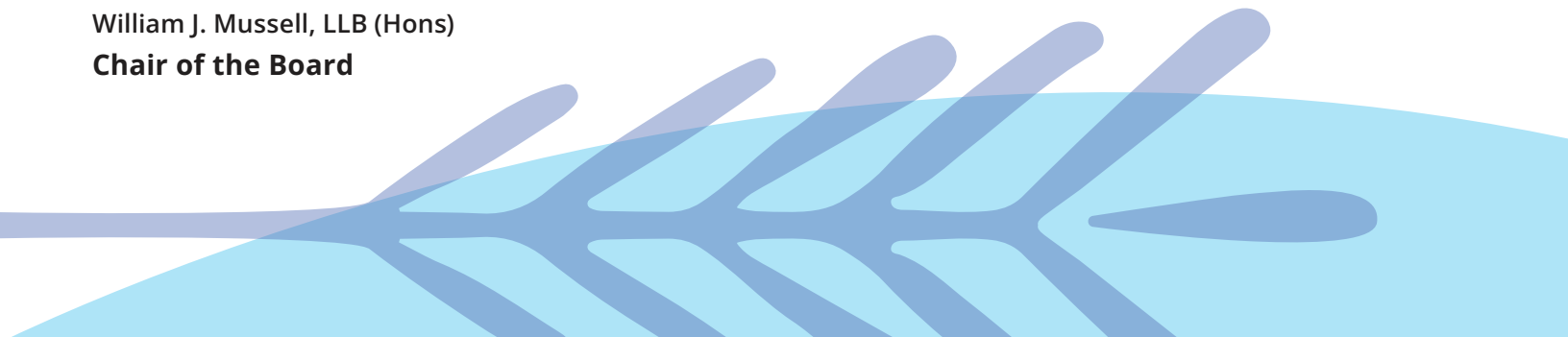
I am pleased to share a few thoughts as I approach my final days as the President and Chair of the First Peoples Wellness Circle (FPWC) and consider the challenges of serving as a Thought Leader for this new and dynamic service organization. My preparation for this work began to take shape over 60 years ago as I graduated from high school and became actively engaged with university studies and as a volunteer with the committee which became instrumental in the further creation of the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB) under the leadership of the late George Manual. Issues of the day included very serious concerns respecting health, absence of opportunities to make a living and to gain access to relevant education and training for gainful employment, compounded by poverty and inadequate social and academic schooling, and scarcity of land and associated resources upon which our indigenous communities relied before the settlers moved in.



Studies in social work, education, adult education and mental health included engagement with Dr. Clare Brant, the creator in 1990 of the Native Mental Health Association of Canada (NMHAC) that helped to bring the science of mental health closer to First Nations, Inuit and Metis of our country. He welcomed those who were inspired to bring awareness, understanding, and knowledge of health, wellness, and healing to our country's First Peoples. Through engagement of this kind, I came to meet other like-minded First Nations leaders who joined with me to further the development of the NMHAC. They included Joan Glode, Ed Connors, Brenda Restoule, Gaye Hanson, Marlene Brant Castellano, Caroline Tait and dedicated others, both indigenous and non-indigenous, who were instrumental in the creation and early development of the First Peoples Wellness Circle, incorporated in 2018.

Following incorporation, I had the pleasure of serving as the President and Chair of the FPWC and always appreciated the time, energy, and talents members of the board of directors shared regardless of our financial circumstances, believing in the value of our hopes and dreams connected with teachings of our ancestors, the Great Spirit and Mother Earth, featured in our respective Origin Stories and reflected in our worldviews, while at the same time respecting the knowledge and wisdom of other societies that have washed upon our shores. The gifts and talents of these members have enabled us to move forward quite comfortably while we built the organization and its capacities to restore core aspects of our respective cultural foundations to sustain health and wellness as families constituting our communities. May we continue to sustain our growth and development in the spirit with which it was founded.

**William J. Mussell, LLB (Hons)**  
**Chair of the Board**



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I'm pleased to share our Annual Report titled "Meaning and Transition" that highlights transitions made during the pandemic by our organization and the Indigenous mental wellness workforce as everyone continues to adapt to the impacts of the pandemic. FPWC held our very first national virtual gathering where Mental Wellness Teams share the creative ways they work with and support communities to live a good life. We heard about land based programs and creative uses of virtual platforms to reconnect communities to culture, language, knowledge, life skills and increase feelings of connection and belonging. The gathering highlighted the strength and capacity of Mental Wellness Teams to support communities during the pandemic.

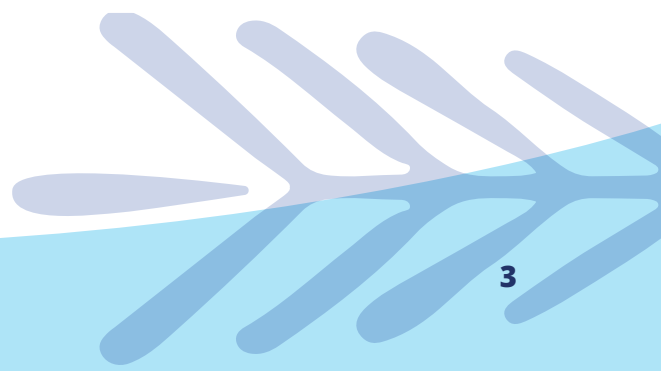
The 2021/2022 fiscal year continued to be directed by the pandemic response and by incidents of colonial trauma against Indigenous people. The uncovering of mass graves/sites of children who attended the former Indian Residential Schools at Tk'emlups te Secwepemc (Kamloops) retriggered traumas and trauma reactions for Indigenous people. It highlighted that racism, discrimination and inequities in systems continue to cause unnatural premature death of Indigenous people in Canada. These events demand systems change and FPWC participated in many roundtables to talk about how to transform systems to ensure Indigenous people have access to equitable services for wellbeing.

Indigenous communities are in a time of transition where there is greater acknowledgement, use and recognition for the need for a transformed system with equitable space of Indigenous knowledge and evidence within and despite systems. Indigenous people are embracing key elements of the First Nation Mental Wellness Continuum Framework, using culture as a foundation to programs and services. The report features media/social campaigns, partnerships, research and initiatives intended to create systems change in mental wellness that are aimed at addressing racism, discrimination and colonial bias found throughout the healthcare and education systems. We placed great emphasis on continuing to support access to culturally relevant, community driven resources and services which are essential to supporting First Nation communities and its members to address their mental wellness needs. This report features FPWC's virtual training, webinars, gatherings and learning opportunities on cultural and two-eyed seeing approaches to care that build capacity, highlight wise practices and build networks for the workforce. While building capacity we heard the challenges experienced by the workforce around worker wellness and we designed multiple forms of training and learning to address this new priority for the MWTs.

I'm grateful for the dedication, commitment and knowledge of FPWC staff and Board who all contributed to the good work done over the past year. So we encourage you to review the report and recognize how the many facets of our work engender meaning during times of transition that can build purpose and hope for a culturally responsive system of care.



**Brenda M Restoule, Ph.D., C.Psych**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



# BUILDING CAPACITY OF MENTAL WELLNESS TEAMS

Supporting our stakeholders during the pandemic in 2021-2022, we explored meaningful ways to provide Mental Wellness, Crisis Response Teams and the Indian Residential School Resolution Health Support Program Workforce with access to learning curriculum grounded in Indigenous Knowledge and a Two-Eyed Seeing Approach. Despite not being able to connect with our stakeholders in-person we continued to find new and diverse ways to support stakeholders through Virtual Learning Series, Gatherings, Webinars and training. This year we focused on enhancing capacity related to offering services virtually or in unique ways as we recognized this workforce felt the pressure to address the negative effects from the pandemic by providing increased support to the communities and populations they service.

Over the course of the pandemic we heard from our stakeholders that the communities they service were experiencing higher rates of need and it was critically important for them to develop skills and strategies that would build wellbeing in the communities. The workforce shared the need to provide programs and services that are built on the foundation of First Nation knowledge and cultural practices to address loss, pandemic fatigue, anxiety, depression and substance misuse. With the workforce having multiple demands of their time we offered a variety of approaches to enhance their learning including **Accredited Training** and **Learning Circles** that promoted Indigenous experts on using Indigenous methodologies to support wellbeing.

Three **Learning Circles** were delivered to over 125 individuals from MWT and RHSP workforce from across the country.

Topics that were explored and presenters included:



FPWC continues to work with their partner, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation (TPF), to provide the MWT network access to culturally relevant and accredited training that builds skills, knowledge and capacity to support wellness in First Nation communities. This year, the mental wellness teams workforce were offered 9 different training opportunities, including a Train the Trainer training, that could enhance knowledge transmission for the workforce. Over 100 training seats were filled by the workforce.

**Mental Wellness Teams accessed the following *Accredited Training*:**



Trauma Informed Training



Culture As Foundation



Community Crisis Response



Buffalo Riders Early Intervention



Pharmacology



Land for Healing and Train the Trainer



Cannabis Education for FN Train the Trainer



Let's Talk Cannabis

Using a case consultation model, FPWC offered learning to MW and CS Teams in early 2022, that brings together helpers to share best practices. Presented by helpers and Elders or cultural practitioners, the ***Facilitation of Care Learning Series (FCLS)*** embraces a two-eyed seeing approach by bridging the perspectives of traditional and western healing approaches and practices to explore issues and treatment approaches in caring for communities.

Forty-one helpers from across Turtle Island, participated in the first of these ongoing interactive learning sessions, Belonging and Connection: How Do these concepts support life and prevent premature unnatural death. Those who participated in the first session expressed appreciation for the sharing of traditional knowledge, representing diverse teachings from across Turtle Island. The interest in this type of learning will be continued in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

The quote below shared a key takeaway that will support them while working with community members:

***"The importance of ceremony and ritual in times of death to connect people to their family, community and culture. It was the first time I heard the term post-vention and really opened my mind to suicide prevention in a different, more culturally-appropriate way."***



## National Gathering

Throughout the pandemic, First Nation communities demonstrate how their knowledge, strengths and gifts were central to their well-being. Caregivers and the mental wellness workforce continued to support the First Nations despite the increased gaps and challenges faced by the communities during the pandemic. Stories of innovation, resilience and hope were a reminder that First Nations culture, language, territories, and values of caring for one another could ensure well-being into the future. However, the work required to care for our bundles often took on new meaning, as many had to balance multiple roles to support their communities as workers, family caregivers and community members.

To provide support in this area, First Peoples Wellness Circle held a National Virtual Gathering called *Caring for our Bundles: Healing and Resilience During and After the Pandemic*. This event took place between November 16 – 18, 2021. This gathering featured keynote speakers, discussion panels, knowledge exchange workshops and a virtual exhibition hall and highlighted work done to address the impacts of the pandemic.

The topics of the gathering highlighted the foundation of our culture and language and attended to holistic wellness in prevention, healing and self-care within the workforce. Participants included Mental Wellness and Crisis Support teams workforce, Knowledge Keepers, community helpers, partners and allies. The gathering also provided an opportunity for participants to celebrate their teams, connect with one another and support their well-being.



FPWC - Caring for Our Bundles National Gathering - Nov. 16-19, 2021  
DAY 1



FPWC - Caring for Our Bundles National Gathering - Nov. 16-19, 2021  
DAY 2



FPWC - Caring for Our Bundles National Gathering - Nov. 16-19, 2021  
DAY 3

"The gathering really filled my bundle and re-energized me to continue the necessary work in my community."

"The gathering ran smoothly and all the speakers were amazing."

"It was amazing and inclusive! The western world could learn so much!"

"Thoroughly enjoyable. Valuable information from knowledgeable speaker."

"Learned a lot and met some very strong, powerful women."



## FIRST PEOPLES WELLNESS CIRCLE NATIONAL GATHERING - VIRTUAL

*Caring for our Bundles: Healing and Resilience During and After the Pandemic*  
November 16, 17 & 18, 2021

164  
Registered  
Participants

10  
Expert  
Guest  
Speakers

9  
Virtual  
Exhibitor  
Booths

34  
Participant  
Prize Boxes  
Shared

1  
Excellent  
Emcee

Easy to use  
interactive  
virtual  
platform

207  
Participants  
over 3 days

Very  
Positive  
Participant  
Feedback

People are  
ready to  
reconnect in  
person



## Building Capacity for Virtual Care

FPWC surveyed the workforce in 2021 to learn more about the needs and capacity in delivering virtual care and virtual services. We heard that most MWT members are using some type of virtual platform to deliver their programs and services and anticipate this will continue post pandemic. The survey revealed that most are using virtual platforms for one-on-one client support but other uses relate to staff meetings, in service training, and to a lesser degree, group work, workshops and community programs. A benefit to use of virtual platforms was reported by the teams.

*"Now I can host one workshop and hit six communities at the same time – not getting burned out from driving. I developed a virtual values program for all six communities – five days a week of Zoom sessions on different topics. For individuals and families in their homes. It's beneficial because people in the home can listen in and learn from the program. It's also helpful because it reduces barriers to getting to programs and services."*

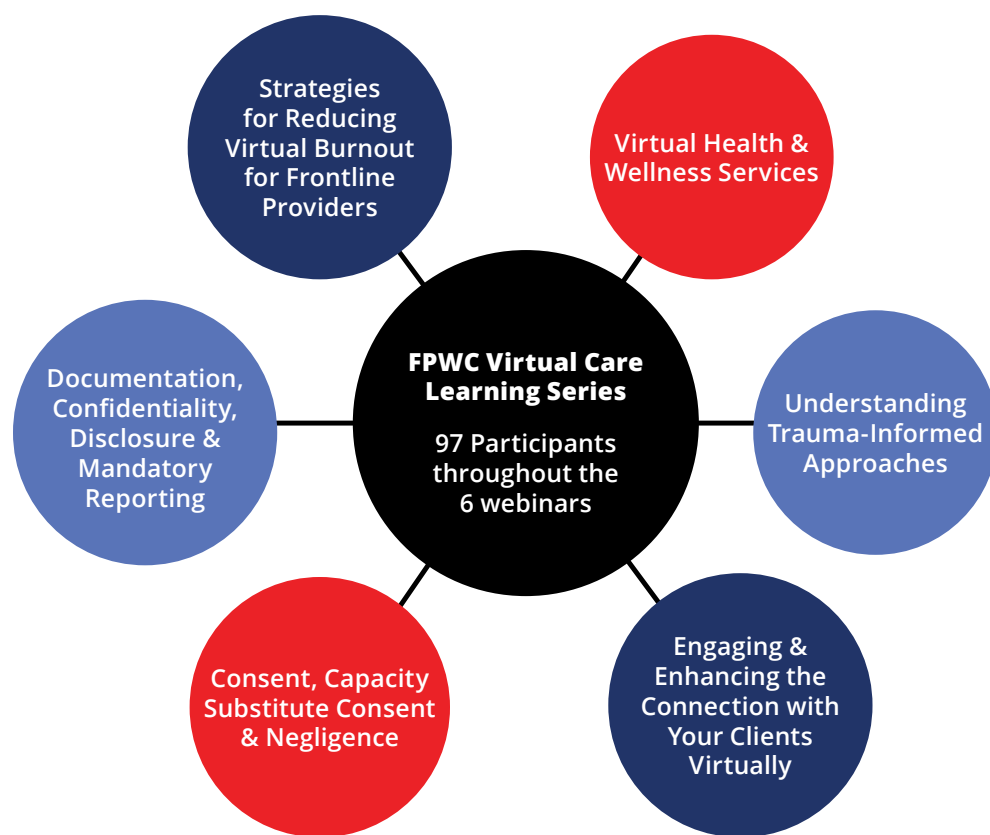
We heard that virtual services are not always feasible or accessible for some MWT and the communities they service. Main reasons identified include:

- Lack of connectivity
- Lack of access to equipment or technology
- Limited phone plans that would allow for texting
- Organizational barriers related to costs
- Lack of knowledge on using virtual platforms
- Discomfort with virtual platforms (i.e, being in front of camera)
- Cultural programs not well suited for virtual platforms



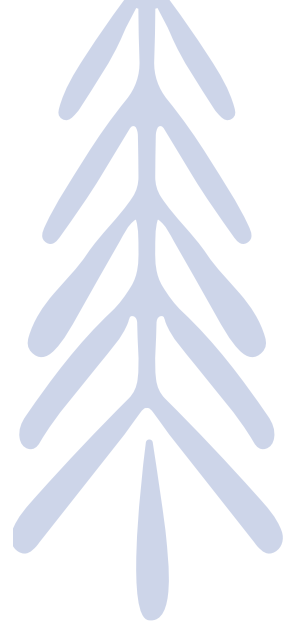
Although FPWC had provided MWT with the option of a virtual platform, Cloud DX, to offer one-on-one services, our survey revealed that uptake of the platform was low for users and non-users. Information suggests that the platform was not user friendly, access to technical support was less than adequate and the platform was not well oriented for mental health professionals. Both users and non-users of the platform reported increased promotion of the platform and access to technology provided by FPWC as well as working collaboratively with coordinators or MWT leaders may have increased usage of the platform. A large number of participants agreed that the training on the platform was sufficient but indicated that specific training geared to healers and Elders on how to use the platform for cultural interventions would be advantageous. Based on this feedback FPWC elected to explore alternate virtual platforms that are geared to the mental wellness workforce and began work on a pilot project to identify some best practices in supporting uptake of virtual platforms by MWT.

Recognizing that MWT continues to use a variety of virtual platforms, FPWC offered webinars to enhance knowledge, skills and capacity to utilize virtual platforms with those they support. Six webinars were delivered by content experts to approximately 100 MWT team members from coast to coast to coast.



## Enhancing Wellness and Self-care of Workers

Indigenous frontline community workers are at higher-than-average risk for experiencing vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout as a direct result of colonial impacts on Indigenous communities. The colonial traumas of racism and the uncovering of mass graves at former Indian Residential Schools have heightened the likelihood of threats to the wellbeing of our frontline workforce. Through the delivery of an interactive learning series we explored strategies to address and reduce secondary trauma to the workforce in the summer and fall of 2021.



### **Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue & Burnout**

delivered once in the summer for the MWT workforce and once in the fall for the IRS Support workforce.

**65**

**Total Participants**  
31 MWT & 34 IRS



### **Workplace, Decision-Making & Pandemic Fatigue**

delivered once in the summer for the MWT workforce.

**27**

**Total Participants**

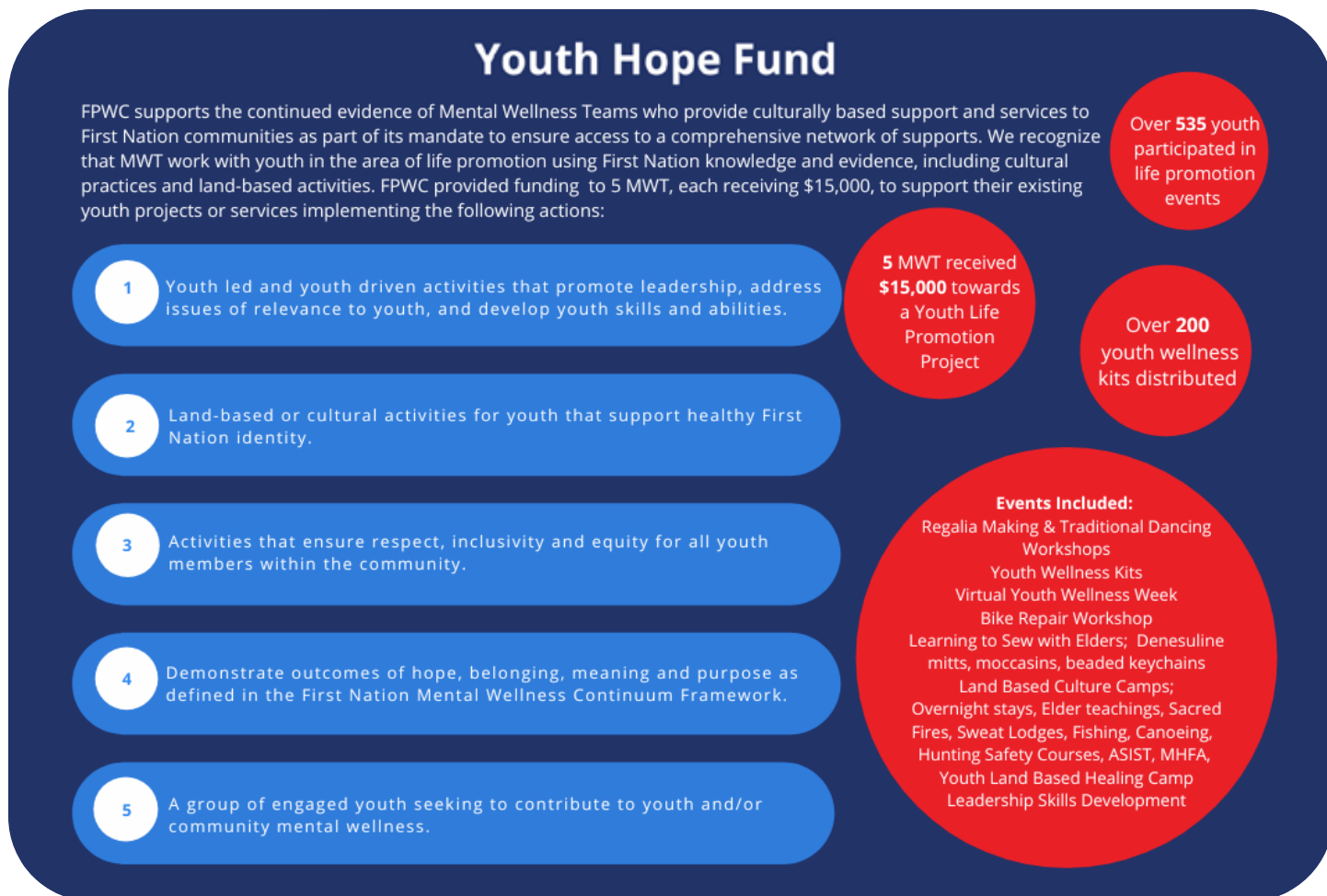
## Workforce Wellness Learning Curriculum

Offering Workplace Well-Being Learning Curriculum for Front-Line Workers in First Nations & Indigenous Communities was identified in response to supporting workers on their own healing and self-care journey. Healthy workplace wellbeing is important, as it impacts the workforces ability to positively support their clients. This learning curriculum will be an extension of the original webinars delivered in summer and fall and will provide managers and frontline staff with knowledge and resources on workplace fatigue, decision-making fatigue, pandemic fatigue, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and burnout. Furthermore, this training provides strategies for the workforce to address triggers and promote self-care and wellness. This training will undergo its first pilot in 2022-2023.

# SUPPORTING LIFE PROMOTION

Life promotion provides an Indigenous perspective on how individuals can live a long and healthy life. It is a holistic approach that addresses spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical wellness by attending to the Indigenous determinants of health, as seen in the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum framework. FPWC continues to support Life Promotion initiatives in a variety of ways, including our own mandate supporting youth led and land based activities. We also continue to support initiatives through partnerships that seek to enhance culturally based supports, relationship building and capacity building.

## Youth Hope Fund



## Promoting Life Together (PLT) Collaborative

FPWC work alongside partner Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC), on the [\*Promoting Life Together \(PLT\) Collaborative\*](#), continued in 2021-2022 with the roll out of [\*14 knowledge sharing products\*](#) following the completion of the 18 month collaborative to share the story of collaboration and relationship development that was required to bring together different world views and facilitate the life promotion work with teams from across northern, rural, and remote parts of Turtle Island.



## Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Promotion

FPWC is supporting 16 individuals from the Mental Wellness Team workforce in the Atlantic region to participate in the [\*Feather Carriers Leadership for Life Promotion\*](#) training. The year-long life promotion training is an approach that speaks to the hearts and minds of people working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals and families who are at risk of premature death, as well as supporting loss and survivors. Gathered from all directions, Feather Carriers brings the knowledge and experience of the whole community into practice and builds on the values and belief that in this present time, life is worth living. The training also supports the development of community leaders through Indigenous knowledge and cultural understandings of life promotion, so they can continue to promote life and prevent premature death (i.e. suicide) in our communities. The graduation ceremony is scheduled for Winter 2022/2023.



# PARTNERSHIPS: ADVOCACY, SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

## Soar Above Stigma

In partnership with Thunderbird Partnership Foundation (TPF), First Nation Health Managers Association (FNHMA) and Nation Talk, FPWC launched the anti-stigma campaign ***"Soar Above Stigma"***. The central themes of Hope, Belonging, Meaning and Purpose were used to connect with First Nation values to stop stigma for mental illness, substance misuse and COVID. The campaign aimed to offer support to those during the pandemic, through television advertisements, social media campaigns, an online docu-series and podcasts.



Metrics below were prepared by Nation Talk.



# COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP WITH THUNDERBIRD PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION AND HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE CANADA

In November 2021, First Peoples Wellness Circle (FPWC), Thunderbird Partnership Foundation (TPF) and Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC), announced a new Commitment to Partnership, focused on advancing the recognition and understanding of cultural knowledge as a meaningful and necessary component to mentally well First Nation citizens and communities. Through this partnership with Healthcare Excellence Canada and Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, we continue to demonstrate our collective intentions at decolonizing health systems to ensure First Nations people have culturally competent and safe services for wellbeing through ongoing efforts at advocacy and highlighting practice-based evidence. FPWC recognizes collaborative partnerships with non-Indigenous organizations such as HEC builds allyship that ensures equitable rights to health and wellbeing for First Nations are achieved. This partnership is currently exploring opportunities for policy changes directed at supporting the workforce.

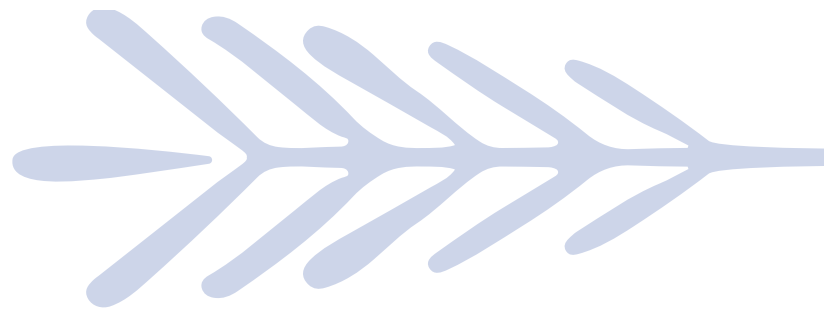


# FIRST NATION HEALTH MANAGERS ASSOCIATION (FNHMA)

## Knowledge Transmission and Promoting MWT Evidence

Dr. Brenda Restoule, CEO of FPWC was a frequent guest speaker on the [\*FNHMA Weekly Virtual Town Hall\*](#) where she joined other featured speakers to provide credible and reliable information, resources, and updates about what their organizations were doing to support First Nations communities and the workforce to combat COVID – 19. Many of the sessions that Dr. Restoule presented addressed wellness, self-care and healing. Responding to the demand for a focus on mental wellness at the Townhalls FPWC featured Indigenous experts Dr. Edward Connors, Dr. Chris Mushquash, Julie Coote and Lisa Meawasige from the Maamwesying MWT who spoke about supporting children, youth, adults and community wellbeing.

- [\*FNHMA Town Hall \(ENG\) March 8, 2022\*](#)
- [\*FNHMA Town Hall \(ENG\) February 1, 2022\*](#)
- [\*FNHMA Town Hall \(FR\) June 30, 2021\*](#)
- [\*FNHMA Town Hall \(ENG\) May 26, 2021\*](#)



## Addressing Racism

In our commitment to support the workforce we continue to work collaboratively with FNHMA on issues that directly impact First Nation communities. FPWC participated in ongoing Ministerial dialogues on anti-Indigenous racism in 2020 and January 2021 that informed roundtable discussions delivered by partners FNHMA and HEC, that brought together health system leaders, to take action on racism experienced by First Nations patients/families in healthcare systems across Canada. FPWC also endorsed the FNHMA 2021 annual conference, *Rise Against Racism*, where we delivered a message of Hope and Resilience to the workforce as one step in a larger initiative intended to address and eradicate racism in the healthcare system that we are poised to launch in the 2022-2023 fiscal.



## Mental Wellness Supports for Events

FPWC utilized the National Mental Wellness Team Database to invite Team members to act as Wellness Supports for gatherings, conferences and meetings to our partners, recognizing that participants could be triggered during a gathering where sensitive topics are discussed. The intention of Wellness Supports is to ensure that anyone participating in these events who are triggered or experiencing emotional distress could receive immediate emotional support. A total of 2 organizations (in addition to FPWC) accessed 11 mental health supports. Organizations that accessed these supports include the Chiefs of Ontario and World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference (WISPC). In addition to coordinating emotional support for WISPC participants, FPWC was pleased to endorse the conference where the FPWC logo was included in the conference program and website as well as throughout the daily conference proceedings.

## Indian Residential School Resolution Health Support Program (RHSP)

The overarching aim of the RHSP is to provide former IRS students and their families with cultural, emotional, and mental health counseling services through the RHSP workforce. FPWC embarked on a qualitative assessment of the IRS RHSP by engaging survivors to understand how the program supported their healing. Using Indigenous research methodologies the IRS workforce guided and directed this work from design, data gathering and analysis. The [\*final report\*](#) highlighted the following strengths of the program:

- RHSP connects survivors and families (and others impacted by colonial traumas) with culturally safe and culturally knowledgeable providers using trauma informed approaches to support their healing.
- RHSP enabled survivors to begin restoring family relationships.
- RHSP offered support for healing centered around reclamation of identity and cultural strengths including use of land based healing to overcome trauma.
- A key strength is its ability to embrace all expressions of spirituality and provides a pathway for individuals to regain their traditional ways.
- RHSP ensured services were accessible in the ancestral languages which cultivated healing by providing a sense of identity and feelings of connection to the broader community.
- COVID impacts to survivors were reduced by the good work of the RHSP workforce and acknowledged the need for RHSP culturally based services to support recovery from the pandemic.

**Moving forward survivors highlighted the following key elements to enhance and strengthen the RHSP:**

- Addressing urgent needs of others impacted by colonial traumas (IDS, MMIWG, Sixties Scoop) through expanded and customized services.
- Creating a life course approach within the RHSP that is distinctive and uniquely tailored.
- Building a quality care system around wholistic healing services with the RHSP integrated within this landscape.
- Expanding culturally based services.
- Expanding a culturally safe workforce through resources, training, capacity building and succession planning.
- Building a 'caring for carers' component to the RHSP.
- Expand the workforce to meet increased service demands that ensures services are provided by Indigenous providers that are holistic, community lead and culturally based.

Nearing the completion of this report, mass graves were uncovered at Kamloops and other former Indian Residential Schools which resulted in the increased demand for the RHSP and its workforce by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. We heard that the work of the RHSP was necessary to support government, leaders, health and social workforces and all Canadians to support healing and reconciliation. The Working Group called for a *formative analysis*, due in fall 2022, that will explore current and projected needs of the RSHP by examining:

- Surge impacts on the RHSP services with an additional focus on needs for crisis response, stabilization and aftercare.
- RHSP supports contribute to planning processes and emotional safety for ground penetrating radar searches, discovery, identification and repatriation ceremonies.
- Explore supportive links to other sectors and leadership which are emerging as new pressures.
- Provide recommendations, opportunities or options for additional resources to support annual commemorative activities associated with National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



## School Mental Health Ontario

FPWC works in collaborative partnership with School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) to support the improvement and enhancement of mental wellness for Indigenous students in schools. FPWC and SMHO gathered a 14-member Advisory Circle made up of Indigenous leaders in education and mental wellness to develop a proposal for Indigenous-specific programming to support Indigenous students in schools. The proposal, *RISE to the Challenge Project*, was built from a literature review, a jurisdictional scan, key informant interviews and focus groups with students and school personnel. Information gathered revealed that there is no existing school mental wellness program that targets Indigenous students across the country that is comprehensive, scaled across provinces or territories, or receives sustainable resources. The proposed multi-year program (see link) seeks to provide culturally relevant school based mental health programming while simultaneously attending to school conditions that disrupt colonial legacies and impacts and staff learning and capacity, to ensure that Indigenous students feel safe and supported at school each day. The proposal is currently under review by the Ministry of Education in Ontario.

Building off of this proposal, FPWC is currently developing school based resources related to Indigenous student mental wellness. These resources will provide school administrators, teachers and support staff with tools, strategies and resources to attend to school conditions and improve school personnel knowledge and capacity to support Indigenous students. An additional resource will also be created for Indigenous parents and caregivers to enhance their knowledge and skills to advocate and support their children in the educational system. The launch of these resources is anticipated for the 2022-2023 school year.

Finally, at the invitation of SMHO, Dr Restoule accepted a co-chair position to work with other system partners in education to review and make adaptations to the Social and Emotional Learning curriculum for Ontario schools. The intention of the review was to consider the unique needs of Indigenous and Black students who are not being well-served by the existing curriculum. The adaptations consider the unique cultural needs of Indigenous and Black students which resulted in the Identity Affirming Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum that was submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Education.

## Research Partnerships

FPWC continues to build its capacity to conduct culturally relevant research on mental wellness that can benefit Indigenous communities and the mental wellness workforce.

### Suicide and Life Promotion

In the 2021-2022 fiscal year we were actively engaged with the Ontario Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR), particularly in the area of suicide prevention/life promotion and complex crisis response. Partnering with the University of Toronto and the Center for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) a literature review Indigenous Suicide Risk Assessment in the Canadian Context (see YouTube webinar presentation here <https://youtu.be/SI0QohQ7Bn4>). In March 2022 over 40 frontline mental wellness workers made up primarily of Mental Wellness Teams were gathered for a knowledge exchange activity that would highlight evidence based practices related to life promotion and suicide prevention. A major theme of this knowledge exchange gathering revealed the use of cultural knowledge and practices as a primary strategy in reducing suicide rates in Indigenous communities. Participants indicated the need for more culturally relevant resources and tools to attend to risk assessment that recognizes the impacts of colonialism and trauma to adequately address risk.

### Dementia

Ongoing work with the Anishinabek Nation and Laurentian University in the area of dementia continued in this fiscal year. A dementia assessment tool was created by Laurentian University and is currently being piloted. FPWC provided a webinar on dementia and mental wellness to support knowledge building and build capacity within the Anishinabek Nation communities.



# WORKING TO CREATE SYSTEMS CHANGE FOR FIRST NATION MENTAL WELLNESS

Continuing the work of ensuring mental wellness for First Nations peoples is built on a strong foundation of First Nation culture and knowledge, as outlined in the First Nation Mental Wellness Continuum Framework, remains an integral part of the core activities of FPWC. We continue to work with our partners, the Implementation Team and youth partners to bring about systemic changes and advocate for ongoing investments in mental wellness, especially during the pandemic.

## **In 2021-2022, FPWC continued to lead, support or partner in implementation of the Framework through the following activities:**

- Development of an orientation package that would assist First Nation, government and non-Indigenous partners and organizations to become familiar with the key tenets of the Framework in order to effectively implement change across systems.
- Continued engagement of Indigenous youth networks that can utilize the Framework to advance youth priorities.
- Ongoing development of an evaluation model for the Framework.
- highlight key tenets of the Framework in child and youth mental health promotion research supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Advise at provincial tables developing mental wellness programs or services that will impact Indigenous people.
- Identifying and highlighting Indigenous practice based evidence to support pandemic recovery.
- Development of an Indigenous-specific Crisis Debriefing Model.



# ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

In the 2021-2022 fiscal year FPWC welcomed new staff to the organization. Lisa Wabange joined us as the new Knowledge Exchange Facilitator and Brianna Purcell joined the team in the role of Program Support Officer. We also welcomed Dr. Wally Rude to the Board of Directors who fills a seat to represent Mental Wellness Teams. In the coming year we anticipate welcoming new board members to represent the voice of MWT, Thought Leaders and new staff to support programs, research, evaluation, communication and the daily operations of the organization.

Expanding our work through committees we continue to develop and revise organizational policies and have initiated work on the development of a new strategic plan that is anticipated to be unveiled in late summer 2022. FPWC has reached out to stakeholders, partners and staff to assist us in creating a strategic plan that will guide us through the next phase of our work together.

FPWC wishes to acknowledge Mental Wellness Team members and the IRS Resolution Health Support Program workforce who provide their knowledge, guidance and support by participating in Working Groups, Advisory Circles and Design Committees in all of our projects. Miigwech for your knowledge and expertise in this work. Finally, FPWC wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Jenny Restoule-Mallozzi, legal counsel, who supported the early development of the corporation.

In November, Jenny received a judicial appointment to the bench in Ontario.

FPWC extends their best wishes to her on her appointment.

# CONFERENCES & COMMITTEES

## Working Groups

- Co-chair of the First Nation Mental Wellness Continuum Framework Implementation Team
- Elder to the First Nation Mental Wellness Continuum Framework Implementation Team
- Member co-chair of the Assembly of First Nations Mental Wellness Committee
- Co-chair of the Mental Wellness Task Force for Rural, Remote and Isolated Northern Communities
- Co-chair and secretariat for the IRS RHSP Project
- Co-chair and secretariat for the Indigenous School Mental Health Ontario Project
- Co-chair and secretariat for Culturally Responsive Social and Emotional Learning
- Leadership team member for the Knowledge Development and Exchange Hub of the Mental Health Innovation Fund projects
- Research community partner with Ontario and Saskatchewan NEIHR
- Research community partner with University of Toronto and Centre for Addictions and Mental Health
- Research partner with Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation and Laurentian University
- Research partner with Anishinabek Nation and Laurentian University
- Working group member for Assembly of First Nation Pandemic Response and Recovery Response Planning
- Working group member for the Canada School Mental Health Leadership Network
- Working group member for the Indigenous Services Canada Youth E-Health Project
- Working group member for the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy for Substance Misuse table
- Advisory member to the Indigenous Mental Wellness Data group
- Participant in Anti-Indigenous Racism (x3 dialogue sessions)

## Invited Speaker and Presentations

- Kina Gbezhgomi Child & Family Services: Youth Mental Wellness & Life Promotion
- Public Health Working Group: Substance Misuse & Land Based Healing
- Senior Management Committee (Federal Departments): Substance Misuse & Land Based Healing
- Expert panel to New Brunswick Child Advocate on Indigenous Child & Youth Mental Wellness
- Kinoomaadziwin Education Board: First Nation Children & Youth Mental Wellness in Schools
- Anishinabek Nation: Student Wellbeing
- Canadian Roots Exchange - Youth Policy Hackathon on Health Legislation and Policy Development: Using the First Nation Mental Wellness Continuum Framework in policy and legislative changes (x2)
- First Nation Health Managers Association: COVID Townhalls x3
- Assembly of First Nation: Change Management
- First Nation Health Authority: Healing From Trauma
- Anishinabek Nation: Mental Wellness During the Pandemic
- Ontario Pricipal's Council: Address Trauma Caused by Racism and Colonialism
- Rocky Bay First Nation: Youth presentation on mental wellness
- Anishinabek Nation: Mental Wellness and the Social Determinants of Health
- Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Panel - July 21
- Anishinabek Nation: Children's Mental Health
- Registered Nurses Association of Ontario Webinar: Indigenous Child and Youth Mental Wellness
- FPWC National Gathering: Addressing Stigma & Workforce wellness
- University of Waterloo: Introduction to the First Nation Mental Wellness Continuum Framework
- McMaster Forum: Child & Youth Resiliency during the Pandemic
- NEIHR Webinar: Putting the First Nation Mental Wellness Continuum Framework into Practice
- Anishinabek Nation: Meditation
- York Region District School Board: Indigenous Education from Theory to Change

*Funding made possible by Indigenous Services Canada and the Province of Ontario for FPWC projects, programs and services listed in this report.*





857 Yellek Trail  
North Bay, ON  
P1B 8G5