

## On-line Resources for Indigenous Communities – Mental Wellness and COVID 19

The COVID 19 pandemic is impacting Indigenous communities in many ways. Whether or not there are cases in or close to their community, people may find themselves experiencing distress, anxiety, and uncertainty. People who are at higher risk may experience more severe mental health impacts. These are understandable reactions and there are mental wellness supports available to help.

Supporting mental wellness during and after the COVID 19 pandemic is an essential service. There is a wide range of virtual resources available to help Indigenous communities with their mental wellness. Support is available to help people cope with anxiety related to the pandemic itself as well as with stress from trying to balance cultural values with public health measures, losing a job, being at home, isolation, physical distancing, family conflict, problematic substance use, and many other issues. Counselling, cultural supports, and other forms of treatment are available through telehealth and on-line platforms.

It is important that Indigenous communities have easy and fast access to trustworthy, factual, and effective resources to support their mental wellness during this challenging time. New on-line mental wellness resources related to COVID 19 are being launched daily, which has led to an overwhelming amount of information. Below is a snapshot of current examples of resources developed for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations. These lists will be updated as more resources are identified and become available.

### **Crisis Lines**

[Hope for Wellness Helpline](#) provides immediate, culturally safe, telephone crisis intervention, 24 hours a day, seven days a week in English and French, and upon request in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.

- **Phone:** 1-855-242-3310
- [On-line chat](#)

[Kids Help Phone](#) is supporting youth 24/7 and through a partnership with We Matter, supporting Indigenous youth through text, phone and linking with youth programs. They have also developed a variety of resources related to [COVID 19](#) among other topics.

- **Phone:** 1-800-668-6868
- **Text:** 686868

### **Indigenous Services Canada**

**Indigenous Services Canada's Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports** provides an overview of [additional supports](#) for communities related to the COVID 19 pandemic.

**NIHB Mental Health Counselling** continues to be available and is being delivered via telehealth platforms. Check out this [website](#) for more information.

**Mental Wellness Teams** continue to support communities in a variety of ways, including on-line and over the phone. In some regions, face-to-face meetings are still possible, but limited to emergencies only.

- [First Peoples Wellness Circle](#) (FPWC) are supporting MWTs by providing guidance material on how to support individuals, families, elders, and communities.
- FPWC will also be launching a secure on-line platform to help MWTs better reach communities in a safe and effective manner. For more information on this work, please see [FPWC's website](#).

**IRS Resolution Health Support Program (IRS RHSP) and support for those affected by the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)** continue to be available. IRS RHSP and MMIWG workers are following public health guidelines and mainly providing services virtually and by phone. Professional counselling for eligible IRS and MMIWG clients is also available at this time and can be provided virtually or by phone.

- A help line provides services for former students of the Indian Residential Schools and their families. These services are accessible 24/7 toll-free at 1-866-925-4419.
- The support line for MMIWG provide immediate assistance, national and independent, toll-free 24/7 at 1-844-413-6649. The service is offered in English, French, Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut.

Most **federally-funded Treatment Centres** have closed, but in some cases, counselling staff are reaching out to clients over the phone and on-line. Some centres are also exploring on-line options for aftercare and some have been providing care hampers to past clients, elders, and low income community members. Check with [treatment centres](#) to find out more. Treatment centres are also being supported by [Thunderbird Partnership Foundation](#).

**OAT Sites** are working with the medical professionals affiliated with their programs to make sure clients have continued access.

**Jordan's Principle** – Services continue during the COVID 19 pandemic. Please see the [website](#) for more details.

**Inuit Child First Initiative** - Services continue during the COVID 19 pandemic. Please see the [website](#) for more details.

## **First Nations Specific Resources**

[Assembly of First Nations](#) has a [webpage](#) dedicated to COVID 19 that includes a variety of information including tips and considerations around mental wellness.

[First Peoples Wellness Circle](#) exists to improve the lives of Canada's First Peoples by addressing healing, wellness and other mental health challenges. They have developed a series of [resources](#) for a variety of audiences related to COVID 19.

[Thunderbird Partnership Foundation's](#) top priority is developing a continuum of care that would be available to all First Nations people in Canada, using the *Honouring Our Strengths* document as a framework. They have developed a variety of [resources](#) related to COVID 19, including several specific to substance use.

[First Nations Health Managers Association](#) works on certification and professional development opportunities. They have pivoted to use their voice as another medium for COVID 19 messaging. They have been and will continue holding [town halls](#) related to COVID 19 that have featured topics such as mental wellness and youth.

[National Association of Friendship Centres](#) focus on supporting Friendship Centres across Canada. They have developed a [webpage](#) with Indigenous resources that are from vetted and trustworthy sources.

[Native Women's Association of Canada](#) has posted [messages](#) on COVID 19 and are helping connect people with their elders.

## **Regionally specific resources:**

### **Quebec-Labrador**

- [Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador](#) has launched a [webpage](#) with resources on COVID 19, including lists of contacts for more information and psychosocial support and links to COVID 19 information being provided by [communities](#).

#### Ontario

- [Chiefs of Ontario](#) have developed a [webpage](#) specific to COVID 19 that includes a [health resource database](#). Links to [Provincial Territorial Organizations](#) provide more specific information.
- [Nishnawbe Aski Nation](#) has a comprehensive [website](#) dedicated to COVID 19 resources, including a thorough list of [helplines](#) that are available.
- [Grand Council Treaty 3](#) has a comprehensive [website](#) on COVID 19 news, resources, and updates, including a [webpage](#) specifically around mental wellness supports.
- [Anishinabek Nation](#) is providing regular [updates](#) on COVID 19.

#### Manitoba

- [Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs](#) are providing regular updates on COVID 19.
- [First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba](#) has a [webpage](#) dedicated to COVID 19 that includes a comprehensive array of resources and list of contact information for helplines, health assistance, mental health/counselling, and other supports.

#### Saskatchewan

- [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations](#) has a [website](#) on emergency management related to COVID 19.

#### Alberta

- [Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta](#) has developed a [website](#) with links to a variety of resources related to COVID 19.
- [Confederacy of Treaty Six Nations](#) has developed a comprehensive [website](#) on COVID 19 including a webpage dedicated to [mental health](#).

#### British Columbia

- [First Nations Health Authority](#) has developed a variety of resources for a variety of audiences including First Nations individuals, health care professionals, and community leaders. They have information specific to mental wellness, including details on [supports](#) that are available.

#### Northwest Territories

- [Dene Nation](#) has webpages with [updates](#) and [support resources](#) around COVID 19.
- [Dehcho First Nation](#) has a [webpage](#) with forms and supports around COVID 19.

#### Yukon

- [Council of Yukon First Nations](#) has a comprehensive webpage of [supports](#) around COVID 19.

### **Métis Specific Resources**

[Métis National Council](#) has a [webpage](#) dedicated to COVID 19 with a variety of resources and messages. While resources are not specific to mental wellness, they do cover aspects of being prepared and responding to the pandemic.

#### **Regionally specific resources:**

[Métis Nation of Ontario](#) has a [webpage](#) dedicated to COVID 19 and have created a helpline, fact sheets, and town halls specific to COVID 19.

[Manitoba Métis Federation](#) has posted [information](#) around COVID 19, although nothing specific to mental wellness.

[Métis Nation British Columbia](#) have a [webpage](#) on COVID 19 which includes specific about accessing mental wellness supports and information for children and youth.

[Métis Nation Saskatchewan](#) has provide details around supports specific to COVID 19 through their website.

[Métis Nation of Alberta](#) has a developed an interim support [plan](#) to address COVID 19.

## **Inuit Specific Resources**

[Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#) has various [resources](#) posted to their website on COVID 19, including a list of COVID 19 supports for urban Inuit and a tool for children. Their work related to mental wellness and COVID 19 is guided by the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy and their National Inuit Youth Council.

### **Regionally specific resources:**

[Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services](#) has a variety of [resources](#) on COVID 19, including for mental wellness.

[Qikiqtani Inuit Association](#) has a [webpage](#) dedicated to COVID 19 that includes a variety of resources related to mental wellness.

[Inuvialuit Regional Corporation](#) has developed a comprehensive support [plan](#) that includes various resources related to mental wellness.

## **Youth-Specific Resources**

[We Matter](#) focuses on life promotion and messages of hope and resilience.

- They have developed toolkits for [youth](#), [teachers](#), and [support workers](#) to help youth and those who support youth through challenging times. They also have a [mini-toolkit](#). This material is also available on USB keys which can be sent to communities, especially those with experiencing issues with connectivity. These toolkits are being used to support Indigenous youth during the COVID 19 pandemic.
- We Matter is also using their on-line platform to reach and support youth on COVID 19. For example, they continue to develop social media content ([facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)) with supportive messages related to the pandemic. They hosted an Instagram live [session](#) on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to facilitate a discussion among youth about COVID 19.
- They are working with their youth representatives from their [Ambassadors of Hope](#) program to link to communities around COVID 19.

[Canadian Roots Exchange](#) has set up the [CREation Community Support Fund](#) to support youth mental wellness during the COVID 19 pandemic through local solutions.