



Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario

Year 4 Report

Summer 2020 - Spring 2021

Land Acknowledgment

IMN-Ontario is housed at Western University and our network extends across the Province and beyond. We acknowledge the many territories and diverse Indigenous communities of our mentors, trainees and network participants across Ontario and Turtle Island (North America).

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing urban Indigenous population.

IMN-Ontario values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) funds 8 regionally based Indigenous Mentorship Network Programs in Canada:



Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario – Ontario

Based at Western University

Indigenous Mentorship Network of the Pacific North-West – British Columbia and the Yukon

Based at the University of Victoria

Alberta Indigenous Mentorship in Health Innovation (AIM-HI) – Alberta

Based at the University of Calgary

Saskatchewan Indigenous Mentorship Network Program – Saskatchewan

Based at University of Saskatchewan

Prairie Indigenous Knowledge Exchange Network (PIKE-Net) Mentorship Program – Manitoba

Based at University of Manitoba

Quebec Indigenous Mentorship Network Program – Quebec

Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network – Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick

Based at Dalhousie University and Memorial University

Ombaashi Network – National/international outreach and opportunities

Based at Thompson Rivers University

IMN-Ontario welcomes all current and potential students, community members, and organizations interested in Indigenous health research to participate in our Network!

Sign up to join our mailing list and follow us on social media:

Facebook: @OntarioIMN

Twitter: ImnOntario

Instagram: IMN_Ontario

www.imnp.uwo.ca

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Message from Dr. Chantelle Richmond, Nominated Principal Investigator

On behalf of IMN-Ontario, I hope you and your families are safe and healthy. As I write this, we have now lived through an entire year of a global pandemic. Our network activities have had to pivot in order to accommodate COVID-19 protocols, meaning we have not been able to gather in-person as a network. At the forefront of our activities has been the desire to seek ways in which we can better support our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This report highlights the many ways we have fostered virtual connections.



As many of you may be aware, the Indigenous Mentorship Network Program across Canada will not be renewed beyond 2022. Canada Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) made the decision to invest its Indigenous health and research training funds in the Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR's), a national network of centres focused on capacity development, research and knowledge translation. Ontario's successful NEIHR is led by Professor Suzanne Stewart (University of Toronto), for her application "**Developing a Community-Engaged Research Network for Indigenous Mental Health: Priorities, Knowledge Gaps and Engagement Strategies for Future Research**"

Despite the fact that CIHR will not fund our Network beyond 2022, I am pleased to let you know that Ontario's NEIHR has committed to investing \$100k/year for 2020 to 2024. These funds will allow IMN-Ontario to continue its work for at least two years beyond our end date. Through a collaborative effort and widened community of partners, scholars, and trainees bridging the IMN and NEIHR in Ontario, it is our shared desire that the impact on Indigenous health trainees will continue to flourish.

IMN-Ontario has accomplished a good deal in the past three years. I attribute our success to the strength of our relational ethics, including our commitment to our communities and to one another. I would like to acknowledge our students for all your contributions in making the strong, beautiful and impactful Network we that we are. Thank you all for your compassion and persistence, for the important research you are working on, and for demanding more of your leaders and mentors. This is heart work! We could not do this work without you and we are grateful every day for your good energy.

Miigwetch to you all. Best wishes for continued wellness.

*Read about IMN-Ontario's backstory in Dr. Richmond's 2018 article, **Try Bravery for a Change: Supporting Indigenous Health Training and Development in Canadian Universities***

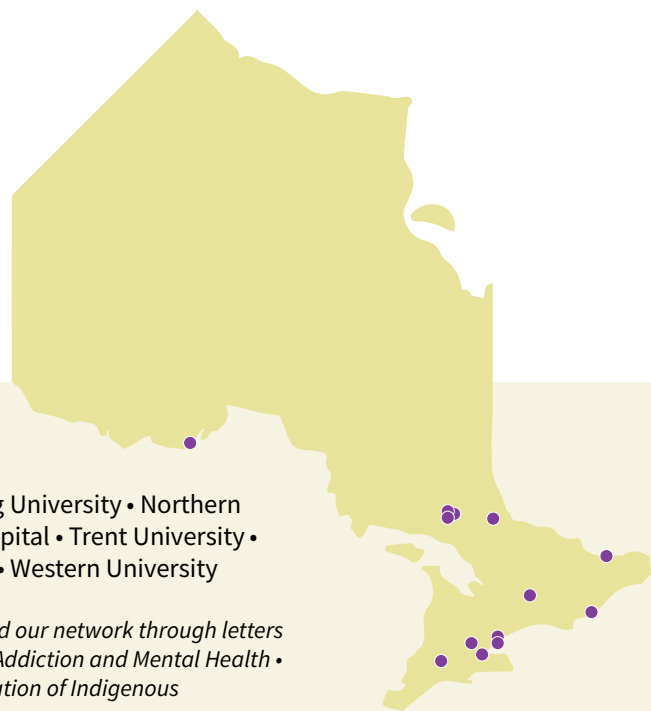
IMN-Ontario Staff and Mentors

Our small team housed at Western includes two other staff. Veronica Reitmeier is an undergraduate student who works part-time as the Network's Research Assistant and manages our social media, and Katie Big-Canoe is our full-time Program Coordinator who oversees all Network activities. We have also assembled a large group of Mentors who are passionate about Indigenous health research and training the next generation of Indigenous scholars. Spread across the province, our Mentors support our Network in a variety of ways.

About IMN-Ontario

The Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario (IMN-Ontario) provides First Nations, Inuit and Métis scholars and trainees with high quality mentorship, training, and opportunities to engage in Indigenous health and well-being research. We are funded as part of a five-year, Canada-wide Indigenous Mentorship Network Program through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)'s Institute of Indigenous Health Research.

IMN-Ontario is fundamentally rooted in the philosophy of 'community first', bringing together 100+ scholars, trainees and community partners of diverse skills, experiences and methodologies in Indigenous health research. We are an interdisciplinary collaboration supported by 13 partnering research institutions, including the leading Indigenous health scholars and research centres in Ontario. Our partnering institutions support the Network in different ways, including hosting scholarships at their universities, facilitating or hosting mentorship or learning opportunities, and helping to fund IMN-Ontario activities.



IMN-Ontario Partner Institutions

Health Sciences North Research Institute (Sudbury) • Lakehead University • Laurentian University • McMaster University • Nipissing University • Northern Ontario School of Medicine • Queen's University • St. Michael's Hospital • Trent University • University of Guelph • University of Ottawa • University of Toronto • Western University

Chi-miigwetch to our community & academic partners, who have supported our network through letters of support and/or celebrated our launch: Cancer Care Ontario • Centre for Addiction and Mental Health • Chiefs of Ontario • Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences • Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres • Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre

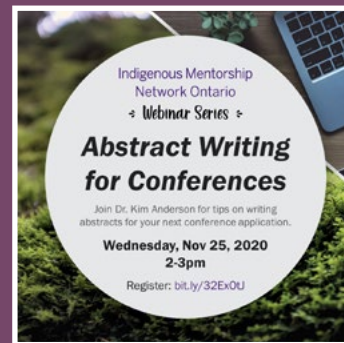
Mno Nimkodadding Geegi: Supporting and growing the next generation of Indigenous health scholars

IMN-Ontario's driving force is inspired by the Anishinaabe concept, Mno Nimkodadding Geegi ('we are all connected'), encompassing the inter-relationships among youth and elders, health and environment, cultural practices, institutional policies, and many more. We seek to create and sustain the very best training environments and mentorship opportunities for current and up and coming Indigenous scholars at the undergraduate, Master's, doctoral and postdoctoral levels, with particular emphasis on community-based research.

We focus on four primary activity areas, holding Mno Nimkodadding Geegi and our community of students, scholars, and partners held at the centre of our work. Within these four areas, some of our offerings include:

- Quarterly webinars to share knowledge, advice, and best practices
- Annual scholarships and seed grants for Indigenous trainees
- Annual community-based summer institute
- Engagement in local, national and international networks
- Research innovation and publishing opportunities
- Cultural, social and academic tools and resources





2020-2021 Webinar Series

In August and September, we sought input from our students about their needs and what they would like to see offered through the Network, both through a survey and an open discussion webinar. IMN-Ontario organized our webinar series based on the feedback we received from students, including the need to learn about funding opportunities, academic workshops (e.g. writing for conferences – especially with so many offered virtually now and preparing for careers in academia), and continued virtual teachings with Traditional Knowledge Keeper Liz Akiwenzie.

Graduate Scholarship Opportunities

In October, the IMN-Ontario Web Series began with an opportunity to learn how to apply for scholarships.

Abstract Writing for Conferences

In November, we hosted IMN-Ontario Mentor Dr. Kim Anderson from the University of Guelph who shared tips on abstract writing for conference applications. **Check out Dr. Anderson's tips online!**

Winter Solstice Teachings

Our wonderful Elder Liz Akiwenzie provided a virtual space to gather in December and learn about traditional Winter Solstice teachings.

Applying and Preparing for Scholarships

The team delivered two webinars in January to support students in applying for scholarship funding. The first provided information about IMN-Ontario scholarships and seed grants, including eligibility and the application process, and the second webinar focused on preparing 2021 doctoral scholarship applications.

Preparing for a Career in Academia

In March, IMN-Ontario Mentor Dr. Chelsea Gabel from McMaster University delivered a webinar for students close to finishing their PhD or interested in learning how to become a professor. Dr. Gabel led a discussion on the types of academic appointments and opportunities, tips for applying for them, and how to prepare for job interviews. **Access Dr. Gabel's webinar slides online!**

2021 Scholarship Awardees

Total funds awarded Year 4: \$118,000

In our fourth year, IMN-Ontario awarded 10 scholarships.

[Read more about each of our 2021 Awardees on our website!](#)

Graduate Students

In 2021, we awarded six graduate and health professional scholarships to Indigenous students pursuing research in applied community-based Indigenous health and well-being.



Victoria Bomberly

Masters student, Geography and
Environmental Studies,
Western University



Jodi John

Masters student,
Geography
Queen's University



Serena Mendizabal

Masters student, Indigenous
Health and Environment,
Western University



Kieran Peltier

PhD student, Indigenous
Sport and Physical Activity,
Nipissing University



Molly Peters

Masters student,
Sustainability Studies,
Trent University



Sarina Perchak

Masters student,
Urban Indigenous Spaces,
University of Guelph

Undergraduate Students

In 2021, we awarded four undergraduate scholarships to Indigenous students enrolled in an undergraduate program. These awards are intended to support Indigenous students who are pursuing academic studies with the future goal of utilizing their degree within an applied Indigenous health community context.



Riley Kennedy

Undergraduate student,
Faculty of Social Science,
Western University



Félix Larocque

Undergraduate student,
Faculty of Arts,
University of Ottawa



Alysha Parks

Undergraduate student,
Indigenous Studies,
Trent University



Paige Saunders

Undergraduate student,
Criminal Justice & Public
Policy, University of Guelph

Chi-Miigwetch to our Year 4 Award Adjudicators!

Dr. Chelsea Gabel, *McMaster University*

Dr. Josh Tobias, *Canadian Partnership Against Cancer*

Dr. Heather Castleden, *Queen's University*

Dr. Lucie Levesque, *Queen's University*

Dr. Cindy Peltier, *Nipissing University*

Dr. Hannah Tait Neufeld, *University of Waterloo*

IMN-Ontario / Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR) Gatherings - Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

Read the Fall 2020 Indigenous Knowledges Virtual Exchange Report

The Indigenous Knowledges Virtual Exchange brought together NEIHR team members (academics, students, partners, community research assistants, and traditional knowledge keepers) and mentees from IMN-Ontario and partnering NEIHR Institutes. In a panel format over two days, we heard from ON-NEIHR and IMN-ON panelists on topics related to student and researcher training, and for general public academic and community audiences. Student panelists spoke to their larger research interests and academic journeys. We are particularly proud of the IMN-ON students who stepped forward to lead these panels as moderators and panelists!

Moderators: Randi Ray, Nipissing University; Riley Kennedy, Western University; Erik Mandawe, Western University; Jacqueline Powless, McMaster University; and Dr. Chantelle Richmond.

Student Panelists: Brittany McBeath, Queen's University; Shanna Peltier, University of Toronto; Candace Angelo, University of Sydney; Sarah Ponton, University of Toronto; Kia Peters, Western University; Robyn Rowe, Laurentian University; Jasper Garay, University of Sydney

Read the Spring 2021 Holistic Wellness for Indigenous Scholars Report

In response to limited opportunities for in-person engagement and community and mental health service accessibility in Indigenous communities during the pandemic, IMN-Ontario and ON-NEIHR co-organized a virtual Spring Gathering that held space for peer mentoring, support and belonging. Over two days in April and May, Faculty and students shared their stories, challenges and the ways they had maintained wellness throughout the year.

IMN-ON Student panelists: Amy Shawanda, Trent University; Sharlene Webkamigad, Laurentian University, Jodi-Mae John, Queen's University

IMN-ON Faculty panelists: Dr. Angela Mashford-Pringle, University of Toronto; Dr. Chris Mushquash, Lakehead University; Dr. Bonnie Freeman, McMaster University



Indigenous Graduate Student Recruitment Fair

From January 5-8, the Indigenous Mentorship Network Programs (IMNPs) hosted a virtual recruitment fair featuring more than 25 faculty and research teams across Canada seeking Indigenous graduate students to work on their projects. Students had the opportunity to learn about IMNP Faculty research and chat informally about potential graduate opportunities. Participating mentors from IMN-Ontario included: Dr. Anita Benoit, Dr. Heather Castleden, Dr. Lucie Lévesque, Dr. Diana Lewis, Dr. Angela Mashford-Pringle, Dr. Chris Mushquash, Dr. Michael Robidoux, Dr. Hannah Tait Neufeld, and Dr. Sonia Wesche.

Meet the IMN-Ontario Mentors



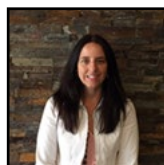
Dr. Amanda Sheppard
Cancer Care Ontario



Dr. Anita Benoit
Toronto



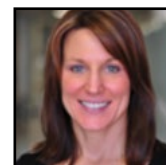
Dr. Bernice Downey
McMaster



Dr. Beverley Shea
Ottawa



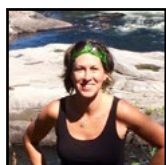
Dr. Bonnie Freeman
McMaster



Dr. Brenda Bruner
Nipissing



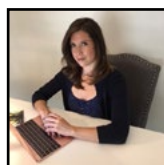
Dr. Brian Branfireun
Western



Dr. Carly Dokis
Nipissing



Dr. Chantelle Richmond
Western



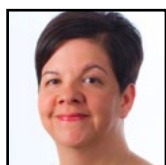
Dr. Chelsea Gabel
McMaster



Dr. Chris Furgal
Trent



Dr. Chris Mushquash
Lakehead



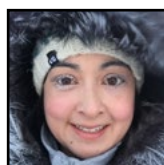
Dr. Cindy Peltier
Nipissing



Dr. Dawn Martin Hill
McMaster



Dr. Diana Lewis
Western



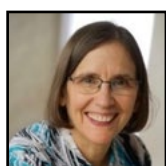
Dr. Gwen Healey
NOSM



Dr. Hannah Tait Neufeld
Waterloo



Dr. Heather Castleden
Queen's



Dr. Janet McElhaney
HSNRI



Dr. Janet Smylie
St. Michael's Hospital



Dr. Jeffrey Denis
McMaster



Dr. Jennifer Walker
Laurentian



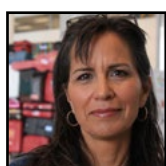
Dr. Jerry White
Western



Dr. Karen Lawford
Queen's



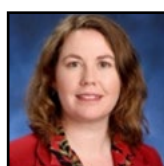
Dr. Katrina Srigley
Nipissing



Dr. Kim Anderson
Guelph



Dr. Laurie Chan
Ottawa



Dr. Lloy Wylie
Western



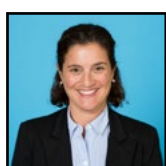
Dr. Lucie Lévesque
Queen's



Dr. Michael Green
Queen's



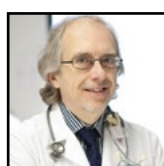
Dr. Michael Robidoux
Ottawa



Dr. Michelle Firestone
St. Michael's Hospital



Dr. Randy Jackson
McMaster



Dr. Robert Hegele
Western



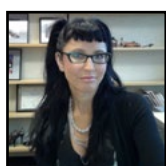
Dr. Sheila Cote-Meek
York



Dr. Sonia Wesche
Ottawa



Dr. Stewart Harris
Western



Dr. Suzanne Stewart
Toronto



Dr. Taima Moeke-Pickering
Laurentian