

## Promoting Indigenous Health, Healing and Resiliency (February 13, 2020)



**Call to Action #21**

**Article 2**

There were a total of ten people present for this session focusing on ways to promote Indigenous Health, Healing and Resiliency. The pre-session questions for this session included three of the previous questions, and did not ask the fourth question on UNDRIP.

### **1. Write down in 2 to 3 sentences your understanding of how racism impacted Indigenous people of Canada**

- Poverty, stolen land, stripped of culture.
- Negative pre-determined assumptions of people result in a loss of self and a creation of shame for who you are.
- I think it creates barriers to potential (ie. job prospects, etc.)
- It robs Indigenous people of their right to their own culture.
- Has impacted lived experiences, been the center of policies and government actions that have tried to destroy Indigenous culture and it continues today.
- It impacts everything from an Indigenous person's ability to open a bank account, to getting employment, to how someone walking down the street views them.
- It has affected their right to necessities of everyday life to running water, food, and shelter.

### **2. Using 2-3 sentences, write down your understanding of how discrimination has affected Indigenous people in Canada.**

- Education & jobs, health care, prison system.
- Indigenous people have been ignored and not considered in questions involving their lifeways and their land.
- People face preconceptions that disallow them the same rights as other Canadians.
- It means they are overrepresented in prison systems.
- Discrimination impacts how Indigenous peoples are able to exist in harmonious relations with others in society.
- People's lack of understanding about the history of Canada and its relationship with Indigenous peoples has led many to hold falsehoods about Indigenous peoples (stereotypes).

- It has affected people when it comes to health, jobs, and education.

**3. In 1-2 sentences, please describe the purpose of Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommended Calls to Action.**

- Bringing to light what has happened in the past.
- To allow other individuals in Canada to recognize the truth of the past and the starting point in moving forward.

In the session, there was much discussion on both the barriers and the successes to advancing truth and reconciliation within the health and wellness sector. The group felt that they had seen an increase of consultation with knowledge holders and cultural advisors and in some cases, more investment in program development.

However, people shared that the health care system is so overwhelmed and entrenched in colonialism where stigma, bias, and discrimination are persistent. This may be from a continued lack of understanding or awareness of how colonialism impacts the system itself. The result of this is a lack of empathy and investments of time, energy, and resources to support lasting changes.

Some steps or strategic actions to eliminate barriers shared from the group included adequate Indigenous engagement in the design of policies, as well as clear links between specific Calls to Action within them. This should extend to hiring policies as well as programmatic ones. Others reflected that organizational mandates are often developed by those in power, not those that represent the voices that need to be amplified. Unfortunately, no responses were collected from the group that demonstrated successes to moving truth and reconciliation forward at the policy level.

### **Evaluation Notes for Past Sessions**

The care and effort to continue to engage the community and ask for their feedback during the course of the project speaks to the strength of the Circle's work to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible. It is important for the community at large to feel heard, in particular with delicate subject matter. While there has been significant information collected to date, there are a few suggestions for future work that can be considered for next time.

The efforts to collect pre-session information from participants as a way to gauge their pre-existing knowledge and needs in the sessions was a successful activity. Without witnessing the use of that information in action in the sessions, it is difficult for this evaluator to comment on the effectiveness or intentional use of that information. It would also have been a greater practice to follow up with a post evaluation to participants to see if their knowledge increased, or was shaped differently after each session was completed.

Continuing to think on the impact and reach of those sessions, it was not always clear if there were particular articles of UNDRIP or specific TRC Calls to Action that were examined. It is understood that the

sessions were still focusing on the general need to spread the awareness of these foundational documents, and future work should dig deeper into them from both sector perspectives, as well as community-wide impacts.

Logistically, if there is another external evaluator, having a clear process for data collection and information management of files will make it easier for a fulsome evaluation of the project story and results. Setting this process up at the outset of the project will also aid in ensuring that all deliverables and outcomes are on track and in scope.