

# Summary Report

Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network Kausattumi Grants Program, 2022-2023

JOCELYN PAUL, PHD IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

*A quantitative and qualitative investigation into unexplored aspects and areas of health among First Nations peoples living in Canada*

***Description of Research***

High rates of health issues among First Nations (FNs) adults in Canada have been linked to historical and ongoing racism. For example, FNs who are adults and who are Adult Cancer Survivors (ACSs) may be more likely to experience worsened mental health than non-FNs ACSs. However, the manifestation of experiencing unique mental health concerns, such as "Fear of Cancer Recurrence" (FCR), and other secondary impacts (e.g., sleep disturbances) is unclear and not well understood. As lower rates of cancer survival exist amongst FNs compared to non-FNs, and FNs are at a heightened risk of experiencing racism within healthcare settings, it is possible that FCR and other secondary impacts (e.g., sleep disturbances) are elevated/have unique impacts/consequences amongst FNs, yet this remains uninvestigated. In addition, as certain facets of FNs' cultural identity have been shown to protect against some negative social and health factors, it remains unclear whether/which cultural identity facets buffer or exacerbate levels of FCR and other secondary impacts for FNs.

The purpose of this work is to address these gaps in the literature among FNs and use quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group) methodologies to explore:

1. Direct links between FCR symptom severity/chronicity, (1) time recovered from cancer (e.g., months, years), (2) cancer type/stage, and (3) presence/severity/chronicity of other secondary impacts (e.g., sleep disturbances).
2. The perspectives surrounding the same and the commonly perceived barriers, facilitators, and interventions.
3. If/how particular forms: racism (e.g., systemic, interpersonal) moderate direct links; and
4. If/how particular facets: cultural identity (e.g., community cultural belonging, traditional land engagement) moderate direct links.

The objectives of the quantitative (survey)<sup>1</sup> and qualitative (focus group)<sup>2</sup> methodologies are to:

- Explore the patterns between FCR symptom severity/chronicity, (1) time recovered from cancer (e.g., months, years), (2) cancer type/stage, and (3) presence/severity/chronicity of other secondary impacts (e.g., sleep disturbances).
- Investigate perspectives surrounding the same and the commonly perceived barriers, facilitators, and interventions.

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<sup>1</sup> Some questionnaires in the battery used for FNs have been compiled to form a brief non-FNs (Caucasian/White) version of the survey that will gauge whether there are links for non-FNs (living in Atlantic Canada) related to FCR symptom severity/chronicity, and (1) time recovered, (2) cancer type/stage, and (3) presence/severity/chronicity of other secondary impacts (e.g., sleep disturbance). There will also be additional screeners for relevant health concerns, including sleep, in the questionnaire package. Generally, our analyses of the quantitative data will distinguish whether there are noticeable and meaningful statistical differences between FNs and non-FNs and whether the same presents statistical and clinical significance.

<sup>2</sup> The qualitative data will be derived from facilitated 1.5-minute in-person focus group sessions comprised of 6-10 FNs participants per session. Sessions will consist of discussions based on the medicine wheel surrounding perspectives, barriers, facilitators and interventions related to various relevant factors.

- Explore if/how particular forms of racism (e.g., systemic, interpersonal) moderate direct links.
- Explore if/how particular facets of cultural identity (e.g., community cultural belonging, traditional land engagement) moderate direct links.

By the end of fall 2023, I will have completed my dissertation's first of three studies, a comprehensive scoping review. My dissertation project initially focused on exploring the FCR among FNS adults and the impact of racism and cultural identity on those experiences. However, under the guidance of my new dissertation co-supervisor, Dr. Penny Corkum, I have expanded my research questions to include more emphasis on sleep (her area of research). We await approval from the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch and the Dalhousie University Research Ethics Board to provide their input on these changes. We expect to receive official approval or support in the upcoming weeks before the winter 2024 term commences.

I am almost finished with my first dissertation study, a scoping review. By fall 2023, I will have a dissertation-style paper ready for my dissertation supervisors' review. In the winter/spring 2024 terms, we will collect data from the quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups. In the summer/fall of 2024, we will share our de-identified findings with stakeholders and Indigenous community members. Data analysis and conceptualization/interpretation will occur until the winter 2025 term. From winter to spring 2025, I expect to go through several revisions of my dissertation paper, continue to collaborate closely with community partner personnel and gather feedback from previous participants regarding their understanding and application of the knowledge shared during my dissertation. Assuming everything progresses and *considering that one of my dissertation supervisors is back from her leave of absence in the upcoming months*, I am budgeting that the earliest I will defend my dissertation would be the summer/fall of 2025 and the latest spring/summer of 2026.

### ***Research Outcomes***

This research project has the potential to shed light on the unique health and well-being challenges faced among FNs peoples, particularly those that often follow the complex impacts of historical and ongoing racism. By exploring unexplored aspects and areas of health among this population, the research could also investigate the manifestation of unique mental health concerns such as "Fear of Cancer Recurrence" (FCR) and other secondary impacts that are not well understood among Indigenous populations. The findings of this research could have significant implications for regional healthcare policies and programs that are designed to better serve FNs peoples in Canada, especially those who are Cancer Survivors and who may be more likely to experience worsened mental health than non-FNs ACSs. Additionally, the research will explore the perspectives and commonly perceived barriers, facilitators, and interventions that could provide insights for healthcare providers in addressing these health concerns among this population. This project will investigate how different forms of racism and cultural identity moderate direct links, which could inform efforts to improve healthcare delivery to FNs peoples.

### *Completed Project Deliverables*

#### Papers:

- St. James, R., & Paul, J. (2023). Developmental pathways to wellness for Indigenous populations living in colonial contexts: The impact of the Indian Residential School system. *Special Issue on Health Inequity: Healthy Populations Journal*. 3(1). Accepted. In copyright process.
- Paul, J., McQuaid, R. J., Hopkins, C., Perri, A., Stewart, S., Matheson, K., Anisman, H., & Bombay, A. (2022). Relations between bullying and distress among youth living in First Nations communities: Assessing direct and moderating effects of culture-related variables. *Transcultural psychiatry*, 13634615221109359. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615221109359>
- Stevens, L., Paul, J., & Stamp, J. (2021-23). Chapters 6, 9, and 10 of "Introduction to psychology and neuroscience. *Create Commons Attribution. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. Digital Libraries. Open Education Project*. <https://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/intropsychneuro/>

#### Abstracts:

- Paul, J. (2022). Culture & Health Among FNs in Canada. Theme: FNs Health and Environmental Stressors. Abstract Published in the Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium Journal. <https://journals.lib.sfu.ca/index.php/igss/issue/view/386>.

#### Presentations:

- Corkum, P., Paul, J., Illie, A., Dockrill, M., Putterman, C., & Vaughan, K. (2023). Better Nights, Better Days Symposium. Talk/symposium at Kids Brain Health Network Conference (KBHN) in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Paul, J., McQuaid, R. J., Hopkins, C., Perri, A., Stewart, S., Matheson, K., ... & Bombay, A. (2023). Relations between bullying and distress among youth living in FNs communities. Talk presented at National Gathering for Graduate Students (NGGS) in Sydney, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada, October 11-14, 2023.
- Wendt, D., Paul, J., et al. (2023). Expanding the Scope of Substance Use Interventions with Indigenous Peoples: Trauma-Focused and Trauma-Informed Approaches. Talk presented at Symposium on Intergenerational Trauma and Indigenous Peoples for the Society for Psychological Anthropology & Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture Joint Conference of the Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, in San Diego, CA, USA and invited by Dr. Joseph Gone.
- Paul, J., & Stevens, L. (2023). Indigenization in Introduction to Psychology: An Ongoing Journey. Talk and shared practice session at the Dalhousie Conference on University Teaching and Learning (DCUTL) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Paul, J., & Stevens, L. (2023). Indigenization in Introduction to Psychology: An Ongoing Journey. Talk and shared practice session at the Dalhousie Conference on University Teaching and Learning (DCUTL) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Paul, J., & Stevens, L. (2023). Indigenization in Introduction to Psychology: An Ongoing Journey. Talk at the Dalhousie Conference for the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience "In-House" Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

- Paul, J., & Stevens, L. (2023). Indigenization in Introduction to Psychology: An Ongoing Journey. Talk at the Transformative Education Center for Learning & Teaching Retreat in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Paul, J., & Ilie, A. (2023). Sleep and Indigenous School-Aged Children: A Scoping Review. The talk was presented at the Better Nights, Better Days Training Program Webinar Series in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Paul, J. (2023). Risk and Resilience: Wellness Among FNs in Canada. 9th International Conference on Public Health (ICOPH). Poster Presentation. Virtual.
- Paul, J. (2023). Risk and Resilience: Wellness Among FNs in Canada. Poster presented at Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Care Conference. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- Paul, J., Wendt, D., et al. (2023). Indigenous Populations in Canada during COVID-19 and Substance Abuse. Talk presented at Canadian Psychological Association Indigenous Peoples Section Symposium in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Paul, J. (2022). Feelings of Anxiety and Depression Among FNs Peoples in Canada: Cultural Mechanisms of Well-Being. The poster was presented at the 24th IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion 2022. Virtual.
- Paul, J. (2022). Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Participation in Community Cultural Events and Impacts on Well-Being. Talk and poster presented at National Indigenous Physical Activity & Wellness Conference. Virtual.
- Paul, J. (2022). "Fall Forward": Staying True to Yourself and Finding Your Path Beyond Undergraduate Psychology. Keynote talk presented at 34th Annual Psychology Student Research Conference at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Paul, J. (2022). Mechanisms of Culture and FNs Mental Health. The talk was presented at the 7th Generation Tribal Public Health Conference. Virtual.
- Paul, J. (2022). FNs Adult Populations in Canada: Cultural Mechanisms and Impacts on Health & Well-being. Talk and poster presented at the Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) Annual Conference. Virtual.
- Paul, J. (2022). Indigenous Adults: Mental Health & Cultural Mechanisms of Change. Talk and poster presented at the International Society for Developmental Origins of Health and Disease World Congress. Virtual.
- Paul, J. (2022). FNs in Canada: Cultural Mechanisms and Mental Health. Poster presented at the 8th International Conference on Public Health. Virtual.
- Paul, J. (2022). Culture and Health Among FNs in Canada. The talk was presented at the 19th Annual National Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium (IGSS). Virtual.

### ***Forthcoming Project Deliverables***

#### Papers:

- Paul, J., Ilie, A., Martin, D., Corkum, P. (in progress). Sleep and health for Indigenous populations living in colonial contexts: a scoping review in progress. I will submit it to the Special Issue: A Closer Look at Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Pediatric Healthcare. Journal of Pediatric Health Care.
- Paul, J., Paul, R., Lynds, T., Paul-Rudderham, S., MacMillan, R., Johnson, S. (in progress). Well-being among post-secondary students in central and Atlantic Canada who

identify as Indigenous. In progress. I will submit it to the Transcultural Psychiatry Journal.

- Paul, J., McQuaid, R., Anisman, H., Matheson, K., & Bombay, A. (in progress). FNs adults living on-reserve in Canada: relations between racism, bullying, aggression and culture. I will submit it to the Journal of Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology or the International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction.
- Lynds, T., McQuaid, R., Bombay, A., Paul, J., & Stewart, S.H. (in progress). Effects of bullying victimization on alcohol use and binge drinking in First Nation youth: is cultural connectedness a protective factor? *Journal of Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Project and manuscript in progress.

#### Presentations:

- Paul, J., McQuaid, R. J., Hopkins, C., Perri, A., Stewart, S., Matheson, K., Anisman, H., & Bombay, A. (2024; poster presentation tentative), Canadian Psychological Association Annual Gathering/Conference.
- Paul, J. & Wendt, D. (2024; panel speaker/presentation tentative), Canadian Psychological Association Annual Gathering/Conference.
- Paul, J. & Bombay, A. (2024; presentation tentative). Crossroads Interdisciplinary Health Research Conference.

#### ***Activities Outside of Your Research***

- 2023/04 - present: Co-Supervisor, Honours Thesis, Dalhousie University, Kate Lamont
- 2022/6-2023/6: Indigenous Research Mentor, Dalhousie University, Alzena Illie
- 2020/2-2022: Scoping Review Supervisor, Indigenous Health (for Rebecca St. James) (varies).
- 2023/09 – present: Indigenous Research Consultant on a preliminary application for a Canada Research Chair related to Indigenous mental health. SSHRC funds the application, and the initial application is led by professors in the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience at Dalhousie University.
- 2023/03 – present: Committee Member, Limited Term Instructor Search Committee, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie University (time-limited)
- 2023/03 – present: Committee Member, Indigenous Perspective, Artwork (for new Clinical Psychology Training Clinic) Committee, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie University (time-limited)
- 2022/12 – present: Committee Member, Canadian Knowledge Mobilization Consortium Indigenous Peoples Health Committee, University of Ottawa (ON)
- 2022/12 – present: Committee Member, Canadian Sleep Research Consortium Early Childhood Hub Committee through Corkum Labs, Dalhousie University
- 2022/12 – present: Lead, Indigenous Liaison, Canadian Sleep Research Consortium (formerly CKMC [Coordination and Knowledge Mobilization Centre])
- 2022/12 – present: Fellow, DIVERT Mental Health, York University (ON)
- 2022/1: Volunteer, Consult for Olaf Ellefson, SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council). Proposed Pilot Project for FNs, Inuit, and Metis Students at Master's Level

- 2021/9 - present: Lead of Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience at Dalhousie)
- 2021/9 – present: Indigenous Liaison, Better Nights Better Days of Corkum Labs at Dalhousie University.
- 2020/9 – present: Member, Department of Psychology & Neuroscience at Dalhousie University’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
- 2020 - present: Dalhousie Course Facilitator-Faculty of Nursing/Medicine/Dentistry-Cultural Safety for Indigenous Peoples Course
- 2019/1 - present: Student Research Scholar, Healthy Populations Institute
- 2018/9 – present: Member, Research Committee, Indigenous Health Interest Group, Dalhousie University
- 2018/9 – present: Member, General Committee, Indigenous Health Interest Group, Dalhousie University
- 2018/2 - present: Student Mentor Member, Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network (AIMN)
- 2022: Volunteer, Talking Circles, Tajikeimik Gathering, Engage Nova Scotia (time-limited/HRM)
- 2022 – present: Volunteer, Consult, Indigenous Health Research, by request
- 2021 – present: Volunteer, Technology Demonstration Volunteer for Child Assessment Course at Dalhousie University
- 2023/05: Volunteer, CACBT (Canadian Association of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies) Conference, for Dr. Alissa Pencer, through Dalhousie University (time-limited/HRM).
- 2019/9 - present: Dalhousie Indigenous Student Centre Casual Volunteer, Dalhousie University
- 2023: Assessment & Intervention Practicum at the Dalhousie Centre for Psychological Health (e.g., working with clients who have difficulties with general mental health, trauma, anxiety, depression, personality disorders, neurodevelopmental disorder concerns; engaging in client case file review, collateral interviewing, diagnostic assessment, scoring, case report writeup/feedback; treatment planning, treatment administration)
- 2023: Therapy Intervention Practicum (e.g., diagnostic assessment, case notes, following unified treatment protocol).
- 2022: Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) Borderline Personality Disorder Treatment Program (BPDTP) Assessment Practicum (e.g., case file review, collateral interviewing, diagnostic assessment, scoring, case report writeup/feedback).
- 2022: Adult Assessment-Practicum (e.g., observations, case review, interviews, administration of tests (e.g., WAIS-V), scoring, case report writeup/feedback).
- 2022: Teaching assistant for a course in developmental research in psychology (PSYO 3609) at Dalhousie University.
- 2021 - present: Exam Proctor for the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience at Dalhousie University (e.g., courses including statistical methods and animal behaviour).

### ***Future Plans***

I am keen to continue my efforts toward improving the mental health of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Growing up on a reserve in BC and then moving to NS at 13, I have seen the

devastating impacts of colonization and poor (and poorly treated!) mental health concerns among my Indigenous brothers and sisters. Constantly reminding myself of the effect that the work I and others are doing can have, I am more driven than ever to continue my passionate efforts to work alongside groups like the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and with communities like Membertou First Nation.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with my numerous colleagues in eastern and central Canada to fill the critical gaps in research related to complex aspects of mental health and use the same to drive policy and programming changes. In terms of the "big picture," after completing my Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology (sometime 2025-26), I plan to work in various FNS communities in Atlantic Canada (with my "home office" at the wellness centre in Membertou) and provide and teach Indigenized culturally-modified forms of structured Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) protocols (e.g., components of Dialectical Behavioural, Acceptance and Commitment, Behavioural Activation) to clientele as well as other mental health providers treating Indigenous clients. Although my disabilities have made it necessary for me to pace myself and the completion of my program, the KSP scholarship has allowed me to dedicate more energy to my Ph.D. program, which has lessened stress-induced accelerated physiological deterioration. Wela'lioq, AIMN!