



THUNDERBIRD PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2017/18

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NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THUNDERBIRD

Thunderbird Partnership Foundation is embarking on a new five-year strategic plan now that its current three-year plan is nearing an end. The new direction was informed by key informant interviews, staff, our Board of Directors representing regional priorities, a Service Effectiveness Survey shared with our stakeholders across the country and by the priorities of the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum (FNMWC) Framework. Interviewees and stakeholders were asked a series of questions, providing Thunderbird with meaningful feedback to evaluate and monitor our progress toward achieving our strategic goals. The questions asked reflected key outcomes of the FNMWC Framework:

- **Hope:** Use of Indigenous Knowledge and Culture
- **Belonging:** Relationships and Partnerships
- **Meaning:** Knowledge Translation
- **Purpose:** Training, Communication, Support

The new direction has a broad focus on expanding Thunderbird's capacity as a Centre of Excellence on Indigenous Knowledge and Culture for Mental Wellness. It was finalized at a meeting of the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation Board of Directors meeting, held in Victoria, BC in November. The new path aligns with the themes of the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework.

ABOVE: Thunderbird Partnership Foundation Board of Directors Back Row (L-R): Richard Gray – Quebec; Norma Saulis – Atlantic; Jennifer Joy – Health Canada; Carol Hopkins – Executive Director; Wanda Smith (alt.) and Julie McKay – Ontario Region; Bill Mussell – First Peoples Wellness Circle; Michelle DeGroot – British Columbia; Ellen Smith – Northwest Territories; Colleen Geddes – Yukon; Mari Stagg – Manitoba; Patty Wells (Shade) – Alberta; Willie Alphonse – Youth Solvent Abuse Committee. Front Row (L-R): Theresa (Dolly) Simond (alt.) – Northwest Territories; Chief Austin Bear – President; Agnes Mills – Elder; Keith LeClaire – Special Advisor; Janice Nicotine – Saskatchewan.

LET'S TALK CANNABIS

Phase two of the Let's Talk Cannabis research project is underway. The Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR) at the University of Victoria, continues to develop preliminary cannabis dialogue tools. The national research project is supported by a grant from the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR).

The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation has a three-stage plan that will focus on a First Nation school setting and a community setting. Stage one, will see Thunderbird modifying the materials provided by CISUR and revise to fit a First Nation's context. Stage two will be testing the cannabis dialogue tools. Stage three will bring our partners back together to discuss how each of the tools worked in practice and to make any necessary adjustments to the originally created tools.

LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS

Thunderbird will also be working with First Nations across the country to host regional discussions on cannabis. In the coming months, as the proposed Bill C-45, the Cannabis Act, makes its way through the House of Commons and provinces and territories determine their action plans, Indigenous communities must also plan for the opportunities and challenges that legalization may bring. The federal government has made it clear that the Cannabis Act intends to protect children and youth. The federally proposed legal age for cannabis possession is 18 years of age. Provinces and territories have the option to raise the minimum age, but not lower it. For example, Ontario has proposed the minimum legal age to be 19 years of age. To view Bill C-45, visit: <http://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-45/second-reading>

CANNABIS USE IN FIRST NATIONS

PROHIBITION BY-LAWS

ALONE INEFFECTIVE

A NNAPF* environmental scan in 2013 of the 239 communities with a bylaw banning alcohol, reported the bylaw alone was ineffective. The national survey conducted by the Cannabis Secretariat of Health Canada ensures Canada can monitor and measure the impact of legalization over the long term. Other countries that have legalized and decriminalized cannabis use report that usage did not significantly increase after legalization. (Monitoring the Future Report, 2014)

* National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation

89%

of First Nations youth aged 12-17 with problematic substance use issues report using cannabis regularly and at an earlier age than the general population in Canada (AMIS 2017).

A survey of Canadians by Health Canada in 2017 reports the age of initiation of cannabis use at 14.2 years, and regular usage at

14%

First Nations communities must consider how best to reduce the harms to all people across the lifespan including those with mental health or substance use challenges, youth, expecting families and women who are breast feeding. Learning from the First Nations community by-laws in place for alcohol, we know that prohibition, or the intent to create dry communities, increased bootlegging and significant enforcement challenges, (McCarthy, Natuashish RCMP Not Doing Enough to Enforce Alcohol Bylaw, 2008).

Thunderbird Partnership Foundation's Indigenous Knowledge Translator, Mary Deleary participated in the Partnership Symposium on Cannabis Public Education and Awareness in Ottawa last November. The event was organized by the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine. The event was held to bring together partner organizations to strategize the best approach to raise awareness and educate the public about the potential risks of cannabis use.



TEENS NEED HONEST CONVERSATIONS

Evidence says that prohibition, fear of cannabis and exaggerating the effects of cannabis use is counter-productive for teens. Promoting honest, fact based conversations about the impacts on the young developing brain are critical for teens.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

(Legalizing Cannabis 2017)

- What does your community know about harm reduction?
- Can cannabis be used in your community as a safer alternative to opioids for pain management?
- What is the best approach to ensure wellness for youth, those with mental health and addictions issues, and pregnant women?
- How can safe cannabis use be promoted while ensuring use is not normalized?
- Is the licensing for the production and distribution of cannabis an opportunity for economic development in your community?
- What support does your community need to develop capacity to reduce the risk of legalized cannabis?

In the fall, the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation participated in the national discussion *Partnership Symposium on Cannabis Public Education and Awareness* and the regional discussion *Cannabis and Youth: Implications for Legalization in Ontario*. At the Partnership Symposium, Thunderbird participated in a panel discussion called: *Raising Awareness Among Target Audiences*. Ensuring that messaging using a one size fits all

approach was avoided, emphasizing that wellness for Indigenous people must always be considered within the context of social determinants of health and from a strengths-based whole community perspective were among the key messages Thunderbird conveyed.

BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OPIOID MISUSE AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

Work continues in the on-going effort to turn the tide in the opioid epidemic for First Nations communities across Canada. The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation continues to advocate for resources to increase community capacity to address opioid misuse; raise awareness about a culturally-based approach to addressing addictions through various forums including community town hall discussions. We also have continued to facilitate the First Nations Opioid Survey.

The First Nations Opioid Survey was created to help communities gain a better understanding of opioid misuse and its impacts to address the opioid crisis at the local level.

Thunderbird Partnership Foundation provides support, as well as analysis of the results to inform local opioid strategies, including community based opioid replacement therapy access. The survey will soon be available in French and Ojibway. Ultimately, the data collected in the survey will help to inform and evaluate policy, prevention, and treatment interventions.

The survey was completed in 2017, and was developed by a working group of addictions medicine specialists, First Nations community practitioners, representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, Health Canada, the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health and the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation.

NEW RESOURCES FOR LAND BASED PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY CRISIS PLANNING

New resources are now available to support First Nations communities interested in creating their own land based wellness programs and community crisis plans. Two new service delivery models are nearing completion by the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework Implementation Team. The models will provide a template to guide communities that want to develop their own wellness programs on the land, or in country, and help them put a plan in place to respond and restore wellness after a community crisis.

The service delivery models are rooted in the principles of the FNMWC, which means they are inclusive of local culture, beliefs, customs, histories and stories, incorporate the belief that people have strengths and are resilient. The models also provide insight into what is possible through examples from other communities. For more information on the Land Based and Crisis Planning, Prevention and Response Service Delivery Models, visit our website at www.thunderbirdpf.org.

Wellness on the Land, a poster developed by the team at the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, wins top spot in the Program and Policy Category at the Issues of Substance Conference held in Calgary, November 2017. This poster, along with Moving from Crisis to Wellness were developed to promote the land based and crisis planning service delivery models. The Thunderbird Team at the IOS, (L-R) – Amy Fournier, Sherry Huff, Jasmine Fournier, Carol Hopkins, Mary Deleary, Nora Bressette and Jordan Davis





THUNDERBIRD PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION **CONGRATULATES CAROL HOPKINS**

Carol Hopkins, Executive Director of the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation
Photo Credit: Greg Lynch – Huff Media

The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation congratulates Carol Hopkins on her appointment to the Order of Canada, announced Friday, December 29, 2017 by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada.

Carol Hopkins is of the Lenape Nation at Moraviantown, Ontario, who has spent more than 20 years in the field of First Nations addictions and mental health. Hopkins serves as the Executive Director of the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, where she works tirelessly to champion a paradigm shift in Indigenous addictions and mental health support.

“Carol Hopkins is the most deserving recipient of the Order of Canada, as she is and continues to be an inspiration to us all for her dedication and commitment in the field of Indigenous addictions and mental wellness both here in Canada and beyond,” says Chief Austin Bear, President of the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation Board of Directors. “On behalf of the board and staff at the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, we wish to express how proud we are of Carol, and congratulate her on this most prestigious award.”

Hopkins has co-chaired national initiatives known for best practice in national policy review and development, resulting in the: First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework (FNMWC), the Honouring Our Strengths: A Renewed Framework to Address Substance Use Issues Among First Nations People in Canada, the Indigenous Wellness Framework, and best practice guidelines for culturally-based inhalant abuse treatment. Hopkins has also inspired the development of Thunderbird Partnership Foundation’s Native Wellness Assessment™, the first such instrument of its kind to psychometrically validate the effectiveness of cultural interventions on wellness outcomes over time.

Hopkins holds both a Masters of Social Work Degree from the University of Toronto and a degree in sacred Indigenous Knowledge, equivalent to a PhD in western-based education systems. Hopkins also holds a sessional faculty position in the School of Social Work at Kings University College at Western University.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN THE WORKPLACE

Not sure how to incorporate cultural competency in your workplace? Thunderbird Partnership Foundation offers numerous education courses geared to support cultural competency in the workplace for those working with First Nations people who struggle with addictions and mental health issues. Our approach is rooted in both Western clinical practices and Indigenous Knowledge, where culture, language, and connection to the land form the foundation.

Implementing cultural competency in your workplace requires a shift in thinking and an examination of service design, policy, human resources, service delivery and health outcomes to ensure they are culturally relevant, meaningful and trauma-informed.



More information on cultural competency, including a cultural policy template, can be found in these Thunderbird guidebooks on our website: www.thunderbirdpf.org. You can also contact us to find out which of our education courses provides this training and support: info@thunderbirdpf.org.

The following are some strategies you can use to help get you started:

- View Indigenous Knowledge as a credible source of evidence
- Invest in more resources to support inclusion of Indigenous culture and traditional healing practices
- Inclusion of cultural practitioners and cultural knowledge in all workforce development

strategies, i.e. human resource policies, contracted services, salary compensation, professional development and/or cultural-specific standards of practice

- Identify your organization's cultural competency needs and priorities for staff, program and community
- Support all staff in developing cultural humility

FEATHER CARRIERS: LEADERSHIP FOR LIFE

A Strategy for Community Mobilization, using an Indigenous Perspective to Promote Life

Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life is a new program in Ontario that draws upon the strengths of Indigenous communities to support life promotion, nourishing the belief that life is worth living. It's been developed by Dr. Ed Connors, John Rice and Dr. Debby Wilson Danard, with the support of the Barrie and Area Advisory Council and the First Peoples Wellness Circle¹.

Feather Carriers acknowledges that a whole community effort is required to

address the epidemic of suicide and other issues resulting in premature death. It aims to build the skills of community leaders to support life promotion strategies, by drawing upon Indigenous concepts of leadership for protection and promotion of community health and well-being. This is done through sharing traditional knowledge, experiential learning and developing strategies to build people's resiliency against historical challenges, cultural genocide and intergenerational trauma.

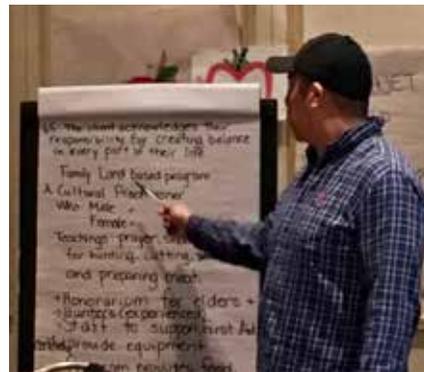
1- The First Peoples Wellness Circle is formerly known as the Native Mental Health Association. The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation is a result of a merger between the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation and the First Peoples Wellness Circle.



FNMWC FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION TRAINING **NOW AVAILABLE**

Training on how to implement the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework is now available through the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation. The FNMWC is a complex model, rooted in culture and comprised of several layers and elements foundational to supporting First Nations mental wellness. Some of the training goals include an understanding of how to manage change and how to establish a vision of community wellness. The Implementation Guide also provides resources to use the FNMWC to design new or review existing programs and services, understand the importance of

Indigenous cultural knowledge, and how to plan a mental wellness continuum of care using a systems approach to create networks and engage partners. Visit our website to learn more:
www.thunderbirdpf.org.



Wellness workers from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory participated in the FNMWC Framework Implementation Training held in January. The training was organized by the Chiefs of Ontario in Thunder Bay, as well as Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto.



BUFFALO RIDERS

Not sure how to support kids at risk in your community?
Buffalo Riders can help.

This 5-day training course from Thunderbird Partnership Foundation is geared to First Nations addiction and mental health workers, school support workers and youth workers!

- Builds local capacity to support kids at risk of substance use
- Blends the latest research, with culturally-grounded teachings
- Includes follow-up support

"this is the most comprehensive workshop I have ever attended"

"giving youth the skills to find balance... and emotional wellness through culture and guidance"

Contact us to explore how you can bring this training to your community.

info@thunderbirdpf.org

1-866-763-4714

CONNECTING WITH CULTURE FOR LIFE



A hub for **Indigenous Youth** to find support through a connection to culture, family and community.

MY CULTURE ~ MY LIFE

To mark World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10, 2017, Indigenous youth and their families chose to focus on LIFE through culture! They shared dozens of photos, videos and stories, celebrating the strength of culture and how it supports their wellness and living a good life.

Visit www.cultureforlife.ca to see Indigenous youth living a good life through a connection to culture!



My Culture ~ My Life was a collaboration between the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, the Assembly of First Nations, the First Peoples Wellness Circle and the National Youth Solvent Abuse Committee.

VISIT CULTUREFORLIFE.CA

- For ideas on how you can connect with culture
- Watch videos from Indigenous Youth about how culture gives them hope, a sense of belonging, meaning in life and how they found their purpose.
- Connect to supports all around you!
- Find wellness tips like the ones below...



SELF-CARE TIPS!

- Learn words to name your emotions; a feeling word vocabulary. Just by naming the emotion with a feeling word, you can stay calm.
- Remind yourself that no matter how bad life seems, how you are feeling and what is happening right now – you can get help
- Spend time near the water
- Go for a walk
- Learn about spending time on the land and reconnecting with Creation
- Help someone/volunteer
- Create something, through art, music, written word

NEED TO TALK?
Support is a phone call away.

Call the First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line
1-855-242-3310