

# Clinical Strategies to Develop Connections, Promote Health and Address Pain from the Perspectives of Indigenous Youth, Elders and Clinicians



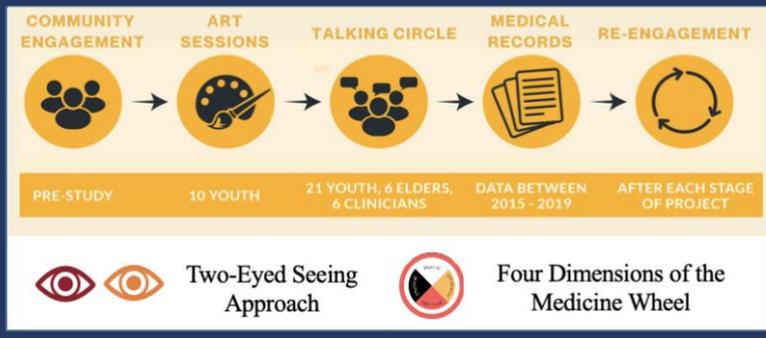
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## BACKGROUND

Indigenous youth in Canada experience high rates of physical pain compared to the non-Indigenous population, and the primary conditions for seeking health care relate to the following pain related symptoms; headaches, musculoskeletal, oral and ear that can profoundly impact children's growth and development.<sup>1,2</sup> There is a growing body of literature about the context of Indigenous children and youth's experience with pain, including a learned stoic expression of pain and hurt that may be impacting clinician's ability to accurately assess and subsequently manage that pain.<sup>1,3-6</sup>

The aim of this study is to mobilize Indigenous knowledge to improve the health care experiences for urban Indigenous youth. This study is an extension of the Canadian Institute of Health Research Chronic Pain Network (CPN) funded Aboriginal Children's Hurt and Healing (ACHH) Initiative, originating in Mi'kma'ki Nova Scotia.

## METHODS



## YOUTH ARTWORK



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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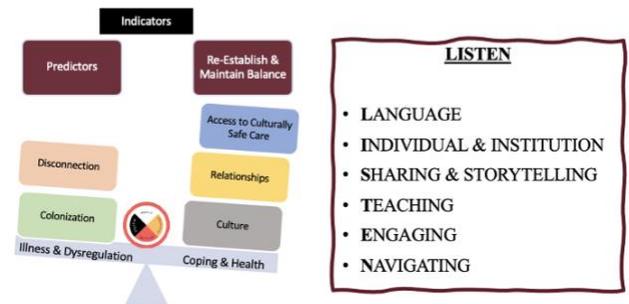
## RESULTS

### ART SESSIONS

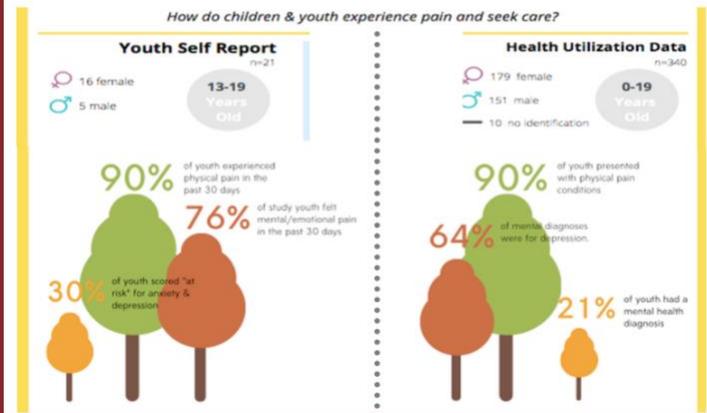
- The Medicine Wheel was used to analyze the artwork, and of the four dimensions, the most commonly painted was the mental health dimension, with subthemes of:
  - Identity, belonging and connections
  - Relationships
  - Safety

### CONVERSATIONS

- Resulted in predictors, indicators, ways to maintain balance, and clinical considerations



### HEALTH UTILIZATION



## CONCLUSIONS

- Indigenous youth demonstrate a high disclosure of physical and mental pain, low rates of mental health diagnoses
- Youth in this study reported accessing clinicians as a usual source of care to consult or receive medical advice and responded they felt comfortable seeking care yet there were some accepted practices in the mainstream system that may cause harm
- This study demonstrates culturally safe and Indigenous-led health care can improve health outcomes, integrate Western and Indigenous knowledge in care plans, and improve access and adherence<sup>7</sup>
- Indigenous youth shared natural ways to create balance and healthy lifestyles including: Smudge, Prayer, Nature walks, Cultural songs, Natural foods and medicines, and Talking circles<sup>7</sup>
- Practice a strengths-based and culturally-safe clinical care strategy to support Indigenous youth- "LISTEN" acronym<sup>7</sup>