

Etuaptmu'k W'loti: Using Mi'kmaw Knowledge to Create Health & Wellness Solutions

THE CHALLENGE

Mi'kmaq have always carried the knowledge that is required to thrive, but the history and ongoing legacy of colonialism in Canada has systematically disrupted Mi'kmaw systems of health. L'nu children and youth experience significant health disparities including less access to safe and timely care, lower rates of reporting for physical and mental health concerns, significantly higher rates of chronic conditions including pain and poor oral and ear health and are less likely to access specialist services.

WHAT CAN BE FIXED?

Mi'kmaw knowledge and data can chart pathways to address persistent chronic conditions and poor care experiences, and to identify culturally safe indicators from a Mi'kmaw worldview. Significant systemic change is needed to create opportunities for training for racism-free, safe health care experiences.

WHAT WILL BE DONE & BY WHOM?

Etuaptmu'k W'loti is led by John R. Sylliboy, PhD Candidate, from Millbrook & Eskasoni First Nations and Dr. Margot Latimer, researcher at Dalhousie University and IWK Health Centre. This will be an important first step toward self-determination in Mi'kmaw health research, with anticipated benefit for Indigenous health outcomes in Nova Scotia.

The work will reflect the foundations of Etuaptmumk or Two-Eyed Seeing, maintaining both Indigenous and Western-based health worldviews.

They will draw on existing partnerships between Tajikeymik, the Wije'winen Health Centre, the IWK Health Centre, Nova Scotia Health, the Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance, the Wabanaki-Labrador Network, Hearing & Speech Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Departments of Health & Wellness and Advanced Education, Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, and Accreditation Canada.

Some of the main areas of focus will include:

- Creating a Mi'kmaw developed and validated "Cultural Safety in Healthcare" Indicators Toolkit for health organizations and providers to measure, document, and enhance cultural safety.
- Developing care and service solutions based on Mi'kmaq communities' interpretation of their own health utilization data.
- Reducing racism and enhancing cultural safety in education, healthcare and research.
- Improving access to culturally appropriate services.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME?

This FRI will improve access to culturally safe health and healing experiences for Mi'kmaw children and youth across Mi'kma'ki.