

# Culturally Safe Care Pathways

## The importance of advancing culturally safe and trauma-informed care through OHTs

This resource is part of a series of information pamphlets and supports for Ontario Health Teams and all those working to advance integrated health and care services for First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous populations.

**Culturally Safe Care** is an approach that fosters respectful engagement that strives to recognize and address power imbalances in the health care system. Culturally safe care considers how social and historical contexts, and structural and interpersonal disparities shape a person's health and wellbeing and their experience with healthcare.

**The Goal** is to create an environment where all individuals feel respected, and their unique cultural needs are understood and addressed.

**Trauma-Informed Care** is an approach that prioritizes supporting individuals to make decisions about their healthcare journey in ways that feel safe to them. It acknowledges that hospitals and clinics can feel unsafe for someone who has experienced trauma. Trauma-informed practices actively recognize the presence of trauma and aim to create safer and more compassionate spaces to reduce the risk of retraumatizing.

**The Goal** is to create care environments that are responsive to the needs of those affected by trauma, fostering trust and healing.

**Person-Centered Care** is an approach to care that shifts the focus from diagnosis and treatment of a medical condition to understanding the whole person, recognizing their individual preferences and values. Person-Centered Care prioritizes the individual with a holistic approach to treatment and empowers the individual to play an active role in their health care decisions, supporting their autonomy and choice.

**The Goal** is to create a comfortable, supportive environment where individuals are treated as partners in their own health care, ensuring that their voices are heard.

### Additional Resources:

IPHCC partners with PCNs to provide customized, local Indigenous Cultural Safety training. Indigenous Cultural Safety Programs and to access training:

[Anishinaabe Mino'Ayaawin - People in Good Health](#)

Effective engagement and amplifying the voices of Indigenous Peoples and communities:

[Indigenous Patient, Family, and Community Engagement Toolkit](#)



# Culturally Safe Care Pathways

Culturally Safe Care is defined by those who receive care, not by those who provide it.

## Training & Research

Providers must deepen their understanding of Indigenous histories and the impacts on health outcomes. Understanding this context is essential as historical trauma, and systemic inequities have led to persistent health disparities for Indigenous communities.

## Self-reflection & Bias Awareness

Examine your own biases and align practices with trauma informed patient centred care. Sharing insights with colleagues and addressing inappropriate comments foster an inclusive environment.

## Embracing Humility & Lifelong Learning

Humility is essential when being corrected or called out, and these moments are valuable opportunities for growth. Approach feedback with openness to improve your understanding and sensitivity, seeing it as a chance to grow will help providers continually improve their approach to Indigenous health care.

## Person centred approach

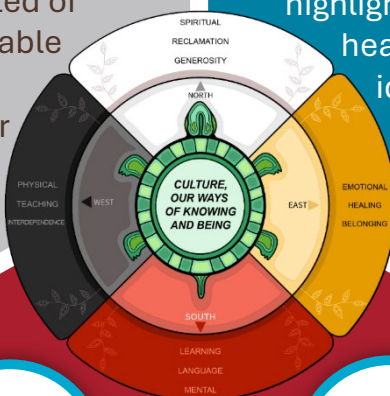
Emphasis must be placed on respecting a patient's autonomy in managing their health, making decisions and choosing treatments. Prioritize their experience by addressing their emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual well-being.

## Wholistic Care Pathways

Recognize the diverse treatment options available to patients, understanding the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of health and includes Traditional Healing methods and the importance of the cultural context in health care.

## Culture is Healing

The [Model of Wholistic Health and Well-being](#) highlights the role of culture in treatment and healing. Aim to foster a strong sense of self identity and self-determination, this approach promotes wholistic well-being and defines health as more than just the absence of disease, improving health outcomes for Indigenous patients .



### Roots & Indicators

Learn to recognize the outputs of trauma and identify when someone is triggered; offer supports; accept that those who have experienced trauma exhibit a wide range of responses; learn to respond appropriately; accept that all patients are deserving of care.



### Transparency

Offer a patient all options for treatment; discuss these options clearly and openly; ensure there is enough time for questions and clarification; ensure the patient feels comfortable and supported in making an informed decision about their care.



### Safe Space

Create an emotionally and physically safe space; be proactive and enquire about needs; make offerings available (water, tea, coffee, etc.); include artwork or warm and inviting decorations in the space; use an open and receptive posture when speaking.



### Prioritize Choice

Respect patients' right to determine their own treatment; be open to including the family in the care plan; learn how cultural beliefs can be integrated into healthcare processes; explore and discover cultural and traditional healing and wellness services in your area.