



CAP NYC

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
National Youth Council

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

COVID-19 has deepened the lack of inequitable access. Too many Indigenous youth face mental health challenges alone. This is an ongoing crisis for youth in particular who are not always connected to resources available. Many Indigenous youth are living in a generalized state of fear.

As COVID-19 changes the new norms for behavioral and social interaction, many youth are feeling isolated; this is further amplified in remote communities.

COVID-19 impacts will be long lasting, especially as related to depression, anxiety, and the resulting substance use.

Communities can no longer gather for social or cultural reasons, and many youth are losing the cultural connection that helps strengthen their identity and spirit. Although there have been efforts to recreate some of these events in an online environment, it doesn't provide the same level of connection.

Many cultural events, interactions, and teachings that can't be recreated through technology, such as sweats, powwows, drum events, medicine making, etc. **The shift in mental health throughout the general population has also been felt by urban Indigenous communities and youth.** In one area, racism and hostile interactions between non-Indigenous and Indigenous populations had increased based on fear and misinformation being spread.

There are also impacts within Indigenous communities and families, as decisions around COVID-19 restrictions can be cause for conflict. In some cases, families face internal stigmas for their choices, which

can result in further feelings of isolation. Marginalized populations also often lack the social safety that other demographics have, and the lack of support can result in further mental stressors.

Indigenous students face particular mental health challenges, which existed well before COVID-19 and has since become a larger issue. It is hard to take a first step and get help with mental health concerns when drop-in clinics or other in-person resources are closed.

The stay home mindset has also created close living spaces and the lack of broadband for many Indigenous youths in these circumstances has only increases stress and mental health concerns. Schools that were once a safe haven from problems at home and a source of resources are now at times not open, which is disruptive and negatively impacts those who depends on these resources.

Indigenous youth lack access to community-based mental health programming and services; too many Indigenous youth are taking their lives and not enough is being done about it. Many see their friends or family members struggling, but don't have resources or information to help them. In some cases, it is lack of knowledge of where or how to access the services that do exist that creates an ongoing barrier.

There is a need for more information on coping mechanisms for individuals, as well as ideas on how to help and support loved ones who are not in your household or social bubble.

The CAP National Youth Council (NYC) consists of provincial and territorial youth representatives from across Canada who are tasked with advocating for the rights, needs and interests of Off-Reserve Indigenous youth at the national level.

The CAP NYC is especially concerned with the socioeconomic factors that affect Off-Reserve Indigenous peoples in Canada. As a result, CAP NYC wanted to explore how Indigenous youth in Canada can get actively engaged in the policy processes that impact their lives, families and communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented Indigenous youth with unique challenges across the country. This website allows CAP to connect youth with resources and information to help them navigate this difficult time, while also maintaining a vital sense of community.

For more information, please visit: capyouth.ca