



A SNAPSHOT OF RECONCILI-ACTION AT OPH: 2021-2022



The following table includes examples of some of the Reconcili-ACTION activities that have occurred at OPH since September 2021. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Principle	Short-Term Outcome	Link to TRC	Activity	Feedback / Lessons Learned
Respect	Increased awareness and understanding of colonial history and systemic racism and its impact on First Nations, Inuit and Métis health	18	<p>National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) – In an effort to commemorate the inaugural NDTR and reaffirm OPH’s commitment to Reconcili-ACTION, several OPH employees and Chair Egli collaborated to create this video message.</p> <p>Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) Training</p> <p>As an essential part of the reconciliation journey, OPH continues to promote ICS learning opportunities for employees. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundations of ICS - Created as part of the <i>Anishinaabe Mino’Ayaawin – People in Good Health</i> program, 119 OPH employees from across the department piloted the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council’s newly launched ICS course between December 2021 and June 2022. Additional employees will complete the course this fall.• Anti-Indigenous Racism Training Sessions - Created to support the implementation of the <i>OPH Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Workplace Policy</i>, these facilitated sessions were offered to OPH employees to compliment/enhance the more general training on key concepts in anti-racism. Content included: an overview of Canadian history and its treatment of Indigenous Peoples; the legacy and ongoing impacts of colonization (e.g. Indian Act; Residential Schools; intergenerational trauma); current Indigenous realities (e.g. Indigenous Peoples in the media; Pope’s apology); and how to become a better ally/advocate for change. Four (4) sessions were offered between June-August 2022, with 208 OPH employees and leaders participating.	<p>Indigenous Cultural Safety Training (ICST):</p> <p><i>Foundations of Indigenous Cultural Safety</i></p> <p>Post-training evaluation results suggested that 97 % of OPH employees agreed or strongly agreed that the course enhanced their knowledge and that the content was appropriate for a public health audience. Additional feedback suggests that some employees felt more mindful of unconscious bias, felt more confident identifying anti-Indigenous racism/microaggressions, and would be willing to speak up against anti-Indigenous racism.</p> <p>“As someone outside of a clinical setting and not working directly with Indigenous clients, I found great value in the IPHCC <i>Foundations of Indigenous Cultural Safety</i> course. While this training really opened my eyes to the injustices Indigenous peoples face in the healthcare system in Canada, it also included a lot of information that applies to many workplaces and social settings. A key takeaway from the training was the power that bystanders have to disrupt microaggressions and racism, and the impact they can have on both the victim and the aggressor. I can apply this to my life by choosing to speak up no matter how subtle the act of racism is. I also appreciated how the information was presented in a way that kept me</p>



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pathways to Indigenous Learning – Launched by the City’s Equity Secretariat to further build awareness of the impacts of colonization on Indigenous Peoples. This is a free, self-paced training that is accessible on the City’s iLearn platform. It includes five (5) e-learning modules that provide an overview of the historical and contemporary government policies that have impacted First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. 51 OPH employees have completed this course since September 2021.• Inuit-specific cultural safety – As requested, Inuit-specific ICS resources were shared with Case Management and IPAC team members working closely with Inuit in order to enhance understanding of the local context (e.g. Urban Inuit Knowledge Centre).• Individual Development Plans (IDP) - A diverse list of formal and informal ICS learning opportunities was also circulated at the end of January in response to expressed interest and the demand for ICS resources. Promotion of this tool coincided with annual employee IDP discussions with supervisors/managers.	<p>interested to learn more. The combination of videos, quizzes, real life examples, data, etc. allowed me to better understand the context and history. The self-guided style was ideal for me as it allowed me to complete the training in small chunks of time and reflect on what I covered bit by bit.”</p> <p>- D. Maxwell, Program Assistant, Community Engagement Team</p>
Relationship	Engagement with Indigenous Elders and partners	20/22	<p>Annual meetings with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Partners – As part of OPH’s ongoing commitment to reconciliation, meetings were arranged for Dr. V. Etches, Medical Officer of Health, to check-in with 10 local Indigenous agencies (two more than last year). The informal interactions provided time to share updates and concerns, celebrate successes, and to identify gaps and opportunities for Reconcili-ACTION. We heard that partners are still fully in COVID response and finding it hard to look forward to recovery planning. Similar to ideas proposed by Indigenous health leaders in the Visioning the Future: First Nations, Inuit and Metis Population and Public Health report (NCCIH, 2021), local Indigenous partners agree that transformation and reimagining the health system is needed in order to ensure a greater impact on the wellbeing of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. This includes addressing anti-Indigenous racism while</p>	<p>Meetings with Indigenous Partners:</p> <p>“It is always a privilege to be part of OPH’s annual meetings with Indigenous partners – something that I look forward to every year. Recent conversations have reaffirmed that addressing Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination remains a top priority, as well as initiatives that support the Indigenous Mental Wellness Strategy, the Indigenous Women’s Safety Table, and the critical need to plan with an Indigenous lens. This is particularly true in the context of housing and opportunities for land-based healing initiatives.</p>



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			<p>integrating Indigenous knowledges and a holistic perspective that considers the intersecting determinants of Indigenous health. Follow up meetings are planned this fall to continue the conversation and collective planning.</p> <p>Pandemic Planning and Support – Throughout the pandemic, OPH has been actively supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners with the interpretation of context-specific COVID-19-related guidelines; providing liaison services to facilitate timely responses to clinical inquiries from OPH content experts; facilitating collaborative COVID case management with Indigenous partners as needed; and sharing COVID-related employee training and wellness resources with partners. While this support continues, local partners have expressed concerns about the: increasing number of clients, employees and family members with COVID-19 infections; lack of Provincial/OPH-required public health measures to mitigate risks; inconsistent messaging/ guidance when contacting OPH; and the subsequent high level of employee absenteeism that they are seeing. This feedback resulted in concerted efforts to identify designated OPH employees to co-create a communication process with partners that will improve timely access to information/support, identify areas for improvement, and build/strengthen relationships between organizations. Consistently broadening this approach has been recommended.</p> <p>Community events – OPH teams were invited to participate at in-person events that celebrate First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture, ways of knowing and doing. For example, OPH collaborated with City partners on an interactive booth at the Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival in June. OPH employees were also asked to support Tungasuvvingat Inuit’s (TI) Annual Inuit Wellness Day and Inuuqatigiit’s Family BBQ. Being present at and supporting these events provides opportunities to enhance knowledge and</p>	<p>Partners have reinforced the need for OPH to get feedback/ guidance on Reconcili-ACTION directly from community members and that we need to enhance external communications and interactions – i.e. to let the communities know what we are doing; to be present to interact with community members at local gatherings and events; and to be sure to include the perspective of Indigenous Elders and youth as we develop our programs, services, and the next steps on our reconciliation journey.”</p> <p>- K. Trotter, Knowledge Exchange Specialist, OPH</p> <p>Pandemic Planning & Support:</p> <p>“Recently, some IPAC team members and I had the pleasure to meet with partners from Inuuqatigiit to share outbreak management information and explore resource needs to best support the centre. In addition, partners identified a need for designated OPH staff to be available to consult with on outbreak management, and to support relationship building and consistent messaging. I am happy to share that since we made this improvement on the IPAC Phone Line and Child Care teams, we have received positive feedback and appreciation from this partner. Inuuqatigiit has since invited our team to participate at their Family BBQ. This is a tremendous opportunity to highlight our work and to answer questions that families may have. Being able to meet in-person allows us to continue to foster the relationship with Inuuqatigiit and the</p>



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			understanding, to build relationships with Indigenous partners, and to learn about the unique strengths, capacity, needs and realities of local Indigenous communities.	families they serve.” – C. Legge, Supervisor, IPAC, OPH
Reciprocity	Address the distinct health needs of Indigenous community members through shared knowledge and service delivery	20	<p>Healthy Growth and Development (HGD) - This program has a long-standing commitment to promoting the health and wellbeing of Indigenous families in Ottawa. Throughout the pandemic, it has continued to prioritize collaboration with local Indigenous organizations to offer a variety of services and supports to First Nations, Inuit and Métis parents. These virtual and in-person services include: prenatal circles, fathering workshops, and monthly parenting sessions on a wide variety of topics (e.g. infant and early child mental health; child development). Designated members of the HGD team also offer families timely support at home visits, including in shelters and at boarding homes (e.g. pre- and postpartum visits for Inuit women who deliver their babies in Ottawa).</p> <p>Collaborative COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics – OPH continues to support COVID-19 vaccine initiatives at the Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team clinic three (3) days a week. Collaborative vaccine activities with Wabano have evolved this past year from a partnership at the Rideau-Vanier Community Centre, to a hub that offered vaccine services two (2) days a week onsite at Wabano. This service was restored in September to accommodate demand for vaccinations for children six (6) months to under five (5) years old. OPH employees also worked with Wabano to support two (2) family clinics in 2022. Regular meetings have taken place to facilitate collaborative planning and to share knowledge/insight. OPH employees are required to complete ICST as part of onboarding for the Indigenous-specific clinics. Overall, greater than 50,500 doses of COVID-19</p>	<p>HGD Collaborations with Indigenous organizations:</p> <p>“As a Public Health Nurse with the HGD Program, I facilitate parenting workshops in collaboration with Indigenous partners. I enjoy connecting with parents and supporting them with education and guidance that will help their children reach their full potential. In this role, I can seamlessly refer families into our program for individualized home visit support that is tailored to the family’s specific needs. I have developed very strong connections with many Indigenous families through my work and feel honored to have joined them during their parenting journey.”</p> <p>– D. Elder, PHN</p> <p>“The collaboration between HGD and ONWA has been such an enormous source of support for our Indigenous Families. So far, we have offered online Prenatal Classes last Fall, and this Spring offered a Parenting Circle. We were able to engage several families in each series. I received such positive feedback from all the participants of both series. After we completed the Parenting Circle, many families reached out to me requesting more of these similar types of classes. Joanne has the most amazing energy and such a warm and inviting</p>



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			<p>vaccine have been administered to members of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Ottawa since February 2021.</p> <p>COVID-19 Communications – Indigenous partners continue to request tailored, up-to-date information on COVID-19 that is offered in plain language, with less text and more culturally- engaging images, that can be available online but also distributed as printed resources via mail, through door-to-door delivery, and/or as handouts that community members can access through programming at Indigenous organizations and/or at community events. In order to build OPH capacity and relationships with Indigenous partners, communications specialists from Wabano and TI were invited to join a facilitated knowledge exchange session with OPH’s Social Media and Engagement team to share their knowledge, insight, recommended wise practices, and key resources related to Indigenous-tailored communications/social media messaging. Participant feedback suggests that this activity was appreciated by partners and OPH employees. Follow up included opportunities to co-create/co-brand new COVID resources (e.g. COVID-19 Anti-Viral Treatment infographic). These resources were also made available in Inuktitut. OPH will continue to seek out these collaborative communication efforts moving forward.</p>	<p>personality that many families resonate with her and her teachings. She has the ability to make all the participants feel at ease and facilitate a forum of trust and honesty. I was fortunate to witness many of my community members who are usually very shy who would easily open up and share and ask questions, this has everything to do with Joanne’s ability to facilitate a safe environment.”</p> <p>- Belinda Larente, Indigenous HBHC Worker, Ontario Native Women’s Association</p> <p>COVID-19 Communications:</p> <p>“It has been an absolute pleasure sharing knowledge with the OPH social media team. The respect and general interest from the team for the work TI engages in daily is inspiring. The attention to detail, importance of understanding cultural viewpoints, and extra efforts to obtain Inuktitut language supports to increase awareness, is best in class. It is of great value and importance from our perspective to know that we have great allies within the OPH communications and social media teams.” – J. Lamoureux, Manager, Communications, TI</p> <p>“Our team was so grateful for the opportunity to listen and learn from the experience of Indigenous community health leaders & communicators. TI and Wabano have both been such incredible partners in sharing COVID-19 health information throughout the pandemic. The social media &</p>



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				<p>engagement team learned the importance of intention and inclusion when creating messages for Indigenous community members and we continue to use this lens in all of our content. Thank you TI and Wabano!”</p> <p>- A. Higginson, Project Officer, OPH</p> <p>“I thoroughly enjoyed the knowledge sharing session with OPH’s social media team. Everyone came to the table with sincerity, an eagerness to learn, and some well-thought out questions. The biggest piece of advice I could give is to first, educate yourself on the community you are trying to connect with. Find out where they come from – mentally, emotionally, culturally. From there, you can start to build a genuine and meaningful relationship with the community in order to foster trust. This is continuous, ongoing work – not a one-and-done campaign. OPH must continue to demonstrate that Indigenous health is a priority, and we would welcome more opportunities to collaborate to help them do this.”</p> <p>- H. Lang, Communications Specialist, Wabano</p>
Reflection	Culturally humble employees through a commitment	23-iii	Talking circles – Mainstream knowledge exchange (KE) practices and evaluation methods can reinforce colonial ways. Consistent with the literature, local evidence, and in the spirit of reconciliation, OPH is trying to implement KE practices that draw on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing - i.e. methods that are participatory, experiential, relational and represent approaches that align with local cultural practices. Talking circles traditionally bring together many voices and perspectives. As a method that encourages	<p>Talking circles</p> <p><i>Reimagine Reconcili-ACTION</i></p> <p>While it would not be appropriate to share individual comments from this talking circle, it was clear from the discussion that we are at a pivotal point in our history when</p>



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	to lifelong learning		<p>deep listening and respectful dialogue, circles are designed to ensure that everyone has an equal voice - a safe space to share stories, thoughts, ideas and feelings. As part of an evaluation of ICST, OPH employees who piloted the Foundations of ICS course were invited to participate in a talking circle to reflect on and share what they had learned; to consider how this knowledge could be applied in public health practice; and to generate ideas for future actions to promote reconciliation. With the support of First Nations Elders and an Algonquin facilitator, 14 employees actively participated in two (2) circles. A third talking circle included nine (9) employees who were inspired to share their thoughts on the reimagining of Reconcili-ACTION at OPH.</p> <p>Knowledge Exchange (KE) Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC) Research Committee – Supported in part by funding from OPH, the OAC initiated a research project to capture an accurate and fulsome account of the physical and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on urban Indigenous peoples and organizations in Ottawa. Two (2) employees were invited to represent OPH on this Committee. While this research is ongoing, the OAC research team agreed to share their respectful observations and recommendations to decolonize the research ethics process in a presentation to eight (8) OPH employees in December 2021, including members of the Public Health Medicine Unit and Evidence Generation and Dissemination Committee. KE activities to share the research results and recommendations with community members, and other health, social services and academic partners, are being planned this fall.• OPH Reconcili-ACTION Network (RAN) – Designed to promote cultural humility, cultural safety, and opportunities to share Indigenous knowledge and lessons learned across the department, this evolving community of practice was established at OPH in	<p>positive change is possible. A time when we must critically analyze and challenge colonial systems and racist and oppressive policies and structures. A time to ensure that Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge and practices inform public health planning, programs and services. A time when we need to be present to learn from Indigenous organizations and community members, with Indigenous youth leading the way, and Mother Earth foremost on our minds.</p> <p>Knowledge Exchange Initiatives</p> <p><i>Promoting Life Together Collaborative (PLTC)</i></p> <p>The PLTC exemplifies why respect for culturally appropriate engagement, and Indigenous knowledge, values and peoples, are essential to the successful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health organizations. Takeaways from this KE session strengthen and build on lessons already learned. For example, PLTC principles include: Recognition of cultural humility/safety as an ongoing journey; inclusion of Indigenous voices; value for Indigenous knowledge; application of Indigenous social determinants of health lens, strengths-based and holistic approaches. That health transformation is not a straight path; there are lots of missteps to learn from along the way. Quality of relationships is a key indicator of success; that the journey is as important as the outcome; process is the product. That we must create an</p>



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			<p>2012. While generally inactive during the enhanced pandemic response, a virtual meeting took place in February 2022 to help members reconnect and reimagine Reconcili-ACTION. Elder Denise McCuaig and Despina Papadopoulos (Indigenous Health Lead, Healthcare Excellence Canada), were invited to share their knowledge and experience working with the Promoting Life Together Collaborative (PLTC). 19 OPH employees enthusiastically joined this session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) Conference – With “<i>Diversity, Our Interwoven Experiences</i>” as its theme, two (2) representatives from OPH were invited to this national conference to share a presentation on <i>Reconcili-ACTION at OPH: Amplifying the Call to Action through Evaluation</i>. This was an opportunity to share OPH’s journey – the process, approach and lessons learned - and to inspire others to join the circle. ~ 70 people were reached during this session. Overall, there were many takeaways and discussions that stoked hope, including: opportunities and actions to decolonize evaluation; the need to push the evaluation agenda beyond human-centredness so that we consider sustainability and the interconnectedness of human and natural systems; and to acknowledge that evaluations must be restorative if reconciliation is to occur. It was clear that there is a need to build things differently if we want different outcomes; a need to dismantle systems; always asking “why” before we do things and “how does this action benefit the communities that we work with.” Similarly, commitment must be coupled with ACTION and self-reflection – i.e. change can’t happen when we are not self-aware. A more fulsome implementation of OPH’s Reconcili-ACTION Plan evaluation is expected in 2023.	<p>environment where things happen in real time – when we are present to build and maintain relationships; co-create and collaborate (not just consult). When we can build in opportunities to be <i>relational</i>, to break bread together, be vulnerable. And always take time to honour the courage in the room.</p> <p><i>CES Conference</i></p> <p>“Positive feedback was received following the session, with several people coming up to learn more, discuss the content, or ask where they could access the symbolic graphic representation of OPH’s evaluation framework. The key messages seemed to have come across loud and clear as demonstrated in a powerful poem* that was gifted to us by one of the participants who shared her reflections and value for reciprocity through this emerging arts-based evaluation approach.”</p> <p>– K. Dumont, Program Planning Evaluation Officer</p> <p><i>*Poem attached as Document 2</i></p>