



**SHIFTING OUR FOCUS FROM
SUICIDE PREVENTION TO
LIFE PROMOTION**

1985-present Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention

- Recognized Suicide rates were highest amongst the First Peoples of Canada from its start.
- I joined the board at their request to help connect with First Nation and Inuit communities as the board travelled across the country. I was the only Indigenous board member.
- We formed an indigenous section for presentations about preventing suicide in First Peoples communities.
- January 2016 CASP formed the First Peoples Council. 3 of 7 members are Indigenous.

1990-present Native Mental Health Association of Canada

2006 Health Canada creates First Nations and Inuit Mental Wellness Advisory Committee and releases First Nations and Inuit Mental Wellness Strategic Action Plan in 2008.

January 2015 released First Peoples Wellness Continuum

June 2015 Renamed First Peoples Wellness Circle and formed a partnership with the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation. Majority of the board are Indigenous.

1991-1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

- 1996 report identifies Residential schools as a source of illness related to unresolved traumas.
- Trauma informed healing becomes a prominent development in First Peoples health care.
- 1995 released Choosing Life: Special Report on Suicide Among Aboriginal People. Researchers who wrote this document were mostly Indigenous.

1998-2014 Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Foundation

- Development of and evaluation of community based healing.
- Produced evidence of the effectiveness of community based healing strategies
- 2007 released Suicide Among Aboriginal People in Canada
- Board was made up of Indigenous members. This organization was for and lead by Indigenous people.

2006-present Mental Health Commission of Canada

- First Nations, Inuit, Metis Committee advanced cultural safety and trauma recovery. Also advanced education about Indigenous mental wellness and holistic health and healing.
- This committee was made up of mostly Indigenous people.
- Mental wellness focus versus mental illness. A different focus.

2008-2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- Clearly identified that colonization has been a major contributor to the ill health of First Peoples in Canada.
- It also clarified that unresolved traumas experienced in the residential schools has resulted in students suffering numerous negative health outcomes,
- And that the family members of these students have also suffered negative health outcomes (intergenerational trauma).

2014 -2015 National Native Addictions Foundation NNAPF

- Following the release of a strategic plan (Honoring Our Strengths) for the development of First Peoples addictions services in Canada , Health Canada supported the creation of NNAPF. This foundation is governed by a board that is made up of First Peoples members. They oversaw the development of First Peoples addictions services in Canada.

June 2015 this organization was renamed to the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation. They currently are involved in a national project called Culture As Healing and now address health and healing in a more comprehensive manner.

June 2015-present First Peoples Wellness Circle

- June 2015 the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation was formed. When this organization was formed the Native Mental Health Association of Canada renamed itself to the First Peoples Wellness Circle and joined in partnership with the TPF. The AFN and the Youth Addictions programs also serve in this partnership. Board membership is Indigenous.
- The FPWC was involved with Health Canada and the AFN in the development of the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework. This framework identifies ways to enhance service coordination and support culturally safe delivery of service. Culture is the heart of the framework and emphasizes strengths and capacities.

Mental Wellness Advisory Committee

- This committee preceded the formation of the FNMWC and provided the foundational principles for the work that followed. Committee members were mostly Indigenous.
- Their vision was “First Nations and Inuit embrace the achievement of whole health through a comprehensive and coordinated approach that respects, values and utilizes traditional and cultural knowledge, methodologies, languages and ways of life.”
- Chandler, M., & Lalonde, C. (2008). Cultural continuity as a protective factor against suicide in First Nations youth.