

Research Report Round-up

November 26, 2014

A research report summary

Title and Link to Report

[Aboriginal Women's Initiative Literature Review: A Review of the Literature on Intergenerational Trauma, Mental Health, Violence Against Women, Addictions and Homelessness among Aboriginal Women of the North \(NOWOPE\)](#)

[Analyse documentaire sur les traumatismes intergénérationnels, la santé mentale, la violence contre les femmes, les dépendances et l'itinérance parmi les femmes autochtones du Nord](#)

Author(s)

YWCA Sudbury & YWCA Canada: Ghislaine Goudreau and Northern Ontario Women's Services Outreach and Partnership Enhancement

Year

2011

Location

Sudbury

What this report is about

Through a literature review the report gives an overview of the history and impact of abuse on Aboriginal women in the North. The report examines the status of Aboriginal women's health, their access to services. It explores the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women and the barriers to reporting the violence.

The report takes a look at the perspective of Aboriginal women in experiencing violence and the challenges they face in seeking treatment (e.g., mental health, addiction, homelessness). It also includes the results of an evaluation of prevention programs, including initiatives for children and youth and a holistic model that allows women to share their stories.

The report looks at:

- The effects of colonization on the health of Aboriginal women and documents how the change in status in the community impacted health outcomes.
- The concepts of healing, medicine wheel, and Mino-Bimaadiziwin (i.e., living the good life) as well as the importance of those traditional practices in providing care.

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What this report is about (cont.)

- The importance of understanding not only the cultural values and the impact of determinants of health on Aboriginal women living in both urban and rural settings, as well as on how women themselves view health.
- Inequities to access to health and social services, which render women “virtually voiceless”, where their concerns are ignored and their access to services is delayed.
- Services available in northern communities, in particular Aboriginal support and housing services. It notes that Aboriginal women living in urban centres do not have access to culturally-appropriate services. The effect of colonization is still impacting the community, with Aboriginal women facing both economic and housing insecurities.
- Some of the systemic challenges faced by Aboriginal women, from racism to sexism, as well as how temporary housing status can leave them vulnerable to abuse.
- Various reasons why Aboriginal women do not report cases of violence against them. These can include lack of trust in the system, fear of their children being taken away from them, and a sense of alienation from mainstream services. The report also looks at other barriers, such as a lack of information about services available in and outside their communities to support them as they transition away from their abusive partner or situation (sex trade).
- Some prevention programs that include:
 - Culturally appropriate services;
 - Programs operated by the Aboriginal community;
 - Understanding of the historical context of violence against Aboriginal women;
 - Children and youth programs that teach children how to resolve problems in a positive non-violent manner;
 - Shelters that take a holistic approach and allow women to smudge, that incorporate the role of Elders, and that incorporate the healing circle as part of the services offered to women.

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How can this report be used

The report provides an overview of how colonization has and continues to impact social determinants of health and health outcomes of Aboriginal women in the North. The summary of available literature provides mental health service providers, administrators, and policy makers a look at the services that work and identifies limitations to those programs. Overall, the report examines determinants of health from First Nation perspective.

This report, in conjunction with the [Urban Aboriginal Task Force: Sudbury Final Report - August 2007](#), provides an overview of the needs of Aboriginal people in a northern setting.

Population addressed

First Nation women living in Northern Ontario community

Type of study

Literature review

Key words

Women, mental health, Aboriginal, gender, trauma, violence, addictions, substance use problem, housing, homelessness

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Language

[English](#) and [French](#)

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for Mental Health and Addictions

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