



Klinik Community Health's Statement on Reconciliation

Responsibility: All Staff and Volunteers
Area: KOP, Brandon
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Klinik Community Health provides services on the original lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene people and on homelands of the Metis Nation. Klinik acknowledges that the health inequities of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people living in Manitoba are the result of colonization, including the policies of the residential and day school system. These policies were recognized as cultural genocide by the Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

As a non-Indigenous organization, Klinik is committed to working toward solidarity and participating in actions that create changes to address systemic racism, patriarchy, and the harms that stem from colonial systems and the resulting practices. We recognize the need to approach this work with humility and as a learning organization who will need direction and support from Indigenous voices. Primary to this work, we acknowledge that we are a part of a health service delivery model which contributes to ongoing power imbalances and includes within it processes of colonization. In the spirit of reconciliation, we aim to respectfully engage in processes that work toward decolonizing the structures and systems within which we work.

Overview

Klinik is a leader in community health, built on a foundation of social justice values. With an increasing understanding of the impacts of the social determinants of health, staff and volunteers provide diverse services and programming targeted to populations most negatively affected by the inequitable distribution of these determinants. Our programming has a strong mental health focus which presents opportunities for hope and healing in a trauma-informed environment. In the spirit of our commitment to reconciliation and decolonization, Klinik works to provide informed care and support to Indigenous people, families and communities.

Background

For more than 500 years in the Americas, colonial systems have been violently enforced and have negatively affected Indigenous peoples in profound ways, resulting in vast inequities. Since first negotiating the Treaties, including Treaties 1 and 2, Canada has violated the spirit and intent of these documents, the cumulative impact of which has created the current marginalization and dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Canada's unique history of colonization, includes removal from lands, intentional starvation, imposed salvation, and forced sterilization. In the creation of the residential and day schools, culture, language, family ties, and community networks were destroyed for generations of Indigenous children. This destruction of structures and practices that allow groups to thrive and continue as Nations, is cultural genocide and has resulted in damage to political and social norms among the Indigenous populations¹. These policies have had wide-ranging effects on physical, mental, sexual and spiritual wellbeing of individuals their families, and their communities.

The legacy of the residential schools and the political legal policies around their history continue to be reflected in the significant educational, income, health, and social disparities between Aboriginal and non-

1 Truth and Reconciliation Commission. P. 1

In 2008, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in Canada, as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. This commission was mandated to investigate and report the complex history of, and legacy left by, residential schools for Indigenous peoples, as well as to set a path to guide healing and reconciliation within and among families and for all Canadians. Seven years later, a comprehensive document containing accounts of personal experiences, detailed government policies and historical quotes from political, church, and community leaders of the time, was presented to government and the Canadian public. This document also contained an extensive and thorough roadmap of recommendations to help guide the process of repairing relationships, a call to action for all Canadians.

*Just as social problems spring in part from collective experience, so solutions require change at the collective level. Aboriginal people acting alone cannot shift the weight of disadvantage and discrimination. But solutions that lift the weight for Aboriginal people collectively shift it for everyone.*³

Reconciliation is the act of establishing new, equal and trusting relationships, which, for non-Indigenous people and organizations, includes learning about the past and present, acknowledging and remedying harms that have taken place, and taking action to build a just and equitable future⁴. The concept of reconciliation has emerged as a result of acts of colonization, the process by which people from one territory establish, maintain, and expand colonies in another territory, often claiming sovereignty over the colonized peoples and the land⁵. The resulting changes to political systems, economic priorities, and ideologies based on race, culture, and skin colour, advantageously position the colonizers. Colonial policies are embedded in economic, social, and political institutions and processes, which in turn generate and perpetuate racism and marginalization⁶. In Canada, Indigenous people continue to face marginalization from mainstream society. Racism is perpetrated on a structural level that continues to inform institutions (e.g. schools, healthcare, justice) and cause harm to entire groups of people and their descendants⁷.

The United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) helps guide the development of legal norms and to set standards around the treatment of Indigenous peoples. Specific to health, this document states that Indigenous individuals should have the right to access, without discrimination, all social and health services and have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. This declaration also identifies marginalized individuals, including elders, women, children, and those with disabilities and the need for the state to ensure protection against all forms of violence and discrimination⁸. In 2016, Canada has officially endorsed this document, though maintains that it is superseded by Canada's constitution and laws.

2 Truth and Reconciliation Commission. P. 183

3 <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637#chp3>

4 <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/indigenous-people-vol11/glossary>

5 http://www.nccah-cnsa.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/46/health_inequalities_EN_web.pdf 6
ibid

7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kYDEXPq62Y>

8 http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Key Considerations and Recommendations

External:

- Advocate for and support the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations.
- Support recommendations of other inquiries and from other organizations with particular creed paid to Indigenous organizations, grassroots movements and Voices.
- Advocate for systems change to address historical injustices, institutional discrimination, colonization and colonial relationships as they apply to the quality of care provided.
- Continue to advocate for equitable access to health and social services (for more information, see Klinik's position statement of Equitable Access to Care).
- Advocate for system-wide cultural safety training in the health sector to facilitate safer therapeutic encounters and challenge inequalities in services.
- Promote recognition that colonial practices, imbedded in the current health service delivery model contribute to ongoing power imbalances.

Internal:

- Identify the ways in which our organization benefits from and perpetuates colonial practices as a preliminary step towards decolonizing the structures and systems within which we work.
- Encourage non-Indigenous staff to reflect on the ways in which they benefit from colonization and develop an awareness of how this impacts the care that they provide.
- Seek and build partnerships/relationships with Indigenous peoples and organizations and seek appropriate guidance through decolonizing practices.
- Ensure that concepts of equity and cultural safety are embedded in policies, programming and procedures.
- Honour and respect indigenous worldviews, knowledge and realities in our policies, procedures and service delivery.
- Review current hiring and volunteer recruitment and identify ways to incorporate diversity and in particular Indigenous voices.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are trained in supporting and creating cultural safety.
- Encourage staff to reflect on their own culture and develop an awareness of how this impacts the care that they provide.
- Implement a consistent land acknowledgement statement to be utilized across programs and services of Klinik

General:

- Endorse recommendations from Truth and Reconciliation Commission and consider the ongoing impact of colonization in service delivery and development⁹.
- Collect and use both qualitative and quantitative data from Klinik's service-users' experiences for the purpose of program evaluation and development.
- Encourage research initiatives that share knowledge and support program decision-making.
- Ensure strong connections among all programs to support the exchange of information and experiences that facilitate collaboration and reduce barriers within Klinik.
- Recognize partnerships at the local, provincial and national level to support our social justice mandate.
- Facilitate self-determined care and ensure that programs and services are developed and operated using a client-centred approach.
- Recognize colonization and attempted genocide as social determinants of health and part of the work to understand the complex role that colonization plays in the lives and health of Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- Recognize the continuing strength, self-determination and resiliency of Indigenous peoples, families, nations and organizations in maintaining and renewing Indigenous knowledge and ways of life.

9 http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

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