

FORMING THE CIRCLE

2023 Gathering on Indigeneity, Neurodevelopmental Disabilities & Mental Health



Executive SUMMARY

The *2023 Gathering on Indigeneity, Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, and Mental Health* brought together a diverse and passionate group of people to discuss the important intersection of Indigeneity, neurodevelopmental disability, and mental health. Attendees included: Indigenous Peoples (with lived experience, community members including Elders and Knowledge Keepers, service providers, and researchers), as well as non-Indigenous allies (with lived experience, service providers, and researchers). The gathering, held in Toronto, Ontario, aimed to explore this important yet neglected topic to better understand the needs of community, identify strengths and challenges, and to propose actions to improve services and supports for Indigenous Peoples with neurodevelopmental disabilities and/or co-occurring mental health challenges. The gathering was the result of a partnership between the Department of Applied Disability Studies at Brock University, the Shkaabe Makwa Centre for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Wellness, and the Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and was made possible by a Canadian Institutes of Health Research Planning and Dissemination Grant. Partner organizations included: Indigenous Disability Canada/British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, Six Nations Health Services, Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship (University of British Columbia), Surrey Place Mashkikiwininiwag Mazinaatesijigan Wichiiewewin program, University of Northern British Columbia, the Autism Resource Centre in Saskatchewan, and the Métis Faamii Foundation.

To gather knowledge in a culturally safe and collaborative way, the event was guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP™), which highlights the importance of inherent ownership over data, jurisdiction over own data, and acknowledges that community wellbeing may differ across First Nations. The group acknowledges that this report reflects only a small sample of the views of Indigenous Peoples with neurodevelopmental disabilities in Canada and cautions against a pan-Indigenous perspective on any issue.

A consistent theme was the importance of a strength-based approach that recognizes and celebrates the unique abilities and gifts of individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities/differences (NDDs)¹. Cultural humility and the prioritization of Traditional Teachings and Practices were also central to the gathering. Woven throughout discussion were several challenges including those precipitated by the systemic discrimination experienced by Indigenous Peoples. Participants highlighted the historical and ongoing effects of colonization on Indigenous communities (intergenerational trauma, residential schools, child welfare system abuses, unethical research practices). The enduring effects of colonial harm have compounded the urgent need for culturally safe and adapted services and supports for Indigenous Peoples with NDDs. Food security, housing, clean drinking water, and community safety are ongoing systemic issues in many communities. These challenges need to be addressed in tandem with improvements in

¹ While the terms “neurodevelopmental disorder” and “neurodevelopmental disability” are commonly used in research literature and in diagnostic guidelines, the term “neurodevelopmental difference” was used most prominently by participants at the gathering, who noted that this language served to combat a deficits-based perspective. In keeping with this sentiment, we have used the latter terminology wherever possible throughout the report.

services for individuals with NDDs. Standardized assessments used for diagnoses and determination of support often fail to consider culture and community context. Individuals may be misdiagnosed due to systemic racism and bias, which can lead to fear and stigma surrounding assessments, diagnoses, and interventions thereby producing significant barriers to accessing appropriate supports and services. Participants emphasized the importance of early intervention and support programs that are both accessible and culturally sensitive. The group spoke at length about the unique challenges associated with funding these programs on and off reserve, stemming from the isolated and often conflictual jurisdictional streams of services and funding from the federal and provincial governments. Participants also pointed to consistent underfunding of programs available to Indigenous Peoples relative to those provided to non-Indigenous people across sectors. The need for tailored education programs that utilize available community resources and incorporate cultural components was also emphasized.

Throughout the gathering, participants stressed the importance of identifying actionable steps to address the needs of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs.

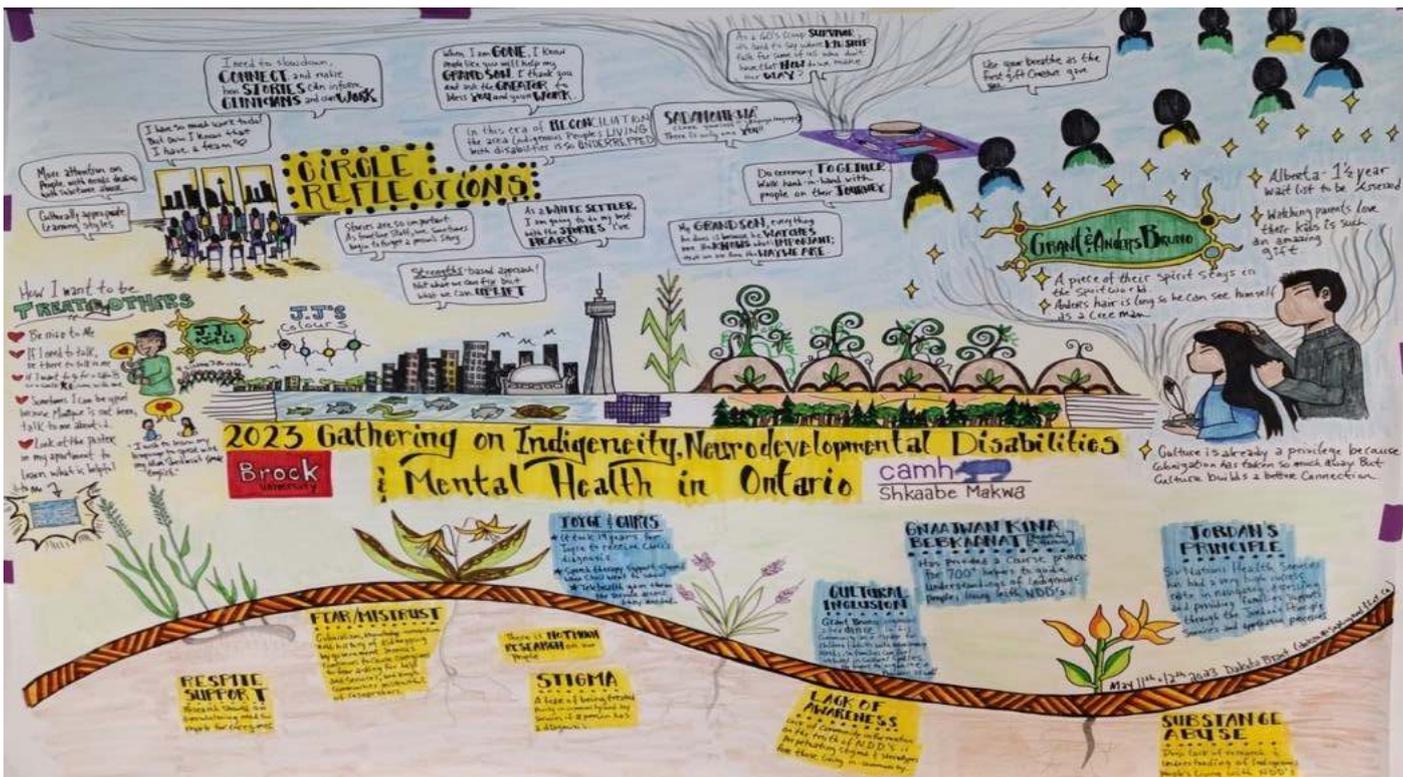
Recommendations for immediate action included:

1. Establish a National Network on Indigeneity, Neurodevelopmental Disability, and Mental Health
2. Secure funding to promote knowledge mobilization and to support community-led programs.
3. Develop formal Calls to Action to meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs.

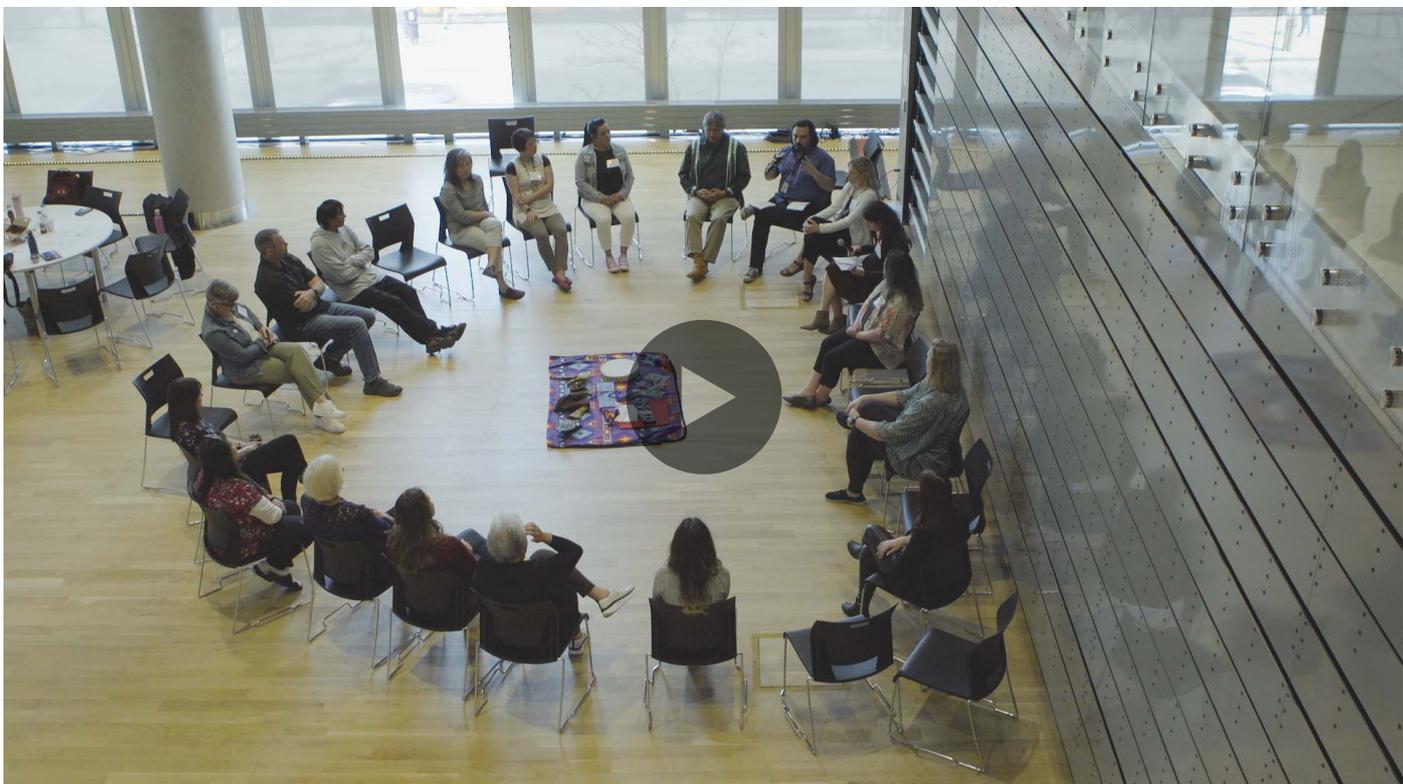
Recommendations for long-term action included:

1. Promote and preserve culture through programs that include cultural practices and funding for land-based learning and living.
2. Build partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and provide training to enhance the cultural safety of programs available to Indigenous Peoples.
3. Improve service access by creating user-friendly resources and alternatives to reimbursement-based funding sources.
4. Develop culturally appropriate assessment tools and supportive programs for Indigenous Peoples with NDDs.
5. Address intersectionality by examining the experience of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs within the criminal justice system, youth populations, child welfare system, as well as those impacted by environmental issues.
6. Assess needs of each community in a comprehensive way and evaluate the impact of incorporating traditional teachings and medicines within educational, social, and health-related programs for Indigenous Peoples with NDDs.

The 2023 *Gathering on Indigeneity, Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, and Mental Health* brought people together to discuss the gifts, hopes, and needs of a sample of neurodiverse Indigenous Peoples, their families, and communities. Feedback from attendees was overall very positive (see Appendix B). Our hope is that this gathering marks the start of a broader discussion, new and strengthened relationships, and a collective commitment across provincial and federal sectors to take action to improve the lives of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs.



Knowledge shared at the gathering was captured through art by Dakota Brant



Jason Jenkins from the production company Going On Dreams created a brief video of the event

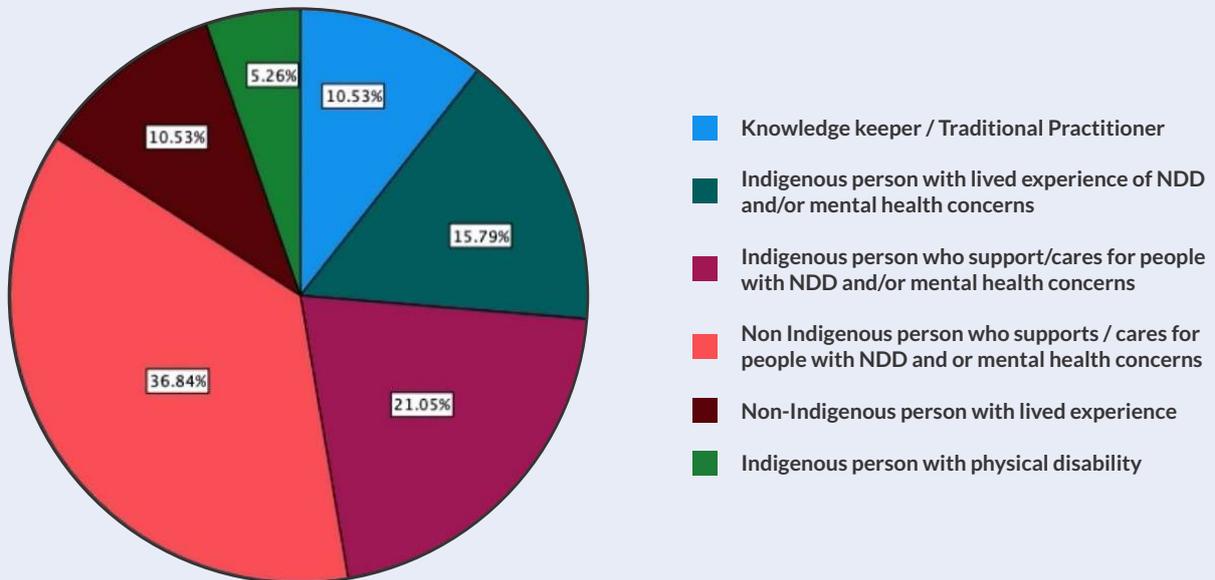
DAY 1

Forming the CIRCLE

Ron Linklater of Couchiching First Nation opened the gathering with prayers, smudging with sacred medicines, and a welcoming song. Ron introduced himself and shared a teaching about family, resilience, and Indigenous values. Kendra Thomson (Brock University/CAMH) welcomed the group and provided a land acknowledgement² embedded within a personal reflection on her position as a settler and an ally.

After opening in a good way, participants introduced themselves in a sharing circle and spoke about their connection to NDDs. Participants shared their hopes for the gathering. Representatives from Ontario (Six Nations, Greater Toronto Area, Niagara Region, Dryden), Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia shared their experiences, initiatives, and goals. The circle emphasized the power of accepting individuals for who they are, recognizing their gifts, and a shared belief that everyone deserves respect and inclusion within their communities.

Attendees



² CAMH is situated on lands that have been occupied by First Nations for millennia; lands rich in civilizations with knowledge of medicine, architecture, technology, and extensive trade routes throughout the Americas. In 1860, the site of CAMH appeared in the Colonial Records Office of the British Crown as the council grounds of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, as they were known at the time. Today, Toronto is covered by the Toronto Purchase, Treaty No. 13 of 1805 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. Toronto is now home to a vast diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis who enrich this city. CAMH is committed to reconciliation. We will honour the land through programs and places that reflect and respect its heritage. We will embrace the healing traditions of the Ancestors, and weave them into our caring practices. We will create new relationships and partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis and share the land and protect it for future generations.

Identifying Strengths of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs

The gathering created a safe space for attendees to share personal stories and reflections based in lived experience and to build relationships. Attendees identified and discussed the many strengths and gifts of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs and their families including:

- **Relationship, Resilience, and Courage:**

Attendees acknowledged the strength of familial and kinship relations in navigating the challenges associated with westernized labels of neurodevelopmental disabilities/disorders and mental health conditions within the complex context of colonization. A common teaching that was shared was that all children are sacred, and that diversity and differences are celebrated as gifts across many Indigenous cultures.
- **Connection to Culture and Community:**

Indigenous Peoples' strong connection to culture and community was seen as a source of support that fosters resilience. Incorporating traditional teachings, ceremonies, and land-based components in programs and interventions were highlighted as beneficial.
- **Wholistic Approach:**

Attendees recognized the importance of a wholistic approach that addresses the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing and integrates traditional teachings and medicines into interventions.
- **Autonomy, Acceptance, and Inclusion:**

Attendees emphasized the importance of placing the individual with NDDs at the centre of the circle. This means providing support while respecting the autonomy of each individual and ensuring that they are involved in decisions that impact their lives. It also means accepting the person for who they are within community.
- **Strength-Based Perspective:**

Attendees emphasized the need to adopt a strength-based perspective. Recognizing and building upon the strengths and abilities of individuals with NDDs vs. focusing on deficits was seen as crucial.
- **Traditional Knowledge and Wisdom:**

Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Knowledge and wisdom were recognized as valuable resources in understanding and supporting individuals with NDDs. Involving Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the work was seen as vital.
- **Traditional Pathways to Well-Being:**

Attendees highlighted the importance of understanding and respecting Indigenous Teachings that promote well-being, such as following nature's cycles and incorporating seasonal changes into activities.

Overall, the group identified that strengths of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs and their families lie in their relationships, resilience, cultural connections, wholistic approach, person-focused perspective, Traditional Knowledge, and ability to draw upon strengths and gifts.

Lived Experience Panel

After lunch on Day 1, people with lived experience participated in a panel discussion facilitated by knowledge mobilization expert, Jayne Morrish (Brock University). Panelists included: JJ Thunder Bear Man supported by Lesley Barreira (Surrey Place), Emmauel Colombe supported by Abby Wise-Till (CAMH), Dorothy Elie (Elder), and Pearl Gabona (Elder), and Grant Bruno (parent). To improve accessibility, the discussion prompts were shared in advance and included:

- *Everyone in the world is different. Why do you think that it is good that people are all different?*
- *What are some challenges/hard things that you face in the world every day?*
- *As an Indigenous person, do you think there are any specific hard things that you face?*
- *What would you want the people that you work and live with to know about you?*
- *What could make life a bit better or easier for you?*

One of the panelists, Grant Bruno, shared a moving [video](#) he created about his son with autism. *The Gift of Being Different* is a short documentary that explores the experiences of autism in the Nehiyawak (Plains Cree) community of Maskwacis, located on Treaty 6 Territory. The group watched it together before the discussion.

Presentations were offered on several projects and programs of interest, being implemented across the country:

- Delaney King shared work by the [Métis Faamii Foundation](#) in Saskatchewan to support adult education and land-based education.
- Keely Wight-Young shared updates from a partnership between the [Autism Resource Centre](#) and Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan, the Building Blocks Program.
- Louis Busch, a community support specialist from Shkaabe Makwa, shared an overview of Gnaajwan Kina Bebkaanat (A Beautiful Difference): A Primer on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for Indigenous Helpers, a [training](#) he co-developed with community.



Ron Linklater closes Day 1 in a good way with teachings and a prayer

DAY 2

Closing the CIRCLE

Ron Linklater started Day 2 with a welcome and shared Seven Grandfathers and Seven Generations Teachings. The group then listened to a recording of Cree composer Andrew Belfour's song, "[Anang \(A Star\)](#)".

Next, the group was moved by one of the attendees, JJ (Thunder Bear Man) from Dryden, Ontario who shared his personal life story with help from Lesley Barreira, a behaviour analyst from the Surrey Place Mashkikiwininiwag Mazinaatesijigan Wichiiwewin program. Day 2 included a powerful and emotional closing circle in which JJ and his caregiver were each gifted an Eagle Feather from Ron Linklater. In many First Nations cultures, this is often viewed as the highest honour one can receive. Ron Linklater shared the following teaching:

"JJ - Animki Makwa Inini - Thunder Bear Man along with his helper - Owij'iweg Kevin / JJ's Helper were gifted these 2 Feathers for all the work accomplished by Kevin over the years and to JJ for all his dedicated work walking the Red Road / instructions were provided to these two men on how to take care / look after their Feathers / they were to obtain Feather holders and to add them to their ceremonial bundles / and to feast their bundles yearly with Asema, Blueberries and Sage / by praying with their Feathers / the spirits would look after them as they continue to live Mino Biimadziwin."

"I used to go camping with my grandmother and grandfather and my auntie and uncle would join too. I liked to swim in the lake. My grandmother would make bannock. I called her Kokom."

"I would like to talk to my mom, but I can't because my mom doesn't speak English and I don't speak her language. I lost all my words. If I want to re-learn my family's language, I'd have to move back to the reserve. There is no one here to teach me"



JJ Thunder Bear Man with Eagle Feather gifted by Ron

Identifying Challenges for Indigenous Peoples with NDDs

Attendees identified the following challenges for Indigenous Peoples labeled with NDDs and their families:

- **Lack of Inclusion and Acceptance:**

Indigenous Peoples with NDDs are seldom engaged in decision making and if they are, it is often tokenistic rather than meaningful.

- **Lack of Cultural Inclusion and Recognition:**

Westernized views of mental health and disabilities have contributed to the eradication of Traditional Knowledge which one attendee referred to as "neurocolonization." Loss of cultural identity and disconnection from Traditional Knowledge and ceremonies contributes to ongoing intergenerational trauma and the erasure of Indigenous values and strengths. The need to respond is urgent, as Knowledge Keepers are aging, and traditions are being lost.

- **Limited Availability of Services:**

In some communities, it is difficult to access post offices, taxis, and other essential services let alone specialized services. Families often need to leave their communities and support systems to access services.

- **Systematic Discrimination and Biases:**

Standardized assessments and diagnostic tools such as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5)* do not consider the cultural and community contexts of First Nations people. This leads to fear and stigma surrounding assessments, diagnoses, and interventions and poses significant barriers. Repeated negative experiences with healthcare and social services, research institutions, and the education system compound feelings of apprehension and mistrust when accessing these services.

- **Misdiagnosis/No Diagnoses:**

Clinicians may make incorrect assumptions about people and their conditions that may lead to misdiagnosis (e.g., fetal alcohol spectrum disorder instead of autism spectrum disorder). Insufficient awareness, systemic racism, and a lack of understanding among medical professionals, general practitioners, and pediatricians, may lead to dismissive attitudes toward caregivers' concerns and requests for diagnosis.

- **Difficulty Accessing Culturally Safe Clinical Services:**

Indigenous Peoples often face micro-aggressions and micro-assaults from non-Indigenous clinicians. The group stressed the importance of culturally safe clinical services or being able to receive care from Indigenous healthcare providers.

- **Lack of Navigational Support:**

Complexities and lack of navigational support within the developmental disabilities sector, make it challenging for families to access appropriate services and supports. Limited availability of plain language guides, educational videos, and culturally adapted assessment tools for Indigenous individuals with NDDs creates barriers. There is a problematic lack of knowledge

and understanding among educators, parents, and clinicians about existing programs such as Jordan's Principle. Access is further complicated by jurisdictional issues between provincial and federal programs which has been referred to as “jurisdictional wasteland” by the Supreme Court of Canada.

- **Lack of Funding:**

Limited funding and reimbursement options poses barriers to addressing the diverse needs of Indigenous individuals with NDDs. There are also other challenges around not being able to get a bank account to receive the funds.

- **Environmental Pollutants:**

Through environmental racism Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately affected by pollution which impacts Traditional Practices and wellbeing.

- **Social Determinants of Health:**

Indigenous Peoples in Canada face considerable inequalities as a result of social, political, and economic disadvantages perpetuated by colonial systems. Addressing food insecurity, overcrowding and underhousing, violence, suicide, and lack of access to clean and safe drinking water are understandably the priorities of many communities. All of these also impact Indigenous Peoples with NDDs, and often serve as barriers to programs and services tailored to their needs.

- **Other Important Intersections:**

Indigenous Peoples with NDDs involved in the criminal justice system face challenges, where they may go undetected and underserved. Youth in foster care and within the child welfare system may be underserved within existing systems.



Next Steps

In the afternoon, small breakout groups discussed potential next steps. The importance of collaboration and community control of services and research was emphasized throughout conversation. Further, understanding the unique needs of each community rather than approaching it with a 'one-size-fits-all' mindset was seen as crucial to good relationships. The following recommendations were suggested to address the challenges and gaps identified during the gathering and promote culturally safe and inclusive support for Indigenous Peoples with NDDs and/or mental health concerns and their families:

Long-Term Vision

1. Promote and Preserve Culture:

Include cultural affirming and relevant practices into existing services and listen to community members and people with lived experience when making changes. Preserve and learn from the knowledge of Elders and Knowledge Keepers and involve them in decision making. Seek opportunities to fund land-based programs. Interventions and support programs should incorporate cultural elements and Traditional Teachings for wholistic well-being.

2. Establish Meaningful Partnerships:

Provide education and support for non-Indigenous service providers to provide clinical services in a culturally safe manner. Educate about and address micro-aggressions and micro-assaults from non-Indigenous clinicians and partners (e.g., substance use suspected when individuals go to the emergency room).

3. Increase Access to Services:

Develop plain language guides and educational videos to provide accessible information on NDDs. Create resources and training to help families navigate the complex developmental disabilities sector. Acknowledge that the “pay and reimburse” system is not feasible for many people.

4. Adapt Services:

Adapt or create assessment tools that are culturally based and appropriate for individuals with NDDs. Develop culturally safe and adapted substance use supports for adults with intellectual disabilities.

5. Examine Other Important Intersections:

Examine the prevalence of Indigenous youth and adults with NDDs in the criminal justice system and explore opportunities for risk prevention and engage partners (e.g., Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Managers). Ensure a focus on Indigenous youth in foster care and the child welfare system. Consider the impact and contribution of environmental pollutants that disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples.

6. Assess Needs and Evaluate Outcomes:

Assess the needs of diverse First Nations communities by meaningfully engaging people with lived experience, families, and community Elders. Study the impacts of incorporating Traditional Teachings and Medicines for youth and people with NDDs.

Immediate Action

1. Establish a National Network:

Attendees of the gathering and other interested parties should form an advisory group that centers people with lived experience and attempt to represent as many diverse nations and geographical regions in Canada as possible. The group should meet regularly and hold an annual gathering.

2. Seek and Secure Funding:

Additional financial support is needed to continue the work of the group, promote knowledge mobilization, and support community-led programs.

3. Develop Formal Calls to Action:

Include Indigenous Peoples with NDDs and their families and the information from the gathering, as well as other available reports, research literature, and expertise to develop tangible calls to action for funders and policy makers. Review existing information including work of Treaty Relations Committees. Conduct a scoping review to determine existing reports and literature by Indigenous authors, including grey literature, on NDDs in Indigenous communities across the country including:

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC),
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Assembly of First Nations' report on disabilities
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

The event ended with a closing circle where participants reflected on what they would do with their heart, head, and hands. They shared gratitude for the opportunity to connect and learn from each other's lived experiences. Participants recognized the importance of strength-based approaches, incorporating cultural teachings, and preserving Indigenous Knowledge. Everyone agreed on the need for change, increased support, and the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' expertise.



Closing the Circle and Preparing to Open New Circles

The 2023 *Gathering on Indigeneity, Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, and Mental Health* served as a platform for knowledge mobilization and underscored the pressing need for culturally sensitive and accessible services. Through shared stories, Traditional Teachings, and the recognition of the impact of colonization and intergenerational trauma, participants emphasized the importance of incorporating culture, language, and community into services and supports for Indigenous Peoples with neurodevelopmental differences. The gathering highlighted the need for systemic changes, including improved collaboration with communities, funding for culturally grounded and land-based programs, and the development of culturally adapted assessments and resources. The conversations and actions generated during this event provide hope for a future where Indigenous communities have access to the comprehensive and wholistic services. The gathering is the first step in a journey of advocacy for equitable, accessible, culturally relevant, and culturally safe services that honour the strengths and beauty of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs.



Attendees participating in the closing sharing circle

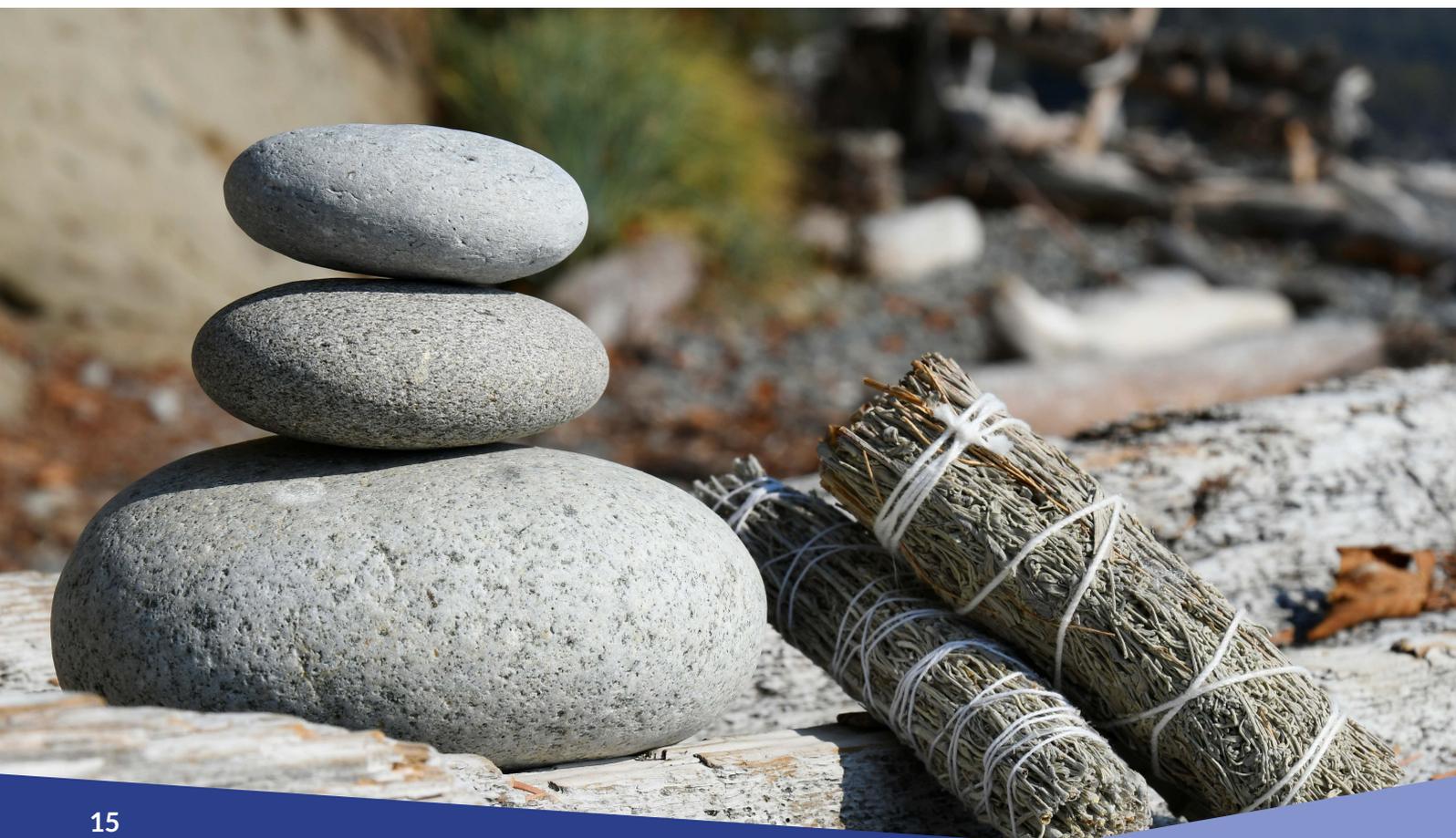
Appendix A

List of Attendees / Affiliations / Locations

Attendees in alphabetical order:

Jennifer Altosaar	Surrey Place, Toronto, ON
Lesley Barriera	Surrey Place, Toronto, ON
Sarah Bernier	Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, Toronto, ON
Dakota Brant	Artist, Ohsweken, ON
Melanie Burgess	Brock University, St.Catharines, ON
Louis Busch	Shkaabe Makwa Centre for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Wellness, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, Toronto, ON
Emmanuel Colombe	Toronto, ON
Anna Durbin	University of Toronto, Toronto, ON
Dorothy Elie	Sault Ste. Marie, ON
Pearl Gabona	Newmarket, ON
Terri Hewitt	Surrey Place, Toronto, ON
Kevin Hildebrand	Dryden, ON
Norma Jacobs	Six Nations, ON
Jason Jenkins	Videographer, Toronto, ON
Delaney King	Métis Faamii Foundation
Renee Linklater	Shkaabe Makwa Centre for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Wellness, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, Toronto, ON
Ron Linklater	Thunder Bay, ON
Yona Lunsky	Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, Toronto, ON

Rod Miller	Six Nations Health Services, Ohsweken, ON
Jayne Morrish	Brock University, St. Catharines, ON
Cindy Noel	Shkaabe Makwa Centre for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Wellness, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, Toronto, ON
Rheanna Robinson	University of Northern British Columbia, BC
Jeanny Scantlebury	Surrey Place, Toronto, ON
Olivia Schilthuis	Six Nations Health Services, Ohsweken, ON
Jacqueline Smith	Six Nations Health Services, Ohsweken, ON
Kendra Thomson	Brock University, St. Catharines, ON Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, Toronto, ON
JJ Thunder Bear Man	Dryden, ON
Keely Wight-Young	Autism Resource Centre, Regina, SK
Abby Wise-Till	Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, Toronto, ON

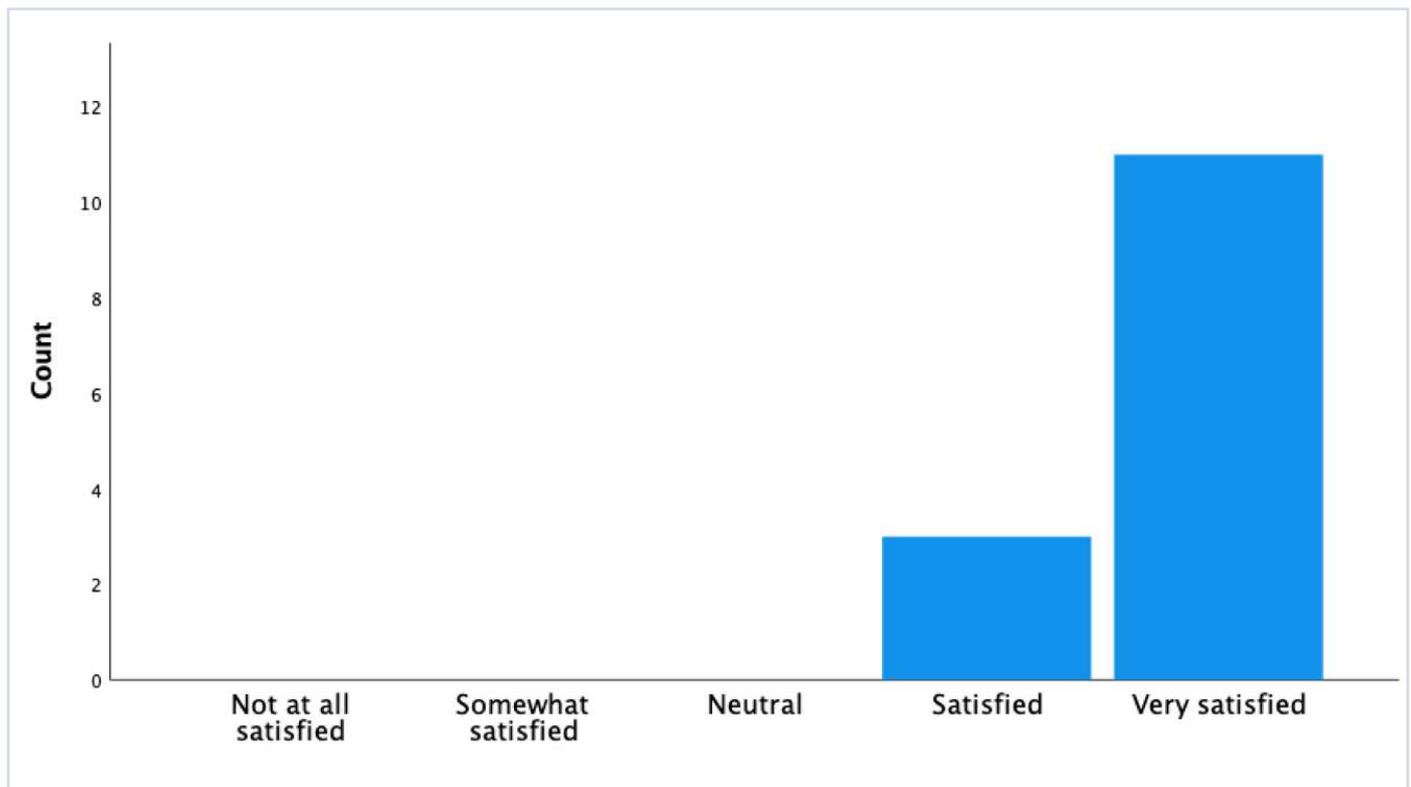


Appendix B

Attendee Feedback

A survey was administered to attendees at the conclusion of the event, and an online version was shared shortly thereafter. Attendee responses to 9 questions were summarized.

In response to the question, “**How satisfied were you with the event?**” participants indicated either “very satisfied” or “satisfied”.



When asked to comment, attendees highlighted sharing stories, teachings, and hearing the lived experience of participants. For example, one attendee said they appreciated, “*people talking and a chance to share stories like my own, people loved my story. Thanks to everyone for their stories too. Ron has really good stories.*” Another participant said they “*liked the diversity of the group and range of knowledge/perspectives*” Another attendee said the gathering was “*a wonderful first step.*”

In response to the next question, “**Did you learn anything new at the event?**” all respondents indicated “yes.” When asked to comment, attendees highlighted: the teachings, learning about culture and colonization, forming new contacts, networking for future work and opportunities, the wonderful work that is being done by everyone, concerns/shared experience of Indigenous Peoples with NDDs, and the roles of caregivers.

One attendee shared: “*it is important to know whole stories. I learned the role of elders, specifically grandmothers and I loved all of Ron's teachings.*” Other attendees said they learned “*about potential opportunities*” and they were “*interested in others' stories and the impacts of colonization.*”

In response to the question, “**Was the event useful for you?**” all attendees responded “yes.” When asked to explain how it was useful, attendees highlighted: hearing about lived experiences, teachings/stories, support programs/systems, and for networking with those doing similar work. Attendees said the gathering had “*good conversation- especially hearing about lived experience*” and they “*needed the support/contact and networking.*” Another said, “*as a non-Indigenous service provider it is very important for us to know the teaching and learnings of other workers and services*”.

Most attendees (80%) responded “yes” to the question, “**Did the event change your impressions of how NDDs and mental health impact/relate to Indigenous Peoples?**” When asked about how it changed their impression, attendees highlighted that they felt more informed, heard different views and perspectives, wanted to do more research, and make more connections. One attendee said they “*still have so much more to do in making good connections - me personally as a helper.*” Another attendee said they felt “*closer to the creator and the spirit world.*”

Over 80% of attendees also indicated that they would “**make changes as a result of the event**” including: seeking more opportunities to learn about the culture through things such as language and teachings, doing more research and applying for funding, and connecting with people with similar goals moving forward.

One attendee said, “*I will work to support preparing a funding application, I will advocate, I will listen and seek opportunities to learn*”. Other attendees stated they would “*start connecting with more people doing similar work*” and “*take part in more events.*”

In response to the question, “**What do you think priorities for future research/advocacy should be?**” attendees highlighted that priorities for future research/advocacy should be helping to share stories and voices of people with lived experience, having support people to talk to, and having easier access to diagnosis and care. Attendees said, “*lived experiences and voices from community*” and “*research*”. Another said, “*When is the next gathering?*”



Appendix C

Knowledge Mobilization / Media

▶ **Brock News Article:**

<https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2023/06/brock-co-hosts-event-on-indigeneity-neurodevelopmental-disabilities-and-mental-health/>

▶ **CAMH News Article:**

<https://www.camh.ca/en/camh-news-and-stories/event-on-indigeneity-neurodevelopmental-disabilities-and-mental-health>

▶ **Video Reel from Event (Going on Dreams):**

<https://youtu.be/Fxv1za8arlw?si=LABfRaCo9YtI31B1>

▶ **Shkaabe Makwa Magazine:**

<https://issuu.com/shkaabemakwa/docs/digital-magazine-01>