

THE COLLEGE STANDS WITH THE TK'EMLÚPS TE SECWÉPEMC FIRST NATION AND ALL OF CANADA'S INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

We were disheartened and appalled to learn of the discovery of the remains of 215 children with unmarked graves on the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. We stand with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nations and all of BC's Indigenous People as they continue to process this news.

We call on all health professionals to practice vigilant cultural humility and safety. To learn about and understand the impacts of residential schools on Canada's First Nations Communities; to acknowledge and reflect on the social issues faced by Indigenous Peoples; and to understand the historical contexts from which these issues originate.

Like many British Columbians, we have no words to describe the sorrow we feel for those children, their families and communities, as well as for all residential school survivors in the wake of Thursday's discovery. To all of BC's Indigenous People, we offer our unwavering support, and will continue to look to our First Nations Leaders as we determine a way to honour and remember the lives of these children.

We recognize that this news is likely to trigger significant pain and sadness among BC's First Nations Communities, especially those with personal or family history of attending residential schools. News like this presents a significant setback in the healing journey of Canada's residential school survivors and can take a serious and unexpected toll on the mental health and wellbeing of members of these communities and their families. It is vital that we acknowledge this pain and do everything we can to support the First Nations communities we serve through these trying times.

This discovery further underscores our need as a health care regulator to become anti-racist, provide culturally safe care and to support the health professionals we regulate to do the same. We must take specific actions, as individual leaders, within our organizations, and as partners in the wider health system.

As stewards of public health and safety in Canada, we have a responsibility to recognize and address the power imbalances inherent in our health care system, and work to ensure that the environments in which we practice are free of racism and discrimination, and that Indigenous people feel safe when receiving care.

To Canada's Indigenous Peoples and residential school survivors, we share in your grief and recognize that there is so much work to be done to eradicate the racism, and heal the wounds left by our colonial history. We remain committed to taking this journey with you and working to ensure that the atrocities of our past, and the resulting patterns of trauma, are respectfully acknowledged and appropriately addressed in the decisions that we make today.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SUPPORTS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE THAT BC OPTOMETRISTS SHOULD BE AWARE OF

The following information, and more, is available on [the First Nations Health Authority Website](#).

BC Optometrists should be aware of resources and services available to help support their patients and communities in times of need.

The FNHA and other organizations provide culturally safe and trauma-informed cultural, emotional, and mental health counselling services. Elders or Traditional Healers provide cultural supports or Indigenous healing practices. Clients are supported in reclaiming ways of taking care of themselves, their families, their communities, and their Nations.

The following resources are available:

- **KUU-US Crisis Line Society:** a 24-hour provincial Indigenous crisis line. Adults call 250-723-4050; children and youth call 250-723-2040. Toll-free 1-800-588-8717.
- **First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line:** Phone toll-free 1-855-242-3310 or chat online at hopeforwellness.ca.
- **The Métis Crisis Line:** available 24 hours a day at 1-833-MétisBC, 1-833-638-4722.
- **Tsow Tun Le Lum:** Phone 1-888-403-3123 to access the following cultural supports: Levi Martin, James Quatell or Mike Kelly.
- **Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS):** Phone 1-800-721-0066 or 604-985-4464 to access the following cultural supports: Sadie McPhee, Gertie Pierre or Yvonne Rigby Jones. Mental health and counselling services are also available from the IRSSS Resolution Health Support Workers.

Wellness resources are also available on [Mental Health and Wellness](#) in COVID-19 on FNHA.ca (fnha.ca/coronavirus).

The resources listed here are also available as an FNHA fact sheet: [Mental Health and Wellness Supports for Indigenous People](#).