



# Let's be healthy together!

CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

*best start  
meilleur départ*

by/par health *nexus* santé

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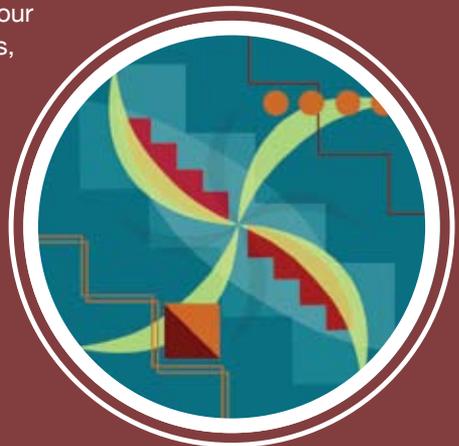
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***Our people have  
the answers.***

**~Mohawk teacher Diane  
Longboat (Kahontakwas),  
Six Nations**



# 1 Why we developed this book

*By Melanie Ferris, Ojibwe/Sioux mother and Aboriginal health promotion consultant at Health Nexus*

On behalf of Health Nexus and our Aboriginal advisory council, I am happy to invite you to learn from our *Let's Be Healthy Together* series.

Health Nexus is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting health for more than 25 years. Health Nexus developed this book using evidence-based health information as well as through interviewing a range of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis parents, role models, and service providers. You'll see quotes from the Aboriginal people we interviewed throughout this book.

## Words We Use

Some of the words that we use in this book include:

- **Aboriginal:** This is a word to describe First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. These are the first peoples of Canada.
- **Diet:** A diet is simply all of the foods that you eat. It doesn't have to be low-calorie or low-fat.
- **Elder:** A respected person in an Aboriginal community who is valued for their wisdom and life experience.
- **Healing:** For many Aboriginal people, our healing processes are often related to things such as residential schools, foster care, the sixties scoop, etc. For some people, healing happens when they get in touch with their cultural identity by exploring things such as ceremonies and teachings.
- **Nutrition:** This is how your body uses food. It breaks food down into nutrients that your body can then use for growth and development.
- **Obesity:** This is a medical condition where your body has too much fat on it. Obesity is linked to a shorter life expectancy and increased health risks. Ask your doctor how to measure obesity for your age and body size.
- **Physical activity:** This is simply moving your body and getting active. Some people also call it exercise, but physical activity could be gardening, hunting, trapping, or dancing.
- **Service provider:** This is any person who provides care to you, such as a doctor, nurse, teacher, etc.

## Why should we think about obesity?

Childhood obesity is a growing concern for all people in Canada. As Aboriginal people, we are especially concerned because we are not as healthy as other Canadians. Our poor health status is closely connected to poverty, isolation, and the move away from our traditional lifestyles.

Moving away from our traditional lifestyles is something that was forced upon us through government policies and systems such as residential schools, the 60s scoop, and foster care. Surviving these things affects the health and well-being of our spirit, mind, body, and emotions. It affects each one of us individually, and it also affects our communities.

## Why should I use this book?

This book is for parents and families raising Aboriginal children between the ages of 0 to 6 in Ontario. Use this book to learn more about how you can give your child the best start in life when it comes to having good mental and spiritual health. Since you know your child the best, use this book to get more ideas about how to explore your culture with your young one(s). This book has phone numbers and website links to free programs and resources that can help your family be healthy.

We designed our tools to help you think about ways of raising healthy children. We focus on mental and spiritual health in this book to help you think about how a happy and healthy mind and spirit helps to prevent obesity amongst Aboriginal children. Other books in our *Let's Be Healthy* series have ideas about getting active and eating good food:

- *Eating the Right Stuff*
- *Getting Active*
- *Prevent Childhood Obesity: A Guide for Service Providers*

### This book:

- briefly explores the ways in which history contributes to many of our social problems today;
- highlights the connection between what has happened to our people, and the problems we face in combating growing rates of obesity and other health problems in our children;
- gives you information to make healthy changes in your lives so that you can raise your children in a good way.

Many of the tips in this book are also available in video or audio format. For other learning tools in our *Let's Be Healthy Together* series, please visit us online at [www.letsbehealthy.ca](http://www.letsbehealthy.ca).



A photograph of a woman and a young child in shallow water. The woman, wearing sunglasses and a blue top, is smiling and looking towards the child. The child, with wet hair, is also smiling broadly. The water is rippling around them.

## *Children need to feel a part of the family.*

*~Swampy Cree Elder Joanne Dallaire (Shadow Hawk Woman)*

*The little ones, from the time that they are here, when you're carrying them, when you bring them up, teach them in your language and culture, so they'll be proud of who they are. A lot of kids are not even proud because they don't know nothing about themselves. Teach them who they are, Indian, Ojibwe, Maliseet, Passomoquady, or whatever, so they'll start talking about it.*

*~Passomoquady Elder Margaret Paul from *In the Words of Elders**

## 2 Imagine a healthy child

Think about the question, “What does a healthy child look like?”

Everyone would have a different answer, but some people might think of a child running and playing sports or being active. The child likely has a smile on her face and you can tell that she is happy.

### You and your child are sacred

If this child was being raised in the traditional Aboriginal ways, this child would also know and feel that he is sacred. This child will grow to respect and treat himself (and those around him) in a good way.

Our children need to know how sacred they are! It is important that you, as an Aboriginal parent, know that you are sacred too.

When you treat yourself as sacred, your children see this behaviour. They are more likely to care for themselves in a good way if they learn from your example.



*Being a role model is a contribution. Being a role model, you're teaching your children. My grandchildren do not abuse drugs or alcohol, they've never seen me use alcohol or drugs, so I've been a good role model for them.*

~Odawa Elder Liza Mosher from *In the Words of Elders*

*I firmly believe that a lot of the healing began in residential school. I have asked myself and others, did I, did we, suffer uselessly in residential school? Like any hard question I have ever posed to my mother, her answer might have been kiya nit nis, which roughly translates to “reflect on it, my daughter.”*

~Residential school survivor Madeleine Dion Stout (Aboriginal Healing Foundation)



*The Inuit community in Ottawa is very tight knit. It's very close so there are a lot of supports from extended family and friends.... isolation comes with not being able to find service in their own language or not understanding how to access the services outside of the Inuit community. There's a lot of red tape compared to northern communities. Like you come from a community of 600, you don't need a birth certificate, you don't need ID, everybody knows everybody right? Then you come to Ottawa and you need ID just to get a bus pass or you need ID just to get a library card right, it's huge. And birth certificates! For kids to get into school they need a birth certificate. So a lot of those supports we provide here but that's where the isolation comes from.*

~Inuk mother of four Heidi Langille, coordinator of school-age program and manager of youth programs at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre

## Aboriginal people were forced from their sacred ways of being

Most of us want happiness and well-being for our children. Although most of us want this, the fact is that many of the Aboriginal people in Canada have been affected in some bad ways by government policies and systems that took them away from their families and communities.

When Aboriginal children were removed from their families, many of these children didn't have smiles on their faces. They didn't receive unconditional love and support. This affected their sense of well-being and their ability to show love to their own children. Residential schools, mass adoptions, and foster homes helped to break down the strong family connections and cultural values that our people have held for generations.

Although some Aboriginal people say that residential school was a positive experience, many do not feel this way. Today many teens and adults try to cope with feelings of anger or sadness that are left over from the residential school experience. Some of us cope by using things like alcohol, drugs, gambling, or even food.

Today residential schools are no longer running, but we still deal with a sense of disconnection from family and our land when we have to leave our communities to go to school. Many young people begin to use different substances when isolation and loneliness come into play.

## Common addictions in our communities

There are many types of addiction problems. Some of these include:

- Alcohol
- Food
- Gambling
- Prescription drugs
- Sniffing
- Smoking
- Street or illegal drugs

*Important values are health and to maintain health. It's very important for a Native person to try and practice the rituals of our ancient forefathers.*

*~Saulteau Elder Wilf Tootosis from *In the Words of Elders**

*Drug abuse is a problem here... what happens is the parents are addicted to prescription drugs or illegal drugs. What happens is the children end up suffering. Kids may not be getting the food they require to live a healthier lifestyle because their parents are spending their money on the thing, or helplessly addicted, kids are getting food of far less nutritional value.*

~Métis college instructor Cory Koski, Red Sky Independent Métis Nation

## **Why are addictions a problem?**

Addictions are a problem when they are harming you and the people around you. They likely harm your health, even if you think that they are not harming you. Often, when people use substances such as alcohol or drugs, they also begin to engage in other dangerous and harmful activities (such as drinking and driving or having unprotected sex).

When you have an addiction, you are likely using it to try to cope with or cover up feelings that you do not want to deal with. Elders say that

two of the most common feelings we have in our communities are **anger** and **fear**. These two emotions are connected. When someone seems angry, it is an expression of what is scaring them.

Many of you see how addictions connect to what has happened to our people. When children are removed from their families, they often do not get the love and support they needed. Many of us did not receive the cultural teachings from our parents or grandparents that we are sacred.

*Addictions are a big problem with our community. Clients need more education. Currently we service both, but our services are limited to Aboriginal population only. More organizations need to follow our services to reach all races to improve the health—mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual—to benefit our next generation as so many families are blended.*

~Aboriginal mother and service provider Sabrina Boucher, Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal Community Health Centre, Thunder Bay

*Abuse in, especially women, they don't come out of it easy. Because something happened to the Spirit when that thing happened. So she take a long time to bring it out, forget about it... some of them come out of it quickly, some of them don't. When they are too small when that happened, more like a different Spirit is inside and the different Spirit it has to come out, and sometimes you see that thing it comes out, and the person gets better.*

~Micmac Elder Albert Ward from *In the Words of Elders*

## How does abuse connect to addictions?

Many of us have been abused in some way. Abuse is not only about hitting and being physically hurt.

Abuse can be:

- Emotional
- Mental
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Sexual
- Financial

Abuse is a cycle. That means that it's easy for us to pass these behaviours onto our children.

Elders say that it takes seven generations to fix the wrongs that have been done to us as a people. Many of us hope that healing ourselves is going to help to fix the wrongs in *less* than seven generations. We do not want our children to suffer, so we know we need to do the healing work now.





***People who have strong feelings of anger and sadness need to get help to deal with whatever issues are making them feel that way.***

~First Nations mom and registered dietitian Kelly Gordon

### 3 Healing your mind and spirit

Elders are the first to say that healing is hard work. We need to do it if we're going to be able to live our lives in a balanced, peaceful, and productive way.

Many people try to heal themselves through using different approaches or a combination of approaches, including:

- Exercise
- Counselling
- Educating themselves
- Helping others
- Becoming a part of a community
- Using medicine from a doctor, such as anti-depressants
- Exploring and expressing spirituality
- Learning about their cultural traditions (sometimes people call this "walking the Red Road")

Some people are able to take control and manage their own healing journeys, but others need guidance and support.

*When the parents are distracted with either the despairing life, or the drugs, or whatever, obviously the children suffer. To figure out how to break that cycle is not easy.*

~Métis college instructor Cory Koski, Red Sky Independent Métis Nation

*Food addiction is something that has been a planned process by companies who put stuff in there to make you crave their food, but also it's an emotional response to loneliness, grieving, or boredom so I think we have to deal with those deeper issues.*

~Traditional Mohawk teacher Diane Longboat (Kahontakwas), Turtle Clan, Six Nations

### "I don't have an addiction but..."

Ask yourself about your own emotional well-being. Do you feel happy and content most days, or are you overcome with feelings of being scared, anxious, lonely, or angry? These types of feelings are a signal that you need support.

If this is how you are feeling, try talking with your health care provider. Let her know that you need help. There is help out there for everyone who needs it and is willing to get it. Your health care provider will have a wide range of ideas for you.

If you don't have a doctor, try talking with your community health nurse, other trained medical professional, or a trusted Elder.

*Parents aren't cooking anymore. The present generation is the pop tarts and the pizza pops generation; microwave. Its frozen food and fast food. There are chemicals in those foods and when kids get a taste, they become addicted. The biggest addiction that we have in society today that's socially acceptable is the addiction to sugar.*

*~Mohawk teacher Diane Longboat, Six Nations*

## Developing healthy ideas about food

If you have been abused, you'll generally feel sad unless you get help. Many of us do not get the help we need to heal from abuse. Some of us deal with abuse by having unhealthy habits, including abusing our food. Maybe we binge eat, or maybe we just eat junk food all the time. There are different ways of using food as an escape.

If you use food as an escape, chances are that you will pass this idea of food as "comfort" to your children. You are your child's first teacher when it comes to them knowing what is and is not normal and healthy when it comes to eating.

### Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I use food as a reward?**  
*Do I try to get my children to do something by telling them they'll get something, like candy, as a reward?*

- Do I use food as a threat?** *Do I tell my children to eat everything off their plate, or else?*

- Do I give my child unhealthy food to make me feel better?**  
*I spend so many hours away from my child, so I feel sad. I take them out for stuff like pizza or ice cream to make us "feel" better.*

- Does my child ever help me do the grocery shopping or meal preparation?** *Do I give my child a chance to be involved in preparing meals? Or do I feel that this is just too much work?*

If you answered "yes" to any of those questions, you may be passing unhealthy eating habits to your children.

Even if you aren't addicted to food, you might have an addiction to alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Sometimes people who use these things become unable or unwilling to prepare a healthy meal for their children because they are too tired, distracted, etc. In these cases, some children go hungry or eat unhealthy foods.

## Tips to develop healthy eating habits with your child:

- Eat at a kitchen table whenever possible. Turn off distractions like TV and music. Spend the time together as a family every day, using the time to ask your child about his day.
- Be careful about how you speak about food.
- Get your child involved in preparing meals. Ask your child to wash the produce, mash the potatoes (under your supervision), or do some blending.
- Get your child to help pick out groceries. Use a shopping trip to help talk about nutrition. Children are more likely to eat healthy food if they're involved in getting it to the table.
- Take time chewing your food, understanding that it takes 20 minutes for your belly to tell your brain that you are full. Remind your child to be mindful when they are eating.
- Read your child a book, play a board game with them and do things like that to help your child feel secure and loved. Remember that time away from the television or computer is a good thing!
- Read our book *Eating the Right Stuff*, available through your service provider or online at [www.letsbehealthy.ca](http://www.letsbehealthy.ca).



*All medicine is sacred. It's treated with respect, the beetle root, muskrat root, we consider that sacred, it helps you in every way you use it. I use it mostly when I sing. It's good for you. You make a tobacco offering.*

~Passomoquady Elder Margaret Paul from *In the Words of Elders*

## Taking care of your spirit and emotions

If you are looking to stop the abuse of your body, you need support to help you in healing your mind, emotions, and spirit.

One thing that many people find helpful during times of healing is their own kind of spirituality. A popular way of expressing spirituality is through attending cultural ceremonies at local friendship centres, schools, community centres, etc. Many people also enjoy attending or being involved in their local church.

Church and cultural ceremonies are helpful because there are usually wise and caring people in these places. These places are also usually places of peace. Some of us enjoy spending time with Elders, pastors, traditional teachers, etc. These people are usually good listeners who can provide feedback to you about some of the issues you might be dealing with.

### Your culture is good for the spirit

Many Aboriginal people find that a cultural approach to healing the spirit is most helpful. Expressing your culture helps you to know who you are. Some of the ways that an Elder or traditional person can help you on your healing journey include:

- Doing a pipe ceremony for you
- Having you take part in a sweat lodge
- Helping you to find your clan, colours, and/or spirit name
- Taking you out on the land to teach you something like hunting or gathering medicines
- Teaching you ancestral languages and drum songs
- Smudging and using sacred medicines with you

Friendship centres, schools, and churches are at the heart of many communities. Many of these places try to give back to the community by organizing events such as bake sales, garage sales, celebrations, concert nights, etc.



When you're a part of a group (community centre, drumming group, dance group, parent program, church, etc.), you're likely to feel like an important and valued member of the community. You can help to increase your sense of belonging by exploring ways of volunteering and giving your energy to other people in the community who need it.

Some people find that when they are healing from an addiction they want to make themselves busy with something else—volunteering can be a great, healthy way to pass the time and to feel valued. For ideas on building strong, helpful communities, see **chapter 4: Healthy Communities Build Healthy Children.**

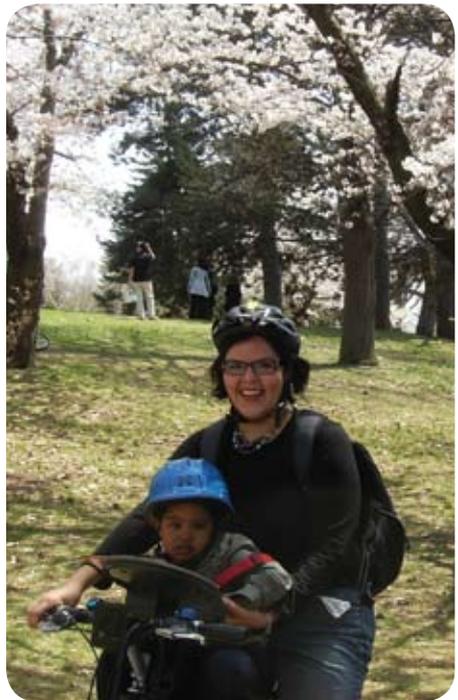
### **If you are having trouble coping**

If you are worried that you have issues that are getting in the way of your caring for your child, you need to ask for help right away:

- Talk to your health care provider.
- Talk to someone in your family or support network who wants to help you.
- There are some places where we can get support when we're in trouble, such as our native children's service agencies.
- Ask a trusted friend for help or advice on what you should do if you're worried about your children.

*Like many Aboriginal parents, I live far from any extended family. I want my son to have a sense of extended family support. I've surrounded my son with Elders and grandparents, as well as the community at my local church.*

~Ojibwe/Sioux mom Melanie Ferris, Horse Clan



*When you're confident in who you are, you don't have that weighing on you—trying to be someone else.*

~Ojibwe student Michael Mahkwa Auksi, Ryerson

***We all have a common goal. And that's what we should all be thinking about.***

**~Métis professor Dr. Lynn Lavallée, Ryerson University**



## 4 Healthy communities build healthy children

You might wonder, “Why is it so important to take the time to heal myself when there is so much going on around me?”

Positive change first happens with the individual. When you are able to become a positive, emotionally balanced person, you affect others in a positive way. This is especially true if you are a parent, auntie, uncle, or grandparent. Children need positive adults around them to provide nurturing and guidance for their own journeys—they need people who keep reinforcing the message that children are sacred!

Being a person who is a helper is also good for the community because it helps to build a strong support network. Think about a spider’s web... if positive people are weaving the web, then the web gets stronger if you are in there helping as well.

Along with helping to build a stronger community, you are becoming a role model for others around you when you are helping out and being a positive life force. Role models are incredibly important in our communities, and we need more of them. You don’t need to be a sports star or an awesome musician to be a good role model!

*I always bring this up because it’s such an important part of, you know, that importance of community and realizing it. When I lost my job one time, a local hunter came to my house with a whole deer and he had taken it to a butcher and, you know, got some sausage and got some ground meat, got some steak, roasts, like all of these things. So I had a whole deer and it last me for the whole winter while I was jobless. Yeah, it was amazing and free fiddle lessons, I would cook for him. You know, those kinds of things, so we made do. We still got what we were hoping for without having to go pay for it or stuff like that, without money.*

~Métis artist and mother Jaime Koebel

*That’s something that I’d like, to get a variety of role models that are committed and have the time with young kids.*

~First Nations diabetes educator Melanie Francis, M’Chigeeng Health Centre, Manitoulin Island

## Creating healthy programs for your community

Think about what you need in your community. What do you like about your community, and what could you improve? If you already have access to a wide range of programs, try to get involved in some of them. If you don't feel that you would enjoy any, think about what you would like to do with your children.

Some simple ideas of things you can do include:

- Visiting someone who is sick or hurt who needs your help around their house
- Helping children learn to read at school
- Clearing brush from a walking trail
- Helping teach people about some of your skills such as painting, beading, dancing, etc.
- Bringing your drum or other instrument into a children's daycare to play music for them



*We have to become less dependent on government and come up with on our own economic solution and only then will we be able to deliver the programs we want to deliver in the way we want to deliver them.*

~Métis professor Dr. Lynn Lavallée, Ryerson University

Some more complex ideas you could put in place with a team include:

- A weekly community kitchen at your church, friendship centre, or child's school
- A hot lunch program once a week at your child's school
- A weekly drumming social where everyone brings hand drums, sings, and dances
- A clothing swap program to help parents trade their children's old clothing
- A farmer's market
- A language program
- Music or art activities for children and families in your park or community centre
- A community fair with various events, activities, etc.



*You need to set a policy in every First Nation that there are going to be medicines gathered every year, there will be wild foods gathered every year, there will be hunting and fishing in season. Every Chief and Council will employ those hunters, fishermen, gatherers, gardeners. Youth could be employed in summer programs to make gardens under the guidance of older people. That needs to be put into the form of a community co-op where someone will manage this program.*

*So if you're a single mom and you have a limited income and you have four children, then your name is on the list as a community member and you can go to the co-op. Every week you're allowed to take so much vegetables, so much medicine, so much fish, or whatever for your family for free.*

*And the community provides that service to families. They are eating wild foods. They are using medicines from their own homelands, drinking that medicine from the homeland. Families are eating the foods that are local, in season and are the foods of the Ancestors.*

*~Mohawk teacher Diane Longboat (Kahontakwas)*

*When we see things wrong in our community, and we say, “Why did this fall apart? Why is this happening?” We should find out. We should get our feet dirty. We joked around. They said to me, “You’re gonna get your feet wet.” I said, “No, I think I’m going to get my hair wet too. I’m gonna dive right in.”*

*And it’s unpaid, right? It’s typically all volunteer, not glamorous. I think more of us have to be involved.*

~Métis professor Dr. Lynn Lavallée, Ryerson University

## **Volunteering in your community**

Nurturing others and being nurtured can help you feel happy during your healing journey.

Nurturing those around you helps to improve your sense of well-being and good health.

If you live in a big town or a city, there are many places for you to volunteer. You can get involved with charities like the Salvation Army, the YMCA, your local friendship centre, etc.

If you live on a reserve, you’ll have less access to volunteer opportunities in organized charities. This is because the government doesn’t fund volunteer organizations to work on reserves.

So if you’re living on a reserve, think creatively about how to be a volunteer. Your community needs your talent and time even more.

There are many ways to get involved:

- Leading walking programs
- Helping with children’s recreation programs—check with your local school about having a space for an after-school program
- Starting a “Buddy Program” to be a support to someone else who is trying to heal from an addiction, trying to be more active or lose weight, etc.

*Traditionally, families worked together, supporting each other. If a certain family was in need of something, that family was given what they did not have. Sharing was a very important task in our lives. Helping one another was of importance.*

~Inuk Elder Pauloosie Angmarlik from *In the Words of Elders*

You can make a difference. If you'd like to volunteer, or start a new program or service, ask yourself the following questions:

- How much time can I commit to this each week?
- What's my purpose in doing this? Making new friends? Supporting local children? Something to keep me busy and out of trouble?
- Do I need food for this program? Can anyone donate it, or do I have money to cover the costs?
- Do I need any special supplies for the program, such as gardening supplies, art supplies, drums, etc.?
- Do I need a special space for this program? Can I get it from my child's school, the friendship centre, the health centre, the church, etc.?
- Would other parents benefit from this? Who should I talk to if I want to get more parents involved in organizing this?
- How am I going to promote this activity?
- Is there going to be a cost for participants?
- Are there any potential partners who would like to donate time or money to help me get this program rolling?
- Should I make a schedule of events to help people know what I'm planning?

*The community was a big help, especially when I was a single parent. It was a big help because they actually employed me one year to teach jiggging and during the jiggging the program consisted of having a meal. They were able to pay me and provided child care for those whose kids were really small or whose kids lost interest, you know, half way through the session. So that was something, I could fit my life around it and include my kids if I wanted to.*

~Métis artist and dancer Jaime Koebel



*It's our responsibility as parents to raise our children to be completely self-sufficient.*

~Swamp Cree Elder Joanne Dallaire



## 5 Getting help in Ontario

Most of us have a hard time quitting something that is enjoyable. If you would like to quit smoking, drinking, or anything else that is harmful, talk to your health care provider. Your doctor or nurse should have a list of programs and resources available to help you get started on your journey.

Aboriginal people in Ontario have access to a wide variety of programs and services. Before you visit your service provider, you might enjoy seeing the wide variety of programs and services that exist for you. We include some starting on page 27.

### Who do I talk to about getting help?

Some people do not like to see a doctor, or cannot see one because there are none in the community. If you don't have a doctor, other people to talk to include:

- Band councillors
- Elders
- Grandparents
- Nurse practitioner
- Midwife
- Pastor or priest
- Traditional healers

*I always thought it was a good idea to teach kids going off to university and college how to drink. No one ever talks about that... why don't we teach them when they go off to @\$ college, explain to them what drugs are what booze are, you know, give them types of booze and actually teach them some responsibility and talk about things instead of not talking about it?*

*I don't see why you can't teach Aboriginal kids how to drink responsibly, no one ever thinks that's a good idea... there's ways to go out and you can go and party and hang out and do all that but I think it would be good if they had some sort of idea that you have to learn the hard way, that don't mix your booze and you know. You know, if you don't explain to your kids the difference between doing acid and doing 'shrooms and smoking pot and smoking hash, well, then how can you expect them to make any sort of informed choices?*

~Aboriginal artist Miche Jette,  
Aboriginal Healing Foundation



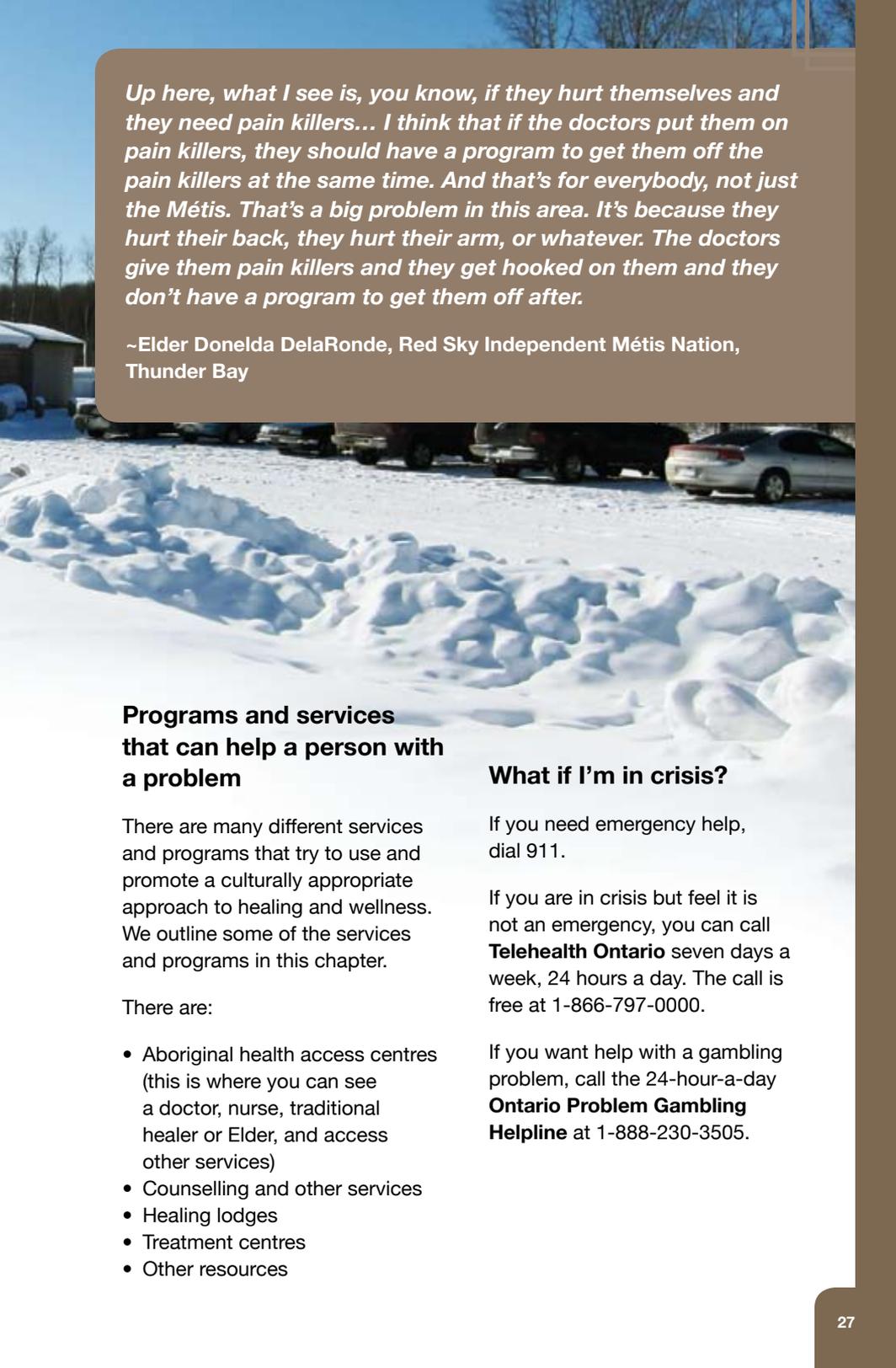
## What is harm reduction?

In her book *Where the Pavement Ends*, author Marie Wadden explores harm reduction within Aboriginal communities. She says that harm reduction promotes public education about the safe use of alcohol and drugs. It also promotes measures to limit the harm these substances do to users and to the public when they're abused.

Some Aboriginal people think harm reduction is a **NOT** a good idea—this is when you'll see policies at friendship centres and other places that say you can't come in if you have been drinking. Other organizations say that they still welcome people if they are trying to quit their habit but are still struggling.

If you'd like to try and take a “harm reduction” approach in your own life, some ideas include:

- Cutting back on how many cigarettes you smoke each day
- Making plans for your children if you are engaging in risky activity (for example, if you know you'll be drinking too much to care for them)
- Talk to your children about your mistakes—you might think smoking is bad, but your children won't know the health risks unless you tell them
- Trying to cut down on any bad habits—if you do them every single day, see if you can even cut down your habit to 6 days... you'll eventually be able to cut down more and more



*Up here, what I see is, you know, if they hurt themselves and they need pain killers... I think that if the doctors put them on pain killers, they should have a program to get them off the pain killers at the same time. And that's for everybody, not just the Métis. That's a big problem in this area. It's because they hurt their back, they hurt their arm, or whatever. The doctors give them pain killers and they get hooked on them and they don't have a program to get them off after.*

~Elder Donelda DelaRonde, Red Sky Independent Métis Nation, Thunder Bay

## **Programs and services that can help a person with a problem**

There are many different services and programs that try to use and promote a culturally appropriate approach to healing and wellness. We outline some of the services and programs in this chapter.

There are:

- Aboriginal health access centres (this is where you can see a doctor, nurse, traditional healer or Elder, and access other services)
- Counselling and other services
- Healing lodges
- Treatment centres
- Other resources

## **What if I'm in crisis?**

If you need emergency help, dial 911.

If you are in crisis but feel it is not an emergency, you can call **Telehealth Ontario** seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The call is free at 1-866-797-0000.

If you want help with a gambling problem, call the 24-hour-a-day **Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline** at 1-888-230-3505.

## Aboriginal health access centres

### **Anishnawbe Health Toronto**

225 Queen Street East, Toronto,  
Ontario, M5A 1S4

**Phone:** 416.360.0486

**Web:** [www.aht.ca](http://www.aht.ca)

### **Anishnawbe-Mushkiki**

29 Royston Court, Thunder Bay,  
Ontario, P7A 4Y7

**Phone:** 807.343.4843

**Web:**

[www.anishnawbe-mushkiki.org](http://www.anishnawbe-mushkiki.org)

### **De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre**

678 Main Street East, Hamilton,  
Ontario, L8M 1K2

**Phone:** 905.544.4320

**Email:**

[info@aboriginalhealthcentre.com](mailto:info@aboriginalhealthcentre.com)

**Web:**

[www.aboriginalhealthcentre.com](http://www.aboriginalhealthcentre.com)

### **Ganaan De We O Dis ^Yethi Yenahwahse**

425 - 427 William Street, London,  
Ontario, N6B 3E1

**Phone:** 519.672.4079

**Web:** [www.soahac.on.ca](http://www.soahac.on.ca)

### **Gizhewaadiziwin Access Centre**

PO Box 686, Fort Frances, Ontario,  
P9A 3M9

**Phone:** 807.274.3131

**Email:** [sweir@vianet.ca](mailto:sweir@vianet.ca)

### **Kanonkwa'tesheio:io Social**

PO Box 579, Cornwall, Ontario,  
K6H 5T3

**Phone:** 613.575.2341

**Email:** [spembleton@akwesasne.ca](mailto:spembleton@akwesasne.ca)

### **Misiway Eniniwuk Health Centre**

PO Box 842, 137 Pine Street South,  
Timmins, Ontario, P9N 7G7

**Phone:** 705.264.2200

### **N'Mninoeyaa: Community Health Access**

49 Indian Road, PO Box 28, Cutler,  
Ontario, P0P 1B0

**Phone:** 705.844.2021

**Web:** [www.mamaweswen.ca](http://www.mamaweswen.ca)

### **Noojmowin Teg Health Access Centre**

Aundeck Omni Kaning  
48 Hillside Road, Hwy 540, Bag  
2002, Little Current, Ontario, P0P  
1K0

**Phone:** 705.368.2182, ext. 204

**Web:** [www.noojmowin-teg.ca](http://www.noojmowin-teg.ca)

### **Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre**

161 Applegrove Street, Sudbury,  
Ontario, P3C 1N2

**Phone:** 705.675.1596

**Web:** [www.shkagamik-kwe.org](http://www.shkagamik-kwe.org)

### **Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health**

299 Montreal Road, Ottawa,  
Ontario, K1L 6B8  
Clinic Telephone: 613.748.5999  
Program Telephone: 613.748.0657

**Web:** [www.wabano.com](http://www.wabano.com)

### **Wassay-Gezhig Na-Nahn-Dah-We-Igamig**

PO Box 320, Keewatin, Ontario,  
P0X 1C0

**Phone:** 807.543.1065

**Web:** [www.kahac.org](http://www.kahac.org)



## Counselling services

Two places that can offer you counseling services include:

- Aboriginal Services at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Métis Nation of Ontario

### **Aboriginal Services at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**

The Centre works to ensure that all residents of Ontario have access to a range of addiction and mental health services they need. The Centre has many different programs for Aboriginal people in Ontario, including a 21-day residential and outpatient programs for those dealing with addictions and mental health issues. The Centre offers individual counseling, education, research, capacity building, and access to an Elder. It also provides telephone service for consults.

Aboriginal Services has access and can make referrals to many programs at the Centre, including geriatrics, women's services, youth services, forensic, residential addictions program, dual diagnosis, schizophrenia and continuing care, general psychiatry, emergency services, addiction medicine (managing withdrawal, opiate service, nicotine service), and shared care clinical outreach services.

#### **Contact:**

**Phone:** 416.535.8501, ext. 7651

**Email:** Dr. Peter Menzies, Clinical Head, [peter.menzies@camh.net](mailto:peter.menzies@camh.net)

**Web:** [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)

## Métis Nation of Ontario

All of the Métis Nation's health branch offices in communities across Ontario offer access to peer counseling. Most also offer telemedicine and a variety of other services. Here is a list of the offices, which is also online at [www.metisnation.org](http://www.metisnation.org).

### For general information on counseling, call the manager of health care initiatives at:

426 Victoria Avenue  
PO Box 403  
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3M7  
**Phone:** 807.274.1386

70 Park St.  
Kenora, ON P9N 1Y6  
**Phone:** 807.468.5835

226 May Street South  
Thunder Bay, ON P7E 1B4  
**Phone:** 807.624.5022

347 Spruce St. South  
Timmins, ON P4N 2N2  
**Phone:** 705.264.3939

26 Queen St. East  
Sault Ste Marie, ON P6A 1Y3  
**Phone:** 705.254.6530

101 Worthington Street E. #232  
North Bay, ON P1B 1G5  
**Phone:** 705.474.0734

260 Alder St.  
Sudbury, ON P3C 5P4  
**Phone:** 705.671.9855

500 Old St. Patrick St.  
Ottawa, ON K1N 9G4  
**Phone:** 613.798.1488

91 Chemaushgon St.  
Bancroft, ON K0L 1C0  
**Phone:** 613.332.2575

236 Stewart St., Suite 102  
Renfrew, ON K7V 1X7  
**Phone:** 613.432.6499

355 Cranston Crescent  
Midland, ON L4R 4K8  
**Phone:** 705.526.6335  
**Toll free:** 1.888.265.6335

380 – 9th St. East  
Owen Sound, ON N4K 1P1  
**Phone:** 519.370.0435

1515 Matheson Blvd. East, Suite 103  
Mississauga, ON L4W 2P5  
**Phone:** 905.625.3351

443 Concession St.  
Hamilton, ON L9A 1C1  
**Phone:** 905.318.2336  
**Toll free:** 1.888.546.3847

145-600 Tecumseh Road E  
Windsor, ON N8X 4X9  
**Phone:** 519.974.0860  
**Toll free:** 1.888.243.5148

18 Division Street  
Welland, ON L3B 3Z6  
**Phone:** 905.735.1112  
**Toll free:** 1.877.292.3522

34A King Street  
Dryden, ON P8N 1B7  
**Phone:** 807.223.4535

222-75 Sherbourne St  
Toronto, ON M5A 2P9  
**Phone:** 416.977.9881  
**Toll free:** 1.888.466.6684

## Healing lodges

Six healing lodges across Ontario offer traditional healing approaches to address the underlying impacts of abuse.

### **Biidaaban Healing Lodge**

(230 km east of Thunder Bay)

Heron Bay, Ontario, POT 1R0

**Phone:** 807.229.3592

**Email:** [request@biidaaban.com](mailto:request@biidaaban.com)

**Web:** [www.biidaaban.com](http://www.biidaaban.com)

### **Enahtig North Healing Lodge**

(near Sudbury)

**Phone:** 705.853.0177

### **Enahtig Healing Lodge and**

**Learning Centre (Midland)**

RR #1, 4184 Vasey Road, Victoria

Harbour, Ontario, L0K 2A0

**Phone:** 705.534.3724

**Web:** [www.enahtig.ca](http://www.enahtig.ca)

### **Kii-kee-wan-nii-kaan Munsee-Delaware Nation**

(20 km south west of London)

RR #1, Jubilee Road, Muncey,

Ontario, N0L 1Y0

**Phone:** 519.289.0148

**Web:** [www.swrhl.ca](http://www.swrhl.ca)

### **Nanaandawe'iyewigamig (Kenora)**

c/o Kenora Health Access Centre

General Delivery, Longbow Lake,

Ontario, P0H 1H0

**Phone:** 807.543.1065

**Web:** [www.kahac.org](http://www.kahac.org)

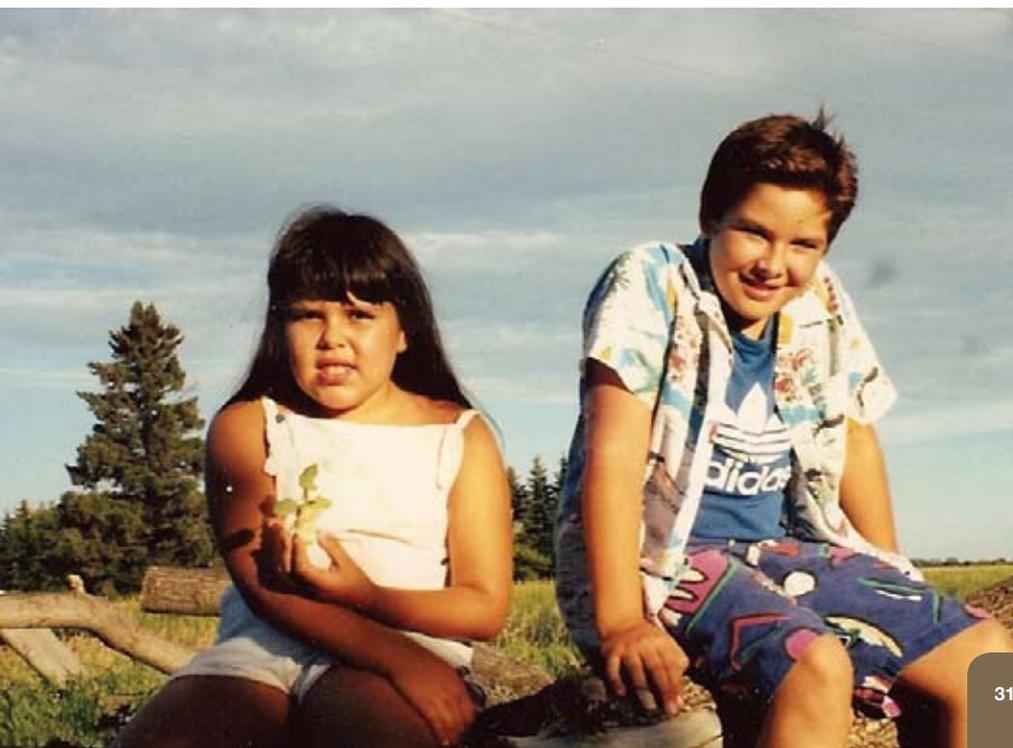
### **Shawanaga First Nation Healing**

**Centre (near Parry Sound)**

RR #1, Nobel, Ontario, POG 1G0

**Phone:** 705.366.2378

**Web:** [www.shawanaga.ca](http://www.shawanaga.ca)



## Treatment centres

### Mamisarvik Trauma and Addictions Treatment Program - Pigiavik House

1863 Russell Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 0N1

**Phone:** 613.563.3546, ext 208 for general inquiries

**Email:**

[mamisarvik@tungasuvvingatinuit.ca](mailto:mamisarvik@tungasuvvingatinuit.ca)

or

[treatment@tungasuvvingatinuit.ca](mailto:treatment@tungasuvvingatinuit.ca)

**Web:**

[www.ontarioinuit.ca/html/addictions.htm](http://www.ontarioinuit.ca/html/addictions.htm)

\*This is a healing centre for Inuit men and women who are 18 and older.

### Oshkee Meekena\*

c/o Michael Hardy, Executive Director

Tikinagan Child and Family Services

PO Box 627, Sioux Lookout, Ontario, P8T 1B1

**Phone:** 807.347.2400

\*This is a residential treatment centre for Aboriginal youth with addiction problems. It supports parents, families, and communities during intake and aftercare.



## Other resources of interest

### Aboriginal Healing Foundation

This foundation has provided much funding over the years to healing programs for Aboriginal people across Canada. The Government of Canada is no longer going to fund the foundation, so it's possible that many healing programs are going to end in 2010. Although healing programs may end, the foundation has done a lot of good work in researching the effects of residential schools. You can get information to help you understand the legacy of the schools. Find more information online at [www.ahf.ca](http://www.ahf.ca).

### Anishnawbe Health Toronto

This health access centre hosts Elders every weekday who meet with Aboriginal clients to do supportive listening, give teachings, perform naming ceremonies, help figure out what kind of traditional medicines might help you, etc. They also have online resources that Elders worked to develop on topics such as traditional healing, moon time, your name and clan, the four sacred medicines, etc. Check out the brochures by visiting [www.aht.ca](http://www.aht.ca) and clicking on "traditional teachings" on the left side of the page.

### First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada

This is the only national non-profit organization dedicated to helping First Nations children in Canada. One program it runs is called Caring Across the Boundaries. This program aims to help increase the range of services available to Aboriginal youth through making links between the voluntary sector, Aboriginal communities, and native child and family services agencies. See [www.fncaresociety.ca](http://www.fncaresociety.ca).





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## References

\*A wide range of traditional teachings were gathered from our key informants and advisory members for this project. You can find their names listed on the inside cover of this book.

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Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. (2007). *Onkwawen tkaienthohseron "our garden": A guide to building stronger Aboriginal communities through community gardening*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: author.

Wadden, M. (2008). *Where the pavement ends: Canada's Aboriginal recovery movement and the urgent need for reconciliation*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Douglas & McIntyre.







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