



DECLARATION of COMMITMENT – APRIL 20, 2018

Cultural Safety and Humility in Provincial work to improve mental health and wellness services accessed by First Nations and Indigenous people in British Columbia

OUR DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT is an important step toward embedding cultural safety and humility within provincial work to improve mental health and wellness, and substance use care with First Nations and Indigenous people in British Columbia, including in response to the overdose emergency and working with health and social ministries to support a whole-of-government approach. This commitment reflects the high priority we place on cultural safety and humility as essential dimensions of quality and safety in reaching our shared objective of advancing mental health and wellness outcomes with and for First Nations and Indigenous populations in British Columbia.

The Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction is responsible for the development of a coherent, accessible and culturally safe mental health and addiction system that is effective for individuals and families across the lifespan throughout the province. The Ministry is also responsible for leading an immediate response to the province's overdose public health emergency. The Ministry is committed to working collaboratively with First Nations to ensure that it delivers on this mandate in a culturally safe and humble manner. The phrase mental health and wellness will be used throughout this document and is inclusive of addictions and substance use services.

This Declaration of Commitment is based on the following guiding principles of cultural safety and humility. These principles are based on principles developed collaboratively by the First Nations Health Authority, Provincial Health Authorities and the Ministry of Health:

- Cultural humility is a life-long process of reflection to understand individual and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust.
- Cultural safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the health care system. Cultural safety is the outcome of people feeling safe when receiving mental health and wellness services. As such, approaches to cultural safety must be client-centred.
- Cultural safety must be understood, upheld and practiced at all levels of the mental health and wellness system including governance, health organizations and within individual professional practice.
- All partners, including First Nations and Indigenous individuals, elders, families, communities, and Nations must be involved in co-development of action strategies and in the decision-making process with a commitment to reciprocal accountability.

Strong leadership on concrete actions is essential to achieving our vision of a culturally safe health system for First Nations and Indigenous people in our province. We, the undersigned representatives of BC's Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions commit to:

CREATE A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE BY:

- Articulating the pressing need to ensure cultural safety within the mental health and wellness system of care in BC.
- Opening an honest and convincing dialogue with all partners to show that change is necessary.
- Forming a coalition of influential leaders and champions who are committed to the priority of embedding cultural humility and safety in BC mental health and wellness policies and services, including working with other social ministries to encourage them to make a similar commitment to cultural safety and humility.
- Contributing to the provincial vision of a culturally safe and humble mental health and wellness system and developing mental health and wellness strategies and plans to achieve the vision.
- Encouraging, supporting and enhancing the development of implementation plans facilitated through sufficient resources.

ENGAGE AND ENABLE STAKEHOLDERS BY:

- Utilizing the unique, multi-sectoral, cross-government mandate and strategic function of the Ministry to champion cultural safety and humility across provincial systems.
- Communicating the vision of a culturally safe mental health and wellness system for First Nations and Indigenous people in BC and the critical need for commitment and understanding on behalf of all partners and clients.
- Openly and honestly addressing concerns and leading by example. Identifying and removing barriers to progress.
- Tracking, evaluating and visibly celebrating accomplishments.

IMPLEMENT AND SUSTAIN CHANGE BY:

- Empowering organizations and individuals to innovate, develop cultural humility and foster a culture of cultural safety.
- Establishing processes where organizations and individuals can raise and address problems without fear of reprisal.
- Leading and enabling successive waves of actions to ensure cultural humility and safety are embedded within all levels of the provincial mental health and wellness system, across various Ministries and service delivery organizations.

REPORTING ON PROGRESS BY:

- Working with the First Nations Health Authority to prepare an action plan with biannual reporting to the Tripartite Committee on First Nations Health outlining and demonstrating how the commitment is being met.

Our signatures demonstrate our long term commitment to ensuring culturally safe mental health and wellness services for First Nations and Indigenous people in British Columbia and to championing the process required to achieve this vision.

THIS DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT is endorsed by the First Nations Health Authority and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and signed by their representatives.

SIGNED ON THIS DATE: APRIL 20, 2018

Mr. Doug Hughes, Deputy Minister
Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions



Mr. Joe Gallagher, Chief Executive Officer
First Nations Health Authority

