



CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND  
PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE  
COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTHÉRAPIE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **National Indigenous Peoples Day: Recognizing the Unique Mental Health Challenges Indigenous Peoples Face**

**OTTAWA (June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020)** – June 21<sup>st</sup> marks National Indigenous Peoples Day, and mental health practitioners within Canada recognize the unique challenges faced by Indigenous peoples. The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is committed to doing its part to find ways to help meet the needs in the area of holistic health and well-being for Indigenous peoples across the country.

On the summer solstice, Canadians are recognizing and celebrating the unique heritage, diverse cultures and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

“As an Indigenous counsellor working with a predominantly Indigenous clientele who live in rural, off reserve communities, I have found that most of the work we do revolves around identity and involves storytelling,” said Kym Edinborough-Capuska, Executive member of the CCPA Indigenous Circle Chapter and member of the Manitoba Chapter Board.

“Through the practice of intentional word choices in storytelling we can shape today what will become the history of tomorrow,” Edinborough-Capuska continued. “Thoughtful word choices, like *check stop* instead of *blockade*; *house less* instead of *homeless*; and *mental health* instead of *mental illness* helps to increase resilience, reduce prejudice, and most importantly, improve the mental wellness of future generation.”

In 2016, CCPA published an [issue paper](#) that examined the urgent need to increase and improve mental health services for Indigenous peoples in Canada. CCPA’s Indigenous Circle Chapter (ICC) raises awareness and is a network for Indigenous and non-Indigenous counsellors to work together on issues that impact Indigenous clients, families, and communities. The ICC provides opportunities for members to share practices and resources so counsellors can build and expand upon collective knowledge and contribute to the evolution of this field within mental health, honouring Indigenous context.

Culturally safe approaches to mental health services for Indigenous peoples need to be based on an understanding of the social determinants of health unique to an Indigenous context, such as cultural identity, connection to the land, community connectedness and racism. Recognizing the importance of mental health to all Canadians, CCPA recommends that dedicated and targeted investments be provided for more equitable access to mental health services to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples by qualified professionals – including both counsellors and psychotherapists.

"There is a need for holistic, respectful, and culturally competent mental health and wellness support for Indigenous people, in Canada," said Dr. Melissa Jay, Indigenous Director for CCPA and Métis woman. "As helping professionals, cultural competence is an ongoing personal and professional journey which is supported through building relations, honouring community, and infusing spirit into all that we do. I appreciate CCPA’s commitment to work collaboratively with the ICC, Indigenous practitioners,



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Elders/Knowledge Keepers, and communities as we learn how support and enhance Indigenous peoples' access to mental health and wellness support."

If you are looking for therapeutic support, go to [www.ccpa-accp.ca](http://www.ccpa-accp.ca), where you can search for a Canadian Certified Counsellor in your region. Members of the public can also find authoritative information about the profession of counselling and psychotherapy by visiting CCPA's public website, [www.talkingcanhelp.ca](http://www.talkingcanhelp.ca).

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*The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is a national bilingual association providing professional counsellors and psychotherapists with access to exclusive educational programs, certification, professional development and direct contact with professional peers and specialty groups. CCPA promotes the profession and its contribution to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians.*

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