

### Part 4 overview

Indigenous older people experience aging in Canada in unique ways that need to be taken into account in practice and policy. Indigenous perspectives and voices – including the full diversity of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples – are increasingly being heard, and Indigenous communities and nations are taking hold of their own revitalization. However, there remains a need to recognize and confront the systemic racism and settler colonialism that is pervasive within Canadian society and directly affects the lives of Indigenous older adults. As the chapters in this part show, this is present in everyday health and social care settings, as well as within community settings and public spaces, and is compounded by histories of intergenerational trauma by the Canadian state. The authors of chapters in this part also highlight the healing potential, for older Indigenous people, of developing and/or strengthening connections with one's Indigenous community, practices, and ways of knowing.

#### Takeaways for practice

- Partnerships need to be developed between Indigenous nations and communities and those providing services to older Indigenous people. Partnerships can facilitate the integration of Indigenous knowledges, medicines, and other cultural practices within health and social care services, community settings as well as within all other aspects of age-friendly planning. Providers and non-Indigenous community members must be educated about the impacts of colonization, cultural safety, and local Indigenous knowledge/traditions on health. Healing that can flourish when this integration and understanding does happen, and harm can be caused when it does not.
- There is a need for better service access for Indigenous older adults living in remote communities, as access to public transportation, medical services, social events, as well as accessing information on programming from different levels of government is limited.
- Elders play an integral role in community wellbeing by passing on cultural practices, Indigenous knowledges, languages, and healing methods. Intergenerational activities are integral to the future health of a community.
- Municipalities engaging in age-friendly planning need to involve a range of local Indigenous communities, nations, and/or organizations from the very beginning. Municipalities looking for Indigenous input must, however, recognize that Indigenous communities are not just another stakeholder. They must work to build and maintain a Nation-to-Nation relationship based on mutual trust.
- Collective care and responsibility of family members to take care of older Indigenous relatives is seen as a duty, one that many are happy to do, because of strong family bonds of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. However,

families need better funding, technology/access to the internet, and culturally appropriate healthcare, treatments and supports.

- There is a need to recognize the unique histories, languages, cultures, economic realities, and geographic locations of different Indigenous groups. Nearly 50% of Indigenous people live off-reserve, making it vital to address these issues in all communities in Canada.

**Questions to consider**

- Does the government provide funding and policy that enables Indigenous communities and organizations to create their own culturally appropriate programs, and health and social care services?
  - Does your municipality's age-friendly plan include engagement and partnerships with Indigenous communities and groups? Who has the power to make decisions?
  - Are the health and social care providers and community members in your municipality educated about the impacts of colonization, cultural safety, and Indigenous knowledge/traditions?
  - How does your Nation or municipality encourage and support Indigenous intergenerational activities?
  - How do Nations or Indigenous organizations understand the needs of Elders and consult with them?
  - What is your Nation or municipality doing to provide transportation and affordable/accessible housing?
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