

Match Summary

Name of Match: **Shifting the Paradigm – Mental Wellness and Indigenous Knowledge: Transformation, Measurement and Implementation**

Location of Match: British Columbia Ministry of Health / First Nations Health Authority, Musqueam First Nation, Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre, 4000 Musqueam Avenue, Vancouver

1. Brief summary of the outcomes of your match

Participants were appreciative of the opportunity to connect and share ideas and best practices with the goal of contributing to dialogue on how to advocate for shifting approaches to mental health from an illness to wellness perspective. They recognized that the adoption and implementation of wellness-focused models is still a work in progress, and requires partnership across diverse sectors before full scale change can occur. Collaboration should be led by Indigenous leaders who engage with their communities to determine what wellness means in a local context, because Indigenous knowledges are central to the work of describing wellness. Similarly, indicators to measure wellness constructs need to be defined by communities, and work needs to be done by health organizations to support communities in understanding the value that measurement can bring to improving health services and health outcomes. It was acknowledged that there is no one single indicator that can represent wellness, and that measuring varying concepts and dimensions of wellness can contribute to creating a 'bigger picture' of what health means to Indigenous communities. Finally, there was a consensus that Indigenous models of wellness hold value for the development of best practices in mental health across all cultures, and policy makers, practitioners, and advocates should be looking to Indigenous leadership for direction on these models.

2. Resources used in your match

Mental health professionals gathered from organizations across the world, including Australia, New Zealand, England, and the US. The match was a low-tech conversation that used paper notepads, pens, and an easel with chart paper. Two facilitators from the host organizations posed questions to guide the conversation, although the discussion was free-flowing and required little direction. A note taker was present all day to capture themes, key ideas, and resources.

[Healthy Minds, Healthy People: a 10-year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance Use in BC](#)

[A Path Forward: BC First Nations and Aboriginal People's Mental Wellness and Substance Use 10-year Plan](#)

[National indicators program](#)

[Adult Mental Health Indicators \(NHS Scotland\)](#)

[UK Office of National Statistics National Program of Measuring Wellbeing](#)

[Oxfam Humankind Index](#)

[Hope, Help and Healing: A Planning Toolkit for First Nations and Aboriginal Communities to Respond to Suicide](#)

[Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)

[Tihei Mauri Ora](#)

[“A Day in the Life” blog](#)

[Aboriginal Childhood Development index](#)

[Perth Charter](#)

[The Gathering Space](#)

[Towards Flourishing for All](#)

[Health Compass](#)

3. Brief description of how your match has accelerated change towards mental health, well-being and inclusion

Many participants described personal changes and new insights as a result of attending the match discussions. There was great value in learning more about the history of colonization both in Canada and abroad that empowered participants to feel better positioned to be a voice to advocate for change in clinical and systems approaches to mental health. The fact that the match was designed from an Indigenous perspective was acknowledged as an important change in and of itself. This perspective was enabled by the inclusion of Indigenous Elders sharing their knowledge; by healers engaging participants in cultural practices; and through presentations of Indigenous knowledge frameworks. Many felt that IIMHL could use Indigenous knowledge to inform its next matches so that it becomes a cross-cutting theme for all of the discussions, rather than a ‘sideshow’ on the margins.

4. Brief description of how your match has built leadership for the future

It was acknowledged that the match provided participants with opportunities for knowledge, learning, and exchange. One of the ways that ongoing learning will occur is through an online ‘portal’ hosted by the First Nations Health Authority that will contain the resources discussed during the match (the ‘Gathering Space’). The platform will also provide a space for continued virtual collaboration with the ability for partners to upload and share relevant documents related to their own or others’ research and practice. To support continuing professional development, a series of webinars was proposed over the next 18 months to gather and share information. In the interim, participants felt that they had “sowed the seeds of imagination” and felt that energy for change would bring them back to their respective organizations armed with new ideas, practices, and frameworks that could be built upon for future success in shifting the paradigm from mental illness to mental wellness.