

# INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SAFETY:

*An environmental scan of cultural safety initiatives  
in Canada - Chapter 8: Cultural safety initiatives  
in Quebec*




National Collaborating Centre  
for Indigenous Health



Centre de collaboration nationale  
de la santé autochtone

CULTURAL SAFETY AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS





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# INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is on cultural safety initiatives in Quebec that have been identified as part of the wider environmental scan. In keeping with the change model proposed by Greenwood (2019), this includes structural-level actions, such as legislation, tripartite and bi-lateral partnership agreements, as well as policy initiatives aimed at promoting cultural safety, humility, and anti-racism in health service delivery through, for example, advancements in Indigenous self-determination over health care planning, design, and delivery. System-level responses by national Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations with a health mandate are also considered, and include strategic action plans, position statements, professional competencies, and practice standards and guidelines. The final sections provide an overview of cultural safety educational resources and training initiatives developed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and governmental departments.

It is important to remind readers of the methodological limitations that affect findings for Quebec. In particular, all Internet search terms were in English; as such, the environmental scan may not have identified all relevant cultural safety initiatives as French is the primary language used by the Government of Quebec.

A note to the reader: In 2017, the federal government replaced Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) with two new departments, Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, to reflect its commitment to reconciliation.







# LEGISLATION

Government of Quebec

## ***An Act Respecting Health and Social Services, 1995***

In 1995, the Quebec Government passed legislation aimed at maintaining and improving the physical, mental, and social capacity of persons to act in their community in the areas of health and social services (Government of Quebec, 1995). The Act established an organizational structure for health and social services delivery that was designed, among other things, to ensure that services were geographical and linguistically accessible, as well as culturally appropriate, safe, and responsive to the needs of individuals, families, and groups. The Act established the NRBHSS and the CBHSSJB, enabling the provision of culturally appropriate and safe services in those regions.

<https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/S-4.2>





# PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS



## Tripartite<sup>1</sup> partnerships

Government of Canada, Quebec, and Mi'gmaq people

### ***Interim Tripartite Agreement on Mi'gmaq Consultation and Accommodation, 2012***

This tripartite agreement between the federal and provincial governments and the Mi'gmaq people of Quebec sets out a process for the provincial and federal governments to consult with the Mi'gmaq regarding issues related to Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal title, and treaty rights.

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1360079520382/1539610761048>

### ***Niganita'suatas'gl IIsutaqann Agreement, 2008***

This tripartite agreement between the federal and provincial governments and the Mi'gmaq people of Quebec aimed to establish a relationship of reconciliation and coexistence through a tripartite mechanism of jointly discussing and resolving issues of mutual concern. The process involved the creation of two circles. The Circle of Leaders (Gigto'qi Niqan'pugultijig) provides a forum of exchange, reflection, and dialogue to understand respective issues and work out differences, while the Circle of Delegates and Officials (Mgnigng) identifies common issues and interests and develops work plans for addressing those issues.

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1298562489774/1539610282133>

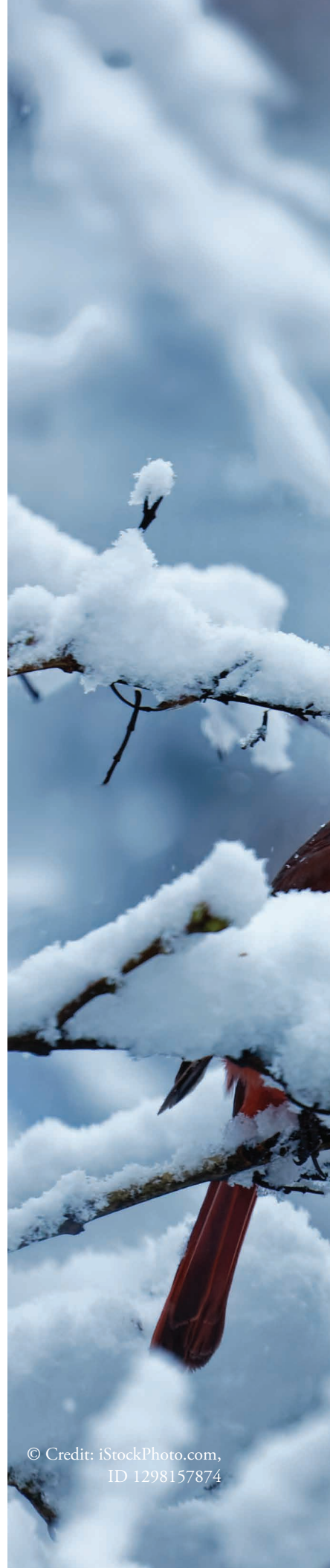
## Bilateral<sup>2</sup> partnerships

None identified.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report, tripartite activities are defined as involving any number of entities from both the federal and provincial/territorial governments plus any number of entities from Indigenous organizations or the health sector.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, bilateral activities are defined as involving any number of entities from either the federal and provincial/territorial governments (but not both), plus any number of entities from Indigenous organizations or the health sector.







# POLICY AND PROGRAM RESPONSES

## Tripartite policy responses

None identified.

## Provincial responses

Commission d'enquête sur les relations entre les Autochtones et certains services publics (Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services),  
Government of Quebec

### ***Public Inquiry Commission on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Quebec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress, Final Report, 2019***

This report presents collated findings from the Public Inquiry with respect to Indigenous Peoples and public services in Quebec, including police, justice, correctional, health and social services, as well as youth protection. The Inquiry involved more than two years of consultation with Indigenous stakeholders and testimonies from 1047 Indigenous individuals and identified 142 Calls to Action to move towards reconciliation within these public services, of which 34 related to health and social services.

- A one-year update on the Government of Quebec's progress on implementing recommendations from the Public Inquiry: <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/public-inquiry-commission-on-relations-between-indigenous-peoples-and-certain-public-services-listening-reconciliation-and-progress-one-year-of-action-877791500.html>



Government of Quebec – Groupe d'action contre le racisme (Action Group against Racism)

***Racism in Québec: Zero Tolerance – Report of the Group d'action contre le racism, 2020***

On June 15, the Government of Quebec struck up the Groupe d'action contre le racisme, giving them the mandate to develop a series of concrete actions that will be effective in combatting racism in the province. This document focuses on the people who are the most vulnerable to racism – visible minorities and Indigenous people – and articulates 25 concrete actions in the broad areas of police discrimination, access to housing, access to employment, anti-racism education, and a government that sets an example.  
[https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/politiques\\_orientations/Groupe\\_action\\_racisme/RA\\_GroupeActionContreRacisme\\_AN.pdf?1607993548](https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/politiques_orientations/Groupe_action_racisme/RA_GroupeActionContreRacisme_AN.pdf?1607993548)

Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones et Direction des communications (Indigenous Affairs Secretariat and Communications Branch)

***Do More, Do Better: Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit, 2017-2022***

Developed through extensive consultations with Indigenous stakeholders, this document expressed the Government of Quebec's commitment to Indigenous Nations and reconciliation. It articulated measures that the Government intended to implement in the areas of language, culture, health and social services, education, employment, housing, justice, security, research, gender equality, youth and citizen involvement.  
<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3532553>

Health system responses

Government of Quebec, Centres intégrés de santé et de services sociaux (Integrated Health and Social Services Centres) (CISSS) and Centres intégrés universitaires de santé et de services sociaux (Integrated University Health and Social Services Centres) (CIUSSS)

***\$15 Million Investment towards Creating Cultural Security for Indigenous Peoples Accessing the Health Care System, November 2020***

A month after the widespread outrage over the racist treatment of Joyce Echaquan in a Quebec hospital, the Government of Quebec announced on November 6, 2020 that it would be allocating \$15 million for a program that aims to improve the quality of health care services for Indigenous people living in Quebec by funding initiatives that fight Indigenous racism and discrimination in the province (ministre responsable des Affaires autochtones, 2020). The five-year program aims to implement targeted actions to enhance cultural safety for First Nations and Inuit in the health and social services sector. It includes cultural safety training for management and workers in the health services sector, the addition of liaison officers within institutions to facilitate relations with Indigenous communities and organizations, and the allocation of funds to hire Indigenous navigators, recruited in partnership with First Nations organizations, who can help guide Indigenous Peoples through Quebec's healthcare system.



Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS)

***An Integrated Vision of Cultural Safety for the Nunavik Health and Social Services Network, November 2018***

This document presents the NRBHSS's submission to the Public Inquiry Commission on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Quebec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress. The brief presents the NRBHSS's integrated vision and steps taken towards achieving cultural safety in Nunavik health and social services.

[https://nrbhss.ca/sites/default/files/documentations/corporatives/memoire\\_rrssn\\_cerp\\_final\\_en.pdf](https://nrbhss.ca/sites/default/files/documentations/corporatives/memoire_rrssn_cerp_final_en.pdf)

Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) and Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB)

***Culturally Adapted, Quality Care and Services for Inuit and Cree Patients with Cancer from Northern Québec, 2014-2017***

Funded by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC), this project aimed to improve the quality and cultural relevance of health care and health services for First Nations and Inuit patients with cancer living in northern Quebec. The project resulted in the creation of region-specific information booklets about local services, tools to aide decision-making about care through the cancer journey, the enhancement of a cultural competency training program for healthcare providers in Nunavik, and the development of a preliminary cancer control strategy for the region's Inuit population (CPAC, n.d.).

Lanaudière Regional Health Authority

***Creation of new Indigenous Liaison positions***

On February 25, 2021, the Lanaudière Health Authority announced it would be hiring two members of the Atikamekw community to act as patient liaisons to improve relations with Indigenous people. They also announced that they would be hiring an assistant to the CEO responsible for Indigenous relations and an assistant commissioner responsible for complaints and service quality regarding Indigenous communities (Plante, 2021).









# ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES



## Professional organization and regulatory body responses

None identified.

## Indigenous organizational responses

Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL)

### ***AFNQL Action plan on racism and discrimination, 2020***

Based on engagement with First Nations and non-Indigenous residents of Quebec, this action plan identifies measures and indicators for ending racism and discrimination in the province (AFNQL, 2020).

### ***Engagement with non-Indigenous Quebecers and First Nations about Racism and Discrimination, 2019***

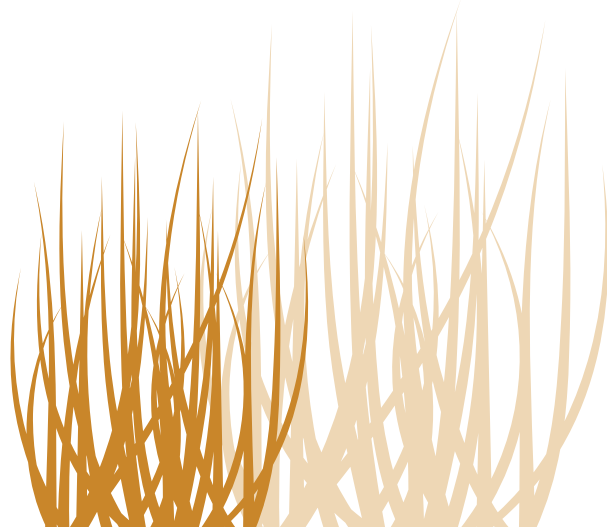
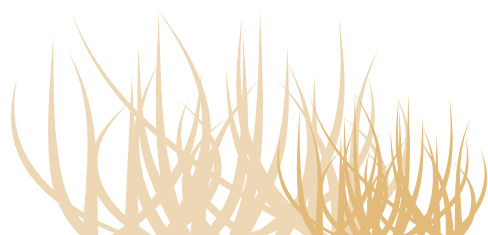
The AFNQL conducted an online survey of non-Quebecers about their opinion of First Nations in Quebec to gather perceptions about First Nations, racism, and discrimination, and engaged with First Nations to identify actions to promote reconciliation and end racism and discrimination. The results of this engagement informed the development of an action plan (AFNQL, 2020).

Conseil des Atikamekw de Manawan (Council of the Atikamekw of Manawan) (CDAM) and Council of the Atikamekw Nation (CAN)

### ***Joyce's Principle, 2020***

Following the death of Joyce Echaquan, a 37-year-old Atikamekw woman who experienced racism in a Joliette hospital, the CDAM and CAN submitted a brief to the Office of the Premier of Quebec and the Prime Minister of Canada calling for both governments to unequivocally adopt “Joyce’s Principle” to assert the rights of Indigenous people in Quebec and Canada relative to health and social services. The principle seeks to guarantee “a right of equitable access, without any discrimination, to all health and social services.” It calls for governments to commit to taking a set of actions to create health and social services systems that are safe and free from discrimination for Indigenous people. The Government of Quebec rejected the principle because it called for recognition of systemic racism.

[https://principedejoyce.com/sn\\_uploads/principe/Joyce\\_s\\_Principle\\_brief\\_\\_\\_Eng.pdf](https://principedejoyce.com/sn_uploads/principe/Joyce_s_Principle_brief___Eng.pdf)







First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)

***Public Health for First Nations in Quebec: Shared Responsibility Concerted Action, 2018***

This report presented the main findings and recommendations from the FNQLHSSC's work to analyze how public health services in First Nations communities in Quebec are offered and organized. The report discussed the unique situations and challenges that arise due to the shared federal and provincial government responsibilities over the organization of health and social services in First Nations communities and called for an integrated and coordinated approach to improving the health and well-being of First Nations in Quebec.

<https://files.cssspnql.com/index.php/s/Cfw7hRGpcod2LWI>

***Quebec First Nations Health and Social Services Blueprint 2007-2017***

Developed in close collaboration with First Nations communities and in consultation with recognized health and social services experts, this document provided a 10-year blueprint for addressing gaps in health status between First Nations and non-First Nations living in Quebec and Labrador and accelerating structural change in health and social services provision (FNQLHSSC, 2007). The blueprint adopted a holistic approach, grounded in First Nations community and cultural values, and acknowledged First Nations self-determination in defining and implementing health and social services that meet their unique community needs and contexts.

- Condensed version: <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2482216>



Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (Quebec Native Friendship Centres Association)

### ***Needs Assessment of Indigenous People in Gatineau, 2017***

This report presents findings from the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec's needs assessment of urban Indigenous people living in Gatineau. The study highlighted the need for safe spaces and culturally safe services for this population, who often accessed culturally adapted services in English in Ontario.

[https://www.rcaa.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/valuation-des-besoins-de-Gatineau\\_2017\\_EN.pdf](https://www.rcaa.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/valuation-des-besoins-de-Gatineau_2017_EN.pdf)

Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre

### ***Social Innovation and Institutional Transformation: The Minowé Clinic at the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre, 2020***

Developed by the ODENA Research Alliance, a joint initiative involving representatives of Indigenous civil society and academic researchers engaged in a process of knowledge co-creation with the goal of improving quality of life of urban Indigenous people living in Quebec, this document outlines the institutional history of the Minowé clinic. It was created in 2009 by the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre to transform health and social services delivery to Indigenous people living in Val-d'Or.

<https://reseaudialog.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CahierODENA-2020-01-MinoweClinic.pdf>

### **Mainstream (non-Indigenous) organizational responses**

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, Concordia University, Rising Sun Daycare and the Clinique jeunesse du Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal Montreal (West Island Integrated University Health and Social Services Centre Youth Clinic)

### ***One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Child Welfare Services for Indigenous Clientele Living in Montreal – Final Report, 2019***

Stemming from a collaboration between two service providers working to improve child welfare services for Indigenous children and families in Montreal, this report presented findings from an action research project that sought to determine the proportion of families served by the organization, the tools that workers needed to provide better services, and barriers to providing culturally appropriate services.

[https://www.aptnnews.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/One-step-forward-two-steps-back\\_FINAL-REPORT-2019.pdf](https://www.aptnnews.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/One-step-forward-two-steps-back_FINAL-REPORT-2019.pdf)





# EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND TRAINING INITIATIVES



## Provincial government educational resources and training initiatives

None identified.

## Health system educational resources and training initiatives

None identified.

## Professional organization and regulatory body educational resources and training initiatives

None identified.

## Indigenous-developed educational resources and training initiatives

Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec (Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission) et Institut Tshakapesh (Tshakapesh Institute)

### ***Aboriginal Peoples: Fact and Fiction, 3rd edition, 2019***

This document responds to the UNDRIP and the movement towards reconciliation by seeking to dispel myths and overcome negative perceptions about Indigenous Peoples by enhancing understanding about the history of Indigenous Peoples with colonization and its impacts on health and well-being.

**<https://www.cdpedj.qc.ca/storage/app/media/publications/AboriginalPeoples.pdf>**



First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)

***Cancer Info-Kit for First Nations of Quebec: For Caregivers Working with First Nations Populations, n.d.***

This toolkit provides information for caregivers working with First Nations people living with cancer in Quebec about the continuum of services, symptoms of the disease, cancer screening, diagnosis and follow up, the most common types of cancers among First Nations and Inuit of Quebec, the current picture of cancer in Quebec, and the connection between nutrition and cancer.

<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2489666?docref=gNEwHkaP7Hvie1cUz1fB8w>

Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network

***Indigenous Ally Toolkit, n.d.***

This toolkit provides tips for workplaces and organizations to practice good allyship.

<https://reseaumtlnetwork.com/en/publication/ally-toolkit>

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, Concordia University, Rising Sun Daycare and the Clinique jeunesse du Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

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[https://www.aptnnews.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/One-step-forward-two-steps-back\\_FINAL-REPORT-2019.pdf](https://www.aptnnews.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/One-step-forward-two-steps-back_FINAL-REPORT-2019.pdf)

Other educational resources and training initiatives

None identified.





# SUMMARY



Quebec's provincial health system promotes the integration of health and social services. This integration is reflected throughout the province through the establishment of health and social service centres that have responsibility for providing "safe, continuous and accessible quality health or social services which respect the rights and spiritual needs of individuals." (An Act respecting health and social services for the Inuit and Naskapi, 1991, chap. 2). First Nations and Inuit living in the James Bay region have had such integrated models of health and social services delivery since 1995. These models – the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay – enable First Nations and Inuit, respectively, to exercise a high degree of self-determination in matters relating to health and social services. In addition to having First Nations and Inuit perspectives incorporated into service delivery through these integrated models, two tripartite agreements provide frameworks for incorporating Mi'gmaq perspectives into planning and decision-making on matters that affect their health and well-being.

Most of the cultural safety initiatives at the provincial government level, identified in the Internet search, focused on broad strategies that aim to address reconciliation and anti-Indigenous racism across public services collectively. This includes a Public Inquiry on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services (hereafter referred to as 'Public Inquiry'), which recommended embedding cultural safety into service provision as one of its 34 health-related Calls to Action for moving towards reconciliation; progress evaluations on meeting commitments made in relation to the Public Inquiry; an action

plan to address racism in the province (Groupe d'action contre le racisme, 2020); and the release of the *Do More, Do Better Action Plan* to advance reconciliation (Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones et Direction des communications, 2017). Additionally, the provincial government responded to widespread outrage over the racist treatment of Joyce Echaquan, an Atikamekw woman who experienced racist treatment in a Joliette hospital, by announcing a five-year, \$15-million investment to improve the quality of health care services for Indigenous people in the province (Blais, 2020). Despite these initiatives, the Quebec Government has so far resisted pressure to recognize the existence of systemic racism since Joyce Echaquan's death, which may pose a potential barrier to developing and implementing cultural safety and humility in the health system.

Only a few cultural safety related initiatives were identified at the regional health-system level. These included a submission by the NRBHSS (2018) to the "Public Inquiry," which presented their vision of achieving cultural safety in Nunavik; and a February 2021 announcement of new positions being created at the Joliette Hospital to improve Indigenous patients' experiences.

Much of the work to advance cultural safety in the province is being driven by Indigenous organizations. This includes the development of Joyce's Principle, which is a response to the racist treatment experienced by Joyce Echaquan. Advocates of Joyce's Principle are calling for equitable access to health and social services, without discrimination, for First Nations individuals in the province (CAM and CAN, 2020), but it has so far been rejected by the Quebec government. Work to support First Nations priorities related to health

and social services has also been conducted by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC), established by the Chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) in 1994, and the AFNQL. In 2007, the FNQLHSSC (2007) developed and implemented a 10-year strategy to transform health and social services provision for First Nations. In 2018, they also undertook a project to analyze how public health services in First Nations communities were organized and offered in the province, concluding that an integrated and coordinated approach was needed to address the challenges of jurisdictional fragmentation of health services delivery (FNQLHSSC, 2018). The AFNQL suggested recommendations to improve the relationship between the provincial government and First Nations in the wake of the Public Inquiry (AFNQL, 2018) and developed an action plan to address racism and discrimination (AFNQL, 2020).

At a more local level, several Indigenous-led initiatives were undertaken to improve service delivery for urban Indigenous populations in the province. This included a study which engaged urban Indigenous people in Gatineau to identify health services needs and priorities (Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec, 2017); a project that aimed to improve the quality of cancer care services for northern Inuit and Cree patients (CPAC, n.d.); and the implementation of an innovative Indigenous-led model of service delivery (Minowé Clinic) by the Val'd'Or Native Friendship Centre. Several Indigenous organizations also developed tools to assist service providers in providing culturally safe services, including a toolkit for caregivers working with First Nations individuals living with cancer (FNQLHSSC, n.d.), a resource

that seeks to enhance understanding of Indigenous Peoples (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec and Institut Tshakapesh, 2019), and an Indigenous Ally Toolkit (Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network, n.d.).

The Internet search revealed no cultural safety related initiatives undertaken by professional health organizations and regulatory bodies in the province, though this may reflect the English language limitation of the search. The search also identified only one initiative by a non-Indigenous organization with a health mandate – a report produced in partnership with an Indigenous organization, which aimed to identify barriers and facilitators to providing culturally appropriate child welfare services in Montreal.





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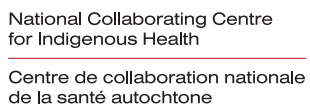
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