



Podcast - Hearing the stories of our health: Perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth - Jackson Cameron

Description

The NCCIH undertook a national digital storytelling project, *Hearing the stories of our health: Perspectives of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth* to better understand what health and well-being mean to Indigenous young people. Nine of the digital storytellers participated in this podcast series where they could further reflect on their lives, their communities, and what health really means to them in a world that often forgets to ask them.

Bios

Victoria Grisdale



I am Victoria Grisdale, I am an Anishinaabe woman from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and Filipino. I am 24 and attending the University of Winnipeg studying Human Rights. I have been working and advocating for First Nations youth since I was 19 in multiple roles, from working in a youth shelter to working in youth housing in First Nations government. I am passionate about making real positive changes for First Nations youth and amplifying other youth voices on issues important to us.

Jackson Cameron

I'm Jackson Cameron. I'm sixteen years old and I'm from Yekooche First Nation (BC). My goals are to help create more opportunities for myself by working hard and to play hockey.



Transcript

-Music-

Victoria Grisdale: Welcome to *Hearing the stories of our health: Perspectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth*, a podcast series produced by the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health, in partnership with Birchbark Collaborative.

My name is Victoria Grisdale, and I am the host of this podcast. From May to July of 2025, 13 Indigenous youth came together in Winnipeg, Prince George, and Ottawa to develop digital stories on what health means to them.

This podcast isn't a polished studio production; it's real talk. It's about Indigenous youth reflecting on their lives, their communities, and what health really means to them in a world that often forgets to ask them.

In this episode, First Nations youth, Jackson Cameron, speaks about the realities of being a youth living on reserve and his dream to inspire other First Nations youth.

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Victoria Grisdale: First, can you introduce yourself, including your name, community, and age?

Jackson Cameron: I'm Jackson Cameron. I'm 16 years old and I'm from Yekooche First Nation.

Victoria Grisdale: And can you tell me about any future goals you have?

Jackson Cameron: So, first, I will try to get more opportunities or I'll create more opportunities for myself and hopefully play hockey this year. I think that's my goal I'm just trying to hit. I'll write it down and I was just trying to see what I could accomplish. And I know I could accomplish this because I don't give up on anything.

Yeah, I think my goal is trying to get more opportunities for myself. I'll work for it and hopefully I get it.

Victoria Grisdale: And if you could describe what your digital story is about, what would you say?



Jackson Cameron: Just teaching the younger generation how life will go because it's going to be hard every single time. You can hit some bumps when you're growing up, but I think life will hit you right in the face every day.

So, I think my story is about that, trying to teach the younger generation [that] it's going to be hard when you grow up. I think everybody goes through stuff. So, I think our younger people should understand how that goes.

Victoria Grisdale: It's a really great story about determination and continuing on, right?

Jackson Cameron: Yeah, for sure.

Victoria Grisdale: And so, what is important to you about health as an Indigenous youth?

Jackson Cameron: I think if you're down, as a man or a woman, just talk to your friends, you know, just talk to your close friends. And mental health: you should focus on that as well. Focus on yourself and eat good. Physical: go to the gym and all that. So, I think that's the main thing about health.

Victoria Grisdale: And did the workshop impact the way that you think about health?

Jackson Cameron: Yes.

Victoria Grisdale: Yeah? And what did it do?

Jackson Cameron: It just made me realize how people think, how they feel. And I just thought about that, a lot of people go through a lot. So, I think that's kind of new to me.

Victoria Grisdale: And how was the workshop experience for you?

Jackson Cameron: It's pretty good, I liked it.

Victoria Grisdale: You enjoyed it?

Jackson Cameron: Yeah, for sure, I enjoyed it. It was cool just learning new things every day.

Victoria Grisdale: Were there any particular skills that you were excited to learn?

Jackson Cameron: I got to say, just creating a video. I think that taught me a lot because I never did this – I did, but back then, but I just stopped doing it. So, I'm trying to get back into it. So, this is a great program for this. I learned a lot, yeah.



Victoria Grisdale: I'm glad. How do you think your view of health is shaped by the community you grew up in?

Jackson Cameron: I would say – how did it impact me in life? I think young kids go through a lot in their days, like going through trauma and that. And I think that made some people – they just don't even talk and don't even do things that much anymore. I am the only one out of – oh, well, I don't think anyone could do this. I think they could do this, what I'm doing. But right now, what I'm doing, I'm trying to make more opportunities for myself, what I said, and keep me going and trying to impact the world.

Victoria Grisdale: Do you have any other thoughts about health that you wanted to share, or specific problems that you think Indigenous youth are dealing with?

Jackson Cameron: You know, it's a good question. I think drugs, alcohol. I think most of the rezzes, maybe in Canada, deals with that a lot. Or maybe every rez. I think there's young kids out there trying to, let's say, be cool, I see that. I think this generation is – it's not going good – 14, 12-year-olds, hitting the vapes, and over time that's going to kill your lungs and all that. But yeah, I do see a lot of bad things in the rez and I think people know about it, but they don't do anything about it – sometimes they don't. So yeah, I see a lot in the rez and in some different rezzes as well.

It's just sad how people do smoke and drugs and all that. And it's kind of brings, let's say, your mom down, your mom and dad down, to see how you became. Like, they didn't really think you became this way, you know? I think there's a lot of problems in the rez right now. I say how to fix it is trying to put a guard up – if someone brings in alcohol or drugs, they take it from them. We did that in the rez, it went pretty good. I think people should do that or the Chiefs now should try to think about that, but they got a lot of things on their hands as well.

Victoria Grisdale: I mean, I also think a lot of those problems, when it comes to substance use, also are rooted back in generational trauma that our people have dealt with. And so, I think there also needs to be not just creating or making every reserve a dry reserve, but also providing resources for people to actually cope with that trauma in a different way, right? Because that's why most people turn to substances.

Jackson Cameron: Yeah, just trying to go away from the pain. But it's always going to follow you. If you don't change that as a woman or a man, then you start realizing you're just wasting years from a young age. And then those are your good years – try to embrace it, try to just enjoy the journey while you're young because you won't get this.

Victoria Grisdale: Yeah.



Jackson Cameron: So, I think young men and young women should understand how life goes. But people could change, and that's a big thing.

Victoria Grisdale: It's just about having the resources.

Jackson Cameron: Yeah, I think changing for yourself and trying to be a better person, trying to be a better man or woman, will impact you in a lot of great ways.

Victoria Grisdale: Did you have anything else you wanted to say about health or the project, or any final comments about anything?

Jackson Cameron: I just want to thank you guys for inviting me. And Carrier Sekani as well, I want to thank them and you guys. So, I just want to say thank you for this grateful opportunity. This is a big one for most kids, if they have it. So, I'm very grateful for this opportunity, and hopefully I get some more.

Victoria Grisdale: Okay, well, we've loved having you part of the project and getting to talk with you and know you, so thank you for being here, and sharing your own story with us and all of this information. You're a very bright young man and I can't wait to see what you do in the future. I think you have a very bright future ahead of you, and a lot of goals about helping your community and setting an example for other youth. And I think that's really amazing, and I can't wait to see what you do in the future.

Jackson Cameron: It is for sure.

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Victoria Grisdale: To hear more podcasts in this series, head to the *Hearing the stories of our health: Perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth* on the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health website, nccih.ca. Music on this podcast by DJ Taj Rashid, is licensed and royalty free under Final Cut Pro software, used as part of this project. Finally, a special thanks to the TD Bank Group for generously supporting this project.

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