



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

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.

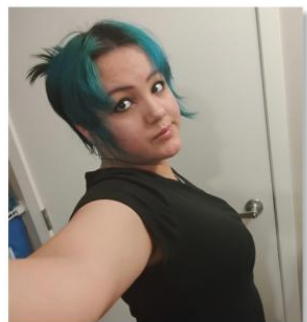
Bios

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.

Jesse Macdonald



My name is Jesse Macdonald. My dad was from Tachie and my mom is from Clay Lake (BC). I was born in Prince George and I am sixteen years old. I'm not sure yet what I'd like to do but I've been looking into going to a cosmetology school in Vancouver.



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, Jesse Macdonald, speaks about the impact art has on her and her family, and the importance of having a creative outlet.

-Music-

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

Jesse Macdonald: My name's Jesse Macdonald. My dad was from Tache and my mom's from Tl'heidli T'enneh, and I was born in Prince George. And I'm 16 years old.

Victoria Grisdale: Can you tell me about your future goals?

Jesse Macdonald: I'm not exactly sure what I want to do yet, but I've been looking into going to a cosmetology school in Vancouver.

Victoria Grisdale: That's great. And you're an artist, right?

Jesse Macdonald: Yeah.

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

Jesse Macdonald: It's about my journey with art and how it's helped me heal over the years.



Victoria Grisdale: Art is an amazing thing. I'm also an artist, so I could yap about it forever.

What is important to you about health as an Indigenous youth?

Jesse Macdonald: I guess, keeping healthy relationships with friends and family. And I mean, taking breaks for yourself, taking time to get to know yourself. I feel like that's really important.

Victoria Grisdale: Yeah. And can you tell me how your art is a part of health?

Jesse Macdonald: I like to – when I'm upset or when I feel like there's something that needs to change, I like to turn to art to help me with that. I'll put on some makeup, or I'll style my hair differently, which I actually did just change up the style again. Or I'll draw something to express how I'm feeling.

Victoria Grisdale: As a fellow coloured hair person, I totally get it. And did the workshop impact the way that you think about health?

Jesse Macdonald: It kind of did because when you were at first asking the questions about it, everyone was just saying, “Oh yeah, health is just exercising, eating healthy,” and I'm like, “But that's not what I do to be healthy. That's not how I view being healthy.” So, I tried to think about it deeper, and I came up with, well, art.

Victoria Grisdale: And if you did another digital story about health, would there be anything else you'd want to say or anything you'd want to add?

Jesse Macdonald: I'd probably talk just a little bit more in depth about my experiences and just how I went from being a super depressed kid to a little bit more stable teenager.

Victoria Grisdale: And is there anything you'd like to share with other youth who watch your video?

Jesse Macdonald: I guess if you want to start art, even if you think it's bad at where you are at right now, the more you practice and the more you love your art, the more you love what you do, the better you'll get at it. Because trust me, at first, I did not like my art.

Victoria Grisdale: Do you want to maybe talk to me a bit more about the way art has impacted your life and been just a positive thing?

Jesse Macdonald: It's always been something that my siblings and my family have shared between us because all of my siblings and I, we are all artists in our own ways. Whether we produce music or we draw, it's always connected us. Sometimes we'll just all get together at the kitchen table and we'll



draw together. We'll be like, "Hey, look at this" and we'll be like, "Oh, wow, that's cool." That's another way that's helped me.

Victoria Grisdale: It's good to have that as a bond that you guys share.

So, thank you, Jesse, for joining me today on this podcast. It was lovely to speak with you. I think you are a great, brilliant young artist and I cannot wait to see where the future takes you. So, thank you so much for being here with us today.

-Music-

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.

The National Collaborating Centre for
Indigenous Health (NCCIH)
3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C.
V2N 4Z9 Canada

Tel: (250) 960-5250
Email: nccih@unbc.ca
Web: nccih.ca

Le Centre de collaboration nationale de la santé
autochtone (CCNSA)
3333 University Way
Prince George (C. - B.)
V2N 4Z9 Canada

Tél : 250 960-5250
Courriel : ccnsa@unbc.ca
Site web : ccnsa.ca

© 2025 National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH) and Birchbark Collaborative. This publication was funded by the NCCIH and made possible through a financial contribution from the TD Bank Group and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the TD Bank Group or PHAC.



National Collaborating Centre
for Indigenous Health



birchbark
collaborative



TD READY
COMMITMENT