



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

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.

Miley Melnyk

My name is Miley Melnyk, I am Anishinaabe from Sagkeeng First Nation (MB). My video is about friendships and personal connections because it's an important part of Indigenous health. I plan to graduate from high school in 2027 and to work towards a career in nursing.



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, Miley Melnyk, speaks about how this project got her thinking about the deeper meaning of what health is. Miley speaks of her goals towards a medical career and what that means to her as a First Nations youth.

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Victoria Grisdale: So first, I'm going to ask you to introduce yourself, including your name, community, and age.

Miley Melnyk: My name is Miley. I'm 16 years old. My family's from Sagkeeng First Nation but I grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Victoria Grisdale: Okay, thank you for being here with us today. First, I want to ask about what your future goals are?

Miley Melnyk: Honestly, I kind of want to go into health care. I want to be a nurse. I was thinking surgery. I used to want to be a surgeon, but I don't know if I want to go through all that school. But I definitely want to be somewhere in that area, like nursing.

Victoria Grisdale: I mean, you want to go into a medical career, right? And as an Indigenous person, how do you think that's going to impact you in the future, working in that career?



Miley Melnyk: When I'm in hospitals, even when I go to my practicums and stuff, I don't see a lot of Indigenous doctors and nurses around there. Actually, I kind of noticed that, and I don't know, I just found that interesting.

But I remember this one time I broke my thumb. I was in the ER until 1 am. And there was this guy, this Indigenous man, I think, and he was asking for help. He didn't seem drunk, he didn't seem high or anything, but they were kind of not really listening to him. He was, I don't know [...] I don't think they really believed him when he was talking about his pain, and that made me feel off, I guess.

Victoria Grisdale: Did that make you just want to be somebody that can help create a change for that, so people aren't treated like that?

Miley Melnyk: When I grow up, I want to become a doctor, and I don't want to treat my people like that. I don't – I want to make sure they all get help even if, yeah.

Victoria Grisdale: Yeah, it's important to be able to treat everybody with dignity and respect.

Miley Melnyk: Yeah, everybody deserves that.

Victoria Grisdale: Did the workshop impact the way that you think about health at all?

Miley Melnyk: Honestly, I never thought about it. When I think of health, I kind of think of the hospital side [...] and when you guys were, when we're having that conversation and what does health mean, and everybody was talking about mental health, I kind of forgot that was a part of it.

Victoria Grisdale: Yeah, health includes everything.

Miley Melnyk: Yeah so, many different things. And just made me think, the conversations we had, it made me think a little bit deeper about what health is and I really like that.

Victoria Grisdale: Yeah, that's great. And so, how was the workshop experience for you?

Miley Melnyk: I think it was a really good experience. Even though we were in that little basement, there was lots of food and I feel like everybody was so nice. And I was kind of shy at first, but everybody was so welcoming. I think it was a really good experience. And I just felt comfortable to do whatever on my video and share it.

Victoria Grisdale: Was it cool getting to see it on the big screen?



Miley Melnyk: Yeah, it was. Even though I go to school, it was cool to see my own stuff on the screen.

Victoria Grisdale: Was there anything, in particular, about the workshop, any skills that you were excited to learn about or that you're glad that you learned about?

Miley Melnyk: I thought it was really cool using the microphones and being able to listen to my voice in the headphones. I don't know, I just thought all the equipment was so cool.

Victoria Grisdale: Yeah, getting to feel professional through all the editing.

Miley Melnyk: And getting to do it by myself too.

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

Miley Melnyk: There's a couple. There was one – I wanted to do about forgiveness and how forgiveness is healing and it lifts you up. If you forgive someone – it's like a burden and weighs you down, but then when you forgive someone, and that's just good for your health too.

Victoria Grisdale: Your video focuses on the importance of community and friendship. How is that related to health?

Miley Melnyk: Having my friends was always my escape and they always just made me feel so happy. I just like having that good community around me. Just having a connection with someone, it can make you feel so much happier. You have good friends – toxic friends is not healthy, but a good community that you feel comfortable in, that you can feel like you can talk to, I think that's really good for you and that's an important part of health people sometimes don't talk about.

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

Miley Melnyk: Make sure you have a good community, good friends to surround yourself with. Even one good friend can go a long way, help you out a lot. Someone to talk to is always nice.

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

Miley Melnyk: My story was about how important my friends are in my life. I have a couple super close friends that I'm super grateful for and they're all kind of leaving me, and it's really sad. But, I was just talking about how grateful I am for them, for the community that I have and the connections that



we have in our memories. And I think it's important that everybody should have that, and everybody deserves that.

Victoria Grisdale: I think that's, for the most part, most of the questions we have about health.

Was there any final thoughts that you had about health or the workshop and how that experience was for you?

Miley Melnyk: The food was really good. Honestly, I had literally nobody to talk to about this because, I don't know. And I feel like it was good to get my thoughts out and express how I was feeling. And I just thought it was nice. Yeah, I think it was a good experience.

Victoria Grisdale: Yes. Thank you so much for joining us, Miley. I cannot wait to see what you do in the future, and good luck on your career path. We definitely need more Indigenous faces in medical careers, and I think you would be amazing at that. Okay, and it was great getting to know you in this workshop, and thank you so much for sharing your story with us in the digital workshop and on this podcast as well.

Miley Melnyk: Thank you.

-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.

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