



Indigenous Wellbeing Gathering Conference

Threads of Connection:
Weaving Community, Culture, and Knowledge

October 23-25, 2025

ABOUT THE COLLECTIVE

Urban Indigenous Wellbeing Collective

The Urban Indigenous Wellbeing Collective (UIWC) is a research, training, and mentorship community made up of Indigenous and settler researchers, staff, students, and an Elder Advisor. Formed in 2021, the UIWC is dedicated to working alongside Indigenous communities in anticolonial, antiracist, and anti-oppressive ways that acknowledge and honour Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing and doing. The work of our Collective is primarily centred on working alongside urban Indigenous Peoples on community-identified wellbeing priorities, and fostering meaningful collaborations between Indigenous community members, researchers, students, and wellbeing practitioners.

Indigenous Wellbeing Gathering Conference

The Indigenous Wellbeing Gathering Conference aims to centre Indigenous voices, Knowledge Systems, and cultural practices. As Indigenous Peoples, we understand that wellbeing includes spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects of health, as well as broader determinants including land, language, community connectedness, cultural resurgence, and self-determination. This two-day event brings together Elders, youth, researchers, wellbeing practitioners, students, and community partners to build relationships, engage in knowledge exchange, and to positively impact the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Nations.

To find out more about the Collective and our work, scan the QR code or visit our website: www.urbanindigenouswellbeing.com. **Sign up for our newsletter** to stay in touch and for future opportunities. Find us on Social Media and **tag us** here:



@urbanindigenouswellbeing



Urban Indigenous Wellbeing Collective



The Urban Indigenous Wellbeing Collective acknowledges that it works and gathers on the unceded, ancestral, and Traditional Territory of the Syilx Okanagan People.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENT

- This space is for everyone. Treat one another with kindness, respect, and honesty.
- Prioritize your own wellbeing. Feel free to take breaks whenever necessary, stand up, stretch, move around, ask questions and engage with the conference activities at a pace that suits you.
- Should you feel activated or triggered by any of the important topics we are exploring, we invite you to step away for as long as you need and return when you are feeling well. We have a **counselor** on-site for your support. You are also able to access the **Community Care Room** if needed.
- Smudging will be available throughout the conference in designated spaces.
- Be mindful of the **RED wristbands** for photo-release consent. RED means they do not consent to their photo being taken.
- Confidentiality and consent - please ask before taking or posting photos on social media, or before sharing personal stories beyond this gathering. Additionally, be mindful of the **BLUE wristbands** for physical distancing preferences. BLUE means they prefer to keep their distance.

GUEST BIOGRAPHIES

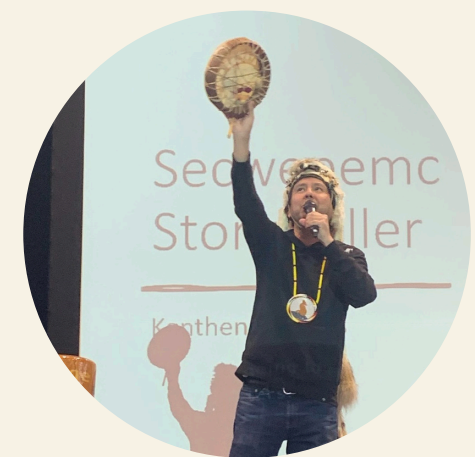
Cara Basil, She/Her, Facilitator

Cara Basil is a Secwépemc Planner and Facilitator from Stuxwtéws. For the past decade, Cara has been immersed in serving First Nations in areas of education, health, planning and previously was an elected Councillor for Bonaparte. Cara holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from UBC. You will often find Cara facilitating gatherings, forums, various meetings, strategic planning sessions and workshops focused on health governance, Indigenous health, community and Nation-based work.



Kenthen Thomas, He/Him, Qelmucw

Kenthen Thomas is Secwépemc with roots in the Syilx nation. He is a storyteller born in Kamloops and raised in Salmon Arm, BC. With both a degree in education and teachings from Secwépemc Elders and ancestors, Kenthen draws on both his Western education and Secwépemc teachings. He travels across Western Canada - and as far as New Zealand and Australia - sharing the traditional stories of the Secwépemc nation. Kenthen encourages learners to balance modern life with ancestral teachings, seeing himself as not a knowledge keeper, but a knowledge sharer whose words belong to future generations.



Tabitha Robin, She/Her, Plenary Speaker

Tabitha Robin is a mixed ancestry Métis and Cree (St. Peter's) researcher, educator, and writer. She is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at the University of British Columbia. She spends much of her time learning about traditional Cree food practices.



GUEST BIOGRAPHIES

Nicole Big Sorrell Horse, She/Her, Counsellor

Nicole Big Sorrell Horse is a registered social worker from the Blood and St'at'imc Nations and a member of Xaxl'ip First Nation. She holds a Master of Social Work from UBC Okanagan and has over 16 years of experience in health and Indigenous non-profit organizations. Based on Syilx territory, Nicole offers holistic, culturally grounded counselling, with a focus on trauma therapy and land-based healing. She practices Self-Regulation Therapy (SRT) and Motivational Interviewing, and works with Interior Health as a clinician registered through FNHA.



Elders Wilfred (Grouse) Barnes, He/Him and Pamela Barnes, She/Her, Opening & Closing Prayer

Wilfred (Grouse) Barnes, is a syilx knowledge keeper and member of Westbank First Nation. As one of the few fluent nsyilxcn speakers, he is dedicated to preserving and revitalizing the language. Pamela Barnes is a syilx educator/knowledge keeper and member of Westbank First Nation. In true syilx tradition, she strives to educate and mentor the next generations in all the work she does.



Pala Kovacs, She/Her, Photographer

Pala, of Pala's Photos & Kickassery, is a portrait & branding photographer from the Líl'wat Nation. With over 1,000 albums delivered to clients across the globe, she brings her sharp eye for special moments to every occasion.



URBAN INDIGENOUS WELLBEING COLLECTIVE

MEMBERS



Gabrielle Legault
(Lead)



Shawn Wilson



Alanaise Ferguson



Peter Hutchinson



Sarah de Leeuw



Tania Willard



Bill McKenna



Skye Barbic



Karlyn Olsen



Mimi Mutahi



Lily Packo



Denica Bleau



Lindsay DuPré



Dante Carter



Geraldine Manossa



Noah Chenoweth

We also want to welcome three new Collective members joining this Fall:
Sandra Fox, Nicole Halbauer, and Mathew Fleury.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Since January 2025, the CAC has played a vital role in guiding the vision and planning of the 2025 conference. Their collaboration strengthens our commitment to creating a conference that is community-drive and culturally grounded.



Bill McKenna



Nikki McCrimmon



Lena Mitchell



Casey Hewes



Laura McNab-Coombs

We also acknowledge former CAC members - Annette Loe, Christian Isbister, Kelly Fosbery, and Saige Werstuik - whose contributions over the past year helped shape our 2025 conference.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Anona Kampe, She/Her, Opening Ceremony

WFN Councillor Andrea Alexander, She/Her, Territorial Welcome

Randi Robins, She/Her, Beading Facilitator

Leon Louis, He/Him, Land-Based Activity Facilitator

Rose Caldwell, She/Her, Elder Witness

Kathy Michel, She/Her, Elder Witness

Lena Mitchell, She/Her, Youth Witness

Lythias Jack, He/Him, Youth Witness

OCTOBER 23, 2025

OPENING CEREMONY

GRAND RESERVE

Light snacks and drinks will be provided.

FROM 5:30PM

Registration

Hotel Lobby

6:00PM

Opening Prayer and Welcome

Elder Grouse Barnes

6:15PM

Okanagan Song and Blessing

Anona Kampe

6:30PM

Conference Introduction

Cara Basil

7:00PM

Visiting

AGENDA

OCTOBER 24, 2025

7:30AM - 10:30AM

Registration

Hotel Lobby

8:00AM - 9:00AM

Breakfast

Hotel Restaurant

9:00AM - 9:30AM

Opening Prayer and Welcome

Elder Grouse Barnes

Andrea Alexander, WFN Councillor

9:30AM - 10:30AM

Qelmucw: Kenthen Thomas

Grand Reserve

10:30AM - 10:45AM

Break

10:45AM - 11:55AM

Session 1

11:55AM - 12:55PM

Lunch

Hotel Restaurant

12:55PM - 1:55PM

Session 2

1:55PM - 2:00PM

Transition Break

2:00PM - 3:00PM

Session 3

3:00PM - 3:15PM

Break

3:15PM - 4:15PM

Session 4 - Plenary Panel

Grand Reserve

4:15PM - 4:30PM

Day One Closing

4:30PM - 6:00PM

Indigenous Artisans and Information Booth Session

6:30PM - 8:00PM

Ticketed Dinner Reception

Grand Reserve

AGENDA

OCTOBER 25, 2025

7:30AM - 10:30AM

Registration

Hotel Lobby

8:00AM - 9:00AM

Breakfast

Hotel Restaurant

9:00AM - 9:15AM

Opening Prayer and Welcome

9:15AM - 10:00AM

Plenary Speaker: Tabitha Robin

Grand Reserve

10:00AM - 10:15AM

Break

10:15AM - 11:30AM

Session 5/Land-Based Activity

11:30AM - 12:30PM

Lunch

Hotel Restaurant

12:30PM - 1:30PM

Session 6

1:30PM - 1:35PM

Transition Break

1:35PM - 2:35PM

Session 7

2:35PM - 2:50PM

Break

2:50PM - 3:50PM

Session 8

3:50PM - 4:30PM

Closing Ceremony

Elder Grouse Barnes

AGENDA

SESSION 1

DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2025
TIME - 10:45AM - 11:55AM

GRAND RESERVE

LIGHTNING ROUND PRESENTATIONS

Attendees will visit each station for 15 minutes (5-minutes for presentation, 10 minutes for discussion) and then rotate to the next table for **four rounds**.

- 1** *Exploring Mental Health Services and Supports for Indigenous Boys and Men: A Scoping Review*
Naomi Epp, *Red River Métis* (Lakehead University)
- 2** *Relationality, Land, and Resistance: Findings from the Kelowna Urban Indigenous Youth Project*
Gabrielle Legault, *Métis Nation BC* (UBC Okanagan)
- 3** *Indigenizing Health Research Ethics in British Columbia: Co-Create Wise Practices & Distinctions-Based Ethical Protocols*
Andrew Caldwell Wa-Wa-Ti-In-In-Ne (Northern Lights Man), *Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg* (Simon Fraser University)
- 4** *‘Healing our Youth Home’ research approach: Weaving Métis youth voices into life promotion and upstream suicide prevention*
Logan Burd, *Métis Nation BC* (UBC Okanagan)
- 5** *Not “Too-Sick”: Centering Two-Spirit & Indigiqueer (2SIQ) Wellness in BC*
Jimmy Chokmeesuk (UBC Vancouver), Xiaoying Zhang (UBC Vancouver)
- 6** *Mental health needs and supports for Métis youth: A review*
Kylee Hagley, *Métis* (University of Saskatchewan), Kristy Kowatch (University of Saskatchewan)
- 7** *Threads of Learning: From ‘Perfect Stranger’ to Relational ‘Not So Perfect Stranger’*
Jihye Kim (UBC Vancouver)

8 *More Than a Method: Reflections on Indigenous Research, Refusal, and Reclaiming Space in the Academy*

Keyara Brody, *Squamish Nation* (UBC Okanagan)

9 *Co-creating a wellness app for young children and caregivers: Aaniish Naa Gegii*

Mylène Michaud (CHEO Research Institute)

10 *Gathering Our Medicine – Foundry BC, Together Towards Indigenous Wellbeing Throughout BC*

Denise Findlay, *Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* (Foundry), Tiera Murray (Foundry), Shanelle Bath, *Cree* (Foundry)

GELLATLY ROOM

Learn to Bead, facilitated by Syilx Beader, Randi Robins

This open, informal session invites participants to drop in and learn the basics of beading with guidance from Syilx Beader, Randi Robins. Attendees are welcome to use the beading kits provided in their conference gift bags or bring their own projects to work on throughout the session.

SESSION 2

DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2025

TIME - 12:55PM - 1:55PM

GRAND RESERVE

Fostering and Strengthening Connections: Building a National Indigenous Youth Mental Health and Wellness Network

Gage Sabattis, *Eskasoni First Nation*, Clifford Ballatyne, *Sturgeon Lake First Nation*, Naomi Epp, *Red River Métis*, Hazel Fox-Recollect
(Team from ACCESS Open Minds Indigenous Youth Mental Health and Wellness Network)

GELLATLY ROOM

Weaving diverse perspectives on community-driven research: Co-creating research with, by and for Indigenous Peoples

Holly Reid, *Métis Nation BC* (UBC Okanagan), Monty Montgomery, *Mi'kmaq* (UBC Okanagan)

SESSION 3

DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2025

TIME - 2:00PM - 3:00PM

GRAND RESERVE

This session will be a series of paper presentations.

1 *Truths for Changing Futures: Indigenous and Newcomer Youth Finding Threads of Connection*

Carla Hilario (UBC Okanagan), Caroline Foster-Boucher, *Amiskwacîwâskahikan* (MacEwan University), Josephine Wong (Toronto Metropolitan University)

2 *Decolonizing Conceptions of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*

Melanie Nelson, *Samahquam* (UBC Vancouver), XiaoYing Zhang (UBC Vancouver), G. Thomas Schanding, Jr. (UBC Vancouver)

3 *Wood smoke Impact on the Lung by Dose (WILD) Study*

Shayna Uhryn, *Métis Nation of Saskatchewan* (UBC Vancouver)

GELLATLY ROOM

Beading is Medicine: weaving our health and wellness into traditions

Teia Miron-Maracle, *Tyendingaga - Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte* (CHEO Research Institute)

SESSION 4

DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2025
TIME - 3:15PM - 4:15PM

GRAND RESERVE

Plenary Panel

Epistemic wellbeing in times of uncertainty: How can we care for Indigenous Knowledges?

Lindsay DuPré Fiddler, *Métis Nation of Saskatchewan* (UBC Okanagan), Aaron Derrickson, *Okanagan-Syilx Nation* (UBC Okanagan), Shawn Wilson, *Opaskwayak Cree Nation* (UBC Okanagan)

GELLATLY ROOM

Room closed as Indigenous Artisans and Information Booths prepare for the open boothing session beginning at 4:30pm.

SESSION 5

DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2025
TIME - 10:15AM - 11:30AM

GRAND RESERVE

We Walk Together: Exploring what connection to land, water, and territory means for health and wellness with BC First Nations Knowledge Keepers and youth

Leena Hasan (First Nations Health Authority), Elyse Big George, *Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug* (First Nations Health Authority)

GELLATLY ROOM/OUTSIDE

Land-Based Activity with Elder Leon Louis

(Meet in Hotel Lobby) Join Elder Leon Louis for a guided walk on the land near the Cove, including a water ceremony and stories about the history and significance of the area. This session is limited to 25 participants, with sign-up available on October 24 at the conference. Please come prepared with warm clothing and comfortable footwear, as the activity involves light movement outdoors.

SESSION 6

DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2025
TIME - 12:30PM - 1:30PM

GRAND RESERVE

This session will be a series of paper presentations.

- 1 Yukon Strategy for Patient Oriented Research**
Piper Fordham, *Teslin Tlingit Council* (Yukon Strategy for Patient Oriented Research), Syllas Itsi, *Vuntut and Tetlit Gwich'in First Nations* (Yukon Strategy for Patient Oriented Research)
- 2 Written in a Way We've Never Spoken: Rethinking Language Learning Across Generations**
Janis Cunningham, *Peavine Métis Settlement*
- 3 Amplifying Indigenous Community Voices: A Program for Healing on and with the Land, from Incarceration and Criminalization**
Denica Bleau, *Métis* (UBC Okanagan), Jean Brown, *Splatsin*, Illyana Christian, *Splatsin*

GELLATLY ROOM

PIHTIKWĒ: VISITS WITH FIRST NATIONS PSYCHOLOGISTS

Alanaise Ferguson, *Sandy Bay Ojibway* (UBC Okanagan)

SESSION 7

DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2025

TIME - 1:35PM - 2:35PM

GRAND RESERVE

Grass Roots Language Revitalization: Pathways to Language Work as a Living Practice

Abigail Cunningham, *Katzie First Nation*, Cheyenne Cunningham, *Katzie First Nation*, Kaitlyn Cunningham, *Katzie First Nation*, Leah Meunier, *Katzie First Nation*, Lilly Teare-Cunningham, *Katzie First Nation*

GELLATLY ROOM

Weaving diverse perspectives on community-driven research: Co-creating research with, by and for Indigenous Peoples

Taylor Sounding Stone, *Bloodvein First Nation*

SESSION 8

DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2025

TIME - 2:50PM - 3:50PM

GRAND RESERVE

Working with Families while they Navigate Two Worlds

Melanie Nelson, *Samahquam* (UBC Vancouver), Cherie Baker, *Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* (Sḵwxwú7mesh Ta7lnewás Education), Adam Williams-Fakhari, *Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* (UBC Vancouver)

GELLATLY ROOM

Wellness as Resistance: Co-Creating Support Plans Rooted in Culture, Care and Connection

Jen Ashlee, *Métis Nation of BC and Cree* (Raven Winged Consulting)

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

To find all
presentation
descriptions,
scan this QR code:



OUR SPONSORS

The Indigenous Wellbeing Gathering Conference could not happen
without our sponsors. We want to thank them for
their continued support.



National Collaborating Centre
for Indigenous Health

Centre de collaboration nationale
de la santé autochtone



EXTENDING OUR THANKS

The Indigenous Wellbeing Gathering Conference could not have come together without the care, time, and energy of so many people. We offer our deepest thanks to everyone who made this gathering possible.

To our Volunteers: Your hard work, patience, and good spirits behind the scenes made everything run smoothly. This gathering would not have been the same without you. Thank you for your generosity and heart.

To our Sponsors: Your generous support made this event possible. Because of you, we were able to create a space for learning, connection, and collaboration. We are truly grateful for your belief in this vision and your partnership in making it real.

To the Cove Lakeside Resort Staff: We thank you for your hospitality and support throughout this event.

To our Guests: Your presence, knowledge, and passion for advancing Indigenous wellbeing have inspired us all. Thank you for sharing your stories, insights, and experiences so openly. Your voices have deepened our conversations and strengthened our shared commitment to this work.

Together, you have helped create more than a conference, you've helped build community. Through these connections, conversations, and moments of learning, we have taken meaningful steps forward in advancing Indigenous wellbeing. We are deeply thankful and look forward to continuing this journey together.

With deep appreciation,
The Urban Indigenous Wellbeing Collective

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