

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #18 / April 8, 2020

Good afternoon,

With all that is going on it would be fair to say that many of us are not quite feeling ourselves these days. Feelings of fear, stress and worry are normal in a crisis. Fortunately, there are many tools available to support mental wellness in communities during these stressful times.

Earlier today (April 8), the FNPSS hosted a webinar “Wellness in a Time of Uncertainty” with Babs Stevens, Skidegate Band Council CAO and Healer, and Sandra Harris, Wet’suwet’en Trauma Practitioner. This 45-minute session included short presentations outlining the critical importance of wellness and healing in a time of uncertainty. A moderated discussion followed, and included suggestions to use simple activities like drumming, singing, beading, and gardening to find balance and stay connected with youth and Elders.

We encourage you to join future FNPSS webinars to hear how First Nations are handling the COVID-19

pandemic in their communities. If you miss the live webinars, you can [view the recordings](#) or join the [First Nations Administrators Network Facebook group](#) to ask questions, post suggestions and requests for speakers and topics, or share best practices from your community.

We also encourage you to explore social media platforms to connect with others and find valuable content. First Nations across BC are using Facebook and Twitter to support health and well-being by sharing articles on traditional wellness, live streaming with medical experts, posting links to resources, and offering words of encouragement and support to communities. You can find links to these resources below.

We extend our heartfelt thanks for all that you are doing to keep Indigenous people safe and well.

For our part we want to share some of the relief being offered by the Government of Canada to address the economic and business impacts your communities are suffering due to COVID-19.

QUESTION OF THE DAY

I have concerns about the mental health of my community members. Who can help them?

Community members can call the First Nations Health Authority’s 24/7 culturally safe KUU-US Crisis Response Services at 1-800-588-8717 (or 250-723-2040 for child and youth / 250-723-4050 for adult and Elder). Another option is the Hope for Wellness Help Line (1-855-242-3310). Online chat is available at www.hopeforwellness.ca.

Additionally, FNHA has some additional Mental Wellness and cultural supports available:

- [Coping with COVID-19](#) (FNHA video on YouTube)
- [The impact of COVID-19 on mental health](#) (FNHA video on YouTube)
- [Mental wellness and cultural supports available during the pandemic](#) (FNHA info sheet)
- [Staying Connected During the Pandemic](#) (FNHA poster)



UPDATES

Many First Nations are currently experiencing huge pressures to support their communities during this COVID-19 crisis.

Today (April 8, 2020) Prime Minister Trudeau announced **temporary changes to the Canada Summer Jobs program** that will help employers hire summer staff and provide young Canadians access to the jobs they need. This program will help create up to 70,000 jobs for youth between 15 and 30 years of age, and will help small businesses hire and keep the workers they need so they can continue to deliver essential services.

Canada will continue to look for ways to support all Canadians, including students and young people, as we weather this pandemic together. Earlier actions taken for youth include a six-month, interest-free moratorium on Canada Student Loans, and the **75 per cent wage subsidy for businesses** that will help more employers keep part-time employees and workers over the coming months.

The Prime Minister announced this subsidy on April 1 to help Canadians and businesses get through these tough economic times. This proposed wage subsidy is retroactive to March 15, 2020. On April 8, Finance Minister Bill Morneau provided **further details on the eligibility criteria for businesses** to access the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). Additional flexibility has been added to address the realities faced by the not-for-profit sector, high growth companies and new businesses. More details about eligibility for the CEWS are available **here**.

Overall, it is important to note that First Nations have access to all other measures provided through the Government of Canada's **COVID-19 Economic Response Plan**, including support to workers and businesses.

This includes measures such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, increased Canada Child Benefit, and special Goods and Services Tax credit payment. Indigenous Peoples are encouraged to review to see what other financial supports might be available to them.

Please take a look on the fnps.ca site as there is document that details the many ways First Nations can access **financial benefits and supports during the COVID-19 outbreak**.

PARTNERS

Health and well-being resources from Community:

- **ᑭᐱᑭᐱ posted an article on Traditional Wellness**
- **Tsilhqot'in National Government video on the importance and significance of traditional medicine**
- **Quatsino First Nation posted how to talk to children about coronavirus**
- **Stó:lō Nation has posted several videos, including one on how to manage conflicts with your loved ones**
- **FNHA shared a podcast of Dr. Nel Wieman speaking about COVID-19 and Mental Health**
- **Council of the Haida Nation posted a webinar about how to take care of yourself during the COVID-19 crisis**

NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **Indigenous Community Support Fund: Urban and off-reserve Indigenous organizations and communities**
- **Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan**
- **Employment Insurance and Canada Emergency Response Benefit**
- **Public Health Agency of Canada: Infographics**
- **The COVID-19 First Nations Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports**
- The Hope for Wellness Help Line is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week to support members of your community experiencing emotional distress and may be reached directly by dialling **1-855-242-3310** or via online chat at: **hopeforwellness.ca**

USEFUL LINKS

- **Family Violence Prevention Program**
- **First Nations Health Authority**
Summary Page of COVID-19 information and response.
- **COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool**
The app will let you receive the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts. The Self-Assessment Tool is built in.
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
Epidemiological summary of COVID-19 cases in Canada (includes map and other data).
- **First Nations Public Service Secretariat**

REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests:
aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca

The email address and other information are also available on the **FNPSS website**.

