

GUIDED BY OUR ANCESTORS: *Indigenous Midwives and Advocacy*

Created by The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives



INDIGENOUS MIDWIVES *in* EVERY INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

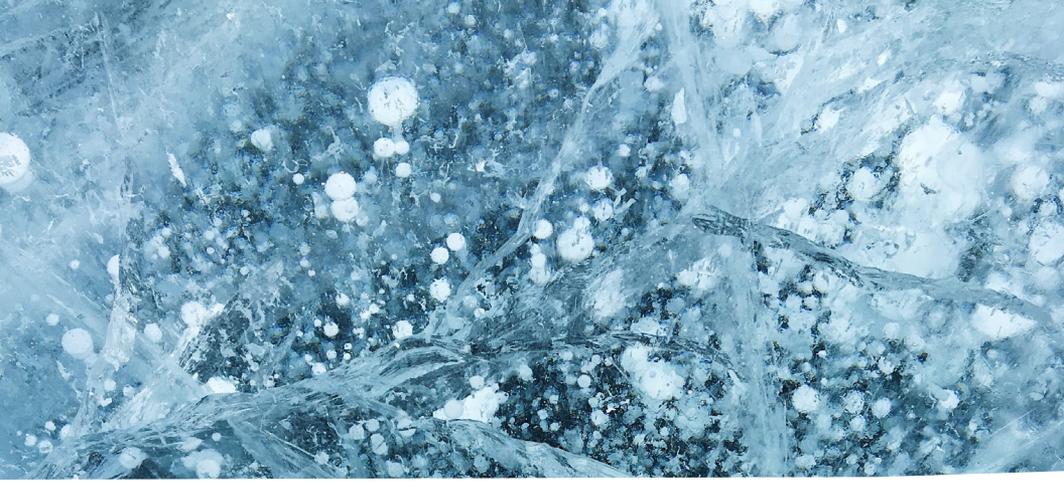


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Indigenous midwives are leaders in reproductive justice for Indigenous communities. We provide essential, clinically excellent, culturally rooted sexual and reproductive health care.

An Indigenous midwife is a keeper of ceremonies, a leader and mentor and someone who passes on important values about health to the next generation.



RECOGNITION

Indigenous Midwifery Matters

Acknowledging the necessity of Indigenous-led health and healing practices is crucial to reconciliation. – See *Truth and Reconciliation Canada: Calls to Action, Call #22, Page 3, 2015*

INDIGENOUS MIDWIVES:

Return birth to our communities, which has enormous cultural significance and broad positive impacts on our communities' health and well-being

Reduce costly medical evacuations for birth in remote areas

Provide midwifery services in the ways our communities need. Our work is grounded in Indigenous worldviews

Respond to the unique health needs of Indigenous people

Support healing in Indigenous communities from the ongoing effects of colonization

Improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes



“Indigenous midwives work tirelessly to improve maternal and infant health throughout a person’s reproductive cycle and, most importantly, during pregnancy, birth and postpartum. We respond to the specific needs of our communities and by doing so nurture the social and cultural reproduction of Indigenous life. I ask that you consider the impact of a baby being born into a healthy and intact community.” – *Cherylee Bourgeois, Métis midwife, addressing the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 17th Session, April 2018.*



RIGHTS

Indigenous people have the right to decide when, where and how we have children, who our care providers will be and to parent the children we have in a healthy environment.

Current reproductive health services are not meeting the needs of Indigenous families and communities. NACM calls for sustained funding from the Government of Canada for Indigenous midwifery services in our communities.

To ensure that midwifery care is rooted in our communities and sustainable, Indigenous people must be able to train, and then work, in our home communities.

NACM is committed to increasing the pathways to education, decolonizing midwifery training and supporting retention as we grow Indigenous midwifery.

Equitable, consistent and stable funding across Canada for Indigenous midwifery training and services is key to growing and sustaining midwifery in our communities.



NACM advocates for Indigenous rights and strongly condemns the violence Indigenous people experience including:

- the routine and blanket evacuation of pregnant people for birth
- the over-representation of Indigenous infants and children in child protection services across the country and within our Nations
- the forced, coerced and involuntary sterilization of Indigenous people

For more information, please visit our website at www.indigenousmidwifery.ca



“We ask the government of Canada to work with Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people to measure our health and wellness as an indicator of the health and wellness of the entire Nation.” – *Declaration by and for Indigenous Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People, Nutsamaht Indigenous Women’s Pre-Conference to Women Deliver Global Conference, 2019*

SAFETY

Indigenous midwives bring cultural and clinical safety to our communities

- ✓ Midwifery care is associated with higher rates of vaginal birth and breastfeeding, decreased medical and surgical intervention, and decreased adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes.
- ✓ Perinatal outcomes in remote centres where midwifery care is available are equal to or better than care provided through medical evacuation for birth.
- ✓ We are guided by national and jurisdictional professional guidelines. Indigenous Registered Midwives are accountable to their professional colleges. Community-based Indigenous Midwives are accountable to the community that recognizes them.



“I can understand that some of you may think that birth in remote areas is dangerous. And we have made it clear what it means for our women to birth in our communities. And you must know that a life without meaning is much more dangerous.”
– *Jusapie Padlayat, Elder and Chair of the Inuulitsivik Health Board (Childbirth without fear: Stories from Nunavik, Presentation, November 2005)*



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS *is our* STRENGTH

Indigenous midwives build relationships with clients, families, allies, organizations and Indigenous and non-Indigenous governing bodies at all levels to advance Indigenous health.

Our approach to building relationships creates strong foundations of trust, awareness and safety. Our relationships are key to advancing policies and approaches that promote the growth of Indigenous midwifery.

NACM calls on all levels of government, health care organizations and educational institutions to identify the ways they can contribute to the growth and sustainability of Indigenous midwifery.

For more information, please visit our website at www.indigenoumidwifery.ca

RESTORATION

Education is essential to restoring Indigenous midwifery

Over a nine-month period, NACM consulted with Indigenous midwives from coast to coast to coast to identify the core competencies of Indigenous midwifery.

Indigenous Midwifery Knowledge and Skills: A Framework of Competencies supports growing and teaching Indigenous midwifery.

THE 9 CORE COMPETENCIES ARE:

- PROVIDE CULTURALLY SAFE CARE
- SUPPORT RITES OF PASSAGE
- COMMUNICATE
- DEVELOP THE PROFESSION
- SUPPORT INDIGENOUS HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
- MANAGE PRENATAL CARE
- MANAGE LABOUR AND DELIVERY
- MANAGE POSTPARTUM CARE
- PROVIDE NEWBORN CARE

NACM CORE VALUES *of* INDIGENOUS MIDWIFERY

**HEALING
RESPECT
AUTONOMY
COMPASSION
BONDING
BREASTFEEDING
CULTURAL SAFETY
CLINICAL EXCELLENCE
EDUCATION
RESPONSIBILITY**



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