

Recruiting Indigenous Students to work with the BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer Indigenous Rights, Reconciliation, & Anti-Racism 360° COVID-19 Review

Dáꞓᑎᑎíh/'Niit/Weykt/Taanshi/Greetings!

We are a small team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous folks from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and BCCDC who are working on a research project to daylight the ways in which systemic white supremacy and anti-Indigenous racism showed up in public health responses during COVID-19. If you are an Indigenous student who is interested in contributing to this work, we would love to hear from you! We will work together to co-develop a proposal to submit to BC NEIHR for a [Research Experience Award](#), amounting to approximately 60 hours of paid work.

Introducing Ourselves

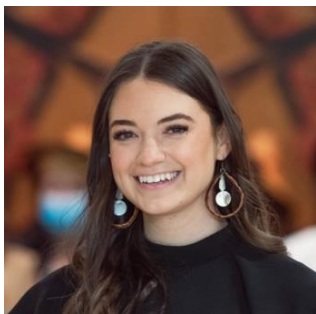


Danièle Behn Smith, MD, CCFP, MPH (she/her). Taanshi, Dáꞓᑎᑎíh, Greetings with gratitude on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations! I'm Métis from the Red River Valley and Eh Cho Dene from Fort Nelson First Nation. I am a mama to two beautiful kids and one little black dog. I have the honour and privilege of working as the Deputy Provincial Health Officer Indigenous Health. At the BC Office of the PHO, we are working towards an environment of cultural safety, anti-racism and trustworthiness. We look forward to connecting with students who are interested in a reciprocal learning experience - bringing their minds, hands, and hearts to this work, and also learning about public health and government approaches through a rotation/practicum in our office! Mussi cho/Maarsi.



Kate Jongbloed, PhD (she/her). I am a white occupier living on the territories of the x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwəxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. I am an epidemiologist and mixed methods health researcher with 15+ years of experience documenting and responding to the impacts of settler colonialism on health and wellness. Recently, I completed a two-year CIHR Health Systems Impact Post-Doctoral Fellowship mentored by Dr. Danièle Behn Smith in the BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer. Now, I am a Senior Scientist at the BC Centre for Disease Control working to grow and “unlearning and undoing white supremacy and Indigenous specific racism lab” (U&U Lab) for population and public health in BC. Two of my other roles are

Adjunct Professor at University of Victoria's School of Public Health and Social Policy and Associate with Qoqoq Consulting Ltd.



Jorden Hendry, MPH (she/her). I am Tsimshian and a member of the Lax Kw'alaams band. I grew up in Terrace, BC along the banks of the mighty Skeena River. I am a PhD student at the School of Population and Public Health at UBC with a focus on Indigenous Public Health, and understanding the racist systems that drive health disparities. I currently reside on the unceded territories of the x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwəxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. I am

working with Kate and Danièle as a Graduate Research Assistant on the Unlearning and Undoing White Supremacy Project.

Kirsten White, MPH, RN(c) (she/her). I am a white occupier gratefully living on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the K'ómoks First Nation. I have been working as a Registered Nurse for over 11 years in emergency departments, northern and remote Indigenous communities, and inner-city outreach. I have borne witness to the important structural, social, and economic intersections that caused the inequitable experiences of communities during this most recent pandemic. I feel honoured to work alongside this team as the Research Coordinator for the 360° COVID-19 Review project to advance our action on Foundational Commitments made to Indigenous Peoples.



Nicole Jules, BHK (she/her). Weykt, I am Secwepemc & Nlaka'pamux gratefully living in the unceded territory of the Malahat Nation and Hul'qumi'num. I grew up in Cstelnec, otherwise known as Adams Lake. I am working at the BC Office of the PHO as a Junior Policy Analyst, within the Indigenous Youth Internship Program, on the Unlearning and Undoing White Supremacy Project. I am honored to work towards an environment of cultural safety, anti-racism and trustworthiness, with love and care, alongside an incredible team.

About the Office of the Provincial Health Officer

As the senior public health official for BC, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) is responsible for monitoring the health of the population of BC and providing independent advice to ministers and public officials on public health issues. Two primary pieces of legislation that govern the work of the OPHO are the Public Health Act and the Drinking Water Protection Act.

About the 360° COVID-19 Review Project with the BC OPHO

The 360° COVID-19 Review Project is part of the Unlearning and Undoing White Supremacy Project, aimed at identifying and arresting inherited white supremacy and anti-Indigenous racism in our day-to-day work and lives. The Unlearning and Undoing White Supremacy Project works to embed Indigenous rights, truth, and reconciliation across the health system.

The 360° COVID-19 Review will focus on daylighting systematic white supremacy and Indigenous specific racism in the BC OPHO and its influence during the COVID-19 pandemic response. So far, there has been no systematic look at the ways in which Indigenous specific racism, white supremacy, and settler colonialism showed up within the COVID-19 public health response. These findings will be shared with public health leadership for the development and implementation of anti-racist pandemic response strategies for future public health threats. This review aims to begin action on *Recommendation 15* of the In Plain Sight report¹.

Project Goals

Over the next one year, we will seek to: (1) illuminate which BC OPHO structure, policies, practices, norms, and values upheld systemic white supremacy and racism during the COVID-19 state of emergency; (2) catalogue the colonial knots that arose within the BC OPHO's sphere of influence during

the COVID-19 state of emergency; and (3) share findings with public health leadership towards development and implementation of anti-racist pandemic response strategies for future public health threats.

Tasks For You to Offer Your Mind, Heart, and Hands

We are guided by the wisdom of Dr. Camara Jones, former president of the American Public Health Association, who launched a national campaign against racism. Her ‘Science & Practice of Anti-Racism’ framework² outlines three tasks: (1) naming racism; (2) asking, how is it operating here?; and (3) organizing and strategizing to act. Puglaas Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Kwakwaka’wakw from We Wai Kai Nation) offers further guidance in her framework of Learn, Understand, and Act³. There are many opportunities for Indigenous student(s) to contribute to elements of this work.

Naming Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the OPHO’s weekly Unlearning & Undoing meeting, in a way that feels comfortable to you. Grow your own learnings on this topic in any way that you feel you need.
Asking, How is Racism Operating Here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to an in-depth review of BC OPHO orders and COVID-19 briefings through the lens of anti-racism and Indigenous rights. Participate in identifying the BC OPHO structures, policies, practices, norms, and values that upheld systemic white supremacy and racism during the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn from Indigenous voices that have already spoken truths regarding individual and community experiences during the pandemic.
Organizing & Strategizing to Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in cataloging and describing ‘colonial knots’ that arose within the OPHO’s sphere of influence during the state of emergency. Identify ways in which Indigenous rights, and Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Being were, or investigate how they could have been, upheld during the pandemic response. Consider ways in which ‘trustworthy’ public health might look for Indigenous Peoples. Collaborate with the BC OPHO team and partners to consider how evidence generated will support decision making in relation to future public health threats.

See our website for other work being done by the U&U Project!



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1. Turpel-Lafond ME. In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care - Summary Report.; 2020:1-74. <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Summary-Report.pdf>
 2. Jones CP. Toward the science and practice of anti-racism: Launching a national campaign against racism. *Ethn Dis.* 2018;28(Supp 1):231. doi:10.18865/ed.28.S1.231
 3. Wilson-Raybould J. *True Reconciliation: How to Be a Force for Change.* Hardcover edition. McClelland & Stewart; 2022.