



Canadian Brain Research Strategy
Indigenous Initiatives

PARTICIPANTS’ PACKAGE: Two-Eyed Seeing Through Compound Eyes

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CANADIAN BRAIN RESEARCH STRATEGY

TWO-EYED SEEING THROUGH COMPOUND EYES WORKSHOP

OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE

It is the unwavering belief of CBRS that a robust national research strategy for brain and mental health should organically weave in the vast, distinct, and rich Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

In recognizing the profound value of Indigenous perspectives in all our organizational pursuits, we acknowledge the historical suppression of Indigenous voices within Canadian colonial structures. In our dedication to fostering a truly collaborative and inclusive approach, we strive to transcend historical barriers and create meaningful partnerships. This integration is not only crucial for advancing our understanding of brain research but also stands as a testament to our commitment to affirming the community expertise and sovereignty of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

Our vision for a comprehensive approach to brain research and health honors Indigenous wisdom in understanding the interconnected nature of health. By acknowledging and integrating Indigenous perspectives, we aim to contribute to a more equitable and enriched landscape in the realm of brain and mental health research.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

This is a unique, cross-cultural opportunity to engage with researchers, funders, institutions, Indigenous community members to initiate dialogue on developing relationships and concrete solutions for brain health research with Indigenous Peoples. As part of our ongoing Indigenous the primary goal for this workshop is to initiate dialogue on developing relationships and concrete solutions for brain health research with Indigenous Peoples.

Four Guiding Principles

1. Embracing Indigenous Knowledge

Learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing, from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing and learning, and to use both compound eyes together for the benefit of all.

2. Partnership

Fostering new partnerships and networks that embrace strength-based approaches and community engagement. Finding cross-cultural understandings, translating constructs of interest, and establishing trust.

3. Appreciating Diversity

Enhancing understanding of the heterogeneity of Indigenous communities and nations, including the unique needs of each community, its desires, goals and challenges.

4. Connectivity

Strengthening connections between Indigenous researchers, investigators who conduct Indigenous research, and Indigenous communities. Building upon Indigenous knowledge that everything in the universe is connected, whether it is the connection between ancestral spirits and the mortal world

MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, January 18th, 2024

10:30 am – 1:00 pm PT

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm ET

[Via Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 861 6082 3678

Passcode: 552615

Time	Agenda Topic
10:30am PT / 1:30pm ET	<p>Welcoming, Address, and Prayer – <i>Andrew Manitowabi & Malcolm King</i></p> <p>Introduction to CBRS Indigenous Initiatives, Setting Objectives, Tone of Meeting and Decorum</p>
10:40am PT / 1:40pm ET	<p>Brain Health Research Through Indigenous Lenses – <i>Grant Bruno, Melissa Perreault, Amy Bombay, Allison Deer</i></p> <p>Examples of ongoing research projects involving Indigenous communities; as well, related topics on brain research with relevance to Indigenous peoples and communities</p>
11:10am PT / 2:10pm ET	<p>Breakout Discussion – <i>Allison Deer, Jennie Z. Young, Kalyne Beaudry, Melissa Perreault</i></p> <p>Participants are encouraged to share their perspectives related to Indigenous research. We are posing the following question to initiate dialogue, but feel free to share your own insights and ideas</p>
11:40am PT / 2:40pm ET	<p>Break / Group Activity / Networking Time – <i>Andrew Manitowabi, Jennie Z. Young</i></p> <p>Group Activity: Brainstorming the Brain</p>
11:55am PT / 2:55pm ET	<p>Co-Creating the Future of Indigenous Brain Health Research – <i>Chloe Ferguson, Kris Noakes, Lorrilee McGregor, Lori Davis Hill</i></p> <p>What does the future look like with Indigenous Peoples co-creating and leading brain research?</p>
12:25pm PT / 3:25pm ET	<p>Breakout Discussion – <i>Allison Deer, Jennie Z. Young, Kalyne Beaudry, Melissa Perreault</i></p> <p>Participants are encouraged to share their perspectives related to Indigenous research. We are posing the following question to initiate dialogue, but feel free to share your own insights and ideas</p>
12:55pm PT / 3:55pm ET	<p>Closing Remarks – <i>Andrew Manitowabi</i></p> <p>Summary and next steps</p>

WORKSHOP CONTRIBUTORS

CBRS Leadership - Indigenous Knowledges Holders Group

Bryce Mercredi, Elder, Métis Nation

Chelsea Gabel, PhD, Métis Nation, McMaster University

Christopher Mushquash, PhD, Pays Plat First Nation, University of Lakehead

Malcolm King, PhD, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, University of Saskatchewan

Melissa Perreault, PhD, Métis Nation, University of Guelph

CBRS Secretariat

Andrew Manitowabi (Mamaateshiins), BA, BBA, Indigenous Initiatives Lead

Jennie Z. Young, PhD, Executive Director

Jonathan Ayers, BA(Hon), BMus, Administrative Coordinator

External Facilitator for Breakout Discussion

Kalyne Beaudry, BA, Junior Policy Analyst, Assembly of First Nations

Workshop Facilitator & Moderator

Andrew Manitowabi (Mamaateshiins), BA, BBA

Indigenous Initiatives Lead, CBRS

Mr. Manitowabi leads CBRS Indigenous Initiatives to ensure the seamless integration of Indigenous perspectives throughout the organization's pursuits. Mr. Manitowabi seeks to incorporate the duality of Indigeneity and Western being into advocating with underrepresented, vulnerable, and disadvantaged Indigenous peoples. Mr. Manitowabi has a lifelong affinity for gracing the voiceless, the ability to shift paradigms and discourse. Concurrent to his position at CBRS, he is the Anishinaabemowin Program Manager for Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, where he bridges Anishinaabe traditions and beliefs with current ways of living, for language revitalization. Mr. Manitowabi has a BA in Criminology and First Nations Studies from Western University, and a BBA from Laurentian. He has worked for Indigenous organizations at the community and the provincial-territorial level.

Panelist Bios (in speaking order)

Grant Bruno, PhD(c)

PhD Candidate in Medical Sciences, Department of Pediatrics, University of Alberta

Mr. Bruno is Nehiyaw (Plains Cree) from Maskawcis, Alberta, a PhD candidate in Medical Science in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta, and a father to autistic children. His PhD research explores autism in First Nations communities through a Nehiyaw lens and is exploring ways to develop culturally informed services and supports in the community.

Melissa Perreault, PhD**Associate Professor, Biomedical Sciences, University of Guelph**

Dr. Perreault is a citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario, a member of the College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists in the Royal Society of Canada, and an Associate Professor and neuroscientist in the Department of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Guelph. Her primary preclinical research focus is to understand sex differences in the cellular mechanisms underlying neurodevelopmental and neuropsychiatric disorders. However, Dr. Perreault also spends much of her time on Indigenous and neuroethics initiatives, including the development of guidelines for research with Indigenous communities and with other marginalized groups.

Amy Bombay, PhD**Associate Professor, School of Nursing, Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University**

Dr. Bombay is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and the School of Nursing at Dalhousie University. Dr. Bombay is a member of Rainy River First Nations and completed her MSc and PhD in Psychology and Neuroscience. Her primary areas of inquiry have focused on exploring the relationships between historical trauma, contemporary stressor exposure, and cultural identity in predicting mental health outcomes among Indigenous peoples in Canada. Her research exploring the different pathways by which Indian Residential School experiences are transmitted across generations has garnered extensive media interest and has been influential in influencing policy and practice related to Indigenous health.

Allison Deer, MBA**Senior Projects Advisor, Bimaadzwin**

Ms. Deer is a Mohawk from the community of Kahnawake, Quebec and is a member of the Wolf Clan. As the former National Manager of the Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO) Indigenous Services in Montreal, Ms. Deer helped build stronger indigenous communities across Canada. She has proven managerial, analytical, networking and communication skills that forge long-lasting collaborative relationships between individuals, corporations and communities to achieve their goals. Ms. Deer has over 35 years' experience in Community and Economic Development at the local, regional and national levels of development and recently obtained an MBA in Community Economic Development at Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia; a degree most suited for the diverse challenges and opportunities faced by Aboriginal communities across Canada.

Chloe Ferguson, BA, MA**Chief Executive Officer, Martin Family Initiative**

Ms. Ferguson has worked with the Martin Family Initiative (MFI) for over the past 10 years. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from McGill University. She has a Masters Degree in Journalism from the University of the Arts, London. Her dissertation was "How Come we don't know? The portrayal of Aboriginal protest in Canadian print". She has developed projects and programs with Indigenous communities, such as the Early Years program.

Kris Noakes**Board of Directors, ALS Canada**

Ms. Noakes is a citizen of the Anishinabek Nation and a member of Nipissing First Nation and a community advocate at the Municipal, Provincial, Federal levels. Her diverse experience includes leading an Indigenous NGO, building Indigenous services in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Ms Noakes lives with a genetic form of the terminal disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). She shares her experiences and perspectives, and the journey of generations of her family that have lived and are living with ALS. She continues to advocate for equitable access to drugs and treatments, Open Science, investments into ALS research and community supports. Along with advocacy she has helped to increase the awareness and understanding of ALS within our Canadian Health Care system, Governments and internationally at the United Nations General Assembly. Ms. Noakes currently serves as a member of ALS Canada's Board of Directors and Chair of the Revolution Ride, a member of the Board of Directors for the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, and has recently finished her second term appointment as a member of the Federal Judicial Advisory Committee for the GTA.

Lorrilee McGregor, PhD**Chair, Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee (MARRC)**

Dr. McGregor is an Anishinaabe from Whitefish River First Nation. She is an Associate Professor at NOSM University where she teaches about Indigenous peoples' health. For the past 20 years, Dr. McGregor has served as the Chair of the Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee, a community-based Research Ethics Board that has reviewed over 100 research ethics applications.

Lori Davis Hill (she/her), PhD(c)**Assistant Professor, Rehabilitation Science, McMaster University**

PhD Candidate, Royal Roads University, "Language is Medicine"

Ms. Hill is a mother, wife, auntie and friend. She is Oneida, Wolf Clan, Haudenosaunee from Six Nations of the Grand River. She was the first Indigenous Speech Language Pathologist trained in Canada and has practiced clinically in both urban and rural, hospital and community settings. She has held several leadership positions including Clinical Coordinator, Team Manager and Director of Health Services at Six Nations of the Grand River. Ms. Hill is completing doctoral studies at Royal Roads University with a focus on an intersectional and interdisciplinary contribution to Indigenous language reclamation and revitalization. Her research project "Language as Medicine" grounded in Indigenous methodology explores healing through the journey of (re)connection to language, culture and Indigenous identity. Ms. Hill was recently appointed as Assistant Professor, Indigenous Health in the School of Rehabilitation Science, Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University. She is committed to blazing trails, building relationships and making connections between people who can influence making healthcare a safe place for Indigenous people now and for the faces yet to come.

ABOUT CBRS INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES

Who is the CBRS

The Canadian Brain Research Strategy (**CBRS**) is a pan-Canadian effort to develop a national research strategy for brain and mental health. CBRS Leadership is comprised of the directors of 40 neuroscience and mental health institutes and programs across the country, along with representatives of early career researchers, Indigenous Knowledges Holders Group, and patients and caregivers.

Our mission has united Canada's neuroscience and mental health researchers, in coalition with Indigenous peoples, people with lived experience of brain conditions, private and public science funders, health charities and non-profits, and industry. Together, we have developed a clear and compelling vision for targeted investment in brain research to drive social, health, and economic advancement for Canada and the world.

Why Does the CBRS Exist

Our brains define who we are, how we behave, what we strive for, and the ways we develop relationships within ourselves (**spirit, mind, emotions, body**), each other (**honoring/following our traditions**), and the land and water (**reciprocity**). Because our brains are so integral to our capacities to live good lives, brain research has the promise to create a better future for all Canadians.

More than 7.5 million Canadians reported living with a neurological or mental health disorder in 2019. That number is growing rapidly since the COVID-19 pandemic and with aging demographics. Understanding the brain - in health, development, disease, and resilience - will be critical to Canada's success and well-being in the 21st century.

What is the CBRS Trying to Achieve

The collective national vision for brain science and societal impact represents a deep, informed perspective to leverage Canada's unique strengths in brain research: 1) *Collaborative* – combining efforts in a scientific culture of coordination and partnership; 2) *Transdisciplinary* – involving diverse voices of researchers as well as partners outside of academia such as Indigenous Peoples, patients, and industry; and 3) *Open* – making scientific knowledge on the brain transparent, shareable, and freely accessible to everyone.

The time is now to make brain and mental health research a national priority with targeted federal investment towards the creation of a Canadian Brain Research Initiative.

We have the network, partnerships, vision, and strategic plan in place. Now we need the funding to catalyze this network into concerted, bold, and concrete action.

CBRS Indigenous Initiatives

Our vision for a comprehensive approach to brain research and health honors Indigenous wisdom in understanding the interconnected nature of health. In recognizing the profound value of Indigenous perspectives in all our organizational pursuits, we acknowledge the historical suppression of Indigenous voices within Canadian colonial structures.

“Indigenous people are not well represented in brain research - brain research is not focused on Indigenous peoples, or researchers have not yet had the conversations about cultural relevance. If we do not find a way to include Indigenous people, the disparities that exist in these research domains, and accessibility to innovations and treatments may only grow”.

- Dr. Christopher Mushquash, IKHG Member

In our commitment to fostering true collaboration and inclusivity, we strive to transcend historical barriers and create meaningful partnerships. This integration is not only crucial to advance our understanding of the brain but also stands as a testament to our commitment to affirming the community expertise and sovereignty of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

The CBRS has brought together Indigenous leaders across Canada who have research interests in brain and mental health to form the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Group (IKHG). Under their insightful guidance, we convened a workshop in 2021 to identify ways that Indigenous stakeholders can have an explicit voice in the developing national strategy, to weave Indigenous knowledge into the fabric of all CBRS activities, and support Indigenous brain and mental wellness.

In the preliminary phase of our Indigenous Outreach and Engagement initiative, we began with extensive consultations involving research, advisory sessions, relationship building, and connecting with diverse stakeholders in Indigenous brain health. Starting in July 2022 through May 2023, we initiated a series of meetings to actively involve a diverse range of participants in Indigenous brain health, including Traditional Knowledge Holders (Anishinaabe and Métis Elders), academics - researchers, including early career and trainees, heads of Indigenous research organizations, community organization representatives, health administrators and other key stakeholders. Throughout seven introductory sessions and three focus groups, participants actively deliberated on the successes, challenges, and opportunities within Canadian brain research for Indigenous Peoples. Their insights extended to evaluating the present and future potential of research to positively impact the lives of those affected by brain conditions.

Our efforts to create a collective national strategy have also extended to uniting funding organizations supporting brain research. This collaboration spans health charities, non-profit organizations, private foundations, and government and public funding agencies at both federal and provincial levels. The collective goal is to transform brain science with a coherent approach, maximizing the impact of investments across diverse fields of brain research and enhancing the overall societal well-being of Canadians. In a dedicated meeting convened to specifically address Indigenous initiatives in brain research and health, this focused session facilitated a robust discussion on the importance of supporting Indigenous Peoples' participation in brain science,

emphasizing a collective commitment to advancing brain and mental health initiatives within Indigenous communities.

The Two-Eyed Seeing Through Compound Eyes Workshop, as a culmination of our collective efforts, aims to convene, connect, and chart a path forward regarding research possibilities with Indigenous communities. We hope that it will present a unique, cross-cultural opportunity with engagement from researchers, funders, institutions, health organizations and Indigenous community members to initiate dialogue, fostering relationships and developing concrete solutions for brain health research with Indigenous Peoples.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **CBRS Indigenous Engagement Interim Synthesis Report**
 - Insights and Perspectives from CBRS Indigenous outreach and engagement
- **“An Indigenous Lens on Priorities of Canadian Brain Research Strategy”**
 - Academic paper drafted by the CBRS Indigenous Knowledges Holders Group (IKHG) following our initial Indigenous Initiatives Workshop in 2021

CONTACTS

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