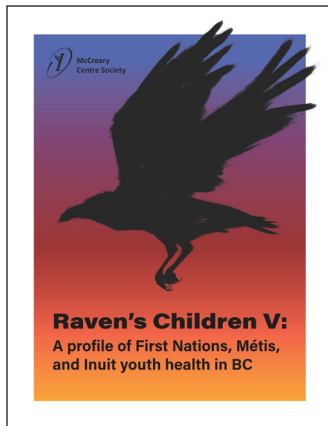


MEDIA RELEASE | November, 2022

Study shows Indigenous youth's resilience and highlights ongoing impact of Residential Schools



McCreary Centre Society today released, *Raven's Children V: A profile of First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth health in BC*. The long-awaited report uses data from the BC Adolescent Health Survey and highlights the challenges and strengths of Indigenous youth across the province.

The study's lead author Samantha Martin-Ferris noted: *"The report highlights many improvements in the health and well-being of Indigenous youth but it also really shows the ongoing legacy and inter-generational trauma of residential schools, with those*

whose families had this experience five times more likely to have been in government care, twice as likely to have been bereaved by suicide and more likely to be living in poverty."

McCreary's Executive Director, Dr. Annie Smith, added: *"This report gives us some really important information about how we are doing as a province in our journey towards truth and reconciliation. The BC AHS has been conducted every five years for the last 30 years, so I think these results clearly spell out where we are making progress and where we need to really focus our efforts. I also think the upcoming 2023 survey results will be especially important in highlighting the impact of the pandemic on Indigenous young people who are clearly still continuing to feel the impacts of colonization on their health and well-being."*

The report shows that the percentage of Indigenous students who could speak an Indigenous language doubled in five years. It also highlights the important role that connection to culture can play in young people's mental health, and reductions over time in Indigenous youth's experiences of violence and substance use. Despite these positive trends, previously identified disparities continue to exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in areas such as missing out on needed services, and government care experience.

A copy of the report is available at mcs.bc.ca.

Webinar presentations of the results are scheduled for:

- Monday, November 14th at 2pm
- Friday, November 18th at 10am

Login details are below:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/365601885>

Access Code: 365-601-885



McCreary
Centre Society

McCreary Centre Society is a non-government, non-profit organization committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation and community-based projects.

Founded in 1977, our vision is that all youth are supported to be healthy and connected.

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BACKGROUNDER

This is the fifth Raven's Children report using BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) data and includes almost 4,000 youth aged 12–19 who completed the BC AHS in 2018.

Some key findings from the report:

There were improvements in the percentage of Indigenous youth who:

- Spoke an Indigenous language (28% vs. 14% in 2013).
- Exercised daily (21% of those aged 12–17 vs. 18% in 2013).
- Experienced a concussion (19% vs. 22% in 2013).
- Engaged in substance use. For example, compared to a decade earlier, there were decreases in alcohol and cannabis use, and in daily smoking rates (8% vs. 15% in 2008).
- Had been physically abused (20% vs. 25% in 2008).

There were no such improvements in the percentage of Indigenous youth who:

- Went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home (17% did so at least sometimes and 2% did so often or always).
- Experienced positive mental health. For example, 30% self-harmed in the past year, which was an increase from 25% in 2013.
- Felt safe at school and on transit. For example, 66% felt safe at school (vs. 72% in 2013).
- Experienced dating violence in the past year (11% of those who dated vs. 9% in 2013).

In comparison to non-Indigenous students, Indigenous youth were:

- Five times as likely to have been in government care (15% vs. 3%); and those whose family had been in Residential School were more likely to have been in care (19% had care experience).
- Less likely to eat three meals a day (26% vs. 39%).
- More likely to have missed out on needed mental health services in the past year (25% vs. 18%).
- More than twice as likely to have lost someone close to them due to a fentanyl overdose (with the highest rates among youth who had been in government care or who had a family member attend Residential School).

Indigenous youth reported more positive health and well-being when they:

- Ate traditional foods from their culture. For example, 73% reported good or excellent mental health (vs. 63% who had not eaten these foods recently).
- Participated in cultural activities. For example, they were more likely to feel a part of their community (46% vs. 36% of those who had not taken part in cultural activities in the past year).
- Felt their teachers cared about them. For example, they were less likely to report self-harming or experiencing anxiety and depression.
- Had supportive adults and friends they could turn to, and felt like part of their school and community.