

WELL LIVING HOUSE

An action research centre for Indigenous infant, child and family health and wellbeing



What is the Well Living House?

The Well Living House is an action research centre that's focused on Indigenous* infant, child and family health and wellbeing. At its heart is an aspiration to be a place where Indigenous people can come together to gather, understand, link and share best knowledge about happy and healthy child, family and community living.

The centre is built from a foundation of almost two decades of collaborative work between Indigenous health researchers, front line health practitioners and Indigenous community grandparents.

What will the Well Living House do?

The long-term vision of the Well Living House is that every Indigenous infant will be born into a context that promotes health and wellbeing - at the individual, family and community levels.

We plan to achieve this vision by improving health policies, services and programs through knowledge work: conducting research, building knowledge networks and providing training.

In all that we do, the Well Living House is committed to using and protecting our Indigenous knowledge, languages and ways of working.

“Each time a child is born it represents not only the birth of an individual but an opportunity to rebirth our families, communities and nations.”

Jan Kahehti:io Longboat, Well Living House Counsel of Grandparents

What kinds of knowledge will the Well Living House work with?

Both Indigenous community-based and mainstream academic knowledge and expertise will inform the work of the Well Living House; we respect both Indigenous and non-Indigenous 'ways of knowing' and doing. Collectively, we will strive to build on synergies between the two, and move beyond historic/current community-university tensions.

How is the Well Living House structured?

The Well Living House is housed at the Centre for Research on Inner City Health (CRICH), part of St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. A committee of Elders, the Counsel of Grandparents**, has been struck to guide the establishment and operation of the Well Living House. The Well Living House will be governed using two accountability routes: one to St. Michael's Hospital, and the other to Indigenous communities through the Counsel of Grandparents.

Can I get involved?

We are actively pursuing researcher and community relationships and networks. To learn more, contact Janet Smylie at 416-864-6060 x77380, Janet.Smylie@utoronto.ca.

St. Michael's

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WELL LIVING HOUSE RESEARCH:

The Well Living House will:

1. Advance our ability to assess and respond to Indigenous health inequities, by working in partnership with Indigenous communities to improve applied health information systems (e.g. databases of information on the health and health service experiences of Indigenous children and their families).
2. Identify and contribute to best practices for improving Indigenous health, by testing and evaluating services and programs for Indigenous infants, children and their families.
3. Advance Indigenous knowledge translation, using innovative methods such as social networks, digital media, knowledge repository, Respondent Driven Sampling and concept mapping.
4. Build research and community capacity, by supporting the life-long learning of Indigenous knowledge workers and building infrastructure to support Indigenous research and evaluation.

Priority research topics will include: Culture based parenting, infant and toddler health promotion, neuroplasticity and child development, trauma and recovery, Indigenous midwifery and sexual/reproductive health. Other topics will be determined in time through community consultation.

Research approaches will include: Solutions-based science (e.g. intervention studies, evaluation, integrated knowledge translation, building maternal/child cohorts and databases, establishing a shared knowledge repository).

* We use the term 'Indigenous' to be inclusive of all people who self-identify as Aboriginal, First Nations, Indian, Indigenous, Inuit and/or Métis in Canada, as well as global Indigenous peoples.

** To underline our commitment to action, the Grandparents use the word 'Counsel' (verb) to describe themselves, rather than 'Council' (noun).

Contact: Janet Smylie, Director, Well Living House
416-864-6060 x77380
Janet.Smylie@utoronto.ca

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CRICH

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON INNER CITY HEALTH
LI KA SHING KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTE
KEENAN RESEARCH CENTRE

crich.ca

WELL LIVING HOUSE VALUES:

We will work collaboratively with other Indigenous groups and organizations and encourage the sharing of resources.

We will cultivate a welcoming, culturally secure environment.

We will encourage cross-jurisdictional and cross-nation collaborations and partnerships that respect our diversities.

We will uncover, innovate and apply traditional and novel Indigenous knowledge methods and technologies.

We will further develop, articulate and follow Indigenous protocols regarding the sharing, protection and application of Indigenous knowledge.

We will facilitate the coming together of Indigenous knowledge keepers to review and integrate knowledge that has been gathered.

We will develop a resource library of traditional knowledge and public health materials regarding infant, child and family health that is relevant, accessible and useful to Indigenous communities and organizations. The library will include Indigenous curriculum materials.

We will draw on technology and develop tools to support the sharing, protection and application of Indigenous knowledge.