

Investigating the experiences of Indigenous patients accessing naturopathic medicine in Thunder Bay Ontario.

Thank you for your interest in this research project. Your time and help are truly appreciated. This sheet gives some basic information on the research, what you can expect, how the data will be handled and used in the future. If anything is unclear or you want more information, please feel free to ask any question you wish, our contact details are at the end of this document.

What is this research about?

This research project is part of my (Dr. Jessica Carfagnini ND) Master in Health Sciences thesis requirement and will explore **the experiences of Indigenous patients accessing naturopathic medicine in Thunder Bay Ontario.**

What is naturopathic medicine?

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct system of medicine that treats the whole person and seeks to address the root cause of health concerns. Licensed Naturopathic Doctors develop individualized treatment plans in partnership with their patients to help them reach their health goals. NDs may use acupuncture or recommendations related to lifestyle, nutrition, exercise, plant medicines, vitamins/minerals, or other natural health products as part of the treatment plan.

What is being requested of me?

You are being invited to participate in this research because you are an Indigenous person who has sought healthcare from a Naturopathic Doctor (other than Dr. Jessica Carfagnini ND) in Thunder Bay. I am asking you to participate in a 45-75 minute conversational-style interview to share **your knowledge and perspectives about your experiences in accessing naturopathic medicine in Thunder Bay.** Your participation is completely voluntary; you may refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. Each interview will be audio recorded with your consent.

Are there any benefits or risks I should be aware of?

Conducting this interview will help me understand **the experiences of Indigenous patients accessing naturopathic medicine in Thunder Bay.** There are very few perceived risks from participating in this research. Your participation is voluntary and you are only being asked to offer information you feel comfortable sharing with us. Your ND will not be informed about whether or not you choose to participate. Benefits include having your voice and opinions heard and used in future to make naturopathic medicine more relevant and accessible to Indigenous Peoples in Thunder Bay and beyond.

Who am I and why am I doing this research?

I am a non-Indigenous Naturopathic Doctor who co-owns Thunder Bay Naturopathic Clinic. Since opening the Clinic in 2011, many of my Indigenous patients have asked me why naturopathic medicine is not funded by the government. Together we have noted that naturopathic medicine may be a desirable health care choice for Indigenous members of the community. Policy changes and funding for services requires research, and so this research aims to explore both what Indigenous people like about naturopathic medicine and potential

deficiencies of naturopathic medicine in serving Indigenous patients. The results from the research will help the profession to work toward offering more culturally safe and inclusive naturopathic care. A potential conflict of interest is that I co-own Thunder Bay Naturopathic Clinic. Since I am both an ND and a researcher I will attend to good ethics and refrain from interviewing any of my own patients. My thesis supervisor, Dr. Helle Møller and thesis committee member Dr. Charles Levkoe are guiding my research. My advisors include Dr. Miranda Lesperance HBS, MPH, PhD, from Opwaaganisiniing (Red Rock First Nation) and Dr. Johanne McCarthy MA, ND of the Onondaga First Nation. I have consulted with Elder Gerry Martin of Mattagami First Nation and Dr. Jeanne Paul ND, of the Coast Salish tribe from the Sliammon Band in BC.

Contribution of Indigenous Peoples: My ND colleagues and I are developing relationships with Chief Duncan Michano of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg and his colleagues at Anishinabek Nation as we all explore the role of naturopathic medicine in supporting Indigenous-led healthcare models. We have also been connecting with Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal Health Access Centre about how naturopathic medicine can be of service as they explore how to incorporate traditional medicines into their Clinic. By sharing your experiences with naturopathic medicine as an Indigenous person, you can contribute to our work in improving healthcare for Indigenous Peoples.

How should I expect to be treated?

This research aims to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity. Centrally, this means that in participating in this research you should feel that you, and your contribution to this research, have been treated with respect. Participation is entirely voluntary and all information offered will be treated in good faith. You are welcome to refuse to participate, withdraw from the research during the interview, or refuse to answer any of the questions without having to provide a reason and without any negative consequences. All questions about the research, its aims and outcomes will be answered openly and honestly.

What will happen to the data after it is collected?

In all cases, nothing you say will be attributed to you individually. Your anonymity will always be the number one priority. Only myself and my thesis advisor Dr. Helle Møller will have access to the interview transcript and identifiable materials (including audio recordings, hand-written notes and your consent form). All raw data, audio recordings and typing up of interviews will be encrypted and stored on password protected computers and in locked filing cabinets for a minimum of 7 years and then destroyed. Transcripts of interviews will be shared with research participants, who will have the opportunity to give feedback. After feedback has been incorporated, the data will be de-identified and will begin our interpretation and write-up of findings. The final research findings will be used to write articles to submit to peer-reviewed journals for publication, to create presentations for health conferences, and used as a tool to advocate for improved access to naturopathic care for Indigenous Peoples. These knowledge products will be shared with research participants. For ethical reasons and to protect the doctor/patient relationship, I will not be interviewing any of my own patients for this research.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research or the research process, please let us know as soon as possible.

Should you have specific questions related to the research ethics board approval of this study, please contact Susan Wright, manager of research ethics and contracts: (807) 343-8010 ext. 8283 or susan.wright@lakeheadu.ca.

Thank you again for your time and assistance,

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