

# Measurement and Monitoring of Cultural Safety Interventions



Christi Belcourt, *Reverence for Life*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, collection of the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health.

## Issue

Anti-Indigenous racism is widespread in Canada's health systems and results in avoidance of medical care, traumatic experiences and negative health outcomes, including preventable deaths. Despite the serious consequences and the widespread commitment to reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, there is a lack of national measurement guidelines or standards to promote cultural safety in health care, track progress and help drive change.

The [Canadian Institute for Health Information](#) (CIHI) is collaborating with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples to support their self-determined health, wellness and data priorities. The measurement of cultural safety interventions will support improvements in health care delivery and the health outcomes of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples through better insight and accountability. Ongoing monitoring will show where improvements are most needed. As stated in CIHI's 2021 report [Measuring Cultural Safety in Health Systems](#), the process of developing a system for cultural safety measurement must be culturally safe — led by First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples and in accordance with Indigenous data sovereignty principles.

## Project objectives and aligned work

CIHI is collaborating with First Nations, Inuit and Métis advisors; a working group composed of First Nations, Inuit and Métis members; and health system partners to co-design the **Organizational Interventions Measurement Tool to Advance Cultural Safety**. The objective of the tool is to assess the extent to which interventions that advance cultural safety are being implemented in health care settings and health systems (see the section on health system interventions in [Measuring Cultural Safety in Health Systems](#)). The tool serves as a resource for learning, assessment, planning and monitoring for health organizations; it can highlight areas of strength and opportunities for improvement that organizations can then begin to address.

The tool has been aligned with landmark commitments to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, such as the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#), as well as accreditation and professional practice standards, including the [Health Standards Organization's British Columbia Cultural Safety and Humility Standard](#). This alignment may help organizations collaborate with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners to prioritize and focus on interventions most important to the communities served, and to optimize efforts to advance cultural safety.

This project builds on foundational initiatives at CIHI working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, such as the [development of a cultural safety measurement framework](#), which included [pilot testing](#). The project also aligns with work that CIHI is undertaking in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis advisors and partners to develop a set of national [indicators for cultural safety measurement](#). The tool may inform certain indicators that will look at the interventions that organizations have in place to prioritize and advance cultural safety.

The tool also aligns with efforts from organizations across the country to advance cultural safety in health care, such as [standards development](#), [national dialogues](#) and the development of [various resources](#) that can be useful in advancing this work. CIHI is working closely with First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations; health systems; and national health care organizations, such as the [National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health](#), [Healthcare Excellence Canada](#) and the [Health Standards Organization](#), to collaboratively address systemic racism and to [create national awareness and change](#).

## Progress

Work on this initiative commenced in spring 2023 and has been co-designed with First Nations, Inuit and Métis advisors and partners and with the Cultural Safety Measurement Working Group. A [literature review](#) was conducted to understand Indigenous-specific cultural safety intervention evidence and measurement across Canada and internationally, with findings published in early 2024.

In spring 2024, we spoke with subject matter experts to gather feedback on [findings](#) from the literature review. These initiatives informed the development of a draft tool and accompanying guidance toolkit, which were tested by 4 pilot sites in 2024. An [early findings report](#) was published in fall 2024 to report on key takeaways resulting from the pilot testing.

Following this report, CIHI has worked collaboratively with the 4 pilot sites; First Nations, Inuit and Métis advisors; and members of the Cultural Safety Measurement Working Group to refine the cultural safety intervention measurement resources. The resulting toolkit will be published for use from coast to coast to coast.

## Next steps

Work on this initiative will continue through 2025–2026, with continued guidance from First Nations, Inuit and Métis advisors and members of the Cultural Safety Measurement Working Group. Additional engagement will focus on First Nations, Inuit and Métis data governance, data collection and reporting.

## CIHI's work on cultural safety

First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples have the right to access culturally safe health care that is responsive to their worldviews and knowledge systems. Cultural safety in health systems can be defined only by the individual receiving care. Culturally safe care does not profile or discriminate but is experienced as respectful and safe and allows meaningful communication and service.<sup>i</sup>

CIHI is on a journey, guided by what we have learned and continue to learn from First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. Our work is grounded in cultural safety and humility, respectful engagement and First Nations–, Inuit- and Métis-driven processes and partnerships. We all have a role to play in addressing racism experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in our health systems.

CIHI provides comparable and actionable data and information that are used to accelerate improvements in health care, health system performance and population health across Canada. CIHI is committed to advancing cultural safety and humility and recognizes that our role is to support accountability and transparency through better measurement. For more information on this collaborative work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, refer to our [website](#) or contact us at [IndigenousHealth@cihi.ca](mailto:IndigenousHealth@cihi.ca).

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i. Canadian Institute for Health Information. [Measuring Cultural Safety in Health Systems](#). Ottawa, ON: CIHI; 2021.



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