

#HopeForum

A National Gathering of Indigenous Youth Leaders on Healing & Life Promotion

January 21st & 22nd, 2018 // Ottawa, ON

CALLS TO ACTION

To the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Governments

- Create a policy immediately, which recognizes on-the-land and cultural activities as a key aspect of Indigenous mental health, wellness, and suicide prevention – ensuring funding dollars be available for these types of projects
- Train and provide resources for healthy adults and mature youth within communities to be effective in responding to mental health and suicide issues (this can include creating paid part-time support roles)
- Create low-barrier micro-grants available for community healing programs proven to be successful, such as: one-on-one role model mentorship programs for youth, culture-specific suicide response training, restorative justice, healing circles, and on-the-land projects
- Every youth should have the CHOICE, if they are at risk for suicide, to receive mainstream care OR funded traditional care from a healthy, trained, community member
- Every youth must have education in schools about issues like suicide and hopelessness, making clear their link to historical events and what Indigenous people have gone through. Similar education should be given to support workers, doctors, or anyone who works with Indigenous youth
- For any formal projects or positions in communities related to the above, *it must be insisted* there is a Two Spirit/LGBTQ+ teaching or awareness component involved

To Indigenous Leaders and Chiefs

- If you are spending time working and engaging with government or industry, spend equal amounts of time promoting health and healing within your community. This can include engaging in regular dialogue about emotional/mental/spiritual health, organizing intergenerational community events, and spending time with youth
- There should be a youth rep in every leadership meeting, and a youth council in every community

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Indigenous Communities and Parents

- Volunteer as much as you can. Cultural and recreation activities should happen every evening, regardless if people are getting paid or not (and even if it takes awhile for it to have an impact)

To Employers who have Indigenous Employees or Customers

- Work more to educate yourself so that you know how to interact with who we are and better address issues like racism, which can exist in the workplace

To Media and Public

- Don't only focus on negative things about Indigenous youth and communities. Celebrate us and all the amazing things about us as much as possible. Learn about who we are and the things we are doing, uplift our voices, check out our art, listen to our music, support our movements, and share cool things about us on social media!

All these Calls to Action fit within the guidelines of the **United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, and specifically relating to **Article 24**, for which implementation is very important to us.

These Calls to Action were agreed upon by 70 Indigenous youth attending the We Matter and Facebook #HopeForum in Ottawa Jan 21st and 22nd 2018. The youth represented First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities from every region across Canada.