

Recruitment and Retention Recommendations: Best Approaches for an Indigenous Liaison at a Medical School

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Introduction

Indigenous people make up 4% of Canada's population and are the youngest and fastest growing demographic. However, there are only approximately "150 Indigenous doctors in Canada representing less than 0.3% of Canadian doctors" (Spencer, 2005). This means that there is a huge gap in Indigenous health human resources and working to recruit and retain Indigenous doctors may help improve the health of the Indigenous population. In addition, there has been low application and enrolment rates of Indigenous students in medical schools across Canada, however, Canadian medical schools are seeking innovative ways improve this issue and alleviate this social disparity.

The Research Project

In order to attempt to improve this situation and reinforce their commitment to social accountability *The Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry* decided to investigate the best practices for recruiting and retaining Aboriginal medical students.

The Project Objectives

- Understand what other medical schools are doing to recruit and retain Indigenous individuals
- Get input from current and past Indigenous medical students on their medical school experience to guide recommendations
- Get input from Indigenous community members on the best approaches for engaging the different communities and supporting Indigenous students.

Findings

Barriers

These were identified as factors that hindered or prevented students from obtaining a medical education.

Pursuing Medicine

- Pathways into medicine
- The Indigenous Stream
- The Application Process
- Documentation Recognition

Cultural Safety

- Racism
- Indigenous Awareness

Facilitators

These were identified as factors that encouraged an helped students attend/complete medical school.

Engagement activities

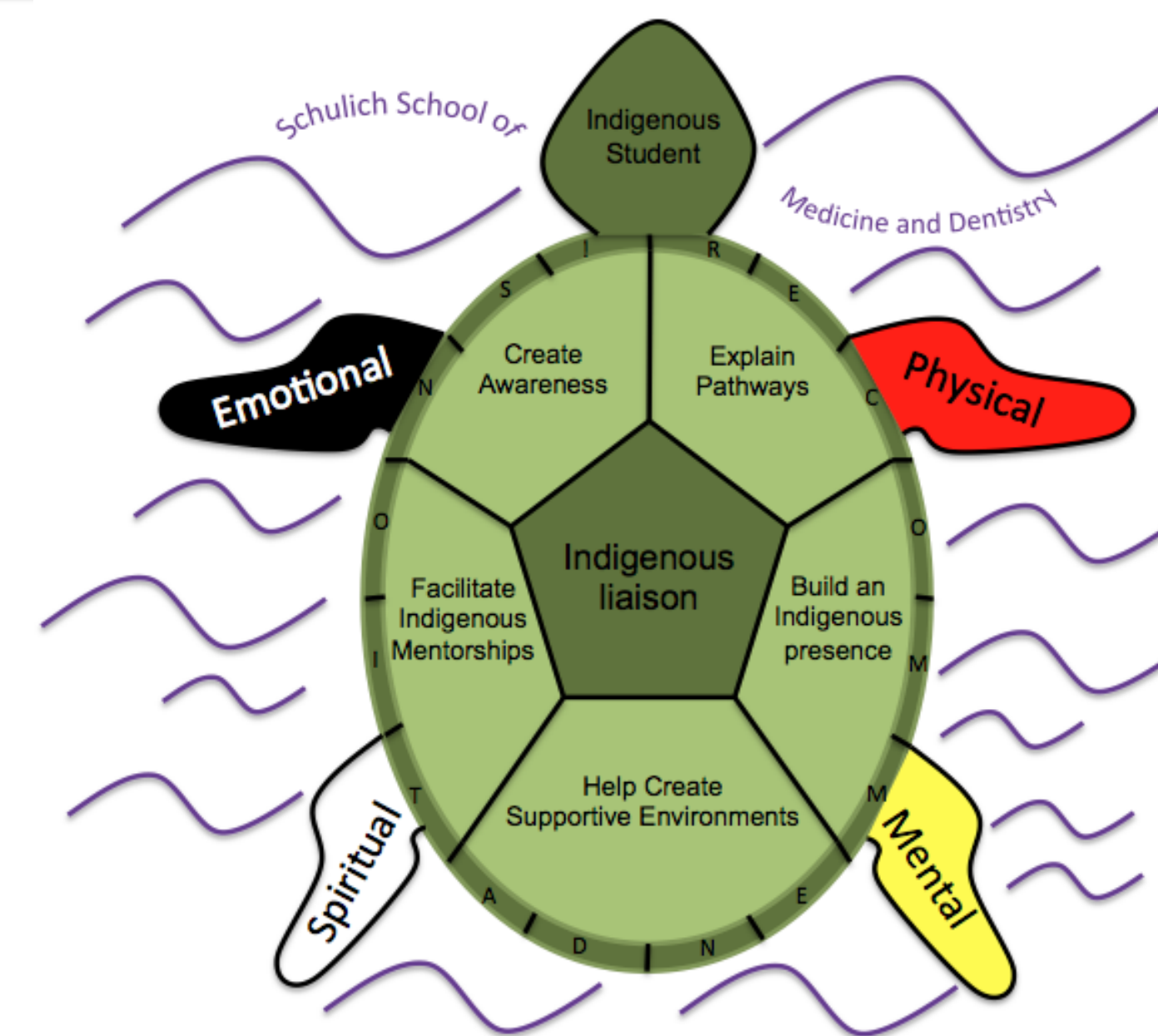
- Indigenous community School visits
- Visits to the medical school

Supports

- Social supports
- Cultural Supports
- Mentorships

The Turtle Diagram of Success

This is a visual depiction of the recommendations. The turtle represents the students that have to navigate medical and dental school, its arms and legs are the medicine wheel teachings that take a holistic approach to the individual, when one these are out of balance the turtle cannot function properly. The center of the shell represents the Indigenous liaison that holds all the other parts of the shell in place and these other parts represent each of the recommendations. With all these in place and working in harmony together it provides the students with the strength to be successful and complete their goals.



Recommendations

These are the items identified as important elements to recruiting and retaining Aboriginal students.

1. Create Awareness through Educational and Community approaches. Getting involved with the Indigenous communities are a great way to introduce them to the medical school and begin to create partnerships.

2. Explain the various pathways into medicine and help Indigenous students understand and be aware of the Indigenous stream of entry.

3. Help facilitate Indigenous mentorships by connecting with current and past medical students. This can help provide role models in Indigenous communities as well as provide students with someone to connect with who has experienced medical school.

4. Help build an Indigenous presence on campus by having Indigenous support services established, offering a culturally safe area, and addressing racism. Unfortunately, racism that is often unintentional goes unaddressed and is an issue that needs to be corrected in order to provide a culturally safe environment.

5. Create supportive environments by involving parents in education planning and offering Indigenous specific support services.

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The Team



Pam Bere is a graduate of the Counselling Psychology program at Western University and holds the Canadian Certified Counsellor designation. She is available to learners of the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry by appointment to discuss issues or concerns related to their wellbeing: personal/psychological, career, financial and academic. Individuals can come for confidential counselling or referral to other supports as needed. Individuals can also speak to Pam if they have concerns about issues related to harassment and discrimination.



Dr. Robert Hammond is a specialist in Neuropathology at London Health Sciences Centre, a Professor at Western University, and Associate Dean of Admission for the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry. His interests include Student Wellness and Mentorships, acting as Director for these programs for undergraduate medical students through the office of Learner Equity and Wellness. He was born and raised in London and received his MD and specialty training at Western.



Kathy Sadler is the Manager of Admissions and came to Schulich Medicine & Dentistry in her role in August 2012 after working for 23 years in Western's Registrar's Office as the Professional Admissions Coordinator. Kathy is a Western University alumni.



Adrean Angles was born and raised in London, Ontario and is from Oneida Nation of the Thames and Chippewa of the Thames First Nation. He completed his bachelors degree in Health Science at Western University and obtained his MPH from Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry. He plans on working with the Indigenous population of Canada to improve the health disparities they are faced with.