

Montreal  
Indigenous  
Community



# Internal policy and general procedure

Mental Health Program



# Internal policy and general procedure Mental Health Program

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# Introduction

## **Presentation of the Mental Health Program**

During the pandemic, the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK (the NETWORK) observed an increase in psychological distress among front-line workers serving Indigenous populations. In response, the NETWORK secured funding to provide a mental health support service, offering at least 10 therapy sessions to over 100 of these workers between 2021 and 2023. We were also able to secure funds to continue the program.

## **Objective of the Policy**

This policy provides the necessary information in the event of dissatisfaction with the services received from the "Mental Health Program", in the event of renewal of therapy sessions and in relation to the confidentiality of information on referred individuals.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to caregivers, referred individuals and the coordination of the Mental Health Program.

# 1. Eligibility criteria

This program is available to people who work directly with Indigenous peoples. Whether you are Indigenous or non-Indigenous, you are eligible if you are a front-line employee for an Indigenous organization\* or for an Indigenous-serving organization\*\* in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal.

## 1.1 Eligibility of Organizations

### a. Indigenous Organizations\*

The NETWORK defines an “Indigenous Organization” as an organization that meets the following criteria:

- The organization was founded by an Indigenous person or group;
- The organization is led by Indigenous people; more than 50% of the decision makers must be Indigenous (Board of Directors, Steering Committee, Director or other decision-making positions);
- The organization is made up of Indigenous people, with a minimum of 50% of its employees being Indigenous (this criterion does not apply to organizations with fewer than five employees);
- More than 50% of the organization’s members and beneficiaries are Indigenous.

### b. Indigenous-Serving Organizations\*\*

The NETWORK defines an “Indigenous-serving organization” as an organization that has 30% or more of its clientele from Indigenous communities and has a program that specifically and directly serves Indigenous people.

## 1.2 Eligibility of Referred Individuals

An automatic assessment of eligibility will be carried out by the Mental Health Program Coordinator for each new request for access to the Mental Health Program. This initial check will be followed by quarterly checks using the list of employees transmitted and updated by participating organizations.

Eligibility will be determined in one of three ways, depending on the applicant's situation:

- **List of employees:** This list includes last name, first name, start and end dates of employment, if applicable, and the name of the organization. It is strictly confidential and accessible only by the Program Coordinator and the participating organization.
- **Human resources:** If security considerations prevent the organization from posting the names of its employees, the applicant must authorize their human resources department to add their name to this list.
- **Work certificate:** If the applicant prefers not to inform human resources of their participation in the Mental Health Program, they must provide us with a recent work certificate (less than 3 months old).

## 1.3 Eligibility of Caregivers

To ensure that our clients have access to quality, culturally safe mental health care, we base the recruitment of caregivers on the following criteria:

- Previous experience working with Indigenous individuals or awareness of Indigenous realities;
- Specialization in the type of support sought by referred individuals (stress, burnout, anxiety, bereavement, sexual abuse, etc.).
- Be recommended by other collaborators,
- Be already affiliated with [Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit](#).
- Be able to issue insurance receipts.

## **2. Responsibilities**

### **2.1 The NETWORK's Responsibilities**

The NETWORK is committed to ensuring open and transparent communication with the caregiver by e-mail and telephone, as well as providing ongoing support to the caregiver, for example, by responding promptly to all questions and concerns and processing invoices within agreed-upon timeframes.

The NETWORK guarantees to connect each referred individual with a caregiver as quickly as possible according to available resources, and to inform referred individuals of any delays incurred if they are on a waiting list. The NETWORK is committed to referring people to caregivers who have a good reputation in the Indigenous sector in Tiohtià:ke and who are recognized as culturally safe for Indigenous peoples, cultural minorities and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

The NETWORK is committed to conducting a quarterly verification of the eligibility status of all referred individuals, at regular three-month intervals. The NETWORK also undertakes to pay, within a maximum of 2 to 3 weeks, for all sessions carried out, as well as those cancelled without respecting the cancellation policy established by the caregiver.

Finally, the NETWORK undertakes to continually seek out new caregivers to refer clients to, and to ensure that the range of expertise available is diversified: elders, art therapists, social workers, psychologists, and so on.

### **2.2 Responsibilities of Participating Organizations**

Once one or more employees of an organization benefit from the NETWORK's Mental Health Program, the organization becomes a participating organization. As part of this partnership, and to ensure the smooth running of the Mental Health Program, it is important to highlight the following responsibilities of partner organizations:

- **Responsibility to update** : We ask each participating organization to keep their employee lists up to date on a quarterly basis. This is essential to ensure the accuracy of the information and the eligibility of their employees to the mental health program.
- **Commitment to communicate**: Whether it's to confirm an update, report a delay, or even indicate an inability to respond to a request, every interaction contributes to effective collaboration. Partner organizations are expected to respond to NETWORK communications within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Proposing alternatives in the event of constraints** : It is understandable that certain situations, such as security issues or other constraints, may prevent NETWORK requests from being answered in a compliant manner. In such cases, we invite the partner organization to propose alternative solutions, or to consider the options offered by the NETWORK, to overcome these obstacles.

We value the collaboration of each participating organization and are dedicated to working together in the interest of the mental health of their employees. Your active involvement in this process is essential to the success of the Mental Health Program and the well-being of those involved.

## **2.3 Responsibilities of Caregivers**

Each caregiver adheres to the declaration of service and guarantees to provide compassionate, culturally respectful and attentive support in compliance with applicable laws. Caregivers also guarantee to respect the confidentiality of those referred to them by the NETWORK, and to provide a culturally safe environment. If needed, the NETWORK has developed a [Decolonial Toolbox](#) and an [Ally Toolkit](#) , which can be shared with caregivers who are less aware of Indigenous realities. The aim is to provide resources, food for thought and help non-Indigenous people understand the complexity of decolonization, so they can become better allies.



### **Caregivers Also Commit to:**

- Ensure the quality of care and interventions in accordance with ethical and professional standards. The caregiver must also hold the necessary accreditations according to the type of therapy offered.
- Ensure cultural and emotional safety.
- Ensure that each rescheduled session takes place before the end of the fiscal year, i.e. March 31 each year.
- Report any concerns, incidents or repeated last-minute cancellations to the Mental Health Program coordinator.
- Not to change the treatment modality in the course of therapy without notifying the Mental Health Program coordination,
- To inform referred individuals of their cancellation policy, and to notify them of any changes in this regard.

## **2.4 Responsibilities of Referred Individuals**

Referred individuals agree to actively participate in therapy sessions as agreed and to respect the caregiver's schedule by cancelling meetings as little as possible. Referred individuals agree to comply with their caregiver's cancellation policy, as well as the NETWORK's cancellation policy. Referred individuals are responsible for asking their caregiver and the Mental Health Program coordinator to suspend their remaining sessions, if needed, to prevent unnecessary expenses in the event of repeated cancellations. Sessions suspended in this way remain accessible until March 31 of the current fiscal year. Suspension of sessions should be requested no later than 3 days before the next scheduled session.

For all communication with the Mental Health Program Coordinator, referred individuals are invited to send an e-mail to [mentalhealth@reseautlnetwork.com](mailto:mentalhealth@reseautlnetwork.com).

Referred individuals are also required to respond to the quarterly follow-up conducted by the Mental Health Program Coordination.

Referred individuals are required to notify the program coordination if any change in their employment status, which could affect their eligibility for the program, occurs outside the verification periods carried out by the NETWORK. Alternatively, you can inform your organization's human resources department so that the list of employees can be updated at the time of your departure.

In the event that the NETWORK finds that a referral has received sessions beyond their eligibility period, we will adopt an understanding and respectful approach:

- We understand that job transitions can significantly affect mental health, and you may have needed support after your employment in the sector ended;
- The NETWORK is ready to discuss suitable solutions;
- A flexible repayment plan, if required, may be possible.

Repayment arrangements, whether made in a single payment by electronic transfer or according to a staggered plan agreed with the NETWORK, can be clarified by contacting program coordination at the following address: [mentalhealth@reseanetwork.com](mailto:mentalhealth@reseanetwork.com).

We're here to help you find the best possible solution!

## **3. Cancelled or postponed sessions**

### **3.1 Last Minute Cancellation**

The NETWORK compensates for any session cancelled at the last minute by the referred individual. The caregiver must invoice the NETWORK as if the session had taken place, and is responsible for forwarding the invoice to the Mental Health Program coordinator. Cancelled sessions that do not comply with the caregiver's cancellation policy are deducted from the referred individual's total remaining sessions according to the caregiver's cancellation policy. Please note that the NETWORK transfers the said cancellation policy to each referred person.

The fee to be charged to the NETWORK in the event of a last-minute cancellation by the referred individual is at the caregiver's discretion, in accordance with the caregiver's internal cancellation policy.

### **3.2 Determining Session Renewals**

Renewal of sessions after the 10 basic sessions offered depends on the availability of the NETWORK's financial resources and the number of new requests. It is therefore not possible to renew sessions indefinitely for all referred individuals.

In a situation where financial resources are limited and there is a high influx of requests, priority will be given to people to Inuit, First Nations and Métis community members, in accordance with our mission and commitment to these communities. We encourage all referred individuals and caregivers to discuss possible financing options (e.i. personal insurance, employer-provided insurance, access to [Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit](#)) and to plan ahead for care extension options, anticipating the possibility of non-renewal of sessions following the allocation of the 10 basic sessions offered by the NETWORK.

### **3.3 Loss of access to services due to disengagement**

When a referred person disengages from their commitments to a caregiver and the NETWORK, they may lose access to the Mental Health Program. This disengagement is primarily reflected by repeated cancellations of sessions provided by the NETWORK, without adhering to the caregiver's cancellation policy.

The referred person must notify the caregiver of any cancellations within the timeframe specified by their policy. If more than three sessions are cancelled without notice, in accordance with the caregiver's cancellation policy, access to the Mental Health Program will be suspended for a period of 6 months. During this period, the number of remaining sessions will be preserved and can be used once the suspension period ends.

This procedure applies each time a person disengages from the Mental Health Program.

The NETWORK will contact the referred individual as well as their caregiver before any suspension of access to the Mental Health Program. After the 6-month period has passed, the NETWORK will check with the caregiver to confirm whether they are still able to support the referred individual or if a connection with another caregiver is necessary.

Once the caregiver's availability is confirmed, the NETWORK will contact the referred individual to restore their access to services.

### 3.4 Dissatisfaction with Services Received

If the referred individual is dissatisfied with the services received by the caregiver, they can contact the Mental Health Program Coordinator (at [mentalhealth@reseaumtlnetwork.com](mailto:mentalhealth@reseaumtlnetwork.com)) so that the NETWORK can connect them with another caregiver. If the referred individual wishes to lodge a complaint against the therapist, they must do so directly with the professional association to which the caregiver is affiliated. You will find the necessary documentation on the website of each professional association:

- **For psychotherapists and psychologists:**
  - Psychologists: [Ordres des psychologues du Québec \(OPQ\)](#)
  - Social Workers and Marital or Family Therapists: [Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec \(OTSTCFQ\)](#)
  - Guidance Counsellors: [Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec \(OCCOQ\)](#)
  - Nurses: [Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec \(OIIQ\)](#)
  - Doctors: [Collège des médecins du Québec \(CMQ\)](#)
  - Psychoeducators: [Ordre des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec \(OPPQ\)](#)
  - Occupational Therapists: [Ordre des ergothérapeutes du Québec \(OEQ\)](#)
  - Ontario Social Workers: [Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers](#)

- **For Art Therapists / Music Therapists / Drama Therapists / Dance Therapists, etc:**
  - Art Therapist: [Association des art-thérapeutes du Québec \(AATQ\)](#)
  - Music Therapists: [Association canadienne de musicothérapie \(ACMT\)](#)
  - Drama Therapist: [North American Drama Therapy Association \(NADTA\)](#)
  - Dance Therapist: [Dance Movement Therapy Association in Canada \(DMTAC\)](#).

## 4. Privacy Policy

### 4.1 Introduction

The protection and security of the personal data of referred individuals, caregivers and organizations is a priority for the NETWORK. This policy details how we collect, store, use and share data concerning all three parties.

### 4.2 Data Collection

We collect only the data necessary for the provision of our services and the smooth running of the program. This data may include: surname, first name, e-mail address, telephone numbers, socio-demographic information, reason for requesting therapy and the name of the organization for which the referred individual works.

This is part of our eligibility verification process that we apply when a person requests access to our program. To facilitate this process, we may contact your organization's human resources department if you agree.

Anonymized data will be used for statistical purposes by the NETWORK once a year. This data may include: number of sessions allocated, cost of sessions, number of complaints, etc.

## 4.3 Data Storage and Use

All confidential data collected is stored securely on [Monday](#)'s servers, which are renowned for their high security standards. No copies of the data are kept outside these servers. The Monday server is used by a single person, the Mental Health Program Coordinator. In the event of a change of coordinator, the account will only be transferred to the server at the time of the transition. .

Here is Monday's [politique de confidentialité](#) and [F.A.Q.](#)

The NETWORK exports anonymized data once a year for the purposes of our annual reports. These enable us to assess the state of our services and improve them accordingly.

We do not sell, rent or share the data of any parties involved to third parties or for commercial purposes. The data is not even shared with the rest of the NETWORK team.

## 4.4 Data Protection

[Monday](#) uses advanced data protection methods to ensure the security of stored information. For our part, we have put in place organizational and technical measures to prevent unauthorized access, modification, disclosure or deletion of data via access management managed by our IT specialist.

## 4.5 Access to Data

Access to the data is reserved solely for the Mental Health Program Coordinator, who needs it to fulfill their duties and meet the needs of the program. The NETWORK's Information Technology Specialist is the only other person authorized to use the accounts, but only during the transfer of the account from one coordinator to another, should the current coordinator leave.

## 5. Policy Implementation

### 5.1 How does the NETWORK ensure that this policy is implemented?

The NETWORK will ensure that this policy is implemented through regular e-mail and telephone contact with caregivers and referred individuals. This may include questions about satisfaction with the care provided, and questions about the structure of the program itself.

### 5.2 How will caregivers, organizations and referred individuals be informed of updates to this policy?

The NETWORK is committed to maintaining transparent and open communication with caregivers, referred individuals and participating organizations. We welcome feedback and suggestions regarding this policy or any other aspect of our Mental Health Program. Your active participation is crucial to enable us to continually improve and best meet the needs of our community.

Should you have any questions, clarifications or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us. Together, we continue to build a strong and responsive network, dedicated to providing effective and responsive support to those we serve.

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#### Contact the NETWORK:

[info@reseaumtlnetwork.com](mailto:info@reseaumtlnetwork.com)

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