



South Slave Divisional Education Council

IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
South Slave Divisional Education Council	Indigenous Health and Wellness Elder	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
99-17576	Fort Smith	Education / South Slave Region

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Indigenous Health and Wellness Elder plays an integral role in supporting children and youth with complex mental health needs, and their families, to build community and identity in the school. The Indigenous Health and Wellness Elder provides a wide range of services with an emphasis on developing relationships with children, youth and their families.

Recognizing the importance of identity in supporting positive mental health in children and youth, the Indigenous Health and Wellness Elder will support culture and language programming in the school.

SCOPE

Located in Fort Smith, the Indigenous Health and Wellness Elder (Elder in School) reports to the school Principal and is responsible for engaging with students to use traditional mental, social, cultural, and spiritual supports, and is part of a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach to the delivery of direct mental health and wellness services to support the needs of children, youth and their families.

This position is based primarily in the school and works on a school year calendar, however in order to align with the needs of children and youth, other worksite locations may include on-the-land camps, student / family homes, or other appropriate community locations. The incumbent ensures that traditional ways of knowing, being and doing are followed and are meeting the individual need of the child, youth and family.

The Indigenous Health and Wellness Elder provides direct student care including listening and sharing of traditional knowledge, advises and collaboratively delivers language and cultural programming, and participates in school wide initiatives to create cultural safety.

This position, is part of a team that collaborates with other community services which could include Principals, Teachers, Regional Coordinators, Child Youth Care Counsellors, Social Workers, Nurses, Physicians, Community Health Representatives, police services, probation, Victim Services, and local Indigenous and Non-Government Organizations to provide a comprehensive, person and family centered approach to care.

As part of an interdisciplinary team approach, other services targeted to assist children and youth include community development, consultation, coordination, education and integrated services management. The incumbent is a member of the school staff and provides integrated mental health and behavioural programming in collaboration with school personnel and other health and social services professionals.

Providing these services in small communities presents unique challenges and the incumbent may also have interactions with friends, neighbours, relatives or social acquaintances who are receiving services on a day to day basis, outside of the work environment.

There will be requirements to attend meetings or sessions in locations that require walking or driving.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide a range of Indigenized health and wellness supports to all children and youth.

- Identify and facilitate connections to community and regional resources that could meet identified needs.
- Participate with School Based Support Team to develop integrated care plan.
- Provide listening ear and offer traditional knowledge to students.
- Advise to ensure that family, cultural and spiritual practices are adhered to during therapeutic planning and communicate feedback to children, youth and their families.
- May be consulted by other service providers and mental health experts to inform recommended approaches and interventions, including making referrals to the principal, CYCC, or social services when appropriate.
- Adhere to confidentiality/privacy, sharing of information, client record keeping practices and other areas of service provision and client care.

2. Provide advice and support to schools and other service providers who provide services to children and youth including educators, principals, and regional staff.

- Provide traditional knowledge expertise, support, professional learning opportunities and consultation to school staff to ensure adequate understanding and ability to respond to the needs of children and youth with social emotional and/or behavioural issues, including participation, when relevant, as a member of the school-based support team (i.e., contribute to the development of Student Support Plans, Individualized Education Plans, etc.), parent workshops, and/or interagency team meetings.

- Ensure a seamless and collaborative approach to service delivery in schools by maintaining a close, collaborative working relationship with school based staff including the principal and CYCC.
- Provide cultural and traditional expertise to community staff and agencies delivering services to children and youth.
- Function as a resource and source of community based information on best practices when working with children/youth in particular for those with social, emotional and/or behavior issues and their families.
- Function as an advisor, where applicable, within the field of child youth mental health and serve as a resource to assist other service delivery partners in understanding integrated, trauma informed and culturally safe practices in the context of colonization and residential schools.

3. Provide leadership and expertise in the implementation of culture and language programming.

- Remain up-to-date and follow school, community, regional, and territorial legislation, policies, initiatives, and resources.
- Undertake purposeful steps to cultivate collaborative working relationships in order to ensure optimal integrative and wrap around service potential. This may also include participating in on-the-land wellness initiatives.
- Demonstrate integrity and respect to cultivate positive working relationships with community and regional partners.
- Actively work to educate staff and students on the local culture, customs and practice and engage in community events and relationship building opportunities.
- Maintain staff, child, youth, and family privacy and confidentiality.
- Utilize a strengths based approach that focuses and builds upon community and personal resiliency and strengths.
- Provide leadership and advocacy with children/youth/families in working with other agencies and services.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

The incumbent will spend approximately 50% of the day on cultural based activities including working outside and in a variety of sitting, standing, kneeling, and moving activities. There may be expectations of the incumbent to participate in youth recreational sports.

Environmental Conditions

No unusual demands.

Sensory Demands

The Elder in School will spend approximately 50% of the day providing mental health and wellness support for students requiring the use of the combined senses.

Mental Demands

Staff who are in an environment where they may hear about child and youth mental health and wellness support have been known to experience vicarious trauma as a result of repeatedly hearing children and youths' traumatic stories (i.e., bullying, sexual abuse, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, multiple losses, family violence, parental addictions, etc.).

In this profession, there is some level of uncertainty in knowing what to expect while at work. Students are unpredictable, including students in crisis and those with social, emotional, and behavioural needs. Students can be abusive to those trying to help, and the incumbent may experience legitimate concern about the risk of verbal and even physical assault.

The incumbent may be required to travel to outlying communities or to land based programs.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire and apply knowledge of Northwest Territories services and supports, as well as relevant legislation (*Child and Family Services Act, Health Information Act, Mental Health Act, Education Act*).
- Knowledge of and the ability to apply awareness of the impacts of colonization and residential schools and to reduce barriers for children youth and their families.
- Skills relating to child and youth health and wellness services including direct, front line service delivery through non-judgmental listening, and offering of traditional knowledge.
- Ability to work in an interdisciplinary manner to optimize wrap around service delivery.
- Ability to provide advice to students, educators, principals, CYCCs and other school staff.
- Ability to provide leadership and expertise in the implementation of culture and language programming.
- Knowledge of the signs of violence, abuse, mental illness and addictions
- Ability to work effectively in a cross cultural setting including with community members impacted by colonization and residential schools.
- Ability to work in teams, and mentor others.
- Ability to communicate clearly on traditional knowledge.
- Ability to adhere to a professional code of ethics.
- Ability to maintain the goodwill of clients, colleagues and co-workers.
- Computer skills and the ability to use word processing, internet, and email programs.
- Ability to act effectively and compassionately during crisis/ stressful situations.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

Extensive traditional knowledge; a diploma in counselling / education or social work, and one (1) year of experience working with children and youth in a school or counselling setting.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Position Security

- ☐ No criminal records check required
- ☐ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- ☒ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French language (check one if applicable)

- ☐ French required (must identify required level below)
 - Level required for this Designated Position is:
 - ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
 - READING COMPREHENSION:
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
 - WRITING SKILLS:
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
- ☐ French preferred

Indigenous language: Indigenous Language - Not Specified

- ☐ Required
- ☒ Preferred