

Community of Indigenous Students in Nursing (CISN)

Group Description:

Embedded within the Student Equity Coalition (SEC) and supported by the CIHR Indigenous Health Nursing Chair at Dalhousie University School of Nursing, the Community of Indigenous Students in Nursing (CISN) was founded by Indigenous students in the autumn of 2018 as a peer support and advocacy group. This group is open to self-identifying Indigenous students in all levels of the nursing programs at Dalhousie University (both undergraduate and graduate), prospective nursing students (from Indigenous communities, the Transition Year Program (TYP), and practical nursing programs), and recent graduates. This group focuses on creating a sense of community on campus for Indigenous students, advocates for the needs of Indigenous nursing students in the classroom and in the nursing profession and engages in political advocacy related to Indigenous health and wellness.

Rationale:

While Indigenous students have inherent strengths and resilience, they are often underserved or underrepresented in the context of nursing education. In academic institutions where the population is predominately white, Indigenous students can be placed in unsafe environments and positioned as “others”. There is a need for Indigenous students to have a safe place to build community and support each other in their goals and objectives pertaining to nursing. Indigenous students have reported that a student community is necessary to achieve these aims.

Goal of the Group:

To build a sense of community and provides services/supports to Indigenous students in the nursing programs at Dalhousie University.

Objectives:

- Personal Development & Advocacy: To provide a safe space for Indigenous students to discuss or explore issues related to being Indigenous in the nursing profession
- Research: To have focused discussion on how to become more involved with research and scholarly activities (conferences, presentations and publications).
- Community Connection: To develop and foster strong connections and relationships in the Indigenous communities locally and within Mi'kma'ki
- Mentorship: To facilitate communication and support between Indigenous nursing students across programs.
- Academics: To share and discuss opportunities for continuing education as well as strategies for academic success.
- Professional Development: To discuss concerns related to licensing, registration, examination and other practice related topics

Format:

The format of group meetings is flexible and meant to be responsive to student needs and community priorities. In general, CISN will gather once per month for updates and relationship building. Additional events may be offered to meet students interests in needs. Currently, meetings are closed to allies but the possibility of including allies in certain events will be explored in the future.

Alignment with the School of Nursing:

The School of Nursing advances health and social justice by educating nurses to be leaders; generating, translating and applying nursing knowledge; and informing and influencing health-related public policy, practice and planning.

Group Co-Leads and Contact Information:

Leah Carrier – leah.carrier@dal.ca

Courtney Pennell - courtney.pennell@iwk.nshealth.ca