

Indigenous Allyship in Medical Education L'allié des Autochtones dans l'éducation médicale

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Dear Editor,

We would like to thank Bruno et al. for the contributions they made through their article “What it means to be an ally in Indigenous healthcare.”¹

This article explores the meaning of allyship in Indigenous health care, the experience of being an ally, and how allyship is cultivated. The authors effectively highlight the importance of healthcare professionals’ allyship with Indigenous populations, acknowledging the history of colonialism and Western authority which have negatively influenced the social and health outcomes of Indigenous populations. These worse outcomes include being disproportionately affected by diabetes, hypertension, mental health concerns, food insecurity, and a significantly reduced life expectancy.²

As medical students, we agree with Bruno et al. and suggest that there should be a push for more active opportunities to be allies to Indigenous populations. Activities such as community workshops and volunteer programs would help medical trainees and professionals build relationships with Indigenous populations, gain a better understanding of their culture, and learn how to

best support them in a healthcare setting. One such program is the “Being an Ally to Indigenous Peoples” training program hosted by Cyndy Baskin, Ph.D., Emeritus Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Toronto Metropolitan University. This 6-hour training program helps clinicians and other service providers explore various worldviews as well as how Indigenous and Western approaches to healing can work together. Overall, pairing medical students early in their careers with allies and Indigenous health professionals would enhance their understanding of treating Indigenous populations.

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