



Ontario Centre of Excellence  
for Child & Youth Mental Health  
Centre d'excellence de l'Ontario en santé  
mentale des enfants et des adolescents

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# MHRC impact grants: COVID-19 response

## Project summary

### **Lona' tshistanet (meaning Firekeepers): Enhancing Coming of Age (COA) for Oneida**

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#### ***What's the issue?***

Colonization and disconnection to their culture have profoundly impacted the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health of Indigenous people over many generations. Indigenous communities have limited access to physical and mental health resources and internet-based services. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic added to the already existing access challenges, leading to further risk to the health of Indigenous communities. To address this situation, the project team will be enhancing Coming of Age, an existing wellness program.

#### ***What's the solution?***

The program, set up in consultation with the local community, will include family groups and leverage land-based healing practices rooted in Haudenosaunee Culture to improve the spiritual connectedness and mental well-being of Oneida young people. Each participant will be paired with an older mentor within the community and will participate in 12 mental wellness skill-learning workshops that combine traditional Indigenous healing values with evidence-based Western therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) practices and dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT). The wellness program will culminate in a five-day summer camp during which participants will share what they have learned and be trained on mentoring others.