



Barriers and Facilitators for Accessing Indigenous Supports – Literature Review

This literature review examines what on-campus Indigenous supports are available to students in PSE, what barriers are impacting the quality or accessibility of these supports, and how these supports can be improved.

**Includes, but is not limited to, Indigenous children who were forcefully taken from their families and placed into the foster care system or adopted by predominantly white families.*

Historical Context: Barriers That Continue to Shape Indigenous Student Experiences

Residential Schools and The Sixties Scoop



*Forced separation from family



Physical and sexual abuse



Residual impact of traumatic experiences



Intergenerational and Historical Trauma



Breakdown of culture



Cycle of trauma



Cumulative effects of oppression



Need for Supports



Mental Health



Community and cultural disconnect



Lack of financial resources

Types of Indigenous Supports in PSE: Impacts and Barriers

Indigenous Student Services (ISS) and Mental Health Services play a vital role in supporting Indigenous students throughout their PSE journey. While offering culturally relevant supports, their accessibility and impact are often shaped by institutional, cultural, and systemic barriers.



INDIGENOUS STUDENT SERVICES (ISS)

Provide culturally grounded spaces, programming, and support to help Indigenous students feel connected, supported, and successful throughout their PSE journey.

Lack of Indigenous Staff

There is often a lack of Indigenous staff and faculty working in ISSs and on the wider campus.

Connection to Community and Culture

Being able to engage with Indigenous communities and cultural practices has been greatly beneficial to the academic success of Indigenous students.

Lack of Institutional Support

The ability of ISSs to provide quality support to Indigenous students is partly limited by funding and space on campus.

Academic Support

Offering academic support is important as Indigenous student struggles in academia often make them feel like they do not belong in PSE.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Offer essential emotional support for students, especially when culturally relevant care addresses impacts of trauma, stigma, and disconnection.

Structural Accessibility

While 91% of public Canadian universities have counseling services, they often lack the capacity to accommodate all students.

Stigma

Stigma surrounding mental health and seeking help deters students from accessing mental health services by causing feelings of shame.

