

## *Indigenous women's reproductive and sexual justice and self-determination (Final Report Summary)*

### **What does reproductive and sexual justice mean to urban Indigenous women living on the Métis homelands and Treaty One (Winnipeg), Treaty Four (Regina), and Treaty Six (Saskatoon) territories?**

It means being able to make decisions about their bodies, gender, sexuality, reproduction, and how they raise their children. Basically, it includes the right to determine:

- 1) Gender and sexual identity and experiences,
- 2) The terms of reproduction (including the right to prevent pregnancy or become pregnant and to end or continue pregnancies),
- 3) The selection of birthing conditions (including whether to have a midwife-attended or physician-attended birth),
- 4) The selection of where one lives with one's family (geographic location and housing conditions), and
- 5) The engagement of relationships (with services, community, cultural practices, and land).

### **What did we do as part of the project? (March 2015-June 2017)**

- 1) Research circles and interviews with a total of 32 collaborators;
- 2) Policy analysis focused on abortion services, tubal ligation procedures, and child welfare;
- 3) Environmental scan;
- 4) Collaborative meetings.

### ***What gets in the way of Indigenous women claiming reproductive and sexual justice?***

- This study identified that colonial, racist, sexist and homophobic stereotypes and assumptions continue to influence systems, institutions, programming, and individuals. For instance, Indigenous women spoke about healthcare and social service providers pressuring them to use long-term contraceptives and/or to have tubal ligations and/or abortion procedures, and some collaborators shared specific examples about how these service providers' actions were influenced by stereotypes.
- Colonial processes have undermined, and continue to undermine, intergenerational transmission of knowledge about Indigenous ways of relating, and teachings about gender, sexuality, and reproduction.
- Dominance of Christian anti-choice beliefs about birth control and pregnancy terminations and biomedical approaches to pregnancy loss.

### ***What supports and respects Indigenous women's rights to reproductive and sexual justice?***

Collaborators talked about the importance of supportive individuals, organizations, and practices, including:

- Sustaining and reclaiming supportive Indigenous teachings, practices, and ceremonies.
- Recognizing Indigenous women's, two-spirit and LGBTQ+ people's (lesbian, bisexual, queer and trans\* as well as other gender- and sexually-diverse identities) multiple roles historically and today.
- Inclusive and responsive care that 'meets them where they are at,' responds to their needs, and respects different aspects of their identities and lived experiences.

### ***How do Indigenous women claim and exercise their rights to reproductive and sexual justice?***

Indigenous women claim and exercise their rights to reproductive and sexual justice in a various ways, such as:

- Resisting the harms of the EuroWestern systems and ways of thinking;
- Using government and community-based services to meet their needs and their families' needs;
- Reaching out and getting support from Indigenous women and allies in their communities;
- Sharing community knowledge and having critical conversations.

### ***What changes will support Indigenous women's rights to reproductive and sexual justice?***

- Increase resources to Indigenous-led organizations and networks.
- Organizations and institutions can engage the 'deep work' of 1) assessing organizations and practices for colonial ideologies and values, and 2) transforming services, service-delivery, and organizations to be more representative, inclusive and welcoming for all members of the communities they serve.

**Contact:** Holly McKenzie at [holly.mckenzie@usask.ca](mailto:holly.mckenzie@usask.ca)

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