

# Addictive behaviours among aboriginal people in canada

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Indigenous Issues in Canada: A Comprehensive Examination\*\*

### **Historical Context and Systemic Inequities**

Indigenous peoples in Canada have faced centuries of oppression and discrimination. The Residential School System, which operated from the 1880s to the 1990s, forcefully removed Indigenous children from their families and communities, causing lasting trauma. Additionally, Indigenous communities were dispossessed of their lands and resources, leading to widespread poverty and social isolation.

### **Addiction and Substance Abuse**

The addiction rate among Indigenous people in Canada is disproportionately high. Approximately 20% of Indigenous adults report having an alcohol or drug addiction, compared to 7% of non-Indigenous adults. The most common addiction in Canada is alcohol.

### **Aboriginal Unemployment and Poverty**

Aboriginal unemployment rates in Canada are among the highest in the country. Indigenous Canadians are more likely to be unemployed, underemployed, or have jobs that are unstable and poorly paid. This economic disparity is rooted in systemic barriers such as discrimination, lack of access to education and training, and inadequate housing.

### **Over-Representation in the Justice System**

Indigenous people are disproportionately represented in Canadian prisons. They make up over 30% of the inmate population, despite only constituting 5% of the total population. This overrepresentation is a result of systemic factors such as poverty, lack of access to legal representation, and biased policing practices.

### **Toronto's Indigenous Overdose Strategy**

The City of Toronto has implemented an Indigenous Overdose Strategy aimed at addressing the high rates of overdose deaths among Indigenous residents. The strategy focuses on providing culturally sensitive harm reduction services, such as supervised consumption sites and overdose prevention training, as well as addressing social determinants of health like poverty and homelessness.

### **Indigenous Conflict Resolution and Traditional Practices**

Indigenous peoples in Canada have traditionally relied on consensus-based decision-making and restorative justice practices to resolve conflicts. However, colonial systems and laws have eroded these traditions, leading to increased reliance on Western legal systems.

### **Current Treatment of Indigenous Peoples**

Despite efforts at reconciliation, Indigenous peoples in Canada still face discrimination and inequality. They continue to experience lower levels of access to healthcare, education, and employment. Systemic racism and cultural insensitivity persist in many aspects of Canadian society.

### **Apologies and Reconciliation**

The Canadian government has issued several apologies to Indigenous peoples for past injustices, including the Residential School System. However, reconciliation remains an ongoing process that requires systemic change and a commitment to addressing the underlying causes of Indigenous disadvantage.

### **Indigenous Interventions and Strategies**

Indigenous-led interventions and strategies are essential for addressing the complex issues facing Indigenous communities. These interventions focus on self-

determination, community-based solutions, and the preservation of Indigenous culture and identity.

## Mental Health and Addiction

Addiction is often a symptom of underlying mental health issues. Substance abuse and mental health disorders are highly prevalent among Indigenous Canadians, and there is a need for culturally sensitive and accessible mental health services.

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