

Community Rehabilitation Worker in First Nations

The Community Rehabilitation Worker (CRW) is a local Indigenous community member trained in rehabilitation principles and skills to support elders and Home and Community Care (HCC) clients. The CRW is a member of the local HCC team. The CRW role supports and enhances community participation in traditional activities, exercise and social groups, local and regional transportation assistance, transitions between hospital and home, safety and well-being among Elders, Activities of Daily Living, and identification of mental health concerns and appropriate resources.



Rationale

Indigenous Peoples in Canada continue to face significant inequities in health and access to culturally safe health care. In addition, Indigenous seniors aged 75+ are 45-55% more frail than the average senior in Ontario, and essential rehabilitation programs and services common in urban settings are not readily available in rural and remote Northwestern Ontario's predominantly Indigenous communities. This gap puts Indigenous elders at increased risk of frailty and compromised health, and often makes it impossible for Indigenous elders to age in community. Evidence and a regional needs assessment have reinforced the need for locally trained CRWs educated to support rehabilitation, local languages, cultures and traditions.

Training Outline

Overview: The program consists of 8 weeks of in-person instruction over a 10-month period. Courses are led by a rehabilitation professional and a local Elder using strength-based, lived experience, adult learning principles. Courses are delivered in Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, and each of the participating communities. Courses include:

- Introduction to Rehabilitation Practice
- Introduction to Musculoskeletal Conditions
- Aging and Dementia
- Mental Health First Aid for Indigenous People, Standard First Aid and CPR.
- Communication Skills
- Introduction to Neurological Conditions
- Care at Home

One week is a Supported Student Success Week to accommodate unexpected schedule changes or areas identified as needing additional attention. Online modules (e.g., hand hygiene, back care etc.) are independent learning to be completed during the program. Each course is a minimum of 42 hours, inclusive of one-week of in person classroom education, assignments and associated clinical training.

Between courses, students work as a member of the HCC team supporting the community rehabilitation needs. This is supervised by the HCC Coordinator to reinforce clinical skills, as well as having dedicated time to complete course assignments during their work day.

Eligibility: The student will be identified as eligible for the program by the Health Director of the community. The student will be a resident of the local community and in compliance with the local HCC hiring qualifications. A literacy and numeracy assessment will be completed in advance of enrollment in order to identify and plan for associated resources and supports as required.

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