



## Our Commitment to Mental Health Services for Indigenous Children, Youth, Families and Communities

### **Guiding Statement: Ripples of Change: Honouring the Past, Acting in the Present, and Re-imagining Indigenous Mental Health and Wellness for the Future**

CASA is on a transformational journey inspired by our vision of a community where all children, youth and their families are provided with timely mental health care and empowered to thrive. An integral part of achieving this vision is focused on being deliberate in learning from the past, acting in the present and creating for the future when it comes to the mental health of Indigenous children, youth, families and communities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issued 94 calls to action urging individual and collective entities across Canada to work together in a good way towards reconciliation.

**Truth First:** As an organization, we acknowledge the continuing harmful impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples across Canada, particularly as it relates to inequities in mental health and historical trauma. We recognize that there has been an overrepresentation of Western values, beliefs and approaches to mental health and wellness in the lives of Indigenous peoples. This overrepresentation has negatively shaped our understanding of Indigenous communities and has resulted in inequitable care.

**Reconciliation in Action:** CASA's mission to build resilience through holistic, evidenceinformed and co passionate care, and to advocate for children, youth and families with mental illness must include pathways to reconciliation. The TRC called upon those with decision-making powers in health to enact relevant changes. CASA is in a unique position to support and advocate for change for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples on Treaty Six territory, where we are located, as well as for Indigenous children, youth, families and communities across Alberta.

In our collective journey towards reconciliation, CASA is working in collaboration with Indigenous communities on an initiative to build an **Indigenous Wellness Support Program**. The initiative aims to provide every Indigenous child and youth, and their families and communities, with mental health care that draws on Indigenous knowledges. The program will provide consultation to therapists, programs and CASA as a whole on moving towards honouring Indigenous knowledges in our work. The initiative is informed by elements of collaboration, education and consultation with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, communities and co-creators of wise mental health and wellness practices that honour Indigenous knowledges.

For meaningful change to happen, we recognize the need to engage in honest dialogue, listen with humility and act with authenticity in our work with Indigenous communities. While we are learning, growing and creating, we want to start by articulating our commitments to walking together in a good way.

## Our Commitments

CASA is uniquely positioned to enact reconciliation through changes to mental health and wellness supports for Indigenous children, youth, families and communities. In response to the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, CASA commits to:

1. Developing meaningful relationships founded on reciprocity, respect and dialogue with Indigenous communities as co-creators of change in Indigenous mental health services.
2. Honouring Indigenous knowledges through actively learning from Indigenous approaches and perspectives of mental health, and mindfully incorporating Indigenous wise practices in our work.
3. Collaborating with Indigenous communities in identifying and building programs and services that meet their needs, and creating policies, processes and protocols to support respectful Indigenous inclusion.
4. Engaging in intentional recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff, creating safe and inclusive workspaces for them and ensuring their authentic involvement in decision-making processes.
5. Developing organization-wide capacity building initiatives to equip staff for reconciliation through access to learning opportunities that promote Indigenous knowledges and prepare staff to respectfully support Indigenous health and wellness.
6. Establishing community-based services that will encourage collaborative capacity building and meaningful community involvement in developing and delivering supports.
7. Allocating resources and partnering with diverse funders to ensure adequate financing to meet the needs of the programs and services.
8. Ensuring sustainability of the programs and services through continued knowledge generation, staffing, resource allocation and ongoing relationship building that will support the evolving mental health and wellness needs of Indigenous communities.

## An Intentional Journey

*“Getting to the truth was hard, but getting to reconciliation will be harder.”*  
*Honourable Murray Sinclair (Chief Commissioner of the TRC)*

As we journey towards reconciliation, we recognize that these commitments represent a living process for CASA. The commitments will change and grow as we engage in ongoing dialogue and thoughtful reflections with Indigenous communities. This is inherently a process of long-term relationship building and will require patience, dedication and an intentional willingness to learn and change. Now let us journey together in a good way as we create ripples of change by honouring the past, acting in the present, and re-imagining Indigenous mental health and wellness for the future.



# The Ripple Effect of the Calls to Action

