



INDIGENOUS HEALTH CARE ACTION SERIES

#04 Joyce's Principle (2020)

Who Was Joyce Echaquan? Joyce Echaquan was a Atikamekw woman from Quebec. In September 2020 she had been admitted to Joliette Hospital at the Centre Hospitalier de Lanaudiere due to stomach pains. Joyce had previously been seen at the hospital and was labelled as a narcotics addict. Based on this prejudice, her concerns were not taken seriously.

Upon hospitalization in September 2020, this label followed her and contributed to her mistreatment until her death. Later during her hearing, evidence showed that she only consumed narcotics she was prescribed and in amounts that were insufficient to cause dependence.

Before she died in the hospital, she and her daughter had live-streamed videos on Facebook in which hospital staff were heard making derogatory and racist remarks towards her.

SCAN ME 

What is Joyce's Principle?

Joyce's Principle was created in November 2020 in response to her death:



Joyce's Principle aims to guarantee to all Indigenous people the right of equitable access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services, as well as the right to enjoy the best possible physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health."



"Joyce's Principle requires the recognition and respect of Indigenous people's traditional and living knowledge in all aspects of health."

What Actions Can I Take as a Healthcare Provider?

1. Prioritize the preferences and needs of patients. Respect their refusal of treatments.
2. Familiarize oneself with and adhere to policies that implement Joyce's Principle
3. Denounce and report any form of racism towards Indigenous people. Familiarize oneself with the complaints process of your organization.
4. Inform patients of the formal complaint procedures within your organization when patients express concerns with their healthcare experience. This includes mistreatment, discrimination, or inappropriate comments.
5. Strive to reduce health-related stigma and discrimination against Indigenous peoples' by combating racism and understanding Indigenous experiences.
6. Acknowledge Indigenous peoples' autonomy and self-determination rights in health and social services.
7. Recognize and respect Indigenous peoples' traditional and living knowledge in matters of health.

What Actions Can I Take as a Health Professional Educator?

1. Develop training programs for healthcare professionals and trainees around Joyce's Principle.
2. Collaborate with Indigenous stakeholders in health and social services to develop and disseminate this information.
3. Integrate traditional and living knowledge of Indigenous peoples into teachings to decolonize health curricula.
4. Advocate for the integration of Joyce's Principle in teaching materials and raise awareness of institutional policies that recognize it.