2025- RTS EDI

May

Anything underlined is a link you should check out!

Asian Heritage Month
Mental Health Awareness Month

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National Accessability Week

Hi and Welcome, everyone, to the first of many EDI Newsletters!

With this newsletter, we aim to share events, issues, and celebrations happening on campus, in Kingston, and around the world that relate to Culture, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

Our goal is to highlight key moments throughout the month while also providing resources to support your growth—not only as individuals, but as future healthcare providers committed to equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive care.

While this month's newsletter was created in collaboration with our wonderful Mental Health Rep, Krystal, we're hoping to collaborate with YOU in the future!

If you're interested in supporting EDI-related events, celebrations, or initiatives, consider joining our EDI Committee! You can simply drop in or commit long term—either way, you're welcome. Join us on the last Thursday of every month for a collaborative session to help shape the next month's newsletter and plan future EDI activities.

This could include researching important dates and events, finding EDI-related articles or resources to share, or helping design the Canva layout that gets sent out. We're all about playing to your strengths—everyone has something valuable to contribute!

Asian Heritage Month

Asian Heritage Month helps acknowledge the many achievements and contributions of people of Asian origin who, throughout our history, have done so much to make Canada the country we know and love.

It acknowledges the abundance of diversity present among Asian Canadian communities, and how this richness has contributed to building a unifying Canadian identity. The diverse nature of Asian Canadian communities is considered as one of their strengths, just as it is in our Canadian identity.

Women's Health Week

As future rehabilitation professionals, Women's Health Week is a reminder that equitable care begins with awareness. Women frequently face delayed diagnoses, under-researched conditions, and systemic bias in healthcare. These challenges are further compounded for women with intersecting identies as they often encounter multiple, intersecting barriers to timely, effective, and culturally safe care. By recognizing the unique physical, mental, and social health needs of women across the lifespan—and understanding how these needs are shaped by intersecting identities—we can move beyond one-size-fits-all approaches

Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Mental health matters, mental health is important, and mental health needs to be spoken about. Let's work together to break the stigma and embrace honesty and vulnerability. Let's create a ripple effect of change and create environments where people feel supported, heard, and seen!

#breakthestigma

Stay tuned for mental health activities this month!

National Accessability Week

May 25th to May 31st Is National Accessibility Week! This is a time to promote inclusion and accessibility across Canada! Let's take this week to reflect and recognize the importance of accessibility and how we as future health care professionals can enhance accessibility in our practice! Let's work towards removing barriers and creating fair and welcome environments for everyone. Principles of Universal Design and incorporating lived experiences are great ways to enhance accessibility in every situation!

Anniversary of Nakba

Background History- Crashcourse (link)

May 15 marks Nakba Day, a solemn anniversary for Palestinians commemorating the "Nakba," or "catastrophe," that began in 1948. On this day almost 77 years ago, over 700,000 Palestinians-more than half the population at the time-were forcefully expelled or fled from their homes during the creation of the State of Israel, and more than 400 towns and villages were destroyed or depopulated (May 15 - on this day, n.d.).

This mass displacement transformed Palestinians into a stateless people and created a refugee crisis that persists today, with millions of Palestinians and their descendants still living in exile or in refugee camps across the Middle East (Al Jazeera, 2024; 15 May- Nakba Day: Day of the Catastrophe, n.d.).

The Nakba is not only a historical event but an ongoing experience for Palestinians. It represents the loss of homeland, rights, and identity, as well as continued dispossession, poverty, and hardship under occupation or as refugees (May 15 - on this day, n.d.; (Al Jazeera, 2024).

While perspectives on the history vary, it is important to understand how this day continues to shape the lived experiences of Palestinians around the world. Acknowledging Nakba Day provides an opportunity to engage with historical context, deepen our understanding of conflict, displacement, and resilience, and uphold values of equity, diversity, and inclusion in our learning environments.

Red Dress Day

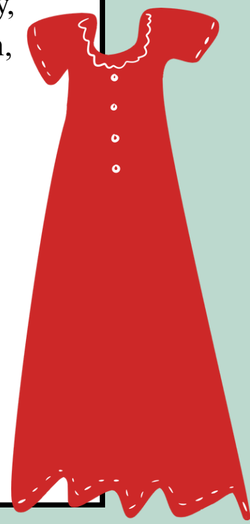
Red Dress Day aims to commemorate Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S) and to honour the lives of those who have been taken, to support the families and communities who continue to grieve, and to raise awareness of the ongoing crisis of gender-based and colonial violence against Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous women and girls are 4.5 times more likely to become victims of homicide in Canada than other women, and more than 1000 are still missing (Saramo, 2016). These statistics are not just numbers; they represent stolen lives, stolen futures, and intergenerational pain.

On May 5th, red dresses are displayed to honour those who are missing and murdered. These red dresses are not just symbols; they are calls for remembrance and calls for action. They represent daughters, sisters, aunties, mothers, friends, and community members who deserved safety, love, and life. With this in mind, we encourage everyone to reflect, learn, and engage in meaningful action—not just today, but every day.

Here are helpful resources to learn more about MMIWG:

- Action Plan (link)
- National Inquiry into MMIWG (link)
- Density map of reported cases (link)
- Podcast- Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo (link)



Cinco De Mayo (May 5th)

Cinco de Mayo, which translates to "fifth of May" in Spanish, commemorates the Mexican victory over the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. It is often celebrated in parts of Mexico and the US by attending parades which feature mariachi bands, dancers in traditional Mexican clothing, and floats decorated in the colors of the Mexican flag.

Other events include “lucha libre (Mexican wrestling) matches. Eating Mexican food is also a highlight of many celebrations, with guacamole, tacos, churros, and mole poblano, a Puebla
specialty made with mole sauce, bitter chocolate, and
pepitas (pumpkin seeds) being favourites.”

Mother’s Day (May 11th)

Mother’s Day celebrates mothers and motherhood in all its forms, equally honoring biological and adoptive mothers, grandmothers, stepmothers, foster mothers, mothers-in-law, guardians. It also honors those who aspire to motherhood, acknowledges the pain of fertility struggles or loss, remembers mothers no longer with us, and celebrates the maternal spirit expressed by mentors, caregivers, and chosen-family figures.

So, no matter how you connect to Mother’s Day, whether it be through blood, bond, heart, or hope, it’s a day to feel seen and valued.

Vesak/ Buddah Day (May 12th)

Vesak is one of the most important and sacred days in Buddihism. This is a celebration of the Buhhda’s birth, enlightenment and passing. It is a time for reflection, compassion, and acts of kindness. Celebrations vary by region but often include temple visits, offerings, chanting, and lantern festivals. Find out how Dinel, Sandaru, Yenuli, Methuli, and Thisah celebrate Vesak by clicking the link on the video.

Click to view video: Vesak Celebration

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (May 17th)

“May 17th was chosen to honour the date that the World Health Organization made the land mark decision to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. It is a day to recognize hard-earned progress, while also addressing the pursuit of equality, in Canada. Members of the 2SLGBTQI+ communities continue to face significant barriers in the ongoing pursuit of equity and inclusion. These communities disproportionately experience discrimination, harassment, and systemic exclusion.”

Interested in learning more? Here are some related resources!

Educational Videos

Intersectionality
We all have Mental Health
How do we stop aboriginal women from disappearing
We are more than murdered and missing
Understanding and addressing systemic barriers faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ populations
Occupational Queerapy

Articles

Buddha's birthday: When is it and how is it celebrated in different countries?

Knowledge, behaviours, and training related to 2SLGBTQIA+ health education amongst entry-level physiotherapy students in Canada: results of a nationwide, cross-sectional survey

Accounts to Follow?

advocacy_canada.lgbt
shinanova
indigenous_baddie
dineaesthetics

References

Al Jazeera. (2024, May 15). *Palestinians observe Nakba anniversary in shadow of Israel's war in Gaza*. Al Jazeera. https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/5/15/palestinians-observe-nakba-anniversary-in-shadow-of-israels-war-in-gaza

CrashCourse. (2015). *Conflict in Israel and Palestine through 2015: Crash Course World History #223* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?si=i3xVJKeefjNTLpNi&v=1wo2TLlMhiw&feature=youtu.be

May 15 - on this day. (n.d.). CJPME - English. Retrieved May 4, 2025, from https://www.cjpme.org/otd_may_15

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