



Message from Principal Wisdom Tettey in response to the discovery of 750+ people found in unmarked graves near a residential school in the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan

*June 24, 2021*

I am deeply saddened by the news of the discovery of 751 unmarked graves at the site of a former residential school in the Cowessess First Nation. As Indigenous communities continue to grieve and process the atrocity represented by the deaths and burial of 215 young lives at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation territory, the pain, gravity, and devastation of this most recent finding are just unimaginable. The U of T Scarborough community sends its condolences to members of the Cowessess First Nation. We recognize the tremendous and lasting impact of this devastating news.

I know that these developments are taking a heavy toll on many in our Campus community who are mourning, grieving, and seeking answers. I urge all of us to support one another and to make use of the various supports available to help us during this time. They are listed below:

Students can access supports through the University's [Indigenous Student Services](#) while U of T [My Student Support Program \(SSP\)](#) offers students 24-hour confidential support that can be accessed over the phone in 35 languages, while support scheduled in advance is available in 146 languages.

Staff and faculty can access the [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#) which offers confidential short-term counselling and support for issues relating to mental health, health management, and workplace well-being. To access EFAP services, please contact Homewood Health at 1-800-663-1142.

Residential school survivors or those impacted by residential schools can access support through the [Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line](#) at 1-866-925-4419. It is available 24 hours a day for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their residential school experience.

The [Office of Indigenous Initiatives](#) is available to connect Indigenous students, staff, faculty, librarians, and community members across U of T.

Beyond U of T, the following resources are also available to members of the Indigenous community:

- [Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council \(TASSC\)](#)
- [2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations](#)
- [Anduhyaun Inc.](#)

- [Native Child & Family Services of Toronto](#)
- [Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto](#)
- [Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre](#)
- [Dodem Kanonhsa'](#)
- [Native Canadian Centre Toronto](#)
- [Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres](#)
- [Na-Me-Res \(Native Men's Residences\)](#)
- [Anishinawbe Health Toronto](#)

To offer support, you could consider donating to the [Indian Residential School Survivors Society \(IRSSS\)](#). The IRSSS is a British Columbia-based organization that strives to provide physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth, development, and healing for residential school survivors, families, and communities. You may also consider donating to U of T's Indigenous Student Services at First Nations House to support our students.