

# 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Cancer Science & Therapy

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## Completing the circle: End of life care with aboriginal families

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This lecture will examine the needs of Aboriginal patients at end of life. Results of previous research conducted by our team validate findings from other researchers who consistently suggest that end of life services based on palliative care philosophy are underutilized by ethnic minorities due to cultural barriers. The lecture is based on a community-based research project that focused on one culture in need of these services: Aboriginal cultures in Canada. Using Community Action Research methodology, this research put into action recommendations made in the literature to: (1) inform end of life health care providers of culturally sensitive protocol when dealing with Aboriginal families through videos, lectures and pamphlets; (2) inform the community of end of life care services (increase awareness); and (3) increase Aboriginal families' use of these services. When Aboriginal families experience the passing of a loved one in hospital, they encounter an efficient bio-technical healthcare system that often makes it impossible to follow appropriate cultural traditions. Our community-based activity strives to prevent further mental anguish in hospital at a time of loss by nurturing principles of cultural safety. In this 23-minute video, we carry messages of traditionally minded Aboriginal Elders to health care providers to promote understanding of what is important in passing from this world to the next. The video moves through moments in the storyline of the dying person. Our Elders come from a diversity of First Nations in Canada but do not speak for others. Meanings are not conveyed in any universal sense, but developed in individual stories. The video is followed by a brief presentation that uses the research to examine what can be done to create culturally safe, patient and family centered care for Aboriginal patients at end of life.

### Biography

Carrie Bourassa is a Professor of Indigenous Health Studies at the First Nations University of Canada and the Special Advisor to the President, Research. She completed her PhD (Social Studies) in 2008. Her book, based on her dissertation was released in the fall of 2012 entitled *Métis Health: The Invisible Problem*. She is proud to be the successful Nominated Principal Investigator on a Canada Foundation for Innovation Grant that funded the Indigenous Community-based Health Research Labs at FN Univ. Her research interests include the impacts of colonization on the health of First Nations and Métis people; creating culturally safe care in health service delivery; Indigenous community-based health research methodology; Indigenous HIV/AIDS research; Indigenous end of life care, Indigenous dementia research and Indigenous women's health.

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