

Indigenous Women in New Brunswick



Eighty-eight women who participated in Resonate’s survey for women identified as Indigenous, Aboriginal, First Nation, Métis, or Inuit. Here is a closer look at what these women shared.

	Resonate		Census ¹	
	Indigenous women	Non-Indigenous women	Aboriginal women	Non-Aboriginal women
Percentage of total participants	7%	93%	4%	96%
Status	56%	n/a	49%	n/a
Non-status	44%	n/a	51%	n/a
Living on-reserve	25%	0%		
Living off-reserve	75%	100%		
Of those NOT living on-reserve:			<p>We have included data from the most recent census for context on how Resonate's participant pool compares to the larger census sample for New Brunswick.</p>	
Living in urban locations	65%	46%		
Living in rural locations	31%	52%		
Living in the north of the province	31%	11%		
Living in the south of the province	69%	86%		
Average age	39.5	38	35.5	44.1
Are parents	73%	52%		
Are single parents	9%	7%	12%	8%
Have post-secondary education	86%	84%	45%	51%
Have personal income < \$20,000/year	30%	25%	52%	40%
Sexual Orientation			<p>There are gaps because the census and Resonate asked different questions. As well, some census data is not published by province or identity group.</p>	
Heterosexual/straight	72%	79%		
LGBQA2S+	8%	14%		
Unclear	1%	3%		
Did not answer question	19%	4%		
First Language				
English	69%	74%	65%	66%
French	18%	23%	28%	32%
Indigenous	13%	0%	8%	0%
Living with a disability	20%	10%		
Living with a mental health challenge	40%	35%		

¹ Statistics Canada. 2018. New Brunswick [Province] (table). Aboriginal Population Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-510-X2016001. Ottawa. Released July 18, 2018.

Issues

In Resonate, we asked women to tell us the most significant issues that need to be addressed to improve the lives of women in New Brunswick as a group, and the most significant problems they faced in their own lives as women in New Brunswick in the past 12 months.

The same top five issues emerged in Indigenous women's responses to both questions.

Healthcare

(including access to mental health and reproductive healthcare)

"MH² problems are the underlying issue with drug and alcohol addictions, there are no supports or counsellors for smaller communities. These people and families have some time in their lives have suffered traumatic events, intergenerational trauma, due to IRS³ or intimate/domestic, sexual, physical or emotional violence. There is nothing for them."

² Mental Health ³ Indian Residential Schools

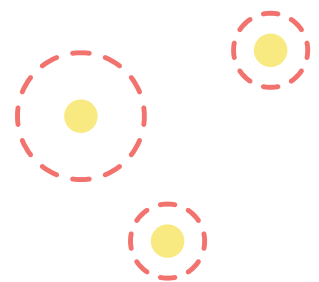
"The health system doesn't consider the menstrual pain I live with. The doctors that I've met minimize this pain and say they're "normal." The gynecologists that I've seen were worse, they didn't ask for my consent before touching me, didn't tell me what they were doing which caused me immense pain and trauma."*

Child care

(including support for stay at home parents and access to culturally appropriate child care services)

"I burned out working full time and am now home. While we have gained peace, organization and better parenting, now our finances are struggling. Predictably, but we couldn't keep going at the pace we were when I was working. The kids were the ones paying the price."

"I stay home to care for my wife's children soon adopted by myself, so she can work outside the home. Childcare outside of home and school is just too expensive and would defeat the purpose of working. I have taken in children on top of our own to make extra money for the household. There is always women looking for affordable sitters that will cover shift work because child care facilities only have set Monday - Friday hours which look something like 8-6. So many jobs require overnights early mornings closing shifts for stores etc..."



Meeting Basic Needs

(including poverty, employment, housing, and transportation)

"Not being able to buy food and pay bills. Having to choose which is more important when I do have money. Then having services shut off when I don't have money."

"I came to Fredericton, as a single mother, left my child behind because I had no where to live while I worked a 6 month trial contract. I lived in my aunt's house on an air mattress and traveled home weekends to see my child. I tried to buy a home, but my income was too low.... When I secured a longer contract I wanted to buy a home to save money... I managed by using credit card for the down payment. As kids grow and I took on foster parenting. I have to get a bigger home because we do not have enough space. There is no one who can help me but myself. It would be nice to have some type of support to help people like me, in these situations."

Violence and Safety

"I've lived and witnessed violence almost on a daily. No one was there to see me through it. It was brushed under the rug, so to speak."

"My abusive ex husband knows how to play the system and is allowed to continue his abuse using the courts. He hasn't paid child support and all the Enforcement Officer can say is that they are over-worked with many similar cases of fathers abusing financially."

"Women still hold jobs that pay less which has a tremendous impact when marital status changes to widow or single parent. So much so that staying in an abusive relationship is sometimes the better option."

Discrimination

"I could provide you with some heavy racist experiences, but those are already out there. I think that one of the most damaging experiences a woman/minority can have is when people say they are advocates of equality, but their actions scream the opposite. A lot of the time, I feel like a checked box. And it breaks my heart, for myself and for every other person out there who feels this way."

"There is a difference between cultural competency, cultural sensitivity and cultural safety. There is no competency there."

Indigenous women's top issues were similar to the top issues that Resonate identified when looking at the data from all participants in the survey for women with some key differences:

- Meeting basic needs was a top issue for Indigenous women; in the findings from all participants, this was only a sub-theme in the broader top issue of economic security and employment.
- Child care was a top issue for Indigenous women; in the findings for all participants, this was only a sub-theme in the broader issue of access to and provision of care. Culturally appropriate care did not emerge as a child care challenge for non-Indigenous women, though finding Francophone daycare was shared as a challenge for some Francophone and/or Acadian women.
- Finally, when describing how they or someone they know have experienced issues, Indigenous women frequently referenced how challenges were inter-connected and compounded by racism and colonialism.

What Indigenous women said is one thing that would make their own lives or lives of NB women easier:

"Putting our women in leadership roles. Filling government seats and top positions to be able to advocate equality."

"To be able freely travel among non natives without them always assuming that we have all these free services."

"People need to realize that we are human too. Maybe it should be taught in schools more, our history should be taught in schools, we should be taught about residential schools and why it happens."

What Indigenous women said government misunderstands, overlooks, or ignores about their experiences:

"I find that many government departments could use sensitivity training in dealing with Aboriginal clients and their issues. No matter what department."

"I am currently struggling to access culturally sensitive mental health services off reserve while attending school. 10 days ago I lost a friend to suicide from another community, my best friends 13th anniversary is in 9 days....my people are struggling, I am struggling!"

"Discrimination on the job still exists."

What is working well to improve the lives of women in New Brunswick?

The most common answer for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women was organizations dedicated to (or with programs that focus on) women or gender-based issues. The second most common response for Indigenous women was that they didn't know of anything or had to rely on informal support from friends or family; non-Indigenous women's second most common response was government services.

Resonate

From late 2017 to early 2018, the New Brunswick Women's Council's Resonate initiative gathered information from more than 1 400 New Brunswick women and individuals belonging to gender minorities as well as more than 35 organizations serving women and addressing gender-equality issues.

This is the first in a series of info sheets that take a deeper look at that data collected and share more stories from women. Read more information about Resonate's findings and methodology at www.resonatenbresonances.ca

The New Brunswick Women's Council

The New Brunswick Women's Council is an independent government agency. The council provides government with advice and raises public awareness about women's equality.

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