Settler allies are made, not self-proclaimed: Unsettling conversations for non-Indigenous researchers and educators involved in Indigenous health

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Abstract

Background: While many settler allies are eager to help towards the goal of disrupting racism, a clearer understanding of how best to harness this eagerness is required within the field of Indigenous health, a field currently comprised mainly non-Indigenous scholars, researchers and educators.

Purpose: Responding to this challenge, this article aims to identify ways of working towards disrupting settler colonialism and addressing racism in all of its manifestations by building settler allyship and adopting an anti-racist lens within the field of Indigenous health. The article describes how to approach building settler allyship by implementing anti-racist acts.

Method: By using anti-racist scholarship and showcasing recent public examples of anti-Indigenous racism, the author describes how settler allies can approach developing unsettled, critical and anti-racist conversations with one another and in respectful ways with Indigenous peoples. As many Indigenous peoples continue to identify ongoing racism, there is a need for informed, unsettled, anti-racist allies willing to challenge their own complicity to then take action when anti-Indigenous racism occurs. Actions include critical self-reflection, confronting white supremacy and implementing demonstrably anti-racist acts.

Conclusion: Findings provide the basis for amplifying unsettling conversations between engaged settler allies to develop anti-racist ways of fostering and extending relationships with Indigenous people and scholars.

Keywords

Anti-racist action, Canada, health sciences, microaggression, settler colonialism

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Introduction

In Canada, anti-Indigenous racism discussion in academia is gaining momentum with recent reconciliation efforts, indigenisation processes[1] and more Indigenous faculty appointments (Canada Research Chairs, Government of Canada, 2018; Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018; Newhouse, 2016). While Indigenous faculty continue to be hired and foster indigenisation processes, we need informed settler allies who disrupt anti-Indigenous racism to help support indigenisation efforts. In the absence of such support, some recent Indigenous faculty have left academic institutions specifically citing anti-Indigenous racism and other hostilities amid indigenisation processes (Abas, 2019; Brown, 2018; Warick, 2020).

I am an Anishinaabe health and well-being scholar from the Turtle Clan, and belong to Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek, a small Anishinaabek (Ojibway) First Nation located in northwestern Ontario, Canada. Throughout my academic training and now in my role as a university faculty member, I have brought my Anishinaabeg gikendaasowin (knowledge) with me in my scholarship and relationships with my colleagues. I continually work on my personal decolonisation and regeneration as this process necessitates a lifespan approach (McGuire-Adams, 2020), and through my scholarship, my teaching, and my service work as an assistant professor, I aim to disrupt settler colonialism and amplify decolonial perspectives. However, in the field of Indigenous health, while there have been important anti-Indigenous racism initiatives (Loppie, 2015; Loppie and Barker, 2016; McGibbon, 2018; Wheeler et al., 2019), there is still an ongoing need for researchers to ignite and/or deepen their settler allyship on their own and with each other but also in creating demonstrable anti-racist acts.

The field of Indigenous health is expansive. Although Indigenous presence is growing, it is a field comprised mainly of non-Indigenous scholars, educators and researchers spanning a variety of academic subjects (e.g. epidemiology, health sciences, physical education, education, kinesiology and recreation, Indigenous studies, social work and nursing, among others) (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2020; National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health, 2019). Metaphorically, the image of a tree is useful to better articulate the field of Indigenous health: the tree trunk is Indigenous health, and an interconnected network of health disciplines represents the many limbs. There are many health disciplines that interconnect with and inform Indigenous health research and education, including but not limited to the following: nursing, hospitals and patient care, health centres, maternal care; health research including health sciences, community-based participatory research, lifespan approaches to health and well-being and sport, leisure, recreation and physical activity research and so on. Rather than identifying each health discipline, for the purposes of this article, I refer broadly to the overarching field of Indigenous health.

More research is needed to better understand the complexities of anti-Indigenous racism and colonialism in the field of Indigenous health (Allan and Smylie, 2015). While it is the position of this article that settler allies need to work towards disrupting settler colonialism and addressing racism in all of its manifestations, more detail of the specifics of how to approach building such allyship and taking up an anti-racist lens is needed. Davis et al. (2017) had drawn attention to the balance that settlers negotiate between taking on the responsibility to re-learn their histories to disrupt their settler consciousness while respectfully learning about Indigenous peoples, their territories and sovereignties. Indeed, 'while it is not the responsibility of Indigenous peoples to educate settlers, consultation and engagement with Indigenous peoples remains crucial' (Davis et al., 2017: 406–407). As an Anishinaabe health and well-being researcher, I chose to write this article to inform non-Indigenous researchers and educators in the field of Indigenous health about creating unsettling allyship and to add to

the growing conversation of what being an anti-racist settler ally entails. Thus, the article is part of an effort to call-in[2] non-Indigenous researchers, scholars and educators in the field of Indigenous health so as to become more engaged, committed settler allies.[3]

To do this, first I discuss the terms settler and unsettling settler consciousness to contextualise the responsibilities ignited by claiming settler allyship within the field of Indigenous health. Second, I then situate settler colonialism to show how it manifests in universities through microaggression and racism, which informs the field of Indigenous health as the majority of researchers work within such institutions as researchers and educators. Third, I discuss the importance of critical self-reflection for settler allies, which is the cornerstone for developing allied relationships with Indigenous peoples. I also describe a series of demonstrable acts of anti-racist allyship.

Unsettling settler consciousness

The terms settler and unsettling, and the responsibility that one enacts on identifying as a settler have been clarified within the literature. For instance, Flowers (2015) articulates that settler is 'a critical term that denaturalises and politicises the presence of non-Indigenous people on Indigenous lands, but also can disrupt the comfort of non-Indigenous people by bringing ongoing colonial power relations into their consciousness' (p. 33). To call oneself a settler is not about signifying if one is non-Indigenous. Rather, it ignites responsibilities that call attention to the decentring of whiteness, the disruption of privilege and the enactment of anti-racist relationships with Indigenous peoples, communities and territories (Barker, 2010; Flowers, 2015; Regan, 2010).

Scholars have articulated that there is an element of conscious choice between a settler being a settler coloniser or a settler ally committed to transformation (Barker, 2010; Davis et al., 2017; Kluttz et al., 2020; Regan, 2010). Davis et al. (2017) argued that settlers' attempts to address their settler consciousness is often a surface-level engagement, but there is a need for a deeper and more sustained engagement with unsettling to better address settler consciousness towards Indigenous sovereignties and territories. Disruption to settler colonialism '. . . requires engaging in an ongoing, complex and dynamic process grounded in a lifetime commitment, which occurs at the level of the individual, family, community and nation' (Davis et al., 2017: 411). Steinman (2020) described unsettling as an internal process of continual unlearning and relearning that challenges one's identity on stolen Indigenous territories while committing to Indigenous-led decolonial and resurgence practices. Learning from Indigenous resurgence scholars is a core element of unsettling and decolonising (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2018), which can be applied in Canada and other settler colonial states through treaty education (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018; Huygens, 2016).

Huygens (2016) suggested a social movement among settlers is needed to garner lasting engagement, which can occur through treaty education. He suggested that a treaty education approach will transform relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples by creating opportunities for meaningful relationship and cultural changes. In a similar vein, Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) shared that treaty education is a model upon which universities may seek meaningful transformation of administrative practice and governance to better reflect the indigenisation process happening at many Canadian universities.

In sum, it is important for non-Indigenous people to take up their responsibilities as settler allies by engaging in new learning about treaty, decolonisation and their relationships to Indigenous peoples and territories. To deepen the contextualisation of racism in settler-colonial institutions (e.g. in universities where the field of Indigenous health is most present), I present a discussion of settler colonialism, microaggression and three poignant examples of how anti-Indigenous racism occurs in academic institutions.

Settler colonialism and everyday microaggression

Applied in many global locations, settler colonialism is a theory used to understand the logics of erasure that are enforced upon Indigenous peoples to justify the theft of Indigenous territories (Wolfe, 2006). Settler colonialism is an enduring colonial structure that has the elimination of Indigenous peoples as its core function and operates at every facet of colonial societies in ways that appear to be invisible (Kawatra, 2018). The settler-colonial state (settler-colonial states include Canada, the USA, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and South Africa among others) ensures that systems are naturalised, or perceived as normal, so that Indigenous pasts and futures become erased. Within the Canadian context, the residential school system, the Indian Act, reserves and the child welfare system are just a few examples of the logics of erasure the settler-colonial state enforced upon Indigenous peoples (Vowel, 2016). Indigenous peoples have always stood in the way of settler-colonial control over Indigenous territories; therefore, they must be forgotten, erased and absorbed into settler society.

Although settler colonialism is an enduring structure, not an event (Wolfe, 2006), it is ordinary people and people at all institutional levels who maintain it (Barker, 2010). As Kawatra (2018) described, it is hard for Canadian citizens to accept that their histories and current lives are immersed in settler colonialism. Settler colonialism is embedded in the broader power structures and we need to confront and 'account for the multifarious ways in which capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and the totalising character of state power interact with one another to form the constellation of power relations that sustain [settler] colonial patterns of behaviour, structures and relationships' (Coulthard, 2014: 14). In the remainder of this section, I focus on the behaviours and relationships towards Indigenous peoples at universities.

Racism, microaggression and the normalisation of whiteness permeate settler-colonial institutions. While vitriolic racist occurrences in the academy may be scant, racism remains. Racism continues to thrive as it shapeshifts from violent occurrences into everyday normalisations via forms of microaggression and is amplified by the increasing presence of Indigenous students and faculty (Cho et al., 2018; Mohamed and Beagan, 2019).

In their book, Cho et al. (2018) acknowledged the difficulty of naming the everyday normalisations of these racist encounters, as many are unintentional and steeped in deep-rooted structures of racism and whiteness. While vitriolic racism in the form of direct verbal or physical assault may be easy to identify, microaggression is more nuanced and insidious in nature, but just as harmful. Huber and Solórzano (2014) describe microaggression as 'the layered, cumulative and often subtle and unconscious forms of racism [and] are the everyday reflections of larger racist structures and ideological beliefs', (p. 302) which occur in a variety of ways.

Microaggression includes microinvalidation, microassault and microinsult (Saloojee and Saloojee, 2018; Sue et al., 2007). Microinvalidation refers to the exclusion, isolation/alienation or negation of people of colour and Indigenous peoples, and their experiences, knowledge(s) or worldviews; microassault refers to the more blatant occurrences of racism, such as name calling; and microinsult refers to the purposeful slights against one's heritage (Saloojee and Saloojee, 2018; Sue et al., 2007). As Huber and Solórzano (2014) explained, microaggressions help us to learn how racism is present in daily occurrences. Recent examples of microaggression in academia include 'being ignored, being isolated, tokenism, verbal affronts, withholding information, scapegoating, infighting, backstabbing and undermining activities' (Bedard, 2018: 95). Similarly, Mohamed and Beagan (2019) have described microaggression as a form of institutional isolation connected to the perpetuation of institutional whiteness and colonialism in academic institutions. To disrupt the normativity of settler colonialism and its manifestations through microaggression, settler allies need to become aware of the subtleties of how they, and their institutions, whether unconsciously or not, become

enmeshed in racism and different forms of microaggression. Scholars have argued that we need to name the ongoing racial tensions of Indigenous peoples and other marginalised people experience in the academy to help visibilise ongoing harms (Ahmed, 2017; Bedard, 2018). However, as Indigenous peoples name ongoing racist occurrences, we need informed, unsettled, anti-racist allies willing to challenge their own complicity in the implicit basis of erasure to then act when microaggression emerges in situations within the academy (Regan, 2010; Steinman, 2020).

There are a few recent public examples[4] that show how racism and microaggression may manifest in everyday interactions within academia, specific to a Canadian context.[5] They include the experience of Angelique EagleWoman who was hired at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, to become the first Indigenous woman to hold the position of Dean of Law at the university; Lynn Lavallée who became the Vice-Provost of Indigenous Engagement at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Barry Lavallee, a leading Indigenous health researcher, also at the University of Manitoba. All point to similar experiences of racism and microaggression to the point at which the Indigenous scholars chose to leave their important leadership roles.

In 2016, there was an announcement that welcomed Angelique EagleWoman into her new role as Dean of the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University. In the announcement, both Angelique and Lakehead University President Brian Stevenson showed their enthusiastic excitement about her new role; in particular, Professor EagleWomen stated that this position was 'a dream come true'. However, after two short years as Dean, she resigned and sued Lakehead University for racial discrimination.[6] In her resignation, Angelique EagleWoman cited the consistent microaggression and racism she had experienced from colleagues at Lakehead University as reasons why she had to leave. The microaggression and hostility she experienced included the daily minimising and undermining of her authority by senior administrative staff, aggressive faculty meetings, no offer of support in her new role, a formal complaint of reverse discrimination against her (her name was ultimately withdrawn from this complaint), the shutting down of her ideas that aimed to improve the hostile environment and an overburden of teaching while maintaining her role as Dean (Brown, 2018; Fine, 2018).

While Angelique EagleWoman was in the process of resigning and ensuring that the public knew the reasons why she left, Lynn Lavallée was also facing daily microaggression at the University of Manitoba after being appointed as Vice Provost of Indigenous Engagement in 2017. She was eager and ready to implement the approved Indigenous strategic plan at the University of Manitoba. But when she sought to implement the Indigenous strategic plan, she experienced immediate hostility from her colleagues. She was expected to provide a rationale for each measure of Indigenous presence and support she sought to implement. For instance, in her own words, Lynn Lavallée shared that she would regularly have to justify why taking steps to implement Indigenous achievement (e.g. non-monetary student and faculty awards, anti-racism efforts, etc.) were not exclusionary for non-Indigenous faculty and students (Lavallée, 2019). She also questioned why the majority of the reconciliation and indigenisation work was expected to be performed by scant Indigenous faculty and why more effort was not placed on building support for implementation by non-Indigenous colleagues (CBC News, 2018). The emotional and intellectual labour it takes to continually justify oneself is simply exhausting; and dealing with such microaggression may lead to professional burnout (Cho et al., 2018). Lynn Lavallée resigned from her Vice Provost position in late 2018.

Shortly after her resignation, another leading Indigenous health researcher from the same University also resigned. Barry Lavallee, the former Director of Education for Ongomiizwin, the University of Manitoba's Indigenous Institute of Health and Wellbeing, left citing the university's lack of action to address anti-Indigenous racism (Abas, 2019). Barry Lavallee's comments on his resignation underscore the harm of microaggression. He stated, 'I've got to do something else

rather than face a wall that's seemingly impossible. And the wall has people's faces on it who smile at you' (Kusch, 2019: para. 4). In addition, and more recently, a cohort of Indigenous professors at the University of Saskatchewan resigned citing microaggression including a hostile working environment, the denouncement of Indigenous knowledge in research, silencing and undermining (Warick, 2020).

While some might explain these occurrences as one-off events, scholars who address racism and semblances of inclusion at universities (Ahmed, 2017; Bedard, 2018; Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018) tether these experiences to the enduring settler-colonial logics of erasure *vis-à-vis* daily racist and microaggression encounters. In each of the above examples, Indigenous faculty battled against racism and microaggression, but they were also battling something less tangible, namely white fragility.

DiAngelo (2018) provided a valuable in-depth study on white fragility, how it is manifested, where it comes from and how to counteract it. She uses the term white fragility to describe the many ways in which white people express defensiveness, anger or shame when confronted with uncomfortable conversations about racism, microaggression and discrimination. Such fragility manifests in feelings (e.g. feeling attacked, insulted, accused, angry, etc.), behaviours (e.g. crying, denying, avoiding, withdrawing, etc.) and claims that work to deflect the uncomfortableness (e.g. I am friends with Indigenous people/people of colour, that is just your opinion, I am a good person, you are judging me, you misunderstood me, etc.) (DiAngelo, 2018: 119–120). DiAngelo (2018: 113) identifying how these reactions work to reinforce racism. She explains how white fragility may be understood as a 'sociology of dominance' that reproduces white supremacy. To counter white fragility, DiAngelo suggests that white people need to practise continual critical self-reflection, foster their own education about racism, create meaningful relationships with people of colour and indigenous peoples and practise anti-racism in daily encounters. An emphatic point DiAngelo (2018: 113) makes from her years of delivering anti-racist workshops is: if white people were to receive feedback from people of colour and Indigenous peoples with openness and graciousness, to then be able to self-reflect and ultimately change the behaviour, the result would be 'revolutionary'.

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If it takes people to maintain the settler-colonial structure, it will take people to ultimately disrupt it. Barker (2010: 327) has argued that while settler colonialism is made apparent by governments, policies and laws, it is non-Indigenous people who 'accept, support and carry out colonisation of Indigenous Peoples primarily, but also each other, and every new generation of Settlers'. These processes of white consciousness and socialisation are continually reiterated to maintain settler colonialism (Allen, 2020). However, while settlers carry out colonialism against Indigenous peoples, it is also true that settlers can choose to engage differently by committing to become unsettled settler allies (Barker, 2010; Regan, 2010; Steinman, 2020). Concerted engagement to disrupt settler-colonial identities may occur in a variety of ways: including through individual critical self-reflection (Flowers, 2015; Regan, 2010); through interpersonal relationships (Allen, 2020); by taking an unsettling approach to daily life (Steinman, 2020) and by engaging in transformational solidarity work with Indigenous resurgence movements (Kluttz et al., 2020).

Non-Indigenous health scholars and educators who implement anti-racist praxis (in their courses, or on social media) need to disrupt the ongoing presence and structure of settler colonialism by practising self-reflection. Steinman (2020) encourages settler allies to continually engage in critical self-reflection that aligns with actions but also to deepen their allyship by taking up an 'unsettling agency' in everyday life. Given that settler colonialism is present in a

myriad of institutions and in individual behaviours, there are limitless possibilities to disrupt the status quo. To do so, requires continuous self-evaluation and consciousness of being unsettled. He stated that 'settlers can unsettle the interwoven beliefs, discourses and practices of our institutions and organisations . . . non-Native people can work to unsettle settler colonialism wherever we are' (Steinman, 2020: 15). For settler allies, a core aspect of critical self-reflection relates to understanding how Indigenous students, colleagues and research partners are affected by settler colonialism, microaggression and racism (Bailey, 2016; Mohamed and Beagan, 2019). One way in which to enact critical self-reflection is to identify whether one's own actions operationalise hierarchy.

Operationalising hierarchy may adversely affect Indigenous people who experience lasting generational impact from the residential school system. For instance, many members of university staff perpetuate and maintain their authority, whether inadvertently or otherwise, by creating expectations among their students not to question their authority. This type of hierarchal authority parallels the settler-colonial authority earlier enforced by priests and nuns in residential schools. And, as Indigenous families continue to grapple with the intergenerational impacts of residential schools, some may find that within their own families they are conditioned not to question the authority of a patriarchal father, for instance. What happened in residential schools was often replicated in families, if one chooses to question patriarchal authority, correction or punishment ensues, such as physical and/or emotional abuse. This discussion brings the everyday normalisation of settler-colonial values into view as a practice that seeks to maintain control.

When one questions someone who holds power, one becomes in question (Ahmed, 2017). For example, should an Indigenous graduate student or Indigenous member of faculty, particularly those aligned with disrupting settler colonialism, attempt to bring awareness of the dynamics of settler colonialism, microaggression, racism or other forms of authority manifesting in their interactions with settler allies, it signals an opportunity to engage in critical self-reflection. This should be understood as an invitation to develop a deeper relationship with an Indigenous colleague, not as a mechanism where one is triggered into white fragility.

Critical self-reflection is not easy, but it is necessary to become a settler ally. It entails active and ongoing mindfulness of one's thoughts, actions and behaviours towards Indigenous people, whether they be faculty, students, colleagues or friends. It is uncomfortable and difficult to critically look at oneself to accept the vulnerability of our emotions, to be humble enough to let go of ego and to allow oneself to be imperfect (Brown, 2012). Yet, the recipe for lasting and meaningful change is vulnerability because we 'need to feel trust to be vulnerable and we need to be vulnerable in order to trust' (Brown, 2012: 102). It is this form of critical self-reflection that will disrupt how settler colonialism is maintained in everyday encounters.

But critical self-reflection also requires action. To be a settler ally, one does not simply self-proclaim their allyship, but one takes up the responsibility to act and demonstrate their allyship (Steinman, 2020). To disrupt the normalcy of settler colonialism in academic institutions, we need critically aware and dedicated settler allies who are ready to contest colonialism and power (Kawatra, 2018). Allen (2020: 385) clarified the importance of confronting and disrupting white supremacy when she states:

> The socially constructed invisibility of whiteness has been anxiously guarded to ensure white settler supremacy remains secure and white people and practices are shielded from analysis and scrutiny. While there is ever-present tension in focusing on an analysis of whiteness, there are also major risks in not doing so. White settler researchers face the real risk of colonising antiracist and anticolonial work [and, therefore] white researchers need to critically confront internalised colonial ways of knowing and ideologies in the knowledge production process, and proceed with humility and recognition of scholars of Colour and Indigenous scholars who do formative work in settler colonial, whiteness and critical race studies.

Demonstrable anti-racist acts

In building on what Allen (2020) offered, I wish to detail some of the acts an anti-racist settler ally might take up. First, they may choose to act in spaces where racism and microaggression present themselves. Second, they may willingly enter into uncomfortable conversations with other white people and ask them to think mindfully about their actions and behaviour towards Indigenous peoples, with the intent of critically engaging in and disrupting hegemonic forms of knowledge and behaviour. Third, they will welcome Indigenous students, faculty and/or friends to tell them when they act with microaggression. Fourth, although they have been called in by their Indigenous colleagues or friends, an anti-racist ally will not place the labour of processing their white fragility on the person who brought it to their attention but, rather, they will process this fragility with other settler allies. Finally, an anti-racist settler ally should actively work to see where, when and how they may unknowingly reproduce whiteness and white supremacy (Applebaum, 2010). This list of possible acts is not meant to comprise an exhaustive anti-racist guide to action and there exist useful resources that identify other options (Raible, 2009). However, it draws attention to the different ways in which settler allies may begin to demonstrate anti-racist actions.

Beyond the suggested demonstrable acts, being an anti-racist ally means creating meaningful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous faculty, Indigenous peoples and Indigenous communities. Hyett et al. (2018: E620) explained that meaningful relationships require 'trust, time, personal risks, interaction, reciprocity and open-minded listening'. Similarly, Kluttz et al. (2020) stated that the label ally is not self-appointed, static nor permanent. The designation must come from Indigenous leaders. The same authors encouraged settler allies to move beyond the label of ally to become active agents in solidarity movements where consistent and meaningful support is offered to Indigenous resurgence efforts. In the academic realm, this means listening so as to actually hear Indigenous faculty or students, not just to respond; it means being present and active when asked; it means challenging whiteness, white fragility and white privilege; it means being willing to be uncomfortable to process how personal actions or behaviours may have negatively affected an Indigenous colleague or student; and it means a having commitment to make change that is accountable to past wrongs. Finally, being a settler ally means choosing to stay present when situations are uncomfortable, and when progress forward can be complex and non-linear (Kluttz et al., 2020).

Conclusion: the field of Indigenous health turning the mirror inward

On Monday, September 28 2020, Joyce Echaquan, a mother of seven from Atikamekw First Nation in the Province of Québec, sought help for stomach pain and died in the place where she was to be cared for, a hospital (Feith, 2020). The moments before her death were live streamed via Facebook Live by Joyce herself. She knew that she was not being treated with care; instead, she was given a medication that was lethal to her, morphine, and was berated in a visceral racist attack by the nurses charged with taking care of her. In her dying moments, she showed to the world how anti-Indigenous racism literally kills in Canada.

This type of occurrence is not new. A mere two weeks after Joyce died in a Québec hospital, another Atikamekw man, Georges-Herve Awashish died after he told his family he overheard nurses making racist remarks about him; he too was given morphine and the following morning

died (Rowe, 2020). Both deaths are still under investigation. In 2008, Brian Sinclair was also left to die in a Canadian hospital when he was waiting to be seen for a bladder infection (Allan and Smylie, 2015). These and other disturbing examples highlight what Indigenous people may experience when being 'taken care of' by health practitioners (Eales and Peers, 2020).

Allan and Smylie (2015) contextualised the racist occurrences in health care settings that cause the wilful death of Indigenous peoples through the lens of racism, discrimination and ongoing colonisation. In the light of this, this article offers a deeper engagement of what anti-racism entails from an Indigenous perspective to inform the broad field of Indigenous health, because such is needed now more than ever. As much as this article adds to the discussion, it is incomplete. Future research should consider other examples of anti-Indigenous racism in the academy and in the research methods prominent in Indigenous health such as community-based participatory research.

As a result of settler colonialism, ill health and health disparity are often studied in the field of Indigenous health (Gracey and King, 2009). Regan (2010) has drawn attention to the ease with which settlers judge or try to find solutions to these inequalities. Given the popularity of health disparity research, this is a salient point; however, Regan argued that to study others as problems to be fixed deflects attention away from acknowledging and addressing white privilege and the fact that settlers, themselves, need to decolonise. Regan (2010) stated

> Canadians are still on a misguided, obsessive and mythical quest to assuage coloniser guilt by solving the Indian problem. In this way, we avoid looking too closely at ourselves and the collective responsibility we bear for the colonial status quo. (p. 11)

It is therefore time for non-Indigenous people, and in particular settler allies who study Indigenous peoples' health and other disparities, to turn their focus inwards to 'solve the settler problem' (Epp, 2003: 228). Imagine how the field of Indigenous health might change if non-Indigenous researchers made a shift away from focusing on Indigenous disparities to develop their settler-colonial identities to become settler allies. This shift could give rise to robust opportunities for allies to take direction from Indigenous thinkers, scholars and knowledge keepers regarding how best to amplify Indigenous practices of well-being and health, rather than focusing only on inequalities. Via such a process, settler allies might take action to support the regeneration of Indigenous health and well-being by protecting Indigenous rights. In Canada, this could mean supporting the Wet'suwet'en Peoples' fight to protect their Indigenous sovereignty, which remains unceded, and to support the revitalisation of Indigenous languages and ceremonies where we study and research Indigenous health.

Throughout this article, I have argued that settler allies need to sit with the uncomfortableness of racism, settler colonialism and other structures of power, which provide the foundation of settler-colonial structures, behaviours and attitudes towards Indigenous peoples. While non-Indigenous academics may be eager to build good relationships with Indigenous academics, and in some fields, these important conversations are beginning to occur (Grenier, 2020), many do not currently know how to become an effective anti-racist ally. I hope this article proves useful to those who wish to be unsettled, uncomfortable and recognised by Indigenous researchers and academics as anti-racist settler allies.

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Notes

1. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) described three distinct versions of indigenisation processes relevant to the academy: Indigenous inclusion, reconciliation indigenisation and decolonial indigenisation, all of which seek to create change, with different degrees of success.
2. Calling in is an act that addresses harms and exclusion, and which focuses on maintaining relationships. For more information on the concept of calling someone in, see https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/guide-to-calling-in/.
3. In this article, I use the term settler ally/allies, which denotes that allies take up actions that cause disruption to settler colonialism and racism, and is informed by settler theorists like Barker, 2010; Regan, 2010; Steinman, 2020. See Snelgrove et al. (2014) critique of the term settler and the Indigenous Ally Toolkit for more information on allies, accomplices and co-resistors http://reseaumtlnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ally_March.pdf.
4. Many examples of microaggression likely remain hidden or private because of real or perceived backlash or criticism when openly discussing them. See Cho et al., 2018.
5. While I draw on these three examples, there are many more examples of Indigenous peoples publicly resigning in Canada or being let go, citing discriminatory practices. For more information, see https://www.thelawyersdaily.ca/articles/12912/meaningful-reconciliation-to-support-leadership-of-indigenous-women-angelique-eaglewoman.
6. In February 2021, it was reported that Lakehead University and Angelique EagleWoman had settled their lawsuit. See https://www.tbnewswatch.com/local-news/lakehead-settles-discrimination-suit-with-former-law-dean-3361814.

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