



RESEARCH2REALITY

Shining a light on research & innovation.

Bridging Science and Culture For Those in Need

An interview with **Christopher Mushquash**
2023 Canada Gairdner Momentum Award laureate

What I'm always trying to do is take the best of what we know from scientific perspectives — but also, importantly, cultural perspectives — and try to improve systems and services in a way that meets people's needs at the community level. Finding ways of improving care for Indigenous people and people in rural and Northern areas in a manner that's respectful and centers on their cultural knowledge and who they are as people.

And I think that, you know, as we do that, you begin to see improvements in suitability, accessibility, applicability, comfort level, and so on with systems and supports that we do develop. There's a relative lack of services when compared to the rest of the Canadian population, and those services that do exist haven't always met the needs of people in community either, right?

Right now there's a certainly a lot of attention; that attention needs to be sustained. One of the real strengths of an opportunity like, you know, the Gairdner Momentum Prize is that it brings the conversation, or it has an opportunity to bring the conversation, to a much wider kind of audience of people who may be interested, who may not have maybe had the opportunity to hear about things, you know, in this way before.

Being acknowledged is a tremendous honour and I see a lot of potential for highlighting important issues and really collaborating with the Gairdner to create a platform where the conversation about mental health and addiction difficulties in Indigenous communities, wellness, cultural approaches to

TODAY'S RESEARCH. TOMORROW'S REALITY.



healing, and so on can be talked about in a way that's, you know, able to set us on a pathway that allows us to continue in our healing journey.