**Learner Perspectives:**

**Excerpts of Interviews with OT and PT Learners**

**on Placement in Rural Communities**

**Difficult emotional situations**

“Yeah…we’ve had this one patient who lives on a reserve, lives on a reserve called [name]. And I’ve never been but from what I’ve been told it’s kind of more rough in terms of crime, drug use and stuff like that. It’s about half an hour from [placement town] but we were trying to get him to take a walker or a cane for when he returns to the community and he refused. And I was kind of confused about why he would refuse, you know, obviously some people just like that independence but he said it’s because he doesn’t want to get beat up because he has a walker and I’d never even considered that a possibility. I’ve been on a lot of First Nations communities and they’ve all kind of been…more well maintained or more well off than what [name of reserve] apparently is. So I was surprised that this was kind of an issue in this community. That people didn’t want to appear vulnerable when walking down the street. It was interesting.

KP: So what did you end up doing?

P1: He’s still in the hospital. So we haven’t done anything yet, I think they’re having a family meeting tomorrow so, I mean, even if he takes a walker home, he could try it but he probably won’t use it if he’s scared of getting beat up.

I thought that was kind of sad because there’s already so many barriers in those types of communities. I mean, they don’t often have ramps, they have dirt roads, whatever things just aren’t set up in acceptable ways. So it’s just one more barrier which is kind of sad.” (OT Learner)

“We have a man right now who we were supposed to discharge him today but we had to wait until tomorrow because he lives on an island, so I guess they have, I don’t know what the actual name for it is. I call it a wind jammer. It’s like a quad type vehicle that goes over the water and ice so I guess they’ve been drilling holes on the ice roads so the water comes up a little bit so he can get back to the island. I think that’s pretty rural.

And I guess right now is a really bad time, I know I was in [town] last weekend visiting my cousin and there’s like a foot of water on top of the ice road. So we were moving all of his stuff, he’s moving to the Metis lands, so we were having him move all of his stuff and it was terrifying. I was hanging out the window half the entire time. I would not want to bring a sick person back on that road, it was horrible.” (OT Learner)

“A lot of the times, because housing here is really expensive and there’s not a lot of it, and a lot of people that are here, especially when they come from the reserves don’t have the job or income saved up or anything like that to get started and they’re relying on the local shelter and food bank and day programs to get themselves what they need to survive.

There’s a recent case of a woman. She had nowhere to go. She’s on dialysis 3 times a week in a wheelchair and like…has no housing or supportive housing set up, there’s a 2 year wait list, and so NHIB’s been paying for her to stay in the hospital for about a year and that’s like basically on compassionate grounds. They’re not going to renew it again. So the hospital is just basically taking the hit and is going to provide her with somewhere to live. She needs dialysis 3 times a week but because an inpatient bed costs more than a hospital bed that’s kind of what we’re left with.

Whereas in the city I don’t think that would ever happen. She’s well known, we talk about it at rounds, everybody is really concerned about her at rounds and it’s…yeah, it was good to see and sad to see at the same time because people here are willing to make that extra bit of effort to provide her with somewhere to live but that it has to come to that is terrible.” (OT learner)

“Um…oh, there was actually a comment early on which maybe it wasn’t racist but inappropriate during rounds. This is a while back that I’m thinking. There was an aboriginal client, it was maybe in my first week, that felt he was being treated unfairly by the nurses. And, somebody just made a comment, ‘They just used that as an excuse, they’re just using the race card thing.’

And I didn’t know the client, I didn’t know the nurse, I didn’t know the person saying the comments so I didn’t know the context at all but to me it sounded like that might be an inappropriate thing to say given the context.” (OT Learner)

“I think it is, yeah. Especially compared to the city because in the city although there might be a big aboriginal population, there’s a big population of every sort of culture. Where I grew up there wasn’t a majority, everyone was just mixed in so the racism didn’t really have a place. Maybe, there was no ignorance, maybe in a way? Um, cause everyone just kind of mixed and mingled and that’s just how it was and I think that up in the North there is quite a divide where aboriginals have their own areas and any other population has their own area and there’s a divide.

Obviously there’s complicated issues and different stuff going on. People develop their viewpoints as to what’s going on and sometimes it’s not positive. Perhaps it can be even racist and I think that that is unique to the North.” (OT learner)