

# A Rural Perspective of Aging in Place

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## Background and Issue

When attending Summit meetings, the Community Based Senior Services (CBSS) Rural & Remote Working Group in partnership with United Way discovered gaps in their research. They realized a need for more information to define the meaning of remote and rural, and the barriers and enablers for seniors accessing these services in those communities. To ensure a complete overview, an understanding from an Indigenous perspective was also incorporated.

## Objective and Methods

Review research and create a presentation the CBSS Rural & Remote Working Group could use at future Summits. The three questions posed are as follows:

- What are the definitions of remote and rural?
- What are the barriers and enablers to services for seniors living in rural and remote communities?
- What are the experiences of rural and remote Indigenous populations in communities?

These questions were answered by performing literature reviews.



*Peter*  
Watson Lake, Yukon Territory

## Defining Rural and Remote

Rural and remote are terms that are not easily defined. There is little to no research regarding specifically the remote experience, whereas the research pertaining to rural is consistent to say there can not be one specific definition. Statistics claim "rural" is defined by numbers and geography, but research goes on to specify that "rural" is a cultural experience that cannot be confined to a single definition.



*Melvin and Geraldine*  
Castlegar, British Columbia

## Barriers

Some of the largest barriers for seniors aging in place rurally include transportation; housing; social participation; civic participation; communication and information; accessing community and health services and age friendly infrastructure. Research topics have been identified that help enable seniors to age in place such as having accessible infrastructure; having supportive family and neighbours, services within walking distances and cognitive health



*Judith*  
Lardeau, British Columbia

## Indigenous Experience

Many elders utilize the Medicine Wheel to support health and well-being using a holistic, spiritual and natural approach. Indigenous populations experience histories of marginalization, inequities, maltreatment, and racism when assessing healthcare. Studies show Indigenous elders' needs are much different than those of non-Indigenous People's needs. Rural and remote communities are uneducated on how to approach the needs of Indigenous Peoples due to the lack of research conducted from an Indigenous perspective.

## Conclusion and Acknowledgements

Although we were able to find some information, more research needs to be conducted. The available research is outdated and often not from a senior's or Indigenous perspective. From research gathered, it can be concluded that more barriers exist than enablers for all seniors accessing care in rural and remote communities of BC. We would like to acknowledge our field guides, Janice Murphy and Jane Osborne and our instructor Nicole Brown.