

Panelists



Alexis Ford-Ellis **Eli Langley** **Henry Kudluk**

Ask Me Anything

A Courageous Conversation on
Indigenous Culture Awareness

Time: 1:00 pm EST **Date:** June 22, 2022 **Hosts:** Bernadeth Betchi and Tom Howe

Ask Me Anything: National Indigenous History Month A Courageous Conversation on Indigenous Culture Awareness

Featuring: Alexis Ford-Ellis, Eli Langley and Henry Kudluk

Opening Remarks by: Jackie Mason

Co-hosted by: Bernadeth Betchi and Tom Howe

Date and time: Wednesday, June 22 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM EST

Audience: Open to all Government of Canada employees

Register: [Online registration form](#)

Link to join: [Join the webinar](#)

Ask Me Anything is now on GC Wiki Collab <https://wiki.gccollab.ca/AMA> .

Event description

In June, we commemorate National Indigenous History Month. During this month, we take the time to recognize the rich history, heritage, perseverance and diversity of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples across Canada.

Learning about the cultural and linguistic diversity as well as the contributions of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, places and experiences is a step forward each Canadian can take on the path to reconciliation.

In this month's Ask Me Anything (AMA), we will honour National Indigenous History Month with a courageous conversation on Indigenous Cultural Awareness. We're pleased to welcome Jackie Mason, Anola Métis Local founding member, who will deliver opening

remarks and set the stage for our remarkable speakers: Alexis Ford-Ellis, Eli Langley, and Henry Kudluk. Join us in welcoming our speakers as they tell us about their Indigenous cultures, reflect on, and share stories from their lived experiences.

About the Ask Me Anything Series

This session is part of a series of Ask Me Anything sessions that give us a platform to share stories, listen, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to becoming more inclusive organizations.

As individuals, you can't necessarily change where you live. You certainly can't change your past, but you can adjust who influences you—through the authors you read, the music you listen to, movies you watch and interactions with your community. The *Ask Me Anything* series provides you with an opportunity to increase your perspective—to learn from the lived experiences of individuals who are bravely sharing their stories to help educate and move the public service towards a culture where equity is embedded.

The series also provides an opportunity for you to know that you aren't alone. These experiences, especially the negative ones, are systemic and happen all too frequently throughout the public service. The objective by shining this light is to continually increase the network of public servants ready to take action and move forward towards a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

Opening Remarks by Jackie Mason



Jackie Mason is a founding member of the Anola Metis Local and has held the position of Chair and Vice-Chair since its inception. In 2019, Jackie was honoured by her community when they asked her to take on the role as Elder for the community. Jackie was proud to accept this role and has taken her responsibilities seriously as she recognizes the significance and importance it has for her community.

Jackie joined Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) in May 1999 originally on secondment from Canada Revenue Agency. Jackie has held many management positions, from managing a staff of 100 processors delivering farm income stability programs to coordinating the development of a three-year Strategic Plan for the Farm Income Programs Directorate. Jackie has also done extensive work with the National Management Community (NMC), giving her an

opportunity to work on issues pertaining to the management community across the federal government. During her assignment with the NMC as the Executive Director, she oversaw Blueprint 2020 national activities and provided a supporting role to the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer during the development and rollout of the Performance Management Initiative. Jackie has been a member of the department's Indigenous Network Circle for a number of years, believing in the value it brings to the department's Indigenous Community.

Meet Our Amazing Panelists



Alexis Ford-Ellis, Director, Workplace Well-being & Mental Health, Knowledge Circle for Indigenous Inclusion

Alexis is a Gwich'in woman from the Fort MacPherson Band located around Aklavik / Inuvik in the North West Territories. She grew up in a chronic abusive and substance-using environment and has lived through many traumatizing experiences. Through the teachings of many wonderful Elders and healers, she learned to change her anger and hatefulness into love and forgiveness along her journey of healing.

Alexis is currently on secondment with the Knowledge Circle for Indigenous Inclusion (KCII) as the Director of Well-being and Mental Health. Previously she was a faculty member of the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) for the Indigenous Learning Program (2019); Director, Wellness with Justice Canada (2015-2019); and Regional Director of Human Resources, Prairie Region with Justice Canada (2010 - 2015).

In 2010, Alexis completed her Master's Degree in Psychology Counselling through City University in Seattle Washington at the Edmonton satellite campus. As a student psychologist, Alexis interned at an Aboriginal Youth Treatment Center, and did research on *How is the Medicine Wheel Considered in Therapeutic Practice* (2010), which was recently published in the *Journal of Concurrent Disorders*, Special Edition, Indigenous Mental Health, September 2019. She has 4 beautiful daughters, 3 granddaughters, and many adopted sons, daughters and grandchildren. Alexis loves running, hot yoga, writing and sewing. With her personal experience as a Gwich'in woman, 25+ years of human resources experience in the federal public service, and her education in psychology, she

is able to bring a wealth of expertise and lived experience in delivering mental health messages.



Chief Petty Officer, 2nd class, Eli Langley, Career Manager for Senior Marine Technicians, Director of Military Careers, and Military Co-chair, National Capital Region Defence Aboriginal Advisory Group

Eli was born in Honey Harbour Ontario on the shores of Georgian Bay. He joined the Navy at age 24 and was sent to Victoria British Columbia. There he sailed on Her Majesty's Canadian Ship PROTECTEUR and then volunteered for service in Her Majesty's Canadian Submarines. Eli served on all four VICTORIA class submarines sailing in both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets deploying to Panama and Asia.

He was posted to Ottawa in July of 2021 to the Director of Military Careers where he is currently the Career Manager for Senior Marine Technicians on the west coast as well as the Military Co-Chair for the National Capital Region Defence Aboriginal Advisory Group.

Eli is Ojibway and belongs to Beausoleil First Nation on Christian Island in Georgian Bay where his grandmother was born. His grandmother was enfranchised when she married Eli's grandfather, a white man. Because of that, my mother was not considered native until 1985 when the law changed returning "Indian status" to those that had been enfranchised.

In 2010 the gender equity bill recognized that native persons descended from women had the same lineage as those descended from males allowing Eli to receive his "Indian status".

Eli is married to Rebecca and has 3 children Elizabeth 13, Andrew 12 and Violet 10.

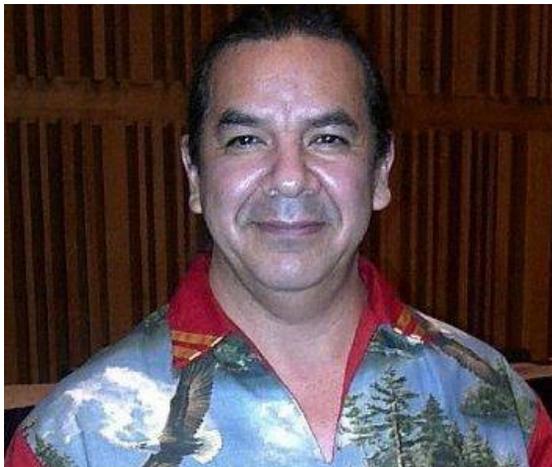


Henry Kudluk, Aboriginal Awareness Advisor, Corporate Indigenous Workforce Directorate, Human Resources Directorate, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

Henry Kudluk was born in Churchill Manitoba; he grew up in Coral Harbour Nunavut. He was the first one in his family to be born in a hospital. Henry is a former Residential school student. He has been with Indigenous Services Canada since 2005, he started at the Inuit Relations Secretariat when it was newly formed. He now works with the Corporate Indigenous Workforce Directorate in the Human Resources Directorate. Henry is a grandfather of three grandchildren, he has three adult children.

His part-time hobby is stone carving. In 2009, his proudest moment at Aboriginal Affairs was translating and reading out the Official High Arctic Relocation Apology document in the communities of Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. While reading the apology document, Henry was thinking of his dad who was relocated from Northern Quebec to Coral Harbour in Nunavut.

Meet Our Co-Hosts



Tom Howe, Senior Advisor, Reconciliation Initiatives, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Tom Howe is a proud father, grandpa, uncle, brother, son and loving partner to Monique. He is a person of Anishinaabe and Mi'kmaq ancestry who has been with Fisheries and Oceans Canada since 2001. As Regional Manager of the Indigenous Affairs branch of Fisheries Management in the Maritimes Region based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Tom leads a team in the delivery of Indigenous fishery programming and assists in rights-based fisheries matters. He

takes great pride in the work he does with his father's people (the Mi'kmaq), other Indigenous partners and with colleagues throughout the department.

He recently took a pause from his position in Maritimes Region and as of August 2021, has been on assignment as a Senior Advisor to the Department's National Reconciliation Champions.

His approach to everything he does in the Department is influenced by the wisdom and values embedded in his traditional teachings and culture. As a child, Tom's mother instilled a deep sense of pride in him as an Indigenous person and the importance of bringing truth to power wherever his life path takes him. In some ways, you could say that he has been advancing Reconciliation throughout his life and professional career long before it became a formal Government of Canada priority and commitment.



Bernadeth Betchi, Acting Section Head, Lead Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion, Materiel Group, National Defence

Bernadeth has a Bachelor of Communication, a Masters of Women and Gender Studies and is a PhD candidate in Philosophy Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa.

She has worked at the Prime Minister of Canada's office, at the Canadian Human Rights Commission and as a professor of Communications and Human Rights at Algonquin College.

As a Black woman living in Canada, she is constantly reminded that she could be an outsider. Having always been intrigued by the experiences of other marginalised groups, Bernadeth has always been drawn towards their narratives, recognizing that their similarities and differences brought them together as they strive to construct or deconstruct their cultural identity.

Bernadeth is the mother of three humans. She is also a sister, a daughter, an aunt, and a friend.

Mission - Ask Me Anything Series

We recognize that individuals are composed of a multitude of layers that make us who we are. We do not fit easily in one box or another and we can't be neatly counted. We represent the mosaic of Canada.

It is important that we find value in each other's experiences, differences and unique characteristics. When we build our cultural competencies, we are able to work better together in our teams and respond to each other with relevance, empathy and compassion.

By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain greater appreciation of each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

We know through diversity, workplaces and communities are stronger, more successful and resilient. And most important, it creates spaces of inclusion and fosters a workplace of belonging where people feel valued.

[#AMACHallenge](#)

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

Here's what you need to do:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organization to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book an "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60 minutes. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

After the AMA – Team Session Discussion Questions

1. What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?
3. What is an example of systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?
5. How can I use my voice/ influence? – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

Thank you to our contributors

Thank you to our contributors from across the Public Service of Canada – Canadian Coast Guard, National Defence, Natural Resources Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Department of Canadian Heritage.

MCs: Tom Howe and Bernadeth Betchi

Panelists: Jackie Mason, Alexis Ford-Ellis, Eli Langley, and Henry Kudluk

AMA Team: Tara Lockhart, Terri-Ann Hurst, Natasha Lim, Jasmine Cousineau, Shelby Racine, Danielle MacKinlay, Michel Mainville, Melissa Michaud, Lamare Robinson, Liliya Ishkaeva, Terri Graham, Kelly Brewer-Balch, Lyrique Richards, Michèle Elliott, Wanda Lewis.