



Dr. Erika Cheng Family Physician, Bella Coola

Dr. Cheng is a family physician working in hospital, emergency, and clinical services for the past 28 years. Most of her work has been in Bella Coola.

For seven years, she was the area's local medical director during which time she developed relationships with the local First Nations Band (the Nuxalk Nation). She also led local medical responses through multiple crises including a forest fire within the community, severe physician shortages, accreditation processes, and the transition from United Church Health Services to VCH governance.

Dr. Cheng also started the local action team of the Child Youth Mental Health Substance Use Collaborative and the Bella Coola Chapter of the Division of Rural and Remote Family Practice.

In addition to her medical work, Dr. Cheng provides attachment and dissociation-focused trauma therapy, incorporating EMDR, sand-tray and psychodynamic techniques. Other special interests include cultural competency, suicide prevention, healing-aligned health-care delivery, resiliency building, Indigenous health, and education of frontline workers, educators, administrators, and parents on ways to move beyond the cycles of trauma.

Dr. Cheng was executive producer and co-writer of the Reaching Past the Cycle of Trauma.© This series of three short films was created in collaboration with the Nuxalk Nation, VCH, trauma therapist and author the late Dr. Sandra Wieland, and filmmakers Hilary Pryor and Art Napoleon. Dr. Cheng is also co-founder and executive director of Beyond the Cycle of Trauma Institute, a non-profit organization that delivers affordable brain-based, practical education on ways to work more effectively with trauma while strengthening community-based healing, interpersonal co-operation, and individual resiliency.

#BreakTheBias

"I help break the bias by striving to be the person for others that we want everyone else to be for us: respectful, kind, consistent, hearing, caring, competent and trustworthy. It helps to remind myself to create a sacred space out of each interaction as if the other person were the most precious person to me at that moment—and as if each second connected our souls for eternity. And when I fail, as I do often, by noticing it, being gentle with myself, picking up, and starting again."