

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to facilitate a better understanding of the barriers and supports that exist in accessing traditional food for Aboriginal Peoples in Nova Scotia. Two focus groups were held (n=16), one off-reserve and one on-reserve in a talking circle format to facilitate discussion on traditional food access. Focus groups were transcribed and analyzed using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and with use of the medicine wheel as an evaluation framework. Supports common between both groups were strength of cultural values, community engagement, and consultations and partnerships. Overall barriers were knowledge/education, identity, community, land access, cost, tourism, and policies. Main barriers on-reserve were land ownership, developments and construction; and off-reserve, limited community support and knowledge circulation. In conclusion, both supports and challenges exist for traditional food access in Nova Scotia; however, barriers outweighed supports in both number and magnitude, which is in line with the increasing inequities experienced by Aboriginal peoples in Canada. In order to address barriers to food access, stronger community and political partnerships along with consultations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups are necessary to address issues of common concern.