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Relationship is Everything: Holistic Approaches to Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health

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Relationship is an extension of thought and being ... Gregory Cajete, 1999

Abstract

This article addresses topics related to Indigenous holistic well-being including, 1) Indigenous perspectives on Aboriginal child and youth holistic mental health; 2) Factors undermining Indigenous well-being; 3) Process and curriculum for training to support mental health practitioners working with Indigenous children, youth and communities; 4) concrete applications and participant feedback. To begin, it is important to explore the following question: What is holistic mental health for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth? In outlining this training curriculum we hope to contribute to a broader conversation about supporting and enhancing the well-being of Indigenous children and youth in Canada.

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Introduction

In this article, the authors outline a curriculum and process for promoting holistic approaches to Aboriginal child and youth mental health. Jeannine Carriere/*Sokiaskiesquao* and Cathy Richardson/*Kinewesquao* developed the curriculum presented in this article and delivered it to Ministry of Children and Family Development Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health therapists from 2006 to 2008 in six regions of British Columbia. The purpose of the training was to inform non-Indigenous child and youth mental health practitioners about working across difference and serving First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth living in B.C. The training was designed to engender a fuller understanding of Canada's colonial context, Indigenous worldviews and perspectives of holistic health and well-being. As well, it provided opportunities to explore and examine the negative health outcomes related to racism including racial stereotyping and misinformation received about Indigenous peoples in the Canadian school system. Participants were offered processes for working with Indigenous communities to learn about protocols and how to establish circles of support around those experiencing mental health challenges. The curriculum promoted decolonization and contextualized approaches, including depathologizing understandable responses to colonial violence and oppression.

The trainers, have a background in counselling, child welfare and social work practice with Indigenous communities. Jeannine Carriere/*Sokiaskiesquao* is Métis with Cree and Assiniboine ancestry; Cathy Richardson/*Kinewesquao* is Métis with Cree, Dene and Gwichin ancestry. The authors have published their research related to holistic well-being after experiences of disconnection and separation experienced through colonial child welfare, residential school and land theft experiences (Carriere & Richardson, 2009; Carriere, 2006, 2005a, 2005b, Richardson, 2012; 2009; 2008; 2006, 2005b, Richardson and Wade, 2010, 2008, Wade 1995). Their focus has been supporting children, especially those in child welfare systems or in the aftermath of violence, to recover, strengthen and reconsolidate their Indigenous identity and sense of connection.

What is holistic mental health for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children and Youth?

Many Indigenous and Indigenist theories have articulated their thoughts about Indigenous worldview and Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Cajete, 1999; Cajete & Little Bear, 2000; Green, Kovach, Montgomery, Thomas, Brown, 2007; Kovach, 2010; 2005; Smith 1999). Within Indigenous epistemology mental health is considered broadly and encompasses a holistic framework, honouring the well-being of mind, body, and spirit as well as the realm of emotions. Various Indigenous models and metaphors have been used to represent holistic wellness, including the Cedar tree, the Medicine Wheel, the Medicine Wheel of Responses (Richardson & Wade, 2010, 2008) the Circle of Courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Bockern, 2002), The Sacred Tree (Bopp, Bopp, Brown and Lane, 1985), the Tree of Life (Carriere, 2011). Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model (1979) can be a helpful bridge for considering the individual in relation to the family, community, society and Earth, although it does not overtly

acknowledge the stresses of colonization. Nsemenang and Dawes (1998) make the links between colonialism, resistance and human development in an African context. Erving Goffman (1963) teaches how we become who we are both by embracing what we love/emulate and by resisting that which we oppose. Practices of resistance are central to the lives of Indigenous people who experience multiple forms of oppression, which can undermine mental health and holistic well-being.

This type of holistic or interrelated ecological framework is consistent with the Indigenous philosophy of the relational and connected reality of humans in their environment. Gregory Cajete is a Tewa Indian and professor in New Mexico. His work explores culturally-based science and emphasizes its relationship to human well-being. He writes:

> Native people expressed a relationship to the natural world that could only be described as 'ensoulment.' The ensoulment of nature is one of the most ancient foundations of human psychology. This projection of the human sense of the soul with its archetypes has been called the 'participation mystique,' which for Native people represented the deepest level of psychological involvement with their land and which provided a kind of map of the soul. The psychology and spiritual qualities of Indigenous people's behavior reflected in symbolism were thoroughly 'in-formed' by the depth and power of their participation mystique with the Earth as a living soul. It was from this orientation that Indian people developed 'responsibilities' to the land and all living things, similar to those that they had to each other. In the Native mind, spirit and matter were not separate; they were one and the same. (1999, p. 186)

This holistic, animistic understanding was offered as part of an expanded view of attachment theory in the training, extended to include the human relationship with the earth.

Since a main orientation to youth psychology in the Ministry is attachment theory, trainers offered an expanded view of attachment and connection similar to that articulated by Cajete. Our goal is to support the mother/child bond and to problematize practices that hold mothers responsible for parenting while making explicit the need to uphold culture and uphold the life-sustaining network of relationships in community. As a social justice approach, it is not empowering for Indigenous families to be blamed and pathologized individually for wounds inflicted by colonialism. Indigenous theorists who informed the curriculum, such as Cajete and Little Bear, showed that psychological practice must move from an individualist to a more collectivist focus if personal and collective well-being is directly linked to the health of the earth, ecosystems and the social relations between peoples. Rod McCormick (2001) also discusses the relationship between attachment theory for youth and ceremonies such as the vision quest. The curriculum offers reference to collective social justice and human rights, as opposed to a focus on individual dysfunction, substituting a language of western psychology with a language of dignity (Richardson & Wade, 2006; Wade, 1997). Further, articulating Indigenous well-being through the lens of United Nations declarations shows that equality and justice are just as health promoting as nutritious food, clean water and the love that is extended to children and young adults (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfil/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf).

Research on social responses and social networks, kinship arrangements and communal care indicates that the quality of social responses received by children and youth relates directly to their immediate and long term well-being. Children who disclose violence, bullying, racism and mistreatment and who receive negative social responses[1] are more likely to experience long-

1 Negative social responses can be individual or systemic. They typically involve not being believed, having the violence mutualized (e.g. told "it takes two to tango") or having adults not act on their behalf. They can involve delayed action in the justice system or police inaction when violence is reported.

term suffering, distress, depression, self-harm and suicidal ideation (Andrews, Brewin & Rose, 2003; Andrews & Brewin, 1990). The research shows that people who receive quick and effective responses that stop the violence and create safety tend to recover relatively quickly. Here children gain a sense of their value, importance, and sacredness: they also learn that violence is not a viable social tool, they learn that people don't get away with it and they are less likely to use violence against others in the future. This research highlights the importance of having structures of care and justice that work to create social safety. The authors viewed this training both as a positive social response to improve lives in Indigenous communities and a guide to practitioners to orchestrating positive collective responses to the suffering of Indigenous children and youth.

Planning for Training

Planning each training session involved meeting with representatives from each local community, often employees from Indigenous agencies. A local co-facilitator was identified and invited to assist with the five day training. Elders and representatives of First Nations, Métis and urban Aboriginal communities were included. They were presented with tobacco and culturally appropriate gifts and asked to assist in the training by imparting their knowledge, skills and teachings or leading cultural and spiritual ceremonies. Some of the Elders would share stories of their life while others would teach crafts or arts such as drum making, beading, hand-games, or making prayer ties. From a cultural and body-centered perspective, it is important to introduce activities that offer room for quiet contemplation and physical activity to facilitate talking, listening and sharing of difficult information, all methods that can be used when working with children and youth.

Beginning Where We Are – Acknowledging the Territory

One of the introductory components discussed the implications of related to 'being in someone's territory,' and thus introducing the idea that much of our life in Canada takes place on unceded Indigenous land. In relation to land and geography, participants were asked to consider:

a. Who are/were the local Indigenous caretakers of the land?

b. What are the traditional Indigenous territories in your area?

c. Who are the Aboriginal peoples of Canada?

d. What do we get from/give to the land?

e. What are the implications of identity and a sense of connection for Indigenous children and youth?

Participants watched the DVD *No Turning Back*, a film about the 1997 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, providing an overview of settler-Indigenous relations in Canada. Participants were directed to make a journal entry noting any areas of tension or discomfort (physically, emotionally, spiritually, politically), during the film. They were asked to comment on the following questions:

1. Identify a few key experiences where you felt tightening in your body/ mind.
2. Did some of the information clash with your understanding of things?
3. What did you find challenging? Difficult? Stretching? Disturbing?
4. What points did you already know about? Agree with? Empathize with?
5. How do you typically integrate new information into your being?

The facilitators propose the idea that because we were raised in a racist society, with imposed divisions between Indigenous and settler Canadians, we are all 'recovering racists.' Here facilitators focus on creating an atmosphere of openness, respect and safety where these issues can be shared and explored with non-judgment. While participants may be in the process of 'unlearning' some of the racist ideologies they would have learned living in Canadian society, they are told that Indigenous people are also shedding many of the stereotypes that were placed upon them/us, negative notions that didn't have anything to do with who we really are. Lee Maracle (1993) says that we are all climbing up the same mountain, taking different paths to reach the summit. Eventually, we will meet each other there and create a new way of being together.

Beginning the Training

Each session was opened with prayers and welcome from local Elders. Participants would then receive a history of the local territory and the particular context of colonial violence. Participants were asked to form small groups to identify and list what was needed to feel safe this week, to promote sharing and psychological safety. Each group would create a list of protocols for cooperation. Here is one example of such an agreement:

> Encourage the traditional teachings of honesty, respect, no interrupting, owning our stuff ('I statements,' take care of yourself and your needs, take a break, remember to breathe) turn off cell phones, avoid sidebars (side conversations) and avoid creating distraction while others are speaking.

Participants were encouraged to take turns leading the daily openings and energizers to help create a shared responsibility for the well-being of the group. Energizers included word games, stories, song, movement, dance and energy boosting activities. Participants were also asked to keep a journal for recording their responses (physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual) to the daily content. This provided them with another forum for processing new or challenging information and to track the changes in their thoughts, understanding and meaning making.

For an increased sense of safety in debriefing content, participants were divided into four groups representing the four cardinal points on the compass. In some cases these groups were 'Fire,' 'Earth,' 'Water' and 'Air.' These groups took an extra role in taking care of its members, sometimes making time to debrief outside of the day, provide support and safety. Occasionally each group was be asked to prepare a certain topic and report back to the larger group. On the

last day of training each group shared a ritual that demonstrated their group learning from the training.

Safety was also established by paying particular attention to the rhythms of the day, infusing humor, energizers, movement, food and music between more emotionally challenging content to assist the participants in processing hard facts about colonial violence. Participants were asked to share what they already know and do when helping themselves or clients to become grounded in stressful situations. They shared the following list: keep breathing, do exercises with breath, focus on the body, wiggle the toes, rub the legs, move the body in some way, meditate, say a prayer in your mind, visualize a desired outcome, write notes or doodle. A helpful pedagogical approach is to elicit group knowledge, what people already know and do, rather than assume that people are not already engaged in their own growth, learning and self/collective care.

The first day's morning ended with the sharing of the poem, *The Invitation* by Oriah Mountain Dreamer (see following page), in hopes of acknowledging what it is to be present for someone who is struggling or to attend to others when we ourselves are struggling and need to put aside our own concerns to care for others. This poem offers an introduction to the kinds of 'invitations' and challenges that are experienced by Indigenous women who often live with a myriad of pressures and demands. It also acknowledges the contribution and dignity of doing real work for children and family.

A Dignity-Based Curriculum

The second day began with a conversation about dignity and its importance in the helping professions. Dignity practices form the foundation of response-based practice and relate directly to work with Indigenous communities (Richardson, 2006; Richardson & Wade, 2008, Wade 1997). Understanding that dignity is central to well-being and that efforts to preserve dignity are often misinterpreted as symptoms or deficits, we explored the ways that we, as individuals and groups, attend to the dignity of one another on a daily basis. Dignity is linked to Indigenous teachings about respect. Mohawk psychologist Clare Brant (1990) wrote about "native ethics," such as the principle of non-interference, in his work with Indigenous communities. This relates to human dignity, giving people choice and sovereignty in the decisions they make in their lives, knowing that it is the community's role to ensure that young people received good teachings throughout their development. We discussed ways that dignity can be restored through counseling and helping processes and why it is crucial to build restorative processes into mental health work.

Teaching About Colonialism

Teaching about colonialism was an eye-opening experience for many of the participants, who were largely unaware of the extent of violence in Canada's colonial history. We talked about how various Indigenous communities experienced the removal of their children to be interned in institutions referred to as 'residential schools,' which could also have been called children's internment camps. Colonial violence supported by the *Indian Act*, played out through intergenerational internment, child welfare, policing, health and social services, has devastated many Indigenous communities and resulted in great suffering. Gerry Oleman of the Seton Lake Band in the Stl'atl'imc Nation and former director of the (IRSSS) Indian Residential School Survivors' Society shared teachings at one of the trainings. He identified the 5Rs as sources of unwellness and destabilization for Indigenous people that have been particularly hard to understand

The Invitation

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living

I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain. I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own without moving to hide it or face it or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own, if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul;

If you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty, even when it's not pretty, every day, and if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you, from the inside, when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments

(Mountain Dreamer, 1999)

and process for children and youth: Racism, Residential Schools, Reserves, RCMP (violence) and Removal (child welfare) (Oleman, personal communication at training in Vancouver, B.C.).

When Elders shared their personal experience of these colonial processes, participants were often moved and experienced a sense of compassion and understanding that reframed what the psychiatric model refers to as 'symptoms' as understandable situational responses.

Colonial Barriers to Holistic Health

In order to understand wellness for Indigenous children and youth, the mental health practitioners were presented with the historical and social context of suffering. Colonialism has inflicted realities that are antithetical to mental and holistic health, realities such as isolation, separation from family, fractured belonging and identity and deprivation of language and culture. Indigenous individuals and families have had to face many negative social responses, such as racism and prejudice as well as classist exclusion from opportunity, rights and the privileges of citizenship. Organizing energies to address these forms of inequality and violence has meant that Indigenous people have not had the luxury of pursuing middle-class wellness pursuits on a wide-scale basis, such as vacations in the sun, lives of calm and privilege or the choice of schools with teachers that uphold and value Indigenous students.

The participants were also asked to consider how Western individualism creates barriers to holistic health for many Indigenous people. Developmental imperatives of Indigenous children (learning, playing, emulating adult skills, receiving stories and skills, acquiring language, caring for self and others) and adolescents (finding a sense of purpose, preparing for adulthood, taking on apprenticeship, going through rituals that prepare for coming of age) are important considerations in addressing the well-being of young people. In many cases, Indigenous teenagers are already parents and yet have not themselves reached adulthood. Traditionally, young parents would live together with extended family in community, receiving support and mentorship which is not always available today. Mental health practitioners were taught about the notion of an extended, relational self and what it means to live with a more collective (than individualistically oriented) worldview and then to have that collectivity disrupted by colonialism. With this knowledge comes an invitation to restore collective processes rather than merely and inappropriately applying western individualistic practice and assumptions onto Indigenous people. For these reasons many practices derived from family therapy and community psychology, with an analysis of power, are offered as helpful ways of working, thereby going beyond mere one-on-one interventions where the system or family/social environment does not benefit from the potential positive change or improved relationships.

In a lesson called 'Colonization, Canada and Aboriginal Peoples,' the facilitators would share quotes, teachings and analyses from teachers, such as El_Hajj Malik El-Shabazz Malcolm X:

> You've been tricked!
> You've been had! Hoodwinked! Bamboozled!
> Somebody sure pulled a fast one on you!
> Somebody, somewhere tricked you into believing there were
> certain things you could not do because of who you were someone
> else told you that only certain people could do or be the very thing

> you wanted to be and you were not one of those people. With a sleight of hand manipulation of facts, someone made you think you didn't have what it takes so they took it (cited in Vanzant, 1993, p. 57).

Participants were then asked to debrief what they were taught as children about Aboriginal people and history in Canada, as well as the history of the settlers. They were asked, "How did your ancestors come together with Indigenous Canadians?" To contextual the extent of the violence, we shared the following quote:

> Native American people have been subjected to one of the most systematic attempts at genocide in the world's history. At the beginning of the colonization process in North America there were over 10 million Native American people living on the continent. By the year 1900 there were only 250,000 people left (Thorton, 1986, cited in Duran & Duran, 1995, p.28).

Phil Lane (cited in Bopp, Bopp and Lane, 1985), Director of the Four Worlds International Institute in Southern Alberta, was cited stating:

> When the full extent of abuse is finally revealed, we'll find the most extensive case of child sexual, physical, mental, and spiritual Abuse ever recorded in human history.

Learning about the extent and deliberateness of colonial violence can bring on an experience of spiritual pain for Canadians who were not aware of this history. Offering support in processing such content is an important part of such an educational and cross-cultural process.

The role of Indigenous women was discussed. Stories of resistance were shared, such as how many Indigenous women who engaged in activism to challenge sexism in their communities and in the *Indian Act*, including colonial laws that privileged men and took away the matrilineal property rights of women. These women included Bridget Tilley, Eva Saulis, Glenna Perley, Jeannette Corbiere Lavelle, Yvonne Bedard and many others. They launched protests, court challenges and took their case to the United Nations, which ruled eventually in their favour and prompted the creation of Bill C-31, returning status to women that had been denied through the *Indian Act's* discriminatory laws.

The Spiritual Pain Related to Colonialism

Participants sometimes needed support around the history of colonialism, white privilege and violence perpetuated by the colonial government in Canada. Some were learning about the extent of historical violence for the first time and were dealing with feelings of sadness, grief and shame. The fact that the training was five days long gave participants an opportunity to work through these feelings with support. They had the chance to speak with Elders and participate in ceremonies, such as a smudge or a sweat lodge. Each group was also asked to create a healing ritual to present and facilitate on the last day, which also provided an experience of movement, ritual and closure. The theme of the ritual was "Making Peace with the Past."

The facilitators, in their structuring of the day, tried to build in places for laughter and play in the curriculum. Laughter can be seen as a strategy for health and resistance, and is often considered in these ways in Indigenous communities. For example, Melanie Corbiere (cited in Anderson, 2007) remembers that it was her mother who taught her about the importance of humor and laughter. She says:

> That's what brings you out of depression, is laughter, nothing else. No pills will do it … The more you laugh, the longer your life will be. If you cry all the time, you shorten up your life, thereby depriving your children of yourself. (Anderson: 2007, p.152)

Kim Anderson documents that "Native women are always laughing and there is always laughter in Indian groups and organizations!" (2008, p.152). As facilitators, we tried to model a parallel process where some of the tools and methods modeled in the training were also teachings that practitioners could use in their counseling and supportive work with Indigenous children and youth. The Elders often brought humor and laughter into the training, sharing teachings that involved funny stories and paradoxical situations to highlight the complexity of particular life situations.

Contesting a Language of Effects

The facilitators spent some time in discussion with participants about the limitations and dangers of working from an over-generalized psychological or psychiatric perspective based on 'how people are affected or impacted by events.' Indigenous and response-based ideas speak of how individuals have agency, spirit, decision-making ability, pre-existing capacity, and knowledge of self preservation. People are not passive and always respond to adversity in some way (Coates & Wade, 2004, Richardson & Wade, 2008). This notion of passivity has been used against Indigenous people in a victim-blaming way; Indigenous people are often accused of not doing enough to help themselves, not being good parents and not looking after their children. The discourse of effects conceals the reality that people constantly resist mistreatment, and their responses demonstrate their knowledge, capacity, values and orientation towards respect. If we begin from the premise that people always resist mistreatment in some way, then it is impossible to impose many western, deficit-based theories because people are clearly not passive. For instance, many women and girls are blamed for the male violence against them because they were not seen as trying to stop or prevent it; this misrepresentation of events can only occur when we do not explore their resistance and the things they did in the moment to try to maximize their safety and dignity, within the limited room to move.

The facilitators structured a demonstration of a response-based interview as an example of how to structure safety into a conversation, elicit resistance knowledges and highlight client capacity, knowledge and pre-existing ability. Some practitioners appreciated a new way of exploring adverse situations with clients, through their acts of resistance, while others remained more embedded in models of psycho-pathology. In an époque of trauma-informed practice, with an intense focus on the brain of the victim, practitioners were invited to consider a social justice approach identifying violence and colonialism as problems in the social world, not merely in people's minds. This shift of focus from an intra-psychic to a social interactional approach (more aligned with systemic ideas of family therapy, social psychology, feminism, activism, and social justice work) relates to the ethics of working respectfully with Indigenous communities, supporting the social needs of the most vulnerable (girls, women, children, people with disabilities, Elders) and challenges notions of people and communities as 'broken.' Through this lens, individual actions commonly seen as 'symptoms' are more readily viewed as understandable responses in the context of particular situations. Many responses are actions which keep people alive during times of immense difficulty and suffering, such as a youth refusing to come home at night (and thus placing himself in other dangerous situations) if there is an abusive parent in the house. While psychology might label this behavior as pathologically avoidant or defiant, it tends to make sense when considered through a lens of safety and dignity.

Racism

The next component of curriculum involved analyzing racism. The facilitators explored the participants' knowledge and experience of racism in their own lives and offered theoretical models related to different types and contexts of racism. The group spent some time analyzing stereotypes and then brainstorming ways to contest racism and racialized violence. One group created the following list as an antidote to racism:

- Using academic and work opportunities to contest racism
- Learning about power, the role of governments and the law
- Deconstructing what is personal and what is institutional
- Understanding the structural relationships between government and business, and why racist attitudes remain
- Valuing the contributions of Aboriginal people
- Listening to people
- Building relationships based on humanness
- Promoting respect and change
- Recognizing successes
- Making recommendations for future reform
- Using appropriate language to describe events and interaction
- Using the court system to reaffirm constitutional law

In terms of working with children and youth who have experienced racism, various models for addressing racialized violence were presented. This included response-based interviewing, group meetings with students and educators, activities to structure safety and dignity into institutions, and strategies for inviting disenfranchised people 'into the circle.' The "Circle of Courage" work (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Bockern, 2002) was discussed as a way of supporting youth who have been harmed, alienated and excluded in order to create a sense of belonging, community and connectedness with others. This included working with youth gangs to foster a pro-social form of social participation and belonging. Strategies for reducing prejudice were discussed as well as the importance of developing an accurate analysis of racism and not reducing racialized violence to bullying, such as with the murder of Reena Virk by her peers in Victoria. It was noted that such therapeutic approaches need to take place within a larger social change project to restore histories of violence and exclusion. Canada has not yet engaged in meaningful public conversations that relate to decolonization and restoration. Australia's 'Sorry Day' is one example of a process and event where the sentiment of 'never again' can nurture a new social relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Canadians.

The medicine wheel of resistance framework was presented as a model for eliciting a person's responses and safety knowledges in the face of adversity, as a potential holistic tool and assessment of risk, safety and well-being (see image on the following page).

Working with Elders

Day Four was dedicated to the Elders, a day where the content and process was facilitated by local Elders and cultural teachers. This day often involved ceremony and an excursion into the

local community. The final day of training was dedicated to each group facilitating a ceremony, ritual or presentation that illustrated the synthesized learning of the week. The presentations were always unique and integrated the particular talents, abilities and spiritual practices of the practitioners. They involved a 'giving back' of sorts or offering to the Elders as a demonstration of a way to move ahead in a good way, making peace with the past and visualizing an end to colonial relations by some act, gesture or commitment. These ceremonies offered a holistic way to demonstrate what each group would be taking away from the training and how their approach to Indigenous child and youth mental health would be different because of their participation.

Concrete Applicability

As discussed in previous sections, many of the activities, ideas and ways of working in the training were meant to build skills and knowledges that practitioners can use with Indigenous youth and children. Yet once the training was over, its applicability depended on what the practitioners took from the sessions and used in their work. Through four training sessions

approximately 100 individuals, approximately 65% of the health practitioners in one particular region, attended the trainings. The feedback received from these health practitioners suggest that the trainings allowed for a significant shift in mental health practice with Indigenous children and youth in the region.

In their feedback, participants discussed how the trainings increased their knowledges and skills in various ways. For some, the training provided an introduction to the experiences and cultures of Indigenous groups in the Fraser region as well as an introduction to colonialism and Indigenous-settler relations. One participant noted how the training, "presented invaluable research findings regarding residential schools, adoption practices (past and present) by Canadian government of Aboriginal children and some of the effects this has had on individuals, families, and culture." Another person said, the "training really expanded my understanding of the impact colonization has had on the lives of our First Nations people." This learning then informed clinical practice. A practitioner said, "Through the training, my sensitivity and awareness of the many strengths and challenges of the First Nations people has increased considerably."

While learning about colonialism, mental health practitioners also learned about their own assumptions and beliefs regarding Aboriginal-settler relations. One participant said, "my staff who took the training report that since the training, some of their beliefs and assumptions have been challenged and their sensitivity to issues within the First Nations communities have greatly increased." Yet while the training worked to exposed the injustice of colonialism and challenged many participants' worldviews, the participants largely said they felt supported during the process. As one participant noted, "this training fed my body, mind, and spirit."

Many participants saw how debunking racist stereotypes and myths that inform mainstream clinical practice helped practitioners to not reproduce racism in their work with Indigenous people. Mental health practitioners tended to see the training as reinforcing importance of practicing mindfully in their work so as to not replicate dominance in their practice. A few mental health practitioners discussed their desire to challenge colonialism and western dominance in the clinical practice. One noted her desire to "help chip away at the racism inherent to western/dominant ideology and clinical practice."

The training encouraged participants to develop relationships with local Indigenous communities, leaders and mental health practitioners. By building these relationships with local Indigenous communities, practitioners were able to access resources and knowledges that helped provide alternatives to mainstream western clinical intervention. One mental health practitioner "offered to provide workshops with and for Aboriginal community members and continue to have dialogue regarding co-facilitating groups with Aboriginal Outreach workers." Another participant "offered my Langley CYMH office for use by an Aboriginal Outreach Worker every second Thursday" to "build relationship between individuals, and provide access to information, consultation and resources within the office."

A few participants expressed frustration at working across the profound differences between the mainstream clinical practices common in government offices and the holistic practices promoted by the training. One participant noted the discouragement she felt when she heard racist remarks at work or had supervisors ignore issues of cultural sensitivity. As another participant said, it is "challenging to try to work in a culturally sensitive manner if ideas and certain practices that are outside mainstream and do not fit neatly within the Ministry ideals of clinical intervention."

Finally, the training developed some participants' appreciation for cross-cultural practice; "the training creates an excitement about learning about different cultures, as diversity makes for a far more unique, rich and beautiful society and community in so many ways."

In another region, a team leader said that the trainings were: 1) helpful for providing an introductory "view in" to some of the important things to be aware of when working across difference with Indigenous folks, and 2) supportive of my caution and sensitivity about the importance of not replicating dominance and colonization, and so would always approach this work really cautiously. This participant said he appreciates working as part of a cross-cultural team and receiving cultural input and analysis from Indigenous counsellors. Much of this therapeutic and supportive work with Aboriginal children and youth requires cross-cultural collaboration as well as relationships with Indigenous families and communities. It is, in many ways, a cross-cultural healing project.

In conclusion, we have revisited our experiences many times since our days on the road with this training. Each session was truly a gift to us as facilitators as we were privileged to meet Elders, participants, local community resource people, as well as the various managers who were responsible to encourage their staff to fully participate and attend our sessions. We believe that this was one of the key factors in the success of these sessions. By modeling a genuine 'presence', the Aboriginal child and youth mental health team leaders and management demonstrated their commitment to the purpose and offering of our training. We have vivid memories of managers sitting in a sweat lodge with us and being humbled by the experience and the teachings of the Elders. This experience was undoubtedly more poignant than any of the handouts or discussions. The power of spiritual connection is deeper than one can explain; however, for us it was important to entrench these teachings and experiences for an audience who were working with Aboriginal children and youth, our families. We hope their memories of this time are equally positive and that those teaching continue to guide their practice and ways of being as Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental practitioners. All our relations!

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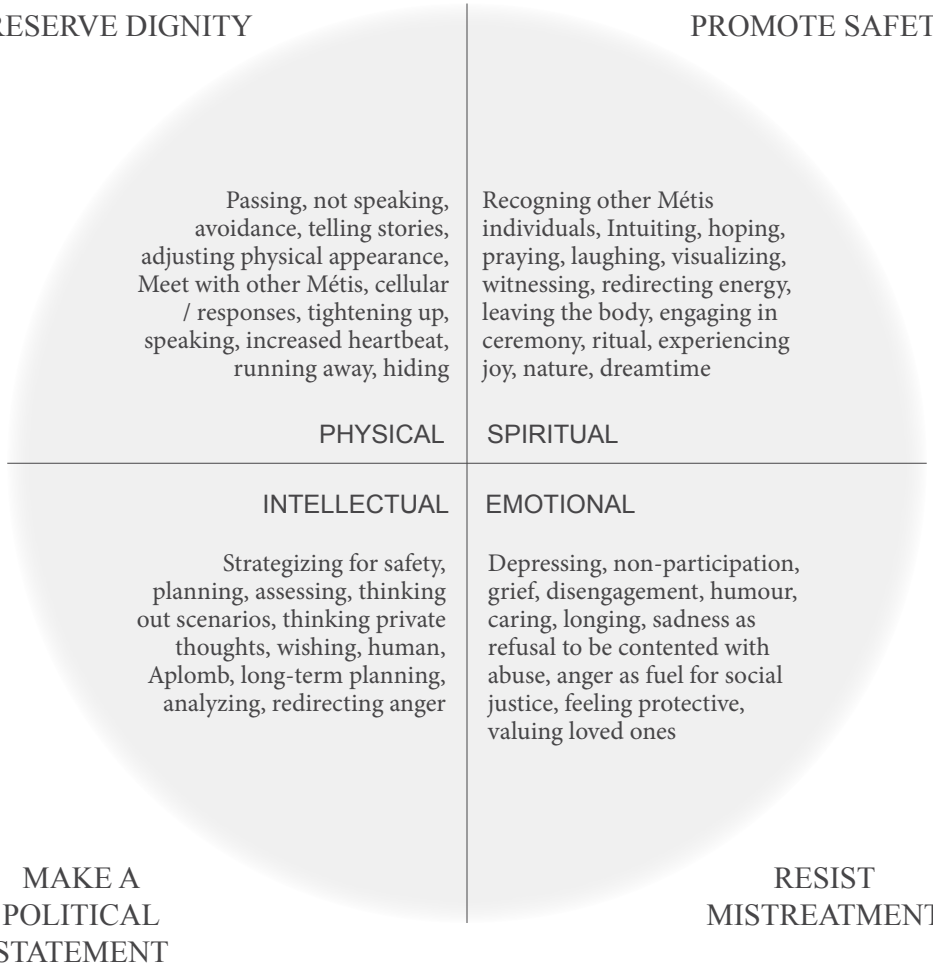
Appendix One - The Medicine Wheel of Responses

Based on the understanding that humans are sentient beings who respond to events, including the diverse forms of oppression, rather than merely being affected by them. Humans make choices, on a number of levels of their being, that:



These responses constitute knowledge of *how to be well,* affirm *pre-existing ability* and indicate Métis resistance knowledge (Wade, 2000; Watzlawick, Beaven Bavelas & Jackson, 1967).

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Tenoch's Gender Journey: Case Study of a 13-year-old Mexican Refugee with Aboriginal Ancestry - Naming the Gaps Between Theory and Practice

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Abstract

This paper explores the issues and technique that were used with a group of non-conforming youth to prepare them for successful entrance into university. It will produce an affirmation of the inner wisdom of non-traditional students as a mirror of learning for traditional teachers, to provide an example of dialogic learning through a de-colonizing lens. Then it will present the results of six years of group support and counselling to prove that denouncing the gaps in institutionalized systemic barriers to sexual minorities, coupled with persistent clinical, advocacy, and community activism, is effective in breaking the cycles of marginalization of fervent, creative, and resilient youth once termed "at risk."

Immigrant latino youth in general and the case study of Tenoch in particular shows that a direct application of present clinical practices are not enough to provide long-term healing and decolonizing attitudes to survive the academic needs of a border-gender communities. Regular, on-going therapy focused on anti-oppressive practices coupled with Aboriginal healing techniques has proved to be a valid, reliable, and consistent method to increase this vulnerable population's well-being without further marginalization. A practitioner might conclude that a mixed model is more affirmative of individual process of personhood while still connected to one's roots and communities of origin. The implication of practice is that a clinician needs to also engage in advocacy, support, and profound transformations in order to unmask both inner and outer colonized mind traps.

Keywords: transgender, youth, advocacy, marginalization, colonization, oppression.

Introduction

From the non-traditional youth to the academically successful one

The completion of any academic program, such as the school preparation for regular entrance into a degree program at a university, could certainly be called a "triumph of tenacity over terror" (Morgan, 1989, 7–18, 27, 43, 45).[1] On the one hand, being forced into a plethora of weekly interactions as a high school student makes one grow up, get real, and confront one's limits and unresolved issues. On the other hand, an academic program per se does not provide answers. It will "prove" nothing, "solve" nothing, and reassure no one. That is not its intention. Rather, it is meant to perform the humbler if irritating function of asking questions, sensing connections, and suggesting perspectives. These may validate a

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1 Morgan applies this beautiful expression to the completion of any feminist task, such as her own account of researching into both our fascination with and our repulsion towards terrorism in general and specific terrorists in particular (cf. Morgan, 1989, pp. 17-18, 27, 43, 45),

few non-traditional students, challenge others, and unsettle some (Morgan, 1989, p.15). How do people really become effective students within the existing system? I believe the key resides in a clear relationship between the student and his/her spiritual needs, which then, and only then, could be projected into the Otherness of academia. Furthermore, the clarity and consistency of the communication (through body, language, and energy) and a willingness to be (or become) a life-long learner might be considered the foundations of such psycho-spiritual encounters.

This paper focuses on such explorations as they relate to the potential of the profound transformation to be propitiated at the end of this unique training for life. Although designed as an assignment, to an external evaluator, the Ministry of Education & Training in Ontario in general and Ontario universities in particular, this is actually an exploration for oneself, and it basically entertains all possible meanings that the personal growth of the therapist is having in those students' lives. Assignments are always for ourselves, on either side of the counselling session, if we really want to empower and heal both participants.

Method

Participants: 4 participants between 10-16 years of age, home schooled at first

Tenoch and his cousin Amalia are part of a visible sexual minority. Tenoch identifies as a "masculine girl, mostly non-gender, female bodied person" (his own definition, as of 2011), while Amalia identifies as queer. Both were home-schooled together by three loving and artistically inclined parents who made sure that the curriculum was pertinent, reliable, and multifaceted. When two more youth also with partial Aboriginal roots—self-identifying as gay and trans-man, respectively—engaged in a formal group study, I was invited to provide ongoing counselling to them. This paper presents the results of the encounters, which lasted six years. Identifiable details have been altered to protect the participants, because after Immigration Canada denied their refugee claims, they all became part of the growing hidden reality of undocumented new Canadians.

Tenoch's own characteristics and original idea as an incoming student: From cycles of shame and trauma to a healing journey

Tenoch has always been the leader of the group. Tenoch's family is of Mexican Aboriginal ancestry. Tenoch lived in the USA during his first eight years. The family lived undocumented there, and one day, as they told me in personal communication, they had to pack all their belongings in a car and just drive and drive until they reached Canada. In Canada, Tenoch was assessed as gifted, a fact that was very obvious to me after just a few conversations.

Tenoch was at first unaware of gender fluctuations, because he was never exposed to criticism by his protective family, and his relations outside the group had been limited. At the beginning of our clinical engagements I noticed that his family was constantly pointing out that he was "different" and "with different needs", although such commnents were more of a proto-advocacy style than a form of criticism. In fact, they were loving and isolated parents with little knowledge on the subject and no community connections. At first I have noticed that his family pointing out that he is different need not have taken the form of criticism though. Tenoch did not attend school in USA given the difficulties to sort the school system out without proper immigration papers. Moreover, proud of his Aboriginal ancestry, he firmly believed that many souls lived

within him. He was not concerned at all with his different presentations, because he thought the Spirit manifested particularly according to the needs. That all changed once he became exposed to "regular, normal kids," as one teacher put it to him as a newcomer to Toronto. After a semester of daily bullying, Tenoch presented all the characteristics related to a DSM-IV diagnosis that he did not provide permission to mention. The family never accepted that diagnosis, and they took him out of that school and decided to home-school him.

Procedure

I had the privilege of working with these 4 youths and their families for 6 years, from when all four of them were 11 and 12 until they were 17 and 18 years old. The case study used narrative therapy. Narrative therapy is based on the concept of clients re-authoring their life story. How does narrative therapy work for potential university students coming from a different background and life's four directions? Evidently, our conceptualization, interpretation, and, therefore, understanding of our own life's events change over time, which is a typical aspect of human development. University professors in general, and Transitional Year Program (TYP) instructors in particular, are not well equipped to deal with such incoming students because they themselves are coming from a privileged position in society, whether they publicly or even privately acknowledge this or not. Shame is a common topic for underprivileged students, who may be found in an inner-city high school and even on some college campuses. As it has been put out, for some individuals, their life stories tell of the event of paying respect to a past or present abuser (Knockwood, 2001, p. 142), so their relation to figures of authority can be problematic. To "make room" for ourselves as helpers/healers of others could be seen as a sort of "natural" consequence of having engaged in our own healing. As part of the foundation of the sacred, "engraved within the soul of every person are links to those who have come before us. Our ancestors are the source of our collective narratives, visions and fears. They may also hold the key to understanding our personal struggles. For some people, dealing with their ancestry involves confronting war trauma, alcoholism, madness or violence; for others it is about coming to terms with the choices their predecessors made" (Volkas & Pendzik, 2012).[2]

Tenoch certainly wanted to heal from past experiences. After having two years of regular hybrid clinical engagements with the group, I learned by chance of a doctor-shaman from Uruguay who was coming to visit a friend of mine in Toronto. I approached him for personal healing, and decided to incorporate some of his Aboriginal techniques in my work with this youth's ancestors. I found that incorporating these techniques provided a richer framework; a calmer understanding of deep-seated emotions, such as historical trauma; and a way to start conversing about unspoken truths. Tenoch then decided to become a student of the shaman to further work on his gender aspects from Aboriginal ways of knowing. The group acknowledged that actual education was irrelevant to their needs as gender-variant youth and also as members of the undocumented community in Toronto, because they need extensive support and community resources based on trust, honour, and respect, which are core values of indigenous ways of relating to each other, nature, community, and family. These four youths had made many attempts at the formal and established educational system. Based on their experience, they rejected the boredom, punitiveness, and irony of being subject to providing the negative expectations of an oppressive self-fulfilment prophecy. Their alternative has been home-schooling and creating

2 Taken from the promotional text for the workshop Restoring the Bonds with Our Ancestors through Drama Therapy and Creative Ritual, organized by The International Institute of Applied and Therapeutic Theatre & Healing Wounds of History, to be conducted by Armando Volkas and Susana Pendzik, August 2-5, 2012, in Oakland, California.

their own community, however small, as an environment of encouragement. To prevent both overt and covert forms of discrimination, the institutionalization of discrimination to marked and unmarked bodies, we, including myself as a clinician, some school authorities, their families and allies advocated for the freedom to generate new curriculum that was both relevant and pertinent. We promoted a newly formed community.

As Chandler and Lalonde (1998) have proven, the political has implications for individual wellness, via cultural continuity. In this case, sexual minorities are also inscribed in specific subcultures within many other ways of being in the world. The more cultural continuity there is, the more solid the mental health of its participants will be (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998, p. 4).

I agree with Herman that for certain individuals, the "existential task is formidable" (Herman, 1992, p. 101). Nevertheless, "being ready isn't sufficient to produce the mutation" (Taylor, 1989, p. 315). Different students need more ongoing psychosocial support, and a former girl who now presents as a boy needs support that would increase the visibility of a positive role model. In my personal case, it took many years of exploration (and definite answering) of a simple yet rather elegant Biblical question:[3] Am I my brother's keeper? Yes, I am indeed. In the first half of my life, in Uruguay, it took a political turn; in this second half, in Canada, it is taking a more psycho-social angle. The personal is not only political, it is also ecological, psychological, and spiritual,[4] to name but a few interconnections. To put it succinctly, academia could theoretically propitiate people's change through a spiritual adjustment to life's circumstances. The process of becoming an adequate teacher at any level is a lifelong path of awakening, attention, surrender, and commitment. It is about a contentment dependent on inner transformation.

Otherness of non-traditional students vis-à-vis the otherness of privileged teachers

Duran self-defined his work in elegant terms, as an "alchemical amalgamation of Western theory and traditional Aboriginal theory and practice" (Duran, 2006, p. 1). The project involving Tenoch provides a Mexican example situated in Toronto of the otherness of non-traditional students vis-à-vis the otherness of privileged teachers, with all its political nuances, as it was not easy to locate an elder for consultation at first, and a shaman for healing work after. Tenoch himself co-formulated his needs and requested support.

In the case of sexual minority youth being bullied, the members of the group acknowledged that an effective intervention cannot be "cook-booked" for an individual or a community (Duran,

3 Jung explores this beautiful aspect of solidarity in humankind in his so controversial last book, *Answer to Job*. This book, finally written in 1958 after a life of self-doubt of its author, is mainly concerned with the controversial and frankly heretic nature of such topics as the inconsistency of an anger-seeking God (Jung, 1958/2002, p. 33) and the envy of God towards the superiority of humankind that overpowers him (Jung, 1958/2002, p. 21), among others. In it, the "burning" question (to use a Jungian common term) poses several dilemmas that merit one's definition towards Otherness as an inclusive/exclusive category to be used in the therapeutic encounter. For instance, I helped some of my patients to move from perfection (a more masculine desideratum) to completeness as a feminine person (Jung, 1958/2002, p. 33), to their satisfaction.

4 One of the most fascinating conversations I had this year in relation to the "helping process" at a spiritual level was with Stephen Jenkinson, the director of the Psycho-Spiritual Program at the Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. This is the place that I am considering as my doctoral placement, if the day arrives. Due to the urgency of his "counselling" sessions or last rites conversations, he just focuses on a brief and intense spiritual cleansing, to give peace of mind at least in the last days of a person's life. He is not afraid of touching subjects in ways that nobody else would, and that is remarkable in itself, not to mention brave, such as a spiritual meaning of money in one' s life. His background in both social work (M.S.W. from the University of Toronto) and divinity (M.Div. from Oxford University), as well his eclectic life as a sculptor, give him a peculiar outlook at suffering and the creative possibilities it involves.

2006, p. 117), so collaboration and creativity was paramount to their own success. Tenoch and the other three members of the group were finally able to start a different career path under very difficult circumstances (advocating with the college registrar's office, completing bursary applications because they could not receive OSAP given their immigration status). The colonizing mind is always operating, so it was necessary for them to disarticulate historical mechanisms of self-hatred and debasing self-esteem in order to work to generate a robust inner self and a deep connection to one's ancestry, and in turn to better manage the daily encounters of still-prevalent imperial domination of so-called majorities over minorities. Tenoch was able to create a strategy and a healthy management of energies when dealing with the school system. Some teachers were less thrilled than others with him in the classroom, but he did succeed, and, more importantly, he did that on his own terms, partly because he was now ready to have realistic expectations of educators, the curriculum, and his own empowerment practices. Nevertheless, real-life teachers were a constant source of disappointment. As Amalia once said, "I had to fight enough with myself to succeed, but that was nothing compared to the daily fight to have a voice in school." If given the opportunity in a pedagogically conducive environment, those students could teach teachers a lot—to everybody's benefit. They need to tell their story, and the school system needs to hear it.

If teachers accepted these students' otherness instead of trying to effectuate a complacent accommodation into the status quo, they could integrate the otherness of the students and from there work on a common ground, where fluidity is the norm and where appreciation of strength and resiliency marks the rhythm of the courses. In my personal experience as a former out-of-the-box high school drop-out and, a decade later, as a new refugee in Toronto and a TYP student (1989–1990), I have observed that non-traditional students' fully developed sense of intuition—that wonderfully arcane form of knowledge—helps them create something new, full of hope, resisting the blandishments of those self-serving and flattering world views that hide the austere reality of the human condition in a disenchanted society. I sensed that my ultimate allegiance was there, against those who decry very traumatized populations or who look at them as a pusillanimous second best. I saw myself deeply committed to building over time a web of relationships that gives fullness and meaning to human survivorship. Although I was careful not to impose my personal agenda onto my (already vulnerable) classmates, I realized my direction was already set. Thus, my absolute questions always frame my relative ones. That still resonates when dealing with Tenoch and the others, a very humble project that started with one individual and at the present time involves more than two hundred.

Discussion

Tenoch in all its gender presentations: Alpha and Omega of development?

The gender spectrum is a theatre of sorts, a theatre of ever-changing identity presentations. My work with Tenoch and his family proved that healing from sexual violence against gender non-conforming youth like Tenoch is always possible in freedom and creativity. This is also an experiential work about three specific lives—the three loving parents of Tenoch and Amalia—that merged into seeking justice for intersectionality of trans-communities, providing an emotional compass to those who care about sexual and cultural diversity in all its splendour. These parental figures overcame the immigration maze to locate a compassionate therapist, an advocate, two school principals acting together with two brave politicians, and several community members, to help create community for themselves and their loved ones. The therapist needs to be the main advocate and activist, a task not usually recognized as such.

Result of the project: A never-ending process.

My clinical engagement, with its overarching principle of a de-colonizing approach, represents a living demystification of several stereotypes that need to be disarticulated in order to grasp the essence of gender-variant individuality. A direct application of Duran's new yet arcane dictum showed that a simplistic, binary view will not be enough to understand trans-women's experiences towards intergenerational sexual violence and their resolution. As a complex yet very approachable individual topic for a healing journey, gender-variant youth like Tenoch embody change and permanence, and that fluidity will definitely enrich any academic and clinical environment, especially one conducive to social change and its appraisal. I have used this family's ethnographic accounts as methodology, coupled with Duran's wise theoretical views, but because these participants are former asylum-seekers living in diaspora, I still needed to travel culturally to interview the doctor-shaman in the countryside of Uruguay, an experience that certainly helped me become a healer myself in and out of that process.

What does it take to create community for trans-kids living in diaspora?

I was helped in my interactions with Tenoch and the others by my various living experiences, both in Latin America (Brazil, Uruguay, and Cuba) and in Canada (Montreal and Toronto); by my family's origin, which has Jewish roots in a Muslim country (Lebanon); by growing up Jewish in a Catholic environment (Uruguay); by being racially white in a Latin-American continent, but a Latina in an Anglo-Saxon one. All these categories within my life contribute to the relativization of all definitions, and the profound contextualization of individual notions. By having oscillated between multiple paradigms, I am now proposing a better integration of theory into practice, and a reduction of its academic and clinical gap: We have to provide incoming counsellors with a secure base of healing techniques, display an openness towards our clients' indigenous background, and invite ancestral work as part of the profound change needed. As the unconventional educator Leo Buscaglia once said, "awareness is terminable, but knowledge is eternal"—something that children intuitively know (Buscaglia, 1982, p. 93). It has been my experience working with Tenoch that he already knew all he needed to know about himself, but work still had to be done around the awareness to create a strategy and to manifest his self into this specific context.

Although I consider myself a very integrated Canadian, I self-identify as a Third World country woman because my feminist views coincide with the needs of that region and resist the blandishments that hide the austere reality of the human condition in a disenchanted world. However, my dual viewpoint is manifested in any intervention of mine, for I have lived experience of many of the issues my research subjects may also present with. Because I certainly don't share patriarchal views of women as a pusillanimous second best, that position permeates empowerment practices I live by. And I think that precisely those multiple living experiences allowed me to work productively with these youth, as they were seeking a different approach to learning and teaching that the regular school system could not or would not give them.

Tenoch had a penchant for mythical explanations of his present life, as well as ritualistic connections to feelings, sensations, and natural phenomena. Thus, narrative therapy was a natural approach for self-exploration. For instance, I used my graduate studies in literature to interpret ancient myths into the light of modern dilemmas, which in turn might open up another angle of a problem. Similarly, certain elements of Khabbalistic thought, so prevalent in Jungian analysis (my therapeutic choice in my private practice), might help create an atmosphere open

to the imagination, so needed in time of crisis after a sexual assault. Different experiences can be interpreted according to the viewer, to the enrichment of the therapeutic encounter in its healing outcome. In other words, I engage in the transformation of chaos into a meaningful cosmos within a viable web of multiple and often co-existent social realities. When assessing for a culturally pertinent intervention, we usually don't take Aboriginal roots into consideration, although its articulation into treatment further advances the intensity of the issue, and its articulation into a whole family system both inflected and affected by usually the same issue(s) under various presentation worth a deeper analysis.

Conclusion

Update about Tenoch and the other members of this project

This is a real-life story, so there are mixed endings. Tenoch is now working at a trans-friendly community centre in downtown Toronto as a peer counsellor for trans-kids. Amalia still lives at home. She is out of the closet in all aspects of her life, still struggling with a self-definition in both gender presentation and gender orientation, producing art and showing her works in alternative cafés around Queen Street, Toronto's artistic district. The other two participants are still sometimes living on the streets, engaging in self-harming activities from time to time, but producing wonderful graffiti and popular theatre for the anti-psychiatric movement. All four of them are meeting regularly to engage other youth and to disseminate their stories, as all of them have finally recaptured their ancestors within.

Their lives do not seem now to be overburdened, although they are still complicated affairs. But they have chosen life, poetry, photography, sketches, and theatre to voice their existences.

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Catching Dreams: Applying Gestalt Dream Work to Canadian Aboriginal Peoples

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Abstract

Gestalt therapy is similar to an Aboriginal worldview in that they both involve a holistic approach and focus on health and wellness strategies. The Aboriginal worldview is best portrayed as holistic in nature, where the circle of wellness symbolizes unity, wholeness, completeness, and balance. Dream work is a therapeutic technique utilized in Gestalt therapy that could be very useful for Aboriginal peoples given their spiritual and narrative way of being. This article demonstrates the cultural acceptability for utilization of dream work in Gestalt with Aboriginal clients. Furthermore, it discusses both strengths and limitations of this modality of therapy. Implications for use are also discussed.

Introduction[1]

I have become acquainted with Aboriginal psychology through my graduate work at the University of Toronto, and possess a deep respect and interest in providing appropriate care and referencing literature that can further benefit the community. Through my involvement in Aboriginal research, I have become engrained in the Aboriginal community of Toronto, through various projects and events. My interest in Aboriginal issues sparked through research involvement with the Canadian Federal Correction system, and from there, my research interests have expanded to cultural identity, spirituality, employment issues, and culturally appropriate counselling techniques for use with Aboriginal peoples. This paper is important to me, as I am currently an aspiring therapist and researcher in the Aboriginal community. The framework and methodology discussed can encourage culturally acceptable resources for therapists working with Aboriginal clients.

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Overview of Gestalt Therapy

Gestalt Therapy, founded in the 1940's by Fritz Perls, is an existential-phenomenological approach to psychotherapy that teaches the importance

1 As a non-Aboriginal person learning and immersing myself in the area of Aboriginal psychology, it is imperative that I acknowledge that this is my own view and that I write from my own position as a student and aspiring mental health professional. What I write does not represent the voice of indigenous people, and speaks only to my own thoughts and interpretations of the literature in relation to this subject.

of self-awareness through feeling, perceiving and being actively present in the environment, by reorganization of former attitudes and through the creation of new ones. Gestalt therapy is different from many other orientations of psychotherapy in that the primary focus is the client's ability to self regulate in response to their current environment. In essence, Gestalt therapists thrive on the assumption that change will happen naturally throughout the therapeutic process. Gestalt therapy focuses on the present and works with the situation that the client is experiencing in the "here and now" of therapy (Corey, 2009).

A gestalt is a complete experience that is always formed in a relationship with the environment. People form and move from one gestalt to another based on past experiences, current expectations, influences exerted by the situation, and by cultural identity (Mann, 2011). As situations change, so do the corresponding experiences. In Gestalt, this change is referred to as a creative adjustment that signifies the active movement, when an individual recreates a sense of being in reaction to the changing situation. People experience psychological difficulties when the reactions to the environment that have served as useful in the past, do not fit with the current situation. These past reactions may have formed out of habit in response to a perceived lack of support and choice (Mann, 2011).

Gestalt therapy is a holistic body-centered model of psychotherapy, meaning the whole is different and greater than the sum of its parts and is considered the unity of humans with their environment. It does not acknowledge psychological events as being separate from the individual and their situation (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1994). Holism views the world as an interrelated entity and the ways that we respond to our world are identified as creative synthesis. The philosophy of holism relates well to gestalt theory as both see humans as essential units that are in a constant state of fluctuation and are always evolving (Mann, 2011).

In the dominant Western culture, particularly in North America and Europe there is a heavy emphasis on perceiving the world through an individualistic lens, where people view themselves as separate to those surrounding them. However, experiences cannot be felt or formed as separate from culture. In terms of the field perspective of gestalt, individuals cannot view themselves as being fully independent from those around them, when their inherited assumptions, values, morals, and beliefs regarding the world are grounded by the collected values of the culture as a whole. Therefore, when engaging in therapy through a gestalt lens, it is essential to consider the full range of possible influences that could be potentially affecting the individual, rather than focusing specifically on the problem (Mann, 2011).

The contact boundary is where interaction and withdraw from the environment occurs, and by this process people can creatively adjust in relation to the situation and distinguish the self from others (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1994). Gestalt theory specifies, that in order for healthy functioning to occur, contact boundaries need to be flexible enough to allow intimacy and autonomy, but must be resistant to things in the environment that are considered to be potentially harmful (Mann, 2011). Perls (1947) noted different ways of diminishing or adjusting contact with the environment that occurs at the contact boundary. As humans, we develop creative adjustments that form in relation to our changing situations. These creative adjustments are, desensitization (numbing the self in an acute phase of a grief reaction); deflection (sidestepping away from direct contact, using generalizing language accompanied by bodily reactions to avoid contact); egotism (observing oneself in relation to the environment, such as in constructive criticism); introjections (developing an attitude, trait or way of being from the environment and internalizing a rulebook that must be followed); retroflection (protection from the environment

by avoidance and internalization of impulses and experiences rather than expression); projection (seeing in others what is present in the self) and confluence (merging or dissolving the contact boundary that results in a lack of differentiation from others) (Mann, 2011; Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1994).

It is important to view these creative adjustments as skills that have been developed and are adjustable and dependant on the situation. Furthermore, some of these processes are more applicable to individualistic cultures rather than from the view of a collectivist culture and must be incorporated with caution during therapy (Mann, 2011). Contact and resistance need to be viewed as part of the same continuum that can be supported depending on the situation. Resistance can be viewed as a means of self-support and must always be viewed in the context of the individual's unique situation (Zinker, 1977).

Gestalt theory also emphasizes the idea that people have a natural tendency and need to create meaningful wholes from their experiences. There are many unfinished situations in life, ranging from those that are trivial to major life events. However, it may not be as essential to complete some tasks as it is for others. If an individual fails to find resolution in these meaningful events, preoccupation with unresolved situations may occur through the expression of psychological distress. A major role of a Gestalt therapist is to facilitate methods to find closure in the "unfinished business" (Mann, 2011). Gestalt therapy is unique to psychotherapeutic approaches because the therapist becomes involved in the client's present situation and therapy is viewed as process, rather than goal oriented. The intended outcome of therapy is to increase an individual's self-awareness and their ability to self-regulate in response to changing perceptions of the environment (Mann, 2011).

Dream work in Gestalt Therapy

When a person dreams, the hardest aspect to accept is that every part of the dream comes from the individual. Images in a dream are not exactly what they are in reality but are impressions traced by memory combined with attributes, opinions, and attitudes coming from the dreamer. In gestalt therapy, dreams are viewed as being an existential message and a means of creative expression (Fantz & Roberts, 1998). Each dream is an idiom of an infinite number of associations, conflicts, and contradictions that make up an individual. Dreams express gestalts, usually many at one time. The unfinished part of a gestalt appears in a dream as a split (change in dream content), tension or conflict (Downing & Marmorstein, 1973).

The existential message in gestalt dream work is to present the dreamer with the disconnected parts of his or her personality. The dream embodies aspects of the person's life and personality that have been rejected from his or her self-concept. The individual can be unaware of aspects of the self that are experienced in the dreams as external to the person (Alban & Groman, 1975). The dream is a message to the person of how they exist in the world, or the nature of their existence (Harman, 1989). These occur in dreams as avoidances, or as objects or people whom it is impossible or fear provoking to identify. The dream work brings attention to unmet needs that have not been recognized by the dreamer. When a need fulfillment pattern is interrupted, we have recurrent dreams, which will clutter up the person's sleeping field until they are confronted (Fantz & Roberts, 1998). From a gestalt perspective, the most meaningful types of dreams are recurring dreams because the avoidances of the dreamer are stabilized into a recurring story or variation on a particular theme. The repetition of the dream may also represent a persistent attempt to come to grips with life problems. The repetition makes sense in that it signifies that a gestalt has not been closed (Alban & Groman, 1975).

Gestalt therapy does not focus on the meaning or symbolism of dreams, but concentrates on the person's experience of that dream. The experience becomes discovery that is deeper and more complete than understanding because it is not limited to the level of intellectualization, thus anyone is capable of finding meaning in his or her dreams (Downing & Marmorstein, 1973). The gestalt dream therapy approach is integrative. The goal is to go as deep into the actual experience of the dream as possible and from this exploration of experience comes discovery, learning, growth and maturation (Downing & Marmorstein, 1973). The dreamer must discover the meaning of the dream; therefore the gestalt therapist merely facilitates the process and aids in heightening awareness of the unique meanings of the dream images, and does not interpret the dream (Mann, 2010). This is crucial to dream work in gestalt, because the dreamer is viewed as having better access into the meaning of the dream than the therapist who, can understand and facilitate the dream work, but cannot experience the dream to the same extent as the dreamer (Alban & Groman, 1975).

Gestalt therapists view dreams as being projections, and thus a way for the individual to resist contact with the environment. These can be either pathological in nature where the impulse is disowned and consequently projected onto the environment; or mindful, creative projections which put the individual's recognized and identified facets against his/her repudiated ones in a confrontation which can lead to discovery and knowledge. Individuals who are very fragmented will have dreams that are more nightmarish in quality, will be filled with holes, avoidances and sterility. Individuals who are well integrated will have dreams with fewer holes, clearer identification, and a more generative process (Fantz & Roberts, 1998).

The activities that occur during dream work involve real actions, feelings and reactions to the fantasy of the dream occurring in the present moment (Alban & Groman, 1975). First, the dreamer is asked to explain the dream using first person language as if the dream is occurring in the present. This use of language immerses the dreamer into his or her own experience with greater force than telling the therapist about the dream (Polster & Polster, 1973). Another method is to ask the dreamer to be the various parts of the dream, which encourages the person's re-identification process. In this experiment the person is helped to play out parts of the dream as if they are aspects of his or her own existence. The individual then works through the dream as a presently occurring event rather than a historical action in order to actively interpret what the dream represents (Polster & Polster, 1973).

The therapist could also ask the individual to develop a dialogue between the various parts of the dream (Harman, 1989). In this method, the dreamer sits in a chair as Perls titled "the hot seat." Opposite, is an empty chair, which is used to facilitate role-playing of all objects that were involved in the dream. Verbal contact is made with these fantasy objects and a dialogue is produced in which the dreamer speaks for each of the objects. The dreamer addresses the empty chair as if a component part of the dream (disowned aspect of the personality) is seated in the opposite chair (Alban & Groman, 1975).

Gestalt as a Culturally Appropriate Therapy for Canadian Aboriginal People

In 2006, approximately one million Canadians reported Aboriginal ancestry, representing 3.8% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2008). It has been argued that the groups' shared experiences of colonization, and the resultant poverty and social stressors have contributed to poorer outcomes across the life span (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001; Meadows, Lagendyk, Thurston

& Eisener, 2003; Mussell, 2005). Furthermore, the spiritual and philosophical foundations that connect Aboriginal people[2] from many different nations to the land, creator, and to each other are all quite similar, although there are many diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples in Canada who have heterogeneous cultural aspects. According to Aboriginal tradition in a general sense, life is a path on which the traveler is invited by the Creator and develops in all areas of life so that one can identify and become aware and respectful of his or her surrounding and inner-self along the way while each individual is portrayed as contributing to the collective well being of the group (Loiselle & Lauretta, 2006; Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001; Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2001).

Gestalt therapy is similar with Aboriginal worldviews in that they involve a holistic approach and focus on health and wellness strategies. Aboriginal worldviews are best portrayed as holistic in nature, where the circle of wellness symbolizes unity, wholeness, completeness, and balance. The nature of the circle explains that all elements are related to one other. The notion of wholeness and interconnectedness is a fundamental concept of balance and implies the requirement of a balanced attribution of energy, attention, and care between all components of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual human being (Loiselle & Lauretta, 2006; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001). The Aboriginal way of life is also similar to "self in relation" ideas presented in gestalt theory, where an individual's wellbeing is identified as the relationship to the environment; for example, a traditional teaching states that the fish, the lake and its entire surrounding, must be all treated equally in order for wellbeing to be restored and sustained (Loiselle & Lauretta, 2006).

Gestalt Dream Work with an Aboriginal population

The spiritual relationship for Native people is their connection to the earth, the spirit forces, and how they feel cared for and loved by the Creator. This spiritual connection is practiced through ceremonies and daily praying and gratitude. Furthermore, the responsibility to carry on these ceremonies and teaching the spiritual relationships rests with each generation (Hill, 2009). Therefore it is important for Aboriginal people to become or perhaps reconnect with their spiritual self to restore a healthy balance in life, and to pass along this knowledge and teachings to the younger generation to sustain cultural survival. Strengthening cultural identity has also been shown to improve the mental health of Aboriginal people (Martin Hill, 2009).

Spirituality is a component of Indigenous knowledge that includes revelations as understood through dreams, visions or even divine messages (Martin Hill, 2009). Indigenous people view dreaming as a time when the dreamer symbolically processes, synthesizes and resolves the information, questions and experiences that occur each day, with understanding coming from acquired knowledge. Some dreams, which may be called visions or gifts, are especially helpful in answering questions, guiding actions, or making sense of the world (Marsden, 2004). Dreams can be inspired by intent or the need to learn something, whether through prayer or through specific thoughts. In turn, dreams can provide visual answers or models for what the dreamer is trying to understand (Marsden, 2004).

Furthermore, visual representations of dreams can be used to communicate complex ideas, build relationships and restore ancient ways of knowing (Marsden, 2004). Although there are many diverse Aboriginal groups in Canada, many share a commonality in a connection to the earth and the spirits. Many groups share the belief that through dreaming, an individual can

2 Aboriginal is defined by the Canadian Constitution acts (1967-1982) as the people who are Native to Canada, and includes the Indian (First Nations), Inuit and Métis people (Government of Canada, 2013).

have a connection to the spirit world (Tedlock, 2004). Dreams can carry powerful messages from the Creator or teachings from spirits or ancestors (Hill, 2009). Some Indigenous groups also view that dreams occur as a way to convey messages and connect with the animal spirits during hunting, or other spirits in sickness (Kaniuekutat, 2009).

The dream is viewed as a living entity and therefore requires that the dreamer display appropriate etiquette and manners. This has been adapted in therapy to encompass cultural appropriateness for Aboriginal people, clients are taught that when they have a dream, they should acknowledge it with a gift. The gift offered to the dream could be tobacco, food, water, cornmeal, or some offering that they deem appropriate (Duran, 2006). Furthermore, it is appropriate to incorporate dream work into therapy with Aboriginal peoples since dreams are very important to traditional Native beliefs and represents a strong aspect of spirituality. The goal of this type of therapy in regards to an Aboriginal client would be able to attempt a relationship with dreams, at any level of involvement or acculturation with traditional beliefs. The unconscious material in dreams is also the best guide as to where the treatment needs to progress (Duran, 2006). This is especially true for Native individuals who are processing and identifying disowned aspects of the self that have occurred through sexual trauma or through the legacy of historical trauma.

Among many Indigenous groups, dreams are still considered relevant and important for day-to-day life; there is an internally consistent perspective, which validates dreaming. In other groups, such as in Western culture, dreams are often marginalized as fanciful distractions from the real world. If dreaming is significant in Indigenous cultures, practitioners must acknowledge the therapeutic value of dreams when working with Aboriginal clients, as culturally sensitive practices lead to equitable and just societies (Marsden, 2004). Utilizing dream work in therapy with an Aboriginal population may also help in regards to decolonization by re-integrating aspects of traditional culture into dominant cultural therapeutic methods.

Gestalt therapy is a respectable and appropriate approach for psychotherapy with Aboriginal people because it views the individual's problems in relation to their entire environment, including effects of poverty, poor health, colonization, and intergenerational trauma that the group has suffered from as a whole. Gestalt is also spiritual in nature, and can flexibly intertwine aspects of Aboriginal tradition into therapy, such as in dream work and the narrative strategies that it encompasses.

Strengths and areas for development for gestalt dream work with Aboriginal peoples

Dream work in gestalt therapy has many aspects that can be considered as being parallel to cultural practices for some Aboriginal groups, and when appropriate, can be a valid method for exploring issues with Aboriginal people especially in regards to their spiritual self. However, like many aspects of psychotherapy that have been developed through western thought, dream therapy with Aboriginal people needs to be adjusted to include specific aspects of the Aboriginal worldview. Duran (2006) explains that incorporating two or more ways of knowing can be a harmonious process where the inclusion of two worldviews can integrate the strengths of both approaches. This idea of epistemological hybridism takes the actual life-world of the person or group as the core truth that needs to be seen as valid. In this case, epistemological hybridism exists by utilizing the self-awareness components of gestalt therapy and incorporates them into an Indigenous contextual lens.

Furthermore, the gestalt therapist who is utilizing dream work with Aboriginal clients must be knowledgeable in Aboriginal tradition in order to be respectful and understand the spiritual nature of dreaming and how it is experienced for that person. For example, an Aboriginal person may view a dream as being a message from the creator or from their ancestors. The therapist must be open to this belief in order to help the Aboriginal client to explore the content and meaning of this dream, while approaching it with the utmost respect. Furthermore, the therapist must be aware of the issues specific to Aboriginal groups such as colonialism and intergenerational trauma, while being attentive to how these issues may arise in dreams whether they are known to the dreamer or not. This is essential for assuring cultural safety within the therapeutic environment. Stewart (2007) emphasizes how it is important to incorporate indigenous approaches to helping and healing when addressing the mental health crisis in Aboriginal communities and populations.

Dream work in gestalt therapy has many aspects that are similar to some of the Aboriginal beliefs regarding spirituality and dreaming, and in some circumstances can be useful in therapy when working with Aboriginal peoples because of its method of delivery. As previously described, during dream therapy the person has full control of where the therapy goes, and is the one who makes meaning out of symbols and activities contoured in the dream. Furthermore, during the dream work session, the client is asked to retell the dream in a story as if it were occurring in the present moment. These techniques are acceptable when working with this specific population, because, not only are individual lived experiences honoured but also Indigenous people usually describe themselves as having an oral-based story telling tradition (Medicine- Eagle, 1980). Therefore, narrative methods in therapy (i.e. client explains dreams or problems by telling their story) are consistent with Aboriginal oral traditions and story telling as ways of knowing and communicating (Stewart, 2008). However, given the widespread violence, abuse, and trauma that is common amongst individuals in some Aboriginal communities, these exercises that incorporate powerful messages through narratives, metaphors, dreams, and fantasies, should be approached in a respectful way, where the individual experiencing the dream must feel that they have entire control over the situation to avoid the risk of re-traumatization.

Another aspect of gestalt dream work therapy, that is appropriate and sensitive for Aboriginal people receiving psychotherapy is dream re-enactment group work. This technique utilizes the entire group, where group members take on the role of various objects or people in the dream. The dreamer then engages in dialogue surrounding each aspect of the dream, as played out by the group members. This could be particularly beneficial for use with an Aboriginal population since many experience issues with colonization and trauma. The group environment would be a safe place for the dreamer to discuss and explore these shared struggles while learning from other members of the group.

Apart from the benefits of using gestalt therapy for Aboriginal people, there are some limitations that must be addressed. First, no two Aboriginal communities are entirely the same. There are more than six hundred different Aboriginal bands residing on over 2,000 reserves across Canada, each having different legal, social, cultural and historical experiences (Voyageur & Calliou, 2001). Gestalt therapy as a general approach must be individually tailored to meet the needs of each client, considering their particular history and traditions. When using dream work in gestalt therapy with Aboriginal people, the therapist must also respect the diversity of Aboriginal groups, and have a thorough understanding of the meaning and importance of dreaming in the tradition of the Aboriginal individual whom the therapist is helping. For example, Some Innu communities view recurring dreams as bad omens and an individual who talks about the recurring dream is thought to bring back luck to the community (Kaniuekutat, 2009). This is an

important issue to address since recurring dreams in gestalt therapy are viewed as being the most important for learning and exploring the aspects of the self. Furthermore, gestalt therapy should not be the main or only means of healing for Aboriginal people. Guidance from a traditional healer or elder in the community should be the primary aspect of the healing journey. When an individual is already receiving services from a traditional elder or healer, gestalt therapy could be actively incorporated into the healing process.

Second, the gestalt therapist must be aware of the creative adjustment processes that are viewed negatively in Western culture, since gestalt theory was proposed based on individualistic views. The concepts of confluence and introjections are viewed as being maladaptive through the individualistic lens. However, they are considered to represent growth and healthy adaptations to someone with a collectivist worldview (Mann, 2011). This further emphasizes the value that is placed on the therapists involvement in the here and now, and their grounding and understanding of the historical background in relevance to the individual's current situation.

Gestalt therapy is a creative approach to psychology that embraces a holistic model to value each aspect of an individual's experiences in order to create self-awareness in the present moment. Furthermore, because of its humanistic methods, narrative styles, and commonalities to Aboriginal world-views and traditions, dream work in gestalt therapy can be utilized as a powerful tool to help Canadian Aboriginal people along their healing journey.

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With Laura: Attachment and the Healing Potential of Substitute Caregivers within Cross-Cultural Child Welfare Practice

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Abstract

Secure attachment has been consistently associated with positive outcomes for children. The complex and intergenerational trauma resulting from colonialism that Aboriginal people in Canada have suffered may threaten the development of secure attachment. Using a case example drawn from social work practice, this paper proposes that Aboriginal children who are insecurely attached and traumatized present particular treatment needs. There is little prior research addressing the treatment needs of insecurely attached Aboriginal children in out-of-home care. Further, in provincial and territorial child welfare agencies Aboriginal children are overwhelmingly in the substitute care of non-Aboriginal caregivers. This paper looks to attachment theory for a treatment approach within these cross-cultural relationships. Attachment theory has shown that the attachment styles of children can be reliably predicted at a rate of 75 percent by looking to those of their caregivers. Additionally, children have been shown to be capable of developing multiple attachment styles in response to the attachment styles of the adults with whom they are in caregiving relationships. Thus, given the strong influence of caregiver attachment on the attachment styles of children, it is compelling to look at the potential impact of the attachment styles of substitute caregivers on the children in their care. This paper proposes that in provincial or territorial child welfare it may be necessary to promote substitute caregivers who are securely attached and to acknowledge the context of trauma within which these children and caregivers are striving for well-being.

Key Words: Aboriginal children, child welfare, attachment theory, intergenerational trauma, 'professional potential attachment figures' (PPAF)

Introduction

Aboriginal children are currently overrepresented in the child welfare system in Canada (Brown, St Arnault, George & Sintzel, 2009; Sinha et al, 2011). Little is known about the emotional impact of their traumatic experiences, their attachment styles or their particular treatment needs. There is, however, agreement that secure attachment is a key component of the well-being of all children (Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988; Van Ijzendoorn & Sagi, 1999).

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Attachment theory research offers evidence which suggests that secure attachment can be activated or constructed through safe relationships with caregivers despite earlier attachment injuries (Howes & Segal, 1993; Howes & Ritchie, 1999; Howes & Spieker, 2008). Substitute caregivers have

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the possibility to promote the well-being of children in their care through the relationships that they share. Research also identifies a caregiver's own attachment style as the greatest predictor of the attachment of a child in their care (Wallin, 2007). Thus, looking to the attachment styles of substitute caregivers emerges as potentially necessary to foster secure attachment for children in the child welfare system. Attachment must be addressed considering the impact of trauma, as it threatens all secure attachment and is often endemic to the experiences of both Aboriginal children and the professionals engaged in the work of child protection.

The aim of this paper is to propose a novel treatment approach for provincial and territorial child welfare agencies caring for Aboriginal children. It is concluded that the promotion of secure attachment within caregiving relationships is a prerequisite for healing. The use of the relationship expands focus from the attachment of the child and their family system to include the attachment of the other member of the caregiving relationship, the professional. This is done through an exploration of attachment theory and the attachment needs among Aboriginal children in out-of-home care from a cross-cultural perspective. The context of trauma is addressed through attachment injuries, intergenerational transmission, secondary traumatic stress and the vicarious traumatization of professionals. Through a case example, it is proposed that child welfare practices addressing the attachment needs of Aboriginal children must do so within the cultural framework of the child in question and through the attachment styles of the professionals who care for them. There are multiple situational and systemic factors that impact these relationships, however, the scope of this paper is limited to attachment styles within these caregiving relationships. This limit in scope is warranted by the necessity to develop a framework for understanding the importance of cross-cultural, relational attachment within child welfare practice. In the following section the historical context of trauma is explored through particular colonial practices involving Aboriginal people.

Colonialism and the Development of Canadian Aboriginal Child Welfare

The population of Aboriginal peoples in North America is estimated to have declined 72 percent between 1500 and 1900, and some have argued the loss of life could have been as high as 90 percent rendering some communities extinct (Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004). The trauma inflicted during the period of colonization included losses of life from diseases introduced by the colonizers; traditional lands; political, economic, and cultural sovereignty; languages, religions, and cultural knowledge (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

With the aim of assimilation, over a hundred thousand Aboriginal children, from 1874 and 1986, were forcibly removed from their families and placed into residential schools (For the Cedar Project Partnership, 2008; Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996). A second period of forced removal, known as the "Sixties Scoop", saw over 11,000 children put up for permanent adoption between 1960 and 1990 (Sinha et al, 2011). Child welfare practices of

this period separated Aboriginal children from their cultural identities and ways of knowing (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003).

The last residential school closed in the mid-1990s, there are now 128 child welfare agencies in Aboriginal control, and there is an increasing recognition within provincially or territorially delivered foster care of the need for culturally appropriate services (Sinha et al, 2011). The current rate of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care as compared to non-Aboriginal children ranges from 3 times higher in Nova Scotia to 19 times higher in Manitoba (Sinha et al, 2011). These children continue to be negatively affected by the past trauma experienced by their parents and grandparents through intergenerational trauma.

Indigenous scholar Yellow Horse Brave Heart defines historical trauma as "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding spanning generations, which emanates from massive group trauma" (Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004, p. 54). In their model of historic trauma transmission among Aboriginal people, Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski (2004) describe the process of memories being passed down from one generation to the next through several mechanisms: "biological (in hereditary predispositions to PTSD), cultural (through story-telling, culturally sanctioned behaviours), social (through inadequate parenting, lateral violence, acting out of abuse), and psychological (through memory processes) channels" (p. 76).

Aboriginal children who suffer abuse that leads to their removal from their families are caught in a continuation of the cycle of family trauma and separation established by the residential school system (Libesman, 2004; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004). Intergenerational traumas have been linked to higher rates of substance misuse, incarceration and suicide in Aboriginal communities than the non-Aboriginal Canadian population (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003); and have been associated with depression and other mental health problems that may impact parenting (Sinha et al, 2011). In order to promote the well-being of Aboriginal children in provincial and territorial care, they must be approached from a culturally informed perspective that is sensitive to the experiences of children who have lived through complex trauma. One such approach is grounded in attachment theory. The following section explores this theory and how culture is addressed in its contemporary application.

Secure Attachment and Primary Caregiving Relationship(s)

Developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, attachment theory is based on the behavioural system that regulates an individual's emotional, cognitive and physical connection to another person. This behavioural system, shaped within primary caregiving relationships, provides a safety and survival function (Simpson, 1990). Direct observation showed Ainsworth and Bowlby that infant-caregiver bonding informs a child's internal working model of the world, and correspondingly, their attachment style. This is the foundation on which a child is able to understand and participate in their social and cultural world (Grossman, 1995). Early attachment styles are instrumental because they are predictive of future development throughout adulthood (Grossman, Grossman, Winter & Zimmerman, 2002).

Ainsworth, observing children and caregivers in Uganda, discovered that the attachment figure (primary caregiver) acted as a secure base for the infant in their care. This relationship enabled the infants to explore their external and internal worlds, returning to the safe haven of their attachment figures for protection, support, and comfort (Levy, Ellison, Scott, & Bernecker, 2011). Bowlby (1988) saw the child's dependency on the parent as a natural, pre-programmed behaviour

and these child-caregiver relationships as invaluable. A secure attachment enables children to have meaningful interpersonal relationships and a positive internal working model of their world. Securely attached children are seen to have high levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, strong coping skills, and improved self-cognition (Howe, 2006). When children have insecure attachment, they may display either anxious or avoidant behaviours in their relationship with their attachment figures (Levine & Heller, 2011). This can occur with children who had inconsistent attachments throughout their childhood, or when there has been a rupture in a secure attachment, such as the traumatic loss of a primary caregiver (Howe, 2006).

From the beginning, Bowlby and Ainsworth acknowledged the potential for attachment styles to be passed down from one generation to the next. Mary Main went on to study the correlation between parents' and infants' attachment styles and observed that securely attached parents were more likely to have a securely attached child, and insecurely attached parents were more likely to have an insecurely attached child (Wallin, 2007). This has been further studied showing that infant attachment towards their primary caregiver at 12 months can be predicted by the caregiver's state of mind around issues of attachment even before the child is born (Lyons-Ruth, 1996). Recent research on attachment demonstrates that it is not solely the displayed physical and emotional connections between caregiver and infant that build secure attachment, but also the bi-directional, intersubjective exchanges that occur between child and caregiver (Beebe, Lachman, Markese, & Bahrick, 2012; Lyons-Ruth, 2007). In the following section, the question of attachment theory's usefulness cross-culturally will be further explored.

Attachment and Culture: Attachment Theory as a Universal Concept

Initially sceptical of Bowlby's theoretical hypotheses that all children were imbued with a biologically based need to attach, Ainsworth's research on parent-child relationships in Uganda and Boston showed that attachment styles were apparent cross-culturally (Bowlby, 1988). While she believed that the attachment relationship was dyadic between mother and child, she recognized the possibility of multiple caregivers and saw that cultural context impacted attachment (Ainsworth, 1967). Bowlby (1988) conceptualized that everyone, regardless of culture, needs a clearly identified individual who is perceived as better able to cope with the world. Most often this primary figure was the mother, however, Bowlby acknowledged the possibility of another caregiver being the primary attachment figure. Contemporary interpretations of attachment theory suggest the importance of considering every child's position on an individual-collective spectrum (Hudnall Stamm & Friedman, 2000). From the collectivist, polytropic view of attachment (Lewis, 2005) children can have multiple attachment figures and may view the community or a group of people as their "secure base" as opposed to having one identified attachment figure.

Some cultural attachment theorists argue that the core hypotheses of attachment theory are not universal, but rather reflect Western theories of human experience (Rothbaum et al., 2000; Brown, Rodgers & Kapadia, 2008). From their perspective, culture is tokenized in attachment theory, barely addressed in its seminal volumes and rarely included in current applications of the theory. As a result, Rothbaum et al., (2000) have called for a culturally specific understanding of what attachment is. They argue that attachment theory has limitations when applied cross-culturally, and instead view biology and culture as inextricable elements within individual development.

They argue that culture is central to a caregiver's mental representation and interpretation of relational experience.

Rothbaum and Morelli (2005) illustrate their argument through a cross-cultural etic study in which they discovered that parents in Japan anticipate their child's needs by using situational cues rather than through the communication of the child, as done by parents in the United States. The authors argue that their findings highlight different approaches to responsiveness and sensitivity cross-culturally. They also assert that attachment theory values the approach of the parent in the United States and deems the parent in Japan to be insecurely attached and "over interpreting" their child's cues (Rothbaum et al., 2000) blind to the likelihood that sensitive, responsive caregiving reflects indigenous values and goals, and these goals may be different amongst different cultures.

According to Rothbaum and Morelli (2005) parenting styles of young children including high levels of touch and co-sleeping would be seen as enmeshed and preoccupied within Western conceptions of attachment theory. However, given that the underpinnings of attachment theory are about closeness in human relationships, this interpretation of the theory is questionable. As a theory, attachment promotes closeness and connectedness with others and Bowlby discussed the importance of dependency in relationships throughout the lifespan (1988). Certainly modern Western society values autonomy and independence, but these ideas have never been championed by attachment theory. One interpretation of Rothbaum and Morelli could be that behaviour needs to be considered within context, and that attachment figures may encourage different attachment behaviours as a result of their own cultural conditioning.

In contrast, other researchers view the relationship between culture and attachment as less problematic. Instead, they argue that attachment is a universal theory that only presents minor differences cross-culturally (Van Ijzendoorn & Sagi, 1999). In a cross-cultural meta-analysis, attachment theory was supported as a universal concept, and secure attachment was seen as normative cross-culturally (Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988). Atwool (2006) supports these findings by stating that the three attachment styles identified by Ainsworth (secure, ambivalent, and avoidant) have been found in all cultures studied thus far.

Another related argument against critiques of attachment theory is that there is more variation intra-culturally than there is cross-culturally, in terms of attachment behaviour and attachment style (Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988). Van Ijzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988) saw that cultures were not homogenous entities and differences occurred within a culture as much as, or more, than they did cross-culturally. As a result they did not see how any claims could be made about a particular culture without large sample sizes and replications of studies. These arguments do not suggest that understanding the contextual particularities of attachment in culture is not important, but rather that these efforts should be balanced with an acknowledgement of the universal applicability of attachment theory (Van Ijzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008).

This view is helpful looking to Aboriginal peoples for whom cultural identity, the impact of colonialism, and child-rearing practices are not all the same. While Aboriginal culture is extremely diverse (Libesman, 2004), when juxtaposed with non-Aboriginal culture, many commonalities emerge including a strong connection to the natural and spiritual world, communalism and interdependence, and the importance of extended family (Weaver, 1998; Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003; Yeo, 2003; Coates, Gray & Hetherington, 2006; Sinha et al., 2011). This view of culture is very different to that of the dominant Euro-western culture where individualism and egocentrism are central (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003) and where dyadic intimate relationships are highly valued (Weaver, 1998). It is from this perspective that similarities amongst

Aboriginal groups will be examined in order to have a better understanding of why attachment may look differently within Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal families and communities.

Although there is little research on attachment within Aboriginal communities, there is an emerging literature that suggests that attachment manifests itself differently in Aboriginal communities as compared to how attachment has been described in the abundant research that has been done within Euro-western populations. In her study conducted in Australia, Yeo (2003) noted that parenting practices within Aboriginal communities are shared among multiple caregivers. Within this context, the child may develop secure attachment not only with her mother or father, but also with a network of consistent caregivers. Consistent with Yeo's observations, Carriere and Richardson (2009) noted in their work with Aboriginal communities in Canada that the mother/child dyad extends to a larger group of caregivers to help with child-rearing activities, including breastfeeding. These scholars note that in the dominant Euro-western culture this type of behaviour is not supported or promoted. They suggest that the conventional definition of attachment, that of between one or two primary caregivers, be broadened to include the child's total environment.

Attachment theory may thus need to be re-conceptualized to address how attachment may look from an Aboriginal versus Euro-western cultural perspective while considering the impact of collective traumatic experiences. As secure attachment has been transformed in Aboriginal communities across Canada (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003) due to destructive colonial practices, Yeo's (2003) question regarding the cultural appropriateness of the current means of assessing the attachment styles of Aboriginal children is pertinent. The following section will describe an experience of a non-Aboriginal student working with an Aboriginal child placed within a provincial child welfare agency.

Laura

This case illustration will be used throughout the rest of the paper in an effort to ground theoretical ideas, their application, and questions within concrete clinical realities. It is also intended as a reminder of the types of challenges faced by children in such circumstances. Laura[1] is an Innu girl in foster care living in a large Canadian city.

I was a student working in youth protection, completing my first social work placement, when I first met Laura at the kitchen table of her new foster home. My supervisor Jason, her foster mother Joan and myself sat on wooden chairs. Laura had been directed by Joan to sit on a plastic chair so that she would not "ruin anything." This was Laura's fifth foster home since she had entered the system as a toddler. She was removed from her mother's care due to addiction and housing issues, her mother became homeless shortly after she lost custody. Laura's longest placement of 4 years had ended when she disclosed that both of the foster parents were sexually abusing her. We were all aware of Laura's history of sexual abuse.

Joan, a practicing Baptist, had immigrated to Canada as an adult from Jamaica. My supervisor explained to me that she was chosen because neither Joan nor Laura were white, and this was "culturally appropriate". Joan complained during our meetings that Laura's mother, still homeless, would wait for Laura outside of the church on Sunday and upset Laura. She described Laura's mother as "a dirty, inappropriate drug addict" who would give Laura "the wrong ideas" and teach her to be a "whore." Another concern that emerged during this meeting was, when Laura got her

1 All names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

period, she would place her soiled pads in a pile on the back of the toilet tank. Joan was furious and Jason scolded Laura by telling her that this was not how to handle getting her "lady days" to "stop being so inappropriate" and "so badly behaved".

The sexual abuse Laura had experienced was never directly discussed. When it was alluded to, Laura would blush and become teary eyed. She slept in a very small bedroom in the basement and was only allowed to be there when she went to bed. There were no visible signs that a child was living in the rest of the home, and she was not allowed to leave the house to go out and play. Joan expressed that, although it wasn't Laura's fault, she could not be expected to trust her because of "where she came from."

I worked with Laura for eight months and at her request we visited many places, when my placement was ending I tried to get her involved in a Big Sister volunteer program; but I was told that there was no one "appropriate" to work with Laura and that they didn't want to set her up in another relationship that was just going to end. I wondered what they meant by "appropriate" and realized that I was just another person in her life who was walking away, powerless to continue supporting her.

In the following section an attachment theory based analysis of Laura's circumstance will be elaborated. It is proposed that working from this perspective might better promote the healing of attachment injuries within provincial or territorially delivered residential or foster care.

Building a Healing Home for Laura: Multiple Attachment Styles and Professional Potential Attachment Figures

Laura's behaviour (stacking her used menstrual pads) and her expressed feelings (tears and blushing) demonstrate that her psychological and emotional needs were not adequately met. It could also be concluded that Joan was emotionally abusive and thus not safe (derogation of Laura's mother, insistence that she could ruin chairs by sitting in them, and negligence of Laura's psychological and emotional needs). To add to the complexity, despite Jason's assertion that the placement was culturally appropriate given Joan and Laura's shared experience of "not being white", they were from different cultures. Did Laura feel the warmth and love central to an effective secure base in Joan's care? Might a child from Joan's culture interpret her behaviour differently? Might a caregiver from Laura's culture make different choices, and behave towards her in different ways?

As scant data exists on foster parent or foster child experiences (Brown, St Arnault, George & Sintzel, 2009) looking to the experiences of those directly involved in residential care emerges as necessary. Until those voices are heard, some tentative understandings of the needs of these children may be gleaned from research around attachment, where certain claims about children's experiences and behaviours have been demonstrated reliably cross-culturally.

Given that "the provision of substitute parents in itself represents the most radical, comprehensive and potent therapeutic change in a child's psychosocial prospects" (Howe, 2006, p. 129), Bowlby's (1988) main concern when developing attachment theory was what happened to a child's attachment when they were separated from their primary attachment figure. While research argues that our current foster care system is better for children's attachment than institutionalization (McLaughlin, Zeanah, Fox & Nelson, 2012) almost nothing is known about what happens to the attachment styles of these children once taken from their homes, and

communities, and placed with one or more strangers under the care of a treatment team who has no prior relationship with them. Research on attachment offers potential insight into the needs of these children following attachment related trauma.

Children seek comfort and care in times of elevated stress (Bowlby, 1988; Wallin, 2007). Regardless of the attachment style of the child, it is necessary that the care they receive from others be demonstrably safe in order for them to maintain or develop healthy attachment, i.e., consistent, reliable, available and contingent on their needs (Briere, 2002). While the transition into out-of-home care is hopefully devoid of the harm from which they came, it is also devoid of the comforting interactions or experiences to which they had prior access. Additionally, one of the behavioural responses triggered by traumatic experiences includes, what appears to be a biological drive to return to the familiar (van der Kolk, 1994). Thus, while out-of-home care performs the basic function of removing a child from an environment that puts their well-being at risk, it may also elevate their stress levels as it disables them from being able to find the familiar as a source of soothing (Briere, 2002). According to Briere (2002), to be therapeutic, the behaviours or relationships in the new environment must be experienced by the child as safe. Further, they must be disparate from the previous experiences of trauma (Briere, 2002). If not, the child will be unable to process the trauma of placement or their previous trauma(s) in order to access or develop a secure attachment style (Briere, 2002).

Children can have multiple attachments and may switch from secure to insecure depending on with whom they are interacting (Lyons-Ruth, 1996). Children removed from their home, whether into institutionalized, adoptive, kinship, or foster care, are also seen as able to form additional attachments to the ones formed in their first years of life (Oliveira et al., 2012). For example, preliminary research suggests that many children who are removed from their primary caregivers as a result of neglect or maltreatment are able to develop secure attachments to alternative caregivers (Howes & Segal, 1993; Howes & Ritchie, 1999 & Howes & Spieker, 2008). The capacity to form selective attachment relationships has been seen in children coming from institutional settings (Oliveira et al., 2012); and children in institutionalized care have been shown to have multiple attachments with their caregivers, including a preferred caregiver (Lyons-Ruth, 2009).

The ability to develop multiple attachment styles is profound for children who have not experienced a secure base, as it could allow them to develop a secure attachment style. The potential for this ability lies within their closest caregiving relationships, where attachment styles could be activated or developed.

From this point forward the discussion of professionals refers only to those employed in residential (institutional) or foster care settings, by provincial or territorial child welfare agencies. Professionals included in this group might be foster home caregivers, primary social workers, psychologists, group home staff, teachers, or daycare workers. Several unique and contextual factors can influence whether and how a child will develop a new attachment style with one or several of these adult figures. The most important factors related to attachment may be the amount of time these professionals spend with the child and/or the degree of intimacy established. For purposes of clarity and brevity, the following discussion will employ the term 'professional potential attachment figures (PPAF)' when referring to those adult figures.

Research describing how children have been shown to cope with stress and/or trauma offers a key to understanding how the development of multiple attachment styles might occur. A sensitive and responsive caregiver can calm stress responses in a child whereas a caregiver with whom a child has a more anxious attachment, can actually activate and elevate their stress level through

emotional cues (Lyons-Ruth, 2007). Given that children are still developing the capacity to self-regulate their emotional states, the manner in which they process elevated stress or traumatic experiences occurs on behavioural and relational, rather than verbal level (Briere, 2002). Thus a PPAF stands to promote secure attachment only if the relationship feels safe to the child based on shared non-verbal experiences. This will influence whether and how a child can access their secure attachment style or develop secure attachment where none previously existed.[2]

To illustrate, the primary PPAF in Laura's circumstance, Joan, might tell Laura that she cares about her or that she wants her to do well in her home, however interpreting Briere, Joan's non-verbal communication of anger, disgust and mistrust in Laura could serve to negate, or refute, her words, non-verbally promoting insecure attachment through the caregiving relationship. Joan's contradictory behaviour raises another question: could Joan's behaviour be indicative of her own insecure attachment? The next section will discuss the relationship between PPAF attachment styles and the well-being of the children in their care.

PPAF Attachment Styles

Given that children's attachment styles can be predicted at a rate of 75 percent simply by assessing the attachment style of the primary caregiver in their family of origin (Wallin, 2007), what must be provided for a child in care to enable secure attachment when their new primary caregiver is a PPAF? If the attachment style of the familial primary caregiver is predictive of the attachment style of the child, what impact might the attachment style of the PPAF have in the formation of a new attachment style for children in care? While there is some question around the genetic basis of this intergenerational transmission of attachment style, it appears not to be causal (Liotti, 2004), suggesting that a PPAF's attachment style could also impact the attachment style of the child in their care. Thus, looking to the attachment style of the PPAF may be necessary.

As with any caregiver, the PPAF's behaviour in the relationship with a child in their care is impacted by many personal, situational and systemic factors. That which falls within the scope of this paper will be addressed in the section "PPAFs and Trauma". Further, their fundamental ability to engage in relationships that could feel safe to the child, and thus be therapeutic, is highly related to their own attachment style (Bowlby, 1979; Main, 1995). The ability of insecurely attached adults to be non-verbally available, reliable, consistent and responsive in a manner that is contingent on others is limited. This is clearly demonstrated through an exploration of the three identified types of insecure adult attachment: dismissing, preoccupied and unresolved (Wallin, 2007). Although differently labelled, these attachment styles correspond with and reflect childhood attachment styles.[3] In looking to how insecurely attached adults behave, we can understand how their attachment style might impact their relationships. In the following examples some behaviours ascribed to the identified adult insecure attachment styles are described and tentatively applied to Laura's relationships. We certainly cannot know the attachment styles of those in her life, but we can imagine how insecure attachment styles result in certain types of adult behaviours in order to illuminate how these styles are crucial in caregiving relationships.

First, in the dismissing adult, feelings are dissociated and intimacy is limited (Wallin, 2007). This renders a dismissing PPAF only partially available to the child on both an emotional and

2 There is emerging evidence that impacts a child's gender ability to access or develop secure attachment in care, see McLaughlin et al. (2012).

3 For a full discussion of adult attachment see Hazan and Shaver (1987), Main (1995), and Wallin (2007).

potentially physical level. If the dismissing PPAF needs to regulate their own emotions through limiting the degree of intimacy with the child, they are not making choices contingent on the child's needs. Their behaviour might be confusing to the child and be perceived as similar to the unsafe experiences that have led to the existing state of insecure attachment. Drawing from the case illustration, Laura's social worker Jason has the ability to impact Laura's relational well-being through their intimate clinical interactions; yet, he shows a disregard for Laura's need for dignity and discretion by publicly discussing her habit of stacking menstrual pads. This corresponds with how a dismissive PPAF might engage in the therapeutic relationship through behaviours, which are based on needs other than the client's, regardless of their clinical effectiveness.

Second, the preoccupied PPAF, will have the tendency to violate boundaries as they struggle with a fear of abandonment and a limited internal construct of self (Wallin, 2007). The preoccupied PPAF thus fails to respond contingently to the child's needs, as they are preoccupied with their own need for closeness, potentially causing a child in their care to feel they must take care of the worker. The opportunities for the child to understand that their needs are non-threatening even when they are different from those that support their caregiver are limited. A child within a relationship of preoccupied attachment may thus have difficulty in forming an understanding of self that is separate from their caregiver.

Third, the unresolved PPAF presents an unpredictable mix of dismissing and preoccupied behaviour (Wallin, 2007). Regardless of the insecure attachment pattern experienced by the PPAF, their resulting behaviour is a threat to the healthy attachment of the child in their care. Joan appears to exhibit an unresolved attachment style, as she insists on Laura's closeness (being forced to stay with her at home or in church) while setting her apart as ruinous and declaring her as essentially untrustworthy.

The very system conceived to protect Laura appears to be constructing counter-therapeutic relationships through its above-described lack of attention to the attachment styles of PPAFs and denial of the trauma faced by all parties in child welfare work. The next section will explore the role of trauma in these important, potentially healing relationships.

The Role of Trauma in PPAF/Aboriginal Child Relationships

The relationship between PPAFs and children in placement begins following a rupture in the child's attachment with their primary caregiver(s). This alone situates the relationship within trauma. In many cases the interruption in the child's attachment is only one of many traumas surrounding their involvement with multiple professionals and entry into out-of-home care. Looking to the needs of insecurely attached children is of utmost importance towards healing for children who have been removed from their families. As shown in the context of Aboriginal children, the compounding of trauma is pervasive especially in light of intergenerational trauma. In acknowledging the role of trauma within the relationship, the attachment of the PPAF becomes essential to the wellness of the child.

Liotti (2004) states when people are traumatized, their attachment system is activated. This is true of both children and adults. When an Aboriginal child in out-of-home care reaches out (using any attachment style) they are doing so within an experience of multiple traumas. A well-trained, securely attached PPAF will have a greater capacity to respond appropriately to the child on the non-verbal level. On the other hand, the trauma of an insecurely attached PPAF will most likely be activated and lead to a less optimal response to the child (Liotti, 2004). No amount of

training, preparation, or good intention can protect the insecurely attached PPAF from his or her own attachment style.

Beebe and Lachman (2002) demonstrate how caregivers express the feelings generated from their triggered attachment styles through behaviours that are unconsciously performed. Further, this triggering will compound within the PPAF, as they are unable to get their attachment needs met within the PPAF/ Aboriginal child relationship. This results in emotions such as anger or fear demonstrated to the child, even if only non-verbally (Liotti, 2004; Beebe & Lachman, 2002). Regardless of the specific emotions demonstrated by the insecurely attached PPAF, the child's potential to feel safe and further secure attachment is thwarted.

By not working with the PPAFs attachment style, this potential harm goes unacknowledged, even denied, by the people and structures professing to the child that a safer haven has been found. This experience of dissonance alone may recreate part of the experience of trauma from which the child was removed. It is within this unconscious and denied relational trauma, that some Aboriginal children are developing their psychological internal working models of the world and adapting their cognitive, emotional and behavioural coping mechanisms. These children have thus been moved into a setting of subtle harm to their most profound structures of self. In the next section the lens of trauma will be expanded from the Aboriginal child in care to include the PPAF working with them.

PPAFs and Trauma

The notion of insecurely attached PPAFs has thus far been presented as a source of attachment danger for Aboriginal children in care. Theoretically, securely attached PPAFs would be much safer in these helping relationships due to their inherent ability to respond appropriately at the unconscious, non-verbal level to insecurely attached children. Unfortunately, all PPAFs are at risk of psychological injury due to the traumatic nature of their work as child welfare workers (Regehr, Hemsworth, Leslie, Howe & Chau, 2004; Regehr, LeBlanc, Shlonsky & Bogo, 2010; Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003; Bride, 2007; Rasmussen, 2005). The occupational hazards of Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder (STSD) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) render the insecure PPAF less able to heal their own attachment injuries and puts the secure PPAF at risk of suffering vicarious trauma.

There is widespread acceptance that workers exposed to the trauma material of others are at risk of suffering "potentially profound effect(s)" (Rasmussen, 2005, p. 19). Bride (2007) studied a diverse group of social workers and found that "55% met the criteria for at least one of the core symptom clusters of STSD, and 15.2% met the criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD…twice that of the general population" (p. 68). While the relationship between STSD and attachment is unknown, several studies have identified that, among other variables, those workers with a history of childhood abuse, maltreatment or emotional abuse or neglect histories were at greater risk of suffering STSD (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003; Pryce, Shackelford & Pryce, 2007; Stevens & Higgins, 2002). Despite this, no causal relationship seems yet to have been established between childhood abuse history, insecure attachment and STSD/PTSD in workers (Brandon, 1999). Regardless of the apparent relationship between abuse histories and STSD/PTSD in workers, there are also workers without abuse histories whose STSD/PTSD correlates with other characteristics such as age, workplace factors and frequency/ severity of exposure (Regehr, Hemsworth, Leslie, Howe, & Chau, 2004; Regehr, Leslie, & Howe, 2005; Van Hook & Rothenberg, 2008). Figley

(1999) describes STSD as "nearly identical to PTSD excepting that exposure to a traumatizing event experienced by one person becomes a traumatizing event for the second person" (p. 11).

If familial predictors of secure attachment can be generalized to PPAF/ Aboriginal Child relationships, then it is possible that even when securely attached PPAFs are suffering from STSD, the attachment of the children in their care will not be at any greater risk than the children assigned to insecurely attached workers. Given that the children of Holocaust survivors were not shown to have higher rates of insecure attachment than control groups, despite the unresolved trauma of their parents (Liotti, 2004), there is some evidence to support this claim. While this hypothesis bears further investigation, regardless of the potential attachment consequences, it is likely that traumatized children are best served by non-traumatized adults. An example of why this might be is found in Regehr et al. (2010) who demonstrated that child welfare workers in Ontario who were exposed to multiple "critical incidents" in the course of their work, or who reported "high levels of traumatic stress symptoms" (p. 614) appeared to have their judgment influenced even when they employed standardized risk assessment measures. This study did not assess the attachment styles of workers. Given what is already known about secure attachment and emotional well-being, research is called for to better understand the role of attachment, vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress within PPAF/Aboriginal Child relationships.

Returning to Laura's situation, understanding that the behaviours of her social worker and foster mother may well have emerged due to psychological injuries, with symptoms akin to those experienced by soldiers or sexual assault survivors, casts a new light on potential responses to this difficult situation. Joan and Jason were people, who may have started with their own attachment injuries, which were then triggered and further ingrained by years of work related trauma- or securely attached people whose careers systematically undermined their psychological well-being. For most, a reading of Laura's story may evoke feelings of rage, disbelief, sadness or horror. If such strong affect could be triggered by reading a page of Laura's experience, what might days, weeks, or years of working with such pain do to a person? While there can never be an excuse for how Laura, and those in similar circumstances have been treated, healing and prevention are likely impossible without an understanding of how these unacceptable circumstances come to be.

Pearlman and Saakvitne (1995) offer a detailed taxonomy of the areas of the helping professional's self that are affected by vicarious trauma. This is an abridged version of what they consider has been transformed in workers when they exhibit inappropriate behaviour, their: frame of reference (worldview, identity, spirituality); self-capacities (ability to tolerate strong affect, maintain positive sense of self, or maintain inner sense of connection with others); ego resources (resources important to the therapy process, resources important to protect oneself from future harm); psychological needs and related cognitive schemas (for safety, trust, esteem, intimacy, and control); and, memory system (verbal, affect, image based, somatic, and interpersonal). Can professionals whose selves are so profoundly compromised be considered as healing resources for the Aboriginal children in their care? This question will be further addressed in the following treatment recommendations.

Recommendations

Provincial and territorial child welfare agencies are encouraged to continue or begin engaging in work that is informed by attachment theory. This must be done with the recognition that cross-culturally, there is a danger that in assessing attachment styles secure attachment may be misinterpreted for insecure attachment (Carriere & Richardson, 2009, Rothbaum et al., 2000,

Rothbaum & Morelli, 2005, Van Ijzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008, Yeo, 2003). Additionally, professionals and services will likely be incapable of promoting and supporting culturally appropriate attachment behaviours, if culturally specific relational patterns and behaviours are not understood. Further research is called for to better understand diversity within attachment. This research must be done in partnership with Aboriginal children, families and communities to ensure that their voices, experiences and understandings are included in how new knowledge is shaped. It is further recommended that the importance of support, training and sensitization for child welfare professionals around issues of attachment and culture, as it applies to their clients and themselves, be considered an important research aim.

Emerging research is now demonstrating some ways in which attachment theory can be employed to help Aboriginal children. Keeping up to date with this fast growing field is necessary. For example, from the collectivist, polytropic view (Lewis, 2005) children can have multiple attachment figures and may view the community or a group of people as their "secure base" as opposed to having one identified attachment figure. This variability is particularly important to consider when intervening across cultures with children from an attachment perspective. For example, if a child's culture has taught them that specific behaviours from multiple mothers represents a secure base, then their culturally-based internal working model can be of great benefit in easing the child's transition to a new caregiver. Key behaviours, based on the child's internal working model, could be adopted by new caregivers to enable the child to understand their new environment as safe. However, if the child's culturally-based internal working model is misunderstood when intervening, there is a risk of pathologizing the child's understanding of healthy attachment relationships through implicit or explicit messages that privilege the working models of the dominant culture.

The sequelae of trauma must be understood and considered in any work with Aboriginal children. Children who have experienced attachment injury related trauma require developmentally appropriate care with behavioural and relational opportunities to develop emotion regulation and healthy attachment. This care may be impossible to provide for PPAFs who themselves are insecurely attached (Wallin, 2007). Child welfare work therefore calls for a relationship-based practice approach (Turney, 2012) that hones in on the attachment styles of those who are providing care within child welfare services if it is to assist children with attachment injuries.

Aboriginal children enter care with the opportunity for healing their attachment related injuries within them. Given the profound impact of vicarious traumatization and the potential for insecure attachment styles to sabotage the healing mandate of child welfare work, it is necessary to expand our spotlight to include not only the self of the child in care, but the selves of the workers charged with their care. The role of "service providers" or "workers" must be re-thought. PPAFs are not generic entities distributing a product, but complex beings engaging in relationships (Ruch, Turney, & Ward, 2010; Ruch, 2005; Sudbery, 2002; Trevithick, 2003). The attachment style of PPAFs within the child welfare relationship may be more powerful than any practice approach or resource. Thus, PPAF's secure attachment must be promoted to enable children in their care the opportunity to exercise their inherent ability to develop secure attachment.

As members of caring relationships workers selves are engaged with these children, other members of the treatment team, and the system charged with their employment and the care of the children and families whom they serve. These interwoven relationships occur due to the trauma of the child's attachment injury and are fraught with highly emotionally provocative content, which must be attended to, lest it sabotage the healing mandate (Obholzer & Roberts,

1994; Rasmussen, 2005). The onus for worker well-being is shared by workers themselves and the organizations within which they practice (Pryce, Shackelford & Pryce, 2007). Child welfare systems might well expand their mandate to include the protection of all parties exposed to the traumatic experience of abuse or neglect in the lives of Aboriginal children. Future scholarship addressing helping relationships, culture and attachment from multiple perspectives is called for.

Conclusion

Colonialism has resulted in many Aboriginal people suffering from complex, intergenerational trauma, causing a disproportionate number of Aboriginal children to be placed within child welfare systems. Looking at the story of one such child, Laura, the potential healing role of secure attachment is framed within the current scholarship on cultural attachment. It is surmised that secure attachment is likely beneficial to all children in all cultures, whilst understanding that it may be expressed, or appear very differently, across cultures and between different people.

Cross-cultural professional relationships between workers and children in provincial and territorially delivered residential and foster care are posited as potentially healing when secure attachment can be fostered within them. Trauma is acknowledged as playing a central role in the lives of many Aboriginal children in care and child welfare professionals. Acknowledgement of trauma in the lives, relationships, and work of these actors is promoted, and a call to individuals and systems to attend to the trauma fraught nature of child welfare work is sounded.

While recommendations for practice have been offered, this view of the healing potential within child protection based relationships reveals that more culturally informed, collaborative research, scholarship and action to address the complex needs of Aboriginal children in provincial and territorially provided out-of-home care is necessary. Although the scholarship in this area is currently limited, evidence suggests culture cannot be considered as a mere add-on to attachment theory, but merits full recognition within each context attachment is studied. An emic approach where individuals from Aboriginal communities are consulted will be a necessary component of further research, as understanding can only be achieved through learning from the people living within these cultures.

The paucity of literature on this topic might suggest that culture is not easy to study within the context of attachment. Despite the challenges, the need to further develop understandings of the attachment process is particularly acute for Aboriginal children in Canada. We need only look to Laura in her small basement room, without the secure, loving base that every child deserves to recognize the importance of this claim.

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Strategies to Revive Traditional Decision-Making in the Context of Child Protection in Northern British Columbia

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Abstract

For indigenous peoples, recovering from colonial rule and aspiring to flourish, the revival of traditional decision making (TDM) is considered essential. However, transitioning from established colonial practices to TDMs is not well understood. In this paper we identify some of the challenges experienced by a First Nation urban community in the north east of British Columbia as they have tried to develop and implement a culturally-relevant child and family-centered traditional decision-making (TDM) process in the context of government-regulated child protection system. Specifically, we problematize a collaborative decision-making strategy—Family Group Conferencing (FGC). FGCs are premised on values of collaboration, participation, and empowerment, and because this strategy shares many of the values and aspirations of Traditional Decision-Making (TDM), there is a temptation to directly download and incorporate FGCs into the TDM model. In this paper we explore five challenges that warrant particular attention in developing TDM model in this contemporary context: 1) power, 2) cultural adaptability, 3) family support and prevention, 4) coordinator "neutrality", and 5) sustainable support. We conclude with eight recommendations to overcome these challenges while developing TDMs in a child protection context.

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1.0. Introduction

As Indigenous communities continue to exercise their right for self-determination, taking

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ownership of both statutory and child welfare agencies becomes a primary mandate to ensure the safety and well-being of their people. Much of this work involves engaging communities to develop and embrace traditional decision-making (TDM) processes and systems that will foster increased collaboration and involvement of families. The importance of reviving TDM cannot be underestimated. For example, Tuso (2011) shows that if these indigenous systems of conflict resolution do not occupy a major space in their cultural landscape, then the essential social and psychological infrastructure that supports these cultures to flourish, also disappears, resulting in utter chaos and cultural demise. He concludes that "negligence of indigenous processes of conflict resolution. . . has had negative consequences for peoples of traditional societies, [who] have experienced considerable levels of group humiliation, ambivalence toward their own cultures, division, and disorientation" (p.266).

The significance of reviving TDM processes notwithstanding, strategies for transitioning from established colonial practices to TDMs is not well understood. In this paper we draw on our experience working with Nenan, a First Nations support and advocacy agency. Their mandate is to support First Nation (Slavey, Cree, Dane zaa), Aboriginal and Métis families in the north east of British Columbia to develop and implement a culturally-relevant child and family-centered TDM process. Transition from the status quo child protection system to reinstitution of TDM processes is regarded as a key strategy to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care.

As part of this community development process, Nenan decided there is value in first understanding the merits and challenges of Family Group Conferencing (FGC) processes. FGC is a collaborative decision-making process that has been administered by the Ministry of Child and Family Development in the north east of BC since 2001. FGC is informed by traditional practices from many cultures and aims to recognize both individual and collective rights. In many respects, the values and goals of FGC align with those of TDM. The FGC process values family participation, collaboration, and empowerment in decision-making; respects the need and capacity of families and kinship to care for their children; and affirms the culture of the family group. However, even though FGC processes share many of the same values and goals of TDM processes, the promise of FGC—to more fully engage families and community in making important and better decisions that affect their lives—is not always realized. For example, anecdotal evidence from families and advocates tell us that family participants may not have been involved in pre-conference and/or follow-up plans, they frequently do not feel heard or empowered in the conferences, and their legal rights have on occasion been usurped without the safeguards of the legal system (see Ney, Stoltz, & Maloney, 2011). Of particular concern is that Aboriginal children continue to be overrepresented in care in this region.

Thus, as urban communities transition from conventional to TDM models of care, there may be a temptation to download FGCs to develop TDM systems, again because of the ostensible alignment of values and goals (e.g. MacDonald, Glode, & Wien, 2005). Though there may be some merit to this strategy, this paper will reveal there are also considerable challenges, that

if left unheeded, may contribute to perpetuation of oppressive practices in child welfare. The purpose of this paper is to identify practices that will best support the development of TDM processes where the delivery of FGCs already exist. To do this we will: 1) review the best practices identified in FGC literature; 2) explore some of the challenges related to the implementation of FGCs in the Indigenous child protection context; and, 3) make recommendations that will inform effective development and implementation of TDM processes.

2.0. Methodology

To complete this paper we conducted a literature review of FGC best practices and Indigenous decision-making in child welfare cases. We used EBSCO Host, CRKN Wiley Online library, and Google Scholar search engines as our research tools. Combinations of key phrases included: Family Group Conference (FGC), Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), best practices, literature review, collaborative practice/planning, collective decision-making, child welfare/protection, Indigenous/Aboriginal family decision-making, Indigenous/Aboriginal child welfare/protection, and Indigenous/Aboriginal FGC/FGDM. The review resulted in articles from edited books, peer-reviewed articles, as well as grey literature and official reports published by government and non-profit organizations. These key articles are listed in the reference section of this paper.

From these selected papers we identified and explored specific issues related to FGC best practice literature. A second scan (using the same search engines as above) was then conducted to deepen our understanding of these specific best practice issues. Here we used the following phrases to conduct the search: "the land" and child welfare, Indigenous/Aboriginal alternative dispute resolution, culture and child welfare, traditional decision-making, empowering practice and child welfare, empowering families, power and decision-making, wraparound, key decision points, child protection/welfare, and disproportionality child welfare decisions. These papers were then critically examined for themes that addressed the challenges with implementing FGC.

3.0. Findings

Approximately half of the twenty-five articles identified address best practice issues with regard to family group conferencing (FGC) and/or family group decision-making (FGDM).[1] The remaining articles provide more depth and exploration on the identified challenges of implementing FGCs. In the next section, we present findings that include: 1) a summary of the issues identified in the FGC best practice literature; and 2) the challenges of implementing FGCs in an Indigenous context.

3.1. Summary of Best Practices Literature

The best practices FGC literature cited in the references addresses practice issues related to FGC protocol (AHA, 2010; Barnsdale & Walker, 2007; CHS, 2008; Connolly & McKenzie, 1999; Crampton, 2004; Helland, 2005; MCFD, 2005; Merkel-Holguin, 2004; Rohm & Bruce, 2008; Sherry, 2008). The most common practice issues focus on: preparation, coordinator role, meaningful extended family involvement, private family time, managing power and family dynamics, and ensuring good follow-up practices. The details of how to conduct good practice in the delivery of FGC is not the focus of this paper, but can be read in the papers cited. Of

1 In the literature, FGDM is used as an umbrella term for FGC and other methods of family decision-making that have evolved across various jurisdictions.

importance here is that there is a body of work that demonstrates consensus of the best practice issues and how to deliver FGC to meet its intended goals. Overall, we found that the mainstream literature is consistent in their conclusion that FGC is a useful tool for family inclusion in child protection decision-making processes.

Amongst the articles reviewed is a 2010 report published by the American Humane Association (AHA) entitled, "Guidelines for Family Group Decision Making in Child Welfare" ("Guidelines"). The AHA Guidelines were developed during two years of consultation and deliberation with 20 family group decision-making practitioners and policy makers from across North America. The primary objective of these consultations was to produce a document that gives child welfare agencies confidence to do their work based on the most "current state of knowledge and reservoirs of wisdom relating to the practice of FGDM" (AHA, 2010, p.7).

The AHA Guidelines is a practical resource in this regard: the contents acknowledge many of the issues highlighted in the research we reviewed and are intended to both raise awareness about, as well as provide practical guidance for case management. For these reasons, the AHA Guidelines stand apart from the other documents reviewed, in that they were developed using a participatory conceptual framework (Prilleltensky, Rossiter, & Walsh-Bowers, 1996) to engage diverse stakeholder groups. The AHA Guidelines, in our review, is the most comprehensive compilation of FGC best practices to date, as it provides practical guidance on roles and responsibilities of family participants, supports, community members, and professionals. In particular, and throughout the AHA Guidelines, the role of the coordinator is described in great detail. Best practice guidance is also provided on various phases of the family meeting (meeting preparation, family meeting delivery, and follow-up), as well as referral practices, systemic support, training, and administration. The AHA Guidelines is a current and substantive resource that can inform development and implementation of TDM. We recommend:

THAT the AHA Guidelines be used as one tool to inform the development of a TDM model.

3.2. Challenges

In the previous section we detailed that the review of FGC literature, and the AHA Guidelines in particular, reveal a plethora of useful best practices to deliver FGC in the context of mainstream child and family services. Building from this body of work, we have identified specific challenges that are especially pertinent to Indigenous cultures that may be in the process of transitioning from the conventional to a traditional decision-making system. These challenges include: 1) power; 2) cultural adaptability; 3) family support and prevention; 4) coordinator "neutrality"; and 5) sustainable support. The remainder of this paper addresses these challenges and provides recommendations to assist Indigenous cultures in their work to develop a TDM.

3.2.1. Power

The research we have reviewed identifies the issue of power as important. For example, Sherry (2008) described how participants of FGC expressed their troubling experiences around power imbalances. She observes that participants "talked about the power differential . . . and stressed the importance of personal awareness and acknowledging this differential" (p. 31). Connolly and McKenzie (1999) concur and caution that "a sure way of undermining effective participatory practice is to neglect the significance of power dynamics within and across systems" (p. 83). The AHA Guidelines (2010) also addresses these power concerns and warns that "[w]ithout agencies'

determined efforts to avoid such imbalances, racial and ethnic minority families and families that are poor or socially disadvantaged are at high risk of disproportionate agency responses to their situations" (p.6). Similarly, Healy & Darlington (2009) point to the challenges of negotiating the tensions between the conventional child protection system and the FGC principles of family empowerment, participation, and collaborative decision-making. They conclude that reconciling how power is played out may be "one of the most complex and sensitive aspects of social work practice" (p.420). And finally, attempting to understand this complexity, in a recent study, Ney, Stoltz, & Maloney (2011) show how (invisible) power—that exists in the dominant institutional and structural forces—can exert itself to override the ability of an FGC intervention to be inclusive, collaborative, and empowering and thus negatively shape the experience of families and children. Specifically, this research confirms previous research (e.g., Healy and Darlington, 2009) that the FGC process is vulnerable to co-optation by powerful child protection institutions and systems, and that participants find it problematic (Sherry, 2008). Importantly, this research also illustrates that professionals—even those fully aligned with the values of FGC—are not always aware of the way power imbalances may undermine the FGC goals (Ney et al., 2011).

For these reasons, we urge that any family support program take the issue of power seriously and include practical strategies for addressing power imbalances. Previous best practice work has advised that practitioners and programmers make a "determined effort" (AHA, 2010, p.6) to address power imbalances: in our view, this is the right objective but an inadequate strategy to address the problem of power. Our review of the literature, as well as observations of the experience of workers and participants, leads us to conclude that there is an absence of practical strategies in the research, best practice guidelines, and training to effectively overcome power imbalances. We conclude that practical strategies that intentionally address power issues are required. The work of Boud (2010) and Fook (2010) offer insights and practical strategies in critical reflexivity to assist practitioners to take seriously context, culture, ideology, and discursive power. To address the issue of power we recommend:

THAT all professionals who work in the child protection system, and the delivery of FGCs in particular, have training in "critical reflexivity" which includes:

- training in awareness of the history of social work with First Nations People[2]
- understanding accountability to the history of harm that is perpetuated
- exposing and becoming aware of one's role in perpetuating the oppression (Cowie, 2010)[3]
- providing experiential orientation around local Indigenous culture (Bortoletto, 2011)

3.2.2. Cultural Adaptation

The literature we reviewed is clear that direct downloading of mainstream FGC or mediation strategies into Indigenous cultures is not the right approach (Blackstock & Trocme, 2005). Cameron (2006) explains how alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as FGC and mediation, while potentially compatible with Indigenous values, are nevertheless "imports from other areas of the world" (p.18). Employment of these "cookie-cutter" approaches obstructs the possibility of eliciting culturally embedded decision-making approaches that will more effectively engage and support Indigenous communities (Helland, 2005; Merkel-Holguin, 2004).

2 PHSA's Indigenous Cultural Competency on-line training is an effective tool to achieve this objective (http://www.culturalcompetency.ca/health-authorities/provincial-health-services).

3 See Fook (2010) for ways to instigate and sustain reflective practices within front-line workers.

Cameron reminds us that Aboriginal communities "since time immemorial, have had, and still do have, principles and processes in place to deal with disharmony in the community" (Lee as cited in Cameron, 2006, p.3). It is essential that grassroots processes be used to elicit local values, customs, and practices of TDM (Avruch & Black, 1991; Cameron, 2006; Connolly & McKenzie, 1999; Walker, 2004).

The value of a bottom-up approach in this regard has long been understood in the conflict resolution field. For example, John Paul Lederach (1997), a renowned practitioner and researcher on developing culturally appropriate decision-making tools, proposes an "elicitive" (as opposed to prescriptive) strategy that respects local understandings and meanings of events and interactions as they play out in specific contexts. In these instances "implicit Indigenous knowledge . . . is a valued resource for creating and sustaining appropriate models of conflict resolution" (p.56). More practically, Avruch & Black (1991) recommend a process called "ethnopraxis" which involves the use of culture-specific mapping to show how local Indigenous communities traditionally address disharmony. Similarly, Cameron (2006), in her review of Indigenous decision-making models, supports the use of mapping processes that are conducted before program implementation. And, finally, in a compilation of 11 Indigenous TDM programs in British Columbia, Harder (2009) shows how extensive consultation with local Indigenous community members is fundamental to designing effective community-specific processes.

This kind of local consultation and bottom-up development points to the need for meaningful attention to "deep culture" or worldview when processing conflict (Goldberg, 2009). Tuso (2011) reviews cases where communities who have experienced cultural devastation and violent conflicts in response to colonial practices, have turned to "indigenous processes of peacemaking in the hope of finding more appropriate mechanisms of healing and reconciliation" (p.265), and reviews cases where reconciliation and healing have resulted from these efforts. But these are not add-on strategies, and coordinators who attempt to down-load hybridized strategies run the risk of perpetuating colonial policies and practices (Blackstock & Trocme, 2005). Furthermore, as LeBaron (2003) reminds us, "cultural fluency" is an essential capacity that requires the ability to acculturate in any number of contexts. Developing "cultural fluency" is not achieved by following check-lists of dos and don'ts. Our concern is that the value of cultural sensitivity is underplayed in the AHA Guidelines.[4]

It is not the intention of this discussion to impose another non-Indigenous model or recommendation on Aboriginal families. But differences in worldview between various First Nations' groups, as well as between First Nations, Métis, and urban Aboriginal people within BC must be understood and taken seriously. Walker (2004) suggests that legitimatizing worldviews is critical to creating a sustainable and supportive space for Indigenous families and insists that "[t]o act otherwise is to marginalize people's abilities to function within their worldviews, an act of ontological violence" (p.530). For this reason, we recommend:

THAT TDM processes include culture-specific mapping to identify traditional Indigenous decision-making practices and to co-create the model with Indigenous communities;

4 Section III.24. (in the AHA Guidelines) devotes a half page (of a 60-page document) to "Cultural Considerations" and advises that the coordinator "show respect" and demonstrate "a genuine interest in the family's culture and an understanding of how the family's culture has been historically treated by the dominant culture" (p. 39). But with no recognition on how "power" can easily co-opt efforts to be culturally sensitive (Goldberg, 2009), nor acknowledgment of "deep culture" (Lederach, 1997), and the need to develop "cultural fluency" (LeBaron, 2003), the guidance is inadequate in ensuring that coordinators conduct a culturally sensitive decision-making process.

THAT Indigenous children and families are engaged in the design, development, implementation and monitoring of the TDM;

THAT families choose the TDM that suits their specific circumstances; and

THAT Elders are involved to ensure that cultural protocols are followed, and to solidify the grounding of decisions in community relationships; and

THAT Coordinators are trained in cultural fluency.

3.2.3. Family Support and Prevention

The literature on decision-making in child welfare systems shows that from the moment a child protection report is made, there are several decision points before the decision is made to apprehend a child. Each of these decision points may direct a family closer to preventative supports or closer to apprehension depending on the time, resources, family situation, and the persons making the decisions (Bortoletto, 2011). Moreover, typically, in conventional systems, the evidence demonstrates that the likelihood of apprehension at each decision point is disproportionately greater for Indigenous peoples than non-Indigenous (Derezotes et al., 2008). Most best practice recommendations for FGCs are confined to safety and care plans—which are conducted after a child has been apprehended. It is a matter of considerable concern that there is inadequate involvement of families earlier in the decision-making process—a strategy that would contribute to mitigation of disproportionate apprehensions (Tilbury, 2009).

The reasons that family involvement does not occur earlier are numerous. Sherry (2008) points out that the "question of timing ties into who holds the power to offer family group conferencing, determine the time, or decide whether or not a referral is appropriate (p.33). Furthermore, the literature shows that when the process of family decision-making is not mandated, social workers with differing worldviews can determine a family outcome without first involving families in the decisions that affect their lives (Crampton, 2004). Such inadvertent oversight provides further support for our previous recommendation that professionals who work in and with the child protection system have training in "critical reflexivity".

Literature that addresses this issue urges organizations to incorporate families and family groups into the decision-making process early on and throughout the process—not just as a one-time, end-of-the-road event or technique (Sherry, 2008; Centre for Human Services, 2008; Walker, 2004). Indeed, this requires reconceptualization of the FGC as a process, not an event (Maloney & Ney, 2008). Sherry (2008) recommends the use of several FGC's throughout a family's involvement with child protection and furthermore to allow the family to decide when it is an appropriate time for an FGC to take place. In BC, the Interior Métis Child and Family Services Society have incorporated two different decision-making processes into their service delivery model: a smaller, shorter meeting "to address immediate planning needs", and a larger, longer meeting to develop care and safety plans (Harder, 2009, p.18). In Lakidjeka, Australia, non-statutory Indigenous case workers are expected to remain fully engaged with families and ensure their voices are heard from the time of first contact and, where necessary, throughout the child protection process (Higgins & Butler, 2007, p.11). The Okanagan Nation Alliance ensures family participation before intake to mitigate, if not circumvent families' deeper involvement in the child protection system. In her review of the use of alternative dispute resolution models in child protection, Cameron (2006) concludes that early family involvement is common, accepted, and culturally appropriate. Together the literature confirms that early and ongoing involvement

of families in the care of their children will mitigate the disproportionate apprehension of Indigenous children. In our view, the AHA Guidelines do not adequately promote early and sustained involvement of families. For these reasons, we recommend:

THAT TDM strategies develop and implement processes and/or policies that will enable Indigenous families and communities to partake in child protection decisions early (at the first point of contact) and throughout the process;

THAT the use of family decision-making processes be available as a preventative measure to families who are not yet known to the child protection system but may benefit from the supportive family process; and,

THAT families be entitled to instigate the use of such processes if they determine that it would assist them at a particular time.

3.2.4. Coordinator "Neutrality"

Mainstream best practice generally supports the use of one coordinator who is considered "independent and impartial" (AHA, 2010; Helland, 2005; Barnsdale & Walker, 2007). The FGC reference guide published by BC government's MCFD echoes this notion stating that families will be referred to an impartial "coordinator" (MCFD, 2005, p.2). However, other literature we reviewed explains that this practice "contrasts sharply with Indigenous approaches, which honor interconnections within the natural world" (Walker, 2004, p.536). In his review of Indigenous approaches to conflict, Walker (2004) found that "Indigenous choice of facilitators also reflects an emphasis on relationships . . . [where coordinators were] well known to the participants and . . . well versed in community beliefs, values, and history" (p.537).

The same was true of the BC models described in Harder's report (2009). In each of the 11 models that were designed and implemented by Indigenous organizations, most facilitators had some connection with the individual family, a practice that is contrary to the ethic of "dual relationship". In some instances where coordinators were not original members, the community embraced the coordinator and invited him/her to become more involved within the community, its members, and traditions. In other instances, the model intentionally recruited a co-coordinator with deeper community connections. Harder (2009) concludes that, "personal history [e.g. same band, same community] and positive relationships with the community appear to be significant indicators of successful service delivery" (p.5).

These examples point to the importance of creating a safe space in Indigenous communities to ensure that Aboriginal people both trust the person(s) coordinating the process, as well as have confidence that the coordinator has knowledge of, understands, and cares for their community and culture. The Indigenous literature reviewed here indicates that trust involves a deeper relational enmeshment than merely respect. Cameron (2006) suggests that the issue of trust and coordinator neutrality be a part of the TDM consultation and design process (p.16). The AHA Guidelines concur that families choose their coordinators (AHA, 2010) to fit within their traditional Indigenous worldview (e.g. the coordinator may be a well known and respected member of their community). Because this relational ethic deeply conflicts with mainstream literature that advocates for coordinator independence and impartiality we recommend:

THAT TDM strategies exercise a cautious approach to the issue of neutrality and ensure the design process explicitly explores who is recruited to coordinate family involvement and decision-making.

3.2.5. Sustainable Support

According to the AHA Guidelines, the role of the coordinator is complete once the final copies of a plan are distributed. At this point, it is the family and social worker who are jointly responsible for ensuring progress and accountability for implementation (2010, p.58). This practice, though, has the effect of reverting the two parties (the family and the child protection agency) back into the classic child protection environment with none of the FGC checks and balances related to power or other challenges and concerns. Rather than continue to nurture the spirit of the process, the FGC process does not kick in again until something in the relationship breaks down. We've emphasized above, under "family support and prevention" that the FGC is not an event, but rather a process. Merkel-Holguin agrees and warns that "[w]hen practitioners view family group conferencing as a tool to be used on families and not as a process in which to engage them — they overlook the key preparation and follow-up steps that are critical to building community partnerships and increasing family involvement" (as cited in Mirsky, 2003, p.2).

Our research identifies post-meeting follow-up as one of the most critical components to the successful completion of a family plan (CHS, 2008; Helland, 2005; Wintenberger McHugh, n.d.). Here, the use of an advocate can be critical. Helland (2005) states that the "one consistent and important condition associated with successful permanency with [FGC participants is having] a strong advocate for the plan" (p.34). Bortoletto (2011) also found that third-party involvement was effective in helping the family to carry out the plan, secure appropriate resources, and ensure child protection staff did not alter the provisions of the plan without due process and in particular without consultation and engagement with the family.

Promoting better follow-up practices fits with Aboriginal values that embrace relationship, interconnectedness, and expanded notions of time. In his book titled, *Research is Ceremony*, Shawn Wilson (2008) indicates that when a ceremony begins, the relationships that are created in that process continue to be respected. To create a safe and sustainable space for Aboriginal people, a family support service must ensure that the equitable and supportive relationships created in the decision-making process continue – rather than dissolve once people leave the "event". The research literature we reviewed is crystal clear: placing exclusive responsibility for follow up solely on the family and social worker is ineffective (Bortoletto, 2011; CHS, 2008; Helland, 2005; Wintenberger McHugh, n.d.). Accordingly, family support programs need to place as much importance upon what happens after decision-making meetings as they do upon what happens before and during them. Specifically, we recommend:

THAT during the TDM model development process, strategies and policies that will ensure sustainable and continued family support are explored and implemented.

4.0. Conclusion

We recognize that for a number of reasons (i.e. loss of culture; separation from community, culture and family, impact of residential schools and child welfare, etc.), not all Aboriginal families utilize their traditional culture in their approaches to family decisions. We also recognize that in many instances, FGC coordinators may be culturally aware and competent, and ensure that cultural safety

is practiced by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies when dealing with Aboriginal families. But the concern of this paper is that for many jurisdictions, such as experienced by Nenan, downloading FGCs cannot overcome the colonialist practices that have been responsible for much of the devastating conditions of Aboriginal people. Instances where these concerns persist may require more interrogation and sensitivity of the way FGCs are practiced.

It is important to highlight the significance of the recently released AHA Guidelines (2010) to this best practice literature review. Their comprehensive description of FGC principles (consistent with other best practice literature we reviewed) and practical guidelines, make this document a useful tool to inform TDM processes. The across-the-board overview contained in the AHA Guidelines afforded us the space and opportunity to focus this report and recommendations on examining, refining and expanding key issues. Accordingly, this review and the accompanying recommendations give greater prominence to central challenges and concerns that have been raised about the workings of FGCs related to power, cultural adaptability, family support and prevention, coordinator "neutrality", and sustainable and continued support. Although many of these challenges have been identified in the FGC literature, in practice they have been minimized or downplayed. Of particular concern is the lack of direction and attention in the AHA Guidelines of how to address "deep culture" and worldview. Stronger leadership in this key document could go a long ways in shaping more culturally-attuned practices.

The overall recommendation of this paper is that these issues of culture must be taken seriously during the development of TDM processes in Indigenous communities. For example, issues of power and culture speak directly to the need for a clear acknowledgment and understanding of the devastation that colonization has caused, and continues to cause, in Indigenous communities. TDM strategies which address these critical challenges will assist Indigenous communities to revitalize their values and culture, and is consistent with and supports self-determination efforts.

We present this research as a tool to inform TDM development processes in child protection.

4.0 Summary of Recommendations

This review of FGC best practices and examination of five critical issues, results in the following recommendations for development of traditional decisions making models in an Indigenous context:

1. Power

THAT the AHA Guidelines be used as one tool to inform the development of a TDM model; and,

THAT all professionals who work in the child protection system, and the delivery of FGCs in particular, have training in "critical reflexivity" which includes:

training in awareness of the history of social work with First Nations People[5]

understanding accountability to the history of harm that is perpetuated

5 PHSA's Indigenous Cultural Competency on-line training is an effective tool to achieve this objective (http://www.culturalcompetency.ca/health-authorities/provincial-health-services).

exposing and becoming aware of one's role in perpetuating the oppression (Cowie, 2010)[6]

providing experiential orientation around local Indigenous culture (Bortoletto, 2011).

2. Cultural Adaptation

THAT TDM processes ensure they undertake culture-specific mapping to identify traditional Indigenous decision-making practices and to co-create the model with Indigenous communities;

THAT Indigenous children and families are engaged in the design, development, implementation and monitoring of the TDM;

THAT families choose the TDM that suits their specific circumstances;

THAT Elders are involved to ensure that cultural protocols are followed, and to solidify the grounding of decisions in community relationships; and

THAT coordinators are trained in cultural fluency.

3. Family Support and Prevention

THAT TDM strategies develop and implement processes and/or policies that will enable Indigenous families and communities to partake in child protection decisions early (at the first point of contact) and throughout the process;

THAT the use of family decision-making processes be available as a preventative measure to families who are not yet known to the child protection system but may benefit from the supportive family process; and,

THAT families be entitled to instigate the use of such processes if they determine that it would assist them at a particular time.

4. Coordinator "Neutrality"

THAT TDM strategies exercise a cautious approach to the issue of neutrality and ensure the design process explicitly explores who is recruited to coordinate family involvement and decision-making.

5. Sustainable Support

THAT during the TDM model development process, strategies and policies that will ensure sustainable and continued family support are explored and implemented.

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Spiritual Needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Foster Parents

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Abstract

Aboriginal children are overrepresented in foster care and more Aboriginal foster parents are needed. A randomized group of licensed First Nations, Métis and Inuit foster parents in a Canadian jurisdiction were asked about their spiritual needs to foster. In response to the question "what do you need spiritually to foster?" there were 55 unique responses that were grouped by participants into five concepts including: religion, practice, integration, sharing and contentment. These results were compared and contrasted with the existing fostering literature.

Keywords: Aboriginal; foster care; Canada; spirituality

Introduction

Aboriginal peoples are a young, growing and mobile population who face greater challenges than the non-Aboriginal population in Canada. The Aboriginal population is an average of 13 years younger than the non-Aboriginal population, has a growth rate nearly 6x greater (Statistics Canada, 2012a) with significantly more frequent residential mobility (Statistics Canada, 2012b). However, life expectancy is at least three years lower and gaps in employment rates and labor force participation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are increasing (Usalcas, 2011). The average income for Aboriginal peoples is about 2/3 of the average for non-Aboriginal people (Statistics Canada, 2012c). In addition, housing quality is dramatically different between reserve and non-reserve communities in Canada, with rates of dwellings in need of major repairs over 6x greater (Statistics Canada, 2012d).

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Aboriginal peoples, who are also referred to as First Peoples, include First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Each has a different history, contemporary understanding and approach to spirituality. Aboriginal spirituality includes a range of views of the world and ways of making meaning of the unknown or unknowable that

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stem from both Indigenous and Indigenous-European ancestries. A description of "traditions, customs, ceremonies, rituals, and everyday life" (King & Trimble, 2013, p. 565) between nations and communities is a deep and complex undertaking when one considers the range of sizes, political structures, income and social conditions between as well as within groups, reserves and settlements in different urban and rural geographies throughout Canada (Voyageur & Calliou, 2000). To illustrate this diversity with the example of language, there are presently 11 language groups representing 65 different languages (Statistics Canada, 2012e).

European settlers' arrival on Turtle Island radically changed ways of life for First Peoples. Efforts to assimilate through forced relocations and confinement to reserves changed relationships with one another and the land. The banning of traditional spiritual practices such as ceremonies, feasts and (non-Christian) prayer drove them underground. As a result, cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices were either hidden or lost. Christian influence was strong and missionaries led many efforts including the first residential schools. Initial "child welfare" efforts on reserve were mass apprehensions of Aboriginal children who were adopted by non-Aboriginal families during the "60's Scoop" (Fournier & Crey, 1997).

Aboriginal child welfare agencies first began in the 1970's. However, contemporary child welfare for Aboriginal families is largely delivered by mainstream agencies, followed by delegated models that have specific mandates and functions as well as some self-government models (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2010). There remain significant challenges due to differences between child welfare funding on and off reserve because of jurisdictional disputes between federal and provincial governments (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2012) that have left children's lives hanging in the balance (First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, 2012) and continue to result in apprehensions from the impoverished communities, termed the "Millennium Scoop" (Beaucage, 2011).

Aboriginal child welfare has a significant literature base (e.g. Harris-Short, 2012). Decentralized and culturally based services for Aboriginal children, families and communities are emerging and becoming more prominent. There is also a revitalization of spiritual practices that have been suppressed (e.g. Indigenous healing in communities to address contemporary physical and mental as well as spiritual illnesses) (Robbins & Dewar, 2011). However, Aboriginal children remain highly overrepresented in child protection caseloads and Aboriginal foster parents underrepresented. There is a need for Aboriginal foster parents and little research on their experiences. Although there are different reasons why one would foster, the purpose of the present study was to explore, from the perspectives of Aboriginal foster parents, their spiritual needs to foster.

Literature Review

While there is some research on religion and spirituality in the fostering literature, there is very little on Aboriginal foster parents and none, that we could locate, on spirituality among Aboriginal foster parents. The literature on fostering, spirituality and religion was reviewed.

Issues reported in this literature include clarity, comfort, communication and coping. Recent literature utilizing concept mapping is also reviewed.

Clarity

Religious or spiritual beliefs provided clarity to foster parents regarding their roles in the lives of foster children as well as the roles of agencies in the lives of birth and foster families. In the immediate foster family, these beliefs helped them put into perspective the challenges faced (Berney, 2009) as well as encouraging them to put efforts into the spiritual lives of foster children (Cole, 2005). Their beliefs also provided those who shared them, a common understanding of their role (Frazer & Selwyn, 2005) as well as confidence in their purpose to be caregivers to children (Jackson et al., 2010). While there was attention to the importance of faith-based organizations, both child welfare (Garland & Chamiec-Case, 2005) and non-child welfare (Singleton & Roseman, 2004), in the lives of foster families, differences in their interactions with faith-based and non faith-based agencies concerned not the types of services, but rather philosophy and approach to service delivery (Reilly & Platz, 2004).

Comfort

There were references to research on spirituality or faith associated with greater certainty and comfort among foster parents. Greater emphasis on personal faith was related to lower stress and better health (Belanger, Copeland, & Cheung, 2008) including wellness practices found in western medicine as well as other approaches (Dell, Vaughan, & Kratochvil, 2008). Foster parents with a commitment to spiritual beliefs and practices (Cox, Buehler, & Orme, 2002) were also likely to foster children who embraced spirituality (Haight, Finet, Bamba, & Helton, 2009).

Communication

Spirituality was researched as a way of making meaning within the foster family as well as with workers, staff and birth families. Foster children's spiritual beliefs (Gillum & O'Brien, 2010) helped them make meaning when faced with difficult issues, such as loss (Coholic, 2011). Foster parents used the created meaning to talk with foster children and workers (Furman, Benson, Grimwood, & Canda, 2004) in a way that was similar to how they might talk about it with their birth families (Duvdevany, Azaiza, & Rbach, 2012).

Coping

Spirituality as coping was also described. It was noted that spiritual support through services from spiritual leaders or knowledge holders (Daining & DePanfilis, 2007) was helpful. This support was found to promote resilience in foster children (Seyfried, Birgen, & Mann, 2007). In addition, it assisted foster youth (Edmond, Auslander, Elze, & Bowland, 2006) during adolescence in particular, when risk taking became more likely and potentially harmful (Ryan, Testa, & Zhai, 2008), for example, in relation to substance use (Scott, Munson, McMillen, & Ollie, 2006). The spiritual support was also especially helpful for working through grief (Rogers, 2003).

Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is a quantitative approach to the analysis of qualitative data. Although initially developed for program development and evaluation (Meagher-Stewart et al., 2012), concept mapping has been applied in human services research on a variety of topics and with a range of participants for different purposes. A recent review of concept mapping studies noted found evidence in support of the reliability and validity of the approach (Rosas & Kane, 2012), which includes participation of multiple stakeholders in the analysis of qualitative data (Leyshon & Shaw, 2012). Participants are asked to respond in phrases that may, because of length, minimize the amount of context that can be included. However, this context is constructed collectively, through the process of grouping responses by participants. Concept mapping has been used for substance abuse treatment program development with counselors (Trudeau, Ainscough, & Charity, 2012), with patients and health professionals to identify desirable Parkinson's treatment outcomes (Hammarlund, Nilsson, & Hagell, 2012), as well as children and adolescents' perceptions of self-regulation (Crăciun, Tăut, & Băban, 2012). Concept maps have been used to describe women's educational needs (Trudeau, Ainscough, Trant, Starker, & Cousineau, 2011), women's experiences seeking help from community resources after intimate partner violence (Simmons, Farrar, Frazer, & Thompson, 2011), as well as South Asian immigrant women regarding medical testing (Ahmad, Mahmood, Pietkiewicz, McDonald, & Ginsburg, 2012) and alternative school students' perceptions of needs for success (Streeter, Franklin, Kim, & Tripod, 2011). In addition, the concept mapping method has been used to identify factors associated with the return to work after absence due to depression (de Vries, Koeter, Nabitz, Hees, & Schene, 2012).

Methodology

The data collection and analysis followed Trochim's (1989) procedure including the generation of responses, organization of responses, analysis of response groupings by participants and representation of response groupings across participants. In the generation of responses, participants were asked the focal question for this study. In the organization of responses, researchers reviewed all responses and organized for clarity and to remove redundancies. In the analysis of response groupings participants were asked to individually group together all responses made by participants and these groupings were analyzed. The representation of the groupings by participants was done through the construction of a concept map.

Generation of Responses

Foster homes licensed to provide care in a central Canadian province (N=1362) were contacted in random order by researchers. Potential participants were provided with a description of the study and what their involvement would include, in accordance with the research protocol that was approved by the university ethics board. Each was asked if she or he identified as an Aboriginal person and if so was asked to respond to a series of questions, which included the question "What do you need spiritually to be a good foster parent?" At the conclusion of the interview each was asked if she or he would be willing to participate in the second phase of the study that was to group all responses together. A list of those who were interested was kept.

The 82 participants included Métis (53), First Nation (25) and Inuit (4) foster parents who together cared for 169 foster children at the time of interview. Over three quarters (63) were

female and 19 were male. They ranged in age from 28 to 76 years with an average age of 51 and had been fostering for an average of 13 years.

Organization of Responses

Each response was reviewed independently by three different authors to identify those that were redundant or unclear. If two authors identified a particular response as redundant or unclear it was discussed by all three authors and a decision was made for removal (in the case of redundant responses) or editing (in the case of unclear responses). Fifty five unique responses remained for the analysis.

Analysis of Response Groupings

Participants who had expressed interest in participating in the second phase of the study at the time of interview were contacted in random order by telephone and invited to participate. Twelve participants agreed to group responses and packages of information including instructions to group all responses into as many groups as desired and in whatever way made sense to them. To make the task easier, each response was printed on a separate slip of paper so they could be spread out and moved around into groups by participants. Nine participants returned their groupings to the researchers for analysis.

These groupings were analyzed by the Concept System (1987) software that applied multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis to the data. Multidimensional scaling used the groupings provided by participants to organize responses on a two-dimensional space with distances between them indicating the frequencies with which they were grouped together by participants. Responses further from one another were grouped together less frequently by participants than responses close to one another. A bridging index value, based on the multidimensional scaling analysis and ranging between 0.00 and 1.00, indicated the frequency with which participants grouped a particular response with only those near to it or both those near to it and far from it. The largest bridging index values (greater than 0.75) were found among responses that were grouped with other responses nearby as well as those farthest away. Smallest bridging index values (less than 0.25) were found among responses that were grouped only with other responses nearby.

Cluster analysis used the multidimensional scaling results to organize the responses into clusters. The analysis started with each response as its own cluster and at each step combined two clusters until all responses were together in one cluster.

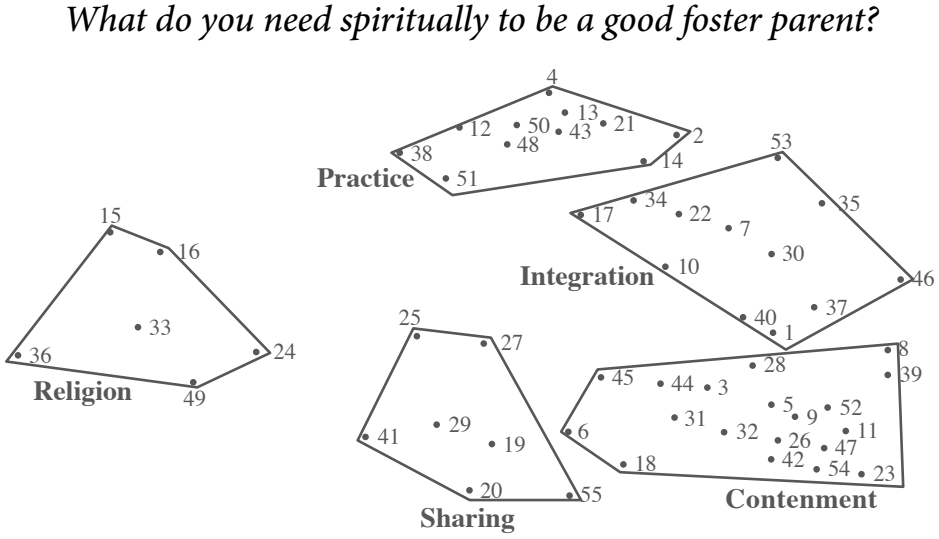
Representation of Groupings

Researchers reviewed results of the cluster analysis for 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 cluster solutions to identify the most appropriate number of clusters for the final concept map. The smallest number of clusters reviewed – 3 and 4 – appeared to overgeneralize the results and the largest cluster results – 6, 7 and 8 – appeared to make distinctions that were difficult to explain. The most interpretable was the 5-cluster solution. Labels for the concepts in the final map were applied by the researchers using the most central (i.e. lowest individual bridging indices) responses within each cluster and suggestions by participants for guidance.

Results

The concept map and responses with bridging indices are listed in Figure 1 and Table 1 respectively. Numbered responses on the map are described on the corresponding table.

Figure 1: Concept Map



Discussion

The existing foster parent literature was compared and contrasted with the responses of Aboriginal foster parents in the present study.

Integration

Responses in this concept referred to integration of beliefs and practice that together embodied a way of living their spirituality. Foster parents noted that it was important to have "a belief system" that recognized a "higher power" and being "open minded about your spiritual beliefs". They described the need to "be cultural" through "medicine wheel" teachings, combined with "faith in the Creator", "prayer", "cleansing" and "meditation" in their lives. They also referred to the need for "bravery" to "walk the Red Road" and seek the guidance of "spiritual advisors".

There was some consistency between existing fostering literature and the experiences of Aboriginal foster parents in this concept. Both sources referred to the importance of cultural beliefs and practices to give a basis for communicating about challenging life events (Gillum & O'Brien, 2010; Coholic, 2011; Furman, Benson, Grimwood, & Canda, 2004; Duvdevany, Azaiza, & Rbach, 2012). However, the participants in the present study were more specific about the culturally based spirituality they practiced, including reference to Medicine Wheel teachings, which are based on holistic worldview of interconnected parts (e.g. spiritual, mental, physical, emotional wellness) within which balance is sought (Dapice, 2006). In addition, participants specifically spoke to the importance of walking the Red Road, or an Aboriginal path through life (Thin Elk, 1993).

Table 1: Cluster Items and Bridging Values

Cluster and Response		Bridging Index
Cluster #1 - Integration		0.27
1.	a belief system	0.16
40.	prayer	0.18
37.	open minded about your spiritual beliefs	0.19
34.	faith in the Creator	0.26
10.	medicine wheel	0.26
7.	bravery	0.27
30.	be cultural	0.27
17.	higher power	0.28
35.	cleansing	0.29
53.	meditation	0.34
46.	walk the Red Road	0.34
46.	spiritual advisors	0.42
Cluster #2 - Practice		0.19
4.	attend pow-wows	0.04
43.	sage	0.04
48.	sun dance	0.04
13.	ceremonies	0.06
31.	Elders	0.06
50.	sweetgrass	0.16
2.	Aboriginal teachings	0.19
14.	children involved in their culture	0.23
12.	cedar	0.31
51.	tradition	0.43
.28	places were they can jib	0.48
Cluster #3 - Religion		0.85
24.	God at the centre of your family	0.73
16.	church	0.78
49.	Sunday school	0.80
15.	Christianity	0.83
36.	Mennonite schools	0.95
33.	make our mark while we were here	1.00
Cluster #4 - Contentment		0.19
5.	balance	0.00
52.	trust	0.00
9.	being positive	0.01
23.	forgiveness	0.01
42.	respect	0.04
32.	love	0.06
3.	acceptance	0.07
44.	See everyday as a fresh day	0.07
11.	caring	0.07
26.	grounded	0.10
47.	stability	0.10
28.	Have it in your heart	0.12
31.	Live by your values	0.16
54.	Your own peace	0.19
18.	Connection	0.21
6.	Be at peace	0.22
9.	Being positive	0.22
45.	See the good in things	0.24
8.	Be good within yourself	0.26
Cluster #5 - Sharing		0.44
19.	Desire to give back	0.32
27.	Guidance	0.33
55.	Yourself	0.42
29.	Help out	0.45
20.	Do the right thing	0.45
25.	Grateful to have the opportunity to help	0.50
41.	Recognition that everything has life	0.58

Practice

Participants described a range of ways of practicing their spirituality. They spoke about the need to have "children involved in their culture" and practiced in "Aboriginal teachings" based on "tradition". They described the importance of traditional medicines, including "sage", "sweetgrass" and "cedar", as well as "ceremonies" such as the "sun dance". In addition, participants described the importance of "Elders" in their spiritual practice, and opportunities to "attend pow-wows" as well as "places where they can jig".

The experiences described by Aboriginal foster parents in this concept were not apparent in the fostering literature. Participants identified several important parts of their spiritual practice, including the place of ceremonies and medicines, as well as the role of Elders as leaders and teachers (Waldram, Herring, & Young, 2006). There was also reference to a Métis dance, known as the Red River Jig, a blend of European and Aboriginal influence, with its own style and history (Lukens, 1997).

Religion

In addition to traditional Aboriginal spirituality, there were responses concerning the role of European-introduced religion. Participants described the place of "Christianity", and having "God at the centre of your family". The importance of attending "Sunday school" at "church", as well as faith-based schools, such as "Mennonite schools" were also stressed. Participants described the need to have an influence on foster children and "make our mark while we were here" in their lives.

References in the fostering literature concerning religion and faith-based services for families were very similar to the responses in this concept. Both foster parents in the present study and existing literature referred to Christian institutions and agencies (Garland & Chamiec-Case, 2005; Singleton & Roseman, 2004; Reilly & Platz, 2004). There was also an emphasis on teaching the foster children their beliefs (Haight, Finet, Bamba, & Helton, 2009) and having expectations in line with religious understandings held by foster parents (Cox, Buehler, & Orme, 2002) in order to have an impact on the children who would otherwise be at risk for significant problems (Seyfried, Birgen, & Mann, 2007; Edmond, Auslander, Elze, & Bowland, 2006; Ryan, Testa, & Zhai, 2008; Scott, Munson, McMillen, & Ollie, 2006; Rogers, 2003).

Contentment

Responses centered on spiritual values and beliefs around "being positive" and to "be at peace". Foster parents described the importance to "have it in your heart", the characteristics of "trust" and "stability", "respect" and "caring" as well as "love" and "forgiveness". It was important to "see the good in things" and to "be good within yourself" to allow one to "live by your values" and "see everyday as a fresh day". They referred to the benefit of being "grounded" and having "your own peace". This was achieved through "connection" and "balance" as well as "acceptance".

There was some similarity between this concept and the existing literature. Previous fostering research noted reduced stress, improved happiness and health associated with spiritual clarity and practice (Belanger, Copeland, & Cheung, 2008; Dell, Vaughan, & Kratochvil, 2008). However, Aboriginal foster parents described these as central (i.e. to have it in your heart) and integrated (i.e. having your own peace) than previous research which has tended to compartmentalize these features as personality characteristics.

Sharing

Participants identified, through responses in this concept, the need to share "yourself" with other families. Foster parents noted that they were "grateful to have the opportunity to help" and "do the right thing". They were motivated to "help out" by a "desire to give back" through "guidance" to children and families. The importance of sharing was extended beyond other children, to families and communities through a spiritual "recognition that everything has life".

There were similarities between the concept of sharing and results from previous studies with foster parents. There is considerable evidence in the literature about the faith-based motives of foster parents to help others (Cole, 2005; Frazer & Selwyn, 2005; Jackson et al., 2010) and to use that knowledge to keep perspective when challenges arise in the care of children in their home (Berney, 2009). However, Aboriginal foster parents in the present study did it not just as a moral

imperative, but more deeply, based out of a recognition of the interconnectedness of all things and people and the necessity to care for one another for all to benefit.

Conclusion

There were many similarities between the experiences of participants in this study and the available literature. The results suggest that the ways spirituality have been described in the fostering research overlap with experiences of Aboriginal foster parents in several important ways. The role of cultural practices – including beliefs, values and ways of communicating about them and living them daily – are needed by foster parents to care for foster children, and to foster parents themselves, for their personal health and wellness as well as success in fostering.

Focusing more specifically on the role of religion, previous studies of foster parents who identified with a Christian worldview and practices shared the desire to have those embodied in institutions and churches as well as codified into practices that agencies and foster parents would employ with foster children. A significant goal for teaching children these practices was to prevent them from experiencing anticipated challenges in life. In addition, these Christian religious beliefs and practices were seen to provide foster children with a better life if they adopted those ways. Foster parents were motivated to share their religion with the children they fostered.

Where there was a significant departure from the existing fostering literature by the foster parents in the current study resulting from the absense of culturally specific Aboriginal or Native American or Indigenous "spiritual" needs in the literature. Foster parents in the present study described more specific ways their spirituality was understood and lived, based on traditional Indigenous ways of being. These traditional ways included participation in ceremonies and working closely with Elders who had Aboriginal cultural knowledge. Participants also described the centrality of spirituality as fundamental to all life, and that the Red Road could be difficult to follow when they experiencd pressure to follow a non-Indigenous path. Underneath the traditional ways expressed by Aboriginal foster parents, there was a depth of respect for all life and all lives and understanding that their place was to give of themselves because that was how it is supposed to be.

While it seems that spirituality is important to fostering, not only from the perspectives of foster parents in the existing literature but from the Aboriginal foster parents in the present study, the ways it is understood and expressed may range considerably. Given the colonial history with the importation of Christianity and ties to residential schooling and suppression of traditional Indigenous practices, there would be reason for it to be rejected, as is has been among many Aboriginal peoples in Canada. However, there is also evidence from the present study of a diversity of experience and understanding of spirituality that includes Christian religion, knowledge and practices. There is support from the findings herein to suggest that both traditional Indigenous and Western Christian ways are understood and practiced among Aboriginal foster parents. It would seem important to understand the ways these worldviews are distinct and blended in the lives of Aboriginal communities, foster parents and foster children so that appropriate policy and practices can take place.

Limitations

Although the sample was random, imperfect response rate for participation in the interviews and again at the sorting task make it difficult to generalize these spiritual needs to First Nations,

Métis and Inuit peoples. We have however, attempted to clarify spiritual practices more commonly held by First Nations, Métis and Inuit as much as possible throughout.

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Beyond Church and State: Rethinking Who Knew What When About Residential Schooling in Canada

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Abstract

This study moves beyond evidence left behind by church and state officials to ask who knew what when about residential schooling in Canada. While our historical knowledge about residential schooling and the people involved in and affected by it has grown in recent years, scholars have characteristically focused on official church and state agents. Other non-Aboriginal individuals who lived in or spent some time in Aboriginal communities, and who are not typically implicated in residential schooling, have consequently been overlooked as a source of knowledge about the truth of residential schooling. By broadening our examination of the various people who knew about residential schooling, by considering what they knew, and by coming to terms with the truth that many of them did little or nothing to stop the abuse they witnessed, this study suggests that we can more fully understand ourselves and our history, and we can be more properly prepared to move forward in a process of reconciliation and healing.

Key words: Residential schools; children; abuse; residential school witnesses; bystanders; knowledge; truth; reconciliation; healing

Introduction

An increased effort has emerged in recent years that is aimed at understanding and coming to terms with the experience of residential schooling in Canada's history. Inspired by student memoirs that began to appear in the 1960s, scholars in Canada have attempted to address the experience of Aboriginal children and the painful memory, both individual and collective, of residential schooling. A proliferation of scholarship since the 1960s has challenged Canadians to rethink the intentions of government and church officials in the schooling of Aboriginal children, and the impact that it had on the lives and communities of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

While our historical knowledge about residential schooling and the people involved in it has grown, scholars have typically used official church and state records as their evidence in order to uncover the primary people implicated in residential schooling, while other agents who lived in or spent some time in Aboriginal communities, and who are not normally associated with residential schooling, have been characteristically overlooked. In contrast, the present study considers the role of non-state and non-church

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agents, such as anthropologists, archaeologists, and social workers, through both the historical record and contemporary reflections on their past work, which offer telling histories regarding their experiences and how they remember residential schooling.

We can learn more about who knew what when about residential schooling by broadening our scope of investigation into the agents not typically associated with residential schooling. By moving our attention away from the "official" agents involved in residential schooling and toward these individuals, we can open new territory into studies on the impact of residential schooling through the perspective of new witnesses. Anthropologist Anthony Fisher (1998) speaks candidly about his field research on the Blood Indian Reserve in Alberta in the 1960s, and admits to being aware about the abuse and horror of residential schooling. Yet, "aside from a few complaints to the Indian Agent," he states, "I did nothing" (p. 93). Fisher attempts to make sense of his failure to do something, and expresses shame about his inaction. He rightfully points out that he was not alone: "Many of us studied residential schools, studied their pupils psychologically, compiled life histories that included residential school episodes, visited residential schools, speculated about acculturation and the schools, and did nothing" (p. 93). Coming to terms with what his generation of researchers in aboriginal communities knew about what was going on, and how little they did about it, was something, he suggests, that simply has to be done. Fisher's words also suggest that evidence left behind by non-church and non-state agents in Aboriginal Communities may indeed be able to help us expand our knowledge about the history of residential schooling in Canada.

This study examines the writings of academic researchers and professionals, such as social workers, whose work brought them into close contact with Aboriginal children, families, and communities throughout the twentieth century. An analysis of their published writing reveals that many of these non-church and non-state agents were aware of the psychological and social harm inflicted upon Aboriginal peoples, and in some cases their writing reveals first-hand knowledge about the abuse of Aboriginal children in residential schools. In addition to published material, this study examines unpublished archival writing from anthropologists, archaeologists, and other academic researchers who did fieldwork in and among Aboriginal communities. At times Aboriginal peoples themselves were the subjects of that research, and at other times they were not. In both cases, however, those doing work and living in Aboriginal communities were given access, both directly and indirectly, to the inside world of those community members' lives. What did they witness? To what extent were they aware of the horrors of residential schooling? Did they become aware of other types of horrors and abuses? In what ways can they broaden our knowledge about the history of residential schooling and the impact of Euro-Canadian educational policies on Aboriginal peoples?

The Writing of the History of Residential Schooling: A Brief Review

Eric Taylor Woods (2012) identifies the 1972 policy paper Indian Control of Indian Education by the National Indian Brotherhood as the turning point in Aboriginal education in Canada. Prior to that, government involvement in the education of Aboriginals was extremely paternalistic, with public policy in Canada directed toward the assimilation and "civilizing" of Aboriginal peoples into a perceived mainstream Euro-Canadian society (Canada, 1996). By extension, scholarship on residential schooling was also extremely paternalistic in tone, dominated by missionary literature that emphasized the noble struggle of missionaries to bring "civilization" and Christianity to Aboriginals (Woods, 2012).

The shift in public policy in the 1970s was reflective of a shift in thinking at the time among Euro-Canadian scholars regarding residential schooling. Increasingly, studies of residential schooling began to consider the perspective of Aboriginal peoples themselves while questioning the intentions of residential school advocates. Maurice Lewis (1966), Jacqueline Gresko (1970, 1975), and John Chalmer (1972) were among the first to shed light on the questionable politics of residential schooling and the appalling environment of the schools, both physical and emotional, that led to psychological problems among Aboriginal children later in life. Studies by Sylvia Dayton (1976), Eric Porter (1981), Sally Weaver (1981), Kenneth Coates (1984), and Brian Titley (1986), along with the seminal collection edited by Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert, and Don McGaskill (1986, 1987), built upon these studies in their consideration of church and state involvement in residential schooling and connected the intentions of church and state officials involved in residential schooling with an assimilationist mentality that permeated Canadian culture from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries.

In the 1990s, studies on residential schooling began to move away from the intentions and designs of policy makers and toward an investigation of how the schools actually worked. Thorough and meticulous historical research by James Miller (1987, 1992, 1996, 2000) demonstrated the negative impact of residential schooling on Aboriginal children and the ways in which they and their communities were often helpless victims in rivalries among churches that were ultimately concerned and driven by their own interests. John Milloy (1996, 1999) added further to the historiography by focusing on residential school administrators, arguing that while they were aware of the problems with residential schooling, they purposefully remained ignorant and neglectful.

Over the last decade, research on residential schooling has primarily been conducted in disciplines other than history, such as psychology, health, and social work (Woods, 2012). The historical research today is often produced by government and government-supported agencies. This should not, however, be considered a weakness of the field but rather a strength in the type and quality of research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s. Historians set in motion important government-funded studies into residential schooling. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) was a watershed that forced the federal government to acknowledge its involvement in the attempted assimilation of Aboriginal peoples. The formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2008 has increased efforts to broaden our understanding of the legacy and impact of residential schooling in Canada. Historians have been instrumental in opening the doors into investigations about residential school advocates and participants, and the consequences of their actions.

While scholarship on residential schooling has provided deep insight into the intentions of residential schooling and the impact on pupils and their families, it has nevertheless been overwhelmingly focused on official records left behind by church and state agents. Some notable exceptions are Celia Haig-Brown (1988), Linda Bull (1991), Rosalyn Ing (1991), and Robert Regnier (1995), who go beyond the documentary evidence and explore the student experience through interviews and conversations that provide a striking oral history of abuse, neglect, and pain. The focus, however, remains on those involved and implicated within residential schools. Few studies have gone beyond official records to consider what knowledge about residential schooling in Canada existed among those not directly working in or within the residential school paradigm. That is, a greater number of witnesses to residential schooling exist than has yet been considered. What can evidence from those not involved in residential schooling, yet fully aware of

what was happening, add to our historical understanding of this painful legacy and phenomenon in Canadian history?

Toward a Broader Understanding of Who Knew What When

The evidence left behind by non-church and non-state agents who witnessed the events surrounding residential schooling in Canada offers to broaden our historical understanding. We can and should begin to assess the variety of histories that emerged through the eyes of a greater number of witnesses than are usually recognized in the writing of residential school history. Anthropologists, archaeologists, doctors, nurses, social workers, and a greater variety and number of individuals than we are used to considering witnessed the horror of residential schooling. What exactly did these people know, or not know? And what did they do, or not do?

In certain ways, these questions raise similar concerns about witnesses of the Holocaust in Europe during the Second World War. Witnesses of the Holocaust have been characterized as "bystanders," and their reluctance to oppose the activities of the Nazi regime have been linked to the "bystander effect" or "Genovese syndrome" demonstrated by John Darley and Bibb Latané following the murder of Kitty Genovese of New York City in 1964 (Henry, 1984; Hilberg, 1992; Barnett, 1999; Bar-on, 2001). Darly and Latané (1968) suggest a social psychological phenomenon in which individuals are less likely to offer help to victims in situations when other people are present. Like witnesses of Genovese's violent murder among a number of witnesses in New York City, witnesses of the Holocaust either remained unaware of victimization or ignored it as a result of being fearful of the consequences. They chose, consciously or unconsciously, to go on with their daily lives in the hope, perhaps, that others were doing something.

Can we identify "bystanders" in the history of residential schooling in Canada? Does the bystander effect explain the longevity of residential schooling? Did the inaction of individuals living among, working with, and sharing lives with Aboriginal families in Canada throughout the twentieth century perpetuate a policy of assimilation and acculturation that Canadians today find challenging to make sense of? How do we come to grips with the fact that people were aware of the horror of residential schooling, but did nothing? Were they in agreement with what they saw? Did what they see bother them? Did they make the conscious decision to look away? Or were they paralyzed with fear of the consequences of what speaking up to church and state would entail? We must begin to look outside of church and state evidence to begin addressing these questions.

Certain historical scholars in Canada have suggested that residential schooling may indeed be considered Canada's Holocaust (Furniss 1992; Grant, 1996; Annett, 2000; Chrisjohn, Young, and Maraun, 2006). Dean Neu (2000) and Neu and Richard Therrien (2003) have even compared administrators in the Canadian government with administrators in Nazi Germany. Scott Trevithick (1998) and Miller (2000), however, suggest that such a comparison should be made with caution. They note that much of the scholarship that has compared residential schooling to the Holocaust or to cultural genocide has tended to be based less on evidence than on opinion, and that the evidence itself should not be read through a contemporary perspective but rather through its proper historical context (Woods, 2012).

In all of the writing on residential schooling in Canada, the question of who knew what when remains, and it challenges us to look beyond the familiar sources. The following sections will

attempt to provide some answers to this question by considering the actions and inactions of some of the non-church and non-state agents who witnessed residential schooling in Canada. This study employs the bystander theory in a broad sense, and considers not only those individuals who witnessed physical violence directly but also those who knew that the residential schooling of Aboriginal children was inflicting various forms of harm – physical, psychological, and social – and yet did nothing about it. The purpose of this study, however, is not to judge such individuals but rather to open dialogue about our history so that we can begin to understand what non-church and non-state agents knew about residential schooling. In doing so, it aims to suggest that a far greater array of agents should take responsibility for the history of residential schooling in Canada.

Non-Church and Non-State Agents among Aboriginal Communities, 1920-1980

As early as the 1920s, Diamond Jenness, Canada's leading anthropologist and scholar of the North for the first half of the twentieth century, promoted the building of industrial schools for Inuit children. While there is no documentary evidence suggesting that Jenness witnessed residential schooling first-hand, the evidence does suggest that Jenness was aware of missionary education, disapproved of it, and was involved in an attempt to restructure education for Inuit children in the 1920s and 1930s. Amidst the growth and expansion of residential schooling, Jenness offered an alternative educational model. Nevertheless, his voice became silent by the 1940s and, despite his proposals, residential schooling continued to cement its place in the lives of Aboriginal children and families.

Jenness, the Chief of Anthropology at the National Museum of Canada, had served in the Canadian Arctic Expedition in the early twentieth century, and was regarded in the Euro-Canadian community as the leading authority on Inuit (or, Eskimo, the term used at the time) culture and society. Jenness has been criticized for having a theoretical approach to Anthropology couched in an evolutionary framework at least a generation old at the time (Hancock, 2002). Even though he was part of an establishment that held a paternalistic attitude toward the Inuit, Jenness also held some surprisingly progressive views concerning the education of Aboriginal peoples in the North. In the autumn of 1925, he sent a memorandum to Duncan C. Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, outlining an educational plan he saw as essential for the survival of the Inuit. "Conditions in the Arctic," he warned, "are changing rapidly. Within the last ten years fur traders and police have extended to every inhabited corner, and although little except furs are now exported, other developments, such as mining, may follow in the not distant future. The Eskimos, the only natives in the region, are changing also…. But with no knowledge of the outside world, with no education or training except what they can acquire from a rare missionary, or from association with traders and police, they are ill-adapted to meet the changed conditions, to assist in the development of their country, or to aid in its exploration and exploitation" (Jenness, 1925).

Jenness saw a serious flaw with the education provided by missionaries who he felt did not provide any useful or practical training. He advocated a different approach altogether, one that favoured training for, as he stated "skilled labour for any industry that may one day arise … their training should commence immediately, to enable them to breast the changed economic conditions and inaugurate a new and more prosperous era." In fact, he was very clear about his

opposition to the type of schooling offered by the missionaries. His own scheme for the schooling of Inuit centred on three principles:

1. That a primary school education would be of little benefit to the Eskimos in their present economic condition. Many can already read and write in their own language, and the knowledge is spreading; many also have a smattering of English. This is sufficient for their present needs.

2. That a limited vocational training which would enable the Eskimos to run, or assist in running, some of the services essential in the far north (e.g. as skippers, pilots, engineers of motor boats) would greatly facilitate the development of the Arctic and reduce the cost of administration. [Clearly his suggestion here would benefit the Euro-Canadian government more than the Inuit, but nevertheless he saw some form of cooperation that was not typical of Euro-Canadian educational values at the time.]

3. That vocational training, wherever possible, should be given in the north, partly to reduce the expense and to avoid all danger of the Eskimos contracting tuberculosis and other diseases in southern cities, but mainly, that the natives might be training in their own environment by instructors familiar with its needs (Jenness, 1925).

His views are remarkable when we consider that he was advocating this type of schooling in 1925. The idea of educating Inuit not only by instructors familiar with their needs, but more importantly at home, in their own communities, was a major point of departure from residential school philosophy.

What did the Department of Indian Affairs do with this report? Through the historical record, we can see that Scott forwarded it to Charles Camsell, Deputy Minister in the Department of Mines, but then there is no more trace of it. Did they take it seriously? We cannot really say, but it may be reasonable to conclude that they did not, because in 1934, Jenness would try again, this time writing to D.L. McKean of the Council of the Northwest Territories with a detailed "Scheme" for practical and industrial schooling in the North. "The present condition of the Canadian Eskimo," he opened his report, "is extremely depressing to any one familiar with the natives in Greenland and Alaska." Citing the Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen, he went so far as to proclaim "that the condition of the Canadian Eskimo is a disgrace to a civilized country" (Jenness, 1934).

Clearly, Jenness wanted, and tried, to have something done. He knew that the condition of Aboriginals in the North as a result of Euro-Canadian involvement was "a disgrace," and he was not alone. Peter Heinbecker (1934) of the School of Medicine at Washington University in St. Louis wrote to H. E. Hume, of the Department of the Interior. His letter suggests that Jenness was not the only academic aware of the ill-effect that the Euro-Canadian presence in the North was having. Heinbecker was condescending by contemporary standards, to be sure, referring to the traditional "Eskimo" way of life as "primitive," and he was certainly not an opponent of Euro-Canadian involvement in the North. Still, he was concerned that without some sort of support from the Canadian government "most of the natives...would starve to death or move away." The "Eskimo" way of life had been altered forever as a result of the emergence of trading posts and the introduction of European weaponry in the North, he suggested. And while it was "not possible to put the clock back," something had to be done to protect Aboriginals in the North. "The price," otherwise, "would be their extinction" (Heinbecker, 1934).

What do we make of these scholars' concerns? Clearly, these scholars did not support a policy of assimilation and acculturation. Did the Canadian government hear Jenness' and other researchers' warnings? Did they take the issue seriously? The history of residential schooling would suggest not. Rather, the Canadian government gave more authority, and funding, to the missionary schools, the Indian Agents, and the RCMP. The idea of industrial practical schooling seems to have died with the end of Jenness' memoranda after the 1930s. Why was Jenness ignored? Did he carry little political weight? Was the Great Depression and WWII just too much of a concern for the government of the time? That is, did the issue of properly addressing Inuit concerns in the North carry little political weight?

A more important question, perhaps, is why did Jenness stop his efforts there? He continued to do research about, and at times speak on behalf of, the Inuit in his papers and books, but official complaints and correspondence to the state waned. Was he aware of the unresponsiveness of the Canadian government, and so gave up? Or did he withdraw, as so many bystanders have throughout history, in the hope that somebody else would do something? It would certainly be unfair to characterize Jenness as a bystander. Although he was aware of, and spoke out against, missionary schools, there is no evidence to suggest that he was aware of the physical abuse and trauma inflicted by certain missionaries. Moreover, Jenness was not a bystander as he clearly tried to offer a model based on an educational philosophy that would have ended residential schooling altogether. Although his efforts to promote his educational scheme ended by the 1940s, he continued to do research in the North. Perhaps he hoped, as many academics do, that his research and writing could effect change.

There were of course many other researchers and workers in Aboriginal communities. Did they do nothing? In 1947, the Canadian Association of Social Workers and the Canadian Welfare Council added to the dialogue in a Joint Submission to the Senate Common Committee on Indian Affairs (CASW and CWC, 1947). Arrangements for the welfare of Aboriginals they insisted, fell short of adequacy in large part by the role played in education and child welfare by residential schools (p. 333). Residential schools, they suggested, were harming Aboriginal children and their families in ways that impacted both their psychological and social well-being. "This institutional policy is out of line with newer thinking respecting community life. We are convinced that the best interests of Indian children and families are not served by the present system. The lack of what Canadian communities have come to recognize as the moral partnership of home and school in child care and training not only hampers the social adjustment of the child, but is a serious deprivation for the parents" (p. 333). The reliance on residential schooling for the education of Aboriginal children, they went on to say, eliminated the possibility of parent education and of developing recreational and community activities at home. The detrimental impact of residential schooling, these witnesses suggested as early as 1947, was being felt by entire communities. In the end, the report did not recommend that residential schools be abolished, but rather that they did indeed "have their place" (p. 334). Again, despite knowledge of the overall harm, nothing was done. They, and other social workers in the 1950s, in fact, made calls for further intervention which would result in the influx of additional non-church and non-state agents in Aboriginal communities in the post-war era (Martins and Bartlett, 1951; Payne, 1956).

Richard J. Preston wrote "Facing New Tasks: Cree and Ojibwa children's adaptation to residential schools," for the National Museum of Canada in 1968. Preston was, at the time, a contract Ethnologist for The National Museum of Canada and Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Franklin and Marshall College. It is a striking document not so much because of its content, but because of its commissioning. The commissioning of this study should raise questions concerning

why the national museum, a house of material culture, was interested in the psychological impact of residential schooling on children. Did years of fieldwork and first-hand knowledge of what was going on by many of the anthropologists and archaeologists and other museum workers force the people of the national museum to take some sort of action? Did such researchers, consciously or unconsciously, refuse to become bystanders?

In the report itself, Preston (1968) makes no judgements, but does emphasize that the traditional world view of the children he was studying was changing rapidly. The experience of the child in a residential school, he stated, is made truly complex when we consider that he or she "has only partly internalized the traditional world view" (p. 11) before being sent to school at a very young age. The "stress and strain of such rapid assimilation into the Euroamerican milieu," he pointed out, resulted in a number of development concerns such as "the development of a protective shield of apparent impersonality," withdrawal, resistance, and so on (p. 11).

The findings by a Euro-Canadian of the "stress and strain" of residential schooling and its negative psychological impact on both the children and its communities is striking when we consider that it was written in the 1960s, and yet residential schools continued in operation in Canada for roughly two more decades. Was this report also ignored? Why was the report not more widely distributed and its findings disseminated in the 1960s, when it was written?

Preston (2008) has subsequently written about his other fieldwork collecting Cree narratives. "When collecting Cree stories in the 1960s," he states metaphorically, "I was committing the neo-colonialist sin of 'butterfly collecting,' that is, going to the natives, collecting specimens of living culture, symbolically asphyxiating them and pinning them to a blotter in a museum case" (p. 201). Although not addressing the issue of residential schools, he does allude, like Fisher, to having acted as an outsider. Nevertheless, Preston cautions against judgmental venting, placing his own work as an applied anthropologist, perhaps rightly, within a historical context that cannot be understood properly through a contemporary perspective.

There are others, however, who suggest that we should indeed judge our actions, or inactions, through new understandings of the legacy we have created by doing nothing. Adje van de Sande and Karen Schwartz (2011) are two social workers who have recently suggested that social workers must examine the "Western positivist paradigm," as they call it, in the history of social work practice with Aboriginal peoples, and must come to terms as a profession with social workers' roles in Aboriginal communities (p. 76). Historically, the active participation of social workers, who were almost exclusively Euro-Canadians with little or no knowledge of Aboriginal culture, was geared toward supporting government policy that "aimed to assimilate Aboriginal people into western culture as quickly as could be managed" (p. 77). Social workers participated in a broad program of assimilation that resulted in loss and devastation among Aboriginal families and communities. "We now acknowledge this as wrong," the authors state (p. 77). Van de Sande and Schwartz suggest that recognizing the damage done by social workers who entered into Aboriginal communities, applied white standards, and, too often, apprehended children and placed them into foster or adoptive homes with "white" families, is the first step toward healing. "We recognize the damage done by such initiatives as the 'sixties scoop,' when thousands of Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families by 'white' social workers and placed in non-aboriginal foster and adoptive homes far from their communities" (p. 77). Lessons can be learned from this history, they argue, that can lead to improvements in practice that can ultimately lead to support the self-determination of Aboriginal people (p. 78).

Raven Sinclair (2004), refers to social work's "colonial influence" in Aboriginal communities, going so far as to suggest that "the colonialistic actions and attitudes [of the social workers] towards Aboriginal people have been deliberate and calculated; designed to displace and distance the people from their land and resources. The attempted obliteration of Aboriginal culture was one strategy towards achieving that end" (p. 50). Social workers, she suggests, played a part in that attempt. Citing the example of the Spellumcheen Band in British Columbia, social workers, she points out, removed 150 children from their families between 1950 and 1977 without any notice to them or their bands. Moreover, when Aboriginal families searched for their children they were lied to and deliberately misled by social workers. Sinclair's message to social workers is one that should probably be considered by everyone who was involved in, witnessed, or otherwise knew about residential schooling: in order to move forward, we must be aware of the historical elements that continue to be carried intergenerationally.

Conclusion

In a report presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2011 by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Marcel Eugene-LeBeuf, the author of the report, admits that police officers routinely acted on behalf of the federal government to track down children who had run away from residential schools; however, LeBeuf argues that they generally were not aware of the abuse. In the end, the report suggests that the children themselves should carry some of the blame, because they would rarely denounce the abuse they experienced. The system, according to LeBeuf, prevented outsiders from knowing about the abuse that occurred. "Indian Residential Schools were," the report concludes, "essentially a closed system between the Department of Indian Affairs, the churches and school administrator" (p. 2). Nevertheless, even this report provides evidence from an anonymous RCMP officer who had refused to bring children back to the schools because, as the officer states, "I think it was not right...there were a lot of parents that were hesitant to send their children to school because of abuse. I was aware of what was going on in the school because I conducted an investigation…in 1959 [ellipses in the original]" (p. 143). Combined with the above evidence from the variety of non-church and non-state agents who became witnesses themselves, we can reasonably conclude that the residential school system was not closed, and that the reality of life in the residential schools was not hidden.

In answering who knew what when, a central question of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission today, it is clear that many individuals knew something was wrong, and they knew it much earlier than we have previously supposed. Many are willing to admit it, and they encourage others to make sense of it. "For my own part," Fisher writes, "I visited both of the residential schools on the Blood Indian Reserve in Alberta in 1962. I was shocked by the violence perpetrated by the school's teachers and administrators. All of my neighbors on the Reserve had attended residential schools and many told me horrible anecdotes from school life. Although my thesis research was a study of young Blood Indians, I avoided the residential schools and school officials as much as possible" (Fisher, 1998, p. 93).

Fisher knew what was happening, yet did nothing. What does the fact that so many people knew what was happening, were immersed in it, were driven to write about the injustice and abuse, reflected on the pain and sadness of it all, yet ultimately did nothing, could do nothing, or were blatantly ignored, tell us about ourselves and our history? Could they have done more? Should they have done more? Did they hope that somebody else was doing something to help Aboriginal children? It is perhaps time to reflect upon the variety of individuals that may have known or

not known what was going on; this means looking at the intentions and actions of not only church and state agents, but everyone – the academic community, researchers, anthropologists, archaeologists, social workers, nurses, doctors – even the airplane and helicopter pilots who flew agents into, and children out of, their communities – all of those who found themselves within the world of residential schooling and became aware of the conditions surrounding the schools and the students. If we do as such, can we come to better terms with what we knew about residential schooling and what we did not do about it, far beyond the perspective of the church and state?

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REDressing Invisibility and Marking Violence Against Indigenous Women in the Americas Through Art, Activism and Advocacy

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Abstract

The incidence of crimes against Indigenous women in the Americas has a long history in the making, but in remembering this history now, in redressing the invisible violence, in rendering the invisible visible, is how we as community can put a stop to the atrocities. Two Indigenous women academics from north and south America explore the intersections between art, activism and advocacy in this article on missing, raped and murdered Indigenous women in Mexico, Guatemala and Canada. It asks questions and provides examples about how artists, activists and advocates can redress the invisibility of the violence against Indigenous women, violations of their human rights and potentially repair loss.

Keywords: *Aboriginal women, missing women, violence, political art, art and activism, advocacy*

Introduction

We are two Indigenous women academics living and working on the traditional unceded, ancestral territory of the Musqueam Coast Salish Nation at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, British Columbia (BC). Shelly is a citizen of the Saulteaux Nation and has Norwegian ancestry. She is a social work academic and activist currently researching the efficacy of First Nations Courts in Canada, the abysmal education provided to urban First Nations children in Canada´s child protection systems, and researching what it means to Indigenize the international academy. Alessandra is a Brazilian artist, activist and scholar of mixed heritage (Carijó of the Guarani Nation, African and European). She is interested in the role of artists and intellectuals in society; in the intersections between art and activism; and in the representation and self-representation of Indigenous peoples. She is currently working on research on displacements and wandering.

This article developed because of our shared examinations into the factors that make the Americas unsafe for Indigenous women, and our determination as scholars and activists to work with artists to advocate for change. This article provides examples of activists, artists and intellectuals who speak up and act up on behalf of murdered and disappeared Indigenous women of the America's, specifically Mexico, Guatemala

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and Canada. It asks "Who speaks for the voiceless?" and "What is the role of art, activism and advocacy for redress and the reparation of loss of so many Indigenous women?"

Who Speaks for the Voiceless?

While marking violence against Indigenous women in the Americas many trajectories converged, not just the personal histories of two scholars working at UBC. It includes our Indigenous understandings of the hemispheric history of the Americas, north to south, including a history of colonization and neo-colonization, and subsequent history of violence. However it also marks the convergence of our healing, resistance to the violence against Indigenous peoples, and our determination to remember the thousands of Indigenous women that are silenced by their death. We asked each other "How do we accomplish the impossible? How do we redress or repair such great loss"?

Art and Activism

How does the activist, artist and the intellectual address violence and violations of human rights? How does one write about a reality so grim? How do we address real loss and grieve in communities that have been historically oppressed? Those are some of the questions that come to mind when pondering the historic, social, legal, political and economic conditions that led to our collaboration.

We wonder if art still offers spaces for critique and public intervention. As part of the public sphere, is art still a political tool of challenge, contestation, and negotiation? How does the public space offer a dialogue about history? What are the cultural tactics artists apply for questioning violence? What are the actual possibilities of protest and activism, given the constraints of a reality imbued with the legacy of colonization, and with the violence that arises from such legacies? And what is the position of art amidst complicity?

Our point of departure is the notion that art, as part of a public sphere, offers a forum for discussion of social problems. Artists, whether openly engaged in the discussion of social issues or not, willingly or inadvertently participate in a public debate on the ramifications and consequences of history. Of course, there are questions surrounding the production, dissemination and reception of art, including the social and material conditions that frame such cycles of cultural production. Nevertheless, one may claim that art that addresses social issues is a denunciation of power imbalances and injustices, or at least an invitation to question inequalities. A detailed discussion of the ethics of artistic practice is beyond the scope of this article, but in general this essay addresses questions pertaining to how artists negotiate violations of human rights.

Artists who are activists value an artistic practice that is related to and / or is imbued with a social practice, in fact, often the distinction may seem imperceptible. Artists/ activists do not seek to reproduce the social dynamics in society, but to question social injustices and atrocities, and ultimately they seek to promote human rights.

There is an ongoing debate in the art world discussing what actually entails political or socially engaged art, and of what are the actual possibilities of art that promotes real social and policy changes. Obviously the question of the actual social impact of art is crucial for those interested in positive change, but it is also important to consider that intersections of art and activism have a social impact over time. Once an artist acknowledges social responsibility, said artist can already

engage with the public, therefore resisting the pervasive complicity that plagues our social reality. To put it simply, we are all complicitous until we do something about it; and creating art that begs for a public discussion of important social issues is a palpable act of social action. In the case in point here, the mostly ignored murders of Aboriginal women are at stake, and are part of a community, artistic, and scholarly discussion.

A History of Invisibility

Recent scholarship has addressed the fact that all over the world women have been victims of violence in a large scale (during war time and peace time), including rape, torture and murder (recent examples in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) (Fregoso & Bejarano, 2010). Narrowing it down to a hemispheric context, this article will focus on crimes against women in the Americas. One of our goals is to establish points of contact between different Indigenous communities that suffer similar histories of oppression and violence. In this vein, it is possible to create what Macarena Gómez-Barris (2012) has called a hemispheric interconnectivity and solidarity that disarticulates the United States hegemony that has long defined the Americas. The history of crimes against women that go on in the Americas with impunity is symptomatic of a legislative blind spot, of a lack of social action, and of a deliberate choice from the part of the authorities to ignore reality. The fact that women are being murdered across the Americas is perhaps to some enough reason to be indifferent, but the fact that Indigenous women are being murdered across the Americas is even more reason to ignore the facts, to pretend the Indigenous women are invisible. The denial of investigation and persecution in the cases in question is proof that the justice system privileges a segment of society, and Indigenous women are certainly at the bottom of the social stratification. The impunity continues the legacy of colonization, as part of "the dominant and subordinate dynamic at the heart of the modern/colonial divide" (Gómez-Barris, 2012, p.122).

The term feminicide refers to the murder of women and appears in a small but significant scholarship. In the particular case of Latin America, the use of rape and murder of women has been systemic and persistent for great part of the 20th century, and continuing into the 21st century, including cases in El Salvador, Peru, Haiti, Honduras, Colombia and Guatemala (Fregoso, 2010). Two particular examples of murders of women that have reached epidemic proportions take place in Mexico and Guatemala. Of course the horrible phenomenon known as feminicide does not only affect women of Indigenous origin in these countries, but since in Mexico and Guatemala the majority of the population is of mixed origin (Fregoso & Bejarano, 2010), most women murdered in Mexico and Guatemala are of Indigenous origin.

Colonial History and Decolonization

Before discussing these two national cases, however, it is important to contextualize their location within a larger hemispheric history. Without a doubt, the history of the colonization of the Americas has been a history of violence, including slavery and genocide of Indigenous peoples by European colonizers. In some ways, while addressing contemporary violence against Indigenous women, we are addressing the legacy of such history, as well as the history of processes of re-colonization, and of neo-colonialism. Contemporary artists, activists and scholars have promoted ways in which the process of decolonization may take place, particularly through finding voices from Indigenous communities that exist throughout the Americas. One example

is the scholar and activist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, of the Aymara Nation, who uses Aymara and Quechua cosmologies in her work as sociologist and historian in Bolivia.

According to Cusicanqui (2006), the struggles of Indigenous communities in the Americas have also presented and proved a history of resistance that is important to recognize. In a project of reclaiming the Indigenous nations' own historicity, Cusicanqui proposes a process of decolonization that entails imagining a solidary community that reclaims forms of self-representation. In order to do so, Indigenous peoples need to find strategies that create a language of empowerment.

Cusicanqui (2006) makes the claim that Indigenous communities have been referred to in art and scholarship as primitive, as remnants of the past, or as essentialized figures of noble savages connected to nature. Instead, she proposes a claiming of an Indigenous historicity that declares an Indigenous contemporaneity, for we live in a present where Indigenous cultural practices are just as contemporaneous as any. In order to do that, Cusicanqui proposes a "decolonization of the imaginaries and of forms of representation" (2006, p.120). Later in this article, the REDress project in Canada is offered as one example of a decolonized practice that reclaims a voice and agency to missing and murdered Indigenous women victims of violence and discrimination.

Another pitfall of current neo-colonialism that Cusicanqui addresses is the problematic of multiculturalism. According to the Aymara critic, multiculturalism denies ethnicities through a homogenizing posture of acknowledging diversity, therefore functioning as "a hiding mechanism par excellence of new forms of colonization" (Cusicanqui, 2006, p.6). Along these lines, multiculturalism does not provide inclusion, but in actuality essentializes Indigenous issues in service of the interests of the state through a transformation of Indigenous populations into subjects of history without agency. She makes the claim that multiculturalism has been co-opted and that "a discourse of decolonization, a theory of decolonization, cannot exist without a decolonizing practice" (Cusicanqui, 2006, p.7). In the context of the issue at stake here, the violence against Indigenous women will not end until the practice of oppression against Indigenous peoples discontinues. Such oppressive practices take many forms and it has been implemented from top down politics, making it ubiquitous and difficult to resist. In the case of both Canada and Latin America, issues of discrimination and racism are actualized through structural discrimination that keeps Indigenous populations poor, preventing the insertion and social mobility of marginalized Indigenous populations into society; isolation and separation of families through the reserve system or residential schools system (in the case of Canada); and assimilation of European culture through processes of social validation that privilege European knowledge, laws and politics. These are only but a few variables which perpetuate forms of colonialism that have existed for centuries in the Americas.

Therefore, the murder of Indigenous women is yet another aspect that factors in the ongoing discrimination and oppression of Indigenous communities across the hemisphere, a brutal and tragic reality that is ignored for the most part. While faced with atrocious crimes against Indigenous women—a largely unspoken and silenced subject—there may be an impression that nothing can be done about it. Artists have taken upon themselves to find strategies in which to make the invisible visible.

The Case of Mexico

Like many countries in Latin America, Mexico has had a history of violence and colonization, as well as a history of authoritarism and oppression. Indigenous communities in general have suffered in a country of a majority of citizens of mixed origin (Indigenous and European among other ethnicities). Arguably, the participation of Mexico in the North American economy has increased social inequalities, and the problem of violence against women. In July 2012 Amnesty International announced that:

> according to a report published by UNIFEM and local human rights organizations, at least 34,000 women were murdered in Mexico between 1985 and 2009—2,418 in 2010 alone. In the state of Chihuahua, where there was a sharp increase of murders, in 2010 one of every 11 victims was a women —up from one in every 14 in 2008. In Ciudad Juárez, 320 women were murdered in 2010. The number of killings fell back slightly in 2011. In the first six months of 2012 there were more than 130 killings of women in the state of Chihuahua. In 2009 alone, public prosecutor's office round the country received 14,829 reports of rape – an alarming number considering that most women do not report these crimes. Only 2,795 convictions were achieved in the courts (Knox, 2012).

As the above quote evidences, the most noticed case of violence in Mexico is in the northern city called Ciudad Juárez. Juárez is located at the state of Chihuahua, and it borders with the United States city of El Paso in Texas. Due to its geographical location, obviously the city of Juárez has the characteristics of a border town, where traffic and criminality are rampant, as well as poverty and the presence of slums. In addition, and as a result of a global economy and free trade agreements between the two countries in question, Juárez is an industrial site that has seen the proliferation of gigantic factories in the past few decades. The maquiladoras as these factories are known in the area, are mostly deregulated because they operate in free trade zone. The sort of social inequalities these deregulations cause has increased poverty and violence even more.

Since 1993, Juárez has also been the site of murders of hundreds of women every year, amounting to thousands of women. Some murders were related to drug traffic and gang related activity, but not all. Many of the women murdered in Juárez were also victims of rape, many worked for the maquiladora factories, and most were of Indigenous origin. As it is the case in most of the Americas, the vast majority of the murders of women that continue to occur for 20 years in Juárez go on with impunity, without investigation, persecution, or justice. There have been activists, journalists and artists responses, availing to little consequences to the authorities.

How do Artists Deal with it? Roberto Bolaño and Teresa Margolles

Chilean born writer Roberto Bolaño (1953-2003) has received much critical and public acclaim for his novels after they were published posthumously in English after 2004. Bolaño has become one of the most important contemporary Latin American writers, and he may certainly be considered an activist of Indigenous and women's rights through his work. Many of his novels deal with issues regarding authoritarian regimes, violence, and discrimination, as well as the colonization and neo-colonization of his native Chile, and he often included stories about the Mapuche resistance to Spanish colonization in his narratives. He also named his son Lautaro, in homage to a 16th century leader in the Mapuche nation resistance. In his literary novel 2666 (2004) Bolaño offers a fictional world that documents the historical atrocities against the women

of Juárez, with wide implications on the violence and border politics between the United States and Mexico. Bolaño confronts the reader with historical acts of extreme violence that, unlike dictatorships and civil wars, are decentralized and could happen anywhere to any woman.

In a complicated novel, the main thread that links all characters and stories is a place in Mexico, a fictitious city called Santa Teresa, which is an apocalyptic border town modeled after the real Ciudad Juárez. In the brutality of stories filled with confrontation, Bolaño describes page after page the murdered women's bodies, the victims from Ciudad Juárez' crimes. Based on the non-fiction book Huesos en el desierto (2002) by journalist Sergio González Rodríguez (who is also a character in 2666) the novel's chapter on the crimes is a detailed account of the victims' corpses. In an almost insufferable narrative, Bolaño manages to give names and histories to over a hundred victims in one year of the tragic history of Juárez.

Bolaño's novels often question the role of the artist and the intellectual, and point towards a direction indicating that the author might not believe in the role of the intellectual in society. Nevertheless, his moral preoccupations in relating these crimes against women point to an opposite direction. Bolaño's writing offers tactics of negotiating Mexican reality and violence. To critics, Bolaño has helped internationalize these local crimes, saying that "this novel helps situate these phenomena in a wider global context" (Herlinghaus, 2011, p. 116); or that Bolaño has faced "the utter terror that is called contemporary living" (Franco, 2009, p. 207).

In the novel, the city of Juárez is a character in itself, described as an infernal place where women are never safe, but it is also the site of protest by feminist groups, and of journalistic investigations, despite the danger. It is the character Florita Almada, an Indigenous shaman, who calls that "the silence must be broken…", that "such terrible apathy and such terrible darkness" must end (Bolano, 2008, p.437). A character largely ignored by other critics, it's through the healer Florita and her visions that action is called upon, and the notion of resistance is proposed amidst drug and gang wars, border poverty, the maquiladoras' harsh reality, and the fact that in Mexico politics intertwined with drug traffic lead to unsolved crimes against women. Santa Teresa/ Juárez is "a sketch of the industrial landscape in the third world" (p. 294). Ironically, to Bolaño freedom is to blame. In an interview, Bolaño mentioned that Ciudad Juárez was his vision of hell, "our curse and mirror, the restless mirror of our frustrations and our infamous interpretation of freedom and our desires. What curbs that unrestricted freedom that leads to violence? Not religion or political belief, nor some universal precept" (quoted in Franco, 2007, p. 215). In denouncing the crimes against women in Juárez, not only does Bolaño expose the reader to a horrific contemporary history, but he also questions issues of social responsibility.

In a different approach, Mexican artist Teresa Margolles (born in 1963) also confronts the crimes against women in Ciudad Juárez. Margolles is known for investigating the consequences of crime and violence in Mexico, and she worked in an art collective that used forensic materials to make art. For example, she built a concrete table using water from a morgue that had been used to wash corpses. Particularly in her work about the crimes in Juárez, Margolles attempts to be an artist who is a "deputy to the dead," giving a body and a history to the invisible corpse, and a voice to the voiceless (Bray, 2007, p. 4). Like Bolaño, Margolles wants to evidence the crimes that go unpunished, but unlike the writer, Margolles works with testimony and images.

Among her series of works about the dead women in the Mexican city, Margolles went to Juárez in 2005 and, according to Rebecca Bray "drove to the crime scenes of a number of murders, where she spent time at the site, often many nights. At these crime scenes she collected the earth; with the earth she produced 500 stones" (2007, p. 28). Margolles' art piece entitled Lote Bravo (2005)

deliberately renders material the invisible presence of the dead. If the dead women are no longer remembered, except for those who mourn them, Margolles takes upon herself the task to bring the dead back to the physical realm. In his novel about the Juárez dead women, Bolaño's words painstakingly and methodically describe corpse after corpse of the victims in details. Margolles' work, on the other hand, does not offer details, but works in a sort of a "material abstraction," using the materials close to the dead women, the earth, to create new objects in the shape of bricks—building blocks of a new future where Indigenous women are no longer killed.

More recently, in early 2012, in a show called Broken Borders at the Satellite Gallery in Vancouver, Margolles exhibited a video art piece called Irrigation (2010). For the video, Margolles soaked blankets in the blood and bodily fluids of the dead women from Ciudad Juárez, later soaking the blankets in a large quantity of water which was placed in a water truck that sprayed a highway road in Texas. The video shows the water truck's journey across the border, carrying the fluids of the dead women, transporting the dead in its remains. Margolles reflections extend the problematic of the crimes against women to border issues. Clearly the crimes of Juárez are a product of intense social inequalities and international tensions that entail drug traffic and other transborder activities. The presence of the dead women is materialized through Margolles words, physically and conceptually, and the artist's pieces function as poetic protests and denunciation.

The Case of Guatemala

According to Amnesty International Reports, Guatemala has the worst record for violence against women, not only in the Americas, but it has the world's highest rate of feminicide. Historically, Guatemala, like many countries in Central America, has had a history of brutality. The majority of the population in Guatemala is of mixed heritage (Indigenous and European), and a large portion of the population is Indigenous (40 per cent). During a violent civil war that lasted 36 years (1960-1996), the Indigenous communities, and particularly the women suffered the most. It is now known since "truth commissions set up after peace accords were signed in 1996 found that some 200,000 people had been killed or had disappeared during the civil war, and that government forces committed 626 massacres in indigenous villages and the rape and murder of Indigenous women" (Malkin, 2012). Now Guatemala is finally under the process of persecuting and trying former military for war crimes and genocide, like several countries in Latin America.

Unfortunately, crimes against humanity have not stopped after the end of the civil war in 1996. Guatemala currently suffers from problems of violence, particularly gang related, and "pervasive and systematic violence against women committed with impunity" (Musalo, 2011, p. 3). According to the Women's Law report from 2010 "in Guatemala, this violence has reached epidemic proportions. During the past decade, over 4,000 women have been killed. There have been successful prosecutions in no more than 2 per cent of these cases, meaning that 98 out of 100 killers of women literally get away with murder" (Musalo, 2011, p. 3).

How do Artists Deal with it?
Regina José Galindo

One example of an artist from Guatemala who addresses crimes against indigenous women is poet and performance artist Regina José Galindo (born in 1974). In Galindo's work the body is often at stake, staging reminders of violence. Galindo's body functions as a witness that reflects

Guatemala's turbulent history and brutalities, and it's a living testament to how the transition to democracy in Guatemala has still brought violence and inequalities. Galindo's main preoccupation is "inscribing inerasable memories," embodying crimes that still take place on a daily basis, but are again for the most part, invisible. Galindo studies the effects of persistent violent and social inequalities through her own experiences.

To mention one example of how Galindo has discussed the appalling situation of the murder of women in Guatemala, at the Venice Biennale, she hid behind a screen, and using a leather belt, she proceeded to hit herself for each woman who was murdered in Guatemala from January 1 to June 9 2005, in a total of 279 blows (Golpes 2005). The public only hears the amplified sounds. This performance of self-flagellation attests to the obscene quality of the murders, by literalizing the hidden element. No one can see the horrible crimes committed. Galindo has also cut the word "bitch" on her left thigh in a performance that emulates messages that gang members inscribe on the bodies of dead women (Perra 2005). She also had her body thrown in a land fill inside a plastic bag, as happens to many murder victims (No perdemos nada con nacer 2000). In addition, Galindo has a series on normative standards of beauty, and expectations on women's appearances, such as a performance where a plastic surgeon pointed out all the "problems" in her body, for example in Recorte por la línea (2005). Galindo is interested in larger issues of social pressures that women have to endure to conform to standardized bodies, as well as on the constant danger that women in Guatemala suffer.

What is striking about Galindo's performances is that her small stature is submitted to trials and endurance. Nevertheless, as Virginia Pérez-Ratton pointed out "Galindo's work is not only about the artist's particular act of endurance but, more importantly, about how much the individual spectators in their own right come to understand, and even endure, a violent reality through the performance" (2007, p. 140). Galindo literally takes public risks for the sake of memory and social awareness. She radicalizes public spaces and restricted art spaces, and calls attention to a new inspection of history. In her confrontations and voluntary violations against her body, she creates a shock value because art is not past shock for as long as history is still shocking.

Galindo's positions stem from general politics and her work deliberates on violence against women and their consequences. The issue of violence, particularly when the state does not act to solve the problem, is a community matter. The crimes against women both in Ciudad Juárez and in Guatemala are part of a social reality that for the most part is invisible. Crimes against Indigenous women are crimes against humanity, and they continue to go on in Mexico and Guatemala. The role of the artists under these circumstances is to collectivize their own awareness as a call to action.

The Case of Canada

Canadian critic Diana Taylor, who was raised in Mexico, and whose main scholarly preoccupations are studying the connections between art and politics, has written extensively about the importance of art in raising consciousness. Taylor (2005) claims that art as embodied practices, such as the art work of Margolles, Galindo or even Bolaño, do indeed transmit knowledge about the past and help shape actual change. Taylor discusses how ephemeral artistic practices expose the past and "fuel cultural agency in the present" (pp. 279-280).

While facing violent realities, especially while facing brutalities that no one (except perhaps for the families and friends of the victims) wants to address, artists and intellectuals have a crucial

role. Artists have a social responsibility to remind communities that crimes exist because of a long historical tradition of oppression, but that they don't have to be repeated. In that sense, artists and intellectuals can work with communities towards the common goal of decolonization, to change oppression and discrimination. What is necessary, from a practical point of view, is not only resistance and protest, but an awareness of the problem and a change in perspective, or what Colombian critic Adolfo Albán Achinte has called re-existence. Achinte defined re-existence as "the devices that communities create and develop to re-invent themselves in everyday life to confront the reality established by the hegemonic project that from colonial times has diminished and silenced and made invisible the existence" of disenfranchised communities (2009, p.13).

The incidence of crimes against Indigenous women in the Americas has a long history in the making, but in remembering this history now, in redressing the invisible violence, in rendering the invisible visible, is how we as community can put a stop to the atrocities. I imagine most people in Canada, specifically here in BC, don't know that Indigenous women were and are deliberately murdered. As Taylor proposed "negotiation, not violence… proves the true heroic strategy" (Taylor, 2005, p. 289). It takes a heroic community to acknowledge violence, and to negotiate with their leaders and those in positions of power. It takes an even more courageous act to say through art that this must stop.

How do Artists Deal with it? Jaime Black's REDress Project

The REDress project is an art installation creation by Jaime Black, a young female Métis artist in Manitoba. By hanging red dresses on simple wooden hangers in public spaces, Black aims to draw attention to the more than 600 missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. Her aims are two-fold; to initiate critical dialogue about gendered and racialized violent crimes against Aboriginal women in Canada, and to "evoke their presence through the marking of their absence" (J. Black, personal communication, October 5, 2011).

Black took some of her inspiration for the project from her experience in Opaskawayak Cree Nation, located near the small rural community of The Pas, Manitoba. This is the community where nineteen year old Cree high school student Helen Betty Osborne was brutally sexually assaulted, stabbed with a screwdriver more than fifty times, and murdered in 1971. Several months later, Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers concluded that four white men were involved in Betty's abduction and murder. Yet it was not until December 1987, more than sixteen years later, that one of them, Dwayne Johnston, was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for her murder. Less than ten years later, on October 10, 1997 Johnston received full parole. James Houghton was acquitted. Lee Colgan received immunity from prosecution in return for testifying against Houghton and Johnston. Norman Manger was never charged (Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 2001).

More inspiration came from a conference in Bogata, Colombia, where Black witnessed a public performance enacted by 300 women in the Place de Bolivar (main square). The performance was to protest violence in their lives, and the loss of family members to politically influenced abduction and murder. This Colombian public performance, conducted by women wearing red dresses, heavily influenced Black's decision to create the REDress public art installation in Canada. The contemporary issue that she chose to invoke and surround with critical dialogue is the 582 missing and murdered Aboriginal women identified by the Native Women's Association

of Canada (NWAC) in their 2010 research report entitled "Stolen sisters: What their stories tell us".

For Black, the colour red portrays both Indigenous femininity and sexuality. Red also reflects violence and the spilled blood of Indigenous missing and murdered women in Canada. A collaboration between Black and the University of Winnipeg's Institute for Women's and Gender Studies (IWGS) in March 2011 launched a campaign to raise awareness for the murders and disappearances of Aboriginal women across Canada. This was the first REDress art installation on a university campus in Canada. Black worked with the institution to install over 120 red dresses on the campus, provide tours of the installation sites, an artist talk and contribute to a panel presentation. Red dresses in all shapes and sizes were donated to Black from community members, including one from the family of a missing Aboriginal woman. She hung the dresses on simple wooden hangers and affixed them in groups with translucent fishing line wire, both outside and inside the university buildings.

How do Activists Deal with it?
Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

In 2005 as part of their continuing efforts to publicly seek justice and redress for missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada, the NWAC created the "Sisters in Spirit" (SIS) project. Each October 4 marks a national day of remembrance to honour the memory of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada and an opportunity to embrace their families, particularly their children. NWAC is instrumental in documenting that more than one quarter of the disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women in Canada have occurred in BC, with a concentration of killings in several locations including Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and along the Highway of Tears (highway 16 west of Prince George to Prince Rupert).

It is important to recognize October 4 in BC because it is the province in which the first and only Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) was appointed into police and criminal justice failures with respect to disappearances and murders of women. A March 2012 press release issued by NWAC and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) details their profound disappointment and outrage at BC's and the MWCI unwillingness to respect the rights of Aboriginal women to fully and equally participate in the judicial process. NWAC and FAFIA appeared before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in Washington D.C. on March 28, 2012 to provide a thematic briefing on the subject of the disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women and girls in BC. The press release states that:

NWAC hoped that the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry would provide an opportunity to shed light on the systemic failures of the police and criminal justice system to deal with the racialized and sexualized violence that Aboriginal women and girls experience and become a model for other jurisdictions. For that reason, NWAC applied for, and was granted, full standing at the Inquiry. Unfortunately, however, both the Government of British Columbia and the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry further violated the rights of Aboriginal women and girls, by refusing NWAC funding for its legal counsel, and by appointing "independent counsel" to speak for Aboriginal women, without our consent. The recently announced decision of that lawyer to withdraw, and her reasons for doing so, confirmed NWAC's worst fear that this Inquiry will not provide answers to the ongoing discrimination against Aboriginal women that threatens their safety and lives. The Missing Women Commission of Inquiry is a failure for Aboriginal women, with 25 publicly-funded lawyers now representing police agencies, no publicly funded counsel

representing any of the groups that were granted standing, and no participation of any Aboriginal groups in the Inquiry (NWAC, 2012).

How do Artist and Activists deal with it? SIS joins with the REDress project

At the time that Indigenous groups in BC were expressing public criticism of the work of the MWCI, I was working as a faculty member at another post-secondary institution in BC. The Chancellor of institution at that time, Justice Wally Oppal, was simultaneously the Commissioner of the MWCI. Indigenous community members felt it was important for these very political reasons to highlight the institution as the site of one of the planned 84 SIS national vigils on October 4, 2011. Justice Oppal/the Chancellor was invited to participate in a panel discussion; one of a number of events planned for October 4-7, 2011 and he declined.

A new and inclusive community-university based Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) was developed to raise funds, recruit and organize volunteers, solicit donations of red dresses, plan, advertise and implement the REDress project. Black was contracted to travel to the small city in August 2011 to determine appropriate installation sites, and meet community and university partners involved in the project. She returned at the beginning of October 2011 to install over 200 red dresses in four community-based sites and three university sites. Perhaps the most visually impactful and meaningful REDress installation for IAC members was hung in a long row of trees stretching in front of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. The red dresses of various sizes, shapes and vintages moving with the breezes evoked thoughts and memories of so many of the former students, the women they became, and were lost to their families and communities. It was important to organizers that there was an equal amount of Aboriginal organizations and non- Aboriginal organizations involved in the event in an effort to support growing awareness of the issues and to spark critical dialogue between the two populations (university/city and reserve-based).

A local Kamloops newspaper reporter wrote of the T'kemlups Indian band's open public invitation to attend the October 4, 2011 dinner and vigil, "If all things were equal, the unexplained disappearance of hundreds of Canadians would need no added emphasis to attract attention. Yet all things are far from equal in Canada. Aboriginal women aged 5 to 44 are five times more likely to suffer a violent death than other women in Canada" (Youds, 2011).

The news article offers a glimpse into the differential and sometimes problematic ways in which the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and violence against Aboriginal women is portrayed or ignored by mainstream Canadian media. Criticism ranges from charges of indifference, racism and bias in that had the missing women been White, the media coverage would rival that given to serial killers and rapists in the Paul Bernardo-Karla Homolko case. Media responses have been both denials that a race issue or bias exists, to incorporation of the charges of bias and indifference in their coverage (Media Portrayals, 2012). What does seem to be needed is more research such as that conducted by NWAC (2010). That research provides evidence to challenge potential stereotypes held by Canadians, and identifies that most of the missing Aboriginal women are not sex trade workers. In addition research and media coverage needs to focus on explaining how the consequences of larger structural or historic issues such as racism, colonialism, residential school and child welfare trauma, poverty and other socio-economic and political issues, differentially affects Aboriginal women in Canada. Their educative

contributions can help to turn the gaze back on structures and systems that perpetuate inequality and lack of redress.

On October 5, 2011 a public film screening of Building a Highway of Hope, occurred twice on the post-secondary campus. The independent documentary was filmed and directed by young Indigenous feminist activist Jessica Yee (Mohawk and Chinese) about the numerous disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women along Highway 16 in BC. The second screening was followed by a public talk by the director who was joined by Jaime Black and included approximately fifteen people who had taken tours of the art installations on campus or visited community-based sites on and off the Tk'emlups Indian Band. On October 6, 2011 a second Indigenous film was screened and followed by a discussion with a community-based panel. Finding Dawn, released in 2006 by Métis filmmaker Christine Welsh, is a National Film Board documentary now available on-line. It discusses the murders and disappearances of 500 Aboriginal women in Canada over the past 30 years and suggests ways to build toward social justice for the women and families. This documentary chronicles Aboriginal women's experiences in Canada's Vancouver Downtown East Side and the Highway of Tears in northern BC. Finding Dawn discusses the historical, social and economic factors that contribute to what the filmmaker calls the epidemic of violence against Native women in this country. Its interviews with Ernie Crey, a Sto:lo fisheries consultant, political actvist, author and brother of murder victim Dawn Crey, whose DNA was discovered on the Pickton Pig Farm in Port Coquitlam, BC contributed to the documentary title. The nearly $100 million joint RCMP-Vancouver Police Department investigation and trial, the most expensive in Canadian history, led to charges in her death and the deaths of twenty-five others, but charges into the deaths of twenty of the women were subsequently dropped. Pickton was convicted in December 2007 on six counts of second-degree murder and is currently serving a life sentence with no chance of parole for twenty-five years.

The discussion panel included an elder from the Tk'emlups Indian Band, a representative from the NWAC, a family member of a disappeared woman and a First Nations lawyer. Interestingly, the lawyer drew a comparison between her environmental work into the disappearances of Fraser River salmon stocks in BC and the disappearances of Aboriginal women in BC. She commented about the lack of financial or legal resources provided by governments to search for Aboriginal women who go missing or provision of legal representation to support the meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal women and Aboriginal organizations at the MWCI. However, she did note that when salmon stocks went missing in 2009, in 2010 the BC government did financially support First Nations communities and organizations to participate at the Vancouver-based Cohen Commission of Inquiry as it launched its official investigation into the collapse of sockeye salmon stocks in BC's Fraser River. It was a comparison that clearly articulated the BC government's economic worth of salmon and lack of value of First Nations women. Unfortunately less than 50 people attended the film screening and panel discussion in a theatre able to seat 300. The REDress art installation ended on October 7, 2011 with two tours and an artist talk by Black .

Addressing a Human Rights Crisis, a National Disgrace, Unacceptable Numbers and an Unacceptable Canadian Response

For Sharon McIvor, a First Nations lawyer and member of FAFIA, the disappearances and murders of more than 600 Aboriginal women and girls across Canada is a human rights crisis that requires relentless advocacy by Indigenous women and organizations. Her way forward is to call on "Governments at all levels that have not put in place the measures necessary to discharge

their obligations to prevent, prosecute, investigate and remedy this violence". On March 28, 2012 she asked the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to initiate a National Inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls that:

> will lead to the design of national, cross-jurisdictional mechanisms and protocols for police and justice officials and to an action plan that will address the crisis of violence, and the social and economic disadvantages of Aboriginal women and girls – including poverty, inadequate housing, low educational attainment, inadequate child welfare policies, and over-criminalization; ensure inter-jurisdictional and inter-agency coordination of policing and law enforcement and establish improved federal, provincial, and territorial police accountability mechanisms that include both civilian oversight and civilian investigation, particularly for adherence with constitutional requirements of equal protection and access to justice; establish a federal mechanism for investigations into misconduct and discrimination within the criminal justice system and police forces; co-operate with civil society groups endeavoring to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada and ensure the full participation of Aboriginal women and Aboriginal organizations, with representatives of their own choosing, within national and provincial inquiries and any other related commissions or inquiries dealing with their rights (NWAC, 2012).

The NWAC (2010) research report identified 582 missing and murdered women in Canada on their Sisters in Spirit database, and listed the intergenerational impact from colonial and state policies such as residential schools and child welfare as contributing factors in the violence they experienced. The organization found that over two thirds of the women are from BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, more than half are under the age of 31 and over 70 per cent disappeared from urban areas. Further, their research identified that "many of the women were mothers. Of the cases where this information is known, 88 per cent of missing and murdered women and girls left behind children and grandchildren" (NWAC, 2010, p.ii). In the two short years since NWAC's 2010 report, the Federal Conservative Government has severely cut its health portfolio, research capacity and SIS vigil support and reallocated the funding to beef up police technology. This action, in the view of NWAC speaking on behalf of marginalized Aboriginal women, will do little to improve safety for Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.

As of September 6, 2012 the NWAC reports that Canada has further cut the NWAC core funding that was not increased since 2005. It is a predictable response from Canada which bristles at the evidence developed by Aboriginal women that Canada's reputation as a fair and just society is unwarranted and suspect. This seems to be particularly true when Canada is confronted with growing calls for meaningful support and participation by Aboriginal women and organizations in matters directly affecting us.

Conclusion: How do Academics deal with it? Working with Artists and Activists to Educate, Raise Awareness and Work Towards Redress

This article provides examples of the inspiring and inclusive numbers of ways that Indigenous artists, activists , writers, academics, lawyers, social workers, community based organizations, family members, international bodies and others continue to seek redress, social justice, health, economic and physical safety for Indigenous women in the America's. Individually and collectively they are taking steps to highlight the murdered and disappeared Indigenous women and girls in the America's, despite limited resources, disrespectful or widespread lack of knowledge about

the issues and retaliatory aggression from states. The ongoing lack of redress demonstrates that more must be done to educate the general public and address long-standing and contemporary concerns. Despite the overwhelming barriers to redress and healing, Indigenous voices continue to be heard, Indigenous art and activism exists, and continues to counteract the overwhelming mainstream silence. In these Indigenous voices and actions, lives resistance and determination for change. In addition, Indigenous concerns and solutions continue to find many ways into non-Indigenous mainstream and ally spaces, academic venues and attention in national and international forums.

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Preventing Crime and Poor Health Among Aboriginal People: The Potential for Preventative Programming

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine prevention programs, and discuss their potential for having an impact on reducing crime and poor health outcomes for Aboriginal people. A historical context is first outlined in order to provide a context for understanding the disproportionate amount of crime and related poor health outcomes affecting Aboriginal people. Risk factors for crime and health are identified, demonstrating their interrelatedness and overlapping nature, indicating that risk factors do not existing in isolation from each other. Existing crime prevention programs are subsequently discussed, paying particular attention to the intersection between evidence-based outcomes and programs offered at Aboriginal Friendship Centres. The use of prevention programs for preventing/reducing crime and related health costs (i.e. substance use/abuse, smoking, and/or addictions) has been positively established by existing research. Thus, it is suggested that these programs offered in Aboriginal centres, such as Aboriginal Friendship Centres, should be further expanded and supported.

Keywords: Crime prevention, Aboriginal peoples, risk factors, early intervention

Introduction: Challenge and Overview

The rates of crime[1] affecting Aboriginal people[2] as both victims and offenders are much higher as compared to non-Aboriginal people. It has been noted that Aboriginal people are three times more likely to experience violent victimization as compared to non-Aboriginal people (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006). Furthermore, the proportion of Aboriginal peoples incarcerated is 12% higher for Aboriginal peoples (72.2%) than for non-Aboriginal peoples (59.9%)[3] (Public Safety Canada, 2011).

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The overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in terms of rates of risky health behaviours across Canada is also significant. According to the

1 Crime is defined as an act committed or omitted, such as negligence, in violation of the Criminal Code of Canada.

2 When discussing "Aboriginal people" this is in reference to the original inhabitants of Turtle Island (referred to as North America). This includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. It is recognized that this term is an institutional construct of the state, and it incorrectly lumps people of many diverse backgrounds and cultures into one grouping.

3 As of April 10, 2011.

2000/01 Canadian Community Health Survey 51.4% of the off-reserve Aboriginal population were smokers, 1.9 times higher as compared to the non-Aboriginal population (Tjepkema, 2002, p. 7). Off-reserve Aboriginal people do comprise a smaller proportion of weekly drinkers as compared to non-Aboriginal people; however, they do report higher levels of heavy drinking as compared to non-Aboriginal peoples (Tjepkema, 2002, p. 8).

These poor health and risk behaviours are frequently associated with crime. In fact, many risk factors for poor health and crime are interrelated (for examples of risk factors see, Lambertus, 2007; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009; Sanders, Markie-Dadds & Turner, 2003; Totten, 2009; World Health Organization [WHO], 2002, 2004; Zahradnik, Stewart, O'Connor, Stevens, Ungar, & Wekerle, 2010). There is a significant body of evidence demonstrating that that preventative early intervention programming can have a major impact on the reduction of risk factors associated with poor health and crime (Farrington & Welsh, 2007, p. 61-65; Mushquash, Comeau & Stewart, 2007; Sanders, et al, 2003). Thus, the main goal of the paper is to explore the potential for preventative programming to reduce crime and poor health for Aboriginal people.

Colonialism, Policies of Assimilation and Residential Schools

In part, many of these interrelated crime and health-related risk factors have been said to stem from residential school experiences and other policies of assimilation, and colonialism (Corrado & Cohen, 2003; Cote & Schissel, 2008; Monchalin, 2010, 2012). Throughout history many policies were enacted with the goals of assimilation and integration. In 1869 there was the Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians. This Act marked the creation of invasive legislative policies which would initiate interference in the internal affairs of Aboriginal peoples. In 1876, the Indian Act was borne which consolidated various "Indian" policies into one place.

In 1879, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald followed a recommendation based on a report written by Nicholas Flood Davin, and commonly referred to as the Davin Report, a report he commissioned. The Davin Report looked to the American model of Indian Industrial Schools, and recommended that Canada follow the U.S. model of "aggressive assimilation." As a result, in 1831 the first Indian residential schools opened in Canada, with the last one closing in 1998 (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 10). The aim of residential schools was to erase all traces of Aboriginal cultures including languages, beliefs, customs and spiritual traditions (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 7).

Many Aboriginal peoples initially supported the formation of church-run residential schools, believing that a knowledge of the English language and agricultural and trade skills would increase their opportunities (Furniss, 1995, p. 21). This was the hope for many Aboriginal nations of Upper Canada at the time when the first schools were established (Furniss, 1995, p. 21). However, by the 1860s support for Christianity and mission education in Upper Canada started to diminish (Furniss, 1995, p. 21). Tribal Councils started to reject the mission program because they disagreed with the dividing of their communities as well as the dismantling of their cultures (Furniss, 1995, p. 21). As the true purpose of the residential schools was to create Christianized, and "civilized" Aboriginal communities (Furniss, 1995, p. 20; Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 69).

Throughout students' tenure at residential schools, many were sexually, physically, and psychologically abused (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 11; Chrisjohn, Young & Maraun, 2006, p. 49-50; Corrado & Cohen, 2003, p. 41; Cote & Schissel, 2008, p. 224; Fournier & Crey, 2006, p. 141-142, Grant, 1996, p. 225-231; Kelly, 2008, p. 24; Milloy, 1999, p. 298; Shawanda, 2010, p. 29). Sexual abuse took many forms, including forced sexual fondling or touching, oral-genital sex, and sexual

intercourse by those in authority over the children (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 11). Founier and Crey (2006), describe an experience by Emily Rice, who had left Kuper Island residential school at the age of 11 in 1959, explaining that:

> She had been repeatedly assaulted and sexually abused by Father Jackson and three other priests, one of whom plied her with alcohol before raping her. A nun Sister Mary Margaret, known for peeping at girls in the shower and grabbing their breasts, was infuriated when Emily resisted her advances. "She took a big stick with bark on it, and rammed it right inside my vagina," recalls Rice…in the years that followed, Emily would have to twice undergo reconstructive vaginal surgery, and she suffered permanent hearing loss. (p. 141-142)

Children would be physically punished for speaking their language, which would include various forms of public humiliation, putting them on a bread and water diet, or pushing needles through their tongues (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 11; Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 82). Children were also harshly punished for a variety of things, ranging from chewing gum to wetting the bed (Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 83), where the punishment for wetting the bed would be for the child to take their pants down in front of all of their peers and then be brutally whipped (Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 83). Punishment for bed wetting also included the forcing of children to wear diapers, or to wear soiled clothing (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 11). Psychological abuse also included children being continually shamed and called names such as "savage" and/or "heathen" (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 11).

Evidence of the effects of residential schools have been well documented in residential school survivors' stories (see Cote & Schissel, 2008; Shawanda, 2010), as well as through research studies, such as examinations of residential school survivors' clinical case study files (see Corrado & Cohen, 2003). There has been a legacy of negative impacts of the residential school system and the Government of Canada's policy of assimilation identified (Corrado & Cohen, 2003; Gagné, 1998; Jacobs & Williams, 2008, p. 126; Kirmayer, Brass, Holton, Paul, Simpson, & Tait, 2007, p. 69; Monture-Angus, 1998, p. 363; Rice & Snyder 2008, p. 49). These include: loss of culture, language, traditional values and family bonding, as well as a decrease in life skills and parenting skills, dependency on others, among others (Furniss, 1995, p. 31; Jacobs & Williams, 2008, p. 126; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 22).

Although the residential school system was ultimately disbanded, legacies of negative impacts remain. Seven generations of Aboriginal children went through residential schools. Clergy, priests and nuns became children's primary caregivers. These primary caregivers were the people who ended up committing horrible acts against these children (Rand, 2011, p. 58). Having families[4] broken apart and children being raised by abusing strangers has left many devastating impacts on the future generations of those families who were forced into these horrific circumstances. According to Fournier and Crey (1997) by the late 1940's, four or five generations of Aboriginal people had come out of residential schools as angry, poorly educated abused strangers "who had no experience in parenting" (p. 82). Some residential school survivors and their descendants now have a very hard time establishing trusting or supportive attachments with family members, including their spouses, children and grandchildren (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 20).

Literature has also shown that many residential school survivors suffer from stressful experiences, which include many crime related risk factors such as disconnected families, single parent families, to poor child rearing and supervision, and family violence. These risk factors have

4 "Families" is in reference to a group living together, typically encompassing parent(s), and children. This can also include extended family members such as grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. It may also include those adopted into the family.

also contributed to further interrelated risk factors such as low educational attainment, substance abuse and addictions, unemployment, substandard living conditions, and high residential mobility, which subsequently have led many survivors and their family members down similar roads (Chansonneuve, 2007; Corrado & Cohen, 2003; Cote & Schissel, 2008; Gagné, 1998; Jacobs & Williams, 2008; Rice & Snyder, 2008; Totten, 2009, p. 137-138).

Colonialism has had drastic implications on Aboriginal peoples. In the context of the Canadian Aboriginal experience, colonialism specifically involves the dislocation and disconnection of Aboriginal peoples from their traditional lands. This involved the stripping away of peoples identity, rights, and forcing peoples under the control and governing influence of—in this case—the European settlers. Furthermore, although colonialism might have been more "visible" when reflecting on the past, it still remains, and is ongoing. Today, we are in an era of contemporary colonialism, where the dominate voice is still rooted and based on the settler imperative (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 597). These new generations of contemporary settlers have shadowed the order bestowed to them by their imperial forefathers' colonial legacy (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 598). Colonizers of today instead follow covert practices to reach goals. They have internalized myths about Aboriginal peoples which have now permeated social institutions and current value systems.

Causal factors related to ongoing colonialism and affecting Aboriginal people, includes structural violence, including racism, marginalization, and exclusion from social and economic participation. Exclusion and marginalization is the notion used to describe obstacles faced by certain social groups (in this case, Aboriginal people), obstructing them from the labour market and involvement in society's core institutions (Jaccoud & Brassard, 2003, p. 132). Exclusion and marginalization are an aspect of poverty, economic insecurity, and social isolation (Jaccoud & Brassard, 2003, p. 132).

Given the history of racist policies and agenda's which sought to eradicate Aboriginal peoples, the focal tenants of these polices and agendas have essentially permeated political structures and have infused social institutions of today. Racism has become institutionalized. Therefore, it may have become more subtle, yet, no less damaging. Barriers of institutionalized racism are what contribute to the lack of access to society's core institutions and play a large part in creating a major hurdle to full participation in the labour market.

Interrelated Health and Criminogenic Risk Factors

Recognizing the accumulated negative outcomes of colonialism and residential schools offers a context for understanding why many Aboriginal people suffer from multiple risk factors related to crime and poor health today (Monchalin, 2012). This is not to say that risk factors for crime and poor health are specific to Aboriginal people, or that there is a biological difference that predisposes Aboriginal people to such factors. To say this would be an incorrect colonial and outright racist assumption, and one that does not take into account the current, and historical, positioning of Aboriginal people in Canadian society. However, it has been shown that individuals, particularly children and youth, of different racial or ethnic backgrounds living in Canada are often faced with different set of extraneous predisposing factors, and often culturally-appropriate coping strategies are not readily accessible (Marques 2010).

All people, regardless of race or ethnic background, are subject to several risk determinants related to crime and poor health. Research shows that any person who experiences risk factors

related to crime puts them at a higher chance to be a victim or offender of crime. The more risk factors one faces, the higher the chances go up. The presence of one risk factor increases the risk of crime and multiple risk factors cause greater increases (Monchalin, 2012, p. 27). This is not to say that this is an absolute, as an individual may experience several crime related risk factors and not be involved in crime, however, it would be more likely that they might be given that they experience such factors (Monchalin, 2012, p. 27). The same reasoning can be applied with health related risk factors. For example, noted risk factors for heart disease include smoking and a high fat diet. Therefore, a person who exhibits these behaviours, compared to someone who does not, would be more likely to have the adverse outcome. However, it is not an absolute.

Given that many Aboriginal people have faced demonstrated atrocities, and continue to face the consequences of on-going colonialism, they are more likely to be confronted with more risk factors for crime and poor health, as well as with less access to resources to mitigate their effects. It cannot be discounted that non-Aboriginal people do not have histories nor do not confront similar realities of colonialism and institutionalized racism.

Risk factors found to be highly associated with poor health outcomes also include many crime related risk factors (Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Sanders et al., 2003). These include: living in poverty and poor housing, lack of access to education, addictions, poor parenting skills, poor supervision and monitoring of children, lack of discipline or parental reinforcement, family violence and crime, and marriage and family breakdown, which have all been found to strongly influence children's development (Farrington & Welsh, 2007, p. 61-62; La Prairie, 1994; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Sanders et al., 2003; Waller, 2006).

In particular, research shows that a lack of a positive relationship with parents; insecure attachment; harsh, inflexible or inconsistent discipline practices; marital inconsistency and breakdown; scarce supervision of and a lack of a strong relationship with children, increases the risk that children will develop increased health problems (Coie, 1996; Farrington & Welsh, 2007, p. 61-62; Loeber & Farrington, 1998; Sanders et al., 2003, p. 1). These include major behavioural and emotional problems, depression, substance abuse, antisocial behaviour, as well as having more experiences with crime (Coie, 1996; Farrington & Welsh, 2007, p. 61-62; Loeber & Farrington, 1998; Sanders et al., 2003, p. 1).

There are many studies and reports which have confirmed the correlation between risk factors such as lack of parental supports, and higher rates of crime (Farrington & Welsh, 2007). Research has shown that family conflict and poor parenting skills are risk factors commonly associated with adverse developmental outcomes in children including drug abuse, delinquency,[5] increased conduct problems, and academic underachievement, as well as intra-familial child abuse (Olds et al., 1999; Sanders, et al., 2003; Schweinhart 2005). Furthermore, many researchers have pointed out the importance of early childhood experiences as an important factor in behaviour in later life (Linden, 2001, p. 7).

5 "Delinquency" includes actions which break rules, obligations or duties as set out by parents, guardians, and/or the law.

Many Aboriginal youth[6] suffer from risk factors for poor health outcomes and criminal behaviour (Totten, 2009, p. 137-138; Zahradnik et al., 2010, p. 209). Research has demonstrated many poor health outcomes that are associated with crime. Some commonly cited health factors include depression, anxiety, emotional distress, and having physical, mental or cognitive disabilities (Lambertus, 2007, p. 46; Sanders et al., 2003). Research has also demonstrated many risky health behaviours associated with crime. Some commonly cited factors include poor prenatal care as well as drinking and smoking during pregnancy, substance abuse/misuse, addictions, family violence and disintegration, neglect, and abuse (Comack et al., 2009, p. 1-5; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009).

Poor health outcomes and risky health behaviours not only have differential impacts on health throughout one's lifespan, but the resulting health issues may themselves create conditions (i.e., additional risk factors) that subsequently influence health (Reading, 2009). For example, poverty is linked with increased alcohol abuse (Cerdá et al., 2010) and other substance abuse, which can lead to stressed family environments and reduced social support, which are correlated to depression (Loppie Reading, & Wein, 2009, p. 3).

Health inequalities can be explained, in part, by the fact that many Aboriginal peoples have lower socio-economic status; a factor widely known to be associated with poor health (Tjepkema, 2002). Additionally, lower socio-economic status among Aboriginal people is also a factor widely known to be associated with crime (La Prairie & Stenning, 2003). Many risk factors for crime and health are interrelated and overlapping, and many do not exist in isolation from other factors (Mikkonen & Raphel, 2010; WHO, 2002, p. 33).

Another related risk factor related to both poor health and crime is unemployment and lack of job security. Unemployment is also associated with physical and mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, and increased suicide rates (Mikkonen & Raphel, 2010).

Physical environments, such as poor living conditions including crowded housing conditions have been found to be been associated with both crime and stress (Fitzgerald & Carrington, 2008; Knotsch & Kinnon, 2011, p. 28; La Prairie, 1992: 2002; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 3; Reading, 2009, p. 13). Poor and crowed housing conditions can also indirectly be a factor in substance abuse and parenting difficulties, which may in turn negatively affect children's functioning in school (Knotsch & Kinnon, 2011, p. 27; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 3). Over-crowded living conditions have also been found to be correlated to youth substance abuse and violence as well as increased aggression in children (Knotsch & Kinnon, 2011, p. 27; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 4). As explained by Loppie Reading and Wein (2009) if a suboptimal environment is present, children and youth may not only be challenged with obstacles to ideal "physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development," but the problems they may face will most likely generate added stressors for their families and/or communities (p. 3-4). Although the numbers are declining,[7] Aboriginal people are still more likely than non-Aboriginal people to live in crowded conditions (Statistics Canada, 2006).

6 When discussing "Aboriginal youth, "this includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth. Age ranges can vary however typically encompass youth aged 15 to 24. More recently however, this has increased to include those up to 35, or sometimes beginning at 13. Statistics Canada defines youth as those between the ages of 15 to 24. Various Aboriginal organizations also have their own definitions. For example the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, The Métis National Council and the National Association of Friendship Centre use the 15 to 24 definition. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation, the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations define youth as those between the ages of 18 to 24. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami defines youth with a broader range inclusive of those 13 to 29. The Empowering Indigenous Youth in Governance and Leadership (EIYGL) youth led Aboriginal initiative, encompasses those aged 15 to 35. The National Aboriginal Role Model Program encompasses youth aged 13 to 30.

7 In 2006, 11% of Aboriginal people were living in homes with more than one person per room, which is down from 17% in 1996.

Similarly, family violence, which is experienced by Aboriginal people at a rate twice as high as compared to non-Aboriginal people (Perreault, 2011, p. 10), directly impacts all aspects of family health, particularly women's health, with a resulting negative impact on the physical and emotional health of children (Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 6; WHO, 2004, p. 33). Physical health impacts on children might include broken bones, fractures, and burns, among others (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health [NCCAH], 2009. Emotional health impacts might include depression, low self-worth, or anxiety, among others (NCCAH, 2009). Furthermore, according to the NCCAH (2009) family violence is also correlated with poor socio-economic circumstances, which in turn can also lead to stress, as well as incapacity to cope, thus, leading to occurrences of violence (p. 1).

A widely discussed risk factor related to both poor health and crime is also the abuse and/or misuse of alcohol (Brems, 1996; Segal, 1999; Brzozowski et al., 2006, p. 138; Yuan, Koss, Polacca, & Goldman, 2006). According to the 2000/01 Canadian Community Health Survey, 22.6% of Aboriginal people living off-reserve reported being heavy drinkers compared to 16.1% of non-Aboriginal people (Tjepkema, 2002). Heavy drinking is linked with suicidal behaviour, and suicide and deaths from unintentional injury (Borowsky, Resnick, Ireland, & Blum, 1999; Kettl & Bixler, 1993; Seale, Shellenberger, & Spence, 2006, p. 2). This risk factor, abuse and/or misuse of alcohol, has also been identified as being related to increases in excessive smoking, the health effects of which are clearly expressed in the high prevalence of cardiovascular disease in Aboriginal populations (Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 6; Retnakaran, Hanley, Connelly, Harris, & Zinman, 2005; Tjepkema, 2002, p. 7). The abuse of drugs and alcohol also increases risk for accidents, illness, disease and violence (Chansonneuve, 2007) and is often a factor in spousal homicide (Statistics Canada 2005).

Suicide rates among First Nations communities are about twice that of the total Canadian population (Kirmayer et al., 2007; Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003). The rate among Inuit people is even higher, with rates 6 to 11 times higher than the general population (Kirmayer et al., 2007, p. 1). However, there is ample variation in suicide rates when comparing different Aboriginal communities in Canada (Hallett et al., 2007; Kirmayer, Fraser, Fauras, & Whitely, 2009, p. 13). Chandler and Lalonde (1998) suggest that Aboriginal youth and young adults whose identity is weakened or challenged by essential or drastic individual or cultural change are put at exceptional risk of suicide because they lose vital guarantees that are essential to their security and welfare. They explain this as being a lapse in what they refer to as "cultural continuity." Any threat to personal or cultural identity poses a threat to community security and welfare, for example, limited access to traditional lands, and the lack of preservation of Aboriginal language would be an upset to cultural continuity (Hallett et al., 2007, p. 393). It is for reasons such as these that youth and young adults who are living through instants of this particularly dramatic change (thus interrupting their cultural continuity) experience high rates of suicide. More recently, Kral (2011) argued that suicide is a learned behaviour. Kral conducted research with Inuit for 17 years on suicide and cultural change, finding that it was common for Inuit youth to talk about and copy other suicides. Looking to patterns of suicide among Indigenous people outside of Canada, high rates of suicide are found among numerous Indigenous peoples who have encountered colonization or other forms of marginalization or cultural oppression (Kirmayer et al., 2009, p. 13). A similar notion is also discussed by Kral (2011), who found that colonialism dramatically disrupted family and romantic relations, also impacting high rates of suicide (p. 8).

Risk factors related to Aboriginal youth suicide have been summarized in a report by Kirmayer et al., (2009), and have included the following: male gender, victim of violence or physical abuse,

victim of bullying (for girls), perpetrator of violence or physical abuse, perpetrator of bullying (for boys), physical fighting, alcohol use, inhalant or solvent use, school problems, poor family environment, relative poverty, among others (p. 19).

Alcohol use has also been found to be correlated to homicide, family violence, and foetal alcohol syndrome (Seale et al., 2006, p. 2). Poor prenatal care as well as alcohol and tobacco use during pregnancy has also been found to be correlated to poor physical, emotional, and intellectual growth among Aboriginal children (Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 6). Furthermore, tobacco use during pregnancy has also been correlated to the mothers' illicit drug use, and non-completion of high school, among other factors (see Heaman & Chalmers, 2005).

Another widely discussed risk factor related to both poor health and crime affecting Aboriginal people is poverty (La Prairie, 1994, 2002; Lambertus, 2007; Latimer & Foss, 2004; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009; Tjepkema, 2002). This includes lack of access to material resources, such as nutrient rich food, which leads to high rates of obesity and diabetes, resulting in poor cardiovascular health as well as poor kidney health (Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 9; Tjepkema, 2002). Lack of exercise and poor diet has been associated with the epidemic of Type II Diabetes among Aboriginal adults and increasing rates among Aboriginal youth (Tjepkema, 2002, p. 7; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 6-7). The prevalence of diabetes among the off-reserve population is double that of the non-Aboriginal population (Tjepkema, 2002: 3).

There are also many health related consequences resulting from living in poverty while one is pregnant (Larson, 2007). This includes greater increased risks, preterm births, growth restrictions and possible infant death (Larson, 2007). In turn, children born to impoverished parents are at increased risk for delayed cognitive development and poor school performance, as well as behaviour problems throughout their youth and adolescence (Larson, 2007).

Poverty is also linked to social exclusion/marginalization, low social cohesion and increased crime (Jaccoud & Brassard, 2003; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 9). In turn, social exclusion/marginalization impedes some from pursing education and/or training (Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 9). Most significantly is the lack of control poverty creates, with resulting anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and low self-esteem (Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 9). This, and other types of psychosocial stress, has been correlated to crime and violence, addictions, poor parenting, and lack of social support (La Prairie, 1994; Lambertus, 2007; Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 9). A recent study has also linked parental psychosocial stress to increases in asthma in their children (see Lange et al., 2011).

Furthermore, suicide has also been identified as being correlated to poor mental health and substance abuse (Brems, 1996: Kirmayer et al., 2009), which is in turn, also linked to social exclusion/marginalization and poverty (Loppie Reading & Wein, 2009, p. 10). Mcleod and Shanahan (1996) have established that children's mental health is directly related to their family's history of living in poverty, and that children who grow up in poverty are more likely to have higher levels of depression and anti-social behaviour.

Evidence for Prevention Programs

Research has also overwhelmingly shown that young people may be the most amenable to intervention (Linden, 2001). There are many reviews of research confirming the importance of

early intervention for children and youth, which include the tackling of risk factors related to crime (Farrington & Welsh, 2007; Sherman et al., 1997; Waller, 2006; Welsh & Farrington, 2006). Research shows also that prevention programming can achieve reduced health costs (Dishion & Andrews, 1995; Sandler, Schoenfelder, Wolchik & MacKinnon, 2011; Smith et al., 2006). These reduced health costs include reductions in substance use/misuse, smoking, and addictions (Dishion & Andrews, 1995; Sandler et al., 2011), as well as foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) (Astley, 2004; Streissguth, et al., 2004).

Given Aboriginal peoples history of being dislocated from families, losing familial bonds, and undergoing obstructed parenting resulting from residential schools, family-focused parenting programs and other early intervention type programs, we argue, might have the potential for having an impact on healing, repairing or preventing some of these resulting intergenerational impacts.

There is a large body of evidence conducted on non-Aboriginal people that shows that prevention which seeks to tackle risk factors, can dramatically reduce such factors (for example see, Carr, 2006; Dishion & Andrews, 1995; Flicker, Turner, Waldron, Brody, & Ozechowski, 2008; Hahn, Leavitt & Aaron, 1994; Schweinhart, 2005; Sexton & Turner, 2010; Smith, Sells, Rodman & Reynolds, 2006). However, compared to general evidence-based research, that which is specific to Aboriginal people is much less (Monchalin, 2012). This means that many of the projects which show evidence for risk factors were not conducted on Aboriginal specific programs, or on programs that had a high degree of Aboriginal participation (Monchalin, 2012). However, more recently what might be termed as "promising" prevention evidence focused on Aboriginal people has been growing (for example see Carter, Straits & Hall, 2007; Gilchrist, Schinke, Trimble & Cvetkovich, 1987; Mushquash et al., 2007; Turner, Richards & Sanders, 2007). This type of evidence is beginning to be amassed in reviews of such research (for example see Bodson et al., 2008: 141-174; Capobianco, Shaw & Dubuc, 2003; Totten 2009; Monchalin 2012).

Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre is also building up an evidence library containing "promising" evidence-based Aboriginal programs. For example, The Kwanlin Dun First Nation's Project was a family-focused prevention program. It incorporated culturally specific components such as recognition of the extended family, and various cultural preferences (Public Safety Canada, 2007). The program was tested in 5 different sites across Canada including three sites in Edmonton (Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, and Terra Association), in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation Healthy Families Program in Whitehorse, Yukon (which was the Aboriginal specific site). The aim of the program was to reduce the risk factors associated with crime, including child abuse and neglect and exposure to domestic violence (Public Safety Canada, 2007). This program targeted parents with children between the ages of 0-6 who were considered at high risk of crime and victimization. It employed family home visitations by family support workers. The visitations incorporated three main components including, parenting, child development and parent-child interaction.

Both process and outcome evaluations were conducted on the program which were administered over a 32-month period, between July 1999 and December 2001 (Public Safety Canada, 2007). Pre- and post-test data was collected across the five different sites, with 370 clients (Public Safety Canada, 2007). The families in Prince Edward Island were used as the comparison group. Some of the key evaluation findings showed that, out of the five sites studied, four demonstrated

improvements in family functioning. All programs experienced improvements in parents' expectations of their children, and their levels of empathy and beliefs about punishment.

Parents felts that the best aspects of the program included: learning about child development and parenting, as well as gaining access to (and also learning about) local community services. They also noted their positive relationship with their family support worker. Parents also felt that the social support they received assisted them in becoming more child-focused, and they thought it enhanced their coping skills and assisted them in relationship building with others. In addition, only 5% of the program group had involvement with child welfare authorities, compared to 35% of the comparison group (Public Safety Canada, 2007).

Aboriginal Friendship Centres: Offering Preventative Programming

Many preventative programs are being delivered in Aboriginal centres and other non-government organizations in Canada (Monchalin, 2012). For example, Friendship Centres offer many essential programs for Canada's urban Aboriginal population. They are centres which were not only created by Aboriginal peoples, but are also run by and for Aboriginal people. Across Canada there are currently 119 Friendship Centres that are members of the National Association of Friendship Centres. These Friendship Centres offer a variety of social programming initiatives for children, youth and families; these have included sports, recreation, cultural education, teen parenting skills, family violence intervention, family support programs, substance abuse intervention, job skills training, and others.

Programming such as this may prove effective in reducing risk factors experienced by many Aboriginal peoples, and thus has potential to reduce the large degree of victimization, crime and poor health affecting some Aboriginal peoples. Even though the many programs offered through the Friendship Centres may not be labelled as "prevention," they are similar to what "effective prevention" is considered to be by researchers in the field (for example see Waller, 2006). These types of programming are sometimes referred to as "Crime Prevention through Social Development" and/or "Secondary Prevention" (see Hastings & Jamieson, 2002; Waller, Sansfaçon & Welsh, 1999; Waller & Weiler 1984). These are programs that focus on early identification and intervention in the lives of individuals or groups who are considered at-risk; and once these at-risk individuals, situations, places, or opportunities are identified, interventions designed to modify those risk factors are implemented with the hope that they might prevent undesired outcomes while increasing positive outcomes.

There is much research revealing the effectiveness of providing early intervention programming for young mothers, children and youth (see Crooks, Wolfe, Hughes, Jaffe & Chiodo, 2008; Mushquash et al., 2007; Olds et al., 1999; Sanders et al., 2003; Schweinhart, 2005; Turner et al., 2007). Friendship Centres across Canada deliver many similar programs as those described in much of the prevention programming literature (see Farrington & Welsh, 2007; Greenwood et al., 2001; Sherman, Farrington, Welsh, & Mackenzie & 2002; Sherman et al., 1997; Waller, 2006).

For example, many Friendship Centres, such as the Odawa Native Friendship Centre in Ottawa, the United Native Friendship Centre in Fort Frances, The Indian Friendship Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, and the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre (among others), offers an Aboriginal Healthy Babies Program that aids mothers with young infants. It provides information on taking care of their babies in a culturally relevant way. The program maintains a network of health and

social service providers to ensure that Aboriginal mothers with young children (prenatal to age six), have access to a range of social development, prevention and early intervention activities and initiatives. For example, the main tenet of the program is to provide home visiting services to urban Aboriginal families. Such services include parenting education and support, child development resources, meal planning and preparation, and traditional teaching in child rearing.

There is a large body of research evidence revealing that programs targeting young at-risk mothers can be effective in reducing child abuse. For example, one evidence-based project which is continually cited for its effectiveness is the Elmira (New York) Prenatal/Early Infancy Project (see Sherman et al., 2002; Sherman et al., 1997; Waller, 2006; Greenwood et al., 2001). This project was a randomized controlled trial which took a sample of 400[8] women in the Elmira, New York area who were low income (85%), unmarried, or younger than 19 years of age. The 400 participants were divided into two groups, with 200 receiving the home visits and the other 200 relying on the standard services being offered in the area at the time (Olds et al., p. 53). The home visits program consisted of public health nurses visiting these mothers. Similar to the Aboriginal Healthy Babies Program the nurses provided mothers with information on the health and development of their children while assisting them in developing supportive relationships with friends and family and other essential health and human services (Olds et al., p. 49).

An evaluation of the Elmira Program revealed that the mothers who took part in the program were less likely to abuse and neglect their children. There was an 80% reduction in verified cases of child abuse and neglect (through to age 15) as compared to a control group (Karoly et al., p. 32; Olds et al., p. 44,). Mothers in the program were also found to avoid substance abuse and other criminal behaviours more effectively when compared to a control group (Olds et al., p. 44). In addition, the children of the mothers who received the programming had 56% fewer arrests by age 15 as compared to a control group (Olds et al., p. 44, Waller, 2006, p. 26).

Furthermore, almost all Friendship Centres offer social development programming for children, teens and youth. A popular program offered by many of the Friendship Centres is the Akwe:go Program. This program provides a variety of social development activities to youth ages 7 to 12. For example, it offers life skills training, anger management training, and provides many different social supports that address poverty-related self-esteem issues. It also provides guidance on reducing victimization, on how to avoid peer pressure, and out-reach support to children in care. It promotes health and physical education and also supports children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Programs offering early intervention assistance for children, teens and youth have been cited as effective by many crime prevention researchers (see Farrington & Welsh, 2007; Sherman et al., 2002; Sherman et al., 1997; Waller, 2006; Welsh & Farrington, 2002). One commonly cited program is the Quantum Opportunities Project. This was a demonstration project which was carried out in five different U.S cities—San Antonio (TX), Philadelphia (PA), Milwaukee (WI), Saginaw (MI), and Oklahoma City (OK)—beginning in September 1989 (Hahn et al., 1994, p. 6). The program focused its prevention efforts on disadvantaged teens[9] and provided them with after-school developmental programming.

Similar to many programs offered through the Friendship Centres for teens and youth, the Quantum Opportunities program provided educational activities including tutoring, computer skills training,

8 Five hundred women were invited to participate; four hundred women actually enrolled (Olds et al., p. 53).

9 According to Hahn et al., (1994) this included high school aged youth who were from families receiving public assistance (p. 6).

life and family skills training, and guidance activities such as planning for post-secondary education or employment following graduation (Hahn et al, 1994; Greenwood et al., 2001).

An evaluation comparing the program and control groups was conducted throughout the duration of the program. This started in September 1989 (before the programming was delivered); questionnaires were given to all participants in both groups. The questionnaires were given to both groups again once the program started, first in the fall of 1990, then in 1991, and again in 1992 (Hahn et al., 1994: 7). Those who received the programming were more likely to graduate from high school and to enrol in post-secondary educational institutions. Moreover, they were more likely to receive an honour or award, were less likely to become pregnant, were less likely to be high school dropouts, and were therefore less likely to lead a life of crime as compared to the non-programming groups (Hahn et al., 1994; p. 15).

Furthermore, there is also research emphasizing the importance of providing programing in a culturally appropriate manner (see Monchalin, 2012). All programs provided at the Friendship Centres have an Aboriginal cultural component to them, or are delivered using Aboriginal traditional teachings and/or knowledge.

Programs, such as those identified above, as well as those provided by various Aboriginal Centres (both on and off reserve) may have the opportunity to make differences in the lives of Aboriginal peoples. Thus, offering a more viable strategy to reduce risk factors found to result in high rates of victimization, crime and poor health related outcomes among Aboriginal peoples.

Discussion and Next Steps

If reductions in crime and poor health affecting Aboriginal peoples are to be reduced, prevention programs tackling interrelated criminogenic and health risk factors could play a large role in achieving reductions. Utting (2003) suggests parenting education and family support as among the more promising potential contributors to a solution (p. 243).

A child or youth's socio-cultural context, including the family, influences learned healthy behaviours (Crossman, Sullivan & Benin, 2006). Early socialization and child development within the family and community contexts can contribute significantly to the development and maintenance of positive health indicators into adulthood (Kendall & Li, 2005). Consistent with an ecological perspective that considers the interpersonal environment an important influence on the behaviour of a given population, the family is also seen as a significant source of behavioural influence (Chea & Nelson, 2004). Children are also held in high regard in many traditional Aboriginal cultures. The family unit itself is often large and includes members of the extended family who assist in helping to raise the children (Dilworth-Anderson & Marshall, 1996). Therefore, programs focusing on children may also be favourable to those whose culture places importance on children and family.

However, before implementing a new prevention program based on similar models described in this paper, a thorough understanding of the population the program is seeking to serve is essential, in terms of needs, culture and any other specifics. Program models which take into consideration specific cultures, traditions and experiences of the people it is seeking to serve is important. Given Aboriginal peoples history of residential schools, and the resulting legacy from many of these experiences, programs which acknowledge this history, as well as acknowledge ongoing colonialism and current experiences, could pose as very beneficial. Programs that take into consideration the specific realities faced by Aboriginal youth such as child welfare

overrepresentation and forced off-reserve relocation for high-school education are also vital. This is also why Aboriginal centres, which provide programs by and for Aboriginal people, are essential, given they will have a better understanding and awareness of Aboriginal specific realities. Utilizing the already existing Friendship Centres and/or other Aboriginal organizations, and providing them with the proper resources, may play a role in breaking the multi-generational cycles of crime, disadvantage, and poor health that have plagued communities for far too long.

However, Aboriginal Friendship Centres have not received an increase in their core funding since 1988 (National Association of Friendship Centres, p. 8). Instead they are left to compete for funding with other organizations and departments. These are centres which provide urban Aboriginal people essential programming that may have a significant effect on reducing risk factors experienced by Aboriginal people. If properly funded and supported, they may also serve dual roles as both inspiration and a roadmap for other countries (for example, Australia and New Zealand) looking to effect similar changes.

If real reductions want to be made with regard to Aboriginal peoples' victimization, crime and health, and if improvements to overall quality of life are an authentic goal, the government must start recognizing that Aboriginal organizations that are currently in existence may be one way to make a difference. Given that these organizations are well-established and are already delivering many programs, if more funding was given to these Friendship Centres (and other similar centres), they could hire more people, and provide additional programming. Doing this would not only reduce crime and poor health, but also increase program potential and offerings, and at the same time increases job opportunities for Aboriginal people working in prevention, counselling and helping professions. Furthermore, if more funds were allocated, Friendship Centres would also be able to start to evaluate many of the programs that they have in operation in order to further determine where successes and improvements need to be made. Ultimately, research shows the potential positives prevention can have, and Aboriginal Centres, such as Friendship Centres already have a head start on such efforts. Therefore expanding and supporting these programs at these centres could prove beneficial on many fronts, most notably in terms of reducing crime and related health costs affecting Aboriginal peoples.

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Native Family Law, Indian Child Welfare Act and Tribal Sovereignty

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Abstract

There has been historical abuse of Native American children in the U.S. which began in the late 19th century in what is known as the residential school movement. It led to their forced integration on pain of removing and eradicating traces of their Indian heritage. The lack of protection for Indigenous children in being transferred from the reservations to non-Indian foster parents caused the U.S. Congress to use their legislative power and enact the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 [ICWA]. This has intervened in a process that is aimed at keeping Native American children within the tribe of their parents over the last 35 years. The result of the ICWA is that it has led to the greater supervision by tribal courts over children but it has caused a conflict to arise with the state courts due to jurisdictional reasons that allows guardianship and supervision to non-Indian parents. The Arizona Court of Appeals has recently ruled in Navajo Nation v. Arizona Department of Economic Security (2012) CA-JV 11-0123 that an Indian child can stay with his non-Native foster parents despite the protests of the tribe that it was infringing the provisions of the statute. This article is intended for the practitioner and policy makers and brings to the fore the issues of the preservation of children on reservation lands, and the need for a greater care consideration in the determination if they should be transferred to foster parents outside the tribe's jurisdiction. It also conducts a comparison with Canada where First Nations children have also suffered abuse and where there is an ongoing debate about the course of action to prevent the appropriation of children from the reserves to live with the non-Native foster parents.

Keywords:

Introduction

The Native American tribes are sovereign nations but their relationship with the U.S. is born from the instrument of federal statutes and judicial precedence. The Indian reservations are designated territories of the individual tribes who have their own tribunals where the tribal councils acts in a judicial capacity. They may have their own courts which apply their own laws and by-laws. The courts have jurisdiction in the realm of family laws and the most contentious disputes have arisen in child custody cases.

The U.S. Congress has a plenary authority over the Indian nations. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution states that "Congress shall have the power to regulate Commerce with foreign nations and among the several states, and with the Indian

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tribes".[1] The effect of this provision is that the Indian nations are recognised as competent in terms of promulgating their own codes and most of the 565 tribes in the US are governed by their own laws which provide them the jurisdictional powers except for the statutes that the U.S. Congress has enacted that permits federal courts' jurisdiction.[2]

The various Indian tribes have different degrees of sovereignty based on their historical relationship with the federal authorities. The U.S. government has not allocated a reservation to all the tribes but their sovereignty is implied even in the absence of reservation lands. The Department of the Interior exercises trustee jurisdiction over the Indian tribes and if the land is held is in trust then the state has no powers of taxation over the tribes territories.[3]

The powers of the Indigenous tribes to govern themselves has been restricted by a trilogy of Supreme Court judgments that have defined their status as a form of wardship. In Johnson v. M'Intosh[4] Chief Justice Marshall ruled that the colonial concept of "discovery" gave title to the U.S. government by whose subject, or by whose authority, it was made by all other European governments".[5]

This was followed by Cherokees v. Georgia[6] where Chief Justice Marshall held that the Cherokee Nation sovereignty had been "eviscerated and it existed only as a distinct society, but not as a political entity" and its relations to the U.S. was "as that of a ward to his guardian".[7] In the subsequent Worcester v. Georgia 31[8] the Chief Justice ruled that the state's jurisdiction did not extend to the Cherokee reservation because the Indian tribes were "domestic dependent nations".

The effect of these rulings is that the U.S. exercises a legislative power over the Indian nations. There is a duty of pre-emption that ties the Native people to the federal government in a bilateral relationship and the states are excluded from any exercise of jurisdiction unless such a power has been expressly reserved for them. It has been recognized in civil jurisdiction and extends to the domain of Family Law and child care cases.

The US government has enacted various statutes that have an express purpose of regulating the conduct of Native Americans. In Criminal Law there is the Major Crimes Act of 1885, that provides federal courts with the jurisdiction to try serious crimes when committed by Indians. The rule against double jeopardy does not apply to the serious crimes or felonies and the accused can be punished by their tribal courts and in the federal court.

The tribes are also bound by the I*ndian Civil Rights Act of 1968*, which incorporates the Bill of Rights of 1791 into the tribal constitutions. These protect the due process rights and oblige the

1 The Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 terminated the practice of the US entering into treaties with the tribes and it required the Federal Government to interact with the various tribes through enacting statutes. Section 1 states that"[n]o Indian nation or tribe within the territory of the United States shall be acknowledged or recognized as an independent nation. . .".

2 http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/faqs/tribal

3 http://www.ncai.org/about-tribes/Indians_101.pdf page 11

4 (8 Wheat) 543 (1823).

5 Page 574.

6 30 US 1 (1831).

7 Parah 10.

8 US 31 (6 Pet.) 515 (1832).

Indian tribes to exercise their power of self government to provide judicial redress to an accused person on reservation lands.[9]

However, the Indian courts are excluded from trying non-Indians who have committed crimes against Indians on reservation lands. This rule was confirmed in the case of Oliphant v Suquamish Indian Tribe[10] where the tribal authority had argued that it had inherent jurisdiction over the defendant who had committed a crime on their land and no treaty or act of Congress had removed its authority over the non-Indians. The Supreme Court held that the tribes' status was in accordance with the previous rulings of the Court that the plenary power over the Indians rested with the federal government.

Justice Rehnquist delivering the judgement of the Court in this case held that the " The history of Indian treaties in the United States is consistent with the principle that Indian tribes may not assume criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians without the permission of Congress."[11]

The main impact of civil laws governing the tribes is determined by the nature of relationship to the Native Americans. In private interactions there are complicated rules for the enrolled members of an Indian Reservation if they marry non-Indians. While there is no general rule, most tribes adhere to the practice that if an Indian seeks to divorce a non-Indian they would have the right to use the state courts as well as the tribal courts, but if a non-Indian seeks to divorce an Indian they would have recourse to only the reservation court.

The tribal court jurisdiction over divorce may involve those who are not domiciled or enrolled on the reservation. They will have to comply in attending the tribe's court on the basis of the domicile and status of the plaintiff. In the instance of a marriage various statutes come into effect such as the Uniform, Marriage and Divorce Act 1970 Part III which applies when there is a dissolution of property among the various claimants.

The main statute that governs the child care and welfare issues is the Indian Child Welfare Act 1978 that was promulgated in order to protect Native children from the guardianship of non-Native parents. It has jurisdiction over the adoption and child custody proceedings, foster care placement, and termination of parental rights. This does not include parental custody pursuant to divorce proceedings. The statute allows the tribal courts to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over adoption and custody of children who reside or are domiciled within the reservation of their tribe.

This article will consider the ICWA and its primary goals. It will then investigate the main object of maintaining the children within the care of the tribe and if that has been accomplished. This will be conducted by reviewing the case law in the U.S. and by examining the conflict between the state and the tribal courts and if it can be resolved by keeping the best interests of the child at the forefront. There will a comparison with the Canadian laws where the government has also been accused of discriminating against the Native families by appropriating children to provide care in non-Indian surroundings.

9 The *Indian Reorganization Act* in 1934 that had the effect of establishing the Tribal Courts. Section 476 allowed Indian nations to select from a catalogue of constitutional documents the enumerated powers for tribes and for tribal councils. While the Act did not specifically grant recognition to the Tribal Courts it is considered the authority of the tribe and not the US delegation paved the way for the Tribal Courts legitimacy.

10 435 U.S. 191 (1978).

11 Parah 198.

Objectives of the Child Welfare Act

In the late 1800s there was a forced policy of assimilation of the Indian children which was effected by removing the Native children from their natural homes and confining them in boarding schools. Their transfer from the reservations and their billeting in the these institutions was called the Boarding House movement. The largest institution in the U.S. which was responsible for placing and transforming the children's identity was the Thomas Carlyle Industrial School in Pennsylvania. This institution was founded by the U.S. Army officer R. H. Pratt in 1879 at a former military installation, and it became a model for other such schools.

Pratt narrated the philosophy of this school in a speech made in 1892: (H Pratt in The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites) pp 260-271

> "A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him and save the man." [12]

The ideology of such an institution was to immerse the Indians in white culture but the impact was immense in that the concept was founded that the Native people were uncivilised and their children could be appropriated for the purpose of wholesale integration in a white environment. There has been a detrimental effect on the Indian families through this process of non-Indian supervision and control and the federal government's plan to address the "Indian problem" by forcefully assimilating indigenous people into the dominant white population.

In an early inquiry into the effect of federal policy on the Native Americans the Merriam Report (1928) presented a compelling critique of the federal Indian policy in education, economic development and social policy towards the Native Americans.[13] It became the focus of promoting change that led to the *Indian Reorganisation Act* 1934 that reformulated federal policy towards the indigenous people.

The report was very critical of confining the children of American Indians in boarding schools. The report "found that children at federal residential schools were malnourished, overworked, harshly punished and poorly educated".[14] The findings also showed that the mandatory integration had retarded the progress of the Indians and that the exertions the children were forced to perform in the residential school environment constituted a violation of child labour laws in most states.[15] The discipline of the boarding schools was restrictive rather than developmental and the routine institutionalism was almost the invariable outcome of the boarding school programme.

In an attempt to deal with this gross abuse that has a historical connection the Indian Child Welfare Act was enacted in 1978. The objective of this statute was to prevent the high removal rate of Indian children from their traditional homes and their adoption by non-Indian parents. The statute under section 1902 grants placement preference for adoption of American Indian children initially to family members, secondly to members of the same tribe, and thirdly to members of another Indian tribe.

12 Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880-1900 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp 260-271.

13 The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey made at the request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and submitted to him, February 21, 1928 study) John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore (1928).

14 Page 351.

15 Ibid 382.

Peter K Wahl in Little Power to help Brenda ? (2000) page 811 writes on the issue of appropriation of Indian children prior to the enactment of the Act as follows:

> In the late 1960s and 1970s between 25 and 35% of all Indian children nationwide were separated from their families and living in an adoptive family, foster care or in an educational institution. Approximately, 85% of these Indian children were placed with non-Indian families.[16]

The ICWA permits tribal courts the major role in child custody proceedings which involve Indian children, by allocating their tribunals sole jurisdiction on the reservation upon which the child resides on, or is domiciled , or when the child is a ward of the tribe. There is also a presumed jurisdiction over non-reservation Native Americans' foster care placement applications.

The Rosebud Sioux tribe, for example, has jurisdiction under Chapter Two of its legal code over the subject matter of Family Law including rights of children. Section 2-2-1 states that the Rosebud Juvenile Court shall have the authority to hear any Petition for adoption involving any Indian child whose domicile or actual residence is within the exterior boundaries of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe or within Indian Country within the original boundaries of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Reservation, or where jurisdiction is conferred upon the Tribal Court by the Federal *Indian Child Welfare Act Public Law* 95-608.

Rule 3-1-4 of the Rosebud tribe's legal code provides jurisdiction to the juvenile court for hearing any civil disputes or for criminal trial. It states "that except as otherwise provided, the Juvenile Court shall have original jurisdiction over any Indian child domiciled or residing upon or found upon the Reservation, or who has been transferred to the Juvenile Court under the Indian Child Welfare Act, and over all persons having care, custody, or control of such children which includes circumstances in (1) concerning any child who has violated any Tribal, local, or municipal ordinance, within the jurisdiction of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe".

The Indian Tribes Department of Social Services deals with minors in custody after they have committed a criminal offence. They exercise the jurisdiction over a child on probation or under the protective supervision, or of a child who may be transferred by the tribal court to a Federal Court if this court consents in any pending action.

However, the main purpose of ICWA is the accommodation of children who no longer have a parental home. The statute has facilitated the issue of adoption and child custody proceedings that includes foster care placement, termination of parental rights and pre-adoptive and adoptive placement. The tribal court has jurisdiction providing the Native American parent does not object and these courts are willing to accept the referral.

This process does not include parental custody pursuant to divorce. In general the tribal courts have the powers to determine custody under section 1911 in accordance with the best interests of the child. The court determines that provision based upon a series of factors which includes the aspirations of the child's parent as to custody; the wishes of the child as to the custodian; the interaction and interrelationship of the child with the child's parent or parents, the child's siblings and any other person who may significantly affect the child's best interest; the child's adjustment to home, school and community; the mental and physical health of all individuals involved.

16 Peter K. Wall, Little Power to help Brenda? A Defence of the Indian Welfare Act and its continued Implementation in Minnesota. Mitchell Law Review. 216 Pp 811- 818 (2000).

The statute has vested powers on the tribe to ascertain the domicile of the child by determining the status of the parents. In the seminal case of Mississipi Band of Choctow Indians v Holyfield[17] the facts concerned parents who were both enrolled members of the Mississippi Band of Choctow Indians and residents of the Choctaw reservation. They had twins who were born out of wedlock in a hospital 200 miles from the reservation. When the parents separated the issue arose of the adoption.

The State argued that the children were born away from the reservation and were not domiciled in its parameters. Both parents executed consent to adoption forms in the chancery court in favor of Mrs. Holyfield who was non-Indian. The tribe tried to invalidate the decree on the ground that the ICWA vested the jurisdiction for adoption in the Tribal Court since the parents were domiciled on the reservation. It was refused and at the State court this decision was affirmed.

The Choctaw Nation then took the case to the US Supreme Court and argued that the term "domicile" for the purpose of the statute should be interpreted in the same manner as that of the parents. The Court granted certiorari but was split 6-3 based on the presumption that both the parents and the appellant had an equal interest in the welfare of the children. The judgment was to the effect that the ICWA would apply and the proper adjudicating body would be the Tribal Court.

The issue was the voluntary relinquishment by the Native parents of their Indian children and not a voluntary intrusion by the State. It was the involuntary separation of children from their families that was the focus of the ICWA. There has been a recent case filed in the Supreme Court involving a dispute between a Cherokee father and adoptive parents of the child. If the court grants certiorari then it may revisit some parts of the questions raised in Mississipi Band of Choctow Indians v Holyfield.

In Adoptive Couple v Cherokee Nation[18] the US Supreme Court has to determine the constitutionality of ICWA by a non-Indian couple. The questions presented to the judges are the following:

> Whether a non custodial parent can invoke ICWA to block an adoption voluntarily and lawfully initiated by a non-Indian parent under state law ?
>
> Whether ICWA defines parent in the Act to include an unwed biological father who has not complied with State law to attain legal status as parent ?

In the U.S. the statute governing the custody and adoption of children is the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction And Enforcement Act 1997. This instrument has the purpose of processing "interstate recognition and enforcement of child custody orders". The custody proceedings pertaining to an Indian child have been excluded by the section (A) Rule 3127.03 that states in " child custody proceeding that pertains to an Indian child as defined in the Indian Child Welfare Act, 25 U.S.C. 1901 et seq., it is not subject to sections 3127.01 - 3127.53 of the Revised Code to the extent that the proceeding are governed by the Indian Child Welfare Act. (B) A court of this state shall treat a tribe as if it were a state of the United States for the purpose of applying sections 3127.01 to 3127.53 of the Revised Code".

However, there is a clause that the treatment of the children has to be of sufficient standard as to merit the criteria of the UCCJEA. Under section (C) A child custody determination made by

17 490 US 30 (1989).

18 Docket No 27148) (2012).

a tribe under factual circumstances has to be "in substantial conformity with the jurisdictional standards of the Revised Code to be recognized and enforced by its sections".[19]

Blood Quantum Requirements

In order for a Native person to be considered a member of a tribe for the purposes of determining which court should have jurisdiction certain requirements need to be satisfied. The blood quantum determines whether a person is indigenous, although there are those tribes that do not impose blood quantum requirements in resolving tribal citizenship and whether one is "Indian". The U.S. tribes are not homogenous and many of them since the forced integration of their children have become heterogeneous.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs which is part of the Department of the Interior has used a "blood quantum" definition generally of one-fourth degree of American Indian "blood" and/or tribal membership to recognize a person as an American Indian. The individuals who are enrolled in federally recognized tribes receive a Certificate or Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, specifying a certain percentage of Indian blood.[20]

However, each tribe has a particular set of requirements, which include a blood quantum, for membership in the tribe and these vary widely and some tribes require at least a one-half Indian or tribal blood quantum; still others require a one-fourth blood quantum. In California and Oklahoma the tribes require a one-eighth, one-sixteenth, or one-thirty-second blood quantum; and some tribes have no minimum blood quantum requirement at all but require an explicitly documented tribal lineage. R Cook in Heart of Colonialism bleeds blood quantum.[21]

In recent times there has been an increased urbanization and interaction with nontribal members, thus facilitating marriage between various ethnic groups. As a consequence of increasing contact over 60% of all American Indians are married to non-Indians, which has certain implications pertaining to group membership (as established by blood quantum), heritage, and identity. Borderwich (1996) in Revolution in Indian country estimates that the US Congress has estimated that by the year 2080 there will be less than 8 % of American Indians who will have one-half or more Indian "blood" quantum.[22]

The child born of a mixed parentage with less then the required blood levels of the tribe has been determined to be a non-Indian in US v Cruz.[23] In this instance the 9th Circuit Court in Montana analysed whether a defendant in a criminal case could be prosecuted by a Federal Court under the laws of the U.S. The federal government contented that Cruz was Indian and committed an assault on tribal land, and could not be charged in a Federal Court under the Major Crimes Act 1886.

He was convicted in the District Court but appealed that he was not an Indian and, therefore, not subject to federal jurisdiction but state jurisdiction. He based his argument on the fact that his father was Hispanic and his mother was 29/64 Blackfeet Indian and 32/64 Blood Indian. The

19 Effective Date: 04-11-2005.

20 http://www.bia.gov/WhatWeDo/ServiceOverview/TribalGov/index.htm

21 Heart of Colonialism bleeds blood quantum. Roy Cook americanindiansource.com/bloodquantum.html Accessed 16/3/13.

22 F. M. Bordewich,"Revolution in Indian country," American Heritage, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 34–46, 1996.

23 9th Cir. (Feb 10th 2009).

Blackfeet are a federally recognised tribe based in northern Montana: the Blood Indians are a Canadian tribe. Cruz's genealogy showed that he is 29/128 Blackfeet Indian and 32/128 Blood Indian.

The Court affirmed that the evidence in this case does not demonstrate that Cruz is an Indian and remanded the matter back to the lower court with directions that it should acquit him of all federal charges. This analysis of blood quantum fixes the definition of qualification to being Indian very narrowly.

However, the courts have adopted a test of determining the Indian status of an individual. In US v Juvenile Male[24] an Indian minor who was charged in a Montana District court for committing crimes under the Major Crimes Act on an Indian reservation challenged the fact that he was an Indian. The juvenile who was one fourth Indian blood claimed that he does not identify as Indian, and that he was not socially recognized as Indian by other tribal members despite the fact that he was an enrolled member and received tribal benefits.

The Federal Court which took over jurisdiction in this case decided that the issue whether someone was an Indian had to be based on a case-by-case analysis. The bench held that there was a "specific "framework for determining an individual's Indian status and that US v Bruce[25] provided that authority. According to that case a defendant is an Indian if the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that he has (1) a sufficient degree of Indian blood (2) tribal or federal government recognition that he is an Indian; (3) enjoyment of the benefits of tribal affiliation; and (4) social recognition as an Indian through residence on a reservation and participation in Indian social life.[26]

Based on these considerations the juvenile may be deemed as an Indian even if he did not have the social connection with the tribe of which he was a member and lived on the reservation. The Court held in Bruce that "the Tribal enrollment is the common evidentiary means of establishing Indian status, but it is not the only means nor is it necessarily determinative."[27] This means that the juvenile defendant need not satisfy the test of social connection before it is determined that he is an Indian.

PN Limerack (1987) on page 338 writes in *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, that to "Set the blood quantum at one-quarter, hold to it as a rigid definition of Indians, let intermarriage proceed as it had for centuries, and eventually Indians will be defined out of existence. When that happens, the federal government will be freed of its persistent "Indian problem".[28]

There is also the distinction between those tribes whose members are quantified by relevance to the data of reservation, versus non-reservation-based membership criteria and degree of blood required. The data suggests that tribes located on reservations have maintained a higher blood quantum requirement as a consequence of geographic isolation. Their location has tended to isolate the tribe from non-Indians and intermarriage with them. Therefore, these tribes with

24 564 U.S. ___ (2011).

25 394 F.3d 1215 (9th Cir.2005).

26 Parah 1223–24.

27 Parah 1224.

28 P. N. Limerick, The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, NY, 1987. page 338

a more inclusive membership have set a lower (or nonexistent) blood quantum requirement since their populations generally have reduced interaction and intermarriage with non-Indian populations.[29]

Custody process of Indian children

There is a general rule that the tribal courts have a remit over all areas where they exercise jurisdiction. This requirement was established in Williams v Lee[30] which ensures that state law may not interfere with tribal self government in principle. The exercise of state jurisdiction in a matter where one of the parties resided on reservation land would undermine the authority of the tribal courts' over the tribes affairs, and hence would infringe on the right of the Indians to govern themselves. This rule extends to the non-Indian defendant in a divorce, custody and child care proceeding and the tribal court is the forum for a dissolution application.

In terms of precedence of how the courts will decide the child custody issue after termination of marriage according to the Williams v Lee principle there was a Supreme Court decision in the case of the Three Affiliated Tribes v. Wold Engineering.[31] The ruling was that the first-in-time temporary orders for custody issued by the Tribal Court fixing the domicile on the reservation would be upheld against the State's jurisdiction. The decision favoured tribal self government over state interference for the well being of the child.

The question becomes relevant of how it is applicable to child custody and support claims incidental to a divorce action between a non-Indian and an Indian. In Byzewski v Byzewski[32] an Indian mother Marilyn who was a resident and a domicile of the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation gave birth to a child outside the reservation. The issue arose whether the child's domicile was the Sioux reservation.

This was an appeal from a district court divorce judgement that led Indian husband Raphael August Byzewski, residing in Grand Forks County, to acquire custody of the couple's three children and an order that she pay child support. Marilynn asserted that the district court lacked subject matter jurisdiction to adjudicate Raphael's custody and support claims.

The North Dakota circuit court affirmed that each of these matters is governed by different jurisdictional principles in the state court. The issue was in meeting the subject matter and personal jurisdictional requirements to sever the marriage does not necessarily grant the court authority to adjudicate related incidents of the marriage. As the court cannot adjudicate a divorce contract unless it has jurisdiction over the defendant, it must have personal jurisdiction over a non-resident spouse in order to decide such matters of spousal obligations.

The ruling was that the marriage contract entered into within the state but outside reservation boundaries might arguably grant a court personal jurisdiction over an Indian domiciled on a reservation. However, they are not necessarily sufficient to grant the court subject matter jurisdiction under the principle set out in Williams v. Lee and the exercise of jurisdiction by the state would be deemed to interfere with the sovereignty of the Tribe.

29 R. Thornton, Tribal membership requirements and the demography of "old" and "new" Native Americans, Population Research and Policy Review, vol. 16, no. 1-2, pp. 33–42, 1997.

30 358 US 217 (1959)

31 476 U.S. 877, 106 S.Ct. 2305, 90 L.Ed.2d 881 (1986)

32 429 NW 2d 394 (ND 1988)

The Supreme Court's denial of state court jurisdiction provides non-Indian spouses of Indian persons to be subject to the tribal court jurisdiction without the benefit of Indian citizenship. This would not be a valid reason for finding there was no infringement upon tribal self-governance. The district court lacked subject matter jurisdiction over Raphael's child custody and support claims and accordingly, the divorce judgment was reversed and there was an award to Raphael of custody of the children and orders for Marilynn to pay support, was otherwise affirmed.

This infers that the district court can only adjudicate an interstate child custody dispute in an initial divorce proceeding under the provisions of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act, Chapter 14-14. However, this Act is inapplicable to jurisdictional disputes between a state court and a tribal court. It is a matter of constitutional principle that a court in a divorce action has personal jurisdiction over a non-resident spouse and an order to make a valid child custody award is not settled. A court gains personal jurisdiction over a defendant in accordance with the due process clause under the 5th Amendment. If the defendant has reasonable notice that an action has been commenced and there is a sufficient connection with the tribe "to make it fair to require defence of the action in the forum."

Inability of the ICWA to achieve its goals

The states are currently electing to bypass ICWA. This is because they have an interest in Indian children also and if the tribes are not providing the level of child protective services that is deemed appropriate, this provides reasonable grounds for a state to intervene on behalf of a needy child. They may, further argue, that the tribes lack the resources in many instances to provide the administrative oversight necessary to ensure child welfare and to handle all of the child care cases that arise within the tribe's jurisdiction. Accordingly, a reallocation of resources from the state to the tribe could improve tribal services and strengthen tribal jurisdiction.

The state courts in the US have recently applied a very stringent test under the child welfare provisions in allocating Indian children to non-Indian parents. In Navajo Nation v. Arizona Department of Economic Security[33] a petition was filed against the biological mother, alleging that the child was living in a drug house infested with cockroaches and had not been bathed or taken to a doctor since birth.

The court was unable to locate the mother to determine whether the ICWA applied and Z was placed with the brother and sister-in-law of the alleged father. A paternity test later proved the man was not the biological father and that Z was living with non-relatives. There was no other father who was identified.

The Arizona Court of Appeals affirmed the findings of the juvenile court in a ruling of a Navajo child, that the child was "rescued" from his parents' home at the age of 1 month, and would remain with non-Indian parents. It upheld a juvenile court decision that had grounds to deviate from the principles of the statute. The grounds were defined as the bond formed between the 2-year-old child, identified as "Z" and his guardians which was determined as an overriding factor.

Judge Kessler's judgement states:

> "While the interest of the [Navajo] Nation and the Congressionally-presumed interest of Z in maintaining his heritage weighed against a finding of good cause to deviate from the ICWA's

33 CA-JV 11-0123 (2012)

> preferences, on this record we cannot say the court erred in weighing all these interests," the appeals court wrote in a unanimous ruling.[34]

The Arizona DES recorded that the Navaho tribe had initially failed to offer alternative homes consistent with the ICWA and, Z had bonded with the family and would suffer severe distress if he was removed from that adoption. The Navaho Nation's argument that the court had not sought alternative homes with family or tribal members was overruled despite the 11 months the child had spent with his adoptive family. The Arizona Department of Economic Security had established that the family provided good care to the child and the biological Indian mother produced the names of six relatives who could care for the child.

The Court took into consideration the fact that the Act does not provide the 'good cause' guidelines for the non-Indian party to show that the child should be placed in their foster care other than with the Indian guardians. It followed the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs 1979 guidelines for state courts as examples of good grounds to deviate which are as follows: (1) a request to deviate that comes from the biological parents or the child (provided he or she is of "sufficient" age), (2) extraordinary physical or emotional needs of the child (as established by qualified expert testimony), and (3) the determination after a diligent search for a family that meets the placement preferences that a "suitable" family is not available.[35]

The critics of this decision have described this ruling as against the intention of the statute. The issue seems to be that the bonding has to occur and if it had taken place then there will be no transfer because this will harm the child when removed from a non-Indian home. This would allow the caretakers the same role as the parents and the ruling appears to deny that the child re-bond with their Indian guardians.

This ruling is in the aftermath of the South Carolina Supreme Court's decision in Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl.[36] In this case the prospective non-adoptive parents filed a petition seeking to adopt the child, and the father who was unwed was an enrolled member of the Cherokee Indian tribe opposed to the adoption. The tribe intervened on his behalf and at the Family Court, in Charleston County, the judge denied the petition and required prospective adoptive parents to transfer the child back to the Indian father.

However, the non-Indian prospective adoptive parents appealed and in the state Supreme Court CJ Toal, ruled as follows:

> (1) unwed, adjudicated father of child was a "parent" under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA); (2) father did not voluntarily consent to the relinquishment of his parental rights under the ICWA; (3) emotional bonding that occurred between prospective adoptive parents and child during contested adoption proceedings did not establish that father's prospective custody of child was likely to result in serious emotional or physical damage to child; and (4) child's best interests would be served by transferring custody from prospective adoptive parents to adjudicated father.

The Court held that the adoptive family and the child had bonded, but that the Act had set a clear objective about granting a placement preference to the biological family. The tribe won because it argued that the health and welfare of the child would be better looked after if the child

34 http://turtletalk.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/navajo-v-adec.pdf

35 www.aacasa.org/library/resources/.../TheChildWelfareSystem.pdf Accessed on 16/3/13

36 (2012) WL 30442287 No. 27148 (2012).

stayed with the Indian children. This has led to the argument that only a new statute can alter this outcome and the ICWA has limitations as it was only meant to preserve the relationship with the tribe of the child. This case is under appeal to the US Supreme Court (See above).

There is a basis for amending ICWA and the changes that are needed must take into account the abuse of Indian children and continuing exploitation. This is because it is obvious that the legal regime does not have the machinery to accommodate the children with their own families or the tribe when they are in foster care. The whole objective of the Act was to maintain the children within the social and cultural environment of the tribe.

The promulgation of the Indian Child Welfare Act was intended to retain children within the Indian tribal environment but it has not been successful in preventing these children from going into non-Native foster care. There is also the fact of substance abuse and higher crime rates among native children then in other communities. Lorie M. Graham (1998; p. 23) stated in "The Past Never Vanishes" that the federal policy reflected in the provisions of the Act that have not eliminated the problems historically associated with federal policy of non-Indian adoption.

Their findings were as follows:

> While the law is not flawless, it provides vital protection to Native American children, their families, and tribes. Yet recent studies suggest that one-fifth of all Native American children "are still being placed outside of their natural tribal and family environments." Courts, social welfare agencies, and attorneys who fail to follow the letter and spirit of the law have all contributed to this ongoing crisis. The "Existing Indian Family" doctrine, a state judicially created exception to the ICWA that has received some recent congressional support, is one such example.

While the doctrine varies slightly from state to state, the end results are the same: to cutoff a number of Native American children from their extended families and cultural heritages by thwarting the express language and goals of the ICWA and ignoring Indigenous views of what constitutes an "Indian family." It is in this way that the doctrine is reminiscent of past U.S. policies. Indeed, these recent challenges to the ICWA cannot be properly evaluated without placing them in the larger historical context of U.S. Indian policy toward American Indian children. The legacies of these policies remain with us today as Native American nations struggle to reconnect with their lost loved ones and maintain a sense of community for their children and their children's children. To ignore the past, as the author believes the Existing Indian Family doctrine does, is to risk reversing all that has been achieved by Native American nations in the past twenty years with respect to familial self-determination.[37]

An empirical investigation by Hillary L Barrows in A Literature Review of Child Welfare in American Indian families (2012 Pge 6 various shortcomings of the ICWA and the manner in which the Act is implemented. This points to a number of the procedural flaws in the care programmes that are currently being implemented. In the investigation of the South Dakota reservation the findings reveal as follows:

> The Indian children make up only 15% of the child population yet comprise more than half the children in foster care. The state is removing 700 Native children every year, sometimes in questionable circumstances [and] is also failing to place Native children with relatives or tribes.

37 Graham, Lorie M. 1998 The Past Never Vanishes: A Contextual Critique of the Existing Indian Family. Doctrine. American Indian Law Review, 23: 1.

There were 90% of American Indian children in foster care or in residential homes treatment are placed in non-Indian families. Poverty, crime and alcoholism are very real problems in these communities. There is priority on the reservations despite the federal government sending thousands of dollars for every child it takes.

Barrows informs that there was uncertainty and "Nobody knows when the placement will take place" and while ICWA protects Indian families "many of them are battling to protect their children". The research concludes with the recommendation that there should be "a holistic approach to Indian child welfare that would develop progammes to hold those on reservations find jobs and come to terms with their addictions making family reunification an option down the road. Establishing programmes to help adults with drug and alcohol abuse could also help children and teens with the same problems as they may be more likely to follow in the steps of their family members".[38]

There is further original research that corroborates these findings which determines the failings of eradicating the social deprivation on the reservations that lead to broken families needing the intervention of ICWA. There is high rate of crime, alcohol and drug abuse on the reservation from which the authors provide a causal link between the lack of supervision for children who are delinquents on the reservations and the shattered homes. Sullivan and Walters (2012) ask the question if "the ICWA helps place children with their tribes and kin, but who helps the parents who battle addiction or are in jail?" Sullivan and Walter in *Incentives and Cultural Bias Fuel the Foster System* (2012).[39]

Welfare policy for child removal in Canada

There are contemporary abuses of Indigenous children in Canada which parallels that of the US. This is premised on a high incidence of their removal from the care of their natural parents and transfer into guardianship by non-Native agencies. There is also a disproportionate amount of children from First Nation backgrounds who are being targeted for adoption by non-Indian parents.

The problem was recognised in the mid 1960s after the Hawthorn Report that was directed to child welfare services, which stated that the "the situation varies from unsatisfactory to appalling".[40] The findings confirmed that no Aboriginal people or organizations were consulted about the changes made to the Indian Act in 1951 to implement changes to the manner in which children's welfare was governed on First Nations Reserves. There was no commitment to preserve Aboriginal culture in these reforms.

In 1966 the federal government and the government of Manitoba entered into a contract to offer for the existing Children's Aid Societies of Central, Eastern and Western Manitoba to deliver child welfare services. The northern bands of First Nations continued to receive some services from the Department of Indian Affairs, but provincial child welfare authorities only intervened in emergency or very critical situations.

38 Hillary Burrows Social Work Project. University of Denver Fall Quarter 2012 SW 4018 (Page 6), https://portfolio.du.edu/portfolio/getportfoliofile?uid=223294.

39 Sullivan and Walter in Incentives and Cultural Bias Fuel the Foster System (2011) Parah 16-18 in Burrows study taken from http://www.npr.org/2011/10/25/141662357/incentives-and-cultural-bias-fuel-foster-system

40 H.B. Hawthorn ed A Survey of the Contemporary Indians in Canada. A Report on Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies, Vol 1 & 2 Ottawa: Canada Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1966, page 327.

The Canadian Council on Social Development recorded as follows: "In most provinces, these child welfare services were never provided in any kind of meaningful or culturally appropriate way. Instead of the counselling of families, or consultation with the community about alternatives to apprehending the child, the apprehension of Aboriginal children became the standard operating procedure with child welfare authorities in most provinces."[41]

Patrick Johnston, in *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (1983) undertook a survey of the prevailing Aboriginal child welfare strategy and compiled a statistical report of the child welfare system in Canada.[42] The Indian children were shown to be over-subscribed in the child welfare system comprising 40–50% in the province of Alberta, 60–70% of those in care in Saskatchewan, and some 50–60% in care in Manitoba. They were deemed to be 4.5 times more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be in the care of child welfare authorities.

The First Nations' representative Anthony Wood of God's River Indian Reserve was quoted in this investigation as follows:

> There was no publicity for years and years about the brutalization of our families and children by the larger Canadian society. Kidnapping was called placement in foster homes. Exporting Aboriginal children to the U.S. was called preparing Indian children for the future. Parents who were heartbroken by the destruction of their families were written off as incompetent people.[43]

The child welfare system replaced the residential schooling on the First Nations Reserves for the Native children and served to remove the indigenous children from their parents, but the programme of appropriating children was termed 'in the best interests of the child.' Johnston (1983) concludes with the premises that the Sixties Scoop was not a coincidence but was 'an outcome of fewer Indian children being sent to residential school and of the child welfare system emerging as the new method of colonization.

In retrospect, the wholesale apprehension of Native children during the Sixties Scoop appears to have been a terrible mistake. While some individual children may have benefitted, many did not. Nor did their families. And Native culture suffered one more of many severe blows. Unfortunately, the damage is still being done. While attitudes may have changed to some extent since the Sixties, Native children continue to be represented in the child welfare system at a much greater rate than non-native children.[44]

The study confirms that the outcome of the child welfare system was that it removed the Aboriginal children from their families, communities and cultures on the premises that the ideal homes for them were those that were those reflected the "white, middle-class homes in white, middle-class neighbourhoods." As a consequence of this strategy there were between the decade's span of 1971 and 1981 over "3,400 Aboriginal children were shipped away to adoptive parents in other societies, and sometimes in other countries."[45]

41 The Justice system and the Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Justice and Implementation System. Chapter 14. Child Welfare. sttp://www.ajic.mb.ca/volumel/chapter14.html.

42 P Johnston in Native Children and the Child Welfare System. Lorimer, Toronto (1983) Page 24.

43 Ibid Page 26.

44 Ibid page 62.

45 Ibid page 63.

Problems on First Nations Reserves in Canada

In Manitoba there was an enactment of the Child and Family Services Act (1979) that was aimed at preserving the First Nations child under the control of the Aboriginal homes. This is a reconciling statute that recognizes that the cultural sensitivity of aboriginal families and growing the children within their environment. However, this has not stemmed the tide of transfers from the Reserves to the non-Native parents for adoption. This is because of the prevailing poverty, alcoholic abuse and violence that has been considered to be a detrimental to the child's growth in these homes.

In *For Generations to Come: The Time Is Now: A Strategy for Aboriginal Family Healing* (1993) the co-authors Sylvia Maracle and Barbara Craig state as follows:

> The Aboriginal people have defined family violence as a consequence to colonization, forced assimilation, and cultural genocide; the learned negative, cumulative, multi-generational actions, values, beliefs, attitudes and behavioral patterns practiced by one or more people that weaken or destroy the harmony and well-being of an Aboriginal individual, family, extended family, community or nationhood."[46]

These problems were highlighted in a documentary report that premised their removal on the grounds of social welfare. Cindy Blackstock of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada was quoted in this report: "We actually have three times the number of First Nations children in child welfare care today than we did at the height of the residential schools."[47] The report's findings showed that 76,000 children in welfare care, of whom over 22,000 were actively waiting for adoption. There were many whose parents were victims of poverty.

There was another Canadian study conducted in March 1999 entitled *Our Way Home*, whose author Janet Budgell notes that in the Kenora region in 1981, "a staggering 85 per cent of the children in care were First Nations children, although First Nations people made up only 25 per cent of the population. The number of First Nations children adopted by non-First Nations parents increased fivefold from the early 1960s to the late 1970s. Non-First Nations families accounted for 78 per cent of the adoptions of First Nations children."[48]

Kenn Richard, who commissioned this report and who is the director of the Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, reflected on it as another phase of the integration process that started with the residential schooling in the 19th century. He said as follows:

> British colonialism has a certain process and formula, and it's been applied around the world with different populations, often Indigenous populations, in different countries that they choose to colonize. And that is to make people into good little Englishmen. Because the best ally you have is someone just like you. One of the ones you hear most about is obviously the residential schools, and residential schools have gotten considerable media attention over the past decade or so. And so it should, because it had a dramatic impact that we're still feeling today. But child welfare to a large extent picked up where residential schools left off.

46 S Maracle and B Craig as cited in Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities, An Aboriginal perspective, The National Clearing House on Family Violence, Cat H 72-21/150-1997E, http://www.phac.aspc.gc/ca/acfrcnivf/familyviolence/html/fvaorbor_ehtml. Accessed 17/3/13.

47 Cindy Blackstock of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on First Nations Child Welfare: Why if Canada wins, equality and justice lose, Children and Youth Services Review. Vol 33 Issue 1, Pages 187-194.

48 Janet Budgell in A Report to the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy on the Repatriation of Aboriginal People Removed by the Child Welfare System. Published by Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, 1999.

> We'll assimilate Aboriginal kids openly through the residential schools. And after we close the residential schools we'll quietly pick it up with child welfare.' It was never written down. But it was an organic process, part of the colonial process in general.[49]

In the period of the residential schools there were no records kept of the adoption records but that has now been made a compulsory requirement. The present figures reveal an optimum level of Aboriginal children being transferred on account of welfare needs and placed with non-Native parents. This is because it has been defined that they are unsuitable to be in the guardianship of First Nations Reserves because of their domestic circumstances which are not dissimilar to the Native Americans in the US. These circumstances are comprised of the violence, alcoholic and drug abuse that has caused the dysfunctional process to arise in the homes of these children.

Conclusion

The children of the Native American tribes in the US were victims of historical abuses that emanated from the residential school movement which forcibly transferred them to non-Indian homes and foster care. The *Indian Child Welfare Act* (1978) was deemed to be a preventative measure to stop their relocation in non-Indian surroundings and cultural framework. Its intention was to maintain them on the reservations and to keep them under the guardianship of the tribe to which their parents belonged.

However, the issue of non-Indian foster care and parentage has not dissipated and there are still a disproportionate number of these children being removed into non-Indian parental supervision. The problem can be sourced to the discretion available to the courts to exercise their power in keeping the children in non-Indian care and the inherent social ills that pervade on Indian reservations because of substance abuse and other social problems.

The Native American tribes generally exercise an original, exclusive jurisdiction over domestic matters including custody of children. There has been a conflict between the tribal courts and the state courts who should exercise the jurisdiction over the children in the event of marital breakdown or lack of parent or suitable guardian from the tribe. There is in principle a separation between the state jurisdiction and the tribal powers established by the judgment in Williams v Lee which led to the decision that the tribes are independent entities and the state cannot interfere in their jurisdiction. The tribes have the autonomy and the power to enforce the provisions of the ICWA in order to supervise the child within the reservation's boundary.

However, the state has a right based on its superior capacity in cases where the funds are at issue and it has the better standards of care and interest in the child. While the legal codes of individual tribes provide a role to the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 to prevent the displacement of the child the relocation cannot be stopped if there are non-Indian parents who can supervise the children as their guardians. This power can be enforced by the state courts because they have more economic resources in comparison to the tribes and they have to consider the welfare of the child as a supreme test in any case before them.

The judgement of the Navajo Nation v. Arizona DES was based on the principle that the non-Native parents could exercise their guardianship even if it is contrary to the intention of the Act. It provides a broad discretion to the courts in the interpretation of the ICWA and that can mean

49 K. Richard in First Peoples Child and Family Review, Vol No 1, September 2004, pages 101-109.

that the tribe will lose the right to maintain the child within an Indian environment if it cannot satisfy the test of keeping to a standard of care or guardianship.

At present the Supreme Court in the U.S. is considering if in principle a non-custodial parent can invoke ICWA to block an adoption voluntarily if it is commenced by a non-Indian parent under state law. This seems on the surface to increase the prospects of Indian children being taken into non-Indian care. There is a need to prevent that from happening by analysing the current process of adjudicating on the current remedies for the children who lack parental supervision. It has to be understood that the Native Americans suffer from the high incidence of poverty on the reservation. This leads to the substance abuse and crime by juveniles.

These problems mirror the problems that are being faced in First Nations Reserves in Canada. This is because the residential school movement that was replicated in Canada has left the same symptoms of despair in the Native families. This has led to dysfunctionality but rather than attacking the source of the illness and prevent the damage from Colonial polices the authorities are implementing a policy of removal from the homes on account of social welfare.

In order to address the cause and effect of the problems that lead to the removal of the Native children there needs to be a holistic approach will prevent the dissipation of the family structure. There has to be a comprehensive program formulated that will remove this degradation and there must be an implementation of a curriculum that will also guarantee that the children will not be transferred into foster care until available options on the reservation have been exhausted.

There is need for further legislation in the U.S. for the grant of jurisdictional rights to the Indian tribes. At present there is uncertainty and the tribal courts lack sufficient powers to appoint guardians who could supervise children if the parents are not deemed to be capable of looking after their children. It allows the state courts the right by default that had been taken from them by the ICWA, but it has not borne fruition due to the lack of a proper infrastructure on the reservations.

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L'intervention de groupe pour soutenir le passage à la vie adulte des jeunes autochtones issus des centres jeunesse et de deux communautés

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Le passage à la vie adulte des jeunes perçus comme « vulnérables » ou « en difficulté » est une préoccupation grandissante à la fois pour les praticiens et les décideurs publics (Goyette & Turcotte, 2004). On cherche par tous les moyens de les soutenir. Ces jeunes ont en effet tendance à être surreprésentés dans les populations marginales (ex. itinérants, toxicomanes, contrevenants, etc…) (La Prairie & Stenning, 2003; Tweddle, 2007; Guay & Grammond, 2010). Malgré de nombreuses études qui vantent les mérites de programmes ou d'interventions fondés sur la modification des attitudes et des comportements par l'apprentissage social et la transmission de connaissances (Coren et al., 2003; Harris & Franklin, 2003; Kissman, 1990; McDonell, Limber & Connor-Godbey, 2007), bon nombre de jeunes « en difficulté » rencontrent des difficultés d'insertion sociale et professionnelle au début de l'âge adulte (Goyette et Turcotte, 2004).

La littérature scientifique portant plus spécifiquement sur les conditions d'insertion sociale des jeunes autochtones révèle qu'ils doivent composer avec des obstacles qui leur sont particuliers tels que leur appartenance culturelle (Bousquet, 2005) et l'héritage des pensionnat (Graham, 2001). Au-delà d'une fierté d'appartenance à leur culture, les jeunes autochtones ont de la difficulté à arrimer leur appartenance culturelle à leur mode de vie contemporain, à se définir simultanément comme citoyen et autochtone (Bergeron, 2006). Outre le fait de se sentir tiraillés entre deux systèmes de valeurs, le manque de connaissance de soi et le peu de modèles d'identification qui s'offrent aux jeunes autochtones sont des facteurs qui inhibent leur mise en projet[1] à l'école et dans le monde du travail (Bergeron, 2006). Le modèle de la vie autonome véhiculé dans la littérature nord-américaine s'inscrit en décalage avec la perspective autochtone sur la transition à la vie adulte (Long et al., 2006) et laisse les intervenants en service social avec peu de moyens pour aider ces jeunes à cheminer.

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1 Leur intégration, leur réussite ou plus simplement leur cheminement.

Il s'agit là de constats préoccupants pour les organismes prestataires de services à la jeunesse, qui n'arrivent pas à soutenir ces jeunes de façon optimale dans leur processus d'insertion sociale. Il est donc impératif de tout mettre en œuvre pour aider les jeunes vulnérables et particulièrement les jeunes autochtones à franchir ce passage, particulièrement dans le cas des jeunes qui sont moins bien outillés, comme c'est le cas des jeunes issus des centres jeunesse[2] qui voient les services se terminer abruptement à l'âge de 18 ans après une mesure de placement.

Ce texte porte sur l'expérimentation d'un programme d'intervention, D'hier à demain, axé sur la préparation au passage à la vie adulte de jeunes autochtones ayant reçu des services des centres jeunesse (Grenier et al., 2010). Il relate les étapes de conception, d'implantation et d'évaluation de ce programme basé sur l'utilisation de la méthode de groupe. Le texte se divise en trois parties. La première fait état des défis que pose le passage à la vie adulte pour les jeunes autochtones vulnérables. La seconde partie présente le processus et les éléments qui ont servi au développement du programme D'hier à demain. La troisième partie relate le processus d'expérimentation du programme auprès des jeunes autochtones qui ont connu une trajectoire de services en centre jeunesse.

1. LES DÉFIS DU PASSAGE À LA VIE ADULTE

Comme le souligne Bidart (2006), la modification des conditions d'entrée dans la vie adulte observée depuis quelques décennies est associée à l'allongement de la jeunesse et à une désynchronisation des moments où se déroulent les transitions à la vie adulte. Le passage à la vie adulte prend maintenant la forme d'un processus qui s'étire dans le temps et qui, pour plusieurs jeunes, nécessite un soutien. Par ailleurs, les parcours d'entrée dans la vie adulte se sont diversifiés et ils sont maintenant marqués par des processus d'allers-retours et d'essais-erreurs (Charbonneau, 2004; Gauthier, 2000; Goyette et al., 2006; Goyette & als., 2010). Également, le passage à la vie adulte ne se réalise plus selon un modèle-type (occupation d'un emploi – mariage – achat d'une maison – enfant). Devenir adulte aujourd'hui veut non seulement dire franchir des étapes d'adaptation concrète, mais aussi effectuer sur le plan symbolique un travail de construction identitaire.

Dans le cas particulier des jeunes autochtones, selon Bousquet (2005), le défi particulier auquel ils font face aujourd'hui est de redéfinir une nouvelle façon d'être autochtone en contexte de réserve et hors réserve. Elle dénote d'ailleurs une intention des jeunes algonquins[3] de concilier les cultures autochtone et allochtone, en prenant garde, toutefois, de ne pas « virer blancs ». Ces jeunes ne s'inscrivent pas dans un processus de définition d'une double-identité, mais tentent au contraire de se construire une nouvelle identité autochtone, en empruntant à la fois à la tradition et à la modernité (Girard & Lutumba, 2004).

En opposition avec l'objectif d'autonomisation des jeunes en général, la culture autochtone traditionnelle se fonde sur une vision du monde qui valorise l'interdépendance du jeune et de la communauté (Long et al., 2006; Goyette et al., 2008). En ce sens, la capacité de maintenir un lien et d'être un soutien pour sa famille et sa communauté tout au long de sa vie est centrale pour les jeunes autochtones (Graham, 2001 ; Long et al., 2006; Munsell, 2004; Goyette et als. 2010). La transition à la vie adulte de ces jeunes est profondément marquée par le contraste des cultures autochtone et allochtone qui définissent différemment les critères d' « accomplissement adulte »

2 Les centres jeunesse sont les organismes chargés de l'application québécois de la loi sur la protection de la jeunesse.

3 Les algonquins sont une des dix nations autochtones du Québec.

et les conditions pour y parvenir, notamment en regard de la poursuite des études et de la réussite scolaire (Bousquet, 2005; Fox et al., 2005).

La prise en compte du conflit identitaire est donc un incontournable dans analyse des enjeux du passage à la vie adulte des jeunes autochtones et dans l'élaboration de modalités d'intervention des travailleurs sociaux pour soutenir ce passage.

2. LA CONCEPTION DU PROGRAMME

Pour accompagner des jeunes autochtones dans leur passage à la vie adulte, tout en reconnaissant cet écart entre les deux cultures, un modèle d'intervention de groupe auprès de la culture amérindienne, où la réalité est généralement prise en compte selon une perspective holistique qui entrevoit le monde à partir des connexions entre les personnes et les communautés (Stewart, 2009), a été développé. Le programme d'intervention de groupe construit dans le cadre de ce projet s'inspire de trois programmes visant la préparation au passage à la vie autonome, soit le programme Qualification des jeunes, Droit devant et Moi et Cie (Grenier et al, 2010). Des éléments tirés de ces programmes ont été adaptés pour tenir compte du concept de la roue médicinale (Loiselle, 2009), concept ancestral des populations amérindiennes et de l'entraide mutuelle en travail social.

Le programme Qualification des jeunes (PQJ) contribue à outiller les jeunes afin de développer des habiletés fonctionnelles, les préparer et les encadrer de manière à ce qu'ils puissent acquérir des compétences de la vie quotidienne, en plus de permettre de développer un réseau de soutien par l'entremise de diverses ressources (Association des centres jeunesses du Québec, 2011). Cependant, les habiletés fonctionnelles visées par le programme D'hier à demain sont davantage reliées à la culture et au mode de vie des jeunes autochtones.

La particularité du programme D'hier à demain (Grenier et al., 2010) réside avant tout dans la volonté d'offrir un contenu adapté sur le plan culturel, soit un contenu qui tient compte de la réalité de vie quotidienne des jeunes amérindiens et des questions qui les touchent plus particulièrement au moment de leur passage à la vie adulte. Ce programme se fonde sur l'aide mutuelle (Grenier et al., 2010). En travail social de groupe, ce modèle renvoie à une « utilisation holistique du groupe et reconnaît la valeur des forces des membres pour leur venir en aide » (Moyse Steinberg, 2008, p.34).

En proposant une intervention de groupe adapté à la réalité autochtone et plus près de leur conception du devenir adulte, le programme D'hier à demain offre une formule innovatrice aux intervenants qui désirent accompagner les jeunes autochtones dans leur passage à la vie adulte, cette période caractérisée par de multiples transitions. Ce programme a pour buts de permettre à des jeunes autochtones d'explorer différentes facettes du passage à la vie adulte et les amener à exprimer leurs désirs, leurs besoins et leurs craintes face à cette transition. Le programme est élaboré de façon à aider les jeunes autochtones à faire des prises de conscience personnelles et collectives par l'entremise de diverses activités jumelant la culture autochtone et occidentale. Les thèmes abordés dans le cadre du programme sont le rapport à soi et à ses origines, les projets résidentiels et professionnels, l'affirmation de soi, le réseau social et le soutien, les ressources environnantes, la contribution à sa communauté et l'accomplissement adulte. Pour ce faire, les activités proposées en lien avec ces thèmes tentent de s'insérer à l'intérieur de chacune des quatre dimensions de la roue médicinale, soit l'aspect spirituel, physique, émotif-relationnel et mental.

3. L'IMPLANTATION DU PROGRAMME

Pour documenter la façon dont le programme D'hier à demain a été implanté, deux sources d'information ont été utilisées : les jeunes qui ont participé et les intervenants. Les participants ont été rencontrés en entrevue individuelle à deux moments, soit avant le début des interventions et après la dernière rencontre. Lors de ces entrevues, ils ont été interrogés sur la façon dont ils avaient été recrutés, sur leur motivation à participer au programme, sur leurs attentes par rapport au groupe et sur leur appréciation du déroulement des activités.

Les intervenants ont été rencontrés au terme du programme. Ils ont été invités à faire part de leur vision de la mise en œuvre des activités et de leur appréciation des effets produits par l'intervention. Ces entretiens réunissaient les deux intervenants chargés du groupe.

Les commentaires des intervenants et des jeunes ont été regroupés en fonction de trois aspects liés à son implantation: (1) l'engagement des jeunes dans les groupes, (2) le respect de l'approche par les intervenants (aide mutuelle), et (3) la place du programme D'hier à demain dans les pratiques des centres jeunesse.

3.1 La formation des intervenants

Afin de préparer l'implantation du programme dans deux communautés autochtones, deux journées de formation ont été offertes en octobre 2010. Ces formations ont porté sur les particularités de l'intervention en contexte autochtone, sur les principes de l'animation de groupe et sur l'utilisation de l'aide mutuelle. Onze intervenants provenant d'une diversité de milieux d'intervention y ont été conviés par une personne-ressource du Centre jeunesse de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Les participants ont reçu un manuel de formation et d'intervention (Grenier et al., 2010) résumant les concepts-clés relatifs à l'intervention de groupe dans une perspective d'aide mutuelle. À la suite de cette formation, quatre intervenants ont été identifiés pour prendre en charge les groupes d'intervention, ils ont été pairés dans des équipes mixtes composées d'un intervenant du centre jeunesse et d'un intervenant rattaché à un organisme communautaire basé sur chacune des communautés. Une rencontre de mi-parcours a eu lieu avec les quatre intervenants en charge des groupes, ainsi qu'avec quelques partenaires qui désiraient suivre le processus d'implantation de près. Le but de cette rencontre était de permettre aux intervenants d'échanger entre eux à propos du déroulement des groupes, des obstacles rencontrés et des éléments qui constituaient pour eux des succès. La rencontre était aussi l'occasion de leur offrir de la supervision clinique. En tout temps durant la mise en place des groupes, le formateur est demeuré disponible pour offrir de la supervision. Cependant, les intervenants n'ont pas eu à faire appel à ses services.

3.2 Le recrutement

Le recrutement des jeunes pour la participation aux groupes a été assuré par les intervenants responsables de leur mise en œuvre. Conformément aux critères de sélection déterminés par l'équipe de recherche en collaboration avec les comités de soutien à l'implantation pour faire partie du programme, les jeunes devaient être âgés entre 16 et 21 ans, avoir reçu des services des Centres jeunesse et être autochtone. Ils devaient être volontaire et pouvoir se rendre disponible pour les groupes. Il est à noter que les jeunes sollicités étaient pour la plupart déjà connus des intervenants en charge du recrutement.

3.3 Les groupes

Le programme D'hier à demain s'est déroulé à l'hiver 2011 auprès de deux groupes mixtes de jeunes adultes (garçons et filles confondus) provenant de deux communautés autochtones. Dans le premier groupe, sept jeunes ont participé au programme, dont six filles et un garçon. L'âge moyen des participants était de 19,1 ans. La plupart des participants vivent toujours chez leurs parents. Environ la moitié de ces jeunes avaient un emploi et la plupart était célibataires. Le niveau de scolarité est faible, la plupart des jeunes n'ayant pas complété la deuxième année du secondaire. Toutefois, la majorité des jeunes fréquente toujours l'école aux adultes dans des cheminements particuliers. Il faut noter que plusieurs participants, soit environ la moitié, sont parents d'un enfant. En raison de la distance géographique entre Montréal, où est basée l'équipe de recherche, et l'Abitibi, nous n'avons pas eu d'accès prolongé au terrain, ce qui nous a occasionné des contraintes importantes lorsqu'est venu le temps de rencontrer les jeunes pour les entretiens post-tests (après l'expérimentation du groupe). Nous n'avons donc pu rejoindre que deux jeunes de ce groupe pour compléter un second entretien de recherche dans les délais prescrits.[4]

Dans le deuxième groupe, cinq jeunes avaient été sélectionnés comme participants, dont deux filles et trois garçons. L'âge moyen des jeunes de ce groupe est de 18,6 ans. Tous les participants demeurent chez leurs parents et sont sans emploi. Seulement une participante a décroché de l'école et les quatre autres fréquentent l'école aux adultes. Trois participants sont célibataires, tandis que deux sont en couple. Le niveau de scolarité des jeunes de ce groupe est similaire au groupe précédent. Ce groupe compte moins de parents comparativement au premier groupe. Des cinq jeunes de ce groupe, trois ont participé aux entretiens post-tests.

Sans être en mesure d'affirmer que les échantillons des deux groupes (12 jeunes adultes) de jeunes sont représentatifs de chaque communauté (seulement cinq jeunes pour le premier groupe et quatre jeunes pour le deuxième groupe ont complété l'outil au premier temps de mesure), les résultats apparaissent cohérents en regard de certains éléments du contexte propre à chaque communauté et observé par les chercheurs et les intervenants en charge des groupes (Goyette et al, 2012). Dans le souci de préserver l'identité de chaque communauté, nous nous contenterons simplement de mentionner que le premier groupe a été réalisé dans une communauté qui se situe plus loin de la ville, qui comporte beaucoup moins d'habitants et où les conditions de vie sont plus rudimentaires.[5] Quoique cette hypothèse demande à être confirmée par des recherches ultérieures, il est fort probable que l'ensemble de ces conditions favorise, pour le premier groupe, la consolidation d'une identité culturelle qui se distingue davantage de la culture dominante.

4. L'ÉVALUATION DES RÉSULTATS

4.1 Une approche culturellement adaptée

Le programme D'hier à demain (Grenier et al, 2010) se voulait avant tout une initiative culturellement adaptée.[6] L'approche qui sous-tend le programme ainsi que sa banque d'activités ont été pensées en fonction de cette préoccupation. Du point de vue de plusieurs intervenants, l'approche ouverte et participative qui sous-tend le groupe D'hier à demain a constitué une

4 Ceci limite notre possibilité de voir les changements sur les jeunes à long termes.

5 Sans électricité et eau courante.

6 Par culturellement adaptée, nous voulons dire qui tenait compte des différences culturelles.

formule gagnante en contexte autochtone. Les intervenants soulignent à cet effet que les jeunes ont particulièrement bien réagi aux moments de «déstructuration relative»[7] que permettait l'approche, et même qu'ils les ont appréciés.

Du point de vue de certains intervenants, les jeunes autochtones sont aussi plus à même de réaliser des apprentissages à partir d'activités qui leur permettent de cheminer à leur rythme. L'idée du « groupe par le groupe », à la base des approches mises de l'avant par le programme expérimenté, permet justement cette ouverture.

> « Je compare ça un petit peu à combien de jeunes autochtones sont aux études aux adultes mais qu'ils peuvent aller à leur rythme, en écoutant de la musique, plus sweet justement, tranquilles. Je vais à mon rythme puis je finirai quand je finirai. Je trouve que le groupe par le groupe c'est un petit peu ça aussi, en disant on commence, on ne sait pas comment ça va virer, on ne sait pas où on va aller exactement, mais on va les suivre puis on va s'adapter. C'est similaire un petit peu. » (Intervenant)

> « C'est qu'on faisait genre qu'est-ce qu'on voulait. On n'était pas à l'école. » (Jeune participant)

Il appert donc que le cheminement personnel des jeunes autochtones a été favorisé par la dynamique de partage authentique avec les autres membres du groupe, incluant les intervenants. Ce principe est fondamental dans le cadre d'un groupe mené dans l'optique de l'aide mutuelle, l'actualisation de dynamiques d'entraide témoignant d'une implantation réussie de l'approche.

L'approche de l'aide mutuelle s'est avérée particulièrement gagnante en contexte autochtone, parce qu'elle s'inscrit en cohérence avec les normes culturelles de non-interférence. Elle ouvre également vers la possibilité de créer un lien entre jeunes et intervenants sur la base d'un rapport égalitaire et significatif, en conformité avec les normes culturelles. Elle présente toutefois un défi supplémentaire lorsqu'elle est implantée dans les communautés caractérisées par une grande proximité physique et relationnelle de ses membres.[8]

4.2 Des activités non culturellement adaptées?

Les activités qui évoquaient des éléments de culture traditionnelle (ex. cérémonie de la sauge, discuter autour d'une légende, découvrir son animal totem) n'ont pas été particulièrement bien reçues par les jeunes. Plusieurs jeunes ont confié que ces activités ne les intéressaient pas et qu'ils n'en comprenaient pas le but.[9]

> « R- La première rencontre c'était genre une histoire. I- C'était une légende, c'est ça. R- Oui c'était une légende puis… I- C'était plus genre sur la culture autochtone ou quelque chose de même? R- Oui. Ça… I- Moins. R- Je n'étais pas très attentive à ça. I- C'est quoi qui t'énervait dans ça? R- Ben je ne comprenais pas l'histoire. » (Jeune participant)

Un jeune mentionne quant à lui que ce n'est pas le rôle des intervenants allochtones de transmettre la culture traditionnelle aux jeunes autochtones. On comprend facilement, à la lecture de son témoignage, son désir que ce soit les autochtones eux-mêmes qui se réapproprient leur culture.

7 Ce concept renvoie au moment où l'intervention n'est pas planifiée à l'avance, mais où elle se construit dans l'instant présent des interactions.

8 Ce qui se passe dans le groupe a nécessairement des impacts rapide à l'extérieur du groupe dans ce genre de communauté.

9 Cela nous renvoie aux travaux de Bousquet (2005) sur l'identité culturelle des jeunes autochtones. Pris entre deux cultures, ils développent leur propre culture qui n'est pas nécessairement celle que leur ainés souhaiteraient.

> « Mettons la culture autochtone c'est mes parents, ma mère ou ben mes grands-parents. C'est eux autres peut-être qui m'apprendraient plus tout qu'est-ce qui est histoire ou des affaires de même, l'histoire autochtone ou ben la trappe, des affaires de même.(…) C'était important mais je veux dire ce qu'ils nous apprennent… en tout cas je ne sais pas comment je pourrais dire ça… Eux autres c'est des Blancs, ça fait que je trouve que des Blancs pourquoi qu'ils viendraient nous apprendre la culture. » (Jeune participant)

Par ailleurs, plusieurs jeunes ont témoigné de leur malaise à porter la culture traditionnelle; ils ont exprimé leur désir de dépasser les clichés et de redéfinir et d'actualiser l'identité de jeune autochtone. Ainsi, la composante identitaire du programme est-t-elle des plus pertinentes, mais nous constatons qu'elle a été plutôt mal abordée dans le cadre du programme.

4.3 Vivre des expériences et bouger

les deux équipes d'intervenants ont relevé que les activités prévues au programme d'intervention de groupe devaient permettre aux jeunes autochtones de bouger et de vivre des expériences pour susciter leur intérêt. Ils ont donc adapté plusieurs activités pour les rendre plus stimulantes pour les jeunes sur le plan de la mise en action. Il s'agit de faire bouger les jeunes et non pas seulement de discuter ou de faire des activités plus passives, comme réaliser un bricolage ou regarder un film.

> « On le sait qu'avec les jeunes autochtones ici ce qui marche c'est tout ce qui est tactile, visuel, c'est de les mettre beaucoup plus en action. (…) On s'est vraiment adaptés pour les faire participer au maximum. Là c'était les mises en situation. » (Intervenant)

À ce sujet, il est intéressant de constater que le groupe a été perçu par plusieurs jeunes autochtones comme une occasion de contrer l'inactivité. Les communautés sont décrites par les jeunes comme des lieux où il n'y a pas grand chose de constructif à faire. Ils ont donc apprécié l'opportunité que représente le groupe au niveau de la mise en action.

5 Impacts du groupe sur les jeunes

5.1 Espace de prises de conscience

Selon le discours des jeunes autochtones, l'effet principal que le groupe a eu sur eux consiste en la réalisation de prises de conscience. Ainsi, le groupe est avant tout perçu comme une opportunité d' « élargir ses horizons » et « d'ouvrir des voies ».

> « Disons que ça me servait à m'amener d'autres expériences, de voir d'autres frontières que celles que j'ai aujourd'hui. Ça élargit mes horizons. » (Jeune participant)

Les jeunes autochtones voient le groupe comme une occasion privilégiée d'être confrontés à différentes opinions et de prendre le temps de les considérer. Les jeunes autochtones ont démontré une ouverture plus grande devant les opportunités qu'offrait le groupe de se questionner sur leurs croyances, leurs comportements et leurs valeurs.

> « I- Tu pourrais-tu me donner un exemple de qu'est-ce que ça pourrait être les changements? R- Ça pourrait être que je pourrais être un peu plus ouvert d'esprit sur les opinions des autres. I- Oui? R- Oui avant je ne faisais pas ça. Avant c'était juste mon opinion puis that's it, that's all. (…) C'était vraiment j'avais une idée… I- Chacun son idée. R- Chacun son idée puis…

> I- Personne ne vous avait jamais fait partager dans le fond vos idées? R- Non, c'était vraiment chacun notre idée puis si tu es pas d'accord avec mon idée ben tu vas jouer là-bas. » (Jeune participant)

5.2 Créer des liens

Le groupe se présente comme un espace de création de liens, à la fois du point de vue des jeunes et des intervenants. C'est d'abord une occasion pour les jeunes de créer des liens avec d'autres jeunes, ou encore, de renforcer les relations qui existent déjà entre eux. À cet effet, certains jeunes soulignent à quel point ils ont apprécié l'opportunité de se rencontrer pour parler de sujets qu'ils n'avaient jamais encore évoqués ensemble.

> « R- Mettons comme dans les rencontres, il y avait des trucs plus personnels. Je ne sais pas comment dire ça. Ils n'en parlent pas mais… on n'en parle pas… I- Vous n'aviez jamais parlé de ça? R- Non. I- Ça c'était tu quelque chose de positif mettons d'amener des sujets que… R- Oui. Mon ami il venait, on dirait que je le connais plus. » (Jeune participant)

Le groupe est aussi une occasion pour les jeunes et les intervenants de réparer un lien fragilisé et souvent caractérisé à la base par un manque de confiance mutuel. Les différentes activités ont permis aux jeunes autochtones et aux intervenants d'apprendre à se faire confiance et à s'entraider. Ainsi, le groupe a représenté un espace d'entraide pour bon nombre de jeunes. Ces derniers ont notamment pu se confier entre eux à propos de leurs difficultés, et ils disent s'être sentis compris et acceptés dans ce partage.

> « J'ai trouvé ça le fun, on s'entendait pis il y a des affaires que je vivais que les autres vivaient, ça fait qu'on a pu s'en parler. (…) J'aime pas ça parler de moi avec des gens plus vieux ou des gens comme mes parents. Mais ici il y a des gens qui me comprennent pis ils sont comme « Oui moi aussi j'ai vécu ça. » (Jeune participant)

Le groupe lie les participants entre eux. Cette cohésion fonctionne comme le moteur du groupe, à tel point que le départ inattendu d'un participant peut être vécu comme une expérience de rejet ou d'abandon par d'autres membres du groupe.

> « Un des participants a lâché prise comme à la troisième rencontre. Ça fait que ça n'a pas aidé. (…) Ben on était un groupe pis on se tenait, pis lui il a décidé de sacrer son camp. » (Jeune participant)

5.3 Espace d'appropriation

De façon plus évidente pour les jeunes ayant vécu un placement en centre jeunesse, le groupe se présente comme un espace d'appropriation. Ces derniers mentionnent que dans le contexte du placement, ils ont généralement peu de latitude pour s'exprimer librement. On fait peu de place à leur participation dans les décisions qui les concernent.

> « C'était différent parce que là c'était notre place pour parler dans le fond. Les autres groupes mettons que c'était juste que tu avais des choses à suivre, mais là c'était notre place pour parler. (…) C'était comme un collectif. (…) On se partageait des affaires pis ça restait confidentiel. » (Jeune participant)

Si le groupe est un espace d'appropriation au sens où il donne la parole aux jeunes, il peut aussi l'être en permettant aux jeunes de se construire en se positionnant personnellement par

rapport aux enjeux qui les concernent. Or, cet effet est surtout observé dans les groupes où les intervenants se sont dits plus à l'aise à mettre en œuvre les approches de la facilitation (Schwarz et al., 2005) et de l'aide mutuelle (Moyse Steinberg, 2008).

En effet, la facilitation est un processus à travers lequel une personne qui est acceptée par tous les participants, qui est neutre et qui n'a pas de pouvoir particulier sur le groupe, intervient pour les aider à améliorer la façon selon laquelle ils identifient les problèmes, les résolvent et prennent des décisions (Schwarz et al., 2005). L'aide mutuelle quant à elle apparait spontanément dans les groupes s'il y a assez d'espace de disponible pour faciliter les échanges constructif (Moyse Steinberg, 2008).

5.4 Espace de valorisation

Le groupe apparaît par ailleurs comme un espace de valorisation pour les jeunes. À travers l'ensemble des activités réalisées, les jeunes confient avoir vécu des réussites, ce qui a contribué à favoriser leur estime de soi.

Le parcours dans le groupe a aussi permis à certains jeunes de se sentir davantage en mesure de faire face aux défis qui les attendent et plus confiants par rapport à leurs perspectives d'avenir. Le groupe a conduit ces jeunes à envisager l'avenir avec davantage d'espoir et de confiance, en les amenant à considérer les possibilités plutôt que les obstacles.

> « Je me sens plus confiant envers moi-même aussi pour le futur, même si j'ai encore des zones ombragées, des zones nébuleuses. Mais je me sens plus confiant pour aller droit devant. » (Jeune participant)

Le groupe a aussi été l'occasion pour certains jeunes non seulement de se prouver à eux-mêmes qu'ils étaient capables d'affronter les défis qui les attendent, mais aussi d'en faire la démonstration aux intervenants présents dans leur vie et aux personnes de leur entourage.

CONCLUSION

En terminant, à la lumière de cette étude, les programmes d'intervention de groupe fondés sur l'approche d'aide mutuelle, comme le programme D'hier à demain, devraient être intégrés au curriculum régulier d'interventions destinées aux jeunes en transition à la vie adulte. Ce type de programme permet aux jeunes de s'autonomiser par le vécu d'expériences concrètes, de soutenir leur construction identitaire et de réparer le lien parfois précaire entre les jeunes et les organismes et établissements prestataires de services sociaux. L'analyse thématique du discours des jeunes participants et des intervenants met en valeur que le programme d'Hier à Demain a permis l'émergence de dynamiques de groupe constructives pour les jeunes autochtones, dans le sens où elles soutiennent leur cheminement vers l'autonomie. Le groupe est un espace d'apprentissage et de conscientisation, d'appropriation, de création de liens, de valorisation et d'appartenance.

Il est impératif de considérer à la fois les jeunes et les intervenants comme des acteurs de premier plan dans le processus de transformation des pratiques. C'est à partir des jeunes que les interventions doivent être pensées, dans le respect de leur volonté et de leur autonomie. Cette façon d'envisager la pratique, telle que soutenue par cette recherche, répond à une conception de l'efficacité, qui renvoie davantage à l'idée d'une adéquation entre les interventions mises en œuvre et les besoins réels des communautés cibles.

Les résultats de cette expérience indiquent qu'une approche d'intervention de groupe axée sur l'aide mutuelle est susceptible de rejoindre plus facilement les jeunes qui se montrent plutôt réfractaires aux approches plus directives. En effet, l'expérience de groupe a été perçue par plusieurs jeunes comme différente des interventions habituelles qui sont souvent critiquées par les jeunes. De par son contraste avec le caractère normatif, directif et parfois « ennuyeux » des interventions menées en contexte d'autorité qui sollicitent peu les jeunes dans la définition des orientations à prendre et des activités à réaliser, l'intervention de groupe qui mise sur une participation accrue des jeunes permet manifestement, de les placer dans une position plus intéressante en leur redonnant du pouvoir dans tout le processus.

En plus de contribuer à développer des liens particulièrement étroits entre eux et de les amener à effectuer un travail en profondeur sur eux-mêmes, le groupe axé sur l'aide mutuelle s'est révélé une excellente tribune où les jeunes autochtones ont pu mettre à profit leur autodétermination et briser leur oisiveté.

Dans la perspective de toujours travailler à une meilleure adaptation du programme sur le plan culturel, les activités du programme d'Hier à demain devraient être conçues pour faire bouger les jeunes autochtones encore davantage, de façon à susciter leur intérêt, et pour favoriser les prises de conscience et les apprentissages par le groupe.

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