



FCSS Calgary has adopted a social sustainability framework to serve as a blueprint for its social planning, investment decisions, and funding practices. Within this framework, FCSS has identified two investment priorities for the next decade: strengthening neighbourhoods and increasing social inclusion.

This literature review was commissioned to highlight best or promising practices in programs, practices and/or underlying philosophies that undertake a preventative approach in Aboriginal programs or communities. Specifically, these preventative approaches will occur through the means of decreasing social isolation and increasing social ties.

highlights

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Aboriginal People Helping Aboriginal People: decreasing social exclusion & increasing social ties



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The issue

Rather than using specific programming areas such as addictions, recreation, or employment ... as a starting point to find best or promising practices, the key concepts used to navigate the literature were drawn from FCSS' outcomes terminology of social ties and social inclusion, along with prevention. Other related concepts came into play as well. It was felt this approach would ensure that the literature review remains focused on FCSS' investment goals and outcomes. In doing so, the program area becomes the vehicle through which decreased social exclusion and increased social ties can be delivered.

Finding numerous examples of "best" or "promising" practices in preventative Aboriginal programs that operationalizes or results in decreasing social exclusion and increasing social ties proved to be a challenge. What did emerge was information that formed more of a set of concepts, processes and approaches, rather than "packaged" programs to replicate locally. There are a few potentially useful examples that could be considered case studies of communities and Aboriginal groups that used some of these approaches, concepts and processes and, as a result, experienced positive change or seem to be on a journey towards that result. Hopefully this will be useful to FCSS and its funded agencies. It does open the door to creating some innovative programs through some of these processes, approaches and concepts and a rare opportunity to realign existing programs to "empower" and "strengthen" communities simply by engaging in this different type of work.



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For example, community development approaches are employed with the intent that through the process of community members identifying their own issues, having input into program creation and implementation and even participating in the evaluation, the Aboriginal program participants become the central actors (or at least increase) in control of the social and political environments that impact their lives.

In summary, the highlights of the findings are as follows:

- Build a solid foundation in Aboriginal culture, language and spirituality through community development process' is explicitly recommended for success. Given that Calgary is an urban center and its Aboriginal community a culturally diverse one, avoiding a pan-Aboriginal approach is advised. Programs should also incorporate this at any given opportunity, including knowledge transmission to teach, communicate, and share information.
- Use the basic tenements of a community development approach—suggesting that community members drive their own process of change, including identifying their own issues, choosing own priorities, having as much decision making power as possible, including what types of activities they would like to participate in. One case study revealed a self-imposed journey of organizational change in response to low participation rates in services and switched to community development principals in all their interactions, such as capacity building, leadership development, etc ...
- Acknowledge the role of the service provider—changing from providing “service” per say, sometimes in a case management style, to a supporter and facilitator of community groups and members. This includes the provision of information.
- Use oral traditions, including story telling—for many purposes, within many program contexts, which produces many benefits and can even be combined with modern approaches if desired.
- Re-think social exclusion—if program participation rates are low, it may worthwhile to look at the reasons behind it to respond appropriately.
- Use family-based programs—which are generally seen as more culturally appropriate but ensuring that all family members are included, particularly men. This is related to identifying values and norms for behavior and attitudes—building a program and incorporating measures in it, that take into account who the primary influencers are in a program participant’s life or social networks can make or break the program, as norms and values can be powerful influences on attitude, behaviors and choices.
- Mentoring—from an Aboriginal perspective, seen as more organic and incorporating more culturally based practices and approaches.

Introduction

The City of Calgary FCSS is implementing an investment framework with new intermediate outcomes and ten-year outcomes. Two overriding priorities that will guide FCSS' investment decisions on programming, are articulated as the following:

- Priority 1: Strengthening neighborhoods—target: focused neighborhoods
- Priority 2: Increasing Social Inclusion—target: vulnerable populations

The overriding priority relevant to this document that focuses on services for Aboriginal people is Priority 2, which is increasing social inclusion. Its ten year ultimate outcome and intermediate outcome is as follows:

- ten year ultimate outcome: Increased social inclusion among vulnerable Calgarians participating in FCSS-funded programs and initiatives in Calgary.
- intermediate outcome: increasing positive social ties.

Specific areas of investment linked to each intermediate outcome have been articulated. In terms of the identified vulnerable population of Aboriginal peoples, FCSS' investment areas in programming are identified as follows:

- supports to assist in the transition from rural/reserve communities to urban settings
- culturally-based programs to support individual development and to help re-establish linkages to families and/or Aboriginal communities
- Aboriginal mentoring and role modeling programs to support individual development
- community engagement and development initiatives/programs that are culturally-based and culturally appropriate

FCSS commissioned this literature review as part of the implementation process of this funding framework. FCSS will use it for discussion in an upcoming consultation with representatives from FCSS' currently funded Aboriginal agencies/programs.

The main content of this review is organized into two sections highlighting the two major categories of types of information found in the literature: processes and concepts; and, best or promising practices of programs and initiatives. Since specific "best practices" in established programs were challenging to find, key phrases or words that may spark ideas for the reader to create programs and initiatives that might lead to effective service delivery in prevention, are italicized.

FCSS stressed the importance of finding information that can be applied by and through Aboriginal agencies and groups to serve Aboriginal people. Practices, programs, approaches and philosophies found in this review needed to be authentic to Aboriginal people to increase the likelihood of success. To ensure utility, the final document was to be brief in length. To ensure that agencies and community members find the information accessible, the review now turns to the matter of terminology or "jargon" found in the literature.



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... learning how people define terminology or view concepts seems essential to understand how they view programs ... the resulting changes ... their level of commitment to continued change, and how they might commit.

A word on terminology

In its funding framework, FCSS framework uses particular terms. These terms and others related to them are also found in the literature. These are often western terms that originate from and/or are used in various disciplines including psychology, health, community development, sociology, and social work. Some of this terminology is now jargon in mainstream public and not-for-profit sectors and are used commonly in activities such as funding, research, program design, evaluation and community development.

The following is a list of the words used by FCSS: prevention; social inclusion; evidence-based programs and practices; best practices; promising practices; operational capacity; neighborhood capacity and capacity building; vulnerable populations; vulnerable Aboriginal peoples; and, dimensions of strong neighborhoods.

FCSS asked the writer to demystify these terms in the literature review. An attempt is made to do this through two means: (1) including information on Aboriginal perspectives on the meaning and/or use of various terms where found in the literature; and, (2) by strongly recommending that these alternative meanings and/or use be validated and possibly adjusted to the preferences of Calgary's urban Aboriginal community in the discussion and implementation phases of FCSS' funding realignment process.

Munoz (2002) was conscientious of the differences in meaning between international agencies and funding bodies' terminology vs. Indigenous people's terminology and concepts; this observation emerges from a review of her thesis, particularly through a discussion on the concept of "development".¹ She asked Indigenous women to convey their thoughts and experiences from their past participation in local projects through the use of journals as way to add to her data collection for her study. She writes of the many profound impacts on the participants that emerged from the process of journaling.² The journals turned out to be an authentic way for the participants to make their own personal meaning from their experience, without the imposition of outside definitions and meaning; the participants expressed their thoughts by writing, but also by drawing symbols from the natural world that were relevant to them. Clearly, learning how people define terminology or view concepts seems essential to understand how they view programs, how they might view the resulting changes in their lives, their level of commitment to continued change, and how they might commit.

Some additional comments on the issue of terminology are important to make because the scope of impact that language and terminology can have should not be underestimated. Language shapes beliefs, action and no less than worldview, it also shapes discourse in the public purview. In that realm, there is real potential to create



ineffective or even harmful interventions, policies and programs because of misunderstandings occurring in discourse and dialogue amongst all stakeholders. It is crucial that the reader and that the Aboriginal agencies working with FCSS be aware of how FCSS defines the terminology in its framework. Meaning and usage of these words not only vary amongst sectors and disciplines in mainstream society, but they also may have very different meanings from an Aboriginal perspective.

An example of this is the word “resilience”. In the literature the term usually encapsulates protective factors or risk reduction factors. From some Aboriginal perspectives however, resilience is seen as part of the ability to live a good life and a natural, human capacity to navigate life well³ and an element of risk need not necessarily be involved. In other cases, the core concepts of terms may be shared by Aboriginal and mainstream communities, but may differ in the terminology of naming⁴ the concept and in its application. “Mentoring” is a prime example of this - while both the mainstream perspectives and the Aboriginal perspectives of mentoring share⁵ the ideas of caring, teaching, guiding and sharing, the preferred applications of mentoring in Aboriginal communities tend to be group mentoring,⁶ peer mentoring and viewing the mentee’s family⁷ as an important partner in the mentoring process.

Cindy Blackstock, from the Gitksan Nation and an expert in the field of child and family services, eloquently illustrates these cautions on terminology in an interview at the 2003 Social Inclusion Research Conference where she was a presenter. In response to an interview question, she answered that she never conceptualized her work within a social inclusion framework but within reconciliation and social justice.⁸ When asked, she said the idea of social inclusion has not helped her because neither she nor her colleagues have received information or been invited to dialogue about social inclusion.⁹ She does feel that the spirit of social inclusion “shapes our persistent efforts but not the terminology. I am not sure to what degree the social inclusion movement has reached out to First Nations service providers or leadership.”¹⁰ She mentioned its helpfulness in drawing investment in First Nations language and cultural programs and sees it as a concept that government recognizes and therefore a way to dialogue on issues.¹¹ However, she feels what is needed is “greater education on First Nations history and collaboration and a sustained, focused effort, and action needs to be taken in addition to the acknowledgement that First Nation people are socially and economically excluded.”¹²

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but not the terminology ... [it is helpful] in drawing investment in First
Nations language and cultural programs ... ”*



“... community empowerment is seen as both an outcome and a process.”

Concepts & processes

The four areas for FCSS program investment attached to the intermediate outcome of increasing social ties involve notions of community engagement and development, culturally-based programs, re-establishing linkages to families and/or Aboriginal communities, mentoring and role-modeling and supports in transitioning to urban centers.

This section will begin by providing information on some of the concepts found related to these notions, and will then move on to two stories to serve as examples of ways that community development processes and practices were used in fairly different settings. One tells the story of a reserve community striving to make change, and in another, shares the journey of an urban Aboriginal organization re-inventing itself to address the under-utilization of its services.

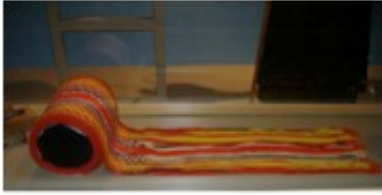
Concept of community empowerment as a strategy

Laverack writes extensively about the concept of “community empowerment” in the context of health promotion and how this concept can be illustrated in actual operation. This may be useful information since health promotion is meant to be preventative. With co-writer Wallerstein (2001), they describe the concept but also add that they believe this concept goes farther than other related ones such as community capacity and community cohesiveness by including dimensions of social influence and transforming power relations.¹³ They attempt to offer what they call “fresh looks” at ways to make community empowerment operational in the context of health promotion programming.¹⁴

They suggest that community empowerment is seen as both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, they claim that results are not generally seen immediately and they suggest that doing so takes years.¹⁵ As a process, they believe that it can be analyzed at different levels—individual, organizational and community. They believe it can be analyzed by unpacking the concept, revealing within it “domains” or factors that influence its use and effectiveness.¹⁶

The authors contend that without evidence of the empowerment of communities, funding will remain unavailable to support these approaches. They state “it is our responsibility as researchers and practitioners to address this important issue properly.”¹⁷

In another article, Laverack (2006) defines empowerment as the means to attaining power and describes it as the process by which relatively powerless people work together to increase control over events that determine their lives and health. The essence is that empowerment comes from within individuals or groups and cannot be bestowed by others.¹⁸



... use community development processes as [a] commitment to stay true to Aboriginal values and to stay relevant to Aboriginal community members.

It is a process but also can be an outcome.¹⁹ Laverack says it is most consistently viewed in program context as a process in which individuals, groups, and communities move towards more organized and broadly-based forms of social action. In a program context, the role of the practitioner is to create opportunities to help others gain more power over their circumstances²⁰ and this often involves a process of capacity building.

Community-based empowerment initiatives that lead to improvement in health outcomes have focused largely on environmental changes²¹—rather than “fixing the individual”, bring about social or political changes. These often have an immediate impact on behaviors that are measurable during the time period covered by the intervention.²² Laverack contends that the evidence shows that community action has been able to lead to sustained changes in the social and organizational environment linked to improvements in health, abuse of alcohol and prevention of injuries.²³

Laverack refers to “domains of empowerment”²⁴ which can be viewed as the unpacking of the concept of empowerment and are needed to increase chances of success. He suggests using these domains as part of building an empowerment strategy.²⁵ They are: participation, community-based organizations, local leadership, resource mobilization, asking “why”, assessment of problems, links with other people and organizations, and the role of outside agents and program management.²⁶ He gives several examples of successful outcomes where the domains were used as strategies. For example, the “asking why” domain was incorporated into a strategy that targeted a group of Indigenous women in a Florida city who suffered from poverty and health issues. Peer groups and mothers’ circles were used to voice issues and the group moved from focusing internally to beginning to understand the larger environmental context impacting their circumstances; “asking why” enhanced their skills to think critically and see their situations in a different light.²⁷

The following two examples describe how community development processes were used, including the use of “domains of empowerment” working well, such as “asking why” in the first story. This story describes the journey taken by members of a Saskatchewan reserve to increase community member involvement in the public institution of child welfare. The second example shows how an urban community organization attempted to use community development processes as their commitment to stay true to Aboriginal values and to stay relevant to Aboriginal community members. These examples are offered to glean lessons and real examples that funding applicants could consider, adapt and adopt to achieve increased social ties and decreased social exclusion.

Two Illustrations of Community Development Processes in Action: Sturgeon Lake Experience & Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Sturgeon Lake Experience



Dr. Jean LaFrance writes about his experience of working in community as the Children’s Advocate with the Sturgeon Lake reserves, 55 kilometers northwest of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. His intent was to see if and how community members would engage with Child Welfare.²⁸ Le France’s role unfolded as a facilitator, helper and supporter for community members as he engaged them in a community development (perhaps community empowerment) process as a means of involving them in an issue relevant to them, which was child welfare.

Community members were invited to meetings to discuss the issues. Participants began to form a “planning group” as they gained a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for addressing problems themselves rather than professionals doing it for them. This planning group began by *identifying several barriers* to community members’ involvement in child welfare.²⁹

The planning group members then moved into an action phase. This phase was enhanced by engaging in cultural activities of a celebration including a feast and round dance. At this point, the work focused on increasing community input into the development and implementation of programs affecting children and families.

The planning group identified their most important priority—to reclaim their right to play a primary role in the well-being and the protection of their children.³⁰ Part of this was to include *traditional healing approaches* and the need for programs to work with Elders.

The community was seen to possess an innate wisdom that could be drawn out by creating trust by helping each member feel valued for the unique gifts they had;³¹ perhaps this is a significant turn in the Sturgeon Lake story. By building on this, the community began to look inwards to identify and use its own resources and strength. LaFrance believes that this began the “development of a collective community consciousness”³² of what needed to happen for the total community to heal. He writes that “[t]his phase of the journey aimed for empowerment through the sharing of stories in a safe, supportive environment that engendered the collective power and support of community members. The intent was to develop a community based “wellness vision” through the sharing of personal stories recounting past experiences and their subsequent impact on individuals and their community³³ ... to promote *healing* of the community.”

A course was created in which people shared stories at the beginning, it later become web-based, with a discussion board. This later led to recommendations for action. The learning that occurred was intended in part to serve as a basis for the development of a course for helping professionals to increase their understanding of the residential



“Healing became a community priority, and was intended to help build a solid foundation to move forward and guide this stage of the change process.”

school experience and its impact of an Aboriginal families and communities. Finally, a community counselor training program was developed to train six members of the core group to support other survivors.

Stories from residential school survivors and their family members were collected, transcribed and shared with others on an ongoing basis. The stories created a greater awareness of the impact of abuses from residential schools upon individuals, families and the community as a whole. Healing became a community priority, and was intended to help build a solid foundation to move forward and guide this stage of the change process.³⁴

A community-needs analysis was conducted to achieve a higher level of understanding of the issues that were of importance to community members. Subsequent steps of activities or “possibilities” and outcomes were identified. These were long lists³⁵ and again for the sake of brevity, only a few of the activities are listed here to share some ideas for possible adoption and incorporation into program design, and only a few outcomes that seemed to align with the FCSS outcomes around social inclusion.

Activities or Possibilities

- Continue the collection and documentation of stories to build a stronger sense of community identity and cohesiveness.
- Finalize the documentation of the community healing journey in the form of a book and film.
- Use an appreciative inquiry approach to community development that seeks to build on community strengths and assets rather than working from a deficiency perspective.
- Hold workshops to educate professionals regarding the impact of the residential school experience.
- Create greater visibility of the issues such as: bring out the residential school pictures; find ways to describe and celebrate local history; bring forth the messages of the survivors.
- Find new ways to come together and build community—community picnics; support the formation of women’s groups; explore new ways to have everyone contribute so the same people do not always have to carry the load when they volunteer for the community.
- Create a sense of appreciation for what people contribute to their community.

Outcomes identified that include aspects of community development:

- Community problem solving skills improve.
- Traditional cultural approaches explored and implemented where feasible.
- Self-esteem and feeling of potency of the community members will be enhanced.
- New training programs and workshops developed and implemented for local people interested in the healing process, with increased emphasis on the rediscovery of traditional approaches.
- Development of peer support circles will provide an ongoing source of support to community members that are expected to last long beyond the funded portion for this initiative.



Ma Mawi provides over 30 culturally relevant prevention and support-based programs and services to the Aboriginal community.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Ma Mawi, Canada's first and largest major urban native child and family support program,³⁶ is a potentially useful illustration of self-imposed realignment undertaken to maximize their relevance to Aboriginal community members. The change process they used was community development in nature.

The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg was created in 1984. It has grown to six different interactive sites. Ma Mawi provides employment for 140 Aboriginal individuals and mobilizes the energy and skills of another 500 volunteers.³⁷

Ma Mawi provides over 30 culturally relevant prevention and support-based programs and services to the Aboriginal community. Capacity building, support circles, training, community planning, respite homes and safe houses, cultural education and experiences, computer access and drop in centers, employment support, are some of the programs provided. They respond to any identified need and work with the community to create appropriate supports, which is why the range and number of activities is so large, from providing bus tickets, to offering shelter for those in crisis, facilitating support and learning circles, visioning with the community for the future, or just visiting people and building relationships.³⁸

The approach they use has driven their activities regarding both their long-term vision and their one-to-one relationships on a daily basis. This approach is based on the medicine wheel, based on the values of reciprocity, respect, inclusion, learning, diversity, caring, independence, and leadership.³⁹

Ma Mawi felt that it had to change. It used to be located near Winnipeg's downtown. This location meant less accessibility, perhaps even approachability, and being less integrated with the community. Services were also being delivered in a more case-worker/case-specific manner. They felt these things contributed to low utilization of their services.

As a way of addressing this dilemma, in 1997, Ma Mawi began a one-year consultation process with the Aboriginal community that included a wide range of stakeholders, including program participants, staff and members of the Aboriginal community.

During the next two years, Ma Mawi responded by:⁴⁰

- committing to becoming a 'learning organization', where people continually expand their capacity to create the results that they desire, and continually learn together;
- moving from case-specific to community capacity building practices, including closing case files and developing programs and supports reflecting this new approach;
- physically relocating to neighborhood sites;
- pulling all staff together to renew and affirm the credo that "we all work together to help one another".



“We asked how we could do things better, and decided that one way would be to make a contract with the people that mattered most.”

The Pan Canadian CED Network (2005) writes that:

“Through this process, Ma Mawi not only developed a vision for the community and an approach to social inclusion that was completely informed by the community, but did so through a participatory process that empowered and built solidarity and a feeling of inclusion in the Aboriginal community. Ma Mawi’s 5-year strategic plan is more a directional document than a list of specific actions and outcomes, but it is also an actual contract or covenant with the community. Diane Redsky, Ma Mawi’s Director of Programs explains, “[w]e signed the document and so did the community through a representative. We asked how we could do things better, and decided that one way would be to make a contract with the people that mattered most.” This instilled in the community a feeling of directional ownership and mutual responsibility and accountability. In fact, their whole approach is now focused on participation, empowerment, and capacity building. Director of Communications Michelle Boivin makes it simple: “[w]hat we want to do is to empower the community so that they can take care of themselves (and) we do this through building relationships.” Ma Mawi translates this new approach into everyday action by ensuring that all activities are at all times guided by the four primary elements of their comprehensive vision: building capacity, being community-based, ensuring community involvement, and nurturing leadership.”⁴¹

Their four strategies may also include some approaches and processes that could be useful for service providers.

- Capacity building—staff and volunteers at Ma Mawi try to draw out that a community member’s interests and gifts and then look for ways that this person can contribute those to the activities happening at Ma Mawi. They feel these strengths just needs to be identified, used, and developed further. Staff development is also encouraged through cross-training. The community learning and workshops are conducted at accessible community centers which are set up as open, comfortable spaces. The participants at each site decide what it is that they want to learn about, and Ma Mawi then looks for people from the community to co-facilitate the workshop, usually pairing someone who is new to facilitation with someone who is experienced. This builds capacity in both the staff or volunteers and the participants through a peer-learning model.
- Being community-based means two things—actually being located in the areas where community members live—they are in six different sites, to provide maximum accessibility, visibility and community integration, increasing opportunities to build the relationships that are so important. “Being community-based is about approaching the community as a “helper” rather than a “fixer;” a partner rather than a provider. Ma Mawi’s contract with the community demonstrates how seriously they take their accountability to the community as partners.”
- Community involvement—the community is always involved in deciding, designing, and delivering programs. One tool they use is PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) planning, a tool in which can be used to facilitate a group process of community visioning, identifying the present situation and actions to make their vision come alive (a process similar to Sturgeon Lake though the PATH tool is not mentioned). It is felt that people gain confidence as their ideas start moving off the ground, promoting even more desire to dream more and get more involved.



“... it is not about service delivery; rather it is about building capacity, relationships, and leadership at the individual, family, and community levels.”

- Leadership development—builds on capacity building and community involvement. This includes co-facilitation opportunities, workshop participation, support circles, and other activities including outreach and advocacy. Community members accompany staff members to community consultations so that they get involved. They also support individuals who want to address various political and community issues.

In terms of lessons learned, Ma Mawi believes that the process and approach are part of the outcomes. They believe it is not about service delivery; rather it is about building capacity, relationships, and leadership at the individual, family, and community levels.⁴²

Best or promising practices examples

As stated earlier, using the lens of prevention, increasing social ties and decreasing social exclusion—rather than a specific social issue area to review best practices in programming—limits the specific examples of best or promising practices that could be found.

This section does not provide “programs” per say that directly match all of FCSS’ funding investment areas, but it does provide some concrete “aspects”, “components”, “activities” or “elements” that, if deemed relevant to the needs of Calgary’s Aboriginal community members, could conceivably be adapted and woven into programs. They can be included in program design to meet FCSS’ funding areas of transitions to urban centers, mentoring and role modeling, personal development and linking to families and communities. Please note that they are not listed here in any particular order of relevance. What is also most important to keep in mind that the categorizations provided do not come from the literature per say but simply reflect the writer’s choice of themes. Furthermore and most important is that these themes are often intertwined with each other, and should not be read in isolation—they can be incorporated into programs separately or the service provider can incorporate as many as he or she wishes. Examples include:

1. *Connecting the community's men through cultural activities and family programs.*
2. *Mentoring for and by community members, particularly fathers and youth.*
3. *Using oral tradition in traditional forms and in combination with contemporary forms of story telling.*
4. *Examining reasons for feelings of social exclusion in specific programs or initiatives and addressing them through particular community development processes and using Aboriginal cultural practices.*
5. *Information provision in ways that are more compatible with Aboriginal values.*



If the strength of a community is seen as inherent in the strength of its families, the wellbeing of men needs to be assured.

Connecting the community's men through cultural activities & family programs

Interestingly, some concrete examples of “promising practices” in programming in areas related to community development and increasing social ties amongst Aboriginal people pertain to Aboriginal men. If the strength of a community is seen as inherent in the strength of its families, the well-being of men needs to be assured. Duran and Duran do an excellent job in analyzing how one of colonization’s most detrimental impacts on the Aboriginal family structure has been the alienation of men from their families and their communities.⁴³ Men’s traditional roles of protector and provider of their families and communities were usurped by the European institutions and systems such as welfare, and their communities fragmented and destabilized by assimilative practices. It is not surprising that many Aboriginal men feel disconnected, lost and dishonored. Duran and Duran argue that the psyche of men have been especially damaged in the process of assimilation. As a result, some men (and women) have taken a destructive path in their lives⁴⁴ in which their human need for connection and nurturance has taken on destructive expression or been denied and suppressed.

Community development and the opportunity of mentorship amongst Aboriginal men have emerged in some of P.R. Krech’s work. He writes about the process of how the undertaking and sharing in specific cultural activities can bond community members and, in the process, promote healing. He recommends embedding these activities into specific programs and activities that he believes have seen success.

For example, he sees the practice of oral tradition, in various forms such as story-telling and talking circles, as being extremely effective in the application of twelve-step programs to battle addictions issues.⁴⁵ Krech describes the benefits of story-telling as follows:

“Oral tradition and experiential activity were and still are touchstones of identity and history, functioning as major pathways in regeneration of cultural mores. Story-telling, talking circle, journaling, and a safe grounding in private and community-based spiritual ceremony are ways this effort has been moving forward. These approaches in the therapeutic context have begun to find inroads into the process of ‘re-storying’ one’s life, thereby bringing about a reframed sense of ‘self’ as a part of the environment ... This way of twelve-step verbal sharing brings people together with similar problems, and shares viable examples of workable solutions. This shared solution-making tends to further foster an ironclad sense of connectedness in struggle. Twelve-step programs in Indian Country are reported to be successfully attracting members of all ages to enter into recovery (Iron Moccasin, 2000) ... [and], especially when integrated with elements of Native spirituality, tends to be a powerful tool for helping to create meaning and in offering the support of others who have successfully navigated a similar journey.” (Coyhis, 1995)⁴⁶



“... celebratory activities such as drumming, singing, powwow, potlatch, and other traditions to revitalize the spirit and “helping the intertribal community come together and rebuild itself ...”

He offers the examples of community gatherings for “grassroots people” in the forums of conferences focusing on healing, sharing and caring such as White Bison’s Firestarter Programs and Sacred Hoop walk, GONA (Gathering of Native Americans), UNITY (United Intertribal Youth), and NANACOA (National Association of Native American Children of Alcoholics) that have drawn thousands of people.⁴⁷ He believes that such gatherings help community members focus on helping each other to begin the healing journey. He sees the proceedings of these gatherings and activities as an opportunity for individuals of all ages to be called upon to become mentors.⁴⁸

He also discusses other celebratory activities such as drumming, singing, powwow, potlatch, and other traditions to revitalize the spirit and “helping the intertribal community come together and rebuild itself, after five hundred years of being driven apart” (A. Roberts, personal interview, May 21, 2001).⁴⁹

Krech concludes that when a man sees another man risk sharing from the soul and not be repulsed or afraid of this act, it can have profound effects.⁵⁰ Again, here the mentoring occurs naturally rather than being “programmed”—it becomes what can be called an outcome rather than a specific program activity.

Another way of connecting the male community members with each other and with family is by focusing on their desire to be good fathers through programming and specifically, father support groups. Manahan and Ball (2005) write of their participation in the Aboriginal Fathers Project in British Columbia that looked at low father participation family-centered services, which are becoming more available because it is believed that a family-centered approach to Aboriginal childcare is more culturally appropriate.⁵¹

The Aboriginal Fathers Project was conducted as part of a larger Canadian exploratory study on fathers’ involvement, the Fathers Involvement Research Alliance (<http://www.fira.ca>). This project eventually grew to include two more on-reserve community programs, three off-reserve community programs, and 80 fathers from various urban communities, reserves, and rural areas in and around British Columbia. First Nations and Métis men who self-identified as fathers of at least one child under the age of seven years of age were recruited to participate in the study.⁵²



“... nearly one-third of the fathers in the study looked to their community for parenting role models ... this approach may be an opportunity to build on the strengths of community and ... support a natural process of mentoring within [the] community.”

Discussions with the fathers revealed much useful information. Men tended not to participate in the programs because they felt excluded by mothers not including them in conversations and service providers making no effort to ensure they felt part of the programs.⁵³ They recommended the implementation of Aboriginal father support groups. Many felt that their negative experiences with their own fathers, or lack of that experience, had not given them any indication of the importance of the father role or helped them believe in their own abilities to be good fathers. They felt that an Aboriginal fathers' support group could fulfill their desire to find, or at least have the opportunity to watch a positive father role model in a positive environment.⁵⁴ For those men who did not have access to a positive father figure or Elder, they often looked to their peers. It is crucial to keep in mind that nearly one-third of the fathers in the study looked to their community for parenting role models,⁵⁵ so this approach may be an opportunity to build on the strengths of community and again, support a natural process of mentoring within community. Manahan and Ball state that the United Nations Working Group of Indigenous Peoples also recognizes the importance of empowering younger generations of Indigenous peoples through education and mentorship.⁵⁶ Therefore, the writers feel that it is imperative to use traditional practice and aspects of Aboriginal spirituality but rightfully caution (mainstream service providers) to recognize the difference between First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, and the diversity of communities, especially where traditional practices and Aboriginal spirituality are concerned.⁵⁷

Manahan and Ball offer these recommendations⁵⁸ for the establishment of an Aboriginal Fathers Support Groups and for other family programming:

- Recognize the variations across Aboriginal family systems when developing community programs. Ensure that family workers know all of the family members and friends who are involved in parenting the child. Ensure that family workers invite all parents to activities and follow-up with parents who do not attend—Manahan and Ball write that having extended family directly involved in raising a child is not reflective of many child and family programs available to Aboriginal families today and they suggest, supporting their statement by citing additional research, that these services may need to be reassessed.

Further, the fathers need to be given the opportunity to shape the group, and influence the decisions about the activities that will occur in the group. The importance of having full participation in decision-making is well documented in the literature, and is central to the creation of culturally appropriate services (Stephens et. al., 2006).



Mentoring has long been seen as an effective approach for the positive development in youth ... [h]owever ... mentoring programs designed for Aboriginal youth and children are fairly rare ..."

- Ask one of the fathers in your program or a male family worker to help create a father support group alongside the family-centered services. Create a safe, father-friendly environment with several father resource materials available and a relaxed atmosphere. The service provider can provide a variety of resources (and ideas) but the participants should decide activities. Manahan and Ball wisely state that each group will have different needs, traditions and spiritual practices and that "Creating a culturally specific environment can be more difficult in an urban setting, where there is often a culturally-diverse population of men. In this kind of situation, it is critical that the fathers decide what practices they want to use, without the imposition of a 'pan-Aboriginal' approach. Promoting the use of traditional practices and spirituality, by inviting local Elders and respecting differing perspectives, is the most a programmer can do, the rest needs to be left in the hands of the fathers."⁵⁹
- Promote spirituality and traditional practices within your community organization, but do not assume everyone is the same. Invite an Elder to visit your community organization or ask the father support group if they would like an Elder to attend their circle. Manahan and Ball state that research suggests that (mainstream) service providers often do not know enough about First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture, historical experiences, generational trauma, traditional practices and/or holistic approaches to health and well-being.
- Educate all staff, although not all staff may be in direct contact with fathers. Ensure that all staff members are familiar with the importance of father involvement, the variation in Aboriginal family system and culture, their historical experiences and what the can mean to Aboriginal people today. Expose your staff and program users to resources that include and/or promote Aboriginal father involvement.

Mentoring for and by community members, particularly fathers and youth

The prior section discussed examples of how programs that connect men can also provide opportunities for them to mentor other men in the programs. Mentoring for youth will now be discussed.

Mentoring has long been seen as an effective approach for the positive development in youth. However, some interesting studies have been done to look at the Aboriginal perspective of mentoring. In one study, Klink et al., attempted to explore and compare concepts of mentoring from both mainstream and Aboriginal perspectives. The researchers found that mentoring programs designed for Aboriginal youth and children are fairly rare, as is the literature in this area.⁶⁰

In mainstream society, mentoring has evolved over time. The literature and the programming have become specialized within three areas: academic, corporate and social or personal with its own goals and strategies. End goals are focused upon, such as career advancement, academic achievement and personal development.⁶¹

From the Aboriginal perspective, although the word "mentoring" is not typically used,⁶² the core concepts are rooted deeply in Aboriginal cultures.⁶³ Adults providing friendship, guidance and support to children and youth outside of their own immediate families is already part of the package and was an established practice prior to European contact.



The researchers make numerous recommendations based on their study and literature review:

- Learning through mentoring should emphasize beliefs and values in accordance with the Indigenous worldview of education,⁶⁴ which is more holistic rather than individualistic, inclusive of immediate and extended family and community and Indigenous culture, values and traditions.
- Group mentoring and group learning seems to be effective for Aboriginal youth and children, in contrast to mainstream models where there is a one-to-one relationship that is structured accordingly. Aboriginal models seem to have a more informal atmosphere in which there is less distinction between who is teaching and who is being taught.⁶⁵ Group mentoring is not only compatible with cultural traditions of learning, but it can also model positive relationships and interactions. It was said that mentors also liked the idea of group mentoring since it takes the pressure of trying to get acquainted with a single youth in a one-to-one, more formal and structured program.
- Some participants in this study felt that family was an essential partner in any mentoring program. There needs to be a relationship between the mentor, the mentee and the mentee's family.⁶⁶ Related to this was the recommendation that there needs to be more family-related services.⁶⁷ An example provided to this was to design and develop a life skills program for families. Because of residential school impacts and the erosion of parenting skills, youth are affected.⁶⁸
- Further to this point, participants felt that programs can bring families and community together to create an "interface for community identity that Aboriginal youth need" and without any attachment to family or community, there is no sense of belonging and no compulsion to respect and value themselves or others.
- Community involvement encompasses two sub-themes in the data: protocol/politics and ownership.⁶⁹ Following proper protocol involves approaching the appropriate community leaders such as Elders to demonstrate respect and trust.⁷⁰ One participant suggested an Aboriginal community advisory group for each program.

While most participants felt that having Aboriginal mentors would be most beneficial to teach Aboriginal values and common experiences,⁷¹ there was some support for mentors not of Aboriginal descent, in the cases where there are few Aboriginal mentors. Some additional alternatives were suggested to help address this dilemma:

- Peer mentoring maybe beneficial—using youth as a resource could be beneficial as they share common experiences. Rather than "targeting" youth in programs, youth can be potential resources helping in-group or peer mentoring or volunteering for other services.⁷²
- Build on existing programs and services instead of starting new ones; financial sustainability of current programs was a concern.⁷³ Some people suggested that a recreation program could be modified to become a mentoring program.⁷⁴ Participants suggested connecting the mentoring program to other programs with similar objectives whether they are mentoring focused or not. All participants felt that mentoring is a good idea although there was disagreement on whether the program is needed in the community more than other programs.⁷⁵



... the oral tradition of story telling is ... a significant process and tool for healing, community change, artistic expression, sharing information and experiences, community bonding and even advocacy.

The researchers wisely note that the perspectives in their study are likely to vary from community to community, and so it would be foolhardy to suggest a one-size-fits-all approach. Interestingly, a variation on the theme of including an Aboriginal perspective on family programs, is taking into consideration those people in the program participant's life who they identify as being most influential in affecting their behavior – and this sometimes includes peers or friends, particularly in the case of youth (Quinn Patton, 2008).

However, these researchers do suggest some general principles and guidelines:⁷⁶

- Mentoring should be an activity that is integrated fully into existing programs in relation to areas compatible with Aboriginal community building, education and healing.
- Mentoring should support community values and goals.
- A community advisory group should be established at the outset of any mentoring program to inform and guide the development and day-to-day continuation of the program.

Using the Oral Tradition

In a prior section, Krech eloquently described how the oral tradition of story telling in addictions programs transforms the individual and validates experience. Other uses of story telling were also described in this literature review such as the Sturgeon Lake communities' classes. Community development was facilitated through community healing as a first step, then sharing circles which are seen as non-judgmental and healing and, finally, using the oral tradition combined with the more modern medium of technologies.

Oral story-telling is sometimes combined with visual and audio approaches (using photographs and music). This is a relatively new tool called photo-voice or digital storytelling. It is extolled as a significant process and tool for healing, community change, artistic expression, sharing information and experiences, community bonding and even advocacy. Because these types of approaches combine aspects of oral traditions with modern tools of technology, by putting the process of the production of the digital story in the hands of the participant and creating a tool (a story saved on a DVD including photographs, music, and the participant's recorded voice telling the story), transformation and empowerment occurs.⁷⁷ The example has been provided about how women's groups have used "photo voice" for documenting their lives through pictures they shoot themselves, learning to analyze what is disempowering them, and to share with decision-makers their issues which eventually resulted in some real change. The process empowered them to do so.⁷⁸ Digital storytelling is often described as an accessible way to build community and a tool to support personal development and to make change at the community level.



... the prime reason behind low participation was a general feeling of exclusion ... from society in general and its mainstream institutions ...

Understanding reasons for feelings of social exclusion in specific programs or initiatives and addressing them through particular community development processes and using Aboriginal cultural practices

Offering services and initiatives in locations close by to where people live is often seen as a key to community engagement; the adage “build it and they will come” is at work here. While this works some of the time, it might not work all of the time. Some community development initiatives strive to include Aboriginal people and take measures to do so such as hiring Aboriginal staff and mailing event invitations to Aboriginal people, but few respond to these efforts. Finding out the reasons for this can provide valuable insight to getting a program on the right path again.

This was the case in a study focusing on Aboriginal resident participation in Winnipeg’s Spence Neighborhood’s community development efforts. The researchers, Silver, Hay, and Gorzen, interviewed the Aboriginal residents as well as the people involved in the local neighborhood association to find out the reason for their lack of involvement, and learned how the Aboriginal residents viewed community development. From this, they were able to provide recommendations for increased involvement of Aboriginal people and presented them to the community development organization; which had indeed made previous unsuccessful efforts to involve them in the community.

A description of this process of learning more about what lies behind reasons for non-involvement in the community—in this case, feelings of exclusion—and crafting recommendations and strategies to address these reasons so that Aboriginal participation in the community based increases, is offered through Spence’s experience as possible learning and ideas for local service providers in building their programming to meet local needs.

There were a few practical reasons such as people not having time to volunteer, or lack of knowledge about the neighborhood association.⁷⁹ However, the prime reason behind low participation was a general feeling of exclusion first from society in general and its mainstream institutions, then in the local initiatives and groups.⁸⁰ Additional social factors⁸¹ then compounded their feelings of being an outsider: financial barriers which prevented the Aboriginal residents from purchasing homes even if they wanted to stay in the neighborhood; feelings that local organizations and businesses would not hire them because of racism; additional day-to-day experiences of racism and high crime rates in the area made them feel reluctant to stray outside their homes. Given these reasons, it is not surprising that flyers in the mail were not enough to compel the Aboriginal residents to get involved.⁸²



The researchers observed that Aboriginal people in the neighborhood were quite separated from each other and do not act as a community although they think of themselves that way in vis a vis non-Aboriginal residents.⁸³ The researchers in fact stated that “They are fragmented, and in fact quite atomized”; there seemed to be limited interaction amongst them and many did not get to know each other - some of this had to do with fears about crime in the neighborhood.⁸⁴ The interviewers were able to identify a range of interest and knowledge in Aboriginal culture, from those who engage in cultural practices regularly and want more opportunities for cultural involvement, to those who indicated low levels of interest but then commented that they believed such opportunities are positive or that they would participate if it were offered.⁸⁵ From a community development perspective, this was seen as an opportunity to start to create social ties.

The researchers here⁸⁶ and other studies⁸⁷ noted that although urban Aboriginal people are described by some scholars as having “jagged” or fragmented worldviews because of colonization and assimilation’s effects on their psyches, aspects of culture in an urban setting is still recognized to those who share it and can still be a powerful influence on norms. In fact, Peters suggests that there is still much reason for hope: “Aboriginal cultures and communities are not transplanted intact to a new environment, and in this way urban life presents a loss. At the same time, there is resilience and creativeness in the creation of new expressions of Aboriginal culture and community in urban areas.”⁸⁸

Cultural values are still strong in urban centers. In the Dean et al. study, the cultural value of reciprocity for example, is so ingrained that Aboriginal people engaging in exchanges such as housing programs and other economic ventures, that could get them ahead economically, but do not have any opportunity to give back, is seen as charity and lacking honor. This is one of the main reasons why Aboriginal people feel a disconnect to some such programs and do not take part.⁸⁹ The authors suggest building in to such initiatives more culturally appropriate strategies such as giveaways,⁹⁰ which are seen to include aspects of reciprocity and therefore expresses the fulfillment of social expectations and social responsibility.

“... there is resilience and creativeness in the creation of new expressions of Aboriginal culture and community in urban areas.”



... increasing the number of Aboriginal community members with the skills and self-confidence to engage in community development is the first step in a process that will put everyone on a more equal footing to ... work together.

Silver et. al. have three recommendations for action:

- Creation of a separate Aboriginal association that would be organizationally affiliated with the mainstream organization. The two groups could work together in the future when they understand each other, because interviewees felt that the mainstream organization expected that the Aboriginal people need to change rather than them—one person suggested that the mainstream people go to an Aboriginal organization to listen and learn from Aboriginal leaders. In the meantime, the Aboriginal group would feel comfortable to have a group in which they could be themselves and not feel judged or alienated, and could build on the numerous skills already present in the individuals (which are not always used or recognized, but could be identified and drawn out).⁹¹ They believe that both the Aboriginal association and the community organizer (see next point) could: promote increased opportunities to learn and experience Aboriginal culture; create ways and means by which Aboriginal people who want to stay can purchase renovated homes; establish neighborhood foot patrols to build a greater sense of safety and community, which in turn could be way to increase social ties.
- The hiring of an Aboriginal community organizer to personally meet and get to know Aboriginal residents⁹² (basically a community development worker to identify their issues and invite them to get involved in community).
- The development of an Aboriginal cultural resource centre—offering cultural activities, engaging youth in creating local “history clubs” in which they could interview local Aboriginal people and record their stories, or to delve into their own family histories—the youth’s interview skills would be developed, and the histories could be recorded or stored in ways seen fit by community members, which in turn would help people learn about their histories.⁹³ They also suggest that there is a desire to create the institutional means by which Aboriginal cultures can be learned and practiced,⁹⁴ and another Winnipeg group does this by offering activities such as cultural awareness workshops, cultural and leadership workshops, monthly gatherings and sharing circles, and Aboriginal youth leadership programs, giveaways such as handing out school supplies to neighborhood children at the beginning of the school year, and having feasts.

When the researchers presented a draft of their report to the neighborhood association, some people responded negatively. They argued that a working together is needed, not a separate organization. The researchers agreed with the general idea, but pointed out that it was not happening currently because Aboriginal people felt excluded and reluctant to get involved. The researchers suggest that increasing the numbers of Aboriginal community members with the skills and self-confidence to engage in community development is the first step in a process that will put everyone on a more equal footing to begin to work together.⁹⁵

Information provision in ways that are more compatible with Aboriginal values

Information provision is a common strategy in programs to teach, share knowledge and communicate. While many service providers are astute in using various methods of knowledge transmission to Aboriginal program participants, there is some potentially useful information on ways to do so that are worth mentioning. These are offered as potential program “components” that can be woven into program design, particularly for those program participants moving to urban centers.



“... two way communication can be a vehicle to improving health outcomes by empowering groups [and] shows promise as a strategy.”

Ricky, Jack, Campbell, Tough offer a definition of knowledge exchange from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. They define it as “a broad concept, encompassing all steps between the creation of new knowledge and its application to yield beneficial outcomes for society”;⁹⁶ a strategy that increases the probability of evidence-informed decisions to improve health.

The researchers suggest methods beyond one-way techniques such as newsletters, presentations in conferences, publications, reports, lectures, and websites. They state that these methods are not always the best because they often fail to change policy, practices or behaviours.⁹⁷ These methods also come with the disadvantages of not involving participants or considering the unique context where they are being applied. They also wisely state that these methods typically do not recognize the value of Indigenous knowledge.⁹⁸ They suggest that two way communication can be a vehicle to improving health outcomes by empowering groups, although they suggest that effective knowledge exchange has not yet been researched and proven to be a “best” practice, but shows promise as a strategy.⁹⁹

The writer has pulled the following “principles for knowledge exchange in Aboriginal communities”¹⁰⁰ seen as useful and potentially applicable from the researchers’ list of principals.

- Cultural appropriateness: modifying strategies to specific contexts and communities.
- Empowerment: knowledge exchange cannot be hierarchical in nature; two-way exchange builds trust and develops relationships; working with communities helps to develop evidence while empowering communities to invest in their health outcomes – in the identifying issues, actions, implementations.
- Respect for Indigenous Knowledge: Indigenous knowledge is key and there must be respect and room for this valuable wisdom.
- Cross-cultural communication: language can be a barrier: necessary to establish research literacy or a common vocabulary to discuss research evidence or Indigenous knowledge. Ability to communicate in Aboriginal dialects is also a tremendous asset (and having access to Aboriginal language speakers/ interpreters for those coming to the city for the first time would also be helpful).



Finally, although offering web-based, one-sided information is contrary to Ricky et al. advice for Aboriginal people transitioning to urban centers, a guide that lists resources that are of special interest to Aboriginal people may still be a valuable resource. In the next section, one study participant spoke eloquently and directly to the feeling that there are no resources dedicated to helping Aboriginal people feel welcome in the city or transition successfully into the city. He stated the following in that study:

“To me, I think, most of our people they come here, don’t really feel part of the community. Right away, new Canadians come in and they get an awful lot of ‘welcome wagon’ treatment, you know, they get an awful lot of help, they get guides, they get mentors, they get people who are willing to even take them shopping, it doesn’t matter if they speak the language or not, they have people who are taking them around and yet a lot of new Canadians come from urban areas and they’re used to urban areas. Our people come from (non-urban areas) and yet when our people come here there’s nobody to show them around, there’s nobody to say ‘hey, you’re welcome’. I’ve never heard of the welcome wagon, I’ve never heard of anybody getting a welcome wagon visit—an Aboriginal, you know, that’s not racist, it’s just the truth, and when we come here ... a lot of people they land here with no job, nothing, they come in with hope, but here’s nothing for them, there’s nothing, compared to the new Canadian ...”¹⁰¹

As supported by a Canada West Foundation study written by Calvin Hanselman:

“Although the transition from rural to reserve areas to a major city can be much like immigrating to Canada from another country, the Government of Canada does not fund urban transition programs for Aboriginal people nearly to the extend that funds transition programs for recent immigrants to Canada. Urban Aboriginal transition programs receive less than five cents for every dollar spent on immigrant settlement and transition.”¹⁰²

Guides could be one handy resource to equip people to ease into their transition by locating services quickly and easily. Winnipeg has such a guide. Located on the internet at www.partnersforcareers.mb.ca/guide, it is more than a list of programs and services but more comprehensive with information for families, youth, Elders and seniors, etc., plus practical advice written in fairly plain language. Perhaps service providers could include such resources and culturally appropriate ways suggested here, to share information about the city with Aboriginal “newcomers” as one means of support.



... it is about drawing on the strengths of each other to stand tall as individuals and as communities ...

Conclusions

FCSS has left considerable room for service providers to create culturally relevant, preventative programming. The emphasis on increasing social ties in preventative program is a great opportunity to build on the strengths of connecting people through cultural practices and staying true to Aboriginal values.

Since there seems to be a limited amount of “best or promising practices” in preventative programming that uses decreasing social exclusion and increasing social ties specifically for Aboriginal people, the writer looked at the information available on processes and concepts related to these ideas to pull out approaches and practices that could be valuable in building and realigning programming. While some of this information is not necessarily “verified” as best or promising practices the way FCSS defines these terms, the stories, examples, views and wisdoms shared by communities, researchers and service providers in the public domain on describing what works or what is working is compelling, particularly suggestions from Aboriginal community members themselves. All of it is about drawing on the strengths of each other to stand tall as individuals and as communities; it is about Aboriginal people helping Aboriginal people in ways that are authentic to them.

What is also compelling is a caution in some of the literature that building social networks may not be the right strategy if the existing norms go against the grain of what is trying to be achieved.¹⁰³ An example provided to illustrate this point is an apparent correlation between Aboriginal children’s low educational attainment and the low educational norms of their families. Conversely, families that expect their children to achieve academically—in part due to their own success academically—appear to offer greater, and sustained support to their children to ensure their academic success.



... it is about Aboriginal people helping Aboriginal people in ways that are authentic to them ...

One could also take some valuable lessons of finding out what aspects of community are important to Aboriginal community—in the White et al. study, they report on research from the Maori people’s view that social capital is less effective outside the family because it is the family that is seen as the primary network:

“Imposition of networks outside the family or community are deemed to be less functional ... family, tribal and community networks may take priority over functional contract with specified agencies such as health, education or welfare ... the informal relations that lead to connectedness and networks that are created have specific functions and expectations to the family kin group, sub-clan and tribal level ... the traditional culture has two social capital related processes that New Zealand policy can utilize: hapai (bridge or connect), which we see in the form of drawing the family into preschool; and tautoko (support or commitment), which we see in the form of using school activities to raise attainment ... (and of consideration is that) success being dependent on two factors: “creating or drawing on a collective historical memory of relations held by the iwi (tribe) with another community that facilitates the bridging process (i.e., the memory and history of relations with the central government in this case); and the perception of shared or lack of shared understandings. These are assessed and developed through interaction. Interaction takes place in traditional forums such as the hui—a ceremonial gathering that allows people to get to know each other in a recognizable context. It seems that this recognition can manufacture a collective knowledge/memory of shared understandings, which permits linkages.” (p. 69)

These revelations give further testament and support that it is important to find out how community views concepts and terminology, and to take into account its practices, its values and norms, its history and, no less important, its aspirations and dreams. Only then can we find the best ways to support and to serve.



In this document:

- “Evidence-based” means that a program or practice has been tested in a well-designed and methodologically sound (ideally but not necessarily, experimental (RCT) or quasi-experimental) study (ideally, but not necessarily, more than one study and replicated in more than one site), and has been shown to produce significant reductions in poor outcomes or associated risk factors or significant increases in positive outcomes or associated protective factors.
- “Best practices” refer to programs or components of programs or delivery methods that have been identified as effective (i.e., produce significant reductions in poor outcomes or associated risk factors or significant increases in positive outcomes or associated protective factors) by repeated methodologically sound studies using an experimental (RCT) or quasi-experimental design.
- “Promising practices” refer to programs or components of programs or delivery methods that have been identified as effective (“effective” as defined above) in at least one well-designed and methodologically sound study using at least a pre-post design with a large sample of participants that has been subject to peer review.
- “Prevention” means creating conditions or personal attributes that strengthen the healthy development, well-being, and safety of individuals across the lifespan and/or communities, and prevent the onset or further development of problems in each of these domains. In the research-based risk and protection prevention paradigm, prevention occurs by reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors.

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