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Centre for Research on Children and Families
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

May 6, 2015 Invited Presentation
Acknowledgements

Traditional territory and owners
Iroquois village site
Algonquin peoples
Thawieakenrut “Pure Wing” Mike Loft

Dr. Trocmé & Pamela Weightman
Centre for Research on Children and Families
McGill University

Funders, past and present
Mukwa Mayett the Creator made you this way and put you in that place for a purpose.

When you do those things always ask yourself if they are good for your children and grandchildren. Always remember who you are in your heart. Never pick up something new and leave behind who you are, who we are, and what we believe.

(Saulteaux Elder Bones, personal communication, 2006)

Shelly, always remember our purpose. We were created to be of service to our people.
Laura Little Thunder

“Mino Takosi Akwanth Kwe” Kirsten
Acknowledging tension in our University-Indigenous relationship

- Every academic institution sits on Indigenous land, and exists because Indigenous peoples were first dispossessed.

- Difficulty arises due to the academy’s role in the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples.

- Academy has much invested in maintaining control over who defines knowledge, who has access to knowledge, and who produces knowledge.

- Small number of Indigenous academics, junior positions (Margaret Mutu, 2012).
Moving forward anyway...

Carving a space where Indigenous values and knowledge are respected

Create an environment that supports research and methodologies useful to Indigenous nation building

Compel institutional responsiveness to Indigenous issues, concerns, and communities

(Devon A. Mihesuah & Angela C. Wilson, 2004, p.2).
In the past and present:

My journey from child welfare to social work practice to policy to leadership to research to academia in BC
2008-2015
TRU – Secwepemc Peoples
UBC – Musqueam People
2011 Defense
All Indigenous cohort

Today 3 more graduates

1983-2008
SW – TL - CEO: CP., Guard, FS, IA, CLS, Adoption, Foster care
BCAAFC & SCCFS
Policy, Finance, Advocacy Practice, Personnel
Becoming an Saulteaux child welfare knowledge seeker (researcher) arises from

1. My own child welfare shaping history, family experiences and practice experiences of viewing Indigenous children in context – belonging to family, clan, nation,

2. Collective Indigenous political and professional experiences and worldviews, relational ways of being, doing and knowing (versus individualistic knowledge gathering and ownership),

3. Critical importance of truth telling; about a collective and intersectional sense of unaddressed genocide, injustice, racism, inter-generational trauma & ‘soul wounds’ that exist within Canada

4. Moving on with re-storying or telling our new stories
My ways of being a Saulteaux/Ojibway/Anishnabe researcher

1. Reject the struggle to “hang Indigeneity and culture” onto non-Indigenous worldviews, practices, policies, and research,
2. Resists the tired notion of “add Indigenous and stir” research
3. Interconnected to purposeful, Saulteaux self-determination, liberation, healing and thriving,
4. Privileges collective Indigenous voices and protocols, and benefits Indigenous peoples in ways that we direct,
5. Responsive, and never imposed on all my relations,
6. Respectful of accountability in ethical relationships “can get another job, but can’t get another community.”
Race, class, gender and other “isms” is embedded in Western research

*Unfortunately Indigenous researchers have often had to explain how their perspective is different from that of dominant system scholars; dominant scholars have seemingly needed no such justification in order to conduct their research*

(Shawn Wilson, 2008, p. 55).

Important epistemological and political motivations to distinguish Indigenous methodologies from qualitative approaches

*Given the assimilative tendency of Western culture, highlighting the tribal-knowledge basis of an Indigenous research framework rather than identifying it as a more generic relational, holistic epistemology, lessens the risk of a qualitative research community assimilating it*

(Maggie Kovach, 2009, p. 177).
Beginning with an Indigenist paradigm and Indigenous voices in my heart

- Difficult to remove underlying epistemology and ontology upon which other paradigms are built
- Guidance from Bones rings in my heart & head
- 4R’s – respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001).
- Indigenous storytelling – 7 principles: how stories can be a tool for teaching and research, heal the heart, mind, body and spirit (Archibald, 2008).
Mind and the heart are connected

Those who understand the medicine wheel believe that the mind and the heart are connected and therefore educating the mind alone is absurd.

In the medicine wheel, the symbolic meaning of the south, the direction of the heart is nourishment. The heart provides nourishment to the mind as well as the physical and spiritual realms of the wheel. Thus, the development of the affective capacity is essential to the development of cognitive capacity

(Lee Brown, Cherokee, 2004)

http://ojibweresources.weebly.com/medicine-wheel.html
Motives and answerability in research

One thing I want to say about research is that there is a motive... Emotionless, passionless, abstract, intellectual research is a goddamn lie, it does not exist. It is a lie to ourselves and a lie to other people. Humans – feeling, living, breathing, thinking humans – do research. When we try to cut ourselves off at the neck and pretend an objectivity that does not exist in the human world, we become dangerous, to ourselves first, and then to the people around us

Eber Hampton, 1995, p. 52

Indigenous paradigms: fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Shared with all creation, with the cosmos, with animals, plants and people... you are answerable to all your relations when you are doing research

Steinhauer, 2002, p. 177
Saulteaux Research Journey

1. MSW (2001). Reclaiming their places: Seven women Chiefs of Northern BC Indigenist, 7 women Band Council, Tribal Council, Hereditary - Medicine Wheel analysis


   29 people from 52 different nations, Vancouver and Victoria, Saulteaux star blanket analysis

4. Education of urban Indigenous youth on Secwepemc territories (2011-2012) SSHRC
   40 people, 3 information gathering talking circles, 2 Secwepemc sites.

5. Education of urban Indigenous youth on Coast Salish territories (2013) SSHRC UAKN
   45 urban Indigenous youth
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUeDDdvIhj8&feature=em-upload_owner

6. Indigenizing the international academy (2013) Peter Wall Institute

7. First Nations courts in Canada (2013-2016) SSHRC – Partnership Development Grant

8. Awakening the spirit: Culture revitalization of ocean-going canoes in Musqueam (2014-17)
   SSHRC - Insight Grant


Relational, guided

Child welfare (25 years)

Indigenous women, children, community - Indigenist, CBR

Child welfare and education - Indigenist, CBR

Child welfare, education, and justice – Indigenist, CBR, Quantitative

Child welfare, education, justice, health, forestry – Indigenist, CBR, Qualitative

Restorative child welfare practices – Indigenist, CBR, Qualitative, Quantitative
### Children and Youth in Care Stats, October 2014

#### Part 1: Total Children and Youth in Care in BC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>CYIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total CYIC</td>
<td>8,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal CYIC</td>
<td>4,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of children who are aboriginal</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Part 2: Children and Youth in Care by SDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDA</th>
<th>Aboriginal</th>
<th>Non-Aboriginal</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of children who are aboriginal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDA 11 - Kootenays</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 12 - Okanagan</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDA 13 - Thompson Cariboo Shuswap</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 21 - East Fraser</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 22 - North Fraser</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 23 - South Fraser</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDA 24 - Vancouver/Richmond</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDA 25 - Coast/North Shore</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 31 - South Vancouver Island</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 32 - North Vancouver Island</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 41 - Northwest</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 42 - North Central</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA 43 - Northeast</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delegated Aboriginal Agencies</td>
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<td>2,110</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>4,198</td>
<td>4,085</td>
<td>8,283</td>
<td>51%</td>
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#### Part 3: Children and Youth in Care in Vancouver Aboriginal Child and family services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Type</th>
<th>CYIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Family Care</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted Family Care</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1 Care</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 Care</td>
<td>139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3 Care</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracted Resources</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Relatives</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Independently</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Coded</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Comprehensive integrative literature review examines sixty-seven peer-reviewed research articles published in the English language (including those from Australia, Sweden, the USA and Canada) between 1980 to present, regarding the educational and social outcomes of children transitioning out of child protective services.


- 2007 study of 32,186 school aged children in foster care of the BC government between 1997-2005

- Less than 7% were eligible for an academic grade point average upon graduation

- Far less than either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal children who were never in foster care (80% and 49%)


Creating an Indigenous presence in the literature by evoking the absence. Speak for ourselves about abuses in “safe places” Systemic oppressions.
Chief Stewart Phillip
UBCIC - Okanagan

“The difference is when children were taken from a community, they went as a group—brothers and sisters and cousins,” he said. “When children are taken into care, they go alone. It’s a far more traumatic experience in that regard. They were denied complete exposure to our language and culture. And we don’t come home for Christmas and holidays. In many ways, it’s the untold story.”

(Pablo, February 2008)
I think about Grand Chief Stewart Philip and the talks he and I had about being a foster child. He said, “Right now we’re dealing with hearing about the residential school voice. But give it time. Our voices as foster children will be heard throughout this country” (Participant).

Class action lawsuits (Ontario and BC).
2 research questions

1. What strategies or supports must be developed to help Indigenous children in care to be more successful in school?

2. Who or what is responsible to do this?
Elders and Advisory Committee

- 40 people
- 3 fishbowl information-gathering talking circles
- Led by Secwepemc elders
- Feb 2011 Kamloops (2) site of IRS
- March 2011 in Williams Lake (1) site of IRS
Who were the 40 people?

- 28 in Kamloops (S. Secwepemc)
- 12 in Williams Lake (N. Secwepemc)
- 38 self identified FN, Metis or Inuit, 2 non FN
- 33 female
- 7 male
- Aged 16 – 76 years
- 7 former or current wards of the BC government
Who were they?

- Current and former cic
- group home managers
- Tribal council reps
- residential school survivors
- Criminal justice reps  school principals
- Employment counsellors
- Foster parents  Teachers, support workers
- Social workers  Band school coord
- CW board member  Coaches
We let loose the chains of oppression when we become the voice of our people, when we speak for justice, when we inspire hope in others

Lai-Lani Ovalles (2008)
First Nations Court in New Westminster

My first visit – recognizing the little boys from foster care that have grown into men...

1. Interviews - 360 degrees
2. Court observation and involvement
3. Gladue Reports (16)
4. File reviews (50)
Awakening the Spirit: Revitalization of ocean going canoeing in Musqueam (2014-2017)

30,000 to 100 - colonization, disease – back to 1200

“What does it mean to be Musqueam when we have no seaworthy canoes, and no one that remembers how to carve a canoe from a cedar tree?”

Sustainability of cultural, health, and healing practices for future generations?
Restorative Indigenous Child Welfare Practices

An emerging model is becoming clear

Consistent elements present in programming and policy (Elders, mediation, FGC, collaborative practices, non-western Court involvement of families, FNC possibilities.

Across the largest urban Aboriginal child welfare agency in BC

141 employees $30M annual budget
Based on their history of practice, and evidence-based research conducted as part of the Strengthening Our Practice Special Project

**Restorative (Reality) vs Preventative: Address ongoing colonization (honour and fund the treaties), poverty, safe and affordable housing, addictions and mental health supports, language and cultural supports.**
VACFSS defines a program or policy as restorative if it is:

1) Grounded in intergenerational Indigenous knowledge systems, worldview, and the culture of the family being served;

2) Framed within an awareness of and engagement with colonial history;
3) Departs from the punitive approaches of mainstream social work, in favour of concrete strength based, graduated and supportive client engagement—such as collaborative practice; and

4) Results in measurable positive change and/or outcomes for the family or families involved.
Restorative Child Welfare Practices

Presentation considers what this emerging model mean for:

a) further development within VACFSS, and

b) other provincial and national urban and land-based child welfare agencies, education, justice and health programs
References


Discussion, comments, questions?

Me’gweech

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