

STORIES OF RESILIENCE RESEARCH SUMMARY

Project Summary

Roots of Resilience is an international interdisciplinary research project that examines factors and processes that promote resilience among Aboriginal peoples. This project involves many sub-projects, one of which is called *Stories of Resilience, Healing and Transformation*. The aim of the Stories of Resilience project is to collect stories to help define resilience from Aboriginal perspectives and to identify factors that promote resilience among individuals and communities. We are collaborating with multiple communities across Canada in order to get multiple viewpoints.

Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to:

1. Understand resilience, healing, recovery, and transformation from Aboriginal perspectives.
2. Identify ways to promote resilience and healing in each participating community.

We have heard many stories about what has helped and hindered healing, as reported by Aboriginal people, and would like those experiences to be recorded and collected so that others might be helped. One of our priorities is to develop a community-specific report that summarizes the processes and factors that have helped people in your community get through challenges. We also intend on reaching a wider audience by publishing the results of this research.

Methodology

The project is a community-based research project whereby community input and involvement are vital to the project. Community members are involved in two ways, first within a local *Community Advisory Committee* that helps with local research and cultural protocol, ethical approval, facilitating communication with the community, revising interview and focus group protocols and interpretation of results. Second, *community researchers* are involved in every step of the research project, including in the design and adaptation of methods to the local cultural protocol, and in gathering and analysing data, and writing the final report.

There are four main phases to this project:

Phase 1: Key informant interviews will be conducted to gain a general understanding of community resilience from the perspectives of prominent people in your community. Key informants could include community leaders, Elders, school teachers or principals, health practitioners, people who run community activities, etc. Key informant interviews will be conducted by the community researcher and / or research coordinator. In total, 6-8 interviews will be conducted. The key informant interviews ask questions about: 1) Community challenges and how the community got through them, 2) Language, words, and expression related to resilience, 3) Examples of resilience, and 4) Traditional stories related to resilience. These interviews will be recorded, transcribed and analyzed by

members of the research team to find the common themes relating to resilience that key informants talk about.

Phase 2: The fieldwork will involve focus groups with three separate age groups of 6-10 people each: 1) Elders; 2) Adults, and 3) Young adults. These focus groups will be conducted by the community researcher and research coordinator. The goal of the focus groups is to get a sense of the important challenges your community has faced and more importantly, how your community got through these challenges. The focus groups ask questions about: 1) Community challenges and how the community got through them, 2) Language, words, and expression related to resilience, 3) Examples of resilience, and 4) Traditional stories related to resilience. The questions are the same as the key informant interviews, however because they will be asked in a group context the responses may be different and provide multiple perspectives.

Phase 3: Once the focus groups are completed, the research team will transcribe the recordings and do a preliminary analysis of the data to identify the common themes. These preliminary analyses will then be discussed with the Community Advisory Committee, which will help us in the interpretation of the themes and identify things that the team might have missed. The focus group data will also help us to adapt the individual narrative interview protocol to the specific context of your community.

Phase 4: The final phase involves conducting individual interviews to get individual's *own* personal stories of resilience. We will also ask how the community challenges, as specified by the focus group participants, may have affected them and how they overcame them. The individual interviews ask participants questions about: 1) Personal challenges and how they got through them, 2) Language, words, and expressions related to resilience, 3) Traditional stories related to resilience, 4) Sharing knowledge about resilience, and 5) Future outlook.

Each interview and focus group will be recorded, and all information collected will be stored in locked filing cabinets at the Culture and Mental Health Research Unit of the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal. All participant information will remain confidential and no names will be used in the final research reports or publications.

Outcomes

One of our priorities is to prepare a community-specific report for your community that would be tailored to your community's interests and concerns. For example, the report will include: 1) A brief description of your community; 2) Literature review on resilience; 3) Results of data analysis, and 4) Discussion of resilience from the perspectives of your community.

In addition to providing community-specific reports, we would like to investigate the similarities and differences across communities. By looking at the data across multiple different communities we hope to give voice to indigenous perspectives of resilience as well as positively contribute to culturally appropriate ideas of resilience not present in current theories on resilience.

Researchers

The following researchers are involved with this project, and can be contacted if you have any questions about the research and methods.

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