A PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL MANUAL FOR COUNSELLING ALBERTA'S ABORIGINAL YOUTH

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Dedication

I dedicate this project

to the

Métis community of Alberta.

Abstract

The intent of this project is to provide helping professionals with the necessary knowledge required to provide culturally relevant counselling to Alberta's urban Aboriginal youth. Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing demographic in Canada and represent almost half of the Aboriginal population. Because the issues facing Alberta's urban Aboriginal youth are unique from those experienced by other non-dominant cultural groups in Alberta, providing culturally relevant and effective counselling to these clients can be a challenge. Presently counsellor training does not provide helping professionals with the necessary knowledge to deliver culturally relevant counselling to this at risk population. This manual will assist helping professionals in the development of their multicultural counselling skills by presenting a summary of Aboriginal history and rights, definitions of terminology, presenting issues experienced by this group, and information on cultural protocol and support systems.

Acknowledgments

This final project marks the end of a life-long goal. Pursuing this degree has been a life changing journey that I am blessed to have been able to take. This program has been a gift that has allowed me to learn more about myself than I thought possible, see the world through a new lens, and become the person I was meant to be. I would like to dedicate this project to my parents for supporting me throughout this journey. Thank you to my family and friends for giving me the strength to continue when I thought I couldn't make it. I would also like to give a special shout out to my "CAAP gals" for your support, guidance, and inspiration to complete this program and write this project. Thank you to Dr. Linda O'Neill for supporting and contributing to this endeavour. Finally, a tremendous thank you to my project supervisor Dr. Blythe Shepard for all of her enthusiasm, guidance, patience and input; and to my community, the Métis community, for the knowledge, experience, funding, and support that allowed me to walk this path.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> I'm always picking myself up. I've never really had no mommy or daddy to run home to…I got to pick myself up…They were what they were. They were adoptive parents. I've never relied on [anyone], whether they're my adoptive parents or foster parents. I've never relied on those people. (Menzies, 2008, p. 44)

Canada's Aboriginal people are one of the many colonized indigenous people around the world who have experienced cultural oppression and forced assimilation which have affected their present day health and well-being (Kirmayer, Tait, & Simpson, 2009). The profound transformation Aboriginal communities have undergone has resulted in high rates of depression, alcoholism, suicide, violence, and economic disparities (Kirmayer, Tait, et al., 2009). Aboriginal youth in particular have most dramatically felt the impact of colonization as they experience higher rates of suicide, mental health issues, alcohol abuse, non-completion of high school, unemployment, incarceration rates, number of births to women under 16, over-representation in child protection, victimization, and offending (Brown, Higgitt, Wingert, Miller, & Morrissette, 2005; Johner & Maslany, 2011; Katz et al., 2006; Lemstra et al., 2008; Lemstra et al., 2009; Lemstra et al., 2011).

> …the lives of Aboriginal youth are profoundly influenced by both historical injustices and current inequities. Issues facing youth are rooted in a history of colonization, dislocation from their traditional territories, communities and cultural traditions, and the inter-generational impacts of the residential school system. (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal People, 2003, p. 2)

It is within this context that counselling professionals must understand the complex

psychosocial and cultural issues experienced by urban Aboriginal youth in order to provide culturally relevant counselling to this demographic.

Intent of Project

Many Aboriginal youth struggle with a variety of mental health issues. Although information regarding cultural competence exists, the information has not been presented in a cohesive manner that can be readily utilized by practitioners. There is a lack of understanding in the helping profession of the cultural norms, beliefs, healing traditions, and practices held by Aboriginal people (Hunter, Logan, Goulet, & Barton, 2006). Furthermore, given the relatively recent use of the term "Aboriginal" and the diverse populations that are included within this definition, it is not uncommon for practitioners to be confused by this term. To add further complication to the matter, there are well over 600 Aboriginal groups within Canada each with their own distinct history, culture, language, traditions, rights, and socio-economic factors. This project will seek to address this dilemma by compiling current research on current urban Aboriginal youth issues and present it in an organized and cohesive manual that practitioners can access in order to develop their multicultural competence on this topic. The intent of this project is the development of a psychoeducational manual that offers suggestions to helping professionals working with urban Aboriginal youth. The following questions are addressed: (a) Who are Alberta's Aboriginal people? (b) What issues do urban Aboriginal youth face? (c) How do these issues affect their mental health? (d) What are their strengths and resiliencies that professionals can incorporate into their work? (e) What are culturally appropriate interventions? and (f) How can counsellors incorporate culturally relevant interventions in their work with urban Aboriginal youth?

Rationale

According to the most recent Canadian census statistics (Statistics Canada, 2008), Canada's Aboriginal population has an above average growth rate and is therefore the fastest growing demographic in Canada. Between 1996 and 2006, the Aboriginal population grew by 45% compared to 8% for the non-Aboriginal population. Surprisingly, 48% of the Aboriginal population consists of children and youth ages 24 and under. Despite the fact that Aboriginal youth are the largest Aboriginal demographic, the issues experienced by urban Aboriginal youth has received little attention in counselling literature.

The historical context, cultural identity, acculturation, worldview, and adolescent growth/development are psychosocial factors that must be considered when counselling Aboriginal clients (Garrett & Herring, 2001). Likewise, Arthur and Collins (2010b) stress the need to educate counsellors on issues specific to particular Canadian ethnic groups such as Aboriginal people in order to counter long standing oppressive beliefs. Constantine (2002) states that when counsellors have strong multicultural counselling competencies, clients' ratings of the benefit and satisfaction experienced as a result of counselling increase. Consequently, counsellors must possess multicultural competencies in order to strengthen their work with urban Aboriginal youth. Furthermore, the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists states that counsellors have an ethical responsibility to "acquire an adequate knowledge of the culture, social structure, and customs of a community...[and] convey respect for and abide by prevailing community mores, social customs, and cultural expectations in their scientific and professional activities..." (Sinclair & Pettifor, 2001, p. 93). Therefore, practitioners need to be aware

of the unique and complex issues faced by urban Aboriginal youth in order to provide culturally sensitive services to this demographic.

Statement of Interest

My interest in Aboriginal issues stems from my Aboriginal upbringing. In my experience with helping professionals as a child, I was acutely aware that these professionals did not understand my worldview or cultural beliefs. I attended counselling for the first time when I was ten years old at the onset of my parents' divorce. This was a difficult period of my childhood during which I experienced feelings of depression and anxiety due to isolation from my extended family (grandparents, aunts/uncles, and cousins). In my culture, the extended family plays a large role in the rearing of children and the support of family members. However, my counsellor was not aware of this important cultural piece and failed to incorporate this into my assessment and treatment, which resulted in the maintenance of my depression and anxiety. As an adult, I continued to notice helping professionals' ignorance of the role of Aboriginal worldview in addressing urban Aboriginal youth mental health issues. My drive to receive a Master's degree in counselling stemmed from my desire to provide culturally relevant counselling services to the Aboriginal population. Furthermore, my cultural teachings taught me that I must embrace the gifts and talents given to me by the Creator. It is therefore with this responsibility that I am allowing this knowledge to come through me in order to share it and ultimately make a difference in my community.

Overview and Structure of Project

This project will assist helping professionals in their understanding of how culture and worldview influence the lives of urban Aboriginal youth as well as the types of

approaches that are culturally appropriate. It will also encourage helping professionals to explore their own culture, values, and beliefs. To accomplish this task, the project will be divided into two sections. The first section will provide a brief history of Canada's Aboriginal people as well as an overview of Aboriginal rights that continue to influence present day experiences of Aboriginal youth. This first half is comprised of a literature review of the issues facing First Nations and Métis youth and their implication for counsellors that includes: (a) effects of colonization, (b) influences of historical trauma, (c) acculturative stress, (d) enculturation, (e) socioeconomic status, (f) mental health issues, (g) mental health disparities between urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth, and (h) resiliency and strengths of urban Aboriginal youth. Methods pertaining to the project's development such as search terms, databases, and ethical considerations are also included. Finally, the first half of the project concludes with a synthesis of the most recent literature on the topic of providing mental health services to urban Aboriginal youth as well as a list of references.

The second section consists of a manual with materials and exercises for counselling professionals and their worksites that will not only aid in building multicultural competence, but will also enhance the delivery of services to urban Aboriginal youth. The manual contains community resources, exercises, frequently asked questions, instructions on cultural protocol, and appropriate interventions, all aimed to build multicultural competence. An appendix is also included to serve as a resource for practitioners to refer to definitions and terminology at a glance.

Defining "Aboriginal"

Before practitioners can educate themselves about the Aboriginal population, there is the question of defining Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Section 35 of Canada's 1982 Constitution Act recognizes three distinct Aboriginal people: First Nations (FN), Métis, and Inuit. It is important for counsellors to understand the distinction between these groups as Alberta has a significant First Nations and Métis population. Alberta has the third highest Aboriginal population in Canada, with Aboriginal people making up 6% of Alberta's total population (Statistics Canada, 2008). In addition, with 52,100 people, Edmonton has the second highest urban Aboriginal population in Canada, second to Winnipeg.

On January 8, 2013, the federal court ruled that Métis and non-status Indians are "Indians" under the Constitution Act and therefore fall under federal jurisdiction. While the ruling was not specific about what actions the federal government must take now that Métis people and non-status Indians will fall under the category of Indians, the ruling will aid in defining the federal government's obligation towards both groups. More importantly, the decision may also change the definition of the terms Métis and non-status Indian and consequently those services each group has access to. At the time of writing of this project, the federal government is expected to appeal the court's decision; it is anticipated that it will take numerous years for the ramifications of the ruling to be resolved.

First Nations. Prior to the term First Nations, Canada's First Nations people were commonly referred to as Indians. However, in present day society the term First Nations is generally preferred; the term First Nations encompasses all 615 First Nations communities across Canada that make up more than 50 cultural groups (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), 2010). Alberta's First Nations population is comprised of 45 First Nations communities which are divided into three treaty areas: Treaty Six, Treaty Seven, and Treaty Eight. Finally, the term First Nations is also inclusive of all individuals outlined under the Indian Act, which includes status and non-status Indians, as well as Bill C-31 Indians. A more in depth examination of the history of Alberta's First Nations population and treaties is covered in Chapter 2 of this project.

Métis. The Métis emerged as one of Canada's distinct people in the 18th and 19th century as a result of European explorers taking First Nations wives. According to Statistics Canada (2008), the Métis are the fastest growing Aboriginal population in Canada. Their population has increased by more than 91% since 1996, which is 11 times more than that of the non-Aboriginal population growth rate. Factors that account for this growth rate include: high birth rates, more individuals identifying themselves as Aboriginal, and a reduction of enumerated Indian reserves (Statistics Canada, 2008).

"The term 'metis' is derived from the Latin verb *miscere*, which means 'to mix, mingle'…" (Dickason, 2002, p. 189). Although the term *half-breed* was originally used to describe people of European and First Nations ancestry, today the word *Métis* is used in its place. It is through the marriage of First Nations and European cultures that the Métis formed a distinct culture comprised of unique communities, culture, language, and

way of life. However, the term *Métis* is in itself confusing as it is used in a variety of contexts. Additionally, the legal definition of Métis remains unclear. According to Isaac (2008) there are three principle reasons for the confusion surrounding the term *Métis* that include: (a) the term has been used to describe all individuals of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry; (b) the term is used restrictively to describe individuals who can trace their ancestry to the historic Métis Nation in Manitoba; and (c) throughout history there have been close geographic, social relationships, and intermarriage between Métis and First Nations. A more in depth look at the history of Alberta's Métis is examined in Chapter 2 of this project.

Inuit. The Inuit are Canada's third distinct Aboriginal group and generally inhabit the Arctic region of Canada. Until the 1970s, the Inuit people of Canada were previously referred to as Eskimo, a term that is now considered offensive to most Inuit people. Throughout the centuries, the Inuit people have managed to maintain their traditional languages and cultural practices with very little change due to their sedentary lifestyle. However, because three-quarters of Canada's Inuit people reside in the region stretching from Labrador to the Northwest Territories (Statistics Canada, 2008), this project will focus on the First Nations and Métis population.

Summary

Miller (2002) warns that "whatever term one uses, there will almost certainly be someone who takes exception to it" (p. 8). For the purpose of this project, the term *Aboriginal* will be inclusive of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. When necessary, more specific terminology (First Nations and Métis) will be used in order to ensure precision of language.

Conclusion

Kirmayer, Simpson, and Cargo (2003) remind counsellors "…it is important to recognise the great diversity of Aboriginal cultures and communities, which is sometimes obscured by images in the popular media…" (p. 19). Blue, Darou, and Ruano (2010) agree with this view and espouse that because cultural practices differ between Aboriginal communities, counsellors must be aware of these intergroup differences so as not to generalize counselling practices across Aboriginal groups. Even when counsellors are working with people from the same community, clients must be treated as individuals; their nation and language may be the same, but their mental health issues may be very different (Stewart, 2008). Because the inter-group cultural differences that exist between Aboriginal groups are greater than those that divide European nations, counsellors must be educated on these inter-group differences (Kirmayer, Brass, & Tait, 2000).

Chapter 2: Summary of Aboriginal History and Present Day Rights

As was noted in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (AANDC, 1996), there are many ghosts that haunt the present day situation of Aboriginal people. Children and youth are those who are most effected by the issues that continue to plague Aboriginal communities (National Council of Welfare, 2007). In order to understand the current issues affecting urban Aboriginal youth, counsellors must first understand the history of Canada's Aboriginal people from which present day problems stem. It is within this context that Nuttgens and Campbell (2010) assert that if helping professionals are to provide culturally relevant counselling to the Aboriginal population, they must have knowledge of the history of colonization and its impact on contemporary culture and values. Incorporating the knowledge of historical events into counselling practices leads to a strengthening of the working alliance and the development of successful intervention strategies (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009; Klink et al., 2005). The first section of this chapter will provide a summary of Canada's Aboriginal history which will include: (a) first contact and colonization, (b) enfranchisement, (c) treaty signing, (d) the implementation of the Indian Act, (e) Métis scrip, (f) the residential school system, (g) the Red River Resistance, and (h) the creation of Métis settlements.

As was established in chapter one, the issue of defining Canada's Aboriginal people is a complicated matter that continues to be a struggle for both First Nations and Métis people. Counsellors must have knowledge of Aboriginal rights in order to not only provide culturally relevant services, but also to provide adequate referrals to community and governmental agencies as Aboriginal services are often provided on the contingency of status and membership.

The counselling profession has been challenged to extend roles to include a stronger social justice agenda (Arthur & Collins, 2010). "Reducing, overcoming, and eradicating social barriers require counsellors to be both proactive and reactive in their professional roles. Counsellors are challenged to consider how to improve the quality of life for clients and to effect social change" (p. 44). If counsellors are to act as social justice agents for urban Aboriginal youth, it is imperative to understand both past and recent legislation that hinders youth's present day ability to lead a quality life. It is for these reasons that the second half of this chapter will focus on a summary of present day Aboriginal rights that will include the issues of: (a) Canada's Constitution Act, (b) Federal and Provincial jurisdiction, (c) status-Indian, (d) non-status Indian, (e) Bill C-31 rights, and (f) Métis rights in Alberta.

Aboriginal History

Contrary to popular belief, Aboriginal peoples' contact with European explorers occurred over a long period of time. According to Dickason (2006), it is now accepted that the earliest record of contact began with the Norse in 1000 BP well before the arrival of the French and English. During these early times of contact, many Aboriginal groups co-operated with European groups to some degree (Burnett & Read, 2012). However, as the territory became increasingly colonized, relations between Canada's Aboriginal people and European settlers began to deteriorate. Unfortunately, these early interactions between Aboriginal groups and explorers set precedence for the contentious relationship that would exist between both groups for hundreds of years and continues to today.

First Contact and Colonization

Historians who have studied the story of Canada's Aboriginal people agree that First Nations and Inuit peoples' contact with European explorers was not a singular moment in history, but rather occurred over thousands of years (Burnett & Read, 2012; Dickason, 2006, 2009). Aboriginal people on the east coast first encountered Vikings more than 500 years before Jacques Cartier landed on the north-eastern shores of North America while West Coast Aboriginals' met the Spanish vessel, the Santiago, in 1774 (Burnett & Read, 2012). Likewise, the Inuit's first meetings with Europeans occurred sporadically over a period of more than 900 years (Dickason, 2006). The First Nations people who occupied the interior of North America also encountered Europeans in numerous fashions over an extended period of time.

Initially, contact between European settlers and Aboriginal people was rooted in sporadic trades and sometimes violent meetings. Both Henry Hudson and Jacques Cartier reported similar incidents of Aboriginal people presenting explorers with tokens of friendships that were interpreted by explorers as eagerness to trade on the part of Aboriginal people. However, overtime it became evident to Canada's indigenous people that Europeans had not arrived to colonize the new world but rather to exploit its riches (Dickason, 2006). What's more, differences in cultural values added tension to the relationship; while First Nations and Inuit societies for the most part valued egalitarian relationships in which the good of the whole was placed above individualistic needs, Europeans on the other hand emerged from a capitalist society (Dickason, 2006). By the second half of the18th century the differences that existed between both cultures would

become greater. Aboriginal people and Europeans would begin to compete for fur and game resources.

The fur trade. The fur trade was integral in the economic development of Canada. Contrary to popular beliefs, Aboriginal people played an active role in Canada's fur trade. Aboriginal people acted as the middle man between Europeans and inland nations by playing a variety of roles that included hunters, trappers, suppliers, canoe builders, boat men, and farm and post labourers (Ray, 2012). However, despite the advantageous relationship between both cultures, the fur trade would forever alter the identity of Aboriginal people.

Europeans adapted to Canadian life by benefiting from Aboriginal technologies such as moccasins and trapping techniques. Europeans also commonly took First Nations wives who became central actors in the trade. Aboriginal women were negotiators of change as they were able to teach and rely on their traditional languages and practices in order to actively participate in the trade, therefore providing their husbands with an advantage on their rivals (Sleeper-Smith, 2012). Additionally, the intermarriage of these two cultures resulted in the creation of the Métis who would later play a prominent role in Canadian history.

Aboriginal people also benefited from the fur trade and were quick to take advantage of competitive conditions by trading for a range of goods (Ray, 2012). However, serious problems arose as a result of the fur trade. The most serious of issues were those of the over-exploitation of resources and the spread of disease (Dickason, 2009). A century of fur trading led to the destruction of a land that was abundant in wildlife such as the beaver that was hunted to near extinction. This over-exploitation led

not only to the collapse of the fur trade, but subsequent poverty that would heavily affect Canada's Aboriginal people. Additionally, the exchange of furs from hand to hand resulted in the spread of diseases to which Aboriginal people were not immune. It is estimated that prior to European arrival 112.5 million indigenous people occupied the North American continent (Dickason, 2009). However, the author contends that 93% of the indigenous populations were decimated after contact European populations due to spread of disease, devastation of traditional food sources, and traditional ways of being.

Enfranchisement

The fur trade firmly established European and Aboriginal negotiations. As the fur trade progressed, so too did relations between the French and the British. Shortly after the French ceded their territory, King George III issued the *Royal Proclamation* in 1763 to assert his acquisition of the new colony. Within this proclamation, Indian rights were specifically referred to for the first time in Canadian history (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008). In other words, the act confirmed Aboriginal rights by setting aside "Indian territory." However, as settlement and the expansion of industry progressed, it became evident to the British that Aboriginal people stood in the way of desired progress. In 1857 John A. MacDonald introduced *An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes of the Canadas* that gave "Indians" the right to vote; in exchange Indians would become ordinary citizens. In order to be eligible for this exchange, "Indians" had to be male, 21 years and older, able to read English or French, minimally educated, of good moral character, free from debt, and able to pass a three-year probationary period. Additionally, successful candidates would also receive 20 hectares of taxable reserve land. Ironically, given these demanding standards most non-Aboriginal Canadians would

not have been eligible for enfranchisement and as result by 1876 only one individual was enfranchised (Dickason, 2006).

The process of assimilation continued with the creation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. Under the British North America Act "Indians" became a federal responsibility as did land reserved for "Indians." Within this act, Aboriginals continued to exist in the category of wardships of the Federal government (Dickason, 2009). The newly formed government was so confident that "Indians" would eventually be assimilated that in 1887 Sir John A. Macdonald stated "…the great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Amerindian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change" (as cited in Dickason, 2009, p. 159).

Enfranchisement continued well into the 1980s. For example, well into the1960s, registered Indians had to give up their legal Indian status in order to vote in federal elections. Furthermore, until the mid-1980s any registered Indian could choose to give up their Indian status by submitting a formal application to the federal government. As will be covered later in this chapter, these policies have since been amended.

Treaty Signing

The signing of the *Royal Proclamation* in 1763 led to the signing of numbered treaties because Canada was obliged under the agreement to oversee the purchase and surrender of Aboriginal lands. The negotiations and signing of the numbered treaties began in 1871 in southern Ontario (Treaty No. 1) and moved westward until 1921 when the final treaty (Treaty No. 11) was signed. Today the only areas in which treaties were

not signed include British Columbia, the Yukon, parts of Quebec, as well as parts of Newfoundland.

The government's underlying motive in negotiating treaties with Aboriginal communities was to free land for further colonization and development. However, for the majority of Aboriginal communities the loss of land use and dwindling game supply threatened the traditional Aboriginal way of life. Consequently, communities attempted to gain as much control as possible in order to survive the rapidly changing conditions and therefore signed treaties (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008). In a comparison of Canadian treaties, Frideres and Gadacz (2008) note that although the specific details of individual treaties differ, their contents are similar. As is evidenced in their opening clause that details the surrender of land, all treaties were written with the purpose of the extinguishment of Aboriginal rights. In return, the treaties grant Aboriginal people reserve land that varied from 160 to 640 acres per family (dependent on the treaty), annuities of $3 per person, a gratuity of $3 per person, and a school on each reserve. In the negotiation of later treaties, despite government-imposed limitations, Aboriginal groups were able to negotiate added benefits. For example, a medicine chest clause and provisions for relief in times of famine were negotiated in Treaty No. 6.

However for the most part, the Canadian government reaped the greatest benefits of treaties that were more often than not drawn up prior to negotiations and presented for signing without discussion (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008). In negotiations with Aboriginal communities, commissioners avoided discussing the nature or extent of Aboriginal land rights with the signing parties. Dickason (2006) succinctly sums up the process of treaty negotiations from the Aboriginal perspective stating

> …Amerindians expected whites to live up to their word. In the Amerindian view, the treaties they were now negotiating with the Canadian government would help them to adapt to the demands of the modern world within the framework of their own traditions. (p.171)

The Indian Act

In 1873, the Government established boards that were charged to handle Aboriginal affairs throughout Canada. However, in 1876 the government revised this legislation into a nationwide framework named the *Indian Act*. The Act itself outlines the federal government's authority to legislate issues that concerned registered Indians, Indian bands, and Indian reserves, and defines First Nations peoples as wards of the Crown (Kirmayer et al., 2003; Menzies, 2008). The Act further outlines administrative uniformity of Indians and allows the government to track those who are recognized as *status Indians* (individuals entitled to rights under the Act) and *non-status Indians* (individuals not recognized as Indians). Today however, the majority of authors agree that the Indian Act's fundamental goal was to encourage the assimilation of Canada's First Nations people without "forcing the issue" (Dickason, 2006, 2009). For example, under the Act, Indians who earned a university degree in ministry, law, education, or medicine could become enfranchised without a probationary period. In addition, Indian women who married European men were deprived of their Indian status as were all subsequent generations produced. The Indian Act also allowed the government to track those who were not Indian. Interestingly, many of the assimilative policies within the Indian Act remain in place today despite numerous amendments passed since its inception. The Métis however were excluded from falling under the provision of the

Indian Act. The federal government chose instead to deal with this Aboriginal group in a separate manner.

Métis Scrip

Métis people experienced similar struggles related to treaties and the definition of Aboriginal rights as those experienced by First Nations people. While not referred to as treaties, the *Manitoba Act* (1870) and *Dominion Land Act* (1885) provided land to Métis in exchange for their Aboriginal rights, a process referred to as scrip "…a certificate giving the holder the right to receive payment later in the form of cash, good, or land" (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008, p. 202). Prior to these acts, the Métis were not dealt with as a separate group and were included in negotiations with First Nations people. The scrip process differed from the treaty process as scrip was granted to individuals rather than groups. The acts under which scrip was administered did not establish the Métis as an Aboriginal group that would be recognized by the government in perpetuity, as did the Indian Act (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008). Nevertheless, for the Métis the allocation of land was provided through a scrip process.

Under the Manitoba Act, 623,000 hectares were originally set aside for the children of Métis families in Manitoba. However because of miscalculations, a lack of available land to disburse resulted in the government issuing money scrip in lieu of land. Consequently, the Dominion Land Act extended allotted land to Métis residents outside the limits of Manitoba to include areas of the Northwest Territories as well as the Athabasca and Peace River areas. By 1921, the federal government spent an excess of $3.6 million that involved over one million hectares of land that spread from the

Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba to successfully extinguish the rights of more than 24,000 Métis individuals.

Residential Schools

Of the policies that have impacted Aboriginal people and their culture, none have affected them more than the residential school system. In accordance with the Indian policies described throughout this chapter, residential schools were designed to assimilate Aboriginal children and youth by removing them at a young age from their homes and placing them in boarding schools to receive a European-Canadian education. It was expected that placing children in residential schools would expedite the assimilation process (Dickason, 2009). Residential schools were funded and run by both the state and various church organizations (e.g., Catholic and Protestant parishes).

At first, residential school attendance was not compulsory, however by the 1900s, Indian agents were given the power to withhold food and supply rations from First Nations families until children were surrendered to the care of Residential schools. Once children arrived, it was not uncommon for them to be stripped of their identities by having their names changed. The curriculum of schools were designed so that students participated in a half-day of schooling and the other half-day learning a "useful" trade that prepared students for menial jobs in lower class life (Dickason, 2009). It was later revealed that often schools did what the author refers to as "outing" students, "…the practice of hiring students out as servants or manual labourers, with the schools collecting pay" (p. 307). In addition to these injustices, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse often occurred in schools with little attention paid to these issues by state and church.

At their height, there were 80 residential schools across Canada; it is estimated that 75% of all First Nations children between the ages of 7 and 15 were in a residential school (Kirmayer et al., 2003; Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010). Astonishingly, the last residential school closed in 1996 with more than 100,000 children and youth placed in the residential school system throughout the years (Menzies, 2008). The history of residential schools remains a present day concern as many Aboriginal families continue to experience the intergenerational effects of residential schools (Klink et al., 2005). The fracturing of families resulted in the loss of transmission of cultural customs, a separation from traditional ways of being, a loss of Aboriginal spirituality, and forced submission and obedience to oppressive patterns (Blue et al., 2010). For example, the violence that occurred in residential schools did not end with the closure of schools rather Fontaine (2012) states, "I realized that the violence that my family had experienced in the schools had been brought into our home" (p. 241).

The Red River Resistance

In the late 1800s, the Métis of the Red River area were opposed to Canada sending out land surveyors to claim land without consultation with the Métis residing in these areas. The Métis perceived these actions as the loss of land they were entitled to under their Aboriginal rights. "The Métis were losing out on all counts: their claims to aboriginal right was not recognized, and even their claims to prior settlers' rights were being challenged" (Dickason, 2002, p. 202). Moreover, although the Métis participated in the negotiations of treaties one through six, they were discounted from all treaties as well as the Indian Act. To further exasperate the situation, buffalo herds were in retreat, game was sparse, and years of poor crops created difficult winters for Métis families

(Dickason, 2002). As injustices continued to occur, the stage was set for a rebellion. Frustrated that they not able to make progress with the federal government the Métis elicited the help of Louis Riel, an educated, bilingual Métis politician well versed in politics and law. In 1884 Riel sent a petition to the federal government requesting that the Métis be treated with the full dignity of British subjects. In 1869 when Ottawa made no provisions to settle grievances with the Métis, Riel proclaimed a provisional Canadian government. Fighting broke out between the Métis and the federal government with the Métis being defeated. Louis Riel later surrendered to the federal government, was convicted of high treason, and was hung. The result of these historical events is that following the Red River Rebellion, numerous western Métis settlements followed suit rebelling against the federal government's failure to address the protection of Métis rights, land, and the survival of the Métis as a distinct people. Some rebellions were successful (Duck Lake, Fish Creek, and Cut Knife) while others were not (Frog Lake and Battoche).

The eventual defeat of the Métis and the subsequent hanging of Louis Riel resulted in numerous Métis fearing for their lives and consequently fleeing the area and/or declaring themselves as Indians in order to gain admittance to the reserves (Frideres & Godacz, 2008). Since that time, the Métis have made little progress in their quest for recognition of rights. Therefore, the questions of "Who is a Métis? and "What are Métis rights?" remain unanswered.

Métis Settlements

After the northwest rebellions, the Métis were scattered across Canada with the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan accumulating significant Métis populations. In

1885 Father Lacombe, a missionary, petitioned Ottawa to establish a reserve for Métis in Alberta where farming could be learned. Ottawa granted Father Lacombe's request and in 1896 Saint-Paul-des-Métis was established. This was the first lot of land set-aside exclusively for the Métis within Canada. Despite the fact that by 1857 over 50 families had established themselves, the federal government terminated the land lease and opened the reserve land for French Canadian settlement in 1908.

Despite this setback, the Métis continued with their efforts for rights in the Province of Alberta. In 1935 an inquiry was launched to solicit information regarding Métis health, education, homelessness, and land issues. What resulted was the 1938 *Métis Betterment Act* that outlined the province of Alberta's relationship with the Métis. Later amended in 1955 and 1970, this act led to the establishment of Métis settlements in which lands were set aside for eight Métis communities located across Northern Alberta which included: Paddle Prairie, Peavine, Gift Lake, East Prairie, Buffalo Lake, Kikino, Elizabeth, and Fishing Lake. The act also laid the foundation for the self-government of each settlement with the election of five council members. The settlements were made official in the historic 1989 *Alberta Settlements Accord,* which passed legislation in 1990. The constitution of Alberta was also amended in 1990 to recognize and protect the rights of the Métis settlements land and resources. To date, Alberta remains the only province to formally recognize the rights of Métis people by setting aside land.

Summary

According to Frideres and Gadacz (2008), "the ultimate consequence of colonization is to reduce the resistance of Aboriginal people to the point at which they can be controlled" (p. 92). The assimilative mission took place over hundreds of years

and began with colonization, evolved to enfranchisement, treaty signing, the creation of the Indian Act and Métis script, the establishment of residential schools, the resistance of the Northwest, and finally the creation of Métis settlements in Alberta. The authors further espouse that no matter the motives for colonization and assimilation, white Canada has gained far more than it has lost. The result of these assimilative acts is that Aboriginal people continue to suffer a loss of identity, land, and resources.

Present Day Aboriginal Rights

It is clear that the numerous assimilative policies of the last 200 years have affected the identity of Canada's Aboriginal people; they also continue to affect the present day rights of Canada's Aboriginal people. The next section will provide a brief overview of these said rights and will include the 1982 Constitution Act, the issue of Federal and Provincial jurisdictions, and the fluid definitions handed to Aboriginal people such as status-Indians, non-status Indians, Bill C-31 Indians, and Métis.

The 1982 Constitution Act

The constitutional amendment of 1982 was a significant turning point for the Aboriginal people of Canada as it enshrined the rights of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people. Section 35(1-4) of the Constitution Act states

> 35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.
>
> (2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.
>
> (3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

> (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons. (Department of Justice Canada, 2012)

The Constitution Act both recognizes and affirms the existing rights of Canada's Aboriginal groups. The inclusion of this section "…means that if these rights existed prior to 1982, it is not possible, unless the Constitution is changed, to do away with Aboriginal rights…" (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008, p. 265). Although section 35 of the Constitution Act is a significant step towards the reform of Aboriginal policies, there remains much ground for Aboriginal people to regain.

Case in point, although the Constitution Act affirms the rights of Aboriginal people, it does not define the said rights (e.g., What are these rights? What do they entail? Are there any limitations?). A further limitation of the act is that although individual rights of liberty, safety, and freedom are asserted, it does not outline compensation for individuals or groups of individuals whose rights were infringed upon or eradicated as those of Aboriginal people (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008). Finally, although the act acknowledges three existing groups of Aboriginal people within Canada (Indian, Inuit, and Métis) a definition of these terms is not provided. For example, it remains to be determined who is included in the term Métis. Moreover, the definition of "Indian" remains in flux. Clearly at present there exists no definition that unilaterally defines those individuals included within the terms First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Federal and Provincial Jurisdictions

The Constitution Act establishes a clear federal jurisdiction of Canada's Aboriginal people. However, consistent with the federal government's history with

Aboriginal people, there is currently no body of law that explicitly outlines the boundaries or responsibilities of this jurisdiction. Within the levels of Canadian government exists municipal, provincial, and federal governments. Each level of government relates to the immediate superior level of government from which it receives its authority. Consequently, Aboriginal governments must interact with various levels of government depending on the issue being discussed (e.g., land rights, program funding, economic development, and education). Frideres and Gadacz (2008) bring to light the complexity of this subject by highlighting harvesting rights and policing as these matters fall within both provincial and federal jurisdictions. From this perspective, it is unclear whether federal or provincial government prevails in instances where Aboriginal governments are deliberating on harvesting and law enforcement issues.

Jurisdictional issues are also experienced by the Métis. Although Métis are included in the constitution, the federal government has historically taken the position that the Métis are a provincial responsibility. This federal position arises out of Section 91(24) of the 1867 Constitution Act that grants the federal government legislative authority over *Indians and Indian reserve land*. With the exception of Alberta, all Canadian provinces agree with this federal stance. Despite this fact, the Métis National Council argues that the Métis are a federal responsibility as historically the Métis and Inuit were inherently included in the term Indian.

Further complicating the matter of jurisdictional issues are the funding levels of social programs made available to Aboriginal people. Alberta's First Nations and Métis people are able to apply for funds with both federal and provincial levels of government. However, each level of government has the authority to dictate funding criteria, thereby

defining those Aboriginal groups and individuals who are eligible to access programing. In other words, whether an individual is status-Indian, non-status Indian, on-reserve Indian or off-reserve Indian, urban Métis or settlement Métis will determine which services and programs an individual is able to access. Complications arise when individuals are unable to define which group they fall under. It is for this reason, that numerous urban Aboriginal youth are unable to access numerous urban Aboriginal programs, despite their availability.

Status-Indians

Since 1868 the federal government has used a variety of criteria to decide those individuals who qualify as registered Indians. Present day status-Indians are those individuals who under the Indian Act, are either registered Indians with the federal government or are entitled to be registered. Vernacular terms used to refer to status-Indians are "legal Indians," "registered Indians," or "treaty Indians". As has been demonstrated, status-Indians are legally defined within the Indian Act and are therefore afforded rights defined by the federal government. For the most part, being a status-Indian means that an individual is part of a band and is registered with the Indian roll in Ottawa. However, not all status-Indians are attached to a band as First Nations government has the authority to not only decide who can register with a band, but also who can live on reserve.

Treaty Indians. What's more, Indians are also categorized by those individuals who belong to a community where their ancestors took treaty and those whose ancestors didn't. Individuals who are part of a treaty are often referred to as "treaty Indian." As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the rights afforded to status-Indians who accepted

treaty are dependent on the negotiated treaty. Therefore, one cannot assume that all status-Indians receive education or health care as treaties were individually negotiated.

On-reserve and off-reserve Indians. Moreover, in addition to the distinction of status-Indians belonging to a territory of signed treaty or status-Indian belonging to an area with no signed treaty, First Nations people are also further divided into on-reserve and off-reserve; this distinction is in accordance with whether the individual's ancestors accepted reserve land. From this perspective, on-reserve Indians are those individuals who live on reserve land while off-reserve Indians are those who choose to reside off reserve land or are perhaps part of a nation who did not receive reserve land.

What is clear is that the classification of individuals as "Indians" is not one that is simply self-declared. Rather the answer to the question "Who is an Indian?" is one that can be found within a legal definition provided by the federal government. Given these numerous and albeit complex definitions, who then is a non-status Indian?

Non-Status Indians

Just as a legal definition exists for status-Indians, there is also legal criteria to define non-status Indians. The definition of a non-status Indian is not that of an individual who identifies or self declares a social or biological link to "being an Indian." Rather, non-status Indians are those individuals who lost registered status due to either enfranchisement or intermarriage to non-Indians. For example, individuals who were enfranchised through either application or suffrage were deemed non-status Indian. Additionally, Indian women who married non-Indian husbands were also deemed non-status Indian; the children and subsequent generations of women who lost their Indian status due to intermarriage were consequently also included within this category.

However, readers should be cautioned that those who are neither considered status Indian nor non-status Indian under the Indian Act, are not necessarily Métis and are therefore not eligible for the minimally existing Métis rights. Further information on this topic will be provided later in this chapter.

Bill C-31 Indians

As previously stated, the definition of status-Indian is one that has evolved over time. One group that has most adversely been affected by government policy changes are Indian women who married non-Indian men, as well as their subsequent generations. As stated, these individuals lost their Indian rights through intermarriage. For this reason, in 1985 an amendment to the Indian Act was passed; Bill C-31 yet again redefined those individuals who were included under the Indian Act. The act is characterized by three key provisions that include: (a) the reinstatement of status of to those Indians who lost their status under earlier Indian Act policies, (b) new rules determining eligibility to register as an Indian, and (c) the ability for First Nations group to define their own rules of membership.

Individuals who lost their status as a result of previous Indian act policies were now able to reapply for their status and have it reinstated. However, in the case of those individuals who married a non-status Indian and consequently lost their status, Bill C-31 reinstates the woman in question and only two consecutive generations of marrying non-status Indians.

A further consequence of the amendment is that four new "types" of Indians were created to include: (a) status-Indian with band membership, (b) status-Indian with no band membership, (c) non-status Indian with band membership, and (d) non-Status

Indian with no band membership. As previously explained, although an individual may legally be on the Indian Census Roll, they may not be entitled to be an Indian band member.

Métis

As has already been noted, the Métis do not fall under a federal act and therefore do not have claim to federal lands as do First Nations people. Historically, the federal government has recognized the existence and claim of Métis rights under such acts as the Dominion Act and Manitoba Act (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008). However, to date no legislation exists that defines the rights of the Métis. For this reason, the twentieth century marked the creation of Métis political organizations in an effort to regain ethnic status and compensation for Aboriginal rights; by the 1970s ten Métis organizations were established and advocated for Métis rights across Canada (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008). In 1984, members of Métis Nations across Canada joined arms to form the Métis National Council (MNC) in an effort to achieve a clear definition of Métis as well as subsequent rights. Presently the MNC (2011) provides the following definition to determine Métis membership: " 'Métis' means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation" (p. 2).

After hundreds of years of conflict, the Supreme Court of Canada under the ruling in the case of R. v. Powley upheld Métis rights. In 1993, Powley and son were charged with hunting without a license and unlawful possession of a moose in Ontario after killing and tagging a moose. As the Powleys' acts were in violation of Ontario's Game and Fish Act, father and son argued to the courts that their act was justified as their

traditional Aboriginal right to harvest was protected under Section 35 of the Constitution Act. On September 19, 2011, a Supreme Court judge upheld the lower court's decision that the Powley's Métis right to hunt was indeed protected under Section 35 of the Constitution Act. Although the ruling did not define Canada's Métis people, it did confirm self-identification, ancestral connection, and community acceptance (Frideres & Gadacz, 2008); a first step in the confirmation of traditional Métis rights.

Despite successes such as the Powley case, the federal government maintains the position that the Métis are a provincial responsibility despite their recognition and protection under section 35(1) of the Constitution Act. Moreover, despite the fact that certain federal ministries provide limited funding to Canada's Métis for matters related to education, economic development, and health, an acknowledgement remains to be made. There is no doubt that Métis rights will continue to shift as progress is made in the recognition of rights.

Summary

Colonization and assimilative policies that have been imposed on Canada's Aboriginal people have deeply affected the present day rights of Aboriginal people. In turn, the 1982 Constitution Act and issues of Federal and Provincial jurisdiction as well as the federal definitions of status-Indian, non-status Indian, Bill C-31 Indian, and Métis affect the identity of this population. What becomes apparent is that the identity of Canada's Aboriginal people remains in flux due to Indian Act amendments and court ruling as demonstrated by the January 8, 2013 federal court ruling. An in-depth understanding of these rights is necessary for helping professionals to provide services that recognize and tackle the unique issues faced by each population.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief history of Canada's Aboriginal people and an overview of present day Aboriginal rights that continue to affect the identity of the Aboriginal individual. What becomes evident is that there is no easy answer to the question: Who is an Aboriginal person? When counsellors are able to better understand the changing landscape of Aboriginal people and their rights, they are better able to understand the complex interplay of socioeconomic and historic factors that influence the well-being of today's urban Aboriginal youth.

Chapter 3: Literature Review of Issues Facing Urban Aboriginal Youth

Authors agree that the situation of urban Aboriginal youth is not only complex but that the multiple issues these youth face continue to be barriers to their well-being (Brown et al., 2005). A literature review on this topic confirms a complex interplay of psychosocial, historical, and cultural issues that affect the well-being of urban Aboriginal youth in Alberta; authors agree there is no easy answer to these issues, but rather a plethora of factors to understand (Blue et al., 2010; Brown et al., 2005; Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Hill, 2009; Katz et al., 2006; LaFromboise, Medoff, Lee, & Harris, 2007; Lemstra et al., 2008; Mohatt, Fok, Burket, Henry, & Allen, 2011; Morrissette & Gadbois, 2006; Pavkov, Travis, Fox, King, & Cross, 2010). The more aware helping professionals are of the social and historical origins of the distress of Aboriginal youth, the more compassionate they become and can therefore deliver more effective services to this vulnerable group (Mitchell & Maracle, 2005).

This chapter will provide a literature review of the issues faced by Alberta's First Nations and Métis youth and how these issues are applicable to the counselling setting. The chapter will begin by defining Alberta's urban Aboriginal youth population. It will then provide an overview of recent literature on this topic that will include matters of colonization, historical trauma, acculturative stress, enculturation, socioeconomic status, and mental health disparities. Then chapter will consider the healing of urban Aboriginal youth through a discussion of resiliencies and strengths that can be brought into the counselling setting; it will then conclude with a discussion on the implication of these issues for counsellors.

Defining Aboriginal Youth

The Aboriginal youth population is both the fastest growing population in Canada as well as the youngest with 48% under the age of 24 (Statistics Canada, 2008). Chapters one and two defined Canada's three distinct Aboriginal groups and clarified terms that included: status and non-status Indian, on-reserve and off-reserve Indian, Bill-C31 Indian, and Métis. While all of the noted definitions affect the identity of the Aboriginal youth population, youth are also affected by trends that make this particular demographic distinct.

The first question is that of age; one must ask who is included in the term *youth*? Statistics Canada defines youth as those between the ages of 15 and 24. While the majority of Aboriginal organizations adhere to Statistics Canada guidelines, the age parameters of youth may fluctuate depending on funder criteria. For example, the National Association of Friendship Centres and the Métis Nation of Alberta who receive funding from the federal *Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth* program define youth as being between the ages of 10-24. However, other Aboriginal organizations who receive funding from the federal *Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy* program define youth as being between the ages of 15-30.

The application of these definitions has created gaps in programming available to youth and can compromise the ability for urban Aboriginal youth to access services, particularly those ages 10-14 (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2003). It is suggested that counsellors contact Aboriginal organizations within their communities to inquire which age groups are included in their definition.

The second question is that of urban versus rural dwellers. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of the Aboriginal population resides in urban centres rather than in rural or on-reserve settings (Hanselmann, 2001). In 2006, for instance, 49.5% of the Aboriginal population were urban dwellers (Environs Institute, 2010). Western Canada boasts the cities with the highest Aboriginal population, as four of the five Canadian cities with the highest Aboriginal populations are located in the west (Hanselmann, 2001). Furthermore, while First Nations people are the most populous group in the majority of Canadian cities, this is untrue of Calgary and Edmonton where the Métis are most numerous (Environs Institute, 2010).

Finally, a significant portion of the urban Aboriginal population is comprised of lone-parent families compared to the non-Aboriginal population (Hanselmann, 2001). Aboriginal women ages 15-24 are 3 times more likely to be single mothers than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (National Council on Welfare, 2007). In 2001, 46% of urban Aboriginal youth resided in lone-parent families comparing to 18% of non-Aboriginal youth (National Council on Welfare, 2007).

Issues Facing First Nations and Métis Youth

The most recent demographic statistics demonstrate that urban Aboriginal youth face unique challenges that make them more vulnerable than other populations (The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2003). The lives of these youth are complex as they face a plethora of challenges. Not only are urban Aboriginal youth affected by the ever-changing landscape of programs and policies that are dependent on changing definitions of "aboriginality" and age, but they are also affected by historical wrongs and current socioeconomic inequities (The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples,

2003). This next section will provide a literature review that will summarize the issues facing urban Aboriginal youth that will include the effects of colonization, historical trauma, acculturative stress, enculturation, socioeconomic status, and mental health disparities.

Effects of Colonization

As was examined in chapter two, the colonization of North America was rooted in the race of European countries' desire for possession of land and resources. During this historical period, European countries "…formed new colonial multi-ethnic provinces and nation-states…with little regard for the people living in the newly controlled areas" (Doyle, 2011, p. 20). Doyle (2011) espouses those post-colonial groups who stayed on their land experienced the appropriation and reshaping of their cultures and identities by the colonizing country. Such was the case for Canada's First Nations people; years of colonization and assimilative policies led to the desolation of Aboriginal communities and cultures (Bombay et al., 2009).

Prior to contact with European cultures, Canada's First Nations' cultures were rooted in the holistic balance of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual of the individual, family, community, nature, and creation. However, during colonization "populations that had previously identified themselves as distinct, based on their cultural, ethnic, and/or religious heritage, were forced to unify under a single national identity" (Doyle, 2011, p. 20). During both peri and post-colonial times, Canada's Aboriginal people faced many challenges that included the unrelenting loss of resources, land, homes, family, identity, language, and culture (Doyle, 2011). Chapter two highlighted the cultural oppression and social marginalization experienced by Aboriginal people

through the actions of European colonizers that included policies of enfranchisement, treaty signing, the Indian Act, Métis script, residential schools, and the banning of cultural and healing practices. For these reasons Kirmayer, Tait, et al. (2009) postulate that "the origins of the elevated rates of mental and social distress found in many Aboriginal populations are not hard to discern" (p. 7).

In extrapolating on the works of Bateson (1979) and Wertsch and Tulviste (1992) on human development, it can then be understood that the mental health of Aboriginal youth "…is inherently sociocultural, and thus mental health issues can best be understood within the context from which they have emerged" (as cited in Iarocci, Root, and Burack, 2009, p. 86). Thus, Aboriginal youth continue to suffer the consequences of colonization. The disconnection from culture and social oppression have resulted in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth compared to non-Aboriginal youth in the following areas: (a) lower completion rates of both secondary and post-secondary education; (b) higher rates of substance use, depression, and anxiety; (c) lower self-esteem; (d) suicide rates 5 times higher than the national average, (e) youth who are 2 to 6 times more likely to use alcohol; (f) youth who are 5 times more likely to live in poverty; and (g) boys (4.5 times more likely) and girls (5 times more likely) to contact a mental health facility (Chandler & Lalonde, 2009; Iarocci et al., 2009; Johner & Maslany, 2011; Lemstra et al., 2008; Menzies, 2008). For these reasons, counsellors must be aware of the unique factors that jeopardize the well-being of urban Aboriginal youth.

The effect that colonization can have on a population is devastating and long reaching (Doyle, 2011). Whether it be enfranchisement, Métis scrip, or residential schools, knowledge of the history of colonization and its effect on contemporary culture

is necessary in order to provide culturally relevant counselling to urban Aboriginal youth (Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010).

Influence of Historical Trauma

The history of Canada's Aboriginal people is grounded in historical and contextual elements of trauma such as colonization, loss of connectedness, and acculturation (Hill, 2009). Historical trauma is a "collective emotional and psychological injury over the lifespan and across generations. It is viewed as resulting from a history of genocide with the effects being psychological, behavioural, and medical" (Mitchell & Maracle, 2005, p. 15). The authors further elaborate that for Canadian Aboriginals, historical trauma is directly linked to the loss of culture through both the banning of cultural practices and policies of assimilation; a culture with a previously strong identity rooted in traditional practices and worldviews was devalued and replaced by a culture of dependence and imbalance. Trauma caused as a result of colonization continues to be experienced in the Aboriginal community today and has resulted in the intergenerational disruption of the continuity of family and community (Bombay et al., 2009; LaFromboise et al., 2007). A review of literature by Bombay and colleagues (2009) on this topic indicates a considerable amount of evidence to support the argument that the effects of trauma are generated across generations to affect children and subsequent generations of those who were initially victimized. The residential schools legacy is presently the most prevalent example of intergenerational trauma; Aboriginal children were uprooted from their homes and stripped of their identity and culture. Residential school children were often raised in an unstable culture of verbal and physical abuse, a culture that was in direct contrast of the Aboriginal traditional of respect, community, and family.

Consequently, the children of residential schools grew up to have their own children without anything but the experience of disruption and abuse.

Practitioners should not confuse symptoms of historical trauma with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as symptoms of the former are more closely associated with feelings of anger, fear, and mistrust (Kirmayer, Tait, et al., 2009). The authors posit that this distinction is important because feelings of anger and mistrust can become obstacles to establishing a safe working alliance with both the client and community.

The impact of historical trauma continues to have consequences for today's urban Aboriginal youth as mental health and social problems found in the Aboriginal population have been linked to social and cultural disruption experienced as a result of historical trauma (Mitchell & Maracle, 2005). "The severing of family, community, and nation has left a legacy of individuals who may be unable to function in mainstream society" (Menzies, 2008, p.43). Youth experience daily reminders of this trauma that are paired with stressors such as gross social and economic inequalities, health inequities, low socioeconomic status, loss of family, discrimination, and ambiguous social status (Kirmayer, Brass, & Valaskakis, 2009; Menzies, 2008; Mitchell & Maracle, 2005).

Trauma exists in four realms of the Aboriginal community: (a) the individual, (b) the family, (c) the community, and (d) the nation (Kirmayer et al., 2000; Waldram, 1997). Prior to colonization, the four realms existed interdependently, however, due to historical trauma the four realms were pushed apart to exist in isolation. When working with Aboriginal individuals, rather than pathologizing the client, individual practitioners should consider the four realms in which trauma exists (Menzies, 2008). Counsellors

must view client issues within the context of the youth's relationship with their family and caregivers (Menzies, 2008). From this perspective, when working with urban Aboriginal youth counsellors must use a holistic approach; family and community support is critical in the development of healthy individuals (Kirmayer et al., 2000, 2003; McCormick, 2000, 2009; Menzies, 2008). Family counselling may be more appropriate than individual counselling with Aboriginal youth (Stewart, 2009).

Acculturative Stress

Acculturation is "the process of integrating or assuming the worldview, values, customs, or norms of another cultural group, resulting in changes in thinking patterns, feelings, and behaviours" (Collins & Arthur, 2010, p. 85). This process is generally discussed as a unidirectional movement from one's culture of origin to mainstream culture that negatively affects the wellbeing and adjustment of the individual (LaFromboise et al., 2007). Acculturative stress on the other hand is a "…form of cultural change that ensures when cultures meet for prolonged periods of time" (Waldram, 2009, p. 69). Research on the effect of acculturative stress on Aboriginal people links acculturative stress with diminished physical and mental health of both the individual and cultural group undergoing the acculturation (LaFromboise, Albright, & Harris, 2010).

Aboriginal youth are faced with the unique dilemma of what is commonly referred to by Aboriginal people as "walking in two worlds" in which youth must learn to be adept in mainstream culture as well as in the traditions of Aboriginal culture. The work of LaFromboise and colleagues (2010) reveals that youth may experience internal conflict as they try to adhere to two starkly different cultural value systems. In their

contact with the dominant culture, youth may also perceive prejudice and pressure to conform to mainstream values. This experience puts Aboriginal youth at risk for negative mental health outcomes that include anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality, alienation, identity confusion, and greater perceived psychosomatic symptoms (LaFromboise et al., 2010). In addition, acculturative stress also puts Aboriginal youth at higher risk for substance abuse, feelings of hopelessness, and powerlessness (LaFromboise et al., 2010; Mohatt et al., 2011). Despite these increased risks, studies indicate that Aboriginal youth who achieve bicultural competence experience more positive mental health and less feelings of hopelessness (Eckersley & Dear, 2002; Garroutte, Goldbert, Beals, & Herrell, 2003; Hill, 2009; LaFromboise et al., 2007; LaFromboise et al., 2010; Lemstra et al., 2008; Mohatt et al., 2011; Pavkov et al., 2010).

Culture and experiences of acculturative stress will vary according to individual and group differences including geographic region, community affiliation, level of acculturation, socioeconomic status, and education (Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010). Counsellors need to determine the cultural orientation of Aboriginal clients in their assessment and treatment (Waldram, 2009). However, Waldram notes that despite the development of numerous assessment tools to measure acculturation, none have been sound measures of acculturation. For this reason, counsellors must not only shed assumptions and beliefs regarding youths' attachment to their race and culture, but must also have an understanding of both the complex relationship between the historic devaluing and loss of Aboriginal culture as well as the client's present relationship with Aboriginal and mainstream culture (Mitchell & Maracle, 2005; Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010). What is evident is that helping professionals should not underestimate the

complexity of acculturative stress and the role that it plays in the mental health of urban Aboriginal youth.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status (SES) is an important cultural dimension in the individual's life as it is "…inextricably linked to their health and sense of well-being" (Arthur & Collins, 2010, p. 35). Despite this fact, individuals of low SES continue to be stigmatized and underserved by mental health professionals (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Pope & Arthur, 2009). The impact of SES on the psychosocial well-being and treatment of clients must also be determined (Arthur & Collins, 2010).

SES is a cultural variable that affects virtually all aspects of the individual's life (Liu et al., 2004). "A person's cultural identity and values cannot be fully understood without considering SES in conjunction with other social identities, such as...ethnicity" (Pope & Arthur, 2009, p. 58). For Canadians from ethnic minority status (e.g., Aboriginal people), SES mobility is difficult to achieve due to systemic discrimination that results in lower incomes, educational achievement, and consequently entry into professional positions.

How does SES impact urban Aboriginal youth? On almost all Canadian quality of life indicators, Aboriginal people do not fare well (National Council of Welfare, 2007). Aboriginal youth are more likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to live in an impoverished family household that has a considerably lower mean income. Furthermore, the median income of Aboriginal women is $8,000 less than that of non-Aboriginal women. This statistic is particularly important because according to Statistics Canada (2008), 24% of Aboriginal youth under the age of 14 live in lone-parent families

in which mothers are the sole breadwinners. Employment rates for Aboriginal people were below those of the non-Aboriginal population with the majority of Aboriginal people employed in the areas of health, social-assistance, trades, construction, and manufacturing (Statistics Canada, 2011). Employment trends have an impact on urban Aboriginal youth as they affect family relationships, self-esteem, wellness, and the expectations and decisions of future generations regarding educational attainment (National Council of Welfare, 2007). Moreover, research on the role of SES on children and families indicates that children in lower SES groups experience more instances of family conflict, less parental worth, as well as less positive communication with their caregivers (Pope & Arthur, 2009). Additionally, Aboriginal youth experience high residential mobility as well as diversity in levels of poverty, health, education, and employment (Brown et al., 2005).

Mental health issues. Mental health is an important aspect of the well-being of youth as the majority of mental illnesses not only manifest themselves in adolescence and early adulthood, but continue to influence the individual throughout the lifespan. Mental health increases the likelihood that youth will complete school, achieve increased levels of attainment, have positive relations with others, experience personal growth, and make positive contributions to society (Health Canada, 2011). Mental illness on the other hand not only increases the risk of physical health problems such as heart disease, but also increases rates of poverty and unemployment (Health Canada, 2011).

Urban Aboriginal youths' experience with mental health includes multiple layers that include genetic, psychological, environmental, and community factors. For example, the high suicide rate of the Aboriginal youth population has been studied at length.

Studies reveal that there are a number of issues relevant to youth suicide that include physical, social, environment, and cultural factors as well as childhood adversity, poverty, and social disorganization (Eckersley & Dear, 2002; Hallet, Chandler, & Lalonde, 2007; Hill, 2009; Katz et al., 2006;). However, despite increased knowledge on the repercussion of these indicators, research on the prevalence of mental health issues in this population is sparse due to Aboriginal youth underutilization of mental health services by youth (Lemstra et al., 2011).

Aboriginal youth encounter higher levels of exposure to trauma than non-Aboriginal youth (Katz et al., 2006). Two studies by Lemsta and colleagues (2009, 2011) reveal that the prevalence of depression is common in 10-year-old individuals and increases as youth age. Depressed moods in Aboriginal youth increase with lack of social support, being bullied, feelings of marginalization, hunger, and lack of parental relationship, and consequently may result in lower self-esteem. Independent risk indicators for depression include not having someone show love and affection, having frequent arguments with parents, and being physically bullied at least once per week.

Health. According to the Chief Officer's report on the state of public health in Canada (Health Canada, 2011), the health and well-being of youth ages 12-19 differs from that of young adults ages 20-29. In addition to social demographic factors that affect the health and well-being of youth such as housing, education, employment, and income, other key elements are physical and mental health. The biopsychosocial model of health contends that both physical and mental health are the consequence of an interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors (Taylor & Sirois, 2012). Similarly, the World Health Organization has also adopted a definition of health in which

health is defined as "…a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (as cited in Taylor & Sirois, 2012, p. 4). Following these models, Health Canada has identified 12 determinants of health that interact to influence health that include: (a) income and social status, (b) social support networks, (c) education, (d) employment/working conditions, (e) social environments, (f) physical environments, (g) personal health practices and coping skills, (h) healthy child development, (i) biology and genetic endowment, (j) health services, (k) gender, and (l) culture (as cited in Taylor & Sirois, 2012). Given these extensive definitions of health, one can make sense of how physical health and mental health are influenced by SES (Taylor & Sirois, 2012).

People who have a high SES are less likely to have medical and psychiatric disorders and are more likely to have lower mortality rates (Taylor & Sirois, 2012). People with lower socioeconomic status are at greater risk for cancer (as well as a faster course of progression once the illness is detected) and greater risk of having chronic conditions (e.g., arthritis, obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and mood disorders) than those who have a higher socioeconomic status. Women in the lower SES group are more likely to be overweight. It is not surprising that Aboriginal people experience unique health issues that include: (a) higher rates of colorectal cancer, (b) increased diabetes rates (3 to 5 times higher than the general population), (c) increased teenage smoking rates (triple the rate of non-Aboriginal youth), (d) greater obesity, (e) higher infant mortality rates, (f) higher SIDS rates, and (g) an overrepresentation in Canada's AIDS epidemic.

When working with urban Aboriginal youth, counsellors must consider how SES has influenced their client's presenting concern (Pope & Arthur, 2009). However, because many SES issues that affect urban Aboriginal youth reside outside of the individual, counsellors must expand their strategies to work collaboratively with professionals from other disciplines such as social workers and medical professionals (Pope & Arthur, 2009).

Mental Health Disparities

While many of the mental health problems and illnesses that affect youth are similar to those affecting the adult Canadian population, the factors that influence the mental health of urban Aboriginal youth differ than those of dominant culture (Iarocci et al., 2009). Aboriginal youth experience mental health issues at alarming rates and are generally at greater risk, as is evidenced in the mental health disparities between Canadian born non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal youth. The chief officer's report on the state of public health in Canada (Health Canada, 2011) as well as the Urban Aboriginal Action Plan (Environics Institute, 2010) highlight the following variances when comparing off-reserve Aboriginal youth to non-Aboriginal urban youth: (a) 6.6% of off-reserve Aboriginal youth ages 12 years and older are diagnosed with a mood disorder compared to 6.3% of non-Aboriginal urban youth (b) off-reserve Aboriginal youth are 1.5 times more likely to experience major depressive episode, and (c) 9.1% of Aboriginal youth are diagnosed with an anxiety disorder compared to 5% of non-Aboriginal urban youth.

Suicide is a particular concern to the Aboriginal youth population. Rates of suicide ideation and attempted suicide are also higher for Aboriginal youth. According to

Lemstra and colleagues (2009), "In 2000 the suicide rate in First Nations people was 24.11 per 100,000, compared with the national average of 13.2" (p. 590). The rate of completed suicide in Aboriginal communities is much higher than in the general population (Katz et al., 2006). Suicide accounts for 38% of all deaths in Aboriginal youth with the highest rates of suicide found in male First Nations youth, ages 15-24, which is 5 times higher than the national average (Lemstra et al., 2009). However, readers are cautioned that Aboriginal youth suicide rates vary per geographical area and therefore vary by province, regional, and Aboriginal community.

Urbanization

Over the last 50 years, the rate of the Aboriginal population living in urban settings has risen by 56%. Today, the majority of Aboriginal people now live in urban centres (Hanselmann, 2001; Kirmayer, Tait, et al., 2009). Although there exists a great deal of diversity among urban Aboriginal youth, the literature consistently demonstrates higher levels of poverty and health related issues and lower levels of educational attainment, employment rates, and salaries than non-Aboriginal urban youth (Brown et al., 2005). Despite these trends, the discussion of Aboriginal issues tends to focus on rural and on-reserve settings (Hanselmann, 2001). Counsellors must be aware of the increased urbanization of Aboriginal people as urban dwelling poses unique issues for youth.

The report on urban Aboriginal youth states that geographical variations produce drastic differences in cultural and educational experiences (Environics Institute, 2010). For instance, while the older Aboriginal population participates in urban Aboriginal cultural activities, youth do not. For this reason, Aboriginal youth are less connected to

Aboriginal culture because they are not as aware of cultural activities that may help foster a sense of collective Aboriginal identity (Environics Institute, 2010).

Urban Aboriginal youth are the most mobile of all Aboriginal groups and therefore frequently move dwellings as well as migrate back and forth between their home community and the urban setting (Brown et al., 2005). Kirmayer, Tait, et al. (2009) refer to this phenomenon as *residential instability* and state that this high mobility not only weakens social cohesion in urban communities and neighbourhoods, but is also linked with family instability. The result is a higher proportion of female lone-parent families with low incomes; these lone-parent families often become victims of crime and victimization. In addition, the mobility of youth complicates the delivery of urban services. Within this context, the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples (2003) discovered that Aboriginal youth who live off-reserve or away from Métis settlements are the most underserved population in the urban setting. Off-reserve Aboriginal youth experience poor economic and social conditions.

Summary

This first section of this chapter focused on the issues experienced by urban Aboriginal youth that included the effects of colonization, historical trauma, acculturative stress, socioeconomic status factors, mental health and physical health issues, and the experience of urbanization. While it is important to understand the issues experienced by youth, Aboriginal culture as a whole has much to offer in the healing of First Nations and Métis youth. The next section of this chapter will consider tools that can be used to facilitate urban Aboriginal youth healing.

Healing First Nations and Métis Youth

Resiliency and strengths. Over the last 10 years, an abundance of research on the topic of resiliency has emerged (Tait & Whiteman, 2011). However, despite this recent trend Filbert and Flynn (2010) remind readers that research on the topic of resiliency of Aboriginal youth is scarce. A number of recent studies have indicated that Aboriginal culture is associated with the increased resilience of Aboriginal youth (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Blackstock & Trocme, 2005; Brown et al., 2005; Dell et al., 2011; Filbert & Flynn, 2010; Janelle, Laliberte, & Ottawa, 2009; King, 2011; Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Phillips, & Williamson; 2011; Tait & Whiteman, 2011). Despite the struggles urban Aboriginal youth face in their daily lives, they express concern for the well-being of their community, community members, and cultural preservation (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Brown et al., 2005; Janelle et al., 2009). These research outcomes strongly suggest that healing urban Aboriginal youth can only be accomplished by accessing the strength and resilience found within Aboriginal cultures.

Aboriginal culture. When attempting to define Aboriginal culture, Kirmayer and colleagues (2003) remind readers "…it is important to recognise the great diversity of Aboriginal cultures and communities, which is sometimes obscured by images in the popular media…" (p. 19). Additionally, cultural practices differ between Aboriginal communities and intergroup differences must be accounted for (Blue et al., 2010; Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010). Although Aboriginal cultures in Alberta are diverse, values related to balance and community are shared. Therefore, the Aboriginal approach to healing is based on values of wholeness, harmony, and restoring mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional balance (Ambtman, Hudson, Hartry, & Mackay-Chiddenton, 2010). The work of King (2011) and Menzies (2008) reminds practitioners that because the individual is connected to their community, environment, collective history, traditions, and families, all realms contribute to the individual's wellness.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, Aboriginal people experienced a disconnection from traditional sources of wellness during colonialism, the establishment of Canada, and the residential school system. This disconnection resulted in the unbalance and subsequent issues experienced by Aboriginal people (Kirmayer et al., 2000; Kirmayer et al., 2003; McCormick, 2000, 2009). Elders participating in Aboriginal research assert that a reconnection to culture, community, and spirituality is essential in the healing Aboriginal people (McCormick, 2000).

Enculturation. "Enculturation is defined as the process by which individuals learn about and identify with their traditional ethnic culture" (Zimmerman, Ramirez, & Washienko as cited in Yoder, Whitbeck, Hoyt, & LaFromboise, 2006, p. 178). Youth who are involved in traditional activities experience less psychological distress

(LaFromboise et al., 2010) while a sense of belonging and connectedness to Aboriginal culture is positively related to well-being (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Garroutte et al., 2003; Hill, 2009; LaFromboise et al., 2010; Mohatt et al., 2011).

Chandler and Lalonde (1998) refer to enculturation as cultural continuity. In their ground-breaking research with 200 Aboriginal groups in British Columbia, the authors identified that those First Nation communities who have taken active steps to preserve and rehabilitate their own culture, display dramatically lower youth suicide rates. For example, the study illustrated that the presence of self-government reduced youth suicide risk by 85% while efforts to exert control over traditional land base reduced the youth suicide risk by 41%. Other factors that decreased the risk of suicide among Aboriginal youth living in First Nations bands included attendance at band controlled schools (reduced rates of suicide by 52%), the provision of health services (reduced rates of suicide by 29%), the availability of cultural facilities (reduced rates of suicide by 23%), and the presence of band controlled fire and police services (reduced rates of suicide by 20%). In their conclusion the authors state,

> taken together, these results are abundantly clear: First Nations communities vary dramatically in the rates of youth suicide that they evidence, and these differences are strongly and clearly associated with a group of predictor variables or protective factors meant to index the degree to which different bands are engaged in community practices that work to help preserve and restore their Native cultures. (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998, pp. 213-214)

A similar study by Hallet and colleagues (2007) confirmed Chandler and Lalonde's (1998) research. In this recent study, Hallet and his colleagues demonstrated

that indigenous languages are strong predictors of the health and well-being of FN communities; bands whose youth possessed higher levels of traditional language, had lower suicide rates.

These findings are also supported by studies conducted with on-reserve American Indian youth. Zimmerman (1998) studied the construct of enculturation with Odawa and Ojibway Native American youth. Zimmerman was able to demonstrate the significance of enculturation as youth with high level of self-esteem and cultural identity reported lower levels of alcohol and substance. Likewise, Hill (2009) discovered a negative correlation between both a sense of belonging and connectedness to traditional culture and suicidal ideation. These studies confirm that revitalizing culture and language are resources for rebuilding identity and healing (King, 2011). On-reserve Aboriginal youth positively benefit from being involved in their traditional Aboriginal culture.

Summary

Kirmayer and colleagues (2003) remind helping professionals that despite concerted efforts at forced assimilation, Aboriginal people have been resilient as Aboriginal cultures continue to exist. All studies highlighted in this section have involved strong links to tradition, community, and culture. It is evident that authors agree that the resiliency of Aboriginal culture is the strongest protective factor against many of the issues experienced by urban Aboriginal youth. From this perspective, counsellors are encouraged to rely on traditional Aboriginal practices when working with urban Aboriginal youth. Implications for counsellors will be considered in the final section of this chapter.

Implications for Counsellors

A web of relationships that include family, communities, nation, and the environment defines the Aboriginal individual. However, "in most urban areas, mental health services have not been adapted to the needs of Aboriginal clients and this is reflected in low rates of use" (Kirmayer et al., 2000, p. 613). Nuttgens and Campbell (2010) espouse that low rates of usage are due to cultural encapsulation, which continues to be prevalent in mental health services provided to urban Aboriginal youth. Therapeutic models, interventions, and assessment tools continue to be based in Eurocentric assumption that is often not congruent with the client's worldview (Corey, 2009; Day-Vines et al., 2007). The continued "failure to take culture into account in the design and delivery of professional services...[is] cultural malpractice" (Hall as cited in Arthur & Collins, 2010, p. 43).

McCormick (2000) posits that mainstream counselling techniques by themselves are of little use to Aboriginal youth without an accurate knowledge and use of culture. In a study by Neumann, McCormick, Amundson, and McLean (2000), First Nations youth unanimously reported the use of cultural practices such as prayer, smudging, sharing circles, use of talking sticks, and inclusion of family and community in counselling as exceptionally helpful and valuable. Participants also reported that the inclusion of these cultural practices along with modern counselling techniques helped them feel respected and heard (Neumann et al., 2000). Therefore, when providing services to urban Aboriginal youth counsellors must select interventions that engage youth, their families, community, and culture (Tait & Whiteman, 2011).

Integrating Aboriginal Culture

The Round Lake Treatment Centre in British Columbia boldly states "culture is treatment" as their program motto (as cited in McCormick, 2000); this motto has become the centre of current Aboriginal research. Authors agree that teaching traditional culture has been proven to be successful in facilitating the healing of Aboriginal people because recuperating traditions reconnects contemporary Aboriginal people to their cultural teachings of wellness (Kirmayer et al., 2003; McCormick, 2000, 2009; Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010; Oulanova & Moodley, 2010; Stewart, 2008). Integration of culture in treatment has proven to reduce youth suicide rates, hopelessness, depression, anxiety, crime and recidivism, substance use, and self-esteem issues (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Hallett et al., 2007; Hill, 2009; Katz et al., 2006; Lafromboise et al., 2010; Lemstra et al., 2008; Lemstra et al., 2011; Mashquash, Comeau, & Stewart, 2007; McCormick, 2009; Mohatt et al., 2011).

Oulanova and Moodley (2010), as well as Smith and Morrissette (2001), suggest that counsellors can begin by being approachable and adapting a supportive client-centered orientation; helpers should avoid assuming the role of expert and instead allow clients to take the lead. The authors further suggest that clients should instigate the incorporation of traditional healing elements into counselling. Nuttgens and Campbell (2010) remind counsellors that Aboriginal culture varies according to the youth's geographic region, cultural affiliation, level of acculturation, socioeconomic status, and education. For this reason, counsellors need to conduct informal cultural assessments in order to avoid ethnocentrism (Oulanova & Moodley, 2010).

Oulanova and Moodley (2010) also suggest that it is important for helping professionals to avoid drawing lines between traditional Aboriginal and western healing methods. In their practice, counsellors can communicate to clients that they consider traditional healing methods to be both valid and important components of the healing process. Counsellors should never suggest traditional healing practices and should instead consult with elders as part of the treatment process in order to help clients' access appropriate cultural practices (Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010; Smith & Morrissette, 2001). Finally, Garrett and Herring (2001) advise that counsellors should create a culturally affirmative environment for youth. Counsellors can subtly signal to youth that they support Aboriginal beliefs through their office environment by displaying Aboriginal cultural items such as displaying artwork or a Métis sash.

Engaging Youth in the Process

"Despite important social and cultural differences across Aboriginal peoples, young people played a vital role in traditional community life" (Kirmayer, Brass, et al., 2009, p. 460). However, since colonialism the socialization of youth has changed dramatically. In addition, there has been a marked departure from times where all members of Aboriginal communities, including youth, were important and had a role to play. The loss of traditions has resulted in an ambiguous transition between youth and adulthood that was once marked with rites of passages (Kirmayer, Brass, et al., 2009). Consequently, today's urban Aboriginal youth face tremendous challenges on a daily basis that include economic disparity, stereotyping, and addiction. Matthew (2009) posits that Aboriginal youth require a safe counselling space (both physically and emotionally) in which youth feel supported and validated in the counselling relationships without

experiencing marginalization. Therefore, Aboriginal youth should play a key role in the direction of the therapeutic journey (Klink et al., 2005). Research conducted by Janelle and colleagues (2009) reveals that a collaborative approach in the integration of traditional activities promotes help-seeking behaviour in youth. Counsellors need to therefore be flexible and creative**.**

Homework. Minimal homework should be assigned to youth because of limited literacy skills amongst Aboriginal populations. According to the Canadian Council on Learning (2009), 40% of Aboriginal youth ages 20 to 24 compared to 13% of non-Aboriginal youth do not have a high school diploma. These rates increase on-reserve where youth have a 61% drop out rate. The council further reveals that needing to work to help support family, home responsibilities, problems at home, and lack of homework assistance were the principle reasons for Aboriginal youth leaving secondary education. It is within this context that the majority of work should be conducted within the counselling setting.

Involving Family and Community

In Aboriginal culture, family and community play an integral role in the guidance and well-being of youth (Neumann et al., 2000). The extended family is important in mentoring youth and determining positive and negative behaviours of youth (Klink et al., 2005; McCormick, 2000). Within this context, it is only natural that family and community members should be involved in the youth's counselling experience as family and extended family are important for effective counselling to take place (McCormick, 2000). Absolon (2010) asserts that in all Aboriginal cultures, the culture of the community is the heartbeat of its people. For this reason, the family and community are

not only important factors in treatment, but also the best place to develop treatment interventions or prevention programs (Blue et al., 2010; McCormick, 2009; Stewart, 2008). King (2011) posits that family and community as a whole can benefit from healing programs. Therefore "…interventions should incorporate core Aboriginal beliefs and values and involve significant others in helping youth understand their strengths and future directions" (Blue et al., 2010, p. 267).

Conclusion

What is clear is that despite the adversities experienced by urban Aboriginal youth, the population continues to thrive; the counselling profession has an important role to play in the healing of this vulnerable population. The first half of this chapter examined the issues experienced by urban Aboriginal youth, which included the effects of colonization, influences of historical trauma, acculturative stress, the role of socioeconomic status in mental and physical health, mental health disparities, and the unique experience of urbanization. This chapter also examined how the resiliencies and strengths of Aboriginal culture are the most effective tools to promote the healing of urban Aboriginal youth. Finally, the chapter concluded with a consideration of implications for counsellors and how an awareness of Aboriginal issues and culture, as well as an integration of culture, family, and community is necessary in order to provide effective counselling to urban Aboriginal youth.

While this chapter focused on a literature review of the most recent research conducted with urban Aboriginal youth, the next chapter will provide a brief overview of the methods employed in the compilation of the literature and research used in the creation of this project.

Chapter 4: Plan of Inquiry

Urban Aboriginal youth face complex psychosocial and cultural issues that counselling professionals must be aware of in order to provide culturally relevant counselling. As was stated in chapter 1 of this project, research conducted with Canada's Aboriginal people, and youth in particular, is extremely limited providing little psychoeducational information for helping professionals to become cognizant of the needs of this demographic. For this reason, research on topics pertaining to Aboriginal populations began during the course component of the CAAP program in 2010. Since this time, several assignments have been completed on a variety of topics of Aboriginal issues in the counselling setting. The articles used for the completion of CAAP course assignments were then compiled for this final project.

In order to close the research gap observed in chapters two, three, and the applied manual, an extensive search of academic databases was conducted using key search terms. Search parameters included government reports, peer-reviewed articles, and books dated from 2000 to present. In addition to databases containing peer-reviewed academic articles, I retrieved materials from authors' reference lists. Additionally, federal government statistics, demographics, and reports published by federal task forces were gathered. Finally, the majority of the articles used focused on studies with Canadian Aboriginal populations with very few studies conducted with American Indian populations.

Search Terms

In order to gain a broader understanding of the proposed project questions, a literature review was conducted using the various terms applied to Aboriginal peoples in

the research literature including: *First Nations*, *Native*, *Métis*, and *Indigenous* in combination with other key words such as *counselling* and *issues*. Other terms applied included: *community capacity building*, *promoting well-being and health*, *cross-cultural and multicultural counselling*, *Aboriginal conceptualizations of mental health*, *colonization*, *ecological approaches to counselling*, *health determinants*, *Aboriginal worldview*, and *Aboriginal youth*. The term *Aboriginal youth* was also combined with various key words that included: *structural determinants*, *resilience*, *social* and *emotional well-being*, *mental health*, *suicide prevention*, *self-harm*, *spirituality*, *identity*, *resiliency, strengths*, and *health determinants*.

Databases Used

Given the diversity and complexity of urban Aboriginal youth issues, a variety of databases were used to ensure that a wide range of research topics and methods were generated by the search. The principle databases used to search topics related to this project include PsychINFO, PsychARTICLES, ScienceDirect, ERIC via EBSCO, SocINDEX and the Internet resource Google Scholar.

Ethical Considerations

While this project did not require the collection of data from human participants, ethical issues were considered and addressed in the development of the psychoeducational manual. The manual adhered to the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (Sinclair & Pettifor, 2001) as well as the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Standards of Practice (CCPA, 2007). The author adhered to these codes of ethics in the following manners: (a) making reasonable effort to ensure knowledge presented within the project cannot be misused to harm others, (b) presenting

information in a manner that cannot be misinterpreted or misused to the detriment of others, (c) providing clarification on the purpose of the research and project, (d) demonstrating respecting for the Aboriginal community and cultural knowledge, and (e) being knowledgeable on Aboriginal culture.

Chapter 5: Synopsis

The intent of this final project was to develop a psychoeducational manual that will better prepare helping professionals to work with urban Aboriginal youth. Chapters 1 through chapter 4 of this project sought to answer the following questions:

(a) Who are Alberta's Aboriginal people?

(b) What issues do urban Aboriginal youth face?

(c) How do these issues affect their mental health?

(d) What are their strengths and resiliencies that professionals can incorporate into their work?

(e) What are culturally appropriate interventions? and

(f) How can counsellors incorporate culturally relevant interventions in their work with urban Aboriginal youth?

The final chapter of this project will conclude with an overview of the applied manual, outcomes of the project, the intended target population, strengths and limitations of the literature reviewed, areas of consideration for future research, the transfer of knowledge, and final reflections of the author.

Overview of Manual

The written portion of this manual provided the knowledge base required for counsellors to learn about the urban Aboriginal youth population of Alberta, their history, current issues, and strengths and resiliencies found in culture. The manual puts this knowledge into practice by providing helping professionals with individual cultural self-awareness exercises, cultural instructions for the counselling setting, psychoeducational flow-charts and tables, as well as resources, handouts, and exercises for counselling

agencies and staff. The manual is divided into the following sections: (a) counsellor cultural self-awareness, (b) awareness of Aboriginal cultural identities, (c) Aboriginal history and legislation at a glance, (d) Aboriginal adolescent development, (e) integrating traditional practices into the counselling setting, (f) social justice issues, and (g) Aboriginal community resources/referral agencies. Following these sections, a glossary of 20 key terms counsellors can reference in their practice is included.

Outcomes of Project

As discussed in chapter 3, urban Aboriginal youth experience a variety of unique issues that affect their everyday lives. In her study with urban Aboriginal youth, Matthew (2009) writes:

> one of the greatest barriers raised by the youth was the challenges with racism and stereotyping. Many youth talked about how it was difficult to be taken seriously by adults who often tokenized them and often racially profiled or stereotyped them. (p. 56)

In light of this common theme, numerous Aboriginal studies and task forces have identified cross-cultural training as a priority for urban agencies delivering services to urban Aboriginal youth. The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples (2003) strongly recommended that "where programs are delivered by mainstream agencies with a significant Aboriginal client base, strive to employ appropriately trained Aboriginal staff and provide non-Aboriginal staff with cross-cultural training" (p. viii). According to Mussell, Cardiff, and White (2004), a large portion of mental health program staff and practitioners feel inadequately prepared to deal effectively with the mental health challenges experienced by urban Aboriginal youth. Recent cutbacks to mental health

services have resulted in staffing limitations. In response, mental health care providers are more focused on dealing with day-to-day concerns and in providing crisis services. Given limited funding, time constraints, and the scarcity of information available on urban Aboriginal youth, it is no wonder that staff feel unprepared to work with this unique population.

The intended outcome of this project is to provide a resource for mental health professionals and support staff that will allow them to educate themselves on the unique issues experienced by urban Aboriginal youth. In doing so, helping professionals will be better prepared to provide competent services and improve the long-term well-being of urban Aboriginal youth.

Target Population

This psychoeducational manual was created for Alberta mental health practitioners in order to assist them in providing culturally relevant counselling to Alberta's urban Aboriginal youth. However, the usefulness of this project is not limited to counsellors and psychologists, but also to psychiatrists, social workers, and psychiatric nurses. Furthermore, this manual was created for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal helping professionals, as Aboriginal practitioners cannot assume to understand the unique worldview of Aboriginal youth given the diversity of this population. Finally, in addition to helping professionals, this manual was produced for agency staff that may read it or reference it in order to improve their capacity to provide culturally sensitive assistance and support services to Aboriginal clients as a whole.

Strengths

Canadian society has begun to understand the profound impact that hundreds of years of colonization and attempts of assimilation has had on Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal communities have begun healing and repairing ruptures in the transmission of traditional knowledge and values (Kirmayer, Brass, et al., 2009). Traditional Aboriginal practices are now acknowledged and supported as legitimate means of Aboriginal healing; studies have confirmed that the revitalization of culture and language are sources of healing for Aboriginal clients (King, 2011).

Aboriginal culture has been resilient in the face of colonization and assimilation. This same resiliency is reflected in Aboriginal beliefs in which long-standing cultural traditions promote healing and maintenance of health. McCormick (2009) posits that "…the profession of counselling is ancient because Aboriginal people have sought out guidance and 'counselling' from expert helpers in their community and on their lands for a long, long time" (p. 337). From this perspective, the strength of Aboriginal culture has much to offer in the healing of urban Aboriginal youth.

As discussed in chapter 3, Aboriginal well-being is not focused on the eradication or absence of illness or disease. Rather Aboriginal well-being "…is understood to be a state of unity or balance across the physical, mental, social, and spiritual components…[which] corroborates with the World Health Organization's holistic definition of health" (Dell et al., 2011, p. 80). The notion of holistic wellness is one that has begun to play a central role in counselling psychology since the introduction of the wheel of wellness. Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer's (2000) wheel of wellness (WOW) integrates the physical, social, psychological, emotional, intellectual, and environmental

dimensions of life that are involved in wellness (Fetter & Koch, 2009). The model proposes five life tasks that are interrelated and interconnected. The individual's accomplishment of life tasks and subsequent wellness are influenced by factors outside of the individual that include spirituality, family, community, government, and the environment. All life tasks interact dynamically for either the well-being or detriment of the individual, therefore, change in one area will affect others (Witmer & Sweeney, 1992). All of these factors are represented much like a bicycle wheel "…if one or more spokes are defective…the wheel is unable to move smoothly through time and space. It is in effect, similar to a wheel that is out of balance…" (Myers et al., 2000, p. 258). In assessing and designing interventions, the authors advise that counsellors must acknowledge the interdependence of these factors. In Aboriginal culture, the medicine wheel is used as a physical representation of the interconnectedness of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual that maintains wellness. Healing occurs and wellness is maintained when balance is found in all four aspects of the self; a deficiency in one area creates a lack of harmony in the other.

Over the last 30 years, multicultural counselling competence has become prominent in counselling literature as authors agree that multicultural counselling is a necessity, rather than an option. According to Corey, Corey, and Callanan (2011), counselling is not a value free process. In their model of multicultural counselling, Collins and Arthur (2010) assert that multicultural counsellors must adopt cultural empathy, as counsellors must gain an "understanding about the ways that culture has influenced a client's life and communicating that understanding back to clients in a meaningful way" (p. 112). In order to accomplish this, Corey (2009) asserts that

multicultural counsellors suspend preconceptions about clients, engage in conversation to avoid stereotyping and making false assumptions, address how racial/ethnic differences between counsellor and client might affect the helping relationship, acknowledge power differentials in the counselling relationship, and remain open to on-going learning about culture. Hart (2002) notes nine values that are common across a variety of Aboriginal cultures that complement the aforementioned multicultural counselling values: (a) vision/wholeness, (b) respect/harmony, (c) kindness, (d) honesty/integrity, (e) sharing, (f) strength, (g) bravery/courage, (h) wisdom, and (i) respect/humility.

Limitations and Areas of Future Research

When conducting research on this topic, it became evident that the majority of the current body of research focuses on Australian Aborigine, American Indian, or First Nations youth issues. Current research that includes Métis youth is limited. Given the diversity both within and between Aboriginal populations, existing research studies cannot be generalized. Furthermore, because of the variety of manners in which urban Aboriginal youth experience mental and physical health problems, researchers must explore the generalizability of concepts across a broad range of Aboriginal cultures (Parker et al., 2005). Therefore, the current research studies cannot be generalized; rather a greater body of research and data is needed from a diversity of Aboriginal youth groups.

In addition, current literature that examines the holistic healing of Aboriginal people is not based on research but rather opinion and conjecture (McCormick, 2009). To date, limited empirical research has been conducted on the efficacy of traditional healing practices in counselling (McCormick, 2009). Furthermore, a greater

understanding of how to collaboratively integrate traditional healing while respecting the beliefs of the client is needed (Oulanova & Moodley, 2010). McCormick (2009) espouses that integration may not always be the best solution because of the power differential that is inherent in western counselling theories. For this reason, further research is needed in order to validate the effectiveness of different counselling theories and traditional healing approaches. In turn, validation of these approaches will aid in the conceptualization of culturally appropriate theories, programs, and services that meet the needs of urban Aboriginal youth.

Moreover, limited research has been conducted and written from the perspective of Aboriginal people. Traditionally, Aboriginal people were not included in the development of academic research (Brown et al., 2005). According to Blue and colleagues (2010) conducting research with Aboriginal people is a delicate issue, especially when researchers originate from the dominant culture. There has been a long history of insensitivity when conducting research with Aboriginal people. A study conducted by Beals, Manson, Mitchell and Spicer (2003) revealed that American Indian communities are often sceptical about the value of research when it is generated from outside of the community. In recent years however, the power balance has begun to shift and research is now relying on partnerships with Aboriginal communities who are driving the process and providing relevant questions they want answered (Blue et al., 2010). Researchers have also begun to acknowledge the need for the building partnerships and inclusion of community as a means to create meaningful counselling interventions as reflected in the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010). Mashquash and colleagues' (2007) study on intervention approaches with Mi'kamp youth confirmed that acceptance of

counselling practices and interventions are enhanced when researchers work collaboratively with community. That being the case, in order to understand how practitioners can begin to address youth issues, authors need to begin creating meaningful research and resources that are developed either by Aboriginal people for their communities or in partnership with Aboriginal communities. Research needs to be designed to honour traditional Aboriginal beliefs and cultural practices in order to generate meaningful and culturally relevant information.

Finally, the majority of literature on the Aboriginal population is deficit based, ignoring the resiliency of Aboriginal people (Pavkov et al., 2010). Specifically, research on the resiliency of Aboriginal youth is scarce (Filbert & Flynn, 2010), focusing on shortcomings rather than strengths. Mohatt and colleagues (2011) posit that future research should investigate "the complex ways in which...positive cultural value contributes to...individual well being" (p. 451). Lalonde (2006) espouses that in future resilience research with Aboriginal youth, researchers must stretch "…the concept of resilience to try to explain not individual coping in the face of adversity, but the ability of whole cultural groups to foster healthy youth development" (p. 52).

Knowledge Transfer

This project will provide non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal counsellors with a succinct and straightforward resource tool in order for counsellors to familiarize themselves with issues experienced by urban Aboriginal youth. Constantine (2002) notes counsellors' increased levels of multicultural training not only decreases early termination but heightens clients' counselling satisfaction. For these reasons, this project will equip counsellors with exercises and resources that will aid them in providing

culturally relevant counselling to urban Aboriginal youth. Furthermore, it will assist counsellors in becoming more knowledgeable about urban Aboriginal youth issues, as it will provide counsellors with a detailed literature review of intergenerational and current issues experienced by urban Aboriginal youth as well as community resources.

Moreover, a key theme in Aboriginal youth research that has recently emerged is the belief that youth see themselves and their children as a generation that can break cycles and "usher in a new era for Aboriginal peoples" (Brown et al., 2005, p. 96). From this perspective, this project will not only benefit urban Aboriginal youth who access counselling services in Alberta, but has the potential to affect their communities and future generations.

Finally, this project will benefit urban Aboriginal youth and their communities, as it was written from the perspective of an Aboriginal person who accessed both western counselling and traditional healing methods as an urban Aboriginal youth. For this reason, the project has not been generated from outside the Aboriginal community, but rather from within. From this perspective, the author has an intimate knowledge and deeply ingrained respect for Aboriginal worldviews, struggles, values, and cultural practices.

Reflections

Researching, planning, and writing this project was the most challenging task I've completed to date in my academic career. I oftentimes found myself frustrated by the lack of research available on Canadian urban Aboriginal youth. Of the peer-reviewed research collected, the majority was conducted on specific topics such as youth suicide, hopelessness, substance abuse, and resilience. It was extremely difficult and arduous to

synthesize the research in a clear and concise manner given the vast topics covered in a variety of disciplines. However, despite the difficulties I experienced creating the final product was a rewarding experience.

In addition to the limited research available on the topic, I found that the majority of Canadian research was culturally insensitive. Of the research I reviewed on Aboriginal youth, the majority of it was conducted with First Nations youth, however, authors claimed their work was conducted with Aboriginal youth. Few studies explicitly explained to readers the definition of terms such as First Nations or Aboriginal. Rather, authors inaccurately used the terms *First Nations* and *Aboriginal* as synonyms. As an Aboriginal person who understands the definition of the term *Aboriginal* (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) I wondered about readers who were not aware of this distinction. I was concerned that the lack of clarification of these terms would leave readers who would rely on these articles to enhance their multicultural competence vulnerable to unintentional stereotypes and consequently would rupture their working alliances with Aboriginal youth.

Finally, completing this project has motivated me to conduct research with the Métis community. I was discouraged that for the most part Métis populations were not included in Aboriginal research populations. As a Métis person, my Elders taught me that I must embrace the gifts and talents given to me by the Creator. Therefore as an individual given the gift of education, I have the responsibility to allow knowledge to come through me in order to make a difference in my community. For this reason, I look forward to conducting research in order to address the gap of Métis research to further the development and well-being of my community.

Summary

The final chapter of this project concluded with an overview of the applied manual, outcomes of the project, the intended target population, strengths and limitations of the literature reviewed, areas of consideration for future research, the transfer of knowledge, and final reflections of the author. While much ground has been gained in understanding the role of Aboriginal healing traditions in the mental health of urban Aboriginal youth, there remains much work to be done. This work can begin with multicultural counselling practitioners who can improve their knowledge of Aboriginal history, current urban issues, and healing practices that can improve the mental health of youth. The applied portion of this manual will provide counsellors with the tools necessary to begin their journey towards becoming better equipped to counsel urban Aboriginal youth.

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A Manual for Working with Urban Aboriginal Youth

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Preamble

The applied portion of this psychoeducational manual has been developed for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and psychiatric nurses providing services to urban Aboriginal youth. The manual has been developed for the aforementioned helping professionals who wish to build their multicultural competence in order to better serve this vulnerable population. The overall goal of this applied piece is to serve as a resource that helping professionals can reference in order to increase their multicultural competence to better serve urban Aboriginal youth.

Copyright

Limitations

Readers should be cautioned that although this psychoeducational manual is intended to be inclusive of the cultural beliefs of Canada's three distinct Aboriginal

groups, counsellors are cautioned to be cognizant of the vast differences that exist between Aboriginal cultures. This manual should not be interpreted as a quintessential guide to Aboriginal culture, but rather the beginning of a life-long learning journey towards multicultural awareness of Alberta's numerous and unique Aboriginal groups.

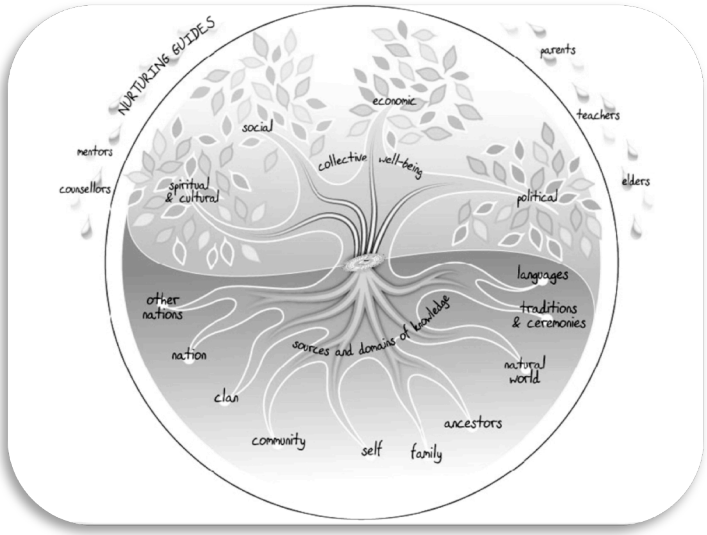
Introduction

Chapters 1-5 of this psychoeducational manual were designed to provide helping professionals with the foundational knowledge necessary to understand the historical, socio-political, and demographic issues of urban Aboriginal youth. For this reason, it is strongly suggested that prior to accessing the exercises and resources provided within the applied section of the manual, readers should familiarize themselves with the content of the first half of this manual.

Rationale for the Applied Manual

As stated in chapter 5 of this project, one of the most crucial issues present in current provision of services to urban Aboriginal people as a whole is the lack of time and resources available for helping professionals to access Aboriginal awareness training. The applied segment of this manual has been developed to aid helping professionals in their desire to better serve urban Aboriginal youth by: (a) promoting counsellors' development of cultural self-awareness, (b) increasing counsellors' cultural awareness of Alberta's urban Aboriginal youth, and (c) creating a cost effective and time efficient at-a-glance reference tool for helpers to access in order to familiarize themselves with the resources, socio-political issues, terminology, and cultural protocol of urban Aboriginal people.

Awareness of Aboriginal Worldview and Cultural Identities



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Aboriginal Model of Wellness

Authors who have examined Aboriginal issues agree that in order to work with Aboriginal clients, it is necessary to examine their complex history and worldview. According to Garrett and Herring (2001), counsellors must be capable of demonstrating knowledge about the dynamics of Aboriginal culture and values. However, Aboriginal cultural knowledge is as diverse as the Aboriginal people of Canada and therefore cannot erroneously be applied equally to all groups (Overmars, 2010). Despite these differences, there are principle commonalities that exist among Aboriginal people: balance, connectedness, spirituality, nature, and ceremony; the wellness of Aboriginal youth lies in these concepts. Below are descriptions and meanings of these notions as applied to the counselling setting.

Balance

- Being balanced implies an individual is living in harmony with the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual self, as well as with family, community, nation and all living things.
- Each aspect of the individual requires equal attention; one aspect of being cannot be isolated, rather all realms must be taken into consideration.
- Illness occurs when the individual lives in an unbalanced fashion.
- When working with Aboriginal youth, counsellors should approach health problems in a holistic manner and incorporate mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (McCormick, 2009).
- Medicine Wheel
    - The medicine wheel is a representation of the Aboriginal concept of wholeness and healing (McCormick, 2009).
    - It is a physical representation of the balance that is required for wellness.
    - The four quadrants represent the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.
    - Healing occurs when balance is achieved in all four aspects of the self.
    - A deficiency in one area creates an imbalance in others.
    - The medicine wheel also teaches us that all beings are connected through the life cycle (Sundlie, 2009).
    - Absolon (2010) warns that circle teachings (e.g., the medicine wheel) and their representations vary depending on the teacher, context, and Aboriginal group.

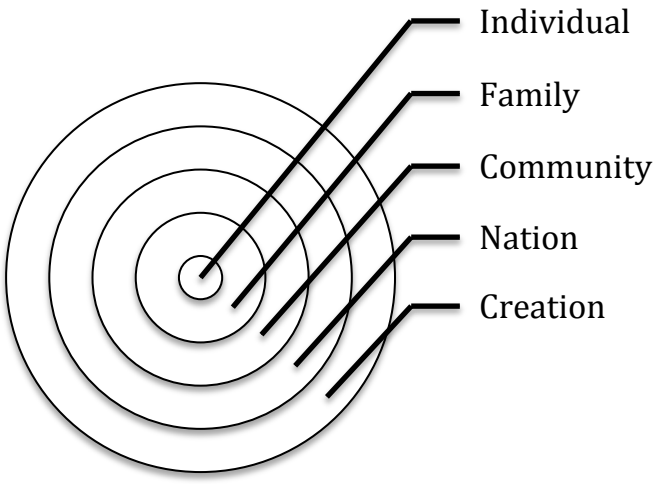
Connectedness

- Interconnectedness is prevalent in most Aboriginal cultures.
- Health promotion extends beyond the individual to engage and empower families as well as communities (Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003).

- The individual is defined by a web of relationships that includes extended family, clans, tribes, bands, communities, land, animals, nature, and the spirit world.
- The inclusion of family, community, culture, nature, and spirituality are essential for successful healing to occur.
- Family
    - Immediate and extended family are critical factors for effective prevention and treatment (McCormick, 2000).
    - Family should be invited to participate in sharing and/or healing circles in order to provide feedback and treatment recommendations (cultural ceremony) to the individual.
- Community
    - The culture of the community is the heartbeat of all Aboriginal peoples (Absolon, 2010).
    - Is a crucial factor in treatment (Blue, Darou, & Ruano, 2010; McCormick, 2009; Stewart, 2008).
    - The most effective setting to develop treatment interventions and/or health promotion programs is in the community itself (McCormick, 2009).

- The Aboriginal worldview is rooted in holism and therefore a multidisciplinary approach to urban youth work must be adopted.
  "Addressing mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of individual health in the context of strengthening families and communities allows 'healing' to expand and to include a much wider array of therapeutic activities and goal" (Chansonneuve, 2007, p. 61).

Figure 1. Aboriginal Model of Healing



Spirituality

- In Aboriginal culture, spirituality is the ability to "get beyond the self" and connect with creation; creation includes family, community, culture, the natural and spirit world (McCormick, 2000).
- Encompasses a connection across generations with ancestors as well as the unborn; all beings are unified as a whole.
- Life is sacred and all life forms have a spirit; Aboriginal people acknowledge this sacredness and therefore humbly offer thanks for life.
- Blue and colleagues (2010) assert that spirituality must be part of the counselling process; ignoring spirituality results in the unbalance of the medicine wheel.
- Spirit plays a substantial role in both illness and wellness.
- Many Aboriginal healing practices stress the need for reconnection to spirituality in order for healing to occur (McCormick, 2009).
- Ceremonies and cultural practices are used to strengthen or cleanse the spirit and therefore reduce illness.

Nature

- In Aboriginal culture, a spiritual connection exists between nature and human beings; human beings are recognized as a part of nature.
- All creation is seen as equal in the eyes of the Creator and part of the collective whole.
- Engaging in nature is part of maintaining the spirit which may involve going out to the land and engaging in traditional activities or simply "being" in nature.
- Connection to nature often helps Aboriginal individuals seeking help feel less lonely, stronger, grounded, and more secure (McCormick, 2009).

Ceremony

- Traditional ceremonies are pathways to healing and wellness.
- Traditional healing practices vary by people or nation and include:
    - Sharing and healing circles
    - Sweetgrass
    - Sweat lodge ceremony
    - Pipe ceremony
    - Sundance ceremony
- As Elders are the keepers of traditional knowledge, counsellors need to consult with Elders and traditional healers should a client require an intervention that the counsellor is unable to provide (e.g., a sweat).
- When warranted, counsellors should consult with an Elder as part of the treatment plan and help clients access appropriate traditional healing practices (Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010).
- According to Nuttgens and Campbell (2010) counsellors should never attempt to

appropriate traditional healing practices in their work as they are not holders of traditional knowledge!

Tradition and Culture

- The authors of current Aboriginal research agree that one of the major roles of incorporating Aboriginal healing in counselling is to reconnect clients with their cultural values (McCormick, 2009; Nutggens & Campbell, 2010; Oulanova & Moodley, 2010; Stewart, 2008).
- Teaching traditional culture has been proven to be successful in facilitating the healing of Aboriginal people (McCormick, 2009; Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010).
- Connection to tradition and culture reduce youth suicide rates (McCormick, 2009).
- Kirmayer and colleagues (2003) assert that recuperating traditions reconnects contemporary Aboriginal people to their historical traditions and in turn, promotes wellness.
- Culture is treatment!
- Caution:
    - Most Aboriginal people identify with more than one culture (Nuttgens & Campbell (2010).
    - Counsellors must determine to what degree their client adheres to their traditional worldview (Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010).

Métis FAQs

Q: What is a Métis person?

A: "The term Métis is a Latin term that means 'to mix'. In Canada, it originally referred to individuals of French and Amerindian ancestry…" (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001, p. 36). In reality, the definition is much more complex and is reflective of cultural, historical, and political factors. The Métis National Council (n.d.) website defines Métis as the offspring of European fur traders and Indian women. The MNC states that "as this population established distinct communities separate from those of Indians and Europeans and married among themselves, a new Aboriginal people emerged – the Métis people – with their own unique culture, traditions, language (Michif), and way of life, collective consciousness and nationhood".

What is important to draw from these definitions is that the Métis possess a unique culture that is distinct from that of First Nations cultures.

Q: If I have a First Nations person in my family tree, does that make me Métis?

A: No. As described in Chapter 2 of this project, the definition of a First Nations and Métis person are rooted in political legislation. Therefore, if an individual has a First Nations person in their family tree, the individual could qualify under one of the numerous definitions that define Aboriginal people (e.g., Status Indian, Non-status Indian etc…).

Q: What is a status Métis?

A: Status Métis do not exist. This is a common inaccuracy that emerges because of the legal definition "Status Indian." Rather, a Métis individual can apply for Métis membership through their provincial Métis organization by demonstrating Métis genealogy that traces his or her ancestry to the traditional Métis homeland.

Q: What benefits are individuals entitled to if they possess a Métis membership card?

A: As stated in Chapter 2 of this project, because the federal government does not recognize Métis people, they do not receive remunerations as those received by status Indians. Rather, Métis membership cards entitle Métis Nation of Alberta members to limited programs and services.

Q: Do Métis people pay taxes?

A: Yes. Métis people pay ALL taxes that non-Aboriginal individuals do.

Q: Do Métis people get free health care?

A: No. Health care is a benefit that is specific to specific Indian treaties.

Q: Can a Métis person hunt whenever and wherever they want?

A: No. The right to harvest wild animals is specific to First Nations rights as well as specific reserve land.

Q: What does a Métis person look like?

A: As in the case of First Nations people, Métis people have a variety of skin, hair, and eye colours.

Q: Are there Métis reserves?

A: No. As stated in chapter 2 of this project, the province of Alberta is the only Canadian province that has created a Métis land base (Métis settlements). Although Alberta Métis have provincial settlements, there exist no reserves and/or treaties similar to those of First Nations people.

Counsellor Cultural Self-Awareness

Image retrieved from www.foter.com

Exercise: Cultural Self-Awareness

Exploring your cultural identity
Define your cultural identity.
What cultures do you belong to?
What are your cultural beliefs about the role of family?
How have you assimilated these cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes into your personal attitudes and beliefs?
From your perspective, what are the positive aspects of your culture? What are the negative aspects of your culture?
What are the factors that influenced the development of your cultural identity (e.g., personal, cultural, and contextual)?

Explain the relationship between your cultural group and other cultural groups (both dominant and non-dominant) in society.
What attitudes, beliefs, and values from your own culture elicit behaviours that demonstrate respect and/or behaviours that disrespect cultures different from your own?
What cultural factors affect you personally and professionally?
What impact does your cultural identity have on your counselling practice?
What are the underlying cultural values and assumptions in your personal counselling theory?
What impact do your cultural values have when counselling clients from non-dominant groups?

What privileges do you receive in society due to your race, socioeconomic background, gender, physical abilities, sexual orientation, education, etc…
How does this power difference affect your counselling? How can it be minimized?

(Arrendondo et al., 1996; Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b)

Exercise: Counsellor's Cultural Beliefs vs. Aboriginal Cultural Beliefs

What pre-conceived notions might you have about Aboriginal people?
What emotional reactions have you experienced when encountering urban Aboriginal youth either individually or as a group?
How could these emotional reactions affect your counselling relationship?
How does your cultural orientation affect your communication style? What may be the differences between your communication style and those of urban Aboriginal youth?
What are your professional limitations that could affect your work with urban Aboriginal youth?

What concerns do you have about working with urban Aboriginal youth? How will you address these concerns?
Who are the Aboriginal youth your organization serves? What are their ages? What is their cultural background?
Explain how urban Aboriginal youth's cultural identity has been shaped by historical, social, political, and cultural experiences.
How do these forces affect the well-being of urban Aboriginal youth?
What are the discriminatory practices at the organizational, community, and governmental levels that may impact the mental health of urban Aboriginal youth?
Describe Aboriginal healing practices. How are they similar to your own? How are they different?

What are the positive aspects of incorporating Aboriginal spirituality in mental health and wellness?
How might cultural healers contribute to the work being conducted in counselling?
What are the ethical conditions of integrating Aboriginal beliefs and healing methods into your counselling practice?
What are the barriers that affect urban Aboriginal youth's ability to access help (individual, family, community, societal, political, socio-economic)?
What are alternatives that could reduce existing barriers that hinder urban Aboriginal youth's ability to access mental health services?

(Arrendondo et al., 1996; Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b)

Qualities and Abilities of Helpers Who Work With Urban Aboriginal Youth

A good counsellor:
✓ **Possesses a thorough knowledge of past and current Aboriginal culture and history.**
✓ **Possesses a willingness to learn.**
✓ **Educates themselves in traditional Aboriginal approaches to mental health and the role of culture in mental well-being.**
✓ **Is self-aware.**
✓ **Accounts for the whole person (including the social and political structures that affect them).**
✓ **Demonstrates knowledge about the dynamics of Aboriginal culture.**
✓ **Has the ability to demonstrate compassion and empathy.**
✓ **Demonstrates respect for the community and culture.**
✓ **Attends community events when possible.**
✓ **Listens!!!**
✓ **Is authentic.**
✓ **Possesses humility, honestly, and gentleness.**
✓ **Is patient and flexible.**
✓ **Possesses a non-judgmental attitude and open mind.**
✓ **Does not make generalizations or assumptions about Aboriginal clients/groups.**
✓ **Is free from the need to control and/or be in a position of power.**
✓ **Understands historical trauma.**
✓ **Clearly understands his or her professional and cultural limitations and ability to make appropriate referrals.**

- ✓**Is able to partner with traditional healers effectively.**
- ✓**Can engage comfortably and knowledgeably in ceremonies.**
- ✓**Uses a holistic counselling approach.**
- ✓**Understands and engages families and communities in healing.**
- ✓**Is helpful.**
- ✓**Assesses the youth's level of acculturation.**
- ✓**Openly addresses issues of cultural dissimilarities.**
- ✓**Allows time for trust to develop before moving to deeper feelings.**
- ✓**Respects the use of silence.**
- ✓**Conducts sessions in a communications style (both verbal and non-verbal) that matches that of the client.**
- ✓**Uses self-disclosure when appropriate.**
- ✓**Respects humour and uses appropriately.**
- ✓**Creates a positive first encounter.**

(Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006; Blue et al., 2010; Castellano, 2006; Chansonneuve, 2007; Dell et al., 2011; Garret & Herring, 2001; Morrissette & Gadbois, 2006; Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010; Smith & Morrissette; 2001)

Balance and Healing of Aboriginal Helpers Counselling Aboriginal Clients

Stress in the counselling profession is high; helpers are faced with hazards of helping that include stress caused by being overly responsible for clients' progress or lack thereof, empathy fatigue, and vicarious traumatization (Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 2011). Aboriginal helpers in particular experience higher rates burnout as "their workloads tend to be too high because of underfunding and multitasking. They are expected to be experts in their field of study, but also to be guest speakers, volunteers, cultural interpreters and translators, and even language teachers" (Blue et al., 2010 p. 281). Stewart (2009) confirms this unique dilemma sharing that as a researcher she has often "…been forced into the position of one who corrects erroneous information and educates others[s]…" (p. 62). Therefore, Aboriginal counsellors not only face the everyday stressors encountered as a result of being counsellors, but also the experience of being an Aboriginal person (Blue et al., 2009).

Barnett, Baker, Elman, and Schoener (2007) warn that counsellors who do not engage in self-care are at risk of not being able to competently perform their professional duties. For this reason, Aboriginal counsellors must be preventative in their self-care to prevent burnout. Below is a list of activities that Aboriginal counsellors can engage in order to be active in their self-care.

What is burnout and impairment?

Burnout: "… a state of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual depletion characterized by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness" (Corey et al., 2011, p. 69).

Impairment: "…the presence of a chronic illness or severe psychological depletion that is likely to prevent a professional from being able to deliver effective services and results in consistently functioning below acceptable practice standards" (Corey et al., 2011, p. 70).

Recognizing signs of burnout and impairment

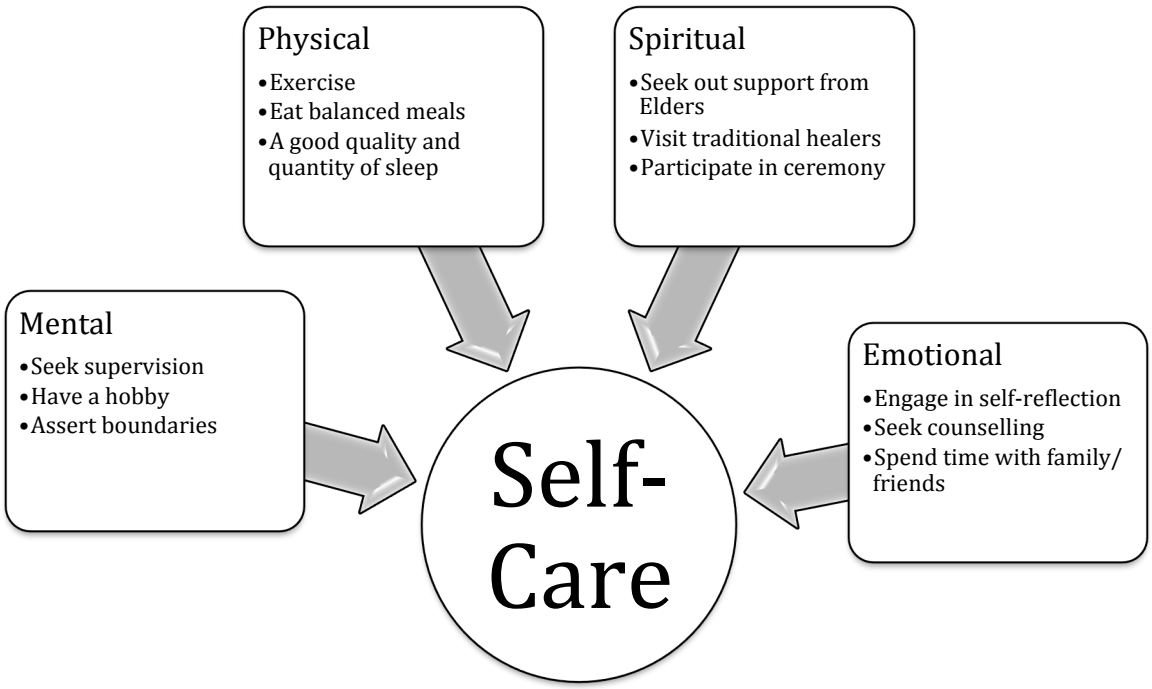
Corey and colleagues (2011) provide the following list of symptoms that counsellors experience when facing burnout and/or impairment:

- An absence of boundaries with clients
- An excessive preoccupation with money and success
- Taking on clients beyond one's level of competence
- Poor health habits (nutrition, exercise, and sleep)
- An absence of time spent on relationships with colleagues and friends
- Living in an isolated manner away from friends and colleagues
- Inability to recognize the impact of clients' struggles on the self
- Resisting personal counselling when facing personal distress

Preventing burnout and impairment

Often in today's society, self-care is seen as an indulgence rather than a necessity. However, in the helping professions self-care is an ethical obligation. One must maintain psychological and physical wellness in order to be competent to practice. Hart (2002) reminds Aboriginal helpers that they are role models of well-being and therefore "…begin the helping process by addressing themselves. They prepare themselves to help others by establishing and maintaining an awareness of their own emotional, mental, spiritual and physical well-being" (p. 105).

Figure 2. Aboriginal Helper Self-Care Activities

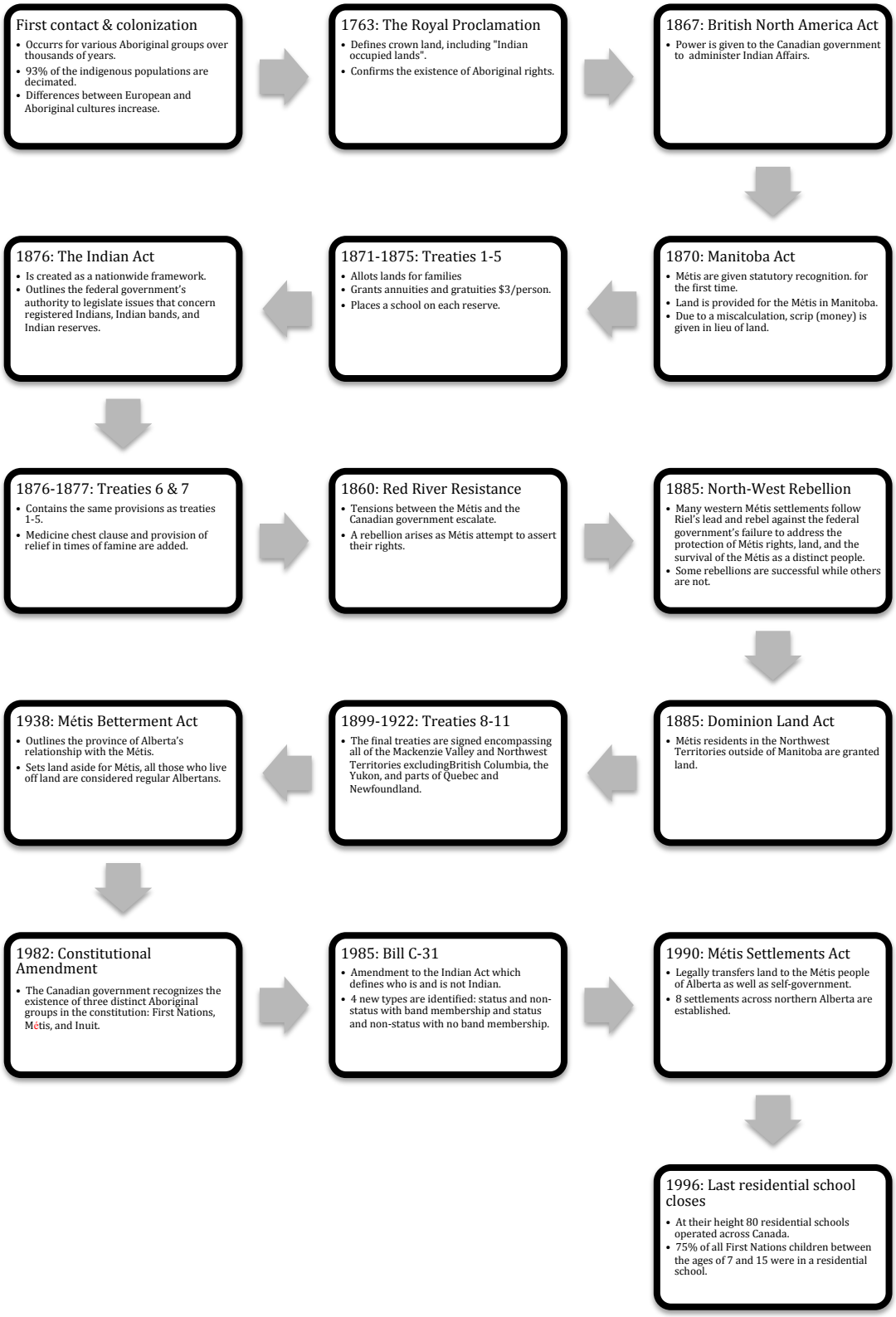


(Arredondo et al., 1996; Barnett et al., 2007; Blue et al., 2010 Corey et al., 2011; Hart, 2002; Oulanova & Moodley, 2010; Stewart, 2009)

History of Aboriginal Legislation

Image retrieved from www.foter.com

Highlights of Canadian History Pertinent to Aboriginal Rights



Aboriginal Identity

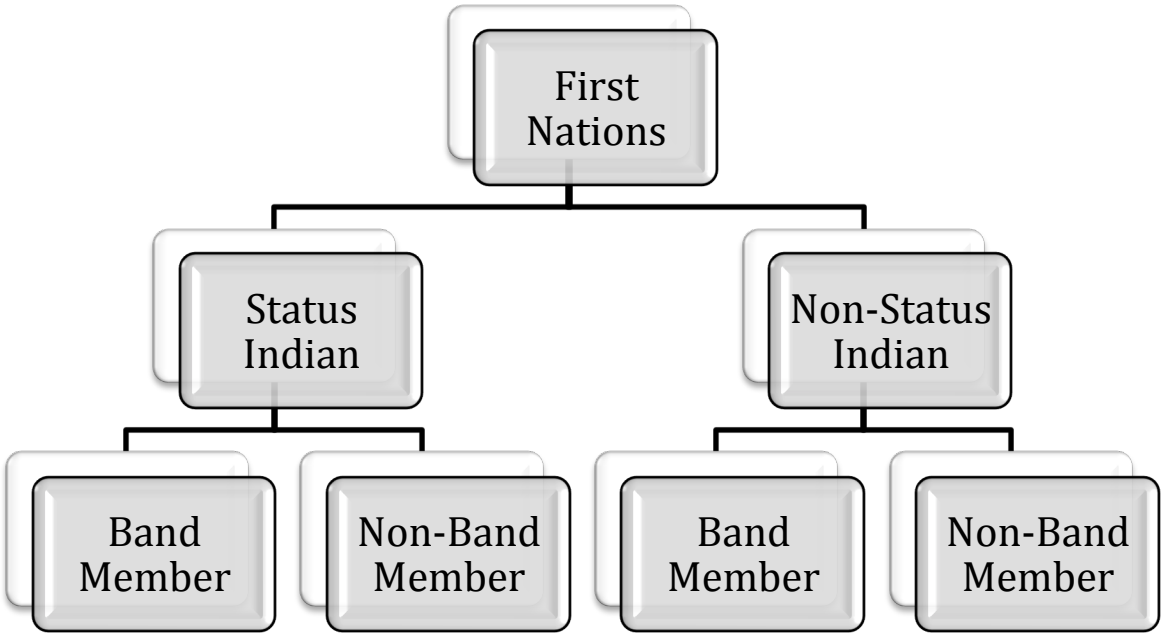
The question of Aboriginal identity is a complicated matter as it is not as straightforward as an individual's self-identification with an Aboriginal group. According to Sawchuk (2001)

> …not all expressions of ethnicity are self-defined. In its relationships with Native peoples, the nation-state often creates or defines aboriginal identities for its own use. These necessarily distort, and may have little to do with people's understanding or perceptions of themselves. (p. 73)

For this reason, counsellors must understand how both federal policies and Aboriginal organizations define those individuals who qualify to be First Nations and those who meet Métis membership criteria.

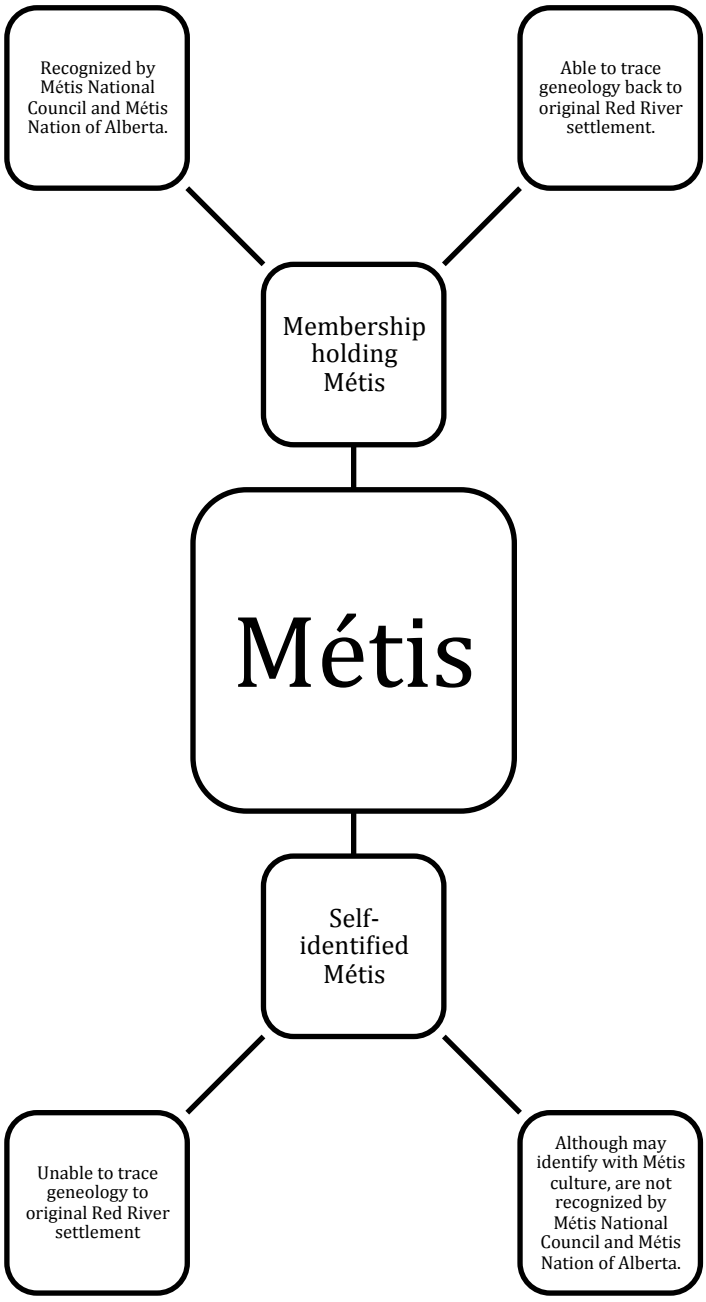
First Nations. According to the federal government, the questions of culture and race have little impact on the definition of *Indian* (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001). Rather, the Indian Act introduced complex legal definitions of who is classified as an *Indian*. Below are those groups of individuals who are recognized as *registered Indians* as defined by the Indian Act. For a detailed explanation of the terms depictured in Figure 3, readers are directed to Chapter 2.

Figure 3. First Nations Identities Derived from the Indian Act



Métis. While the Federal government may have recognized three distinct Aboriginal groups in the 1982 constitutional amendment, presently no federal definition of the term *Métis* exists. The most current definition of *Métis* rests primarily on self-identification and Métis political organizations' definition of Métis (Sawchuk, 2001).

Figure 4. Métis Membership



Alberta Treaty Areas

The Province of Alberta is home to 45 First Nations communities and 140 reserves that exist within three treaty areas. According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2010), the most commonly spoken First Nations languages in Alberta are Blackfoot, Cree, Chipewyan, Dene, Sarcee, and Stoney (Nakoda Sioux).

Figure 5. Table of Alberta Treaties and Reserves

ALBERTA TREATY AREAS AND RESERVES	
Treaty 6 • Signed in 1876 • Encompasses central Alberta and Saskatchewan • Includes 16 Alberta First Nations • Website: http://ct6fn.org/default.aspx?page=Home&ID=1	❁ Alexander First Nation Website: www.alexanderfn.com ❁ Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation Website: www.alexisnakotasioux.com ❁ Beaver Lake Cree Nation Website: www.beaverlakecreenation.ca ❁ Cold Lake First Nation Website: www.clfns.com ❁ Enoch Cree Nation Website: www.enochecdev.ca ❁ Ermineskin Cree Nation Website: www.creegallery.com ❁ Frog Lake First Nation Website: www.froglake.ca ❁ Heart Lake First Nation Website not available ❁ Kehewin Cree Nation Website: www.kehewincreenation.ca ❁ Louis Bull Tribe Website: www.louisbulltribe.ca ❁ Montana First Nation Website: www.montanafirstnation.com ❁ O'Chiese First Nation Website: www.ochiese.ca

	❁ Paul First Nation Website: www.paulfirstnation.com ❁ Saddle Lake First Nation Website: www.saddlelake.ca ❁ Samson Cree Nation Website: www.samsoncree.com ❁ Sunchild First Nation ❁ Whitefish Lake First Website: www.wfl128.ca
Treaty 7 • Signed in 1877 • Encompasses southern Alberta • Includes 5 First Nations • Website: http://www.treaty7.org/	❁ Blood Tribe Website: www.bloodtribe.org ❁ Piikani Nation Website: www.piikanination.com ❁ Siksika Nation Website: www.siksikanation.com ❁ Stoney Tribe: Bearspaw; Chiniki; Wesley Website: www.stoneynation.com ❁ Tsuu T'ina Nation Website: www.tsuutina.ca

Treaty 8

- Signed in 1899
- Encompasses portions of northern Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and parts of the Northwest Territories
- Includes 24 First Nations
- Website: http://www.treaty8.ca/

- Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
  Website: www.acfn.com

- Beaver First Nation
  Website not available

- Bigstone Cree Nation
  Website: www.bigstone.ca

- Chipewyan Prairie First Nation
  Website: www.Chipewyan.ca

- Dene Tha' First Nation
  Website: www.denetha.ca

- Driftpile First Nation
  Website: www.driftpilecreenation.com

- Duncan's First Nation
  Website: www.duncanfn.ca

- Fort McKay First Nation
  Website: www.fortmckay.com

- Fort McMurray First Nation
  Website: wwww.atc97.org

- Horse Lake First Nation
  Website not available

- Kapawe'no First Nation
  Website not available

- Little Red River Cree Nation
  Website: www.lrrcn.ab.ca

- Loon River First Nation
  Website: www.loonriver.net

- Lubicon Lake Indian Nation (No Reserve)
  Website not available

- Mikisew Cree First Nation
  Website: www.mikisew.org

	❁ Peerless Trout Lake First Nation Website not available ❁ Sawridge Band Website not available ❁ Smith's Landing First Nation Website: www.smithlanding.com ❁ Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation Website: www.sturgeonlake.ca ❁ Sucker Creek First Nation Website: www.scfn.ca ❁ Swan River First Nation Website not available ❁ Tallcree First Nation Website not available ❁ Whitefish Lake First Nation (Atikameg) Website: www.whitefishlake.ca ❁ Woodland Cree First Nation Website not available

Figure 6. Map of Alberta's First Nations Communities

Image retrieved from http://report.hcom.ca/people/first-nations-communities-alberta/

First Nations and Métis Political Structures

Arthur and Collins (2010) state that multicultural counsellors must extend their roles to include a social justice agenda. According to the authors, "reducing, overcoming, and eradicating social barriers require counsellors to be both proactive and reactive in their professional roles. Counsellors are challenged to consider how to improve the quality of life for clients and to effect social change" (Arthur & Collins, 2010, p. 44). Arthur and Collins' views are consistent with the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists Principle II (Responsible Caring) value II.21 which states that psychologists have the responsibility to strive for the best possible service for clients which includes advocating on the behalf of clients (Sinclair & Pettifor, 2001).

From this perspective, counsellors must be knowledgeable about First Nations and Métis political structures at the regional, provincial, and federal levels if they are to provide social justice on behalf of clients. For example, as Métis are not governed by an overarching federal act such as the Indian Act, the rights of Métis people are represented by organizations on multiple levels. Counsellors must be aware of the organizations they will need to collaborate with in order to advocate for clients' needs and rights.

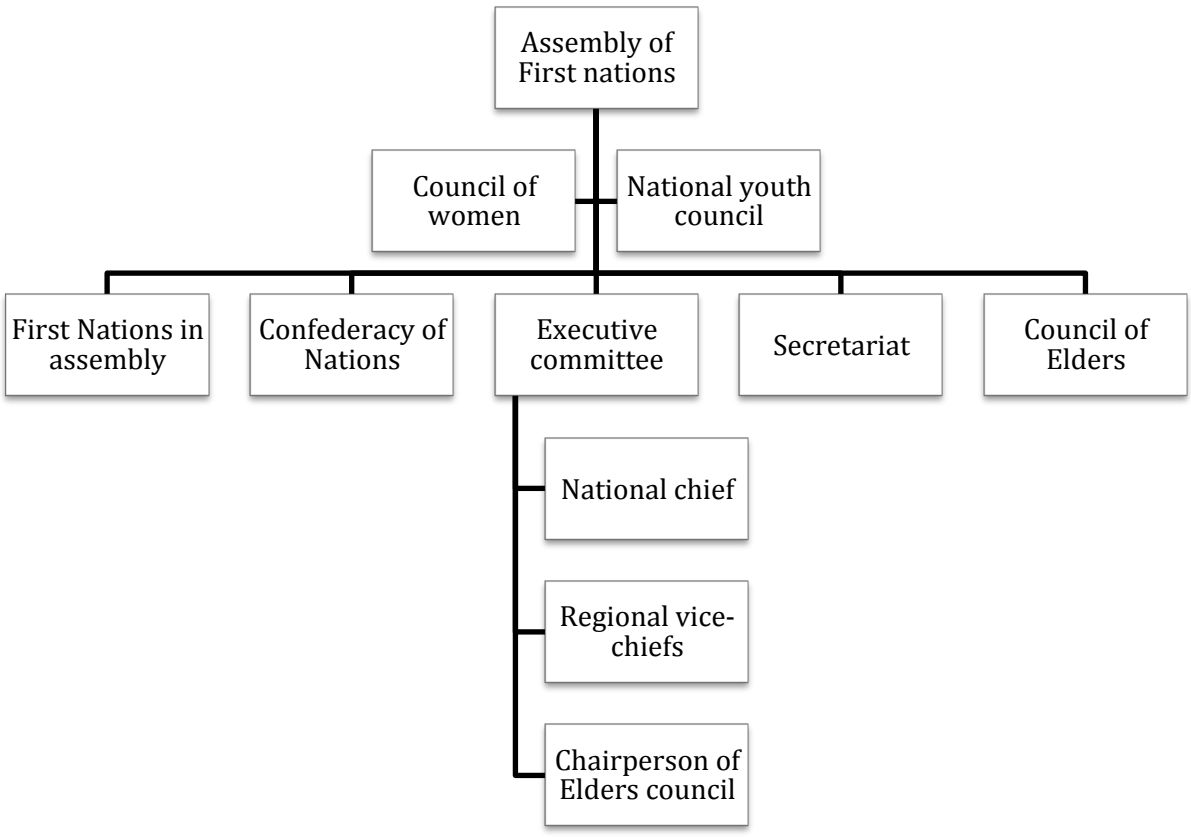
In addition, Aboriginal political organizations are complex structures with built in accountability through systems of checks and balances. As the majority of Aboriginal organizations receive federal funding for economic development and cultural programs, Aboriginal individuals sometimes experience delays and inconsistencies in funding decisions. For this reason, counsellors must understand the complex structures clients must approach in order to gain access to funding and assistance. Finally, counsellors must be informed of whether present urban Aboriginal youth issues fall within provincial or federal jurisdictional issues as this will also affect the course of action that will be taken by all Aboriginal organizations that have mandates to protect Aboriginal rights.

Reservation political structures. Under the *Indian Act*, bands were created to assert the existence of self-government through the principles of democratic government (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001). Under this form of self-government, reserves were granted the power to elect a chief and a band council comprised of one counsellor for every 100 band members. Band responsibilities include the management of education, housing, governance support, economic development, and all other activities on reserve (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001). It should also be noted that in addition to individual bands, group bands, tribal councils, and treaty groupings are also recognized as self-governing bodies by the federal government.

First Nations national political structure. Born in 1982 out of the National Indian Brotherhood, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national body that promotes the rights of all 630 First Nations groups across Canada (Assembly of First Nations, n.d.). The political structures of the AFN includes: a national chief (elected every three years), 10 vice-chiefs also elected every three years (representing the regions of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, Québec and Labrador, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon Territory, and the Northwest Territories), a secretariat, a council of Elders, a confederacy of Nations (comprised of representatives for each 10 regions), the council of women, and the national youth council (20 members representing the 10 regions).

The AFN advocates on the federal level for the rights of all of Canada's First Nations people and their communities on issues that include: (a) Aboriginal and treaty rights, (b) economic development, (c) education, (d) languages and literacy, (e) health, (f) housing, (g) social development, (h) justice, (i) taxation, (j) land claims, and (k) the environment.

Figure 7. Organizational Structure of the Assembly of First Nations



Métis settlements. Alberta is the only Province to recognize a Métis land base in Canada. There are eight Métis settlements located throughout east-central and northern Alberta that cover 1.25 million acres with approximately 9,000 residents (Alberta Aboriginal Relations, 2012). In 1985 the Alberta legislature voted to transfer land to the Alberta Métis in the form of settlements. The legislation was made official in 1989 through the Alberta Métis Settlement Accord, which also granted autonomous governance for settlements through the Métis Settlements General Council (MSGC). The MSGC is charged with the responsibility for the socio-economic needs of Métis people living on settlement that include environmental issues, economic development, health promotion and well-being, education strategies, and employment training.

Métis settlement youth face unique challenges. It is common for settlement youth to leave their community to pursue employment or education in urban areas. As described in chapter 3, these youth face tremendous changes. Furthermore, their access to urban Aboriginal services are limited by the fact they are registered settlement members and therefore unable to access urban Aboriginal funding opportunities. Counsellors must not only be aware of these barriers, but also the communities from which youth originate. Additionally, counsellors must also inquire about the youth's intentions for leaving and/or returning. Below is a list of Métis settlements that the author recommends readers become more familiar with.

Figure 8. Table of Métis Settlements

MÉTIS SETTLEMENTS	
Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement	• Located 50 km southwest of Lac La Biche • Population approximately 1,300 • Website: http://buffalolakems.ca/
East Prairie Métis Settlement	• Located 40 km southeast of High Prairie • Population approximately 800 • Website not available
Elizabeth Métis Settlement	• Located 30 km south of the City of Cold Lake • Population approximately 1,000 • Website: http://elizabethms.ca/
Fishing Lake Métis Settlement	• Located 93 km south of the City of Cold Lake • Population approximately 800 • Website: http://fishinglakems.ca/
Gift Lake Métis Settlement	• Located 40 km northeast of High Prairie • Population approximately 1,300 • Website not available

Kikino Métis Settlement	• Located 40 km south of Lac La Biche • Population approximately 1,300 • Website: http://kikinoms.ca/
Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement	• Located 77 km south of High Level • Population approximately 1,500 • Website not available
Peavine Métis Settlement	• Located 56 km north of High Prairie • Population approximately 1,000 • Website not available

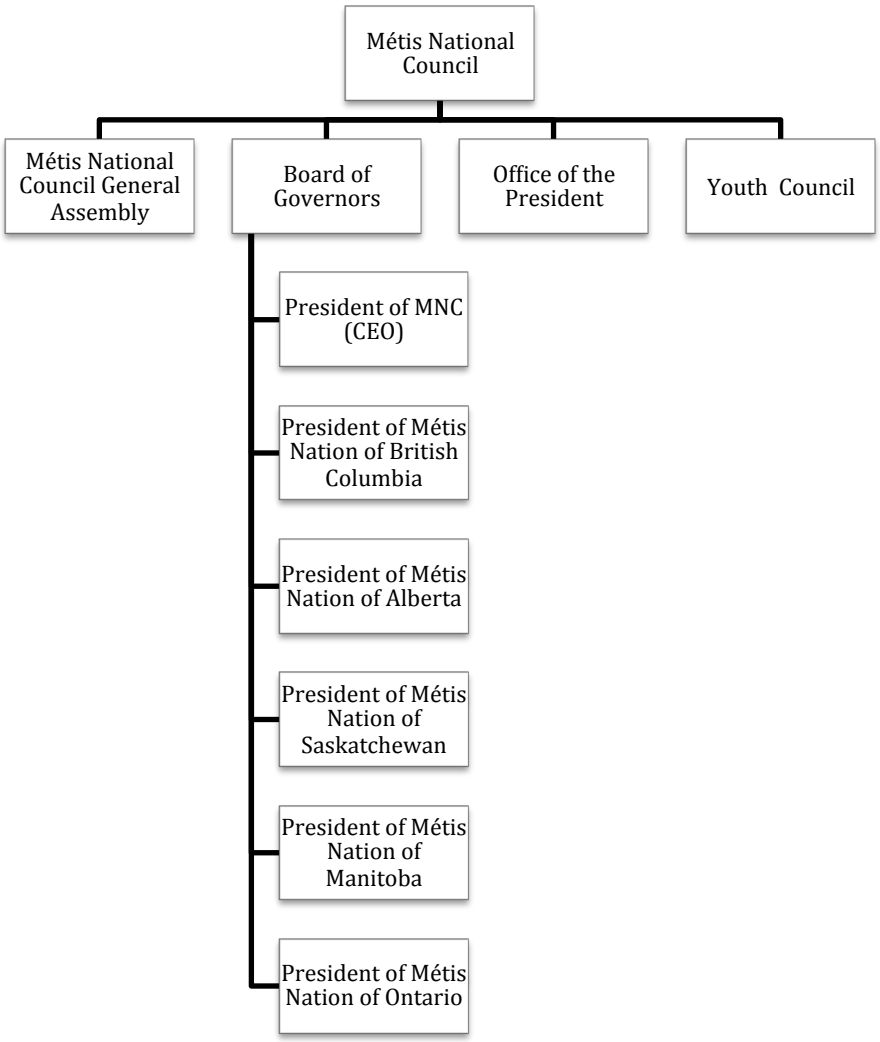
Figure 9. Map of Alberta's Métis Settlements

Image retrieved from http://www.ualberta.ca/~walld/map.html

(Alberta Aboriginal Relations, 2012; Métis Settlement General Council, 2012)

Métis national political structure. The Métis National Council (MNC) is comprised of the following members and structures: (a) elected president; (b) a general assembly; (c) a board of governors comprised of each Métis Nation provincial president from across western Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario); (d) the office of the President; (e) and a youth council. The MNC is responsible for advocating for the socio-economic needs of Métis people across Canada on the political level as well as through the delivering of economic development programs.

Figure 10. Organizational Structure of the Métis National Council

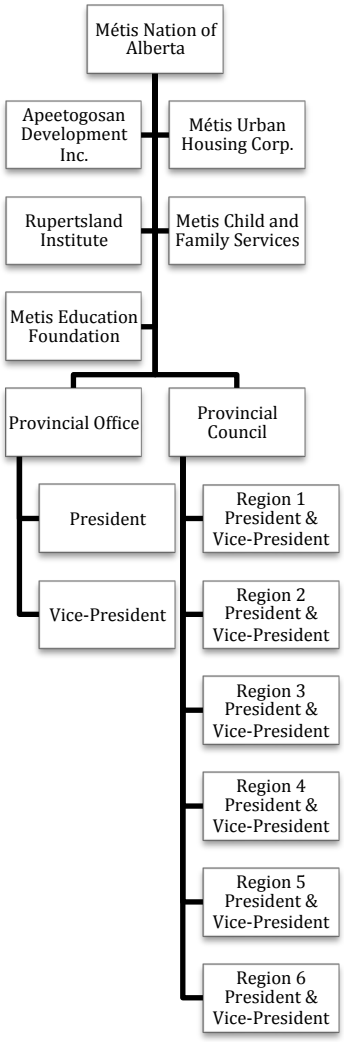


Métis provincial political structure. Founded in 1932, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) advocates for the rights, interests, and advancement of Alberta's Métis population at the municipal, provincial, and federal level. The MNA advocates for Alberta's Métis on issues that includes education, health, economic development, employment, housing, children and youth. The Métis Nation of Alberta divides the

Province of Alberta into six regions that each has democratically elected Presidents and Vice-Presidents. In turn, each Provincial region has established Métis Locals established at the municipal/community level that bring their concerns to their regional offices who in turn bring concerns to the Provincial council.

In addition, the MNA has five affiliate institutions that serve provide socio-economic and cultural support to Métis people. The MNA's provincial office (located in Edmonton) as well as provincial council are responsible for gaining access to government programs and services that in turn are delivered by the MNA's affiliate institutions as well as regional and local communities (Métis Nation of Alberta, 2007).

Figure 11. Organizational Structure of the Métis Nation of Alberta



Aboriginal Adolescent Development

Image retrieved from www.foter.com

Introduction

In the developmental model of adolescence, Wodarski (2010) posits that the primary tasks of youth are to establish autonomy and develop an identity. For this reason youth begin to test new philosophies, value systems, and lifestyles (Ormrod, 2012; Wodarski, 2010). Despite these recent findings on adolescent development, Burack, Blidner, Flores, and Fitch (2007) caution counsellors to be aware of the complexity of all individuals. The whole individual must be considered "…across domains of academic success, behavioural competence and appropriateness, social adaptation, and emotional health as defined by current societal and community values" (p. 18). Because of the diversity that exists among urban Aboriginal youth, counsellors must have an awareness of the complex, dynamic, and continually evolving nature of Aboriginal youth development.

Periods of Development

Different developmental periods are associated with a variety of needs, developmental tasks and milestones, and types of relationships formed. Numerous theorists have developed theories that seek to explain the social, cognitive, emotional, and educational development of children (e.g., Piaget, Vigotsky, Bowlby, Erikson). Despite the varying theories, typically early life development is related to: (a) the child's caregivers, (b) their interactions, (c) physical growth, and (d) motor development.

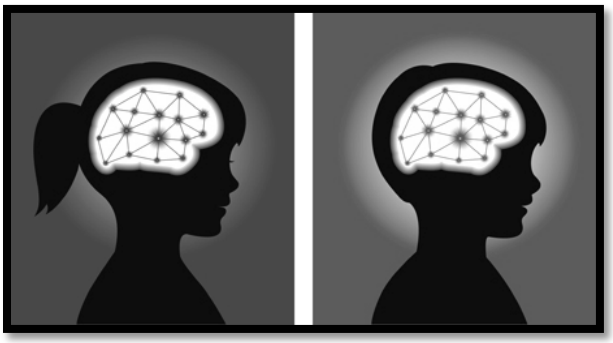


Image retrieved from http://www.ontheballparent.com/your_childs_developing_brain.php

Child development involves an intricate development that includes cognitive, social, and emotional development and evolving relationships with parents, family, peers, teachers, and other individuals involved in the child's life.

Development during youth and adolescence is characterized by substantial changes in social and cultural development. Development is more complex as it is characterized by self-discovery and identity formation as well as tumultuous physical and cognitive changes.

Recent research indicates that the experience of Aboriginal adolescence is much distinct than that of non-Aboriginal counterparts (Burack et al., 2007; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Filbert & Flynn, 2010; Parker et al., 2005). A brief description of those areas of adolescent development that are unique to the experiences of Aboriginal adolescent development follows.

Personal Beliefs and Identity

As adolescents prepare for adulthood, they begin to explore their personal beliefs; young adults begin to evaluate their childhood beliefs, make comparisons to new experiences and beliefs systems encountered, and place greater emphasis on individual spirituality as opposed to religion and/or organized institutions. Consequently, adolescents begin to take on new beliefs. However, studies indicate that contrary to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, urban Aboriginal youth continue to identify with their traditional culture and heritage (Cheah & Nelson, 2004). Instead, Aboriginal youth continue to identify with the collectivist values of Aboriginal culture placing priority on family and community. Despite the challenges faced by urban Aboriginal youth, studies indicate that youth express pride in their culture, the desire to pass their culture to their children, and a concern for the state and well-being of their community (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Brown, Higgitt, Wingert, Miller, & Morrissette, 2005; Janelle, Laliberte, & Ottawa, 2009).

Risk Behaviours

Research indicates that adolescence is a peak period for the development of several risk behaviours that include crime, unprotected sex, substance use, binge drinking, unsafe driving, and criminal and gang behaviours (Cheah & Nelson, 2004). Canadian police report statistics support developmental research. Canadian crime rates are highest amongst adolescents aged 15-22 years with the majority of criminal activity peaking at age 17 (Turner & Dauvergne, 2009).

However, deviant behaviours of youth are learned within a social context (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Winfree, Esbensen, & Osgood, 1996). For example, the persistence of deviant behaviours is learned through past and present rewards and punishments for behaviours (Hartinger-Saunders & Rine, 2011). Thus, deviant behaviour is more likely to occur when an individual resides in an environment where misconduct is reinforced (Pratt et al., 2009). Youth who are raised by parents who modeled poor coping skills or aggressive behaviours are at greater risk for criminal behaviour (Hartinger-Saunders & Rine, 2011). Peers also serve as powerful models as youth are more open to peers who relate to their personal experience with violence, crime, or alcohol use. In this light, adolescents learn appropriate and inappropriate behaviour through observational learning of their peers and the subsequent reinforcement or punishment of the modeled behaviour (Wodarski, 2010).

However, Burack and colleagues (2007) remind counsellors that developmental models of risk behaviours during adolescence are too simplistic. Rather, the authors posit that counsellors must account for the complexities found within the individual's life such as the adolescent's cognitive functioning, environmental factors, relationships, and culture. The latter is particularly important for the development of Aboriginal youth as the level of acculturation of youth vary for each individual. Chandler and Lalonde's (1998) study on youth suicide demonstrates this phenomenon. The authors' study revealed that on-reserve First Nations youth suicide rates vary drastically between geographic regions.

Variations are a direct result of protective cultural factors that include communities involved in education, self-government, health services, and cultural facilities.

From this perspective, Burack and colleagues (2007) state that the development of risk behaviours among Aboriginal youth are unique to each individual's experiences.

Emerging Adulthood

Research with Canadian adolescents indicates three criteria required in order for adolescents to transition successfully to adulthood: (a) accepting responsibility for oneself, (b) the capability of making independent decisions, and (c) financial independence (Cheah & Nelson, 2004). However, the criteria most commonly identified in studies of adolescent development consist of standards that are generally aligned with individualistic beliefs (Arnett, 2003). Given that Aboriginal culture is a collectivist culture, the criteria for successful transition from adolescence to adulthood is likely to differ drastically from the experience of adolescents from the majority culture.

Cheah and Nelson's (2004) study revealed that Aboriginal youth's transition into adulthood reflects the cultural values of their culture in the following manners:

- Each member has an important role to play in society and achieving adulthood is not related to independence. Therefore, Aboriginal youth tend to perceive himself or herself reaching adulthood sooner than non-Aboriginal youth.
- Aboriginal youth view interdependence as an important component of adulthood.
- Youth associate an awareness of unhealthy practices and behaviours with the transition to adulthood.
- Adherence to the traditional cultural norm of compliance found within the collectivistic and holistic nature of Aboriginal culture (e.g., care of Elders, community involvement).

Resiliency

Image retrieved from www.foter.com

While research on the role of resiliency in Aboriginal youth development is scarce, the findings to date are encouraging. Researchers agree that accessing the resilience and building on strengths of Aboriginal youth is the most successful strategy to promote healthy development.

Filbert and Flynn (2010) identify two types of assets that are crucial in the development of positive mental health of urban Aboriginal youth:

- Developmental assets: "..individual attributes, self processes, or ecological supports that have been consistently demonstrated to lessen risk and promote positive developmental outcomes" (p. 561).

    - External assets: "…relationships and opportunities that prosocial adults provide to youth and are of four types: support, empowerment, boundaries, and expectations, and constructive use of time" (p. 561).
    - Internal assets: "…values and competencies that allow young people to engage in effective self-regulation and are also of four types: commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity" (p. 561".

- Cultural assets: "…collective resources that enable ethnocultural groups to maintain their identities over time and experience more positive outcomes" (p. 561).

From this perspective, sources of resiliency that can aid in the positive development of urban Aboriginal youth include: (a) self-efficacy, (b) self-esteem, (c) absence of distress, pride in one's culture and heritage, (d) mentorship, and (e) social resources (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008).

Integrating Traditional Practices in the Counselling Setting

Image retrieved from http://www.way-of-the-wild-rose.com/smudging_76.html

Evaluation of Counsellor Aboriginal Competency

Rate your current level of competency to incorporate Aboriginal culture in your counselling process. Please rate as follows:

1= Poor
2= Fair
3= Good
4= Very Good
5= Excellent

Once you have rated yourself, indicate your plan to address those areas in which you rated your current level as poor or fair.

My incorporation of Aboriginal culture	Rating	Plan to improve my competency
The physical environment of my office visibly welcomes and celebrates all Aboriginal people and reflects a place of safety, belonging, and trust.		
I understand the diversity of Aboriginal culture in Alberta.		
I have knowledge of Aboriginal cultural beliefs, practices, and principles of health.		
I have been educated about the legacy of residential school and its intergenerational impacts.		
I have knowledge of the issues and barriers experienced by urban Aboriginal youth.		
My client assessments, case conceptualizations, and treatment plans account for the barriers youth face in their everyday lives.		
I connect youth clients to family and significant community members in family and/or group therapy.		

My work with urban Aboriginal youth is grounded in the principle of "culture as treatment.		
My treatment plans are client-driven, flexible, and incorporate a variety of both Aboriginal healing and western therapeutic interventions.		
My therapeutic practices restore belonging, hope, and self-determination in youth.		
When appropriate, I help youth increase their self-esteem by restoring pride in their cultural identity.		
When using narratives and stories in counselling, I choose stories that illustrate the humour, strength, and resilience of urban Aboriginal youth.		
I bridge clients to culturally appropriate traditional healing practices such as: • Elders • Healing, talking, or sharing circles • Traditional ceremonies • Cultural teachings		
I bridge clients to appropriate community services that can support and maintain their healing such as: • Aboriginal organizations • Housing services • Child care • Employment agencies • Educational funding • Cultural programs • Community		
I support multidisciplinary and inter-agency practices.		
I provide advocacy for clients who require support.		

I receive guidance and support from respected Elders and traditional teachers.		
I engage in regular supervision in order to reflect on the quality of my counselling practices and lessons learned.		

(Adapted from Chansonneuve, 2007)

Elder Participation in Counselling

As stressed throughout this project, **culture is treatment** when working with Aboriginal youth. For this reason, Elders have an important role to play in the therapeutic setting as Elders are considered keepers of traditional knowledge. However, readers shouldn't equivocate the term *Elder* as an individual who has attained a certain age. Rather, in Aboriginal culture to be called an Elder is a term of respect as he or she is "…recognized and respected for knowing, living, and sharing traditional knowledge. They represent a bridge between the past and present" (Hunter, Logan, Goulet, & Barton, 2006, p.19). Elders are held in high regard in both First Nations and Métis culture.

McCormick (2000) asserts that Elders are essential in healing Aboriginal clients because they are able to reconnect the individual to culture, community, and spirituality. However, counsellors must be knowledgeable on cultural protocol required to approach an Elder to either guide a client in traditional healing or to participate in the counselling setting. Below are recommendations that may help counsellors approach their community Elder(s) in a culturally respectful manner:

Types of Elders.

- Distinctions will need to be made between Elders. Some elders may possess specific cultural knowledge while some may not be able to provide the guidance that you or your client requires.

- Elders may be political Elders or spiritual Elders.

- Political Elders are those who are connected to various organizations in order to represent the socio-political and cultural needs of Aboriginal people. These Elders may sit on boards and provide consultation on political issues. Political Elders may belong to a variety of organizations and boards including: Aboriginal institutions, community agencies, government boards, councils, and committees at the three levels of government (municipal, provincial, federal), and educational facilities or may even serve as federal parliamentarians

- Spiritual Elders are those who perform traditional healing ceremonies and provide spiritual guidance. They seek guidance from Creator and ancestors to guide individuals, groups, and communities on their path of healing.

Identifying your community Elder.

- Find out who the designated Elder(s) is/are in your community.

- Ensure the Elder(s) has/have been chosen by their community as keeper(s) of traditional knowledge.

Offerings.

- When approaching an Elder to provide cultural guidance, Aboriginal culture dictates

that an individual must provide an offering to the Elder.

- Tobacco is typically presented to Elders when requesting their assistance. In Aboriginal culture, tobacco is a sacred object that is smoked in the sacred pipe during a traditional pipe ceremony. Spirits are asked to provide guidance and healing.

- The tobacco offered to an Elder will be used at a later date along with traditional tobacco gathered from the land. When the Elder performs a pipe ceremony; the tobacco will be offered to Creator and spirits as an offering for their guidance

Approaching an Elder.

- Try to approach an Elder before the full moon.

- Do not approach an Elder on the street or in the community at large. If you are able, approach the Elder in a traditional setting such as in nature. If this is not possible, approach the Elder in their home.

- Provide your offering to the Elder.

- Humbly convey to your Elder what you require.

- Be respectful!

- Listen!

- Be patient. The Elder may not have an answer for you and you may need to wait for an answer.

Incorporating Traditional Healing Practices in the Therapeutic Setting

According to McCormick (2000), western counselling techniques by themselves are of little help when used with Aboriginal clients. Rather, the author suggests that counsellors who are able to integrate the healing practices of Aboriginal cultures create new and effective practices to assist Aboriginal clients.

Creating a culturally affirming environment.

- Display cultural décor.
- Openly address dissimilar cultural identities.
- Allow for trust to develop before focusing on deeper feelings.
- Select counselling techniques that elicit practical solutions to the client's presenting problem and that meet the needs of the clients.
- Adopt a communication style that matches that of the client (both verbal and non-verbal). Use appropriate eye contact, respect silences, and maintain relaxed, open body language.
- Demonstrate honour and respect for the client's Aboriginal culture and beliefs.
- Ask permission whenever possible.
- Always give thanks to the client.
- Share personal experiences when appropriate.
- If possible, burn sweetgrass or sage before sessions. The lingering aroma of sweetgrass or sage invites conversation and trust.

Assessing clients' culture.

As most Aboriginal people identify with more than one culture, counsellors must determine to what degree the client adheres to their traditional worldview. Garrett and Herring (2001) warn that before incorporating traditional healing practices in the counselling setting, helping professionals must first assess the client's cultural identity which includes:

(a) their cultural identity and level of acculturation;
(b) the community the client originates from (urban setting, reservation, Métis settlement, rural setting etc…); and
(c) the cultural beliefs, customs, and traditions that influence the client's worldview.

Assessing the client's cultural identity is imperative before counsellors can suggest that the client seeks out culturally-based healing practices (Nuttgens & Campbell, 2010).

Referring to traditional healing practices.

- According to Nuttgens and Campbell (2010), counsellors should never attempt to appropriate traditional healing practices within their work as if they were holders of traditional knowledge.

- When warranted, counsellors should consult Elders as part of the treatment plan and help clients access appropriate traditional healing practices.

- As Elders are the keepers of traditional knowledge, counsellors need to consult with Elders and traditional healers when a client requires an intervention that the counsellor is unable to provide (e.g., using a sweatlodge).

Incorporating culture in counselling.

- The incorporation of traditional healing elements into counselling should be initiated by the client (Oulanova & Moodley, 2010).

- Counsellors can communicate to clients that they consider traditional healing methods to be valid and important components of the healing process.

- Counsellors shed the role of expert and instead they follow the clients' lead.

- Allow the client to initiate traditional healing by having traditional healing elements available in the counselling space such as sweetgrass or a drum.

- Counsellors report successful integration of western techniques with traditional techniques, for example, using the tool of the drum with eye movement desensitization and reprocessing techniques.

- Counsellors can be creative and move sessions outside the office into nature (e.g., walking during session).

- If the client finds the medicine wheel to be a helpful way to process life challenges, counsellors can integrate its teaching to guide interventions.

- As story telling is an important component of Aboriginal culture, counsellors must be able to incorporate the use of metaphors and stories in counselling.

- As family and community play a central role in Aboriginal culture, family and community members can be invited to the counselling setting. The talking circle can be facilitated by an Elder.

- Counsellors can ask Elders to collaborate in the counselling setting by providing cultural healing.

- If Elders collaborate in counselling, the role of the counsellor is to adopt the role of participant and to allow the Elder to facilitate. The role of the counsellor is to support the healing process as Elders have asked spirits and the Creator for guidance through the process.

- Counsellors cannot rush the process and must instead be patient and flexible in order to allow traditional practices to unfold as needed.

Rationale for Narrative Therapy When Counselling Urban Aboriginal Youth

Narrative therapy involves the telling of client stories in order to search for occasions in clients' lives when they have been able to separate themselves for dominant internal discourse in order to create alternative life stories (Corey, 2009). Stewart (2008) asserts that because Aboriginal people possess an oral-based story telling tradition, the narrative approach is a culturally appropriate western technique to be implemented with Aboriginal clients. In addition, narrative therapy is flexible and allows the incorporation of other techniques (e.g., Aboriginal healing traditions). Research has demonstrated that the marriage of Western and Aboriginal traditional interventions has been proven especially effective in the treatment of clients (Wendt & Gone, 2011; Vukic, Gregory, Martin-Misener, & Etowa, 2011).

Story telling is frequently used by therapists working with adolescents as it is recognized as an effective method in representing the individual's experience (Kirven, 2000). Corey (2009) posits that individuals live their lives by stories that are told about themselves as well as others. Consequently, the individual devises meaning in his or her life through interpretive stories that are treated as truths. The author further states that "because the power of dominant culture narratives, individuals tend to internalize the messages from the these dominant discourses, which often work against the life opportunity of the individual" (Corey, 2009, p. 388). Thus, stories shape the reality of an individual's life as they shape reality and affect what an individual does and feels. From this perspective, the goal of narrative therapy is to help the individual re-write their stories with creative new language and narratives. Garte-Wolf (2011) espouses that the goal of re-authoring narratives is to use past memories as a base for forming an alternative life story. Furthermore, re-authoring facilitates a shift in perspective by locating the problem outside of the individual rather than inside and therefore creates an opportunity for new prospects and change (Hill, 2011).

As stated, narratives adapted by individuals are rooted in cultural discourse; stories develop out of conversations that occur in a cultural context. According to Semmler and Williams (2000), narrative therapy provides a framework for counsellors to explore implicit cultural assumptions that influence clients. The authors state this is especially important for individuals from minority cultures because dominant cultural narratives often do not match the experience of minorities and may affect them differently. The experience of externalization of stories afforded by narrative therapy creates an environment in which stories of cultural oppression, intergenerational trauma, and hurt can openly be shared. Furthermore, social barriers such as racism, when internalized, present barriers of self-expression to clients. This is especially relevant to the urban Aboriginal youth population who often experience racism, oppression, and discrimination (National Council of Welfare, 2007). Narrative therapy can be used with urban Aboriginal youth to recognize that their problems are based on cultural assumptions rather than on personal deficiencies. In turn, this opens urban Aboriginal youth up to the possibility of resources they may have previously been unaware of (Semmler & Williams, 2000).

Additionally, Semmler and Williams (2000) state that clients' identities are constituted by what they know therefore self-knowledge is defined largely by cultural practices. The authors assert that narrative therapy can help get to the heart of deconstructing the dominant cultural narrative of inferiority and reclaiming liberating traditions within culture and individuals. Despite centuries of assimilative policies and cultural oppressions, Canada's Aboriginal people have demonstrated great resiliency. In Aboriginal culture, much of what promotes resiliency lies outside of the individual in community cultural practices (Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Phillips, & Williamson, 2011). Healing traditions can be used to deconstruct negative cultural discourses, as they require self-reflection in order to open the self to new possibilities. Likewise, narrative therapy techniques and strategies foster self-reflection, provide clients with the opportunity to assess their lives, and help clients focus on accomplishments and gratifying moments (Kirven, 2000).

Therefore, the self-exploration, deconstruction, externalization, and re-authoring of negative narratives required of individuals participating in narrative therapy have much to offer urban Aboriginal youth clients.

Facilitating a Sharing Circle

Benefits of group therapy. In today's therapeutic setting, "groups are an excellent treatment choice for numerous intrapersonal and interpersonal issues and for helping people change" (Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2010, p. 4). The group environment offers multiple relationships that become powerful mechanisms for change as it provides opportunities for individual growth and problem solving. Participants experience increased self-understanding, find universality in their problems, try out new behaviours, and find new hope. Group work encompasses many different kinds of groups as well as a variety of theoretical orientations in order to effectively meet the needs of participants.

Clients often believe they are alone in their problems and don't know how to change what is not working for them. Research indicates that social support provides individuals with the ability to meet personal challenges by instilling hope and increasing self-confidence while promoting personal growth and wellness (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2009; Sarason & Sarason, 2009). In addition, social support has been associated with increased emotional, social, and physical well-being (Harel, Schechtman, & Cutrona, 2012). Group counselling provides clients with needed social support that "…enables participants to make decisions about how they will change their lives in the real world" (Corey et al., 2010, p. 275). Group counselling also provides clients with a safe environment in which they can experiment with new behaviours, improve communication skills, and receive feedback from members who share similar concerns. Corey and colleagues (2010) advise that "the most important thing about the group experience is what the members take with them by way of new learning to enhance the quality of their lives" (p. 267).

Rationale for sharing circles. In Aboriginal culture "sharing circles are both healing techniques and processes which set the stage for people's ongoing healing, growth and self-development" (Hart, 2002, p. 61). Blue et al. (2010) support this idea with "…interventions should incorporate core Aboriginal beliefs and values and involve significant others in helping youth understand their strengths and future directions" (p. 267).

For this reason, sharing circles are an opportunity to bridge communal support systems in the group context and foster partnerships that bring together generations. Additionally, family and community must be included in the counselling process as they remain the central institution in Aboriginal societies (McCormick, 2000). For this reason, it is culturally appropriate for youths' families and community members to have input into their healing (McCormick, 2000). Furthermore, inviting family and community also involves youth in community and allows both parties to discuss and appreciate how to live and work together (Kirven, 2000). Additionally, community supports help alleviate stress as coping strategies are infused and valued (Kirven, 2000).

Forming an Urban Aboriginal Youth Sharing Circle

- Trust and intimacy is not something that Aboriginal youth will share freely with strangers (McCormick, 2000). Furthermore, the size of sharing circle affects the degree to which participants are willing to share (Hart, 2002). For this reason, small circles of 10-15 participants are suggested.
- In addition to group participants, the Elder(s) should be present at each group session in order to ensure that respect toward Aboriginal cultural protocols is honoured.
- For the above stated reasons, sharing circles should be conducted in a community based setting.
- Although it is important to highlight the goals, rationale, and description of sharing circles, it is suggested that timelines not be included in session outlines in order to respect Aboriginal cultural protocol.
- Sharing circles can be held in a variety of locations that can include an office, a conference room, the outdoors, a home, a lodge, a tepee, or a classroom (Hart, 2002).

Creating a welcoming environment.

- The gathering of Aboriginal communities, groups, and families for feasts is a large component of Aboriginal culture. It is culturally appropriate to make food available at gatherings such as sharing circles and group sessions.
- Matthew (2009) supports this notion and suggests that incentives such as food must be provided to those who participate in healing.
- Healthy snacks should be provided to the participants during breaks.

Group process.

- Chairs should be arranged in a circle.
- The facilitator should open the sharing circle by inviting the Elder to say a prayer and engage the group in a smudging ceremony.
- It is helpful to have a talking stick or eagle feather to facilitate the group discussion.
- The facilitator should seek the input from family members and/or community members for additional perspectives.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that all circle members have a chance to express themselves.
- Facilitators should be flexible for sharing circle timelines. In Aboriginal traditions, it is understood that group and community gatherings will unfold as they should. This is because Creator allows for healing to occur for each individual. For this reason a group session framework is provided, but the unfolding of the framework will vary from session to session.
- Before ending a session, the facilitator should thank all participants for their time and participation of the group.

General Sharing Circle Format

- **Welcome**
  - The group leader welcomes group members and the Elder.
  - The leader provides a quick review of group norms, informed consent, and confidentiality.
  - The leader provides a review of previous sessions (themes and highlights) as well as a review of group rules established previously.
  - The group leader should thank the Elder for attending, present the Elder with an offering, and ask the Elder to open the session by saying a prayer.

- **Prayer and Smudging**
  - Elder says a prayer.
  - All group members, group leader, and Elder participate in a smudging ritual.

- **Check-in**
  - The group leader should open up the group circle and allows group members to discuss any questions or concerns that may have arisen for them since the last group session.

- **Story Sharing**
  - The group leader begins by reading a narrative of a personal account about the circle topic at hand (e.g., self-esteem, educational struggles, substance use…) that highlights how this individual's life was impacted.
  - The group leader encourages feedback and reflections from group members on this story. Group members are asked to reflect on whether they noticed parallels between the author's story and that of their own.

- **Break**
  - Tea, juice, water, and fruit to be served.

- **Cultural Teaching**
  - After break, the group leader highlights the sections of the shared narrative in which the individual in the story turned to cultural traditions and practices to enhance the healing process.
  - The group facilitator should invite the Elder to engage the youth in a traditional lesson about the significance of culture and traditions related to the group's presenting problem. Cultural teachings that Elders facilitate could include:
    - The significance of balance between the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual self.
    - Education of the manner in which mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health extends beyond the focus of the individual to engage and empower families, communities, and nature.
    - Teachings about spiritualty on issues such as:
      - Life is sacred and all life forms have a spirit.

- Ignoring spirituality results in the imbalance of the medicine wheel. Therefore, spirit plays a large role in sickness and in wellness.
- Ceremonies and cultural practices are used to strengthen or cleanse the spirit and heal the individual.

❁ **Session Wrap-Up**

- The group leader conducts a review of objectives and goals of the session.
- The leader should allow members to ask questions or express concerns they may have about today's group or future groups.
- The group leader should thank the Elder for providing the cultural teaching of the session.
- The group leader concludes by thanking members for their attention and work today and officially closes the session.

Homework. Minimal homework should be assigned to group participants because of possible limited literacy skills amongst Aboriginal populations. According to the Canadian Council on Learning (2009) 40% of Aboriginal youth aged 20 to 24 did not have a high school diploma compared to 13% of non-Aboriginal youth. These rates are even higher for on-reserve First Nations youth who have a 61% drop out rate. The council further revealed that needing to work to help support the family, responsibilities at home, problems at home, and no assistance available for homework were the principle reasons for Aboriginal youth leaving secondary education.

Research conducted on school experiences of inner city Aboriginal youth (Brown, Rodger, & Fraehlich, 2009) revealed that Aboriginal youth commonly experience negative connotations related to homework. Housing conditions leave some youth without a quiet space to complete their homework. Others expressed feeling overwhelmed with work and homework. Additionally, parents may lack the academic skills necessary to assist their children with homework. It is within this context that it is suggested that the majority of work should be completed in the group sessions with a focus on reflective homework.

Becoming Involved in Social Justice

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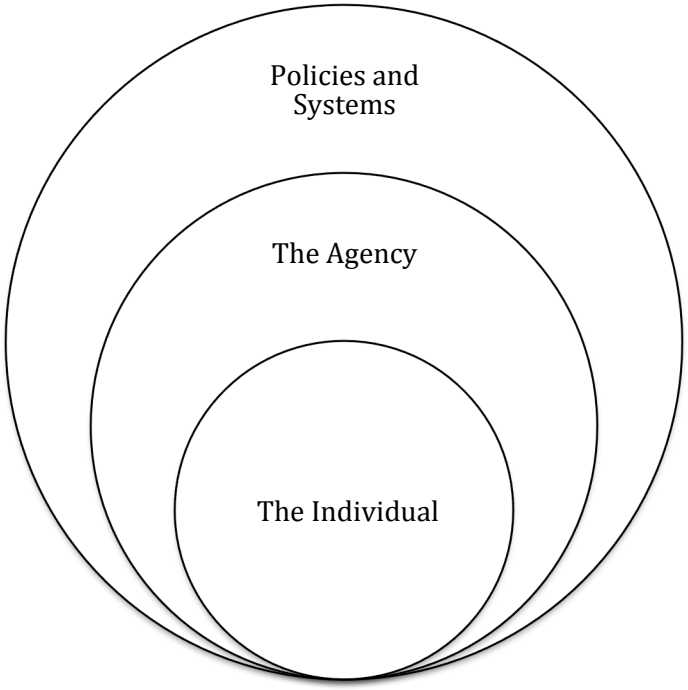
Levels of Change

Ambtman, Hudson, Hartry, and Mackay-Chiddenton (2010) propose that long-held beliefs and practices of service providers cannot change without major systemic changes within organizations. Therefore, the authors propose that in order to reclaim Aboriginal youth at risk and implement new practices in agencies serving youth, change must occur on three levels: (a) the micro level (the individual staff member), (b) the macro level (the agency), and (c) the meta level (policies and systemic change).

Figure 12. Organizational Levels of Change



Micro level change: The individual.

Helpers can promote change on the individual level by becoming culturally competent counsellors. As discussed throughout this manual, counsellors should partake in:

- Become aware of Aboriginal worldview, identities, and beliefs
    - Understand Aboriginal beliefs about wellness and healing.
- Develop counsellor cultural self-awareness including:
    - Awareness of personal cultural values and beliefs.
    - Awareness of the differences between personal values and those of clients.
    - Awareness and acknowledgement of power differentials between counsellors and urban Aboriginal youth.
- Understand the history and current political structures of Aboriginal people including:
    - Understanding the role of colonization and historical trauma.

- Understanding how history has affected present-day relationships between Aboriginal people and dominant culture.

Macro level change: The agency.

- In order to become a culturally competent agency that adopts multicultural attitudes, policies, and practices agencies must:
  - Possess the ability to let go of ineffective ways of doing business.
  - Hire and retain staff at all levels (front line, middle management, and upper management) who mirror the cultural diversity of the community.
  - Develop a culturally competent management structure.
  - Recognize and validate cultural skills, knowledge, and values in performance review processes.
  - Provide cross-cultural training to staff.
  - Support staff members who wish to obtain professional credentials.
  - Counteract stereotyping and racism that may exist within the organization.
  - Develop and implement policies for conflict resolution management.
  - Develop the organization's relationship with the community it serves.
  - Recognize and deal effectively with power relations (at the personal, interpersonal, and political levels).
  - Revise policies and procedures to reflect the needs of the community.
  - Advocate for the social justice of clients served.

Meta level change: Policies and systems.

- Organizations must practice directives that mandate culturally competent policies and practices of organizations that include: governments, professional associations, funders, stakeholders, and partners.

Agency Brown-Bag Sessions Activities

Brown-bag sessions can be useful opportunities during lunch hours for training or information sessions to address various topics and/or to allow staff members to brainstorm solutions to barriers youth encounter when trying to access services (Ambtman et al., 2010). The aim of the sessions is to provide training and information to staff followed by a discussion in an informal setting. The following activities are brown-bag session exercises modeled on intercultural interactions developed by Mullavey-O'Byrne (1994a, 1994b), Pedersen (1994), and Horvath (1994).

Image retrieved from www.foter.com

Brown-bag sessions are not complex or costly but rather are easily implemented, require little preparation, and are easily adaptable to meet the needs of staff. Brown-bag sessions can take many forms that can be as simple as: (a) discussion topics, (b) self-assessment activities, (c) reflection of role-play activities, and (d) review and discussion of videos, websites, and articles. Brown bag sessions are excellent opportunities to begin encouraging change at the individual and organizational level.

The following are sessions that can be employed to increase the Aboriginal awareness of staff members, to encourage reflection on the manner in which agencies can improve access to their services, and to improve services provided to urban Aboriginal youth.

Brown bag activity: Self-assessment of multicultural interactions.

Materials needed:

- ✓White board or flow chart paper
- ✓Markers
- ✓Paper and pens for all participants
- ✓Note taker
- ✓Facilitator

On a white board or flow chart paper, write the following instruction and allow staff 5-10 minutes to reflect on the following two questions:

> *Reflect on a situation in which you were involved in providing services to an Aboriginal youth whose background was different than your own.*
>
> *Identify three instances in which you were aware of being satisfied and/or dissatisfied with how you handled the situation. What made you feel this way?*

Once all staff had the opportunity to answer both questions, the facilitator leads a discussion on staff members' responses by inviting staff members to answer the following questions based on the themes or examples identified:

1. In what way was the satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction I experienced related to my knowledge/lack of knowledge about:
    - ❑ The youth's needs?
    - ❑ The youth's cultural background?
    - ❑ The youth's language?

2. In what way was the satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction I experienced related to my skill or lack of skill in:
    - ❑ Accurately understanding the client's needs within their presenting situation?
    - ❑ Accurately communication my understanding of the client's needs in the situation to the client?
    - ❑ Selecting and implementing appropriate action?

3. In what way was the satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction I experienced related to my skill or lack of skill related to:
    - ❑ My sensitivity to the client's needs and culture?
    - ❑ My beliefs about Aboriginal culture?
    - ❑ My beliefs about who should receive assistance?
    - ❑ My beliefs about people who seek assistance?

Brown bag activity: Role-play. Role-play is a valuable activity that when conducted in a group setting, can allow participants to receive valuable feedback. As it can be difficult to observe and provide feedback of counselling skills in a natural setting, role-play provides as naturalistic a setting possible to observe and provide feedback of counselling skills (Young, 2009).

According to Young (2009), role-play has three distinct phases: (a) warm-up, (b) action, and (c) sharing and analysis.

- Warm up: Allows time for participants to get in-touch with the experience that is trying to be recreated. This time also allows participants to decrease stage fright and allows actors to prepare themselves for the process.

- Action: Scene setting is the preliminary task conducted during the action phase. Participants are asked to take on their roles and set the stage designing the day, time, situation, and individuals being portrayed in the role-play.

- Sharing and Analysis: This phase provides an opportunity for observes to relate and share their personal experiences evoked by the role-play. During this time, observes also provide feedback and suggestions.

Materials needed:

- ✓2-3 chairs
- ✓8.5'' x 11'' manila envelopes
- ✓Prepared role-play situations and characters typed out and placed in envelopes and sorted by role-play topics
- ✓Whiteboard/flowchart paper
- ✓Markers
- ✓Note-take
- ✓Facilitator

In order to prepare for role-play:

- Select a common counsellor/Aboriginal youth interactions that occurs in daily work.
- Select a setting for the role-play (e.g., initial screening, assessment, counselling session).
- Prepare role cards with specific instructions for staff to play client characters and the behaviours expected of them in the role.
- Staff members playing counsellors will interact in the role as they would if the scenario occurred in an everyday setting.

Example setting Initial screening - Client is meeting the counsellor for the first time in order to seek career counselling.

Example role card client

Role Card: Jack

Main themes to address: acculturation, miscommunication and misunderstanding between client and counsellor.

Client background: You recently moved to the city from a rural setting to pursue a career in the trades. You are a 23-year-old Métis youth who lived in a rural setting your entire life. You grew up surrounded by a large extended family. Although you attended high school, you never successfully graduated, as you did not receive passing grades in your grade 12 classes to obtain your high school credits. Your desire to enter a career in trades was inspired by your uncle Ted who was handy with many tools and assisted members of the community in fixing household problems.

You are currently renting a small apartment with a family acquaintance in a lower-economic neighbourhood but you are experiencing trouble making ends meet because you've experienced trouble securing and maintain employment. Furthermore, since moving to the city, you have made few friends, often feel discriminated against, and are feeling isolated and misunderstood. You've come to meet with a counsellor because you are beginning to feel hopeless and are not sure what to do.

Implementing the role play:

- Invite two staff members to volunteer to participate in a role-play.
- Provide all members with information about the setting of the role-play.
- Provide volunteer(s) with their player role-card and allow participants a few minutes to become familiar with their role.
- Encourage players to stay in their role should they experience difficulty.
- The amount of time expected during the role-play will vary based on the degree of enthusiasm and confidence of the staff members.
- Once the role-play has completed, invite the players to comment on their experience.
- Open up the discussion to the entire group and encourage members to discuss the following questions:
    - ❑ What was your experience in the role you played?
    - ❑ What insights did you have as a result of the role you were playing?
    - ❑ What skills were you aware that you were using?
    - ❑ What skills did observers see their colleagues using in the role-play?
    - ❑ What techniques worked well?
    - ❑ What techniques didn't work well?
    - ❑ What problems evolved during the role-play?
    - ❑ What alternative strategies could have been used?
    - ❑ As an organization, how can we better meet the needs of such clients?

Brown-bag activity: Discussion topics. Brown-bag lunch hours can also provide an opportunity to discuss questions that elicit reflection on agency practices and protocols that may or may not meet the needs of urban Aboriginal youth; this time can also be spent brainstorming. Questions are based on the work of Brislin (1994).

Materials needs:

- ✓Whiteboard/flowchart paper
- ✓Marker
- ✓Note-taker
- ✓Facilitator

Cross-Cultural Discussion Topics

- List the Aboriginal cultural groups that your organization serves.
- Write down the stereotypes associated with the groups and in particular, the youth of these groups.
- Where possible, write down the reasons why the stereotype came into existence.
- Where possible, write down an explanation of the stereotype that may help others make less negative conclusions about Alberta's urban Aboriginal youth population.

Q: What can we learn from this exercise?

Q: How do these stereotypes affect urban Aboriginal youth?

Q: Which of these stereotypes arise from Aboriginal cultural customs? How can we apply these cultural customs to our practice?

Q: Are there any stereotypes and/or explanations staff were unfamiliar with? If so, what gaps of learning can we identify?

Q: How do these stereotypes affect our practice and the manner in which we serve the needs of Aboriginal youth?

Barriers to Accessing Services Discussion Topics

The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey (Environics, 2010) asked youth why they do not use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations. Common replies included:

> *Just because I'm independent. I feel that there are too many handouts. I just feel like everyone can help. I just don't feel that it has to be Aboriginal-based*.

> *I don't really rely on Aboriginal services, but I am really happy that they are there for me when it comes to using them for school.*

> *Because I've never been on unemployment, had troubles with rent or had family difficulties. There's not been a need.*
>
> *Because I'm independent. My goal is to not be dependent on any system. To me, that is a form of government control.*
>
> *I don't know what is out there and at the same [time] think that I do not need them that much. I think I can fairly rely on myself in that respect. Also, when it comes to certain services, I am reluctant to use them on the basis [that] I am Aboriginal. If I am to use a service, I prefer to be entitled to it on my own merit than exclusively based on my background.*
>
> *Some organization I don't know about. I moved from Ottawa. Many of them catered towards people in the Downtown East-side. I'm not in that situation.*
>
> *There is no information about where to go to get services*. (p. 70)

Q: What are the themes of these statements?

Q: What surprised you about these statements?

Q: What does our organization do to help youth access services in a respectful manner?

Q: How do we advocate for urban Aboriginal youth?

Q: How can our services be improved?

Referral and Affiliation Discussion Topics

Q: Who are our current partners?

Q: What organizations do we currently refer urban Aboriginal youth to?

Q: When reviewing the list of partners and affiliates generated, identify the organizations that are Aboriginal. Are these organizations aware of the services our organization currently offers to urban Aboriginal youth?

Q: How can we create greater awareness within the Aboriginal community of our services?

Facilitating an Agency Sharing Circle

** Although the following sharing circle outlines a single session, agencies are welcome to implement as many sessions as deemed necessary. In addition, sharing circles can also be conducted with Aboriginal community members as a means of including their family and receiving feedback on current services and needs of the urban Aboriginal youth of the community.*

** In order to respect Aboriginal circle teachings, group session chairs should be arranged in a circle prior to the arrival of group members.*

** Elders should be part of the group to facilitate cultural learning and protocol.*

Goal. The objective of the sharing circle is to advocate for, and support the cultural proficiency of the organization in its work with Aboriginal people. Additionally, sharing circles support the organization's staff members as they try to increase their own cultural competence and bring about change in the organization (Ambtman et al., 2010). In addition, the circle will aim to thread together empowering moments and stories of success from the client's experience as well as failures.

Finally the circle should set the tone for a warm, safe, and supportive environment that will elicit trust, openness, and honesty amongst members. This is first accomplished with a brief introduction of the leader and members. The Elder should also be introduced and his or her role within the group context explained. Following this, the Elder provides a blessing and brief smudging lesson to group members. Finally, in order to reduce anxieties and worries that may exist for circle members, these worries should be discussed openly.

Rationale. Establishing member roles, group rules, and norms are critical in the initial formation of the circle as it influences the degree of trust within the group. According to Corey and colleagues (2010), the initial stage of a group is orientation and exploration during which

> members are getting acquainted, learning how the group functions, developing spoken and unspoken norms that will govern the group behavior, exploring their fears and hopes pertaining to the group, clarifying their expectations, identifying personal goals, and determining whether this group is safe. (p. 133)

Sharing circle template.

❁ **Welcome and Introductions**

- The group leader welcomes group members and introduces him/herself. The group leader provides a brief synopsis of his or her experience with Aboriginal culture and working with urban Aboriginal youth.

- The group leader should provide a brief overview of the objectives of the group; groups serve as safe place to discuss past and present experiences and to provide tools that aid in increasing the multicultural competence of staff members.
- The group leader provides an overview of the manner in which sharing of stories and Aboriginal teachings will be used to facilitate multicultural competence.
- The group leader should provide an explanation of the structure of the group meeting.
- Each member is asked to provide an introduction and share a brief story of their hopes for the group and what they hope to gain from it.

❁ **Lesson on Prayer and Smudging**

- The circle leader introduces and presents an offering to the Elder.
- The Elder provides a brief teaching on the significance of prayer. Members learn that prayer is used to ask the Creator to preside over the group work so that healing can take place and that group members are open to sharing, learning, and healing.
- The Elder also provides a brief teaching about smudging. Circle members learn that smudging is done to purify thoughts and cleanse the spirit as well as how to properly engage in a smudging ceremony.
- The Elder says a prayer to the Creator for the group.
- Circle members participate in smudging as per the Elder's teaching.

❁ **Review of Member Rights and Privacy**

- The group leader should also discuss the respect of the sharing circle process and emphasize that each member is responsible for maintaining this respect. Furthermore, the circle leader should also teach members that group stories should remain in the group.
- The group leader discusses with members that although the circle progress can be discussed outside of group, the sharing of circle experiences should not be discussed outside of the circle setting.
- The leader provides members with the opportunity to ask questions about rights and privacy.
- Circle members engage in a brainstorming session to determine the rules and norms of the current group. One circle member is asked to volunteer to record these rules on a board that is viewable by all members at each session.

❁ **Story Sharing**

- The leader should check-in with participants to determine how all participants would like to use the talking stick during the circle.
- The circle leader opens the healing circle and invites Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff members to share either views or firsthand experiences of working with urban Aboriginal youth and the difficulties/successes they've experienced due to either lack of, or sufficient cultural knowledge.
- Members should also be encouraged to discuss their struggles to increase their cultural competence and possible solutions to overcoming this barrier.

- The circle leader should listen for and emphasize positive views, strengths, resilience, stories about overcome adversity and setbacks, favoured memories, and stories that include accomplishments, family, community, and culture.
- Circle leader should ensure the members' stories are not interrupted and that those who want to share will all be able to share their story.

❁ **Break**
- Tea, juice, water, fruit, and vegetables to be served.

❁ **Sharing Circle**
- Once all circle members share their stories, all members are invited to share their thoughts and feedback regarding their colleagues' stories. Circle members are encouraged to share one at a time through the passing of the talking stick.
- Once all members have provided feedback, the Elder closes the sharing circle.

❁ **Reflections**
- The circle leader asks members to share their favourite story told by another group member. Members are asked to explain why this particular story was helpful and what was gained from it.

❁ **Session Wrap-Up**
- The circle leader provides a brief summary of the themes of the sharing circle.
- The leader should thank members for their attention and work today as well as official closing of the session.

❁ **Evaluation**
- The group leader presents an anonymous feedback form that group members complete and return by a decided deadline.

Involving the Aboriginal Community

> I think it may be helpful to host dialogues between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to talk about their histories, perceptions & views of the world to help ordinary people to learn to live together and overcome the impact of historical relationships between Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal people—a cultural dialogue. (Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Dialogue, 2006, p. 27)

Rationale. The question is not whether the Aboriginal community should be involved in the delivery of urban Aboriginal youth mental health services, but rather, how community can be involved for the following reasons:

- Klink, Cardinal, Edwards, Bisanz, and DaCosta (2005) assert that community advisory groups should be established at the outset of all Aboriginal youth programming.

- There is a need to for helping professionals to rethink the applicability of a variety of interventions from the perspective of local community values and aspirations (Klink et al., 2005).

- Kirmayer and colleagues (2003) state that mental health services must be directed at the individual and the community. However, in order for organizations to ensure that services meet the needs of urban Aboriginal youth and are delivered in a culturally sensitive manner, community should be consulted.

- Youth traditionally played a role in the decision making process of the Aboriginal community (Kirmayer et al., 2003). Many Aboriginal organizations have begun establishing youth advisory committees because youth make up 48% of the Aboriginal population. As Aboriginal youth access mental health services at lower rates non-Aboriginal youth, it is vital that agencies consult with youth in order to better reach this population.

Cultural protocol.

- Agencies and staff should follow proper protocol of the Aboriginal communities they serve in order to convey respect and trust.

- Agencies should also approach the appropriate community leaders at the outset.

- When working with First Nations communities, agencies should meet with chiefs and councils and advise members of intentions.

Eliciting community involvement. Community can be involved though a variety of activities both traditional and non-traditional that can include:

- Sharing circles (as described earlier in this section) in which both community and agency members participate.

- Hosting a luncheon
    - As gathering for feasts is a value among numerous Aboriginal communities, inviting community members for an informal dialogue conveys respect and interest.

- Forming a youth advisory groups
    - As Aboriginal youth experience higher rates of poverty and mobility, food, honorariums, and/or compensation for transportation (e.g., bus tickets) can encourage participation.

Community Resources/Referral Agencies

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Figure 13. Table of Aboriginal Community Organizations and Referral Agencies

ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE LINK
Political Organizations		
Assembly of First Nations	The national representative organization of the 630 First Nations in Canada. Advocates for the views of the various First Nations in areas such as: Aboriginal and treaty rights, economic development, education, languages and literacy, health, housing, social development, justice, taxation, land claims, environment, and a whole array of additional issues.	http://www.afn.ca/
Métis National Council	Represents and advocates for the Métis Nations across Canada at the federal level on a variety of issues such as Aboriginal rights, culture, education, health, economic development, and land claims.	http://www.metisnation.ca/
Métis Nation of Alberta	Represents the Métis people in Alberta in government policy and decision making process. Promotes and facilitates the advancement of Alberta's Métis people through the pursuit of self-reliance, self-determination, and self-management.	www.albertametis.com
Health Organizations		
National Aboriginal Health Organization	The National Aboriginal Health Organization advances and promotes the health and well-being of all Aboriginal people through collaborative research, Traditional Knowledge, building capacity, and community led health initiatives. Is a source for recent research and culturally appropriate physical and mental health interventions with Aboriginal people.	http://www.naho.ca/

National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health	Collaborates at the federal and provincial levels to ensure culturally appropriate public health services for Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Facilitates a greater role for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in public health initiatives that affect Aboriginal health and well-being. Seeks to increase knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal public health by developing culturally relevant materials and projects. Is a source for recent findings and initiatives on the physical and mental health of Aboriginal children and youth in Canada.	http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/en/
Health Council of Canada – Aboriginal Health	Monitors and reports on health accords of Health Canada. Informs and strengthens Canada's health system by reporting on best practices and innovation that meet the needs of Canada Aboriginal people. Is a source for articles and videos on the physical and mental health of Aboriginal people.	http://www.healthcouncilcanada.ca/accord.php?mnu=1&mnu1=7
Aboriginal History, Research, and Census Information		
Aboriginal FAQs	Concise summary of frequently asked questions about Canada's Aboriginal people (e.g., what is a status Indian?).	http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/aboriginals/faqs.html
A summary of the treaties	A concise summary of treaties 1-11 including dates signed, content, and current socio-economic impact.	http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/aboriginals/treaties_summary.html
Highlights from the report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples	Commissioned in 1991, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples set out with the mandate to address the many socio-economic issues experienced by Canada's Aboriginal people. The report	http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597

	proposes specific solutions, rooted in domestic and international experience, to the problems which have plagued Aboriginal people as well as their relationships with mainstream society.	
A Guide to Aboriginal Organizations and Services in Alberta	Commissioned by the Province of Alberta, is a comprehensive guide to Aboriginal organizations and services in Alberta that includes representatives groups, community organizations, agencies and services of arts and culture, business and economic development, communications and media, education, employment services, family services, friendship centres, health, healing and social services, housing services, legal services, urban organizations, women's organizations, and youth organizations.	http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/documents/2012_AboriginalOrganizationGuide.pdf
Education, Training, and Employment		
Métis Training to Employment Services	Education funding, upgrading, and training opportunities for Metis youth (including urban youth) at offices throughout the province of Alberta.	http://www.metisemployment.ca/
Oteenow Training and Employment Society	Education funding, upgrading, and training opportunities for Urban First Nations in Edmonton.	http://www.oteenow.com/
Treaty 7 Management Corporation	Facilitates, coordinates, and develops positions for lobbying in areas such as treaties, education, health, community development, social development, and economic development.	http://www.treaty7.org/
Aboriginal Bursaries	A reference page of post-secondary educational bursaries available to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth.	http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/ab/site.nsf/index-eng?OpenView&Query=PRO-

		23132454-2D3-PROD-82C2GW
Counselling and Treatment Services		
Native Counselling Services of Alberta	Provides healing to the Aboriginal community through a variety of programs that include: the prevention youth recruitment into street gangs, family and community wellness programming, legal education, national health campaigns, video production and community-based research. Offers branches and offices across the Provinces of Alberta.	http://www.ncsa.ca/online/
Poundmakers Lodge	Recovery from addictions and treatment though a combination of the 12-step program and traditional Aboriginal healing methods.	http://poundmakerlodge.com/
Community Agencies		
Alberta Native Friendship Centre Associations	Provides culturally-based programs and services to meet the needs of urban Aboriginal people. Seeks to revitalize Aboriginal culture and increase the understanding of urban Aboriginal needs by bridging the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in urban areas with government and community members/organizations. Also provides programming in social, health, youth, children, employment, education, community, and culture.	http://anfca.com/
Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth	Provides Calgary's Aboriginal youth between the ages of 12-20 with a variety of programming that includes: anti-racism programs, cultural programs, healthy lifestyle initiatives, and a monthly publication.	www.usay.ca
Spirit of our Youth Homes	Strives to empower youth and strengthen their connections with	http://www.spirityouth.ca/

	family and community by providing culturally based programming, support, and accommodations to Aboriginal Youth.	
Spirit Keeper Youth Society	Provide urban Aboriginal youth a variety of multi-cultural, community based services in a culturally sensitive manner in partnership with local organizations, service providers, and professionals.	http://www.spiritkeeper.ca
Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge	Advocates for Lethbridge's Aboriginal community by ensuring that services are meeting present and future socio-economic needs. The committee focus is on social inclusion of Aboriginal people within the community, as well as providing a bridge between cultural differences.	http://www.acleth.ca/index.php

Appendix: Definitions

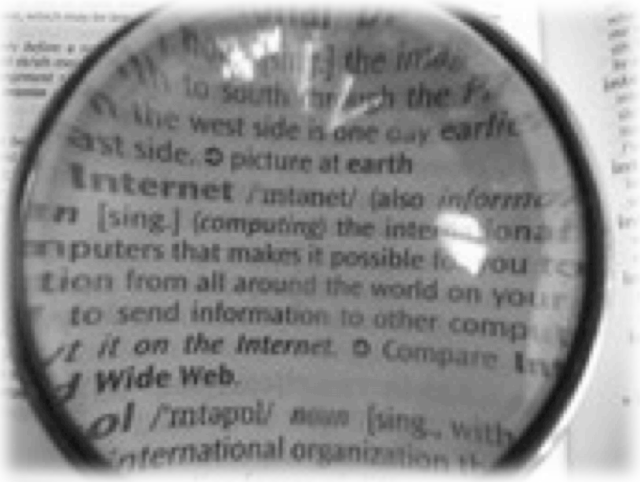

Image retrieved from www.foter.com

Appendix

Definitions

Aboriginal: "Includes, Métis, Inuit, and First Nations, regardless of where they live in Canada and regardless of whether they are 'registered' under the Indian Act" (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, p. 2006, p.1).

Bill C-31: An amendment to the Indian Act that:

- ends discriminatory practices of the Indian Act against women.
- changes the meaning of "status" and allows limited reinstatement of Indians who were denied or lost status and/or Band membership in the past.
- allows bands to define their own membership rules.

Elder: A term of respect used to describe a keeper of traditional knowledge "…recognized and respected for knowing, living, and sharing traditional knowledge. They represent a bridge between the past and present" (Hunter et al., 2006, p.19). The term *Elder* should not be equivocated to an individual who has attained a certain age.

Enculturation: "The process by which individuals learn about and identify with their traditional ethnic culture" (Yoder, Whitbeck, Hoyt, & LaFromboise, 2006, p. 178).

First Nations: Although the exact definition is unclear, it has taken on a political connotation and is used by "Indians" to refer to the first 60-80 nations that lived in Canada prior to colonization (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001).

Healing Circles: Is a round robin sharing session during which a talking stick, sacred stone, or feather is passed around a circle of individuals (from right to left). Is usually guided by an Elder during which time all participants listen with respect, openness, and good listening allowing each member to share. Is an important tool that can be used to lift pain, guilt, and encourage healing.

Historical Trauma: "…a collective emotional and psychological injury over the lifespan and across generations. It is viewed as resulting from a history of genocide with the effects being psychological, behavioural, and medical" (Mitchell & Maracle, 2005, p. 15).

Indian Act: Established in 1876 by the federal government as a nationwide framework named the *Indian Act* which outlines the federal government's authority to legislate issues that concerned registered Indians, Indian bands, and Indian reserves. The Indian Act also defines First Nations peoples as wards of the Crown.

Medicine Wheel: Is used as a physical representation of the unity and balance of the interconnectedness of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual that maintain wellness. Although the medicine wheel is found in several North American indigenous

cultures, circle teachings and their representations vary depending on the teacher, context, and Aboriginal group (Absolon, 2010).

Métis: One of the three distinct Aboriginal people of Canada that was born through the marriage of First Nations and European cultures. The Métis formed a distinct culture comprised of unique communities, common culture, language, and a way of life.

Métis Settlements: Eight provincially recognized Métis land bases located throughout east-central and northern Alberta that cover 1.25 million acres with approximately 9,000 residents (Alberta Aboriginal Relations, 2012). Alberta remains the only Province to recognize a Métis land base in Canada.

Non-Status Indian: Should not be confused with one who simply identifies or self declares as having a social or biological link to "being an Indian." Rather non-status Indians are generally individuals who were originally registered with the *Indian Act* however, lost their status due to either enfranchisement or intermarriage to non-Indians.

Pipe Carrier: Is an individual chosen by Elders to care for a sacred pipe. The individual is asked to make a commitment to honour Creator, Grandmother Earth, all the directions, Grandmothers and Grandfathers, self, and all relations. Pipe carriers also have the responsibility to be ready to use the sacred pipe at any given time when asked to give and receive prayers.

Pow-wow: Where First Nations people gather to dance, sing, socialize, and respect traditional culture by participating in traditional dance with traditional clothing.

Reserve: Land specified by the *Indian Act* set apart by the Crown for the use and benefit of a band and its registered Indians.

Residential Schools: "The residential school system in Canada attended by Aboriginal students. This may include industrial schools, boarding schools, homes for students, hostels, billets, residential schools, residential schools with a majority of day students or a combination of the above" (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006, p. 3).

Smudging: Is conducted before a ceremony or cultural gathering. A sweetgrass holder moves around a circle clockwise with the smoking sweetgrass and circle members wash their faces to purify their thoughts and ask for help from the ancestors and Creator in the endeavour. It is generally suggested that those who are not comfortable with the ceremony should not participate.

Status Indian: A First Nations individual registered with the Indian Registry. Under the Indian Act, a status Indian has rights and benefits not granted to unregistered Indians, Inuit, or Métis.

Sundance: Is one of the most spiritual rites and ceremonies traditionally done during the spring equinox where an individual pledges to present a sun dance for good fortune (Blue et al., 2010).

Sweat Lodge: "This is a ceremony to enhance the power to dream and to give a sense of belongingness to a community….[and] is symbolic of purification, rebirth, and regaining old ways" (Blue et al., 2010, p. 279).

Sweetgrass: Usually dried and braided and is used for prayer, smudging, or purifying.

Traditional Healing: "Approaches incorporating all culturally-based healing strategies including, but not limited to sharing, healing, talking circles, sweats, ceremonies, fasts, feasts, celebrations, vision quests, traditional medicines and any other spiritual exercises" (Aboriginal Healing Foundations, 2006, p. 1).

Urban: According to Statistics Canada (2011) is a population of high density of at least 1,000 and a density of 400 or more people per square kilometre.

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