



UAKN
Urban Aboriginal
Knowledge Network

rcdu
Réseau de connaissances des
Autochtones en milieu urbain

Research Project Summary UAKN Atlantic

Name of Project:

Urban Aboriginal Wellbeing, Wellness and Justice: A MicMac Friendship Centre Needs Assessment Study for Creating a Collaborative Indigenous Mental Resiliency, Addictions and Justice Strategy

Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:

The MicMac Friendship Centre wishes to undertake capacity building research to assess its roles in the social developmental determinants of mental resilience and wellbeing for urban Indigenous populations in Halifax. The purpose of the research is to conduct a culturally relevant needs assessment in order to understand the characteristics of resilient communities that foster wellbeing and to facilitate and promote the creation of Indigenous frameworks and tools for mental resilience assessments and treatments for urban Indigenous populations. This research will ask:

1. What are the determinants of wellbeing identified by the urban Aboriginal population in Halifax, Nova Scotia?
2. Are the current Nova Scotia Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Strategy culturally inclusive and relevant for urban Aboriginal populations?
3. How do Indigenous populations access mental resilience supports and services in the Halifax region?
4. What obstacles limit access to mental resilience and addiction services within the Nova Scotia justice system for urban Indigenous populations?
5. What roles and services could a mental resilience and justice liaison committee provide for improving wellbeing of clients of the MicMac Friendship Centre?
6. Do urban community-based reintegration services for Indigenous peoples support mental resilience and addictions issues effectively post incarceration?
7. What collaborations can address a community approach to improve Urban Aboriginal Wellbeing, Wellness and Justice?
8. What are the promising practices for holistic cultural prevention, intervention and reintegration supports to help Aboriginal clients navigate the Canadian criminal and mental health systems?
9. What capacity building exercises will best disseminate findings with other urban Aboriginal communities, researchers and academics?

Name of Principal Investigator:

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Engagement objectives:

The research process and dissemination activities will engage government, academics and urban Aboriginal community members in an ongoing dialogue on policy priorities and research needs in the area of urban Indigenous mental resilience, wellbeing and social justice support practices and services.

The research process will engage front line service providers and clients of the MicMac Friendship Centre and other members of the urban Aboriginal population in the Halifax region in a series of focus groups, sharing circles and pathway building exercises on the themes of Aboriginal traditional knowledge and wellness, cultural healing and service provision, encounters with Canadian criminal justice and mental health systems and promising practices for reintegration and supporting resilience within families. Additionally a series of ethnographic and structured interviews will take place with people identified as knowledge carriers by the collaborative research network.

The Urban Aboriginal Wellbeing, Wellness and Justice project will provide an excellent opportunity for new scholar research training by employing two Aboriginal graduate students who will participate in every step of the research process. Under the direction of the co-principle investigators, the students will help design the community engagement process, create the needs assessment tools, coordinate research activities, gather, organize and analyze data, prepare information packages, write and disseminate findings. The intended audiences for this research include urban Aboriginal communities, academic, researchers, the general public and government service providers and the members of UAKN.

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