



UAKN
Urban Aboriginal
Knowledge Network

RCU
Réseau de connaissances des
Autochtones en milieu urbain

RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY Western Regional Research Centre

Name of Project:

Transforming education: Strategies to improve the education of urban Aboriginal youth.

Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:

Urban Aboriginal youth, particularly those living in Canada's foster care systems, have unique educational needs. They graduate at levels much lower than either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal students not in foster care (Johnson, 2011; Turpel-Lafond & Kendall, 2007) and experience much greater disruption in their educational experiences. To determine the purpose of this Indigenist research study, we met with Aboriginal youth groups to develop the research question, design and methodologies that will help to better understand their educational struggles, successes and needs. We will invite up to 24 urban Aboriginal youth representing four urban Aboriginal youth groups (up to six members each) living in larger metropolitan areas of Vancouver and Victoria BC to creatively respond to the question "Who or what could make you want to stay in school?" The four youth groups are asked to create a video, poster, art project, theatrical performance or song to address the research question. Their responses will be videotaped at a one day provincial youth education conference on October 18, 2013 at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver). Up to 56 foster parents, legal guardians, teachers, social workers, parents, agency support staff, school support staff and elders will be invited to witness the youth presentations. Then they will work in table groups with the youth to make recommendations based on the youth presentations. The data will be analyzed using Indigenist methodologies. One of the outcomes of this conference will be a ten to fifteen minute video production of the youth presentations and conference participant recommendations.

Name of Principal Investigators:

Dr. Leslie Brown (University of Victoria) and Dr. Shelly Johnson (University of British Columbia)

Collaborating Friendship Centre and/or other urban Aboriginal organization:

- Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services (Holly Anderson)
- Surrounded By Cedar Child and Family Services (Barb Cowan)
- Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents (Gary Mavis)
- Broadway Youth Resource Centre (Joycellyn Helland)

Engagement objectives:

This research is committed to meaningful engagement with urban Aboriginal youth. They have been involved in the development of this project since its inception and will continue to be involved throughout the data collection, data analysis and future presentation of findings.

Main contact:

Shelly Johnson, EdD
Assistant Professor (UBC)
Shelly.johnson@ubc.ca
604.822.9647

Leslie Brown, PhD
Associate Dean of Research (UVIC)
lbrown@uvic.ca
250.508.0678