



UAKN  
Urban Aboriginal  
Knowledge Network

RCU  
Réseau de connaissances des  
Autochtones en milieu urbain

## RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY

### Western Research Centre

#### Name of Project:

Truth in Indigenous Ways of Knowing

#### Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:

Although research employing quantitative or qualitative methodology is widely accepted, support and understanding of Indigenous research methodologies is less common. Unfortunately, the comparative lack of published research explicating Indigenous ways of knowing tends to maintain the status quo of using western approaches to research. A lack of overall understanding of Indigenous Research Methodology (IRM) and its results continues to colonize Indigenous clients in many service-oriented and agency settings. Without having relevant and timely research that supports Indigenous epistemology, Western research methods will continue to permeate research practices and devalue and ignore Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Further, without Indigenous ways of knowing being supported in academia, most human-service programs will only continue to provide superficial, inadequate and culturally-inappropriate services to Indigenous people that are often based on western constructs of "best practices".

One of the many challenges faced by Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM) is the lack of information documenting IRM and culturally-appropriate Indigenous equivalents of the western concepts of "reliability" and "validity". It is vital that IRM explore, explain and document the links between the research and the truth or meaning that results from these methodologies. This proposal seeks to challenge dominant culture norms entrenched in research methodologies by exploring, and documenting, how Indigenous Ceremony, Protocol and Relational Accountability can be understood to bring *tapwewin* (truth) to IRM. One of the seven *nehiyaw* (Cree) teachings is *tapwewin*; to know and understand *tapwewin* is to speak, walk and be in unison with the Natural Laws and provides the framework for ethical accountability in IRM.

Blue Quills First Nations College, in partnership with the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, proposes to explore the process in IRM that creates truth within the context of Indigenous Ways of Knowing. It is our hope that this project, by encouraging the use of IRM, will result in increased access to culturally-based programs and services for urban Indigenous peoples that genuinely encompass an *iyiniw* (First People/People of the Land) worldview.

**Engagement Objectives:**

This project will also build upon and be connected to a project recently conducted in partnership with FCSS Calgary that concluded with the creation of a set of Indigenous Program Indicators. This project created thirteen indicators in five areas (Indigenous Identity, Social Inclusion, Trauma and Healing, Traditional Parenting, and Ceremony) that are now being used by funded FCSS programs to support continued program funding. However, one of the western challenges to the Indigenous Program Indicators (IPI) questions their reliability and validity from a western perspective. While the City of Calgary is using t-tests to confirm that the IPI's are having a strong impact on improving services to Indigenous peoples, it is vital that the *tapwewin* of the Indicators be clearly defined and confirmed from an Indigenous perspective and worldview. By expanding on the previous work this research proposal will support the process of evaluating Indigenous programs from an Indigenous perspective – allowing Indigenous programs to maintain funding using appropriate – and culturally substantiated - outcome indicators.

**Collaborating Friendship Centre and/or other urban Aboriginal organization:**

Blue Quills First Nations College

Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

Mahegun Trails Inc

The Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families (AASCF)

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