



UAKN
Urban Aboriginal
Knowledge Network

RCdU
Réseau de connaissances des
Autochtones en milieu urbain

RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY

Atlantic Research Centre

Name of Project:

Coming Out Stories: Two Spirit Narratives in Atlantic Canada

Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:

The Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance was established to build supports in areas of health, culture, education, awareness and research on matters related to Two Spirit people in Atlantic Canada. The Alliance relies on health data from organizations like Egale Canada and Health Canada, which are not specific to social-cultural contexts of the Atlantic Two Spirited community. W2SA recognizes that there is little or no literature or research on Two Spirited people in Atlantic Canada. This project aims to assist the Alliance in its urgent need to conduct its own community-based research to address these gaps in knowledge with respect to Two Spirits in Atlantic Canada.

Engagement Objectives:

The Alliance aims to conduct research that will inform the development of supports for mental health and resilience, suicide prevention, Two Spirit cultural identity and awareness. To summarize, our research into the coming out stories of two spirited Aboriginal persons living in communities and urban environments across the Atlantic region, will culminate in a publishable document titled "Coming Out of Atlantic Two Spirits" will provide a source of pride, empowerment and cultural identity, which are crucial for education, cultural awareness, and knowledge translation for the LGBTQ and non- LGBTQ communities in general.

There are four inter-related research questions in this project:

1. What are the coming out stories of community and urban Aboriginals living in Atlantic Canada?
2. How can the findings from the proposed coming out stories and on-line survey deepen our understanding of the mental distress (despair, suicidal ideation) experienced by Two Spirits persons?
3. How can these coming out stories and survey data inform the development of supports for mental health and resilience, suicide prevention, Two Spirit cultural identity and awareness?
4. What quantitative and qualitative data do we have on mental resiliency and related determinants of Two Spirits persons living in Atlantic Canada?

The document resulting from our research will be used to heighten awareness and increase knowledge sharing among Aboriginal communities, tribal organizations, First Nations education institutions and the public at large. Most importantly, the research process and resulting documentation will be a source of healing for those who are dealing with their own struggles with coming out.

Methodology:

This community driven research will use both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting data through interviews and focus groups and a quantitative survey to identify the emergence of themes and issues present in the research. A literature review and a narrative analysis will also be conducted.

Collaborating Friendship Centre and/or other urban Aboriginal organization:

Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance
Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
Nova Scotia Government
Cape Breton University
Mount Saint Vincent University

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