

Trauma Practice Framework with Indigenous Peoples

November 9, 2018

Setting the Context – 2016 Stats

- 1,673,785 Indigenous people in Canada representing 4.9% of the total population.
- More than 70 Indigenous languages are spoken.
- There are more than 600 unique First Nation communities in Canada.
- 51.8% of Indigenous peoples live in metropolitan areas.
- One-third of First Nations people (29.2%) were 14 years of age or younger. For Métis, 22.3% of the population was 14 years of age or younger. For the Inuit, one-third (33.0%) were 14 years of age or younger .

Setting the Context – 2016 Stats

- About one-third (34.0%) of Indigenous children aged 0 to 4 years lived with a lone parent.
- First Nations children aged 0 to 4 years (38.9%) were the most likely to live with a lone parent, followed by Métis (25.5%) and Inuit (26.5%)
- Many children living with a lone parent also live or lived with grandparent(s).
- The majority of Indigenous children and youth live in complex family systems.

Critical Issues Facing Indigenous Children and Youth

- Reflecting on the social determinants of health - poverty, employment, working conditions, education and literacy, social status, social support networks, housing, physical environments, geographic location, access to health services, food security, early child development, gender, culture, and language.

Worldviews Colliding – Colonization and Violence (lateral, internal, external)

Traditional	Technological
Community Sharing Cooperation The sacred is everywhere Silence Humour is trust Eye Contact not necessary Aging	Individual Property rights Competition The sacred is institutionalized Talk Humour has its place Eye contact is assumed truthful Youth

Adapted from the 2014 “the other side of the door”:

- Things to consider when engaging Indigenous children, youth and their families:

Language

- English may not be their strongest language. If you are able to use basic greetings or have a language ally with you, this can set the stage for a less-threatening dialogue. [L] [SEP]
- Consider reading comprehension levels and the use of acronyms when providing information, written conditions and/or guidelines.

Adapted from the 2014 “the other side of the door”:

Questions

- Structure questions to build on the child, youth and/or family’s history, culture, and background.
- Recognize that the child, youth and/or family is the expert in their own life.
- If answers are not clear, ask deeper questions.
- Be prepared to answer the questions the family may ask of you.

Adapted from the 2014 “the other side of the door”:

History

- Recognize that Indigenous children, youth and/or families have not always had good relationships with external agencies and may require support to work with you effectively.
- This means connecting the family with appropriate Indigenous services and/or having an Indigenous advocate with you.

Plans of Care

- Jordan's Principle provides that where a government service is available to all other children, but a jurisdictional dispute regarding services to a First Nations child arises between Canada, a province, a territory, or between government departments, the government department of first contact pays for the service and can seek reimbursement from the other government or department after the child has received the service. It is a child-first principle meant to prevent First Nations children from being denied essential public services or experiencing delays in receiving them. On December 12, 2007, the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion that the government should immediately adopt a child-first principle, based on Jordan's Principle, to resolve jurisdictional disputes involving the care of First Nations children.

Adapted from “the other side of the door”

- Home community, ancestry and affiliation.
 - An Indigenous child/youth will always have a tribal affiliation and a home community which should be clearly stated. A non-status child, or Métis child, will also have a community of origin but it may be a village or even a large city.
- An assessment of the child or youth’s current cultural connections and their significance.
 - What is the child or youth’s description of how s/he identifies, and how consistent is that with the written record? If there are significant discrepancies in this area then it will be up to caregivers to help the child sort them out, or it could create significant distress later. If s/he has a clear identity and simply needs an opportunity to express it, then a cultural plan can move forward.

Adapted from “the other side of the door”

- Identification of specific activities associated with a cultural plan.
 - These activities should focus on building identity and relationships, a community connection or some alternative to it. The actual activities would be best informed by partnering with the Indigenous sector, the child’s home community, or a local Friendship Center.

Adapted from “a child becomes strong”:

THE GOOD LIFE (BIRTH TO AGE SEVEN)

- After birth, the first seven years of your life is the good life. During these first seven years there usually are Elders, grandmothers, and grandfathers around who support the parents in providing for all the needs of the child. This marks a very important time in child development.

Adapted from “a child becomes strong”:

THE FAST LIFE (AGES 7 TO 14)

- The fast life is from 7 to 14 years. It is a time of celebrating the transition into adulthood. During the fast life, the child goes through stages of awkwardness (rapid physical changes that affect everything else). These changes may challenge their self-esteem. This stage of life requires many supports to provide a healthy sense of self. Towards the end of the fast life, children transition to young adults. This is also when they pull away from adults and gravitate towards peers.

Adapted from “a child becomes strong”:

WANDERING/WONDERING LIFE (AGES 15 TO 21)

- The next part is the wandering/wondering years. This stage is from age 15 to 21. This is a time when young people begin to ask questions and challenge ideas. This is also known as the Wandering Years. In their travels young people begin to find their teachers and to gain new experiences. Youth begin to question their life’s purpose. It is a time for testing limits and discovering the consequences to behaviours and choices which shape your character.

Healing, spirituality and culturally based resolution (i.e. talking circles, family group conferencing, locations of safety)

The Spiritual

- inclusion of Elders, Métis Senators and/or Cultural Resource People as part of the process and proceedings,
- meetings and/or visits (real and virtual) to places of significance to the family and/or Indigenous Peoples in the area (i.e. land based activities that reinforce cultural teachings),
- understanding (and compassion) of the intergenerational impacts of residential schools and colonization on Indigenous children, youth and their families,
- acceptance that the relationship between you and the child/youth/family is a sacred one and the effects of that relationship will be felt for many years to come.

Healing, spirituality and culturally based resolution (i.e. talking circles, family group conferencing, locations of safety)

The Emotional

- the presence of respectful humour as a way to establish connections and is the seamless integration of the informal and formal part of the relationship,
- partnerships with parents/guardians and the communities by way of planning activities together (i.e. regular program, special events),
- celebrating milestones in the child or youth's life (i.e. completion of process; traditional rites of passage; birthdays),
- professional sharing of life story as a way to connect with the child and their families (i.e. family, pets, hobbies, special memories),

Healing, spirituality and culturally based resolution (i.e. talking circles, family group conferencing, locations of safety)

The Intellectual

- books, videos and other print resources included in the process to have Indigenous voices present,
- on-going check-ins (informal and formal) with Indigenous children/youth/families regarding the benefits and areas of growth for the process,
- communication strategies in the meetings that include hands-on activities, mini-lessons, and time for reflection,
- fostering of curiosity and inquiry by providing quality time and diverse experiences for the child/youth/family.

Examining Our Buildings, Spaces and Materials for Indigenous Inclusion

The Physical

- spaces to have equipment, posters, messages and symbols in the original languages/cultures of the child, youth and families (even if they are not fluent in either),
- meals and snacks to be provided as part of meetings in response to issues surrounding food security,
- memos and communication with families to be accessible and include original languages of the families (i.e. basic greetings as an introduction),
- traditional Indigenous land acknowledgments to start the beginning of court proceedings.

Sources in order of appearance

- Indigenous Statistics:
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm>
- The other side of the door:
<http://cwrp.ca/publications/2966>
- A child becomes strong: <https://www.beststart.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=K12-A>
- Each child brings a special gift:
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/brief_2_indigenous_en.pdf