



Canadian Institutes of Health Research funding renewed

A huge thank you to all of you who have worked so hard together to keep this project moving forward. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved our funding has been renewed until 2012

Upcoming events

Circle of Life Retreats
Kikiwak Inn, OCN
July 19-21, 2010
August 16 – 18, 2010

3rd Annual Conference
Winnipeg, Manitoba
October 20 – 21, 2010
Guest Speaker:
Frank Deane, Professor in Psychology, Director of Illawarra Institute for Mental Health, University of Wollongong
Wollongong NSW 2522
Australia

Editor

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If you have any suggestions for an upcoming issue or need to report an error, please contact Keri-Lynne.

Meet Your Community Liaison

As part of our work with the Swampy Cree communities, we have established a community liaison position for each community. Community Liaisons are the link for the project between the University of Manitoba, Cree Nation Tribal Health and the communities. The liaisons participate in monthly conference calls and attend annual conferences for the project. Liaisons are also working towards establishing Community Advisory Councils within each of the communities to work on community-level suicide prevention activities and programs.

If you have questions about the Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention project, please contact your Community Liaison.

Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team Community Liaisons

Chemawawin Cree Nation	Chris Kematch	(204) 329-2257
Marcel Colomb Cree Nation	Douglas Hart	(204) 356-2292
Mathias Colomb Cree Nation	Mary Anne Sinclair	(204) 553-2048
Misipawistik Cree Nation	Steve Martin	(204) 639-2417
Mosakahiken Cree Nation	Hazel McNabb	(204) 678-2098
Opaskwayak Cree Nation	Pamela Whitehead	(204) 627-7181
Sapotawayak Cree Nation	Raylynn Delaronde	(204) 587-2058
Wuskwi Siphik Cree Nation	Fred Stevens	(204) 236-4894



Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team

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Have you noticed people wearing the SCSPT t-shirts in your community?

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A University –
First Nations
Community
Partnership

Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team Updater

First Nations Youth Suicide study supported by RBC Foundation

RBC's investment will play a significant role in providing these First Nations communities with evidence for policymakers to make decisions that will reduce the risk of suicide among youth groups determined to be at risk.

"I hope this is a stepping stone to find answers and create healing among Swampy Cree children and communities," said Holly Toupin, Regional Vice-President, RBC Royal Bank.

Why is this study important to do?

This work will help people in the community immediately.

We can learn whether ASIST is useful in making community members more aware of suicidal youth and whether it is better than just bringing community members together simply for a retreat.

If ASIST is useful, we plan to apply for more funding to have a greater number of people in the community trained in ASIST.



Circle of Life.

The aim of this project is to understand the best ways to help prevent suicide in the Swampy Cree communities. Over the past several years the Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team has been speaking with community members to ask what they think would be helpful in preventing suicide in their communities. Numerous comments were given that suggested that more interaction between the generations would be helpful in preventing suicide. Also, some indicated that going back to traditional ways and getting back to the culture would also be helpful in reducing suicide. Finally, community members said that more training was needed for community members to be able to recognize the signs of suicide in others.

Between December 2008 and June 2009, members of 7 of the 8 Swampy Cree Community Advisory groups participated in SafeTALK training. This is a half-day education program developed by LivingWorks Inc. that aims to increase community alertness for suicidal people. Those who participated in the training felt strongly that SafeTALK or ASIST (Applied Intervention Skills Training) should be offered to more people in their communities.

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As a next step in our work with the Swampy Cree communities, we (with the help of the Swampy Cree community liaisons and project facilitator) have developed a plan to incorporate the suggestions described above. We aim to see whether a 2-day retreat that includes ASIST training is better than a two-day retreat without ASIST in preparing people in Swampy Cree communities to recognize youth at risk for suicide.

A total of 96 community members will participate in 2 retreats. Twelve people from each of the eight communities will be invited to participate in two separate retreats (48 people per retreat). These 96 participants will include youth who are 16-18 years old, adults, and elders. The retreats will occur in the summer months of 2010, with the possibility of more retreats the following summer (2011).

Participants will be randomly selected. Participants who are selected to attend the retreats will fill out a short self-report questionnaire at three time points: prior to attending the retreat, immediately after the retreat, and 6 months after the retreat.





The Manitoba Health Research Council recently hosted an information event on February 16, 2010 at the Manitoba Legislature in Winnipeg titled "Health Research at Work in Manitoba". As a recipient of a Manitoba Health Research Council Award, Dr. Jitender Sareen was asked to give a presentation on our work with the Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Project. The event organizers also requested that someone from a Swampy Cree community who was familiar with the project also speak at this event. Mr. Mike Campeau (former Community Facilitator) spoke of his experience with the project and how it was being helpful to those in the Swampy Cree communities. Mr. Fred Stevens (Community Liaison-Wuskiw Siphik) was also in attendance for this event. The response to these talks from the audience and the Manitoba Health Research Council was very positive.



Community-based Suicide Prevention Research in Remote On-Reserve First Nations Communities

Corinne A. Isaak, Mike Campeau, Laurence Y. Katz, Murray W. Enns, Brenda Elias, Jitender Sareen & Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team



Suicide is a complex problem linked to genetic, environmental, psychological and community factors. For the Aboriginal population more specifically, loss of culture, history of traumatic events, individual, family and community factors may also play a role in suicidal behaviour. Of particular concern is the high rate of suicide among Canadian Aboriginal youth. While the need to develop interventions to reduce suicidal behaviour for First Nations on-reserve populations is evident, there may be an element of distrust of researchers by Aboriginal communities. Furthermore, research in mental health and specifically suicide is much more sensitive than studying medical illnesses like diabetes.

Clearly, this issue requires a unique and insightful approach. While numerous suicide prevention/intervention plans and guidelines have

been published specifically for work involving Aboriginal people, the literature lacks a comprehensive discussion of the methodological and logistical issues faced by research teams and Aboriginal communities attempting to develop culturally-grounded and community specific suicide prevention and intervention strategies.

This paper outlines the research process, key challenges and lessons learned in a collaborative University-First Nations suicide prevention project conducted with eight north-western Manitoba First Nations communities (Canada).



This article was recently published in the *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, October 2009.



2nd Annual Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Conference

The conference began with several presentations on what has been accomplished so far over the past 2 ½ years in the project including the feedback from the community advisory councils and the interviews in the communities during the summer of 2008. Mike Campeau spoke on reflections of his work as a Community

Facilitator of the past few years. The new community Facilitator, Ron Cook, was introduced as well. Dr. Jitender Sareen presented an overview of future plans for the project. This was followed by a lengthy discussion with community members in attendance on the development and early details of the Circle of Life project which will start during the summer of 2010.

Dr. Laurence Kirmayer, one of the guest speakers shared about his work with First Nations communities in Quebec regarding suicide prevention. Ms. Stephanie Loewen, Coordinator of the Manitoba Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy provided an overview of that project as well.

November 2 – 3, 2009



Holiday Inn Winnipeg South, Winnipeg, Manitoba



Meet the new Community Facilitator



Please join us in welcoming Ron Cook, the new Community Facilitator, to the Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team. Ron joined the Team in August 2009 and he works directly with the Community Liaison in each of the eight Swampy Cree First Nation Communities.

Over the past several years Ron has worked within the Swampy Cree Communities as a Residential School Counselor for the Swampy Cree Tribal Council. He has also worked within the Cree Nation Child & Family Caring Agency as a child care worker in the Sapotaweyak Cree Nation and as an Executive Director at the Sapotaweyak Health Authority. Ron has also worked as the Assistant Executive Director for Cree Nation Tribal Health.

Ron's extensive experience working with the Swampy Cree Tribal Council and the Health Authority give him a wealth of experience to draw on and a wonderful knowledge base to share with the rest of the team. The Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team welcomes Ron to the Team and look forward to continued work with him on this project.

You can contact Ron Cook at:

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