



Upcoming events

Community health care providers will be trained in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) in Winnipeg on October 16-17, 2008 at the Victoria Inn. Participants will be reviewing the DBT manuals to see if changes are needed for this treatment to work within your communities.

Editor

Shay-Lee Belik
University of Manitoba
PZ430-771 Bannatyne Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3E 3N4
(204) 787-7431

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

Recent events & Presentations

• National Aboriginal Mental Health Research Conference

Jitender Sareen, Corinne Isaak, and Shay-Lee Belik attended this meeting in August. Five teams working on Aboriginal suicide research met to discuss and share ideas, plans, and progress in their communities. Jitender made a presentation about the SCSP Team project and our progress to date. Our group stood out as a motivated and ambitious bunch!

• Daniel Rasic et al. Religion, Spirituality, Mental Illness and Suicidal Behavior in a Large Community Sample

Daniel Rasic presented a poster of his recent work looking at the effect of spirituality and religion on suicidal behavior at a Canadian conference held in Montreal last November.

• Joshua Nepon, Media Guidelines

Joshua Nepon created a series of guidelines for media on how to report on someone who has completed suicide. His guidelines are based on research showing how to minimize negative effects or copying of suicide in others.

• Jitender Sareen, Laurence Katz and Brenda Elias invited to present

Jitender, Laurence and Brenda have presented "From Risk Factors to Culturally-Sensitive Interventions: A Programmatic Approach to Aboriginal Suicide" at the following 6 events. The project has been well-received by all.

May 2007	Cree Nations Tribal Health Conference, The Pas, Manitoba
November 2007	Colloquium, Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba
February 2008	Grand Rounds, Department of Psychiatry, University of Manitoba
May 2008	Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Research to Action Day on Suicide
June 2008	Manitoba Injury-free Conference
August 2008	National Aboriginal Mental Health Network



Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team

SCSPT University Team
PZ432-771 Bannatyne Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 3N4
204.787.7431 ph
204.787.4879 fax
www.suicideresearch.ca
scspt@suicideresearch.ca

Swampy Cree Community Facilitator
Mike Campeau
Cree Nations Tribal Health Centre
204.627.1516 ph
204.623.4747 fax
mcampeau@tribalhealth.ca



Dr. Jitender Sareen Mike Campeau



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

this issue

Goal of our project [P.1](#)

Progress to date [P.1](#)

Community visits [P.2](#)

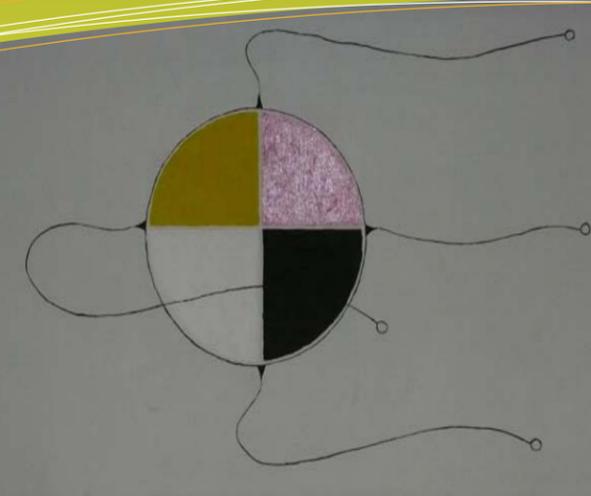
Spirituality, religion and suicide [P.2](#)

SCSPT 1st Annual conference [P.3](#)

SCSPT Advisory Committees [P.3](#)

Upcoming events [P.4](#)

Recent events & presentations [P.4](#)



Goal of our project

Suicide is a serious health problem. We have formed a new team to try to find out **your ideas** about why some First Nations people feel that they want to die. We would also like **your input** about what you think would help in your community.

Our team is made up of community members from Swampy Cree Tribal Council, healthcare providers, and university-based researchers.

We hope **you** can help us better understand what is going on in your communities so that we can help your communities.

Progress to date in your communities.

Tanisi and tatawaw (hello and welcome) to the first edition of the Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team newsletter. It is a pleasure to work with the Swampy Cree Tribal Council to advance the understanding of suicide prevention. This is the second year of our project and we have had a fantastic year of activities. We are very pleased with the outstanding productivity from our team.

We want to especially thank all the community members from the Swampy Cree region who have taken their precious time to provide thoughtful input and guidance to the research work. Through individual and group meetings, we have tried to understand the many causes of suicide and the best ways to prevent suicide. Over the next year, we will be summarizing what we have heard and give this information back to the communities, leaders and government.

We also want to thank Mr. Garry Munro and Mr. Mike Campeau for their enormous work in moving this project forward.

The purpose of the newsletter is to update you on what kinds of activities and events are going on in your communities for our research project. This newsletter also highlights an important paper on the link between spirituality and religion and suicide. We think the findings will be of interest to all of you.

We want to appreciate all the efforts of the co-investigators and students on the team who have worked extremely hard over the last year. Finally, we want to appreciate the work of Ms. Shay-Lee Belik and Ms. Corinne Isaak for their help in designing this newsletter.

We look forward to our ongoing relationship and meegwetch (thank you) for your participation!

Jitender Sareen, Principal Investigator
Brenda Elias, Co-Principal Investigator



Community visits

During July and August, 2008, two or three members from the University of Manitoba, as well as the project Community Facilitator Mike Campeau (Cree Nation Tribal Health), visited each of the communities for two days each. During the visits, a community gathering was held (Lunch or BBQ) where members were invited to eat and hear a short presentation about the project.

Following the gathering, members of the research team had the opportunity to speak with many people who live and work in the Swampy Cree communities. To date we have interviewed 133 individuals who live and or work in or with the Swampy Cree communities.

We have received valuable input from community members, health workers, educators and others who work in the community. We will continue to pursue interviews, with youth in particular. A report of the information gathered during the interviews will be available once all analysis has been completed.

Community Visits:
 July 1-5
 Sapatoweyak and Wuskwi Siphk
 July 22-25
 Grand Rapids and Easterville
 August 4-8
 Lynn Lake and Pukatawagan
 August 18-21
 Moose Lake and OCN

DBT Training Workshop - Winnipeg



Spirituality versus religion...how does it relate to suicide?

We studied whether spiritual beliefs or religion affected the likelihood of attempting suicide.

Spirituality and religion are important values to people worldwide. Over the past few decades, a distinction between religion and spirituality has been drawn.

Spirituality has been conceptualized as a search for meaning and purpose to one's life in contrast to religion, which has been thought of as an organized set of beliefs and rituals to make possible a closeness to a higher power.

A large amount of research has been done showing that, in general, people who are religious have less mental illness than those who are not. Spirituality, on the other hand has not shown a consistent relationship with mental illness. A small amount of research has specifically looked at the relationship between suicide and religion.

Overall, the research has

looked at religion and suicide and found that those people who attend religious ceremonies have less suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.

The reason for this effect, researchers have thought, is because religion is a socially supportive environment, and having more supports means a person is less likely to commit suicide.

Dr. Daniel Rasic, a resident in Psychiatry at Dalhousie University in Halifax who works with the SCSP Team, looked at whether people who attended religious ceremonies and people who considered themselves spiritual were more likely, less likely or no difference to resort to suicide than those who were not.

Overall the study found that people who attended religious

ceremonies were less likely to have thought of suicide or attempt suicide than those who did not. In addition, it was shown that even when the effects of social support were accounted for, people were still less likely to have attempted suicide. Those who considered themselves spiritual, on the other hand, were no more likely and no less likely to have considered or attempted suicide. These results imply that those who

attend religious ceremonies are less likely to think about or attempt suicide but that private spiritual reflection alone, on the other hand, is not associated with decreased suicide.

~ Daniel Rasic MD

Dr. Rasic's paper will be published in an upcoming issue of Journal of Affective Disorders.

“People who attended religious ceremonies were less likely to have thought of suicide”

Community gathering - Pukatawagan



Community advisory committees support progress

Over the winter months, we plan to meet with members of each community in Winnipeg to encourage community involvement in the project. The aim is to create Community

Advisory Councils for each of the eight Swampy Cree Communities. The goal of the Advisory Councils would be to organize suicide prevention activities and programming

within each community.

Calling all youth!! We are looking for a new logo...

Students in grades 7 through grade 12 are invited to create a logo for the Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team. The logo design can be anything that you feel would be a good representation of the work that

we are doing. First prize will be an Ipod Nano, second prize ??, and third prize a SCSP Team t-shirt and ???. Logos will be judged by our community representatives.

Entries can be mailed to:
 SCSP Team Logo Contest
 PZ432-771 Bannatyne Avenue
 Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 3N4

Participants Wanted

The Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team hopes to develop a network of community individuals who are willing to guide us in developing the suicide prevention strategies needed in your communities.



Corinne Isaak

Dr. Brenda Elias

We are looking for people who are willing to take part in any of the following ways:
 - Individual interviews
 - Attendance at the annual meetings
 - Advisory committee

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact us at 204.787.7431 or scspt@suicideresearch.ca

May Conference 1st Annual

Members from each of the eight Swampy Cree Tribal Council communities met with researchers from the University of Manitoba to:

1. Develop a better understanding of suicide within the Swampy Cree communities

2. Develop suicide prevention strategies that are most likely to be effective

This year's conference was a huge success! Fifteen elders, youth, health workers and other community members attended the Kikiwak Inn in The Pas for the two day event.

This conference will be held annually in an effort to report back to the community members about the work that we are doing.

Due to limited funding, only three members from each community will have their travel expenses funded. However, anyone else interested is welcome to attend.